

# Project Evaluation Criteria

## PSRC 2026 Transportation Alternatives Program

### Introduction

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a Federal Highway Administration funding program for community-based transportation improvements, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, historic preservation of transportation assets, environmental mitigation and others.

The policy focus for PSRC’s 2026 TAP project competition is to support the development of centers and the transportation corridors that serve them. The intent of this policy focus is to support implementation of VISION 2050 and the Regional Transportation Plan. For the TAP competition, centers are defined as regionally designated growth or manufacturing/industrial centers, countywide centers designated through countywide planning policies, or local centers identified in local comprehensive plans.

The project evaluation criteria have been designed to implement this policy focus of supporting centers and the corridors that serve them. Projects will be reviewed for a variety of characteristics and impacts. The project evaluation criteria address support for centers and elements particular to each of the following three project categories: pedestrian and bicycle, historic resources, and environmental. Project sponsors are asked to pick the category that best fits their project and respond to the corresponding criteria. Part 1 contains evaluation criteria that will be applied to ALL projects. Part 2 contains evaluation criteria based on the three categories. In addition, sponsors may provide information that is not addressed in the evaluation criteria for additional consideration in the recommendation process.

	Points
<b>Part 1: Criteria for All Projects</b>	<b>30</b>
1.1 Support for Centers	30
<b>Part 2: Category-Specific Criteria</b>	<b>70</b>
2.1. Pedestrian and Bicycle	70
<i>Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility</i>	42
<i>Community Support</i>	10
<i>Safety and Security</i>	18
2.2. Historic Resources	70
2.3. Environmental	70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

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The objective of the project evaluation criteria is to review and rate similar types of projects. Projects will be compared to one another within their category to determine the magnitude of the improvement and to arrive at a final score. Project scores of high, medium, and low are assigned for each criterion based on the magnitude of the benefits and impacts. Projects that most directly support each criterion, addressing each question within a given section, will be rated "High." The highest possible total score a project can receive is 100 points. Projects from all three categories will be ranked together based upon total points received.

Projects will be evaluated against the criteria based on the information and responses provided in the application found in the Call for Projects. Each criterion contains specific bullet points that are equally important to the evaluation of that criterion, unless otherwise specified. The questions in the application reflect each of these bullet points (refer to the table above). After all projects have been scored by PSRC staff, the scoring committee will use the scores as a tool to help determine which projects to recommend for funding to PSRC's Boards for final approval.

## Part I: Criteria for All Projects

### Support for Centers (30 points)

- Describe how the project will support the existing and planned housing/employment densities in the center.
- Describe how the project will support the development/redevelopment plans and activities (objectives and aims) of the center.

**High:** A project will receive a high rating if it clearly supports a significant amount of existing and/or planned housing/employment activity in the center, and implements specific development/redevelopment policies or projects identified for the center in the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan or applicable subarea plan.

**Medium:** A project will receive a medium rating if it supports a moderate amount of existing and/or planned housing/employment activity in the center, and implements adopted general or programmatic development/redevelopment policies for the center.

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**Low:** A project will receive a low rating if it supports a limited amount of existing and/or planned housing/employment activity in the center, and is consistent with the development/redevelopment goals for the center.

**Guidance:** VISION 2050 calls for preserving and developing compact communities and directing employment and housing growth into centers that support walking, biking and transit use. VISION 2050 also calls for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, open space and recreational opportunities, and scenic and historic areas. Transportation projects are a fundamental part of supporting development in these centers and accommodating future growth.

Projects are rated on their ability to provide service to the greatest number of people, as expressed through their relationship to regionally designated growth and/or manufacturing/industrial centers, countywide centers designated through countywide planning policies, or local centers identified in local comprehensive plans, including those in rural areas. Examples of local centers include locations identified as a town center, downtown, mixed use or business district or neighborhood activity center as identified in a local comprehensive plan, and military facilities.

Projects will be evaluated on their support of existing and/or planned population/employment activity within the center(s), demonstrating support of the identified needs within the context of each center. Preference will be given to those projects that provide clear benefits and help meet the development goals of the designated center(s), including plans and activities related to land use and affordable housing, environmental, and cultural goals, context sensitive design, economic development, alternative forms of transportation, etc. For example, a project proposing increased connectivity through a new bicycle route could provide a new customer base for businesses within a center by providing a new mode of connection.

