

Project Ranking Criteria

2007 Program Update

BACKGROUND

The goal of the project ranking criteria is to ensure consistency between the mix of projects and investments of the TIP and the goals and policies implemented through the plans and programs in our region. This is the third program update in which ranking criteria have been applied.

These criteria are intended to serve as a starting point when evaluating projects. Common evaluation criteria also will initiate a documented process to track project progress and keep local municipalities informed of their projects' status.

STRUCTURE

Potential transportation projects will be evaluated against each of the 17 criteria, as defined by the HATS Technical Committee below.

Criteria 1 - 9: The first seven are the minimum requirements for our transportation program as defined by Federal regulations. Other federal regulations applicable to our region are air quality and social/environmental justice impacts.

Criteria 10 – 14: Regional factors considered include the HATS Regional Transportation Plan, Congestion Management Plan, Regional Growth Management Plan, funding history and new funds available, and PennDOT's Long Range Plan.

Criteria 15 – 17: Local priorities are also considered in project evaluation. This includes consistency with the County's Comprehensive Plan, local/sponsor priority, local funding commitment and multi-municipal partnerships.

DESCRIPTION

Each criterion is described in more detail (attached). A brief statement describes the purpose of the criteria. Federal regulations are quoted directly from the Federal Register for the seven planning factors; the remaining criteria are more broadly described.

General project characteristics for each criterion are then listed to determine whether or not a proposed project meets the objective of the criterion, and subsequently earn points under that criterion. If a project does not fit the purpose or characteristics of the criterion, it earns zero points for that criterion. It is not expected that a project will earn points for every criterion. On the whole, all of the projects will be evaluated consistently across the criterion and each project's merits relative to other projects being proposed can be illustrated.

The number of points assigned for each project is determined by its "impact". Specific improvements or activities are listed to define "high-impact", "medium-impact", or "low-impact" projects, earning 10 points, 5 points or 1 point, respectively. A project earns points according to one impact level only. In some cases, "plus" or "minus" points may be assigned if a project has a particular strength in support of or opposition to a criterion. These plus/minus points are specified in nine of the criterion.

The criteria are 'weighted' based on Technical Committee priority rankings of the criteria. Those weights are applied to the criteria, and the points earned from each criterion are summed to give each project a total "score". The projects are then sorted in numerical order to indicate a preliminary priority order for the proposed projects.

The priority order will be further refined based on eligibility and availability of specific funding sources (such as CMAQ, NHS, bridge, etc.). Fiscal constraint will continue to influence the timing of projects, as will policy guidance from the Coordinating Committee.

Federal Planning Factors

1. Support the **economic vitality** of the metropolitan planning area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.

General project characteristics include:

- Improves access to airport or intermodal freight facility (within corridor that provides access to foreign trade zone or urban enterprise zone)
- Leads to redevelopment of brownfields, etc.
- Assists tourism/recreation travel within 5 miles of a facility
- Enhances freight movement (truck percentage served, links to rail/freight yards or industrial parks)
- Improves mobility to job centers

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves access to existing regional activity centers which retain jobs • New access to regional activity centers which create new jobs • On route where (heavy) trucks are more than 20% of average daily traffic • Improves access to HIA and Capital City Airport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves rail or vehicular access to freight distribution facilities or major industrial districts • Transportation demand strategies, programs and incentives such as the Commuter Alternatives Program (CAP) • Alternative fuel infrastructure at major activity centers
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On route where heavy trucks are between 10% and 20% of average daily traffic 	
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports mobility needs of business and industry not in an activity center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of existing access facilities
Improvement to distressed municipalities = <i>plus</i> 5 points	

Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

Because lenders, investors, and developers fear that involvement with these sites may make them liable for cleaning up contamination they did not create, they are more attracted to developing sites in pristine areas, called "greenfields." The result can be blighted areas with many abandoned industrial facilities that create safety and health risks for residents, drive up unemployment, and foster a sense of hopelessness. These areas are called "brownfields." (Source: EPA website - <http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/index.html#info>).

Distressed municipalities are geographic areas where at least 30 percent of the residents have incomes less than the national poverty level, and the unemployment rate is at least 1.5 times greater than the national average. (Source: 12 CFR 1806.200).

