WSDOT

Performance-based Project Evaluation Feasibility Report

December 2020

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Performance-based Project Evaluation Feasibility Report
Executive Summary

STUDY APPROACH

In 2020, the Washington state Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to study the feasibility of performance-based evaluation of transportation projects. The 2019-21 Supplemental Transportation Budget (ESHB 2322, Section 218 (7)) named the direction through a proviso.

WSDOT studied how to compare transportation projects to determine which investments will best help the transportation system meet the policy goals set by the Legislature. The study included:

- Looking at how WSDOT has used the transportation policy goals to make decisions.
- Reviewing WSDOT's current tools and procedures for evaluating performance.
- Asking for feedback from stakeholders, including traditionally underserved and historically disadvantaged populations, to help inform how WSDOT and the Legislature could evaluate transportation investments.
- Analyzing how WSDOT engages and communicates with stakeholders, including people who have been historically underrepresented, about project evaluation.

34 Listening session participants

48 Workshop participants

118 Completed online questionnaires

**421** Online open house visitors

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Between September and November 2020, WSDOT hosted six listening sessions, an online open house and two stakeholder workshops to introduce the effort, understand concerns and solicit feedback. To conduct intentional, inclusive and equitable outreach, the study team focused on hearing from stakeholders representing a wide cross-section of perspectives and varying levels of knowledge or involvement in the legislative process. Key takeaways included:

- The way projects are currently selected is not widely understood, particularly for people without deep experience in transportation policy.
- Transportation investments should be guided by clear goals and objectives that represent community values.
- Consider factors such as geographic balance, environmental preservation, health and equity during project evaluation.
- Safety, preservation and maintenance on existing facilities should be emphasized.

FEASIBILITY AND READINESS ASSESSMENT

WSDOT assessed the feasibility and readiness of implementing performance-based project evaluation through data analysis, reviewing WSDOT plans and processes, and conducting interviews with staff. Key findings included:

- WSDOT has the necessary knowledge and skills to complete project evaluation.
- Performance-based project evaluation is feasible only if the Legislature supports the process and confirms acceptance and use of the results.
- WSDOT should clarify the **transportation policy goals** through development of **objectives** and **criteria** that reflect community values and system priorities.

Transportation policy goals

⬇

Objectives

⬇

Criteria
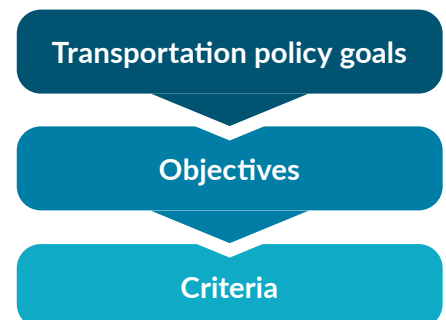
DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECT EVALUATION MODEL

The study produced a performance-based project evaluation developmental model that responds to the assessment results and stakeholder input. The model incorporates a **sorting** layer to take advantage of internal subject matter expertise, a criteria-based **scoring** layer, and a more detailed evaluation of environmental, health and equity values through a **screening** layer. The steps of the layered evaluation process contribute to a project's composite score.

After assigning a composite score, evaluators rank each project within grouping categories to prevent unintended competition between different modes. Decision makers can then pull a ranked list from the group ranks and assess for funding balance across regions.
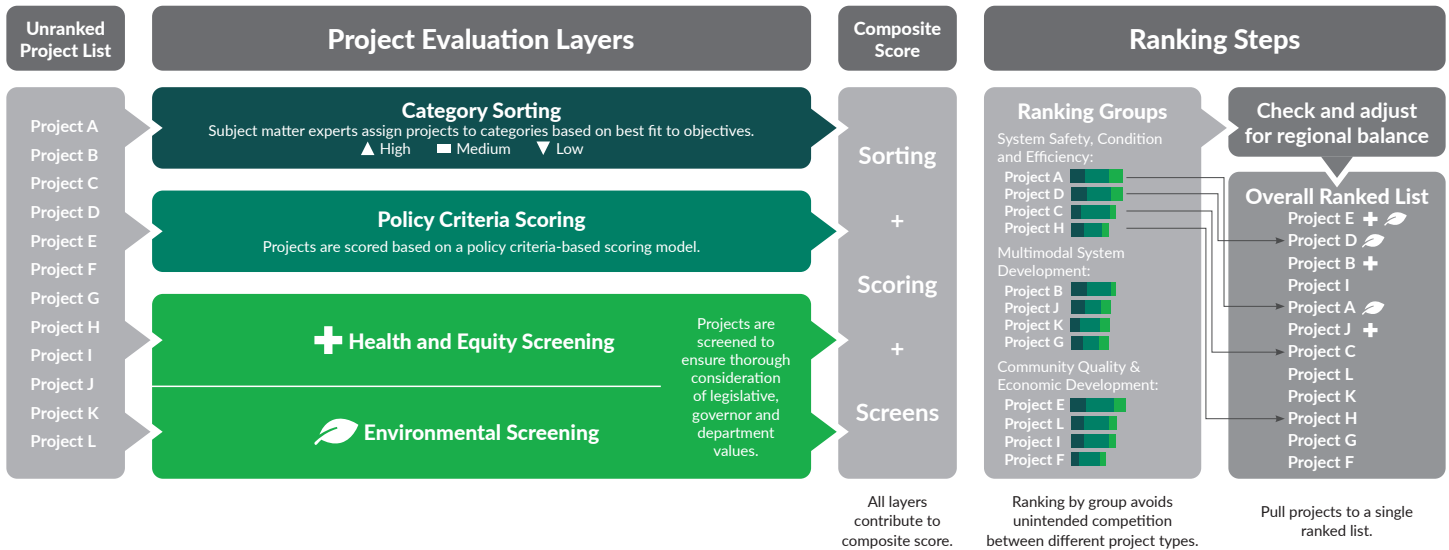
The graphic above presents the project evaluation developmental model. Projects are evaluated based on their independent sorting, scoring and screening ratings. The composite scores are ranked by group, then checked and adjusted for regional balance into a single ranked list.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Based on the key input raised by external stakeholders, an assessment of feasibility and readiness, and the principal recommendations outlined in this report, the study team has identified the following next step considerations:

- Determine the Legislature's interest in using a performance-based project evaluation model and identify resources needed to advance project evaluation.
- WSDOT should launch a process to bring common understanding of the transportation policy goals, then use stakeholder input to develop objectives and criteria.
- WSDOT should further develop the Project Evaluation Developmental Model, including testing against prior project lists, to identify where calibration is needed.
- WSDOT should commit to ongoing engagement and make information about performance-based project evaluation more accessible to the public.

Section I. Introduction

In 2020, the Washington state Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to study the feasibility of doing a performance-based evaluation of transportation projects. The 2019-21 Supplemental Transportation Budget (ESHB 2322, Section 218 (7)), shown to the left, named the direction as a proviso.

ESHB 2322, Section 218 (7)

For the Department of Transportation– transportation planning, data and research

The appropriations in this section are subject to the following conditions and limitations: (7) By December 31, 2020, the department shall provide to the governor and the transportation committees of the legislature a report examining the feasibility of doing performance-based evaluations for projects. The department must incorporate feedback from stakeholder groups, including the traditionally underserved and historically disadvantaged populations, and the report shall include the project evaluation procedures that would be used for the performance-based evaluation.

To achieve project understanding and direction, WSDOT discussed the proposed project scope and time constraints with the sponsoring legislators and initial stakeholders who worked toward proviso adoption. For this report's purposes, performance-based project evaluation applies to investments considered for transportation funding, such as in the biennial transportation budget or a transportation revenue package. This report does not address programmatic transportation investments, such as the ongoing expenses needed to maintain and preserve existing roads and bridges. Nor does it address investments made through grant programs, such as Regional Mobility or Safe Routes to School grants. WSDOT already prioritizes programmatic and grant-funded transportation investments based on performance.

The study team, which consisted of WSDOT Multimodal Planning Division staff, JLA Public Involvement, Performance Plane LLC and PRR, relied on data analysis, review of existing plans and policies, interviews with department staff and feedback from external stakeholders to develop recommendations on the feasibility of performance-based project evaluation.

This Performance-based Project Evaluation Feasibility Report includes:

- **Key takeaways raised by external stakeholders**, including traditionally underserved and historically disadvantaged populations, to help inform how the Legislature could evaluate transportation investments.

- An **assessment of feasibility and readiness** for implementing performance-based project evaluation, including how WSDOT currently uses performance-

How decisions are currently made

Decision-making varies based on the type of project and the funding source. For example, WSDOT chooses preservation work based on the lowest life-cycle costs and safety criteria.

WSDOT and other agencies give transportation grants to cities, counties and transit agencies based on separate criteria for specific programs.

Over the last 20 years, when the Legislature considers new transportation revenue (such as increasing the gas tax), members negotiate how to use it. Leaders call for projects, which members bring forward from cities, counties, tribal governments, WSDOT, interest groups and others. The Legislature then discusses and decides which projects to fund.

based processes and how WSDOT has used the transportation policy goals to make decisions.

- **Principal recommendations, including a developmental evaluation model,** for implementing performance-based project evaluation that could better inform transportation investments being considered for funding.

Statewide transportation policy goals

As defined by RCW 47.04.280, six statewide transportation policy goals guide the planning, operation, performance of and investment in Washington state's transportation system. Statute also requires WSDOT to perform its powers, duties and functions in a manner consistent with the following goals:

- **Economic vitality**: to promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.

- **Preservation**: to maintain, preserve and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services.

- **Safety**: to provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.

- **Mobility**: to improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington, including congestion relief and improved freight mobility.