The applicant should describe how the proposed project would implement the policies and objectives identified for the center in the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan or subarea plan and provide documentation of the relevant policies. For example, a jurisdiction may have a comprehensive plan policy that states that roadways within the center should be redeveloped into pedestrian and bicyclist friendly facilities. Proposed projects that introduce or advance active transportation modes on existing roadways, such as new or improved sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and/or bicycle lanes, would accomplish this objective. Restoration of a

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historic transportation facility could help support policies for economic development and maintenance of historic assets and community character, while an environmental project could be used to advance policies related to the maintenance of the natural environment and/or stormwater management.

Transportation projects may be on corridors outside of centers but play an important role in executing the envisioned future of these areas. For corridors serving centers, applicants should look to their jurisdiction's comprehensive plan or applicable subarea plan to develop an understanding of how the jurisdiction envisions connections to centers and use this guidance to address the criteria.

## Part 2: Category-Specific Criteria

Project sponsors will select the category most appropriate for their project, and projects will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria specific to that category. All categories are of equal weight, and each project will receive up to 70 points from this section. These three categories will provide for comparison of similar projects and a rating system based on factors that are most appropriate to each category.

The eligible Transportation Alternatives Program project types have been grouped into the three categories shown below. All projects must meet the appropriate Transportation Alternatives Program eligibility requirements (refer to the Summary of Eligibility information in the Call for Projects) and follow federal design and other professional standards.

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Pedestrian and Bicycle*	Historic Resources	Environmental
Facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists and other nonmotorized forms of transportation.	Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities.	Construction of turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas.
Infrastructure-related projects providing safe routes for non-drivers.	Archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project (mitigation).	Inventory, control or removal of outdoor advertising.
Conversion and use of abandoned railway corridors for trails.		Vegetation management practices in transportation right of way.
Safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists (only under the Safe Routes to Schools program), and activities in furtherance of a vulnerable road user safety assessment.		Mitigation to address storm water management, control and water pollution prevention related to highway construction or highway runoff.
Planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways.		Reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.

\*Note: Recreational trails are eligible under the set-aside for the State's Recreational Trails Program

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## 2.1. Pedestrian and Bicycle (70 points)

### Circulation, Mobility and Accessibility (42 Points)

- Describe how the project extends or completes a regional or local pedestrian and bicycle system, and/or adds facilities to an existing pedestrian and bicycle system or network.
- Describe how the project addresses a need in the community and reduces key barriers to use and functionality.
- Describe the connections to transit stops and stations provided by the project, including bus, rail, ferries, etc.
- Describe the anticipated level of public usage within the community and how the project will benefit a variety of user groups, including commuters, residents, and/or commercial users.
- Discuss whether there will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.

**High:** A project will receive a high rating if it extends or completes an existing pedestrian and bicycle system. Projects will receive a higher score if they address a clearly demonstrated need in the community and/or reduce barrier(s) to use and functionality (such as travel distance, a steep slope, a comfort issue, or other identified barrier). Projects will also score higher if they support several connections to transit, (for example, high capacity or other transit stations, ferry terminals, etc.). High scores will be based on whether the project has or will have a high level of usage in the community and benefits for multiple user groups. In addition, projects will receive higher scores if there will be a loss of opportunity if not funded.

**Medium:** A project will receive a medium rating if it adds to an existing pedestrian and bicycle system and moderately addresses an identified need in the community and/or barrier(s) to use and functionality. Projects will receive medium scores if they support some connections to transit, have or will have a moderate level of usage and benefit some user groups. In addition, projects will receive moderate scores if there will be some loss of opportunity if not funded.

**Low:** A project will receive a low rating if it does not link to an existing pedestrian and bicycle system and does not resolve an identified need in the community and/or barrier(s) to usage. Projects will receive low scores if they have few or no connections

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to transit, have or will have a low level of usage in the community, and benefit few user groups. Additionally, projects will receive lower scores if there will be no loss of opportunity if not funded.

**Guidance:** Applicants should describe the benefits of the project in terms of time savings, safety, completing gaps in the system, overcoming of barriers, provision of active transportation that can lead to public health benefits, etc. Projects completing networks and providing critical connections that did not exist previously will tend to score higher than those that do not, such as the completion of the final pedestrian and bicycle facility network gap.

