

## Agenda Item E.

# SKATS MTP: Project Evaluation Criteria & Comments on Goals and Policies

SKATS Policy Committee

March 24, 2026

Action Requested: Review and discuss the criteria for use in evaluating projects for inclusion in the SKATS 2027-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Review the comments on Chapters 2 and 3.



SKATS

## SALEM-KEIZER AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

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# Memorandum

**Date:** March 17, 2026  
**To:** SKATS Policy Committee  
**From:** Ray Jackson, Senior Transportation Planner  
**Re:** **SKATS MTP 2027 Update: Criteria for Project Evaluation Process**

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During the update to the Salem Keizer Area Transportation Study's (SKATS) Regional Transportation Systems Plan (RTSP) in 2018-2019, the concept of performance-based planning was introduced and used for evaluating the projects to aid in informing the selection of projects for inclusion in the financially constrained plan. The requirement to use performance-based planning comes from the regulations promulgated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) after the passage of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) federal surface transportation bill from 2012<sup>1</sup>. The process outlined in this document was developed in 2018 with input from the Policy Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee. This process has been used in the last two updates to the SKATS Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and is documented in Appendix C of the 2023-2050 SKATS MTP. The draft of the Appendix is attached and follows the discussion presented below.

### Current Process Used

The process involves SKATS staff assembling lists of possible projects from the local jurisdictions, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD), and ODOT. The majority of these projects are already in a local transportation system plan, one of SAMTD's plans, or from an ODOT planning study. The projects are required to have an understandable and concise description, a planning level cost estimate, and a year to be built. After entering the projects into a database, SKATS staff perform the first evaluation using the criteria listed below. This results in a preliminary score that is then weighted based on direction from the SKATS Policy Committee. The results are presented and discussed with the SKATS Technical Advisory Committee, and any necessary modifications or adjustments are

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, the federal regulations require all long-range plans and Transportation Improvement Programs adopted or amended after May 27, 2018, to use performance-based planning and programming. 23 CFR 450.300 et seq.

made. These results are then used to develop the draft project list for the SKATS MTP (see Appendix C of the SKATS MTP for details) for consideration by the SKATS Technical Advisory Committee and the Policy Committee.

### Current Criteria Used

Shown in **Table 1** are the criteria that were used for project evaluation and the corresponding Goal(s) from the SKATS MTP that is addressed. Note that some Goals have more than one criterion while others have only one<sup>2</sup>, and one Goal is only indirectly addressed<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 1: Criteria for Project Evaluation and Goal(s) Addressed**

Criteria	Goal(s) Addressed
1 Increases the miles of pavement in travel lane that are ranked "good"	2 – Preservation
2 Increases the number of bridges that are ranked "good"	2 – Preservation
3 Enhances transit service or operations	3 – Safety & Security 3 – Safety & Security 6 - Multimodal
4 Reduces a gap in a regional system	1 – Accessibility & Mobility 5 – Efficient Use 6 – Multimodal 3 – Safety & Security (sometimes)
5 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE <sup>4</sup>	
6 Addresses freight movement impediment on designated CUFC	3 – Safety & Security 5 – Efficient Use 9 – Vibrant Regional Economy
7 Increase access to employment center or jobs	1 – Accessibility & Mobility 4 – Equity 9 – Vibrant Regional Economy
8 Project improves transportation options in a low-income and/or minority area <sup>5</sup>	4 – Equity
9 Addresses a known safety location/issue	3 – Safety & Security
10 Addresses a bottleneck along a corridor	1 – Accessibility & Mobility 3 – Safety & Security 5 – Efficient Use

<sup>2</sup> The Goal for Public Involvement is a requirement of all projects and is not used in this evaluation process.

<sup>3</sup> The Goal "Developed and Maintained with the funds available to the region" is met by the fact that the Plan is financially constrained.

<sup>4</sup> This was used for a criterion that was removed in the 2023-2050 MTP. The numbering is saved so the evaluation forms do not need to be changed.