- **Environment**: to enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities and protect the environment.

- **Stewardship**: to continuously improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the transportation system.

What is performance-based project evaluation?

As directed by the Legislature, WSDOT is considering how to compare transportation projects to determine which investments will best help the transportation system meet the Legislature's policy goals. The purpose of performance-based project evaluation is to identify the investments and projects that most effectively and efficiently support identified goals. Using performance-based project evaluation will help maximize a return on the state's transportation investments while promoting the benefits represented in the graphic to the right.

Connecting policies and investments

Promoting consistency

Demonstrating transparency

Recognizing tradeoffs

Bringing alignment

Promoting systemic perspective

WSDOT evaluates the state's progress toward meeting the transportation policy goals in several ways, including the Biennial Transportation Attainment Report and the Gray Notebook's quarterly publication. The Washington State Transportation Commission also plays a role in implementing the

transportation policy goals through recommendations in its statewide policy plan, *2040 and Beyond*.

Other work WSDOT currently has underway related to performance-based decision making includes:

- The **WSDOT Capital Program Development and Management Office took initial steps to develop a criteria-based scoring model** to evaluate legislative investment proposals based on the transportation policy goals. WSDOT piloted the model to analyze investment proposals during the 2019 legislative session. The study team used the criteria-based scoring model as a prototype for advancing performance-based project evaluation at WSDOT.

- The **WSDOT Multimodal Planning Division is developing a performance framework** to help WSDOT think more systemically, understand tradeoffs, better align with partners, and demonstrate consistency and transparency. The Practical Solutions Performance Framework is an existing WSDOT initiative intended to create a consistent and flexible system of objectives, measures and metrics that align WSDOT business practices with the transportation policy goals.

- For projects not specifically designated by the Legislature, **WSDOT prioritizes funding investments based on performance.** For example, in traffic safety, maintenance and preservation programs, investments are prioritized using clearly stated objectives, rating criteria and consistent flow of empirical data.

- **WSDOT evaluates investment proposals in several grant programs and ranks them based on clear and straightforward measures.** WSDOT submits the list of successful grant applicants to the Legislature for final consideration and award. The Regional Mobility Grant in the Public Transportation Division and Pedestrian and Bicycle Grant in the Local Programs Division are examples of long-standing and successful criteria-based grant programs.

External engagement

WSDOT engaged as diverse an audience as possible in a limited timeframe to solicit input to help shape performance-based project evaluation recommendations and better inform legislatively identified transportation investments being considered for funding. The study team planned phased engagement activities to build awareness and understanding of the effort, solicit feedback to inform recommendations and establish connections for future dialog as the work evolves. The graphic to the right summarizes the project's engagement reach.

The study team focused on hearing from stakeholders representing a broad cross-section of views and different levels of expertise or participation in the legislative process to conduct intentional, inclusive and equitable outreach. The study team completed a stakeholder analysis at the outset of the process to ensure a balance of geographic participation and representation

across Washington state, including traditionally underserved and historically disadvantaged populations. Audiences included human services and transportation providers, multimodal and environmental advocates, business and agricultural representatives, regional transportation planning organizations, local jurisdictions, labor representatives, Washington tribes and the general public. WSDOT kept stakeholders informed about opportunities to participate and expanded the contact list through an online open house sign-up form.

Between September and November 2020, WSDOT hosted six listening sessions, an online open house and two stakeholder workshops to understand concerns and consider feedback. Appendix A includes additional information about the engagement formats, known participants and a summary of each engagement activity's key findings.

The study team summarized the key takeaways and included representative quotes from stakeholder engagement as follows:

The way projects are currently selected is not widely understood.

- Levels of understanding vary widely about how the Legislature considers and selects transportation projects for funding.

- It is challenging for people without deep experience in transportation policy to understand how the Legislature and WSDOT currently make transportation investment decisions or recommendations.

"There is a real gap between those who know the process and those who don't. Engage smaller communities and those who traditionally haven't had a voice. Give them power in this conversation."

— Listening Session participant

Transportation investments should be guided by clear goals and objectives that represent community values.

- There is general support for developing a performance-based project evaluation process. Stakeholders seem to agree there is a benefit in having consistent metrics to compare projects objectively.

- Stakeholders would like clarity on how the Legislature and WSDOT will apply performance-based project evaluation to new transportation funding packages or funding decisions.

"With so many infrastructure needs and evolving transportation modes it seems very important to have data to prioritize investments."

— Online Open House participant

"[Performance-based project evaluation] would be a more fair and systematic method compared to the current way."

—Online Open House participant

Consider factors such as geographic balance, environmental preservation, and health and equity during evaluation.

- Stakeholders expressed that safety, preservation and maintenance of existing facilities should be emphasized during evaluation.

- There is concern that performance-based project evaluation may bring more projects to populated, urban areas but leave out rural interests. Stakeholders emphasized that performance-based project evaluation is valuable to ensure money is being invested effectively; however, there should be a geographic balance in investments.

> *"Equity issues arise when budgets are tight, and we know we're facing budget deficits. Those budget cuts often disproportionately affect communities that are not as affluent. At the County perspective – rural Washington seems to get left out of the conversation due to smaller populations, higher cost of investment in infrastructure, higher cost of transit investments – it becomes a financial issue. The rural component is a really important one in this conversation, as well."*
> — *Stakeholder Workshop participant*

- Some stakeholders felt that vehicle users are overrepresented in the current project selection process and there should be a greater balance of mode share, such as transit and active transportation projects.

- Health and equity factors, such as air pollution and access to employment and education, are important to consider during the decision-making process, focusing on historically neglected interests.

- An evaluation process should reflect environmental preservation and differentiate between natural resource and climate impacts.

The study team used stakeholder feedback to develop principal recommendations found in Section III, particularly the application of environmental, health and equity screening questions and monitoring the regional balance of projects. Stakeholder perspectives are also reflected in the recommended next steps in Section IV, predominantly that performance-based evaluation should be more accessible to the public.

Section II. Feasibility and readiness assessment

The Legislature set the six transportation policy goals in state law with the intent that the goals be used for the planning, operation, performance of, and investment in, the state's transportation system. The study team looked at how WSDOT has used the transportation policy goals to make decisions.

This report assessed both feasibility and readiness in providing the Legislature with performance information about investments considered for transportation funding. After an extensive data analysis, the study team prepared this assessment, reviewing current WSDOT plans and processes and conducting interviews with WSDOT staff. Based on this assessment, the study team recommends legislative and departmental actions, summarized in the recommended next steps in Section IV, to ensure the effective implementation and accuracy of performance-based project evaluation.

Feasibility assessment

For this report, feasibility is assessed based on capability (skills), capacity (budget and staffing level) and business case (purpose and need). Overall, the study team found WSDOT has the necessary knowledge and skills to complete performance-based project evaluation, but considerable work is necessary to establish readiness as assessed below. The business case is especially critical because a performance-based project evaluation model will be less valuable if it is unclear how and whether the Legislature will use its outcomes.

Capability - Skills

Factors considered: The feasibility assessment considered subject matter knowledge and technical capability for project evaluation among current WSDOT staff. The study team also reviewed the existing performance-based decision-making processes.

Assessment findings: The assessment indicates that WSDOT has the necessary skills to implement a performance-based project evaluation. Observations about department staff capability include:

- Key department staff interviews showed strong subject matter expertise. Staff spoke knowledgeably and articulately about their business activities and desired accomplishments.

- WSDOT has well-developed policy and thematic plans, including the Strategic Plan, Asset Management and Strategic Highway Safety plans, and the draft Active Transportation Plan.

- WSDOT currently practices several successful project evaluation processes in the Public Transportation Division, the safety program and Local Programs grants. Further, the department is currently developing an evaluation process for active transportation programs.

Capacity – Budget and staffing level

Factors considered: The feasibility assessment looked at whether the cost was reasonable compared to the work's value. The study team did not estimate the evaluation cost because more information is needed about development of the final model and the number of projects requiring evaluation.

Assessment findings: Based on a similar process designed for 300 to 400 projects annually, the study team estimates a one-and-a-half-year development timeline, requiring a substantial level of effort. The assessment concluded that, while the development of a performance-based project evaluation model may require an additional budget, the amount is expected to be reasonable compared to the department budget scale. The work's value depends on whether, how and when the Legislature uses the outcomes of the evaluation process.

The assessment found that existing staffing levels are likely sufficient to accommodate this report's recommendations except for analytical capacity. Analytical staff at WSDOT were found to be skilled but in short supply, indicating a potential need for additional staff to assist with the evaluation process.

Business case - Purpose and need

Factors considered: The feasibility assessment examined the business case to determine whether there was sufficient value for performance-based project evaluation in relation to the work required to develop the process. The business case means the justification for a program or project to move forward based on its expected value. The purpose of project evaluation is to provide quality information about project ranking to inform the department, Governor and Legislature's project identification and budget processes. The feasibility of project evaluation depends on 1) whether the Legislature can incorporate the time for rating into their schedule; and 2) whether the Legislature will use project rankings to achieve consensus.

Assessment findings: The assessment concludes that performance-based project evaluation is feasible only if the Legislature supports the process and confirms acceptance and use of the results. The Legislature could direct a performance-based project evaluation process to occur at another time, such as before or after the legislative session. This report's recommendations assume the process is similar to the existing practice of identifying projects during the legislative budget session.

Readiness assessment

Public and private organizations use capital investments as a principal way to converge on goals. A clear, standard interpretation of goals and translation to objectives is required before developing strong rating criteria. The assessment found that WSDOT must complete additional work, particularly in goal clarity, to inform the development of objectives and strong criteria. This must occur before creating standard work procedures and confirming data needs. The graphic below summarizes the readiness factors that promote successful performance-based project evaluation.