Applicants should describe the level of public access to the project. For example, the current and future land use in the vicinity of the facility, such as schools, residences, commercial, retail, tourist areas, that would be expected to provide utilization of the facility. Projects will score higher if they are easily accessible to a high-density area or to a large proportion of the local community, and serve a variety of user groups, including commuters, residents, and commercial users. Applicants should consider the transportation needs of these various users to, from and within the center and clearly describe how the project would benefit the applicable user groups.

## Community Support (10 points)

- Identify the different population groups within the project area, and describe any disparities or gaps in the transportation system being experienced. Describe how the project will address these disparities or gaps and provide an improvement.
- Describe the public outreach process that led to the development of the project. This could be at a broader planning level (comprehensive plan, corridor plan, etc.) or for the specific project. Include specific outreach or communication with the population groups identified in the previous section.
- Describe how this outreach influenced the development of the project, e.g., the location, scope, design, timing, etc.

**High:** A project will receive a high rating if it clearly addresses a demonstrated problem or need specifically identified by community members from the population groups identified, either from general or project specific outreach.

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**Medium:** A project will receive a medium rating if it addresses a demonstrated problem or need of the transportation system and connects broadly to more general feedback provided by community members from the population groups identified, either from general or project specific outreach.

**Low:** A project will receive a low rating if there is no clear connection demonstrated between the development of the project and outreach heard from members of the population groups identified.

**Guidance:** Sponsors should clearly describe the feedback received from population groups identified during the general or project specific outreach process and highlight how it influenced the project, illustrating that this is a project these population groups want in their community. Pathways for outreach are different for different projects, so whether the outreach was at the planning or project level will not influence the score. For example, a sponsor of a complete streets project may reference a comment for a plan that may state, "Please address the different needs of people using modes including but not limited to walking, wheelchairs, running, biking, e-scooters, strollers, etc." Or the sponsor may reference a comment specific to the project that may state, "Please add sidewalks and bike lanes to Dakota St. so people with different needs can get from the bus stop on 42<sup>nd</sup> St. to Gramercy Park." Responses will be scored based on how well feedback from communities was taken into consideration.

## Safety and Security (18 Points)

- Describe how the project addresses safety and security.
- Describe how the project helps protect vulnerable users of the transportation system, by improving pedestrian safety and addressing existing risks or conditions for pedestrian injuries and fatalities and/or adding or improving facilities for pedestrian and bicycle safety and comfort.
- Does your agency have an adopted safety policy (e.g., Vision Zero, Target Zero, etc.)? How did these policies inform the development of the project?
- Describe how the project reduces reliance on enforcement and/or designs for decreased speeds.

**High:** A project will receive a high rating if it identifies and addresses a clearly demonstrated existing or future safety or security issue, includes features that directly address vulnerable users of the system, implements the agency's adopted



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safety policies, and includes element(s) that may decrease speeds and/or reduce reliance on enforcement.

**Medium:** A project will receive a medium rating if it addresses an existing or future safety and security issue, includes features that support vulnerable users of the system, is consistent with the agency's adopted safety policies, and does not include elements that may reduce speeds and/or reduce reliance on enforcement.

**Low:** A project will receive a low rating if it does not clearly demonstrate how it addresses an existing or potential future safety and security issue, does not include features that support vulnerable users of the system, has no clear connection to adopted safety policies and does not include elements that may reduce speeds and/or reduce reliance on enforcement.

**Guidance:** Applicants should clearly describe the safety or security related issues being addressed by the project, and how the project will improve safety conditions. Applicants should describe how the project improves safety and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as wheelchair users and other vulnerable users. For example, projects may be addressing unsafe conditions for these modes, providing a separation of vulnerable users from other modes, improving lighting and other security conditions, improving steep grade conditions, etc.

Applicants should also highlight features of the project that may result in decreased vehicle speeds. Examples of these features include adding a pedestrian crossing median, traffic calming techniques, etc. Features that may support a reduced reliance on enforcement could include improved signage and pedestrian and bicycle signals.

In terms of policy, there is a spectrum of safety policies adopted by jurisdictions across the region, from broad safety-supportive statements to more precise calls for improvements in specific locations. Policies are found in a range of documents from comprehensive plans to sub-area plans to standalone safety plans. Applicants should identify what their agency's policies on safety are and discuss how the project implements or was informed by these policies. Specific factors to consider include the project location, the scope of the project and the specific safety issue being addressed.

All projects must meet the appropriate Transportation Alternatives Program eligibility requirements and follow professional standards.