- Increase the **safety and security** of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

General project characteristics include:

- Improves bridge, roadway poor conditions
- Reduces accidents
- Improves signalization
- Reduces vehicle speeds or traffic volumes (in areas with high potential for pedestrian and bicycle activity)
- Improves accommodations for non-motorized travel
- Eliminates conflicts between bike/pedestrian and other traffic
- Avoids breakdowns or disasters (flooding, rock slides)

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves sight distance, intersection alignment problems • New median barriers/guardrail • Interchange modifications • Grade separations on existing highways - Rail grade crossing improvements • Reduces accidents at intersections and/or segments with accident rates higher than average for that type of facility • New (warranted) traffic signal where none exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge safety improvements with sufficiency rating up to 50 • Elimination of chronic standing water or rock slide hazard • Bicycle/pedestrian facility within established neighborhood or activity center • Pedestrian refuge islands, bike lockers or racks, safe storm grates • Traffic calming within established neighborhood or activity center
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic calming • New bicycle/pedestrian facility • Bridge safety improvements with sufficiency rating from 50.1-80 • Transit equipment for safety or security – such as transit shelters, weather and traffic-protected waiting areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade median/guardrail • Improves emergency access • Reduces accidents at intersections and/or segments with accident rates on average for that type of facility • Improves lighting for all project facilities
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New interchanges • Reduces accidents at intersections and/or segments with accident rates lower than average for that type of facility 	

3. Increase the **accessibility and mobility** options available to people and for freight.

General project characteristics include:

- Reduces travel time
- Relieves congestion – Congestion Management System (CMS) strategies (see #11 below)
- Improves information, convenience to users, intermodal linkages
- Optimizes existing capacity
- Increases access to bus, train stations
- Adds frequency and service of bus/transit/rail
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New/expanded transit infrastructure – platforms, parking and stations, rail lines • New transit service, commuter rail, inter-city service • Significant expansion (passengers) of existing transit service • Upgrade/computerize signal controllers • Bicycle/pedestrian facility serving primarily a transportation use (ie. not recreation) • Alternative fuel vehicles and infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to HIA or Capital City Airport, freight distribution facilities, or major industrial districts • ITS systems • Opens bridge or removes detour • Transportation demand strategies, program, and incentives such as CAP • Park and ride lots, and other intermodal linkages • On route where heavy trucks are more than 20% of average daily traffic • ROW preservation for future transportation corridor
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade existing transit infrastructure • Regional signing and informational systems (other than its) • Functional class - Improvements to rural interstates, rural principal arterials, urban interstates, or urban freeway/expressway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle/pedestrian facility within established neighborhood or activity center • On route where heavy trucks are between 10% and 20% of average daily traffic
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On route where heavy trucks are less than 10% of average daily traffic • Functional class - Improvements to rural minor arterials, rural major collectors, urban principal arterials, or urban minor arterials 	

4. Protect and enhance the **environment**, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life.

General project characteristics include:

- Improves air quality (see #8)
- Eliminates vehicle trips – promote bike/pedestrian, transit facilities
- Generates positive effect on water quality (limits impervious surfaces, runoff)
- Abates noise
- Uses recycled materials
- Aesthetics considered in design (context-sensitive design, landscaping, visual easements, scenic overlooks)

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic calming within established neighborhood or activity center • Directly promotes shift from single occupancy vehicle (SOV) • Bus replacement for vehicles beyond useful life (standard transit bus = 12 years or 500,000 miles; vans = 4 years or 100,000 miles) • Clean fuel buses/vehicles - alternative fuel infrastructure • Preservation of existing greenway corridors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking management within established neighborhood or activity center • Transportation demand strategies, programs, and incentives (CAP) • Bicycle/pedestrian facilities serving primarily a transportation use • Creates an improvement in the quantity/quality of water runoff • Preservation of wetlands
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Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic calming • Bicycle/pedestrian facility within established neighborhood or activity center • No significant change in quantity/quality of water runoff • Rehab or reconstruction of transit vehicles or facilities that increases ridership • Parking management • Enhances efficiency of transit operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal updating and interconnections • Wetlands banking/mitigation • Intersection channelization resulting in the reduction of stop and go traffic • Preservation of historic structures in national or state register, or of significant local interest • Park and ride lots
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Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New signal projects • Noise barrier projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance/condition improvement of transit vehicles or facilities
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Capacity increase for SOV = <i>minus</i> 5 points
Adverse impact on environmentally sensitive areas = <i>minus</i> 5 points

Environmentally sensitive areas as defined in the Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP): Flood plains, wetlands, stream corridors, Class 1, 2 and 3 prime agricultural soils, steep slopes, and woodlands.

- Enhance the **integration and connectivity** of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.