Common understanding of goals → Criteria that reflect goals → Repeatable standard work → Data flow
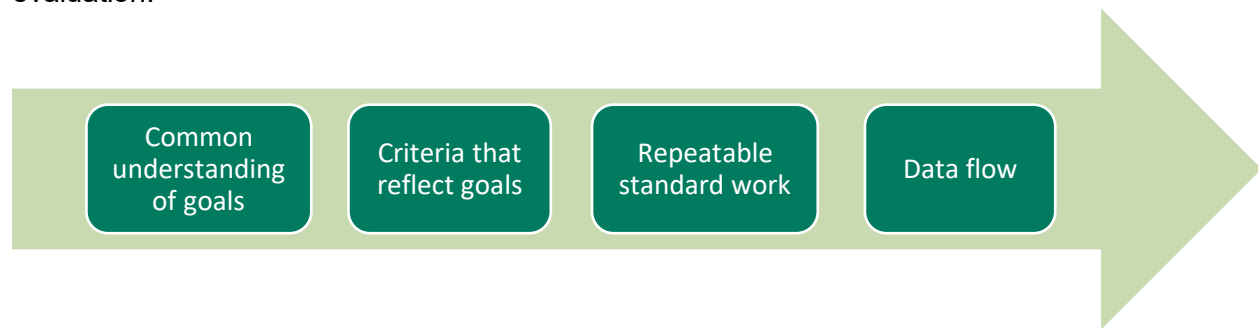
Common understanding of goals

Factors considered: The readiness assessment examined whether the transportation policy goals were defined and accepted throughout WSDOT. Further, the study team assessed how the transportation policy goals are used to plan and implement programs and strategic initiatives. An evaluation process requires criteria development that accurately reflects how projects converge on goals.

Assessment findings: The readiness assessment identified a need for greater clarity of the transportation policy goals. WSDOT should continue to further define the goals by developing clear objectives and criteria that reflect community values and system priorities.

Criteria that reflect goals

Factors considered: The readiness assessment looked at whether existing criteria reflect the transportation policy goals.

Assessment findings: The assessment found some metrics relating to the transportation policy goals are reported by WSDOT in current planning documents, but those sources are not consistent or do not fully correspond to the interpretations of the goals. Additional work is needed to identify criteria that relate to WSDOT activities used to converge on the goals. WSDOT can use the Performance Framework as a basis for further development of objectives and criteria.

Repeatable standard work

Factors considered: The readiness assessment evaluated whether WSDOT has a standardized rating guide (handbook) to follow when applying performance-based project evaluation criteria. Standard work is a set of process steps and/or diagrams that document how to interpret and apply the criteria. The absence of standard work exposes the evaluation process to unintended variation based on the individual perception of different raters.

Assessment findings: The assessment found that WSDOT should develop written guidance on how to score projects; however, the department must first finalize the rating criteria and fully design a project evaluation model.

Data flow

Factors considered: The readiness assessment looked at whether data flow (the way data is collected and used) within WSDOT supports a performance-based project evaluation process. Good data flow happens when necessary data is collected automatically as part of an organization's daily work, thus ensuring it is available when needed. This contrasts with the current practice where staff collects periodic data, which can be unmanageable when large amounts of data is required for performance evaluation. Available data should not dictate criteria; instead, the criteria should dictate what data the department collects.

Assessment findings: The study team found that WSDOT reports metrics based on available data rather than on intentionally collected data to inform the criteria. Identifying the best information to support performance-based project evaluation and establishing good data flow is critical; however, data collection can be labor-intensive and costly. Obtaining data that support the evaluation process requires effort to identify, collect and automate the flow. WSDOT must

strike a balance to ensure the cost of producing additional data adds value in evaluating projects.

Section III. Principal recommendations

This section outlines the principal recommendations for implementing performance-based project evaluation to help inform legislatively identified transportation investments considered for funding. The recommendations are based on the assessment results and key takeaways gleaned from interviews with WSDOT department staff and feedback from external stakeholders.

Types of performance-based project evaluation

Performance-based project evaluation methods range from simple sorting to complex criteria scoring. The type of evaluation selected by an organization has implications for the cost and analytical rigor required to support the process. Accordingly, it is important to use a level of evaluation that is within budget, meets the business case requirements, and successfully differentiates projects by value, urgency or both.

Principal recommendations

The principal recommendations, shown in the table below and expanded in this section, are grouped by two primary actions:

- Goal clarification and evaluation readiness.
- Performance-based project evaluation developmental model.

Goal clarification and evaluation readiness	Project evaluation developmental model	
	A. Project evaluation layers	**B. Ranking steps**
1. Ensure a common understanding of the transportation policy goals.	A1. Leverage internal expertise.	B1. Rank projects within grouping categories to prevent unintended competition between different travel modes.
2. Develop objectives to further define the transportation policy goals and reflect community values.	A2. Develop criteria for the scoring layer based on objectives.	B2. Monitor regional balance and adjust project ranking to achieve intended allocations.
3. Identify and connect criteria definitively to the transportation policy goals and objectives.	A3. Apply environmental and health/equity screening questions to ensure agency and stakeholder values are reflected.	*Result: Produce a final list of projects based on group ranks.*
4. Develop repeatable, standard work.	*Result: Produce a composite score based on evaluation layers.*	
5. Establish data flow.		

*(The left-most column is labeled vertically: **Recommendations**)*

Goal clarification and evaluation readiness

The assessment found that the transportation policy goals are too general to guide criteria development; therefore, WSDOT must further define the goals through objectives that reflect the intended outcomes for function, geographic location and mode of transport.

The graphic to the right summarizes the steps required to support the development of rating criteria. The following recommendations would constitute a new and large body of work for WSDOT that would require additional budget. This report includes more details on recommendations for when and how to invest in next steps in Section IV.

Transportation policy goals

↓

Performance Objectives

↓

Criteria

1. Ensure common understanding of the transportation policy goals

The transportation policy goals do not provide sufficient detail to derive evaluation criteria for the complexity and modal diversity of Washington state's transportation system. For example, the mobility goal could be interpreted as person trip throughput. However, mobility is defined in planning documents to include network continuity, geographic connectivity, travel reliability, travel choice, congestion relief and modal diversification for vehicles, freight, transit, and active transportation.

2. Develop performance objectives to further define the transportation policy goals and reflect community values

WSDOT should interpret the transportation policy goals through objectives that will produce the intended performance outcomes. WSDOT has policy and specific thematic plans from which to develop and consolidate objectives. The department's Performance Framework effort can be used as a basis to assemble and gain agency-wide acceptance of a narrow set of objectives for each transportation policy goal.

During stakeholder engagement, the study team heard that transportation investments should be guided by clear goals and objectives representing community values. The objective-setting process provides an ideal opportunity to incorporate stakeholder input as the work moves forward, building off the Performance Framework project. WSDOT should consult stakeholders while developing the objectives to inform strong scoring criteria that demonstrate community values. The study team advises against soliciting stakeholder input during criteria development as it may be too technical and nuanced for how the criteria will be used to rate projects.

3. Identify and connect criteria definitively to transportation policy goals and objectives

The assessment found that WSDOT must develop criteria that reflect the objectives in order to converge on the transportation policy goals. The criteria and project evaluation model will need to account for the complexity of competing priorities within the transportation policy goals and produce appropriate rankings for different travel modes, geographies and volume of users. Evaluation criteria should result in ranked projects that implement the department's intended outcomes and the transportation policy goals.

Definitively connecting the criteria to the transportation policy goals and objectives will help demonstrate to the public how the Legislature and WSDOT consider investments for transportation funding.

4. Develop repeatable standard work

The assessment found that a written rating guide, or handbook, would help ensure a repeatable evaluation process where different raters use the same interpretation for applying the criteria. Small variations in interpretations based on rater perception and expertise are acceptable; however, raters using different guidance or assumptions may introduce unintended variation into the scoring process. Raters should start with a written list of assumptions and rating guidance to promote standard work.

5. Establish data flow

The assessment found departmental capability exists to analyze data, but WSDOT has extremely limited staff to support increased data needs. WSDOT is currently reporting valuable performance statistics; however, the department should also report on their progress in converging on goals.

Performance-based project evaluation developmental model

The study team crafted a performance-based project evaluation developmental model that responds to the assessment results and stakeholders' input. The assessment found that a single rank order list of projects will be too limiting to account for the multiple goals and diversity of project types. Therefore, this evaluation process will require more than one type of rating methodology and ranking option. The model, shown full-size on page 22, illustrates ways to utilize staff expertise and fully assess community values around environmental, equity and health outcomes.

The model incorporates a **sorting** layer to take advantage of internal subject matter expertise, a qualitative criteria-based **scoring** layer, and a more detailed evaluation of environmental and community values through a **screening** inquiry. Each evaluation layer contributes to the project's composite score. Ranking groups account for the diversity of project types, geographic location and intensity of usage. WSDOT evaluators then pull a final ranked list from the group ranks while considering the desired regional funding balance.

Stage of model development

Full buildout of a project evaluation model requires testing against current project lists, which was not possible in this analysis's timeframe; thus, the model presented is still in the developmental phase. Creating an operational methodology requires future work. The next step in model development is to determine the evaluation layers' proportional weighting to the composite score and confirm the ranking groups used during evaluation criteria development and calibration.

Primary actions

Recommendations related to the performance-based project evaluation developmental model, shown in the diagram on the following page and full-size on page 22, are divided into two primary actions:

> A. Project evaluation layers.
> B. Ranking steps.