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## 2.2. Historic Resources (70 Points)

- Describe the historic significance of the facility. This could include designation as a local, state, or national landmark; listing as a contributing part of a local, state or National Register historic district; or a determination of eligibility for listing in the National Register.
- Describe the project's relationship to the larger historic preservation plan for the area.
- Describe the former and/or current transportation use of the facility. "Facility" can refer to any historic property, building or other structure with a transportation connection.
- Describe plans for the continued or future use of the facility once the project is complete, and the project's relationship to the larger transportation system in the area.
- Identify the population groups within the project area and describe the level of public access to the project.
- Describe the long-term preservation and/or maintenance plans for the facility.
- Discuss whether there will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.

**High:** A project will receive a high rating if applicants clearly show how it contributes to the preservation of significant historic or archaeological resources and the larger historic preservation plan for the area. The project will also score more highly if the current and planned use of the facility has a strong connection to the existing transportation system, and if it has a high level of access to the public, including access for a variety of modes (vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, etc.). Finally, the project will score highly if it has a clearly documented long-term preservation and/or maintenance plan, and if there will be a loss of opportunity if not funded.

**Medium:** A project will receive a medium rating if it somewhat contributes to the preservation of historic or archaeological resources and the larger historic preservation plan for the area. The project will also receive a medium score if the current and planned use of the facility has some connection to the existing transportation system, and if it has a moderate level of access to the public. Additionally, the project will score moderately if it has a long-term preservation and/or maintenance plan and there will be some loss of opportunity if not funded.

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**Low:** A project will receive a low rating if it has a limited impact on the preservation of historic or archaeological resources and is not included in a larger historic preservation plan. The project will receive a lower score if the current and planned use of the facility has a low degree of connection to the existing transportation system, and low level of access to the public. Additionally, the project will score lower if it does not have a long-term preservation and/or maintenance plan, and there will be no loss of opportunity if not funded.

**Guidance:** Applicants should describe the historic significance of the facility. This could include designation as a local, state, or national landmark; listing as a contributing part of a local, state or National Register historic district; or a determination of eligibility for listing in the National Register or other historic preservation plan.

For levels of public access, the project should have the potential to serve the identified population groups in the project areas.

For preservation and/or maintenance plans, applicants are asked to provide documentation illustrating the commitment to maintenance into the future, and/or information on the steps required to do so. All projects must meet the appropriate Transportation Alternatives Program eligibility requirements and follow professional standards, including [“The Secretary of The Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.”](#)

### 3.3. Environmental (70 Points)

- Describe the relationship of the project to the transportation system.
- Identify the population groups within the project area and describe the level of public access to the project.
- Describe how well the project goes over and above normally required environmental mitigation.
- Describe the long-term maintenance plans for the project.
- Discuss whether there will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.

**High:** A project will receive a high rating if it has a demonstrated connection to the existing transportation system, and a high level of access to the public. Projects will score more highly if they provide multiple benefits beyond those of mitigation (e.g.,

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additional flood control benefits, safety, etc.). A project will also score highly if it has a clearly documented long-term maintenance plan and if there will be a loss of opportunity if not funded.

**Medium:** A project will receive a medium rating if it has some connection to the existing transportation system and a moderate level of access to the public. Projects will score moderately if they provide some benefits beyond those of normally required environmental mitigation. Finally, a project will receive a medium score if it has a long-term maintenance plan and there will be some loss of opportunity if not funded.

**Low:** A project will receive a low rating if it has a low degree of connection to the transportation system and low level of access to the public. Projects will also receive low scores if they do not provide benefits beyond normally required environmental mitigation, do not have long-term maintenance plans, and if there will no loss of opportunity if not funded.

**Guidance:** For levels of public access, the project should have the potential to serve the identified population groups in the project areas. For example, projects will score more highly if they are along heavily traveled routes, provide access to a variety of modes (vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, etc.), or if there is a high population density surrounding the project. Additional resources are provided in the Call for Projects to assist sponsors in determining the location of these population groups within their project area.

For long-term maintenance plans, applicants are asked to provide documentation illustrating the commitment to maintenance into the future, and/or information on the steps required to do so. All projects must meet the appropriate Transportation Alternatives Program eligibility requirements and follow professional standards.

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## **Other Considerations**

Project sponsors may describe additional aspects of the project that are not addressed in the evaluation criteria that could be relevant to the final recommendation and decision-making process, including stakeholder involvement and support for the project. No additional points are given.

- Describe any additional aspects of your project not requested in the evaluation criteria that could be relevant to the final project recommendation and decision-making process.