General project characteristics include:

- Supports redevelopment, infill and mixed use development in existing activity centers
- Promotes intermodalism (use of alternate modes - park and ride lots, access to transit/rail, bike/pedestrian facilities, feeder service, signage)
- Eliminates major barrier in regional corridor; provides gap closure; links jurisdictions and connects major activity centers
- Provides linkages to other regional systems (Maryland, New York, New Jersey)
- Removes height or weight restrictions

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuter or inter-city rail project • Corridor preservation project in major regional corridor • Eliminates or overcomes major barrier in an existing regional corridor • Provides gap closure in major regional corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park and ride lots • Bicycle/pedestrian facilities making intermodal linkages or regional connections • Development of intermodal transportation centers • Removes posted bridge restrictions
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corridor preservation project in minor regional corridor • Transportation demand strategies, programs and incentives (CAP) • Provides gap closure in minor regional corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates or overcomes minor barrier in an existing major regional corridor • Rehabilitation of intermodal transportation centers
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates or overcomes barrier in a minor regional corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides gap closure in local corridor

Major regional corridors include routes such as I-81, I-83, US 11/15, PA 283, (I-76) – routes which connect our region with other regions. **Minor regional corridors** include US 22/322, US 22, US 322/422, US 322, US 422, US 11, US 15, US 209, I-283, PA 114, PA 944, PA 581, PA 230, PA 443, PA 225, PA 325, PA 39, PA 34, PA 274, PA 850 – routes providing connectivity within our region.

Major barriers include problems such as facility closures, lengthy detours or delays, geography such as rivers and mountains, or rail rights-of-way. **Minor barriers** include issues such as weight/height restrictions, poor intersection alignments.

6. Promote efficient **system management and operation.**

General project characteristics include:

- Result of or establishes multi-municipal or public-private partnership
- Supports coordination of land use and transportation systems
- Reduces existing/prevent future congestion (improve flow, reduce travel time)
- Reduces SOV trips and promotes transit
- Promotes access management

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases transit service capacity / reliability • Park and ride lots, vanpools • New or improved intermodal transportation center • Upgrades existing interchanges by improving access • Signal interconnect of 6 or more signals • Reduces # of existing or potential driveways directly accessing federal-aid system roads ('collector' classification or greater) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relieves congestion on parallel route • ITS improvements • Grade separations on existing highway to improve flow • Bicycle/pedestrian facility within established neighborhood or activity center • Transportation demand strategies, programs and incentives (CAP) • Improves roadway at LOS E or F (urban area) or LOS D (rural area) • Bridge with sufficiency rating 0 -50
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade existing interchanges • Introduces new connections between existing street patterns • Reduces travel time • Intersection improvements • Improves roadway at LOS D (urban area) or LOS C (rural area) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal interconnection of 2 to 5 signals • New signal which relieves congestion • Traffic flow improvements • Median treatments • Bridge with sufficiency rating 50.1 -80
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Left or center turn lanes • Station/stop amenities and shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New interchanges on limited access highway to relieve congestion
<p>New non-interconnected signal (lessens efficiency) = <i>minus</i> 5 points</p>	

7. Emphasize the **preservation of the existing** transportation system.

General project characteristics include:

- Optimal replacement cycle - delay need for repair/reconstruction (reduces truck vehicle miles traveled (VMT), diverts heavy truck traffic, pavement/resurfacing)
- Facility and fleet replacement or modernization
- Traffic signals and railroad grade crossings improvements

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal pavement or bridge rehabilitation when in pavement or bridge management system • Reconstruction or resurfacing of arterial highways • Traffic signal upgrade • Rail warning signals, grade crossings improvement/replacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing transit facility replacement/rehab that prolongs useful life of assets (improves “substandard” or “poor” condition ratings) • Transit vehicle replacement/rehab consistent with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) standards (standard transit bus = 12 years or 500,000 miles; vans = 4 years or 100,000 miles) • Maintains/preserves publicly owned bicycle and pedestrian facilities
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal pavement or bridge rehabilitation when not in pavement or bridge management system • Reconstruction of collector highways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing transit facility replacement/rehab that prolongs useful life of assets (improves “adequate” condition ratings) • Roadway and bridge support infrastructure improvements (drainage, retaining, signal)
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General resurfacing of roadway 	

Other Fed Regs

8. **Air Quality** – effects on air quality; US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard for ozone and PM_{2.5}

General project characteristics include:

- Improve traffic flow, but do not add lanes/capacity or relocate facilities
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), discourage single occupancy vehicles (SOV)
- Reduce congestion, or support transit and more compact development
- Reduces truck idling or improves truck way-finding

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New (warranted) traffic signal where none exist, and relieves congestion • New or improved transit facilities (stations, buses, park & rides) • New bicycle/pedestrian facility serving primarily a transportation use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking Management • Transportation demand strategies, programs and incentives (CAP) • Removes detour • Technology improvements - truck idling reduction; GPS systems or other locational devices
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic flow improvements (such as intersection channelization and alignments, signal upgrade/timing/interconnections) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle/pedestrian improvements to existing facilities (roadway or bike/ped)
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that have no/neutral air quality impact 	
Increase VMT/congestion = <i>minus</i> 5 points	

9. Social Impacts

General project characteristics include:

- Low-income and minority populations not disproportionately affected in adverse way
- Low-income and minority populations not prevented from, or caused to have a significant delay in, the receipt of benefits
- Serve elderly or mobility-impaired populations