Exhibit A. Performance-based project evaluation developmental model
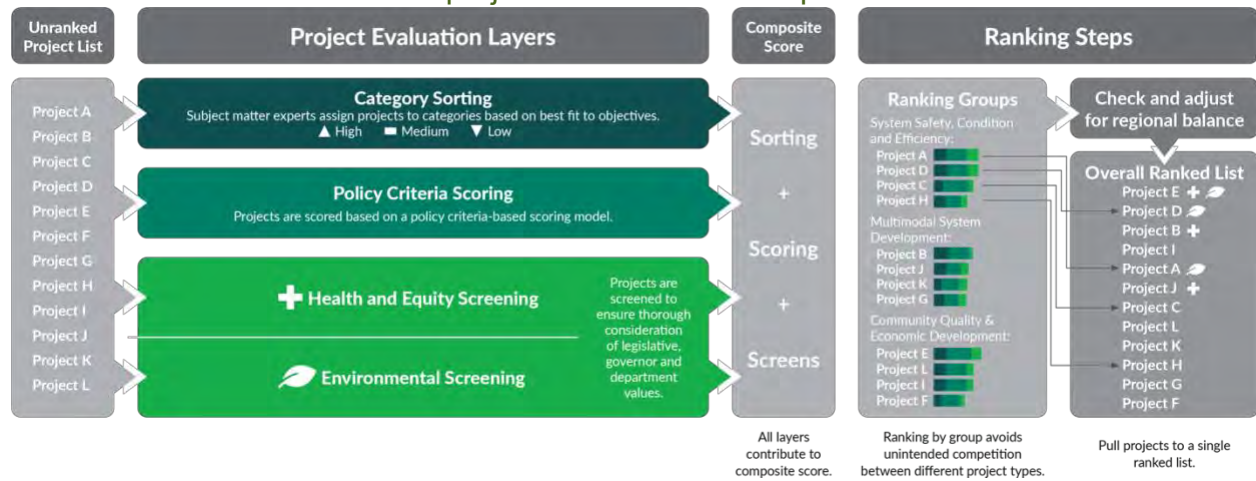
A. Project evaluation layers

The project evaluation developmental model includes a layering of three evaluation methods, each of which are different ways of ranking projects used for different purposes:

A1. A **sorting** process, using multiple raters to ensure inclusion of internal subject matter experts.

A2. A qualitative **scoring** step using criteria that create a connection to transportation policy goals.

A3. A **screening** step to ensure agency values do not get lost in a large set of criteria.

The evaluation layers provide a structure to address the assessment results and advance evaluation readiness. The following sections provide more detail on each of the model layer components.

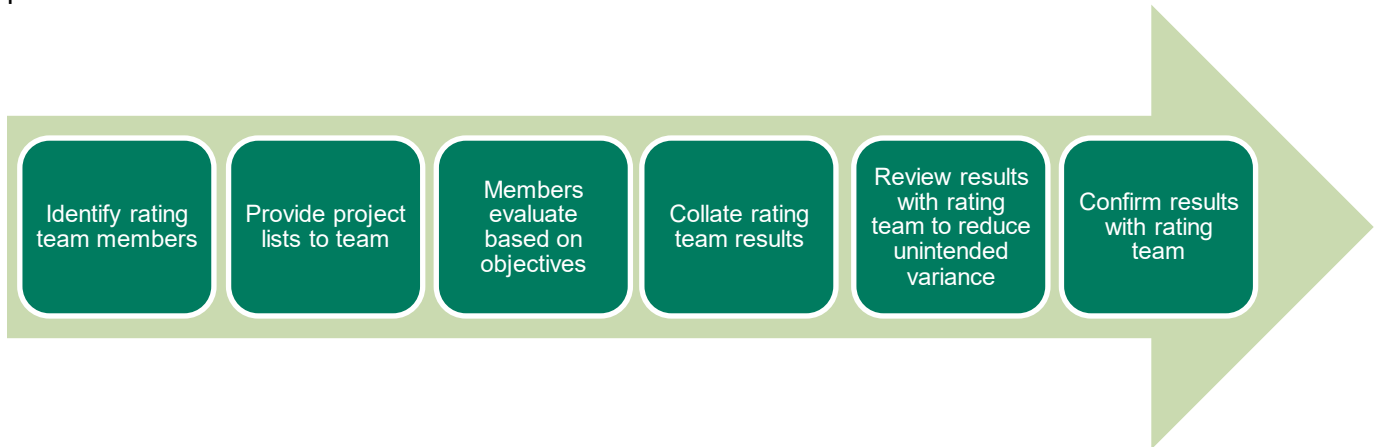## A1. Sorting - Leverage internal expertise

The feasibility assessment found many quality planning and subject matter experts within WSDOT. WSDOT already uses rating processes to prioritize programmatic funds, such as traffic safety and preservation. Consequently, a key recommendation is to leverage the experts and methods currently available. Delphic prioritization is an efficient way of leveraging this existing knowledge.

Delphic rating employs multiple evaluators conducting independent project rankings against a set of common criteria or value questions followed by a concurrence cycle. The raters confer to identify and resolve scoring anomalies and confirm a consolidated ranking list. The WSDOT Public Transportation Division uses a similar collaborative approach to rating Regional Mobility Grant projects.

An initial rating step in the project evaluation developmental model includes using up to six subject matter experts to independently sort the project list by how well they implement plans, objectives and project urgency. Subject matter experts sort projects based on the following

categories: essential to include, should include if possible and optional to include if resources are available.

Staff can use web forms or polling applications to ensure rapid processing. The department will then combine the ratings into the composite score after completion of the other evaluation layers. The graphic below summarizes the process for implementing a collaborative sorting process.

| Identify rating team members | Provide project lists to team | Members evaluate based on objectives | Collate rating team results | Review results with rating team to reduce unintended variance | Confirm results with rating team |

A2. Scoring - Develop criteria for the scoring layer based on objectives
Scoring projects against quantitative and qualitative rating criteria can be an effective method to determine project value and urgency if the criteria provide a reasonable reflection of the identified objectives and goals. The level of precision produced by qualitative criteria is generally sufficient because transportation projects do not require quantitative precision in determining ranking. WSDOT should continue developing the criteria-based scoring model, identified in Section I, after addressing goal clarity and criteria development recommendations.

A3. Screening - Apply environmental, health and equity screening questions to ensure agency and stakeholder values are reflected
The study team recommends using screening questions to evaluate projects based upon values like environmental, health and equity. These screening questions would replace criteria scoring for the identified values.

Value characteristics often receive too little emphasis in project evaluation because the criteria must account for so many transportation characteristics. The screening step in evaluation ensures greater consideration of these values than can be achieved through criteria scoring. The screening results contribute to the project's composite score and help determine ranking.

The screening questions below would be answered "yes" or "no" plus a brief explanatory statement. The screening results convert to a part of the project's composite score. The highest screening score comes from projects with positive outcomes for environmental, health and equity value benefits. WSDOT should adjust the screening questions based on the advice of subject matter experts during final model development.

1. Does the project produce a best outcome?
2. Does the project have a net positive impact?
3. Does the project have a negative impact?

4. Can the project be modified to decrease or avoid impact?
5. Can the negative impact be mitigated?

B. Ranking steps

The steps of the evaluation layers each contribute to a project's composite score before undergoing project ranking. Project ranking is an iterative process based on the composite score and desired regional balance of the investments.

B1. Rank projects by grouping categories to prevent unintended competition between different modes

The project evaluation methodology needs to account for the complexity of the state transportation program's many goals and objectives. A single rank order list works well for targeted programs, such as safety. However, more ranking options are necessary to account for the transportation policy goals and associated objectives. Parallel ranking allows more variations in project type (such as capacity, active transportation and environment) to emerge as high-ranking projects compared to a single rank order list. The ranking groups consolidate the transportation policy goals, thereby reducing the number of rank order lists (six groups appeared to be too many for the typical number of projects rated at one time). The example groups in the project evaluation developmental model include System Safety, Condition and Demand; Multimodal System Development; Community Quality and Economic Development. However, ranking groups should be tested and finalized during model development.

This step reflects stakeholder feedback that safety, preservation and maintenance should be emphasized by including a ranking group that focuses on transportation safety and highway condition.

B2. Monitor regional balance and adjust ranking to achieve intended allocations

The final ranking step includes tracking and adjusting for regional balance rather than setting regional funding levels in advance. Evaluators can make more informed decisions about regional funding allocations once a project's value and urgency have been assessed. Funding targets should be flexible, depending upon the quality of the ranked projects.

This step responds to stakeholder feedback received that balance is needed across all geographic areas of Washington when making decisions about project investments.

Section IV. Recommended next steps

Based on the key takeaways raised by external stakeholders, an assessment of feasibility and readiness, and the principal recommendations outlined in this report, the study team has identified the following considerations:

Determine the Legislature's interest in using a performance-based project evaluation model and identify resources needed to advance project evaluation.

- Upon reviewing and considering this report, the Legislature should determine whether or not to advance performance-based project evaluation methods. This review should include whether the legislative timeline for identifying transportation funding investments can accommodate the time needed to evaluate projects in this manner.

- If the Legislature decides to advance the use of performance-based project evaluation, there should be clear direction and funding for WSDOT to advance the project evaluation developmental model and engage in ongoing outreach activities.

- WSDOT should use this report's findings to provide the Legislature with estimated development costs and a proposed schedule to build a complete evaluation process and model.

- While the Legislature determines whether to advance evaluation methods, WSDOT should incorporate specific principal recommendations into practice, such as including internal experts in the project evaluation process and testing criteria that reflect the policy goals.

- WSDOT should prioritize defining objectives over investing significant resources into performance-based project evaluation until legislative direction and desired usage is determined.