<sup>5</sup> Renamed for the 2027-2050 MTP to align with changes in federal guidance and requirements.

Equally important is how the criteria are used to evaluate the projects. Many data sources were used to determine whether the project addresses a criterion. In all cases, the evaluation was a simple 'yes/no', with a score of "1" if the project addressed the criterion and "0" if it didn't (the exception is safety projects that benefit vulnerable road users).

The evaluations used in the 2023 Update are listed below, with the proposed changes for the 2027 Update highlighted. One change is in wording to align with recent federal guidance. The second change is to emphasize projects on the designated High Injury Network corridors.

### Criteria Definition

- Increases miles of pavement in travel lane(s) that are ranked "Good."
  - Replaces travel lane pavement rated less than "Good" (Fair or Poor)
    - The assumption is that unless a road was paved recently, the pavement quality would be "Fair" at best.
  - Considers project on all roads to align with HB 2017 reporting requirements
  - Further analysis needs to be done to determine existing pavement quality.
- Increases the number of bridges that are ranked "Good."
  - Replaces the bridge deck that is rated "Fair" or "Poor"
  - From the Baseline Performance Period Report (2018) "A bridge can only move from poor to good condition if it is replaced. Repairing can move a bridge from poor to fair.
  - Consider projects on all roads to align with HB2017 data reporting requirements.
- Enhances transit service or operations.
  - If a project is not located along a transit route but provides information to the rider or to operations (such as automated vehicle location (AVL) devices for stop announcements and/or real-time arrival).
  - Located along a transit route and provides some benefit either for operations or for access to the stops.
    - This includes building sidewalks linking to the route or along the route.
  - Operations can be helped by adding turn lanes and/or signals to allow better traffic flow.
- Reduces (or completes) a gap in the defined regional system.
  - A gap is one that has been identified in Chapter 5 of the SKATS MTP for either the regional bicycle system, regional pedestrian system, or regional signal interconnect system. Gaps have not been identified for the regional road system (except for known extensions of minor arterials and above) or the regional transit system.
- Addresses freight movement impediment on the designated Critical Urban Freight Corridor (CUFC)

- The Critical Urban Freight Corridors have been defined and are shown in SKATS MTP in Chapter 4 on Map 4-2 and Table 5-10 in Chapter 5.
- Increases access to regional employment center or jobs
  - Currently regional employment centers are defined as:
    - Salem CBD + Capital Mall area
    - Mill Creek Corporate Center
    - Salem Industrial area
    - Fairview Industrial area
  - Maps of employment clustering were used to define where high concentration of jobs are located.
- Addresses a safety location/issue
  - Project is located along a High Injury network corridor designated in the latest Metropolitan Transportation Safety Action Plan
  - Safety locations will be/are defined by the number of crashes at an intersection or along a corridor. Locations with fatalities and/or serious injuries could be prioritized in future iterations.
  - TAC members were asked to consider which projects are meant to focus on safety issues/locations.
  - Projects receive a “2” if they include features that are likely to increase the safety of vulnerable users (e.g., sidewalks, bike facilities, etc.) and a “1” if the project otherwise addresses a safety location/issue. Inclusion of this was at the direction of the SKATS Policy Committee.
- Project is likely to improve transportation facilities within a Low-Income and/or Minority area.
  - These areas are defined as part of the Transportation Disadvantaged Report
  - “Likely to Improve” means a project provides new facilities, fixes a gap, is oriented toward a known safety issue/location.
- Address a bottleneck along a corridor
  - Bottlenecks are defined for freight in Chapter 5 and from the process described in the CMP.
  - Bottlenecks are currently limited to the regional road system used for CMP monitoring and analysis.

**Weighting the Criteria**

For the 2023-2050 MTP, the SKATS Policy Committee directed staff to use a weighting scheme as shown in **Table 2**. The Policy Committee will be asked whether there should be any modifications to the weights for this MTP update. Currently none are proposed.

