

Appendix C

Project Evaluation Process

PROCEDURE FOR EVALUATING PROPOSED CAPITAL PROJECTS
BY THE VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION'S
TRANSPORTATION OPERATORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRANSCOM)

The intent of this procedure is to lay out the process of evaluating potential capital improvement projects for the various transit agencies in Ventura County. The procedure outlines the steps for defining a proposed project to enable a structured evaluation, the criteria for evaluation, and the means for conducting the evaluation. At the heart of the procedure is building consensus among the transit operating agencies on priorities for capital funding that will not only affect their particular jurisdictions, but will also contribute to improved service and mobility for all residents of the county.

STEP 1. Defining a Proposed Project

In order for the evaluation criteria (described in Step 2) to be applied, a proposed project must be adequately defined. Proponents should use the criteria as a guideline for describing the needs to be met, features of a proposed capital investment, specific benefits for the local jurisdiction and other jurisdictions in maintaining or improving transit services, etc., much as one would do for a grant application or for a new budget item. Keep in mind that in Step 3, the proposed project will be reviewed by other transit operating agencies and that the project proponent will need to verbally “defend” their proposal. The more clearly the project description spells out what and why capital funds are being sought, as well as the expected results, the easier it will be for TRANSCOM members to conduct the evaluation and reach consensus on funding priorities. This consensus position will like give more weight to recommendations from TRANSCOM to the VCTC Board and other agencies.

STEP 2. Evaluation Criteria

A three-level set of evaluation criteria was developed in consultation with TRANSCOM members in December 2008 and January 2009. Within the following template, these have been organized based on the priorities established by TRANSCOM as: Table 1, Primary Evaluation Criteria, Table 2 Secondary Evaluation Criteria, and Table 3 Other Considerations. The first two table focus on transit benefits and issues, while Table 3 is useful in defining the relationship between a proposed project and other issues. For Table 3, weightings are optional and can be assigned if needed to help proponents address local issues and advocate for a project.

While initially developed to prioritize applications for state funding under Proposition 1B, the criteria can be applied for other types of funding. The issues/examples listed for each of the criteria are not intended to be limited, but to provide a frame of reference for assessing a proposed project’s characteristics, benefits, and constraints. Any of the cells in the criteria matrix can be modified as appropriate. For example, criteria wording can be modified or added to by proponents to more clearly respond to specific requirements for a particular source of funds. The weightings for the individual criteria and the point range shown in the template can be modified by the TRANSCOM as needed.

Responses to the criteria can be qualitative, based on professional judgment. Quantitative data to support rankings should be provided, or referenced, if available.

TEMPLATE: BASELINE EVALUATION MATRIX

TABLE 1: PRIMARY EVALUATION CRITERIA				
PRIMARY CRITERIA <i>(initially ranked in order of importance by TRANSCOM in December 2008; modify as appropriate)</i>	WEIGHTS <i>(Optional; suggested range: 1-3)</i>	SAMPLE CRITERIA/ THINGS TO CONSIDER <i>(choose from among these as appropriate for the types of projects/ funding being evaluated; add other criteria as needed)</i>	POINTS 0-5 <i>(modify as appropriate)</i>	SCORE <i>(Weight multiplied by Points for those criteria chosen for use in an evaluation)</i>
1. Mandated Improvements	1	Required for ADA compliance		
	2	Required for air quality compliance		
	3	Necessary to support legislative mandates or contractual obligations		
	1	Desirable to support legislative mandates		
	3	Fulfills unmet transit needs		
	1	Required safety improvements		
			Other	
2. Preservation of Current Levels of Service	3	For transit arterials, provides new improvements or maintenance at bus stops/rail stations		
	2	Addresses scheduled replacements or vehicles.		
	1	Transportation control devices along transit routes/rail lines		
	1	Improves the condition of the sidewalks and streets within 250 feet of a bus stop or rail station.		
	1	Supports projects already designated for improvement.		

TABLE 1: PRIMARY EVALUATION CRITERIA

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	1	Reduces the backlog of deferred maintenance of sidewalks and streets used for transit.		
		Other		
3. Expansion of Transit Service (including shorter headways)	3	Improves current access to and from local and/or regional transit stops and rail stations.		
	3	Serves/Connects current activity centers (e.g., employment, educational facilities, medical centers, shopping hubs, sporting venues, etc.).		
	3	Adds or improves connectivity to other local and/or regional transit services.		
	1	Serves anticipated growth in transit demand (e.g., in a specific region) - what time horizon?		
	2	Improves speed and reliability of transit vehicles.		
	2	Improves bus stop/rail station performance for buses, such as reducing transfer time.		
	3	Likely to increase the percentage of trips made by transit and reduce the percentage by automobile.		
	3	Provides new/improved service during peak hours.		
	2	Provides new/improved		

