



PSRC’s 2021 Transportation Alternatives Program Project Evaluation Criteria

INTRODUCTION

VISION 2050 is the region’s plan for growth and the overarching policy framework guiding planning and investments in the region. VISION 2050 sets a particular policy focus for the distribution of PSRC’s federal funds, which is to support regional, countywide, and local centers.

Projects will be reviewed for a variety of characteristics and impacts. The project evaluation criteria address support for centers, the project’s readiness to go, and elements particular to each of the following three project categories: bicycle and pedestrian, 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.

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 below). 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.

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 bullet point 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.

	Points
Part 1: Criteria for All Projects	
A. Support for Centers	30
B. Project Readiness/Financial Plan	10
Part 2: Category-Specific Policy Criteria	
<i>C1. Bicycle and Pedestrian</i>	60
<i>C2. Historic Resources</i>	60
<i>C3. Environmental</i>	60
TOTAL	100

Part 1: Criteria for All Projects

A. The project supports regional growth, regional manufacturing/industrial centers, and/or locally identified centers. 30 Points

VISION 2050 calls for preserving and developing compact communities and directing employment and housing growth into centers that support walking, biking and transit use. In addition to regional growth and manufacturing/industrial centers, VISION 2050 also calls for the support of locally identified centers, including those in rural areas, as well as the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, open space and recreational opportunities, and scenic and historic areas.

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. 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 also military facilities. Preference will be given to those projects that provide clear benefit to one of these designated centers and help meet the development goals of the center(s). In addition, 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.

Projects will be rated:

High:

- The project is located within a designated regional or locally identified center, or is located along a corridor connecting to one of these areas.
- The project supports a significant amount of existing and/or planned population/employment activity in the center and implements specific policies or projects identified for the center in an adopted plan.
- The project helps the center develop in a manner consistent with the adopted policies and plans for the center, as identified in the comprehensive plan of the local jurisdiction. These may include land use and affordable housing, environmental, and cultural goals, context sensitive design, economic development, alternative forms of transportation, etc.

Medium:

- The project is located within a designated regional or locally identified center, or is located along a corridor connecting to one of these areas.
- The project supports a moderate amount of existing and/or planned population/employment activity in the center and implements adopted general or programmatic policies for the center.

Low:

- The project is located within a designated regional or locally identified center, or is located along a corridor connecting to one of these areas.

- The project supports a limited amount of existing and/or planned population/employment in the center, and is consistent with the development goals of the center.

B. Project Readiness/Financial Plan. 10 Points

The focus of this criterion is to evaluate the feasibility of each project to meet the obligation and financial plan requirements of the requested phase by the estimated selected date. All requested phases must be fully funded with the PSRC grant award and other identified funding. Applicants may request funding for any single project phase, but requests for multiple phases are limited to preliminary engineering plus the subsequent phase necessary. Refer to the Call for Projects for more information on limits to the funding requests, requirements for matching funds, obligation deadline requirements, and other key requirements.

Project sponsors will be asked to supply a full financial budget and project schedule in the application. Depending on the type and scale of the project, information should be provided on the following project milestones: environmental documentation, permits, right of way approvals, percent design completed, contract dates, etc.

Project applications will be reviewed for the following elements:

- When will the sponsor complete all prerequisites needed to obligate the project’s requested funds?
- How reasonable is the financial plan for the requested phase(s)? Describe the funds already secured for the project, anticipated, and reasonably expected to be secured, or unsecured, at the time of the application.

Projects will be rated:

High:

- The applicant can demonstrate that work on the prerequisites for obligation of the requested phase has begun and/or remaining work is scheduled and feasible to be completed by the obligation deadline.
- All funds needed to complete the phase(s) have been secured at the time of application or are reasonably expected by the obligation deadline for the phase(s) requested.

Medium:

- The applicant can demonstrate that work on the prerequisites for obligation of the requested phase has begun and/or remaining work is scheduled and feasible to be completed by the obligation deadline.
- No funds needed to complete the phase(s) have been secured at the time of application, but funds are reasonably expected by the obligation deadline for the phase(s) requested.

Low:

- The applicant fails to demonstrate that all prerequisites for obligation of the requested phase(s) will be completed by the estimated obligation deadline.
- No funds needed to complete the phase(s) are secured, and there is risk that the sponsor’s plan to secure all necessary funding will not be achieved by the obligation deadline for the phase(s) requested.

Part 2: Category-Specific Criteria

C. The project significantly enhances the transportation experience for a variety and multitude of users. 60 points

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 60 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.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects*	Historic Resources Projects	Environmental Projects
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 for kindergarten through 8 th grade)		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

C1. Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects. 60 Points

All projects must meet the appropriate Transportation Alternatives Program eligibility requirements and follow federal design and other professional standards. Projects will be evaluated based on the following elements:

- The project extends or completes a regional or local bicycle and pedestrian system, and/or adds facilities to an existing bicycle and pedestrian system or network.
- The project addresses a need in the community and reduces key barriers to use and functionality.
- The project addresses safety and security.
- The facility connects to other multimodal facilities (for example, high capacity or other transit stations, ferry terminals, etc.).
- The level of public access to the project (for example, current and future land use in the vicinity of the facility such as schools, residences, commercial, retail, tourist areas, etc. that would be expected to provide utilization of the facility).
- The project will benefit a variety of user groups, including commuters, residents, and/or commercial users.
- The project will benefit populations identified in the President's Order for Environmental Justice¹ including people of color and people with low incomes, older adults, people with disabilities, populations located in highly impacted communities, and/or areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment.
- There will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.