**Table 2:** Criteria and Weights used in Project Evaluation 2023 MTP

Criteria	Weight / Multiplier
Safety	4
Enhances Transit Service or Operations	3
Reduces a Gap in a Regional System	3

<b>Addresses a Bottleneck</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Contiguous to adjacent project from another jurisdiction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>All other criteria<sup>6</sup> (each)</b>	<b>1</b>

**Future Project Evaluation**

The Transportation System Plans for Salem and Keizer are both being updated to address the revised Transportation Planning Rule (TPR). As part of this process, the TSPs will include an unconstrained list of prioritized projects and a financially constrained project list (a subset of the unconstrained list). Projects on the financially constrained project lists will be considered for inclusion in the SKATS MTP and evaluated by the process presented above. One difference between the federal and state rules is that “financially constrained” is defined in the TPR as 125 percent of anticipated revenues for a jurisdiction. For the MTP “financially constrained” is defined by federal regulations as 100 percent of reasonably anticipated revenues. Thus, the list in the MTP will not include all the projects from the local jurisdiction’s TSPs.

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<sup>6</sup> All Other Criteria: Increases miles of pavement in travel lane(s) ranked “Good”; Increases the number of bridges that are ranked “good”; Addresses freight movement impediment on designated Critical Urban Freight Corridors; Increases access to regional employment center or jobs; Project is likely to improve facilities in a Low-Income and/or Minority area.

# Comments on Chapter 2 (Policies) and Chapter 3 (Goals)

Comments on Chapter 2 (Policies) and Chapter 3 (Goals) were submitted by Sadie Carney, Salem Area Mass Transit District Board representative. The comments were transferred from the PDF to a Word document to make it easier to read. Many of the comments are suggested edits, often to incorporate directly or indirectly reference of the Metropolitan Transportation Safety Action Plan. The comments are shown by Chapter and page number in *italic* below. Initial responses follow.

## Chapter 2

- 1) Page 2-2: *Can we add a sentence like - "The planning process incorporates data on crash history, roadway conditions, and travel patterns to ensure that safety and mobility improvements are directed to locations with the greatest demonstrated need." This agrees with our commitments in the TSAP.*

**Response:** Assuming this suggestion is for inclusion at the end of the second paragraph in the *Comprehensive* section. The proposed addition is "Data on crash history, roadway conditions, and travel patterns are considered to ensure that projects provide safety and mobility benefits in locations with the greatest demonstrated need."

- 2) Page 2-3, end of the second paragraph in the *Cooperative* section: *Add details about cooperative that agree with our selection criteria and stated goals - "Member agencies collaborate to identify locations where roadway design, user behavior, or infrastructure gaps contribute to elevated safety risks, and to coordinate improvements that benefit the entire regional system."*

**Response:** TBD

- 3) Page 2-4, end of the first paragraph in the *Cost-effective* section: *add a statement about cost benefits - "Investments that measurably reduce severe crashes or improve system reliability are prioritized, consistent with the region's commitment to prudent stewardship of public resources."*

**Response:** Added as requested, aligns with the current project evaluation process.

- 4) Page 2-5, end of the second paragraph: *Add - "Consistent with federal emphasis on performance-based planning, SKATS uses crash data, roadway conditions, and system performance metrics to guide investment decisions."*

**Response:** Added the following at the end of the second paragraph: "These rules and performance measures are used in the development of the MTP, and inform the decisions made in future investments to the regional system."

- 5) Page 2-13, after second sentence in first full paragraph: add - "The MTSAP provides data-driven identification of corridors with elevated rates of severe crashes, supporting targeted improvements that enhance safety for all users."

**Response:** Revised the second sentence to read: "It aims to address the safety needs of all road users within SKATS using a data-driven identification of corridors with elevated rates of crashes involving fatalities or severe injuries, supporting targeted investments to enhance the safety of all users."

## Chapter 3

### Goal 1

- A) After first sentence in the explanatory statement: Add bridge sentence - "Accessibility also depends on the safety and reliability of the transportation network, ensuring that people can reach destinations without undue risk or delay"

**Response:** Proposed language: "The safety, reliability, and connectiveness of the transportation network can increase or decrease the accessibility to a location."