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
• Improves accessibility and mobility and enhances community cohesion	
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
• Improves accessibility with no negative impact to community cohesion	
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
• No improvement in access or community cohesion	
Disproportionately impacts access or community cohesion = <i>minus</i> 5 points	

Low-income and minority groups as defined by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act Environmental Justice includes Black, Hispanic, Asian American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, and persons whose household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

Regional Factors

10. HATS Transportation Plan – regional projects identified in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

General project characteristics include:

- Enhances funding
- Maintains, improves, and better coordinates system
- Increases use of alternate modes, including bicycle & pedestrian
- Land use planning and administration
- Improves mobility and accessibility of regional network
- Reduces negative effects on communities and environment
- Improves intermodal system/facilities – inter-city passenger rail and rail freight

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
• Priorities identified in the HATS Regional Transportation Plan	
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
• Generally consistent with goals and objectives of the 2030 RTP	
Conflict with RTP goals & objectives = <i>minus</i> 5 points	

11. CMS plan

General project characteristics include:

- Transit, rideshare, park and ride/carpool, non-traditional modes
- Operational improvements (signal timing, etc.)
- Eliminate bottlenecks (physical barriers)
- Freight movement
- Incident management
- Public education/PR
- Land use/growth management
- ITS applications
- Access management
- Employer programs (variable work hours, telecommuting, parking management)

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
• High priority areas identified in 2003 CMS study	• “Very practical” strategies identified in 2003 CMS study
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
• Medium priority areas identified in 2003 CMS study	• “Practical” strategies identified in 2003 CMS study
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
• Low priority areas identified in 2003 CMS study	• Generally consistent with the goals and objectives of the CMS study

12. Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP)

General project characteristics include:

- Development patterns/design that promote pedestrian and non-motorized transportation, reduces auto dependence
- Balanced development - mix of complementary uses
- Compact growth/activity – address planned density (residential, economic, supports transit)
- Link neighborhoods, connect streets, sidewalks, trails
- Integrate activity areas with surrounding neighborhoods/areas
- Preserve/provide functional open space and natural features
- Intergovernmental cooperation
- Manage supply/effects of parking (congestion, impervious surfaces)
- Retain and attract jobs

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
• Supports defined “Planned Growth Areas” and land needs concept	• Supports development of regional transit initiatives
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
• Addresses two or more of the above characteristics	• Supports multi-municipal plan generally consistent with RGMP
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
• Located outside defined “Planned Growth Areas”, but does not encourage dispersed, uncoordinated development	• Generally consistent with the goals and objectives of the RGMP
In conflict with RGMP goals & objectives = <i>minus</i> 5 points	

13. “New” or Previous \$ invested

General project characteristics include:

- Projects with funds obligated/encumbered on a previous TIP
- “Reserve” priority project list (derived from RTP and project suggestions not initially placed on program) funded as federal funds become available – cost savings or new \$
- “New” funds – earmarked for specific projects – does not affect base allocation
- Reimbursement for advance construct projects – estimated line item and potential project listing provided

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
• Funds obligated/ encumbered on a previous TIP	• Listed on “reserve” priority project list (as federal funds become available – cost savings or new \$)
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
• Reimbursement for advance construct projects listed on potential project listing	• “Earmarked” with specific funds outside base allocation to complete the project

14. PENNDOT Long Range Plan

General project characteristics include:

- Consistency with statewide long range plan

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
• Funds obligated on the previous STIP	
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
• Corridor projects within the HATS region: Capitol, Keystone, Blue Mountain, Susquehanna Valley, Cumberland Valley	
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
• Corridor projects of state priority outside HATS region which improve accessibility, mobility, or intermodal connectivity of HATS regional network	
In conflict with LRP = <i>minus</i> 5 points	

Local Factors

15. County Priority (Comp Plan)

- Priority ranking assigned by Cumberland, Dauphin, Perry Counties and Lebanon County for a combined priority ranking among the projects in North Londonderry Township, South Londonderry Township and Palmyra Borough
- Consistency with local plans

High Impact Projects –10 points	
• County Priority #1	
Medium Impact Projects –5 points	
• County Priority #2	
Low Impact Projects –1 point	
• County Priority #3	
In conflict with local plans = <i>minus</i> 5 points	

16. Local/sponsor priority

- Priority ranking assigned by municipality/sponsor

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
• Local Priority #1	
Medium Impact Projects – 5 points	
• Local Priority #2	
Low Impact Projects – 1 point	
• Local Priority #3	

17. Local Commitment

- Source for local funding/match available
- Project sponsor collaborating as part of a regional group

High Impact Projects – 10 points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local match above required % (non-federal share)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnership (public/private) projects including multi-municipal efforts and priorities