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		service during off-peak hours.		
	3	Fulfills a new, unmet transit need.		
	2	Meets needs of special population group		
		Other		
4. Financial Sustainability	3	Provides matching funds		
	3	Effects on fares and operating costs.		
	2	Availability of ongoing operating funds.		
	1	Likelihood for additional operating funds.		
	2	Availability of ongoing staff to implement.		
	1	Likelihood for additional staff.		
	1	Degree to which need for other funding is increased.		
	1	Degree to which need for other funding is decreased.		
		Other		
5. Readiness	2	Ability to procure in a timely manner.		
	1	Status of design (if applicable).		
	1	Need to implement in phases		
		Other		
TOTAL PRIMARY SCORE				

TABLE 2: SECONDARY CRITERIA

SECONDARY CRITERIA <i>(initially ranked in order of importance by TRANSCOM in December 2008; modify as appropriate)</i>	WEIGHTS <i>(Optional; suggested range: 1-2)</i>	SAMPLE CRITERIA/ THINGS TO CONSIDER <i>(choose from among these as appropriate for the types of projects/ funding being evaluated; add other criteria as needed)</i>	POINTS 0-5 <i>(modify as appropriate)</i>	SCORE <i>(Weight multiplied by Points for those criteria chosen for use in an evaluation)</i>
6. Non-transit influences	1	Critical to other city projects/ priorities		
	1	Supportive/desirable for other city projects/priorities.		
		Other		
7. Other	1	Criteria specified by funding program (if applicable and not listed elsewhere above)		
8. Bonus Points	2	1 point for each additional operating agency that would be served		
		Other		
TOTAL SECONDARY SCORE				

TABLE 3: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

CRITERIA <i>(no priority order)</i>	WEIGHTS <i>(Optional; suggested range: (1-2))</i>	SAMPLE CRITERIA/ THINGS TO CONSIDER <i>(choose from among these as appropriate for the types of projects/ funding being evaluated; add other criteria as needed)</i>	POINTS 0-5 <i>(modify as appropriate)</i>	SCORE <i>(Weight multiplied by Points for those criteria chosen for use in an evaluation)</i>
Improvements to Ride Quality		Improves quality of transit stops, including comfort and convenience.		
		Improves information provided to users.		
Safety/Security		Eliminates or reduces a specific safety/security hazard.		
		Supports general or systemwide safety/security improvements.		
Community Impacts		Negative and positive effects, including air quality, noise, traffic, property acquisitions, and “going green”.		
		Community support/opposition.		
Compatibility /conflict with Regional and Local Plans		Part of an adopted transportation plan (e.g., congestion management, etc.).		
		Supports an adopted or pending transportation plan.		
		Supports community and economic development, business functionality, and creation or retention of employment.		
		Provides or increases access to business districts and/or employers.		
		Provides infrastructure or service to support new employment.		

TABLE 3: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS				
		Is a required mitigation measure.		
		Supports local land use or transit-oriented development.		
Strategic		Necessary predecessor for subsequent projects.		
		Desirable predecessor for subsequent projects.		
TOTAL SCORE				

This template should be reviewed for its applicability to a proposed funding source, and adjustments made to address any specific requirements of that source. The list of sample criteria is broad enough that such adjustments should be readily accommodated within the “Sample Criteria/Things to Consider” cells. Similarly, any specific priorities or weightings accompanying a funding source can be reflected in adjustments within the “Weight” or “Points” cells. Criteria that are not applicable or appropriate for the specific evaluation being undertaken could be struck out or marked as ‘not applicable’.

STEP 3. Conducting the Evaluation

Here are the steps for carrying out a typical evaluation.

1. Review the eligibility and evaluation requirements for the source of funds. Develop a checklist of all items that need to be included in the project description. Modify the evaluation matrix as appropriate. Define the timeline and other ground rules for completing the prioritization process. *Responsible party: VCTC Staff*
2. Prepare a project description and complete an evaluation form; label this set as Proponent's Initial Request for Funding and Self-Evaluation. Include any support information that will facilitate the TRANSCOM review. This is the opportunity for the proponent to test their proposed project against the criteria and to perhaps make adjustments to increase the score. *Responsible party: Project Proponent*
3. Submit the Initial Request for Funding, supporting materials, Self-Evaluation and a blank evaluation form to other members of TRANSCOM. *Responsible parties: Project Proponent submits the Initial Request for Funding and supporting materials to VCTC staff for distribution, along with blank evaluation forms, to TRANSCOM.*
4. Review the proponent's package and score it against the evaluation criteria. *Responsible party: TRANSCOM members.*
5. Meet to review the scorings of the proponent and TRANSCOM members. Working in consultation, TRANSCOM will reach consensus on point scoring for the proposed projects. If projects must be prioritized, TRANSCOM members will use the consensus score as the initial ranking. The initial rankings will be reviewed and discussed and TRANSCOM will determine a final ranking. *Responsible parties: TRANSCOM with VCTC staff assistance.*
6. Prepare a recommendation to the VCTC Board (or other agency as appropriate) covering the prioritization of projects for specific funding sources. As appropriate, describe or summarize this procedure to explain how priorities were established. *Responsible party: VCTC staff, with TRANSCOM concurrence.*
7. Periodically conduct a review of this procedure and revise it accordingly. *Responsible parties: TRANSCOM and VCTC staff.*