WSDOT should launch a process to establish common understanding of the transportation policy goals, then use stakeholder input to develop performance objectives and criteria.

- Before developing objectives to evaluate projects, WSDOT should further assess department-wide clarity on the existing transportation policy goals and how they are translated into daily work.

- WSDOT should develop clear objectives for project evaluation that reflect stakeholder values and input from ongoing community engagement efforts.

- WSDOT's Performance Framework project has laid a foundation for building a set of objectives that reflect the statewide transportation policy goals and public feedback. Further development of this framework will be a critical step in the readiness of performance-based project evaluation.

WSDOT should further develop the Performance-based Project Evaluation Developmental Model, including testing against prior project lists to identify where calibration is needed.
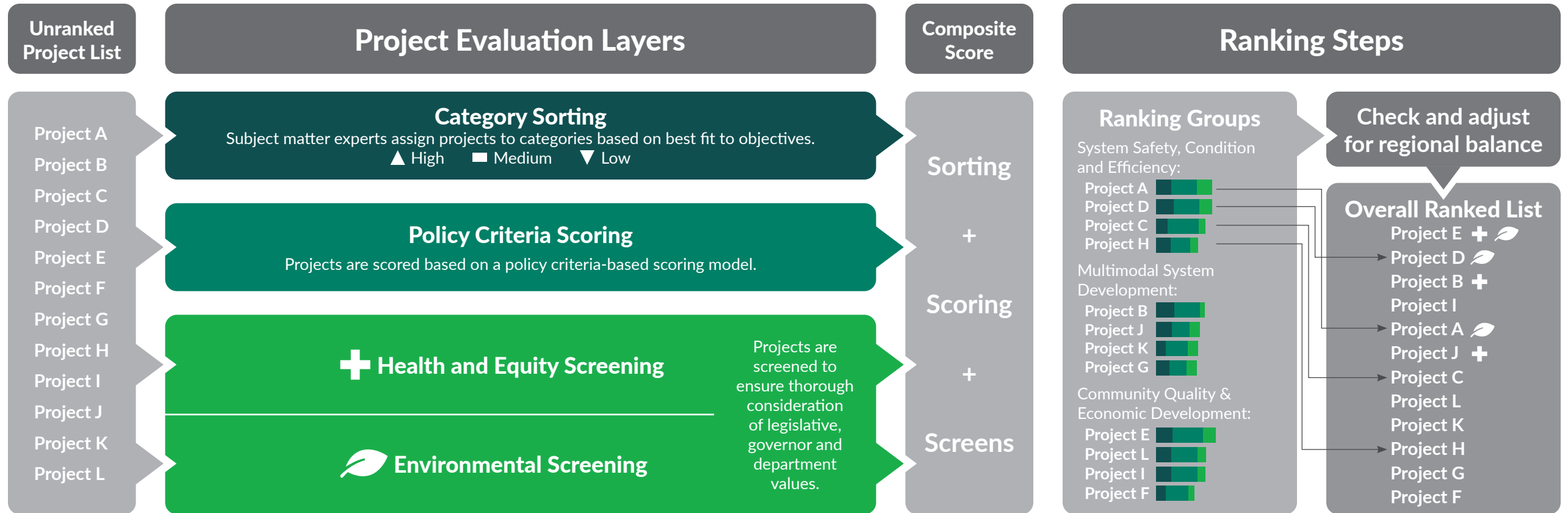
- WSDOT should develop criteria to produce a project evaluation process that helps to achieve the objectives.

- WSDOT should refine and adjust the evaluation process and criteria steps by testing previous system improvement project lists.

- WSDOT should use screening questions to evaluate projects that produce the best outcomes for legislative, governor, department and community values, including environmental preservation, health and social equity. For example, WSDOT can apply the Environmental Justice Task Force recommendation to create a standard method to develop, track, evaluate, and publish environmental justice and health goals focused on pollution reduction and eliminating environmental health disparities.

- During evaluation criteria development and calibration, WSDOT should determine the evaluation layers' proportional weighting and confirm the ranking groups.

WSDOT should commit to ongoing engagement and make information about performance-based project evaluation more accessible to the public.

- WSDOT should continue engaging with stakeholders and other interested parties by hosting periodic listening sessions to provide updates for this work.

- WSDOT should continue advancing work to reflect community values in the objectives and in the project evaluation developmental model screening steps.

- WSDOT should simplify content that explains performance-based project evaluation in a manner that is clear, so community members feel informed enough to participate and understand how decision making occurs.

- To reach a broader, more diverse audience and increase awareness, WSDOT should create a webpage designed for interactive learning and engagement about performance-based project evaluation tools and procedures with an overview video in multiple languages. The website can demonstrate how WSDOT uses goals, objectives and criteria to evaluate projects.

- WSDOT and the Legislature should consider an online interactive dashboard or other online tools that allow for transparency and accountability. These tools could share the results of performance-based project evaluation with the public.

Performance-based Project Evaluation Developmental Model

Exhibit A

Unranked Project List

Project A
Project B
Project C
Project D
Project E
Project F
Project G
Project H
Project I
Project J
Project K
Project L

Project Evaluation Layers

Category Sorting
Subject matter experts assign projects to categories based on best fit to objectives.

▲ High   ■ Medium   ▼ Low

Policy Criteria Scoring
Projects are scored based on a policy criteria-based scoring model.

✚ Health and Equity Screening

🍃 Environmental Screening

Projects are screened to ensure thorough consideration of legislative, governor and department values.

Composite Score

Sorting

+

Scoring

+

Screens

All layers contribute to composite score.

Ranking Steps

Ranking Groups

System Safety, Condition and Efficiency:

Project A
Project D
Project C
Project H

Multimodal System Development:

Project B
Project J
Project K
Project G

Community Quality & Economic Development:

Project E
Project L
Project I
Project F

Ranking by group avoids unintended competition between different project types.

Check and adjust for regional balance

Overall Ranked List

Project E ✚ 🍃
Project D 🍃
Project B ✚
Project I
Project A 🍃
Project J ✚
Project C
Project L
Project K
Project H
Project G
Project F

Pull projects to a single ranked list.

WSDOT

December 2020

Appendix A: Stakeholder Engagement

Following direction in the 2019-21 Supplemental Transportation Budget (ESHB 2322, Section 218 (7)), WSDOT engaged as diverse an audience as possible in a limited timeframe to develop recommendations for implementing a performance-based project evaluation that could inform legislatively-identified transportation project investments. Phased engagement activities were intended to build awareness and understanding of the effort, solicit feedback to inform recommendations and establish connections for future dialog as the work evolves. This appendix summaries key take-aways and findings from each engagement activity.

To conduct intentional, inclusive and equitable outreach, the study team focused on hearing from stakeholders representing a wide cross-section of perspectives and varying levels of knowledge and involvement in the legislative process. The study team completed a stakeholder analysis to ensure a balance of geographic participation and representation across Washington state, including traditionally underserved and historically disadvantaged populations. WSDOT kept stakeholders informed about opportunities to participate and expanded the contact list through an online open house sign-up form.

Despite a limited project timeline, WSDOT hosted six listening sessions, an online open house and two stakeholder workshops between September and November 2020 to understand concerns and consider feedback.

This input helped WSDOT understand stakeholder expectations and preferences for performance-based evaluation of transportation projects.

34 Listening session participants

48 Workshop participants

118 Completed online questionnaires

421 Online open house visitors

Engagement goals
- Engage a broad constituency, including traditionally underserved and historically disadvantaged populations, to develop a common understanding of Washington's transportation policy goals.
- Bring collaboration and transparency to how transportation policy goals are used to evaluate investments.
- Understand stakeholder concerns and consider their feedback as WSDOT assesses the feasibility of evaluating the performance of transportation investments proposed for new revenue.
- Build and grow positive relationships with stakeholders and community-based organizations to increase their understanding of performance-based evaluation tools and procedures.
- Conduct and document intentional, inclusive and equitable stakeholder engagement.
- Commit to ongoing engagement through the proviso work and other WSDOT planning efforts.

Stakeholder Listening Sessions Summary

Purpose

WSDOT and the consultant team facilitated six group listening sessions with stakeholders and potentially affected groups to identify issues and concerns for consideration in the assessment of performance-based evaluation of transportation investments.

The listening sessions worked towards the following goals:

- Identify key concerns related to how Washington state evaluates and prioritizes recommendations on transportation investments.
- Identify stakeholder priorities for how they would like Washington state to evaluate and prioritize recommendations on transportation investments.
- Engage transportation stakeholders who represent a diversity of interests, with a focus on historically underrepresented groups, to inform recommendations for how transportation investments should be evaluated in funding decisions.
- Build and grow trusting relationships.
- Identify key parties not represented.

Format

The project team invited over 40 organizations to participate in the listening sessions. Six listening sessions took place on the Zoom video platform between September 21 and October 1, 2020.

Listening sessions included three to ten participants, each representing a particular interest or constituency. The study team developed listening session groups with stakeholders representing similar interests to reduce potentially problematic power imbalances in each group and allow participants to amplify the concerns and ideas of those they represented. The listening session groups included:

- Local and regional public agencies
- Agricultural and rural interests
- Business and highway users
- Environmental and multimodal advocates
- Labor representatives
- Human service providers
- Tribal representatives

The study team developed an interview guide with questions designed to achieve the listening session goals described above. A skilled facilitator used the interview guide to lead conversation with the listening session participants. The focus of the sessions was to listen to the issues, concerns, and ideas of the participants, rather than to achieve a consensus or determine next steps.