- B) Before last sentence in the explanatory statement: Consider adding - "Reliable transit service expands access to jobs, education, and essential services, particularly in corridors where roadway congestion limits mobility."

**Response:** TBD

### Goal 2

- A) First sentence, second word in the explanatory statement, suggestion is to revise to read: "Preserving **all aspects of** the system..."

**Response:** Change as requested

- B) End of last sentence in the explanatory statement: Consider adding: "Maintaining facilities in good repair also reduces crash risk associated with deteriorating pavement, outdated signals, or inadequate lighting."  
C) And "Maintaining transit facilities and vehicles in good repair supports a dependable regional mobility network."

**Response:** Proposed language: “Maintaining the roads and transit facilities and vehicles supports a dependable transportation system and can contribute to reducing the risks in traveling.”

### Goal 3

- A) End of first sentence in the explanatory statement: *Based on MTSAP add - “Crash data shows that severe injuries are concentrated on a small portion of the regional network. Prioritizing improvements on these corridors maximizes safety benefits and ensures resources are directed where they will have the greatest impact.”*

**Response:** TBD

- B) First Objective: *Add objective to align with MTSAP - “Identify and address locations with elevated rates of severe crashes to maximize safety benefits.”*

**Response:** New objectives need to be discussed with the TAC and PC. The proposed language overlaps the language of the current safety objective and the safety criterion. Roadway segments with high numbers of crashes leading to fatalities or severe injuries are captured in the High Injury Network work in the MTSAP. These locations are used in the safety criterion when evaluating projects proposed for the SKATS Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

- C) Third Objective: *Provide safe access to transit stops including lighting, crossings, and sidewalks*

**Response:** New objectives need to be discussed with the TAC and PC.

### Goal 4

- A) After second sentence in the explanatory statement: *Add sentence - “A well-functioning regional transportation system ensures that all parts of the region have reasonable access to essential services, employment, and transportation options. No area should experience disproportionate delays, safety risks, or infrastructure deficiencies. Directing improvements to locations with demonstrated safety or access challenges supports a balanced and reliable regional system.”*

**Response:** TBD

- B) *“Reliable transit options help ensure that all parts of the region have practical access to essential destinations, supporting a balanced and functional transportation system.”*

**Response:** TBD

## Goal 5

- A) After first sentence in the explanatory statement: *add - "Transit can improve overall system efficiency by reducing peak-hour demand on constrained corridors."*

**Response:** TBD

- B) After last sentence in the explanatory statement: *Add sentence - "Efficiency also includes reducing delays and safety risks caused by roadway design issues, missing infrastructure, or unpredictable travel conditions."*

**Response:** TBD

## Goal 6

- A) Last sentence in the explanatory statement: *Add sentence either before or after to align with MTSAP - "Providing safe and reliable options for walking, biking, transit, and driving supports overall system performance and reduces pressure on the roadway network."*

**Response:** TBD

- B) After first sentence add: *"A multimodal system includes transit options that provide dependable alternatives to driving and support safe connections between modes."*

**Response:** TBD

## Goal 7

- A) Last sentence in the explanatory statement "... should be give to factors that...":  
*transportation solutions - not factors*

**Response:** Changed 'factors' to 'investments'. Revised portion: "Consideration should be given to *investments* that reduce or mitigate ..."

## Goal 8

- A) Last sentence in the explanatory statement: *add - "Reliable and safe transportation corridors support business operations, freight movement, and workforce access."*

**Response:** TBD

- B) Objective: *Make strategic transit investments that reduce long-term infrastructure costs*

**Response:** New objectives need to be discussed with the TAC and PC.

## Goal 10

- A) Before last sentence in the explanatory statement: *add sentence - "Engagement efforts should include outreach to areas with documented safety or access challenges to ensure that local knowledge informs regional decisions."*

**Response:** TBD