Bicycle and Pedestrian projects will be rated:

High:

- The project extends, completes, or otherwise adds to an existing bicycle and pedestrian system.
- The project addresses an identified need in the community and reduces a barrier to use and functionality, such as travel distance, a steep slope, a comfort issue, or other identified barrier.
- The project improves or provides for safety and security.
- The project supports a facility connecting to other multimodal facilities (for example, high capacity or other transit stations, ferry terminals, etc.).
- The project has or will have a high level of usage in the community (for example, is easily accessible to a high-density area or to a large proportion of the local community, and serves a variety of user groups).
- The project provides benefits to people of color and people with low incomes, older adults, people with disabilities, populations located in highly impacted communities, and/or areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment.
- There will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.

Medium:

- The project adds to an existing bicycle and pedestrian system.
- The project addresses an identified need in the community and reduces a barrier to use and functionality, such as travel distance, a steep slope, a comfort issue, or other identified barrier.

¹ The President's Order for Environmental Justice states "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations."

- The project has a moderate level of access to the public, including access for people of color and people with low incomes, older adults, people with disabilities, populations located in highly impacted communities, and/or areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment.

Low:

- The project does not link to an existing bicycle and pedestrian system.
- The project has or will have a low level of usage in the community (for example, is easily accessible to only a small portion of the local community).

C2. Historic Resources Projects. 60 Points

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.”² Projects will be evaluated based on the following elements:

- The current or former transportation use of the facility.³
- 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.
- The planned use of the facility and the project’s relationship to the transportation system.
- The project is part of a larger historic preservation plan.
- The level of public access to the project, including access for populations identified in the President’s Order for Environmental Justice, which include people of color and people with low incomes, older adults, people with disabilities, populations located in highly impacted communities, and/or areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment.
- There will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.
- Long-term preservation and/or maintenance plans for the facility.

Historic Resources projects will be rated:

High:

- The project contributes to the preservation of significant historic or archaeological resources.
- The facility is designated as a local, state, or national landmark or is listed as a contributing part of a designated historic district.
- The planned use of the facility will have a strong connection to the existing transportation system. The project is part of a larger historic preservation plan.
- The project has a high level of access to the public, including people of color and people with low incomes, older adults, people with disabilities, populations located in highly impacted communities, and/or areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment.
- There is access to the project for a variety of modes (vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, etc.).

² Can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>

³ “Facility” is not limited to buildings, but can be any historic property, structure, etc. with a transportation connection.

- There will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.
- The project has a long-term maintenance plan.

Medium:

- The project has a moderate impact on the preservation of historic or archaeological resources.
- The facility is not designated as a local, state, or national landmark or as part of a designated historic district.
- The planned use of the facility will have a connection to the existing transportation system.
- The project has a moderate level of access to the public, including access for people of color and people with low incomes, older adults, people with disabilities, populations located in highly impacted communities, and/or areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment.
- The project has a long-term maintenance plan.
- There will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.

Low:

- The project has a limited impact on the preservation of historic or archaeological resources.
- The project has a low level of access to the public.
- The project does not have a long-term maintenance plan.

C4. Environmental Projects. 60 Points

All projects must meet the appropriate Transportation Alternatives Program eligibility requirements and follow professional standards. Projects will be evaluated based on the following elements:

- The relationship of the project to the transportation system.
- The level of public access to the project, including access for populations identified in the President’s Order for Environmental Justice, which include people of color and people with low incomes, older adults, people with disabilities, populations located in highly impacted communities, and/or areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment.
- How well the project goes over and above what is normally required.
- Long-term maintenance plans for the project.
- There will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.

Environmental Projects will be rated:

High:

- The project has a high level of access to the public (for example, the project is along a heavily traveled route, there are a variety of modes [vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, etc.], there is a high population density surrounding the project, etc.), including access for people of color and people with low incomes, older adults, people with disabilities,

populations located in highly impacted communities, and/or areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment.

- There is a demonstrated need for the project, and the project provides benefits beyond those of mitigation (e.g., additional flood control benefits, safety, etc.).
- The project has a long-term maintenance plan.
- There will be a loss of opportunity if this project is not funded, e.g., development or other economic pressure.

Medium:

- The project has a moderate level of access to the public, including access for people of color and people with low incomes, older adults, people with disabilities, populations located in highly impacted communities, and/or areas experiencing high levels of unemployment or chronic underemployment.
- There is a demonstrated need for the project, and the project provides benefits beyond those of mitigation.
- The project has a long-term maintenance plan.

Low:

- The project has a low level of access to the public.
- The project has no long-term maintenance plan.

D. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS (NO POINTS)

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.

- 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.
- Describe the public review process for the project and actions taken to involve stakeholders in the project's development. Describe the outreach and engagement of all stakeholders and provide any public comments received (both positive and negative), letters of support, and/or other partnerships for the project.