Methodology

Listening sessions were conducted using a facilitation methodology called "focused conversation." In a focused conversation, a facilitator guides the group through a series of

questions with the aim of leading to a considered conclusion. Questions follow an objective-reflective-interpretive-decisional format.

- Objective questions asked participants to describe the facts as they are currently known.

- Reflective questions asked participants to reflect on what they know and how they feel about that.

- Interpretive questions asked participants to think about the meaning behind what they know.

- Finally, decisional questions asked participants to think about the implications of what they have discussed so far in the conversation and make recommendations.

Each of the four levels built on the shared understanding that is achieved in the previous levels.

Key findings

All groups: These key findings were identified after reviewing notes from all six groups and highlight the findings that were common across groups or the differences between groups.

- **Understanding of current process.** Participants showed considerable variety in their understanding of how the state currently prioritizes transportation investments.
  - Those who regularly advocate or lobby the legislature, including some members of the environmental and multimodal advocates group and the business and highway users' group, generally had detailed understanding of the current process.
  - Representatives from county and city governments, some tribal representatives, multimodal advocates, and transit agencies were well-versed in the grant process.
  - Some members in the human services, tribal representatives, and agricultural interest listening sessions were entirely unfamiliar with how the state makes decisions about transportation investments but eager to learn more.

- **Satisfaction with current process.** In general, the business and highway user group described the most satisfaction with the current process, while the environmental and multimodal group and the human services group had the most criticisms.
  - The main criticisms related to the way potential funding is siloed into the highway account and the grant programs.
  - Additional criticisms of the grant programs included:
    - Difficulty to navigate
    - Provided insufficient funding considering the need
    - Resulted in projects being proposed that meet the requirements of the grant but not the needs of the community

- **Political nature of process.** Participants generally agreed that the political nature of the current process makes it practical; however, that nature also makes it less accessible to those who are unfamiliar with the process and/ or who are less connected.
  - Participants largely described the current process as political in nature. When pressed, they expressed that legislators are trying to ensure that projects get

built that benefit the people they represent. One way to do that in the current process is through negotiations by legislative members. This can be effective, because it leads to projects getting funded both in places where members of the electorate have a high tolerance for new revenue and in places where they do not.

- o However, the political nature of the process leaves out those who are farther from Olympia, who can't hire a lobbyist, non-profit groups who represent many constituents and interests but who cannot lobby, and those who simply don't know how the process works.

- **Preservation and maintenance.** There was consensus across groups that preservation and maintenance should be prioritized, sometimes over new projects.

- **Performance measures.** Many participants voiced concern that new performance measures would favor projects in more populous regions.
  - o Participants in several groups were concerned that performance measures favoring efficiency would benefit projects that can serve many people over projects that could be vitally important for people living in more isolated or rural areas.

- **Equity.** Many participants agreed that equity was important to consider. They defined equity as serving those whose interests have historically been neglected.
  - o Participants provided the following examples of those whose interests have historically been neglected:
    - Future generations
    - People who live in rural or more isolated communities
    - Those who are economically disadvantaged
    - Those who speak a language other than English at home
    - People who do not drive cars
    - People who are disabled
    - Farmers and farm workers

- **Holistic vision.** Members in half of the groups mentioned a need for a holistic vision for the future of transportation in Washington state, guided by agreed-upon values. Some members in these groups recognized that WSDOT has a 20-year plan, but they were skeptical that the vision laid out in the plan influenced funding decisions.

By group: These key findings are broken down by group and show what concerns, issues, and ideas were most prevalent in each group.

Local and regional public agencies

- The grant system is effective because it allows for a thorough vetting of projects. However, there are many barriers to success, especially for those who are unfamiliar with the process.

- Vehicle users are overrepresented in project selection, whereas rural regions and historically marginalized communities are underrepresented.
- A new, holistic process could create equitable, innovative, and effective solutions.

Agricultural and rural interests

- Travel by vehicles is prioritized over walking and rolling.
- The current system excludes non-English speakers and rural communities.
- A statewide investment strategy requires a holistic lens and a clear set of values to move communities forward; our current investments prioritize efficiency over equity, accessibility, and the health of communities.

Business and highway users

- The current system is practical in a very politicized environment.
- The lobbying apparatus leaves some interests and communities behind, especially rural, environmental, and non-English speaking communities and interests.
- WSDOT should prioritize maintenance and preservation, safety, transparency, regional equity, seismic mitigation, environmental preservation, stewardship, and equity.

Environmental and multimodal advocates

- Innovation is limited by our current system.
- Maximizing benefits for the most people leads to inequity. It is a valid choice to mitigate burdens for people who have historically been burdened.
- The state should move toward a holistic vision of what the transportation system could be and how it could benefit Washington state residents and build a performance evaluation system that helps it move toward that vision.
- WSDOT should prioritize environmental preservation, equity, maintenance and preservation, accessibility and mobility. These factors will benefit the people who have historically been left out of the conversation.

Human services providers

- The process is political and investment decisions influence re-election campaigns.
- Communities and issues represented largely by non-profits have little voice because of the lobbying process and because non-profits cannot legally lobby the legislature.
- Bringing the most benefit to the most people at the lowest cost is not equitable.
- Investments decisions often prioritize the loudest voice over the biggest need.
- WSDOT should prioritize minimizing and mitigating negative impacts to historically disadvantaged populations, creative solutions, mobility, safety, health, and community need.

Native American tribes

- The process is confusing. Without the political know-how, it is difficult to represent your communities.

- The timeline is unclear, which makes it difficult to collect tribal input for meaningful representation.
- The state prioritizes throughput and volume in its investment decisions, both for new projects and maintenance and preservation, to the detriment of rural and historically underrepresented communities.
- The state should prioritize projects that are beneficial to the health and well-being of communities, and that are supported across agencies and in the community.

Listening session participants

Listening Session Group	Organization	First name	Last name
Environment and Multimodal Advocates September 21, 2020	Climate Solutions	Vlad	Gutman-Britten
	Climate Solutions	Leah	Missik
	Community Transportation Association of the Northwest	Angie	Coulter
	Front & Centered	Paulo	Nunes-Ueno
	Front & Centered	Sameer	Ranade
	Futurewise	Bryce	Yadon
	Snohomish County Committee for Improved Transportation	Andy	Thompson
	Transportation Choices Coalition	Alex	Hudson
	Washington Bikes	Alex	Alston
	Washington Environmental Council	Cliff	Traisman
Agricultural and Rural Interests September 24, 2020	Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health	Carol	Moser
	Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health	Lauren	Noble
	Tilth Alliance	Melissa	Spear
	Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinic	Rodona	Marquez
	Disability Rights Washington	Anna	Zivarts
Business and Highway Users September 25, 2020	Washington Economic Development Association	Suzanne	Dale Estey
	Washington Roundtable	Neil	Strege
	Washington State Farm Bureau	Bre	Elsey
	Washington Trucking Associations	Brent	Vander Pol
	Washington Building Trades	Neil	Hartman
Local and Regional Agencies September 25, 2020	Washington Public Ports Association (Port of Vancouver)	Amber	Carter
	Washington Public Ports Association	Chris	Herman

Listening Session Group	Organization	First name	Last name
	Washington State Association of Counties (Snohomish County)	Doug	McCormick
	Washington State Association of Counties (Clark County)	Temple	Lentz
	Washington State Transit Association (Island Transit)	Todd	Morrow
	Washington State Transit Association (Spokane Transit)	E. Susan	Meyer
	Washington State Transit Association	Justin	Leighton
Human Services Providers September 30, 2020	Asian Pacific Islander Coalition	Rowena	Pineda
	Hopelink	Staci	Haber
	North Central Accountable Community of Health	John	Schapman
	People for People	Jan	Ollivier
	Pierce County Coordinated Transportation	Jerri	Kelly
Native American Tribes October 1, 2020	WSDOT	Megan	Nicodemus
	Swinomish	Keri	Cleary
	Squaxin Island Tribe	Penni	Restivo

Online Open House and Questionnaire Summary

Purpose

The study team hosted an online open house from October 23 through November 6, 2020 to share information about the performance-based project evaluation proviso and solicit input from stakeholders. The online open house was not intended as a statistically valid public-opinion poll. The goals of the online open house were to:

- Introduce the performance-based project evaluation proviso to a broader audience, including the purpose and anticipated outcomes.
- Share feedback of what has been heard to date.
- Ask questions to inform future alignment between state transportation policy goals and the performance-based evaluation framework. Feedback will also inform recommendations for future communications and stakeholder engagement.

Overall participation and notification

Overall, 118 people responded to the questionnaire and there were 421 unique page views of the online open house.

A broad range of community stakeholders and local, regional, and non-WSDOT state agency staff were informed about the online open house. WSDOT promoted the online open house through distribution to the following channels:

- Direct email to stakeholder groups, such as:
  - Those identified in the stakeholder spreadsheet developed for this project (including WSDOT Regional Administrators and Planners to promote within their networks)
  - Advocacy groups
  - Legislators on the House and Senate Transportation Committees
- WSDOT Social Media platforms

Format

The online open house was intended to provide project stakeholders and the general public with information about the performance-based project evaluation proviso and the opportunity to provide feedback on it through the linked questionnaire (more info below). This online event included six stations which included:

- **Overview and purpose:** Participants were able to review what the performance-based roject evaluation proviso is, why it is needed, and feedback that has been received by the project team so far.
- **How decisions are currently made:** Participants were able to review the current decision-making process around transportation investments in Washington state.
- **State transportation goals:** Participants were able to review the six statewide transportation policy goals.

- **Legislative study process:** Participants were able to review the legislative study process and the anticipated outcomes.
- **Tell us what you think and stay connected:** Participants were given the option to complete a questionnaire and provide their contact information if they wished to stay informed about the project moving forward.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire focused on gathering feedback on participants' familiarity with Washington's transportation policy goals, how they felt about the current transportation investment decision-making process and gathered specific feedback on the current stakeholder objectives related to the transportation policy goals. This feedback will help the Legislature consider how new transportation investments can be prioritized to best serve the community.

Summary

This section summarizes the feedback received through the online open house, and more specifically, through the questionnaire that participants were prompted to take on the last page of the open house.

Opening questions

How familiar are you with the transportation policy goals?
Less than 5% not at all familiar – or 5 out of 114, most were very familiar – 38%.

How would you prioritize the following transportation policy goals? (Click and drag each goal to arrange the list in the order of priority for you. 1 = Highest.)
Safety and preservation are the top priorities of the policy goals (ranked average 4.68 and 4.11 respectively).

Do you see your values reflected in the above transportation policy goals? If not, what's missing?
Most (78% or 90 people) felt the policy goals reflected their values. Comments reflected equity, multimodal mobility, fiscal responsibility, and supporting communities.

Do you feel you understand how transportation investments are currently prioritized and funded? If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please share how satisfied you are with the outcomes of the current transportation investment decision making process.
Most understand the process (67%) but are not necessarily satisfied with the outcomes [split between somewhat satisfied (38%) and very dissatisfied (14%)/somewhat dissatisfied (32%)].

Are you satisfied with your level of engagement in the current transportation investment decision making process?
Polarized feedback on level of satisfaction with engagement (32% Yes, 33% No, 27% Maybe).

Do you see value in the legislature using a data-driven project prioritization tool to inform decisions for selecting transportation investments?

Slightly over half (55%) feel there is value in providing the legislature with a data driven project prioritization tool. About less than a third (30%) felt that there might be value.

Transportation policy goals and objectives rating questions

On average, 91 participants completed each of the 12 questions about the objectives associated with each of the transportation policy goals.

Participants were presented with each of the six transportation policy goals and objectives for each that were obtained from past efforts such as the Performance Framework workshops, proviso listening sessions, Transportation Asset Management Plan, Highway Safety Improvement Program Implementation Plan, and the 2018 Transportation Attainment Report. Participants were asked to rate the level of importance of these objectives on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being "most important."

Economic vitality

Below are the top four of ten objectives with their average rating noted in parenthesis:

- Improve quality of life by prioritizing investments that support areas with existing health disparities by increasing access to healthcare, improving safety, addressing poor air quality, or providing safer biking and walking facilities (3.47)
- Consider the needs of low-income communities and people of color, and ensuring fair and just distribution of social benefits and burdens (3.37)
- Support business growth and diversity by prioritizing investments that serve infill development in priority growth areas (3.29)
- Support business growth and diversity by prioritizing investments that align with the statewide freight plan (3.24)

Preservation

Below is the top objective of two with the average rating noted in parenthesis:

- Achieve and sustain a State of Good Repair for transportation assets (e.g., state of good repair for pavement or bridges is defined as a section being in fair or good condition) (4.45)

Safety

Below is the top objective of three with the average rating noted in parenthesis:

- Prevent fatal and serious injury crashes targeting crash types that are an emphasis area in Target Zero including: lane departure crashes, intersection related crashes focusing on compact roundabouts, crashes involving vulnerable users (pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists) (4.14)

Mobility

Below are the top four of six objectives with the average rating noted in parenthesis:

- Maintain and increase multimodal accessibility to jobs, households, services, schools, ports, freight terminals, and other destinations (3.81)
- Maintain and increase travel reliability (reduce the variability of travel time compared to free flow travel time, by mode) (3.52)
- Maintain and increase network resiliency, or the availability of route and mode options to avoid incidents, closures and delays (3.52)
- Increase mode share of efficient travel options (e.g. riding transit, biking, walking) (3.3)

Environmental
Below are the top four of six objectives with their average rating noted in parenthesis:
- Improve water quality by managing stormwater runoff (3.26)
- Promote stewardship and restoration of the natural environment to avoid adverse impacts (3.16)
- Reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions produced statewide (3.14)
- Reduce the impacts of diesel emissions on vulnerable populations (3.13)

Stewardship
Below are the top four of nine objectives with their average rating noted in parenthesis:
- Make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure to manage travel demand (4.16)
- Improve public perceptions of the condition of the statewide transportation system (3.05)
- Deliver 90% of Nickel and TPA projects on time and on budget (2.97)
- Deliver 90% of rail capital projects on time and on budget (2.91)

Demographics
Participants were given the option to provide their demographic information. The results are summarized below. Approximately 73 people provided responses to these questions.

Race/Ethnicity
- 83% or 61 people white or Caucasian
- 1% or 1 person Hispanic or Latinx
- 4% or 3 people Asian or Asian American
- 1% or 1 person Native American
- 1% or 1 person other race
- 11% or 8 people chose not to disclose

Language
- 98% or 71 people English
- 4% or 3 people Spanish
- 1% or 1 person Vietnamese
- 1% or 1 person Other (please specify) Hindi

Age
- 8% or 3 people 25-34
- 31% or 22 people 35-44
- 28% or 20 people 45-54
- 22% or 16 people 55-64
- 10% or 7 people 65-74
- 1% or 1 person 75+

Gender
- 42% or 30 people Female
- 57% or 41 people Male
- 1% or 1 person Gender Non-Conforming

Income

- 1% or 1 person $10,000 - $14,999
- 5% or 3 people $25,000 - $34,999
- 1% or 1 person $35,000 - $49,999
- 14% or 9 people $50,000 - $74,999
- 16% or 11 people $75,000 - $99,999
- 63% or 42 people $100,000 or more

Zip Codes

- 70 people reported their zip codes with participants completing the survey from 57 different zip codes.

Stakeholder Workshops Summary

Purpose

The study team held two facilitated virtual workshops on November 9 and November 12, 2020 with key stakeholders and potentially affected groups. The purpose of these workshops was to build on information gathered through the listening sessions and online open house with the intent to:

- Provide an overview of the performance-based project evaluation proviso, including the purpose and anticipated outcomes.
- Share feedback of what has been heard to date.
- Confirm and narrow key concerns related to how Washington state evaluates and prioritizes recommendations on transportation investments.
- Confirm and narrow stakeholder priorities for how they would like Washington state to evaluate and prioritize recommendations on transportation investments.
- Ask questions to inform future alignment between state transportation policy goals and the performance-based project evaluation framework.
- Ask questions to inform recommendations for future communications and stakeholder engagement.

Format

Workshops were 90 minutes in length and took place on the Zoom video platform. Each session included a guided PowerPoint presentation, including information on:

- Welcome and agenda overview
- Proviso purpose and intent
- Approach to the work
- What we have learned so far
- Status report on various intersecting efforts
- Intermittent facilitated discussion and clarifying questions
- Next steps

Summary

This section summarizes the key take-aways that emerged from the workshop discussions.

- There is general support for developing a performance-based project evaluation process. Participants seemed to agree that there is benefit in having consistent, objective metrics to measure projects against.
- Consider the needs of urban and rural partners. Performance evaluation is valuable to ensure money is being invested effectively; however, ensure geographic balance in investments.
- Clarify how performance-based project evaluation will be applied to new transportation funding packages. Other transportation programs, such as the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) and the County Road Administration Board (CRAB), already have rigorous accountability requirements for funding.
- Differentiate the environmental screen between natural resource and climate impacts.

- Test and calibrate the model moving forward to ensure desired outcomes.
- Engage local agencies and partners moving forward to align project performance targets.
- Equity should consider rural communities, compounding impacts of air pollution, and access to jobs, education, and healthcare for all. Consider developing opportunity maps to identify distressed and underserved communities.

The following provides a comprehensive summary of the content, discussion and feedback for both of the two workshops.

Welcome and agenda

Each meeting began with a welcome, agenda overview and meeting guidelines.

Performance-based project evaluation overview

A brief presentation on the proviso project background was provided, including the following topics:

- Project purpose and need
- Overview of WSDOT multimodal planning
- Washington state transportation policy goals
- Complementary planning efforts
- Description of performance-based evaluation.

Participants were asked: ***What do you feel are the benefits or challenges of doing performance-based project evaluation?***

Below is a summary of the discussion from both workshop discussions.

General discussion

- The label of "urban" is applied for places that have significant rural areas and issues.
- The rural vs. urban divide can impact economic justice and contractor competition.
- When determining measurements, consider how different modes serve different needs depending on location. Rural areas rely heavily on transit for healthcare needs.
- The evaluation needs to include performance measures that allow flexibility to support how different programs operate.
- Consider how to value equity and accessibility for all in a performance-based evaluation when equity and access maybe be at odds with other measures such as speed, efficiency, and cost/benefit analysis.
- Equity and environmental justice are different.
- WSDOT is not subject to concurrency like counties are via the Growth Management Act (GMA), consider how that can be achieved in project evaluation.
- Consider earmarking more funding for preservation and maintenance since they have been identified as higher priority goals.
- It's important to differentiate between different environmental and climate impacts.

- There are extensive hurdles that agencies must go through to apply, be scored, and receive funding. The feasibility report needs to identify what investments would be assessed using performance-based evaluation.
- Clarify the estimated frequency of use for a multi-step evaluation model and who would participate in the evaluation process.
- There needs to be an initial screen for purely legislative projects versus projects that are already identified in regional and WSDOT plans.
- Performance needs broad consideration based on the transportation policy goals. Bring it to the legislature independent of the funding source.

Benefits of performance-based evaluation
- Allows comparison of similar programs using shared measurements.
- Clarifies the connection between overall goals and the subsequent investment decisions.
- Provides objective criteria to weight projects against.
- Provides more certainty that funds are being effectively spent.

Challenges of performance-based evaluation
- Data availability and continuity are critical and can pose challenges.
- The overall cost and time of the process presents challenges.
- Depending on how things are being evaluated, rural areas are at a disadvantage.
- It's important to balance project funding, understanding data-driven versus subjective legislative process influence over project selection. There is concern about using performance-based evaluation because it is a private sector principle that doesn't necessarily apply to the public sector.
- Critical projects that may meet the stated goals may have a timeframe and/or format that prevent them from being fairly prioritized in the data.

Workshop participants were then presented the following topics:

- Direction from the Legislature
- Approach to the assessment work
- Stakeholder engagement
- Key recommendation

Below is a summary of both workshop discussions.

Equity is important to WSDOT and the Legislature as it was specifically called out in the proviso. What do you feel is important to consider when evaluating projects with an equity lens?

- Concern about how projects are advertised, and decisions are made. Does WSDOT take into consideration the timing of projects in a way that maximizes economic benefit? If the process for choosing and funding a project is excessively long, it can be a barrier to minority contractors due to excessive overhead cost.

- Equity needs to consider who is being served and how, as well as equity in funding, i.e. rural, suburban, and urban areas.
- Economic and income equality is important. Increase investment in disadvantaged communities to provide better and more service to those that are historically underserved. This will also have the potential to shift some business growth outside Puget Sound which will reduce congestion on I-5 and benefit the state as a whole.
- The Puget Sound Regional Council is building opportunity maps that lead with an equity strategy that prioritizes needs based on race and people of color.
- The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office applies a reduced match for distressed and underserved communities for its recreation grant applicants. Consider applying this mechanism to serve an equity purpose for transportation.
- Consider access to opportunity, understanding the differences of each region and the level of analysis of who has access and who does not.
- Title 6 requires transit agencies work to ensure equitable service levels, equipment, and fares are being provided at a local level and by members across the state, regardless of the size of the jurisdiction.
- Budget restraints impact people differently and there are challenges the Transportation Improvement Board faces that can harm underserved communities. Additionally, rural communities are often left out of the conversation.

After talking about the recommendation, do you feel like the study team is heading in the right direction to address the issues that have been heard so far?

- Consider using a similar approach to the EPA model from the previous administration.
- It would be helpful to clarify the performance measures to ensure they are based on applicability to specific projects.
- Focus on what is trying to be accomplished, don't make the process and methodology so broad that it creates more barriers for those that already face barriers to funding.
- If the intention is to use policy goals to select projects, an equity goal could create more challenges. The process needs to recognize overlap to prevent undue burdens.
- Consider using the SR 526 - Corridor Improvements as a guiding framework.
- Support for the stated goals and thoughtful approach to incorporating them into the process.
- Apply the criteria to the right projects at the right times to eliminate redundancy and ensure projects are fairly assessed against the stated goals.
- How much flexibility does WSDOT have to apply this process once projects are funded?
- Consider setting the conversation on how to bring this to the legislature and how the legislature identifies whether to move this forward.

Next steps

The project schedule and next steps were outlined for workshop participants followed by additional questions and discussion. Below is a summary of the discussion from both workshop discussions.

WSDOT can't carry this work forward alone. What do you think is necessary for all of us to move this work forward?

- Concern about potential for this to promote mobility pricing.
- Regularly scheduled calls and e-mail updates with stakeholders will help the process moving forward.
- This is an opportunity to incorporate the Gray Notebook and other WSDOT reporting structures.
- Make sincere efforts to work with local agencies.
- Seek common ground to ensure measures are consistent across agencies.
- Invest in the process and analysis tools for local agencies to ensure small jurisdictions have the technology, time, and man-power to do part of the analysis themselves.

Workshop participants

Workshop Group	Organization	First name	Last name
Workshop #1 November 9, 2020	Community Transportation Association of the Northwest	Angie	Coulter
	City of Pasco	Maria	Serra
	Puget Sound Regional Council	Gil	Cerise
	City of Redmond	Peter	Dane
	People For People	Jan	Ollivier
	Kitsap County Public Works	David	Forte
	City of Hoquiam	Brian	Shay
	WA Highway Users Federation	Shelly	Helder
	Yakima Valley Conference of Governments	Alan	Adolf
	Washington State Transportation Commission	Tamara	Jones
	Ecolane	Priscilla	Vargas
	Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization	Susan	Driver
	National Association of Minority Contractors – Washington Chapter	Vicky	Schiantarelli
	Human Services Council	Colleen	Kuhn
	Port of Bellingham	Gina	Stark
	City of Richland Economic Development Department	Darin	Arrasmith
	City of Richland	Mandy	Wallner

Workshop #2 November 12, 2020	Disability Rights Washington	Anna	Zivarts
	Climate Solutions	Leah	Missik
	Pierce County Human Services	Jerri	Kelly
	Whatcom Council of Governments	Hugh	Conroy
	Amber Carter Government Relations LLC	Amber	Carter
	Snohomish County Public Works Department	Doug	McCormick
		Joe	Kunzler
	Associated General Contractors of Washington	Jerry	VanderWood
	Northeast Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization / Tri County Economic Development District	Silas	Rappe
	Port of Vancouver, USA	Mike	Bomar
	Washington Highway Users Federation	Holly	Cocci
	Swinomish Indian Tribal Community	Keri	Cleary
	Transportation Choices Coalition / Futurewise	Bryce	Yadon
	Snohomish County Public Works Department	Max	Phan
	Washington State Association of Counties	Jane	Wall
	Benton-Franklin Council of Governments	Erin	Braich
	Jefferson County	Wendy	Clark-Getzin
	Transportation Improvement Board	Ashley	Probart
	City of Sequim	Matt	Klontz
	Kitsap Transit	John	Clauson
	Aging and Disability Services, Seattle/King County	Jon	Morrison-Winters
	Gordon Thomas Honeywell Government Affairs	Briahna	Murray
	City of Liberty Lake	Katy	Allen
	City of Covington	Don	Vondran
	Federal Highway Administration	Dan	Mathis
	North Central Accountable Community of Health	John	Schapman
	San Juan County Economic Development Council	Victoria	Compton

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council	Matt	Ransom
City of Spokane Valley	John	Hohman
Transportation Choices Coalition	Alex	Hudson
Washington State Transit Association	Justin	Leighton

Performance-based Project Evaluation Proviso Stakeholder List

The study team completed a stakeholder analysis to ensure a balance of geographic participation and representation across Washington state, including traditionally underserved and historically disadvantaged populations. WSDOT kept the following list of stakeholders informed about opportunities to participate and expanded the contact list through an online open house sign-up form.

AAA Washington

Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians

Asian Pacific Islander Coalition

Associated General Contractors

Association for County Human Services - Developmental Disabilities

Association of Washington Business

Association of Washington Cities

Avista

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments

Better Health Together

Building Trade Council

Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council

City of Bellevue

City of Blaine

City of Covington

City of Covington

City of Hoquiam

City of Liberty Lake

City of Longview

City of Olympia

City of Othello

City of Pasco

City of Poulsbo

City of Raymond

City of Redmond

City of Richland

City of Seattle

City of Sequim

City of Spokane Valley

City of Tacoma

City of Wenatchee

Clark County

Climate Solutions

Clinton Community Council

Colville Confederated Tribes

Colville Tribe

Community to Community Development

Community Transportation Association of the Northwest

Cowlitz County

Disability Rights Washington

Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition

Ecolane

Federal Highways Administration

Feet First

Front & Centered

Futurewise

Gordan Thomas Honeywell - Government Affairs

Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health

Hopelink

Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Island Transit

Jefferson County

Kitsap County Public Works

Kitsap Transit

Latino Community Fund

Lewis & Clark Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

Lighthouse for the Blind

MLK Labor Council

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe

National Association of Minority Contractors

North Central Accountable Community of Health

Northeast Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce

Okanogan Council of Governments Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Olympic Community Action Programs

Olympic Community of Health

One America

Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization

People For People

Pierce County

Port of Bellingham

Port of Seattle

Port of Vancouver

Puget Sound Regional Council

Puget Sound Sage

Puyallup Tribe

Quad Counties Regional Transportation Planning Organization

San Juan County Economic Development Council

SCJ Alliance

Skagit Council of Governments

Snohomish County Committee for Improved Transportation (SCCIT)

Snohomish County

Sound Transit

Southwest Regional Transportation Council

Spokane Alliance

Spokane Area Good Roads Association

Spokane Regional Transportation Council

Spokane Transit Authority

Squaxin Island Tribe

Swinomish Tribes

Tabor 100

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

The Noble Foundation

Thurston Regional Planning Council

Tilth Alliance

T-O Engineers

Transportation Choices Coalition

Transportation Improvement Board

Tribal Transportation Planning Organization

United Farm Workers

Walla Walla Subregional Transportation Planning Organization

Washington Apple Commission

Washington Association of Wheat Growers

Washington Bikes

Washington Building Trades

Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives

Washington Conservation Voters

Washington Economic Development Association

Washington Environmental Council

Washington Forest Protection Association

Washington Highway Users Federation

Washington Low Income Housing Alliance

Washington Policy Center

Washington Public Ports Association

Washington Roundtable

Washington State Association of Counties

Washington State Department of Health

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

Washington State House of Representatives

Washington State Farm Bureau

Washington State Human Services Council

Washington State Labor Council

Washington State Office of Financial Management

Washington State Senate

Washington State Transit Association

Washington State Transportation Commission

Washington State Tree Fruit Association

Washington State Trucking Association

Whatcom Council of Governments

Whatcom Mobility

Yakima Tribe

Yakima Valley County of Governments

Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinic