

# **TRAC**

**Transportation Review Advisory Council**

## **Policies and Procedures**

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# Transportation Review Advisory Council

## Policies for Selecting Major New Capacity Projects

### Overview

The goal of the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) is to improve Ohio's state and federal transportation network. We can achieve this by choosing the best transportation investments on the state, interstate and U.S. routes.

Local and county road projects will not be funded by the TRAC. While the TRAC recognizes the importance of city and county roads, the TRAC was established to make decisions for major statewide and regional transportation investments. ODOT, however, contributes a significant amount of transportation funds to address needs at the local level. ODOT has programs for safety projects, transportation enhancements, local roads, and city and county bridges. The TRAC encourages local entities to look at these ODOT funding sources for local projects and focus the TRAC requests on projects that significantly impact a region or the state.

This document summarizes the TRAC policies and procedures for selecting Major New Capacity projects. It includes the principles for selecting the scoring criteria and how the criteria are used to score projects. It also contains scoring tables and protocols on how the process will be conducted.

The TRAC defines a major new capacity project as:

**Definition:** Major New Capacity projects cost ODOT more than \$5 million and which do one or more of the following: increase mobility, provide connectivity, increase the accessibility of a region for economic development, increase the capacity of a transportation facility, or reduce congestion. This definition includes all new interchanges proposed for economic development or local access, any significant interchange modifications, bypasses, general purpose lane additions, intermodal facilities, major transit facilities, passenger rail facilities, or Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

The TRAC may choose to participate in the funding of non-traditional projects that cannot be scored. Examples of non-traditional projects include ITS, shared ride facilities, modal hubs, freight rail infrastructure and other facilities that improve the operation of the state's transportation system.

# The Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC)

The Major New Capacity project selection process operates under the purview of the TRAC. The council was established by Ohio Revised Code in 1997 at ODOT's request. It is a permanent body of predominantly non-ODOT personnel which develops and modifies a project selection process and which approves major new projects for funding.

The TRAC has nine members and is chaired by the Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation. Six additional members are appointed by the Governor and one each by the speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives and the president of the Ohio Senate. Members have overlapping terms. In accordance with the law, the director of Transportation each year provides the TRAC with a report on the money available for new construction for the following four-year period. The Director provides funds for new construction only after assuring that system preservation needs have been met. The use of the new construction funds is the responsibility of the TRAC, but the TRAC does not have authority over other aspects of the Department of Transportation.

By law, the TRAC is to hold up to six public hearings annually.

## TRAC Policies

### **Policy 1      Open, Fair, Criteria-driven Process**

It is TRAC policy to have a fair, open and equitable Major New Capacity selection process based on criteria which determine which projects contribute most to state, regional and local transportation and economic development goals. Further, the TRAC process intends to maximize resources using quantifiable measures.

### **Policy 2      Long Range, Statewide Planning with Local Approval**

The TRAC's project selection criteria reflect the goals of **ACCESS OHIO**, the state's long range statewide planning document and take into consideration regional and local priorities by strongly urging metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to submit priority project lists. In addition, no project will be ranked unless approved or reviewed and commented on by the appropriate MPO or ODOT's Division of Planning in non MPO areas.

### **Policy 3      Preservation First**

Preservation, maintenance and management shall have the greatest weight in allocating funds among ODOT's programs.

### **Policy 4      Transportation and Development Factors**

Transportation efficiency and effectiveness factors represent 70 percent of the total potential score in the selection process; economic development factors represent 30 percent of the total potential score.

## **Policy 5      Transportation Efficiency Criteria**

The project selection criteria under the goal of Transportation Efficiency shall include the project's average daily traffic, volume-to-capacity-ratio, roadway classification, and macro corridor completion. All data for traffic volume, functional classification, volume-to-capacity ratio and macro corridor completion are collected by ODOT in a uniform and objective manner. All interested parties can review and critique ODOT's data. All data shall be reviewed by ODOT for conformity to ODOT standards to ensure projects are measured similarly.

## **Policy 6      Safety Criterion**

It is the policy of ODOT to use a project's current accident rate as a selection criterion because it achieves the following policy objectives:

- ◆ Ensuring the health and safety of Ohio's citizens
- ◆ Providing Ohio with a more competitive economic climate because it reduces accident costs which are a drain upon Ohio's businesses and citizens

## **Policy 7      Non-ODOT Participation**

Points shall be assigned to projects based upon the amount of private funding, local assistance, or funds contributed through project-specific federal processes.

It is the policy to encourage local and private entities to leverage the state's transportation capital by contributing additional funds for projects. This policy allows Ohio to increase its infrastructure investment, gives local project proponents additional means to complete projects which otherwise would not be possible, and encourages those who benefit most from projects to participate in their construction.

## **Policy 8      Interchange Participation**

The TRAC will build no new interchanges on existing routes without a minimum of a 50 percent contribution of the cost of the interchange from either private, local or other non-ODOT funds.

## **Policy 9      Intermodal Connectivity**

Points shall be awarded for projects with intermodal benefits.

It is TRAC policy to encourage projects which improve the connectivity between different modes of transportation. In addition to the transportation and economic development scores earned by a project, additional points will be awarded if the project includes a significant intermodal component. Intermodal benefits are those which improve the connectivity between the various modes of transportation. Transportation projects which expand or improve connections to water ports, airports, rail facilities or transit facilities will receive additional points.

## **Policy 10     Economic Development Criteria**

To measure a project's influence on future economic development, it shall be scored on the categories of Job Creation, Job Retention, Level of Investment, Cost Effectiveness and Economic Distress.

It is the policy of the TRAC to assign economic or job creation points to a project only if the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Department of Transportation are assured that the economic development is not speculative but is certain and documented.

### **Policy 11     Retail and Tourism**

The TRAC's ranking process for Major New Capacity projects awards points if a project has a direct, measurable impact on the creation of new jobs or if it attracts significant private sector investment to Ohio. It is the TRAC's position not to award points for projects which attract new retail development. Points for tourism-related projects will be pro-rated based on the length of the tourist season.

### **Policy 12     Fixed Transit Line Evaluation**

While the selection process focuses primarily on highway projects, the TRAC also wants to evaluate transit projects. However, many of the current measures - Average Daily Traffic (ADT), Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C), Roadway Functional Classification (FC) and Accident Rate (AR) - do not apply directly to public transportation projects. The TRAC, therefore, will use parallel criteria to rank most transit projects and to compare them to highway projects.

These surrogate criteria can be used when a transit project has some similarities to highway projects, such as being a linear expansion to move people or freight in a given area. For instance, the expansion or creation of a commuter rail line can be compared to a parallel highway expansion in that both are intended to alleviate congestion in the peak hour. However, the parallel criteria cannot be used for non-linear projects, such as a transit station.

Non-linear projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All other criteria under the categories of Economic Development, Non-ODOT Participation, Intermodal Connectivity and Urban Revitalization will remain unchanged.

### **Policy 13     Non-traditional Projects**

The TRAC will consider participating in non-traditional projects that cannot be scored. It will give priority to non-highway projects which alleviate congestion, increase capacity, or facilitate freight movement on the state's major corridors.

ODOT will consider high-occupancy vehicle lanes, shared ride facilities, freight rail infrastructure acquisition, modal hubs, and other facilities if they are intended to improve the operation of one of the state's major corridors.

ODOT will not participate in the replacement or repair of rolling stock, basic maintenance facilities such as garages, operational expenses, fare subsidies, or other routine expenses associated with the operation of existing or expanded service.

### **Policy 14     Bypass Projects**

A bypass is the realignment of a state or U.S. route around a community or communities to avoid as many conflict points as possible. Projects with the intention of bypassing a community or communities will be scored by the TRAC using different transportation efficiency criteria. The bypass transportation criteria will include the project's average daily traffic, the percentage of vehicles projected to divert from the current facility to the bypass, volume-to-capacity ratio on the current facility,

number of impediments (recurrent congestion points) avoided by the bypass, size of community/communities being bypassed, and macro corridor completion.

All other criteria under the categories of Economic Development, Non-ODOT Participation, Intermodal Connectivity and Urban Revitalization remain the same.

### **Policy 15    Urban Revitalization**

The TRAC will award additional points for projects that support re-investment in an urban core by attracting economic development into the city or helping a city retain existing jobs.

### **Policy 16    Intelligent Transportation Systems**

ITS projects on the state and federal transportation network are eligible for Major New Capacity program funding. While local and county transportation systems are important to mobility and economic development, other funding sources exist (and indeed have historically been used) to fund ITS projects on such systems.

TRAC will only consider ITS projects that are sponsored by an ODOT district deputy director and follow these basic principles:

- ◆ Since incidents are the primary source of delay on the state highway system, ITS projects will focus on incident management as their primary functionality;
- ◆ As a part of incident management, ITS projects shall include traffic management/control through ramp metering, lane control, and freeway-to-freeway route diversion via dynamic message signs;
- ◆ Minimize maintenance and operations cost.

# Major New Project Selection Criteria

Goal	Factors	Maximum Score
Transportation Efficiency	Average Daily Traffic - Volume of traffic on a daily average	20
	Volume to Capacity Ratio - A measure of a highway's congestion	20
	Roadway Classification - A measure of a highway's importance	5
	Macro Corridor Completion - Does the project contribute to the completion of a Macro Corridor?	10
Safety	Accident Rate - Number of accidents per 1 million miles of travel during 3 year period.	15
<b>Transportation points account for at least 70% of a project's base score</b>		<b>70</b>
Economic Development	Job Creation - The level of non-retail jobs the project creates.	10
	Job Retention - Evidence that the job will retain existing jobs.	5
	Economic Distress - Points based upon the severity of the unemployment rate of the country.	5
	Cost Effectiveness of Investment - A ratio of the cost of the jobs created and investment attracted. Determined by dividing the cost to Ohio for the transportation project by the number of jobs created.	5
	Level of Investment - The level of private sector, non-retail capital attracted to Ohio because of the project	5
<b>Economic Development Points account for up to 30% of a projects base score</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>Additional Points</b>		
Funding	Public/Private/Local Participation - Does this project leverage additional funds which allow state funds to be augmented?	15
Unique Multi-Modal Impacts	Does this project have some unique multi-modal impact?	5
Urban Revitalization	Does this project provide direct access to cap zone areas or brownfield sites?	10
<b>Total Possible Points including Transportation, Economic Development, and additional categories</b>		<b>130</b>

# Principles of TRAC Policies

As part of the TRAC's commitment to an open, understandable process, the principles which underlie the TRAC's decision making policies need to be accessible to project advocates, to government officials at all levels and to the general public.

## Principle 1 Open, Fair Criteria-driven Process

Faith in the TRAC process is vital. Ohio's citizens, public officials and transportation professionals deserve a process they believe is fair, fiscally responsible and serves the entire state.

## Principle 2 Long range, Statewide Planning

The major goals of Ohio's transportation system were developed in the 99 public meetings held between 1992 and 1995 for **ACCESS OHIO**, the state's long-range multi-modal transportation plan.

The goals for Ohio's transportation system as developed in **ACCESS OHIO** include:

- ◆ **System Preservation and Management** - Preserve and manage Ohio's existing multimodal transportation system and resources more effectively and efficiently.
- ◆ **Economic Development and Quality of Life** - Enhance Ohio's comparative economic advantage and quality of life, and promote the expansion and diversity of Ohio's economy, by creating and maintaining a safe, convenient, and efficient multi-modal transportation system that is sensitive to regional differences and is socially and environmentally responsible.
- ◆ **Cooperative Planning Process and Transportation Efficiency** - Use a cooperative planning process to develop an effective and efficient transportation system and an organizational decision-making process through the use of system management programs and public participation.
- ◆ **Transportation Safety and Convenience** - Improve the safety of Ohio's transportation resources by ensuring that the safety and well-being of customers are primary considerations in the design, development, and operation of the state's transportation investment.
- ◆ **Funding** - Seek stable resources for the preservation and maintenance of existing facilities and services, plus the provision of new facilities and services that meet Ohio's transportation needs, and support efforts to develop new and innovative approaches to transportation funding.

## Principle 3 Preservation First

Preservation and management of the existing system shall be accomplished by funding system preservation needs first and providing funds for new construction only after the Director and Governor are assured that basic maintenance needs of the existing transportation system are being met.

The Director of Transportation shall advise the Governor and the general public through the State Transportation Improvement Program of the amount of money available for new construction projects.

## Principle 4 Transportation and Development

In the project selection process, 70 percent of the scoring is related to some form of direct transportation preservation or enhancement criteria. It is the policy that 70 percent is the appropriate percentage because of the importance of system preservation and management to the health of Ohio's existing businesses, economic activity and quality of life. The creation or retention of jobs and investment in Ohio represents 30 percent of the total score in the Major New Capacity project selection process.

An important point in the scoring system must be noted. The 70-30 split occurs between the potential total points available - in other words, up to 70 percent of potential points are available for transportation factors and up to 30 percent of potential points are available for economic factors. However, economic points are not awarded in all cases. Economic points are awarded only when direct, demonstrable economic impacts from the transportation project can be identified.

### Transportation Factors:

#### Principle 5A Average Daily Traffic

Average daily traffic is the volume of traffic on a route annualized to a daily average. For purposes of Major New Capacity project data analysis, the traffic is averaged over the entire length of the project. ADT break points and scores are presented for truck and auto traffic in the table on the right.

Truck ADT	Points	Auto ADT	Points
10801-12000	10	72000 +	10
9601-10800	9	64000-71999	9
8401-9600	8	56000-63999	8
7201-8400	7	48000-55999	7
6001-7200	6	40000-47999	6
4801-6000	5	32000-39999	5
3601-4800	4	24000-31999	4
2401-3600	3	16000-23999	3
1201-2400	2	8000-15999	2
0-1200	1	0-7999	1

#### Principle 5B Volume to Capacity Ratio

Volume to capacity (V/C) ratio is a simple, accurate, universally recognized measure of congestion. It is TRAC policy to use the V/C ratio as a criterion because the V/C ratio reflects the following policy objectives:

- ◆ Reducing congestion improves the quality of life
- ◆ Reducing congestion reduces travel time thereby increasing economic efficiency. Time lost to delay is expensive to businesses, translating into economic inefficiencies which raise the cost of doing business, making Ohio less competitive.

Inherent within the V/C ratio are factors which reflect other transportation goals:

- ◆ High congestion contributes to accidents.
- ◆ The V/C ratio is sensitive to local conditions. A rural, two-lane route with many curves and hills, narrow pavement, narrow shoulders, and significant truck volumes has a very low capacity.

Even without high volumes, as experienced in urban areas, a rural route with a lowered capacity because of its narrow pavements or truck volumes still may have a high volume-to-capacity ratio. Therefore, the V/C ratio is a good reflection of factors important for safety, congestion relief, local economic development, and regional diversity.

V/C Ratio	Points	V/C Ratio	Points
>1.50	20	1.00-1.04	10
1.45-1.50	19	0.95-0.99	9
1.40-1.44	18	0.90-0.94	8
1.35-1.39	17	0.85-0.89	7
1.30-1.34	16	0.80-0.84	6
1.25-1.29	15	0.75-0.79	5
1.20-1.24	14	0.70-0.74	4
1.15-1.19	13	0.65-0.69	3
1.10-1.14	12	0.60-0.64	2
1.05-1.09	11	0.55-0.59	1

Like average daily traffic, the V/C ratio is averaged over the entire length of the project. Volume is equal to ADT and capacity is the design volume of the facility. The V/C ratio is calculated for the mainline of a facility, and does not consider intersection congestion.

This criterion relates to **ACCESS OHIO** Goal 3 (Transportation Efficiency).

### Principle 5C Roadway Classification

Roadway classification is a criterion because it meets the following policy objectives:

- ◆ It tends to serve the greatest number of people.
- ◆ It directs limited transportation resources to projects on routes which have the highest statewide benefit.

Highway Classification	Points
Interstate	5
National Highway System	2
Freeway/Expressway	2
Principal Arterial	2
Minor Arterial/Collector	1

This criterion is also directly related to **ACCESS OHIO** Goal 3. Functional Classification is a highway's ranking in a defined hierarchy including the following categories: Interstate, Macro Corridor, National Highway System, Freeway/Expressway, Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, and Collector. The point scale for roadway classification is straightforward. Macro Corridors were designated in Phase 1 of **ACCESS OHIO**.

The other roadway classifications were designated by the Division of Planning in accordance with federal requirements. All interstate routes are macro corridors, but points are awarded for one classification only. The scoring scale for this factor is adjacent.

This criterion was selected because a significant amount of analysis is inherent in a route's classification. All highways are evaluated on a 10 year cycle to determine if shifting population patterns require a route to be upgraded, downgraded, or left as designated in the federal classification system. It should be understood that the hierarchy used in the Major New Capacity project selection process is a mix between the federal functional classification and other classifications such as macro corridors, which are unique to Ohio.

Interstates, macro corridors, and arterials serve the intrastate, interstate and even international movement of people and goods. These criteria are regionally sensitive in that all areas of the state have routes designated as interstates, macro corridors, and arterials, and traffic volumes are not the sole factor used in determining the classification of a route.

A route's classification accounts for up to five points of a project's base score. The scoring range is from one to five points with interstate and macro corridor routes receiving the most points.

When a project intersects with routes that have different functional classifications, a determination needs to be made as to which functional classification shall be used in the scoring. For instance, the intersecting of an interstate highway with a principal arterial would affect two routes, each with a different classification. In that case, a determination will be made as to which route is primarily improved by the project.

In the example of the interchange project, is it proposed to alleviate a problem on the interstate highway or on the arterial? The classification of the roadway which will benefit from the project construction will be the classification used to score the project.

## **Principle 5D Macro Corridor Completion**

The TRAC adopts macro corridor completion as a criterion for project selection because it reflects the policy of ODOT to complete an efficient, statewide corridor network providing access to every corner of Ohio.

Because it is impossible for Ohio to raise enough revenue to provide major highway facilities to every community, ODOT has adopted the objective to complete the macro corridor system. ODOT is pursuing the completion of a systematic, rational network of statewide routes serving every region. Although not every individual community will be reached, 94 percent of Ohio's population will be within a 15-minute commuting distance of an efficient corridor which can attract economic development. The macro corridors were selected through an objective, systematic process to evaluate which routes are most important for each region's movement of people and goods.

The macro corridors are an additional highway designation adopted by ODOT during the **ACCESS OHIO** process. The routes are designated based on a statewide analysis of population, manufacturing production, agricultural production, tourism and other indicators of economic importance. Each county is assessed in terms of its economic impact in the region and then the most important highway links were designated as macro corridor routes. In all, 3,341 miles of Ohio's 19,000 miles of state highways are included in the system.

ODOT adopted macro corridor completion as a Major New Capacity project selection criterion because:

- ◆ It will result in the eventual completion of a statewide network.
- ◆ Such a network contributes to the goals of increased/enhanced economic development and quality of life.
- ◆ A completed macro corridor network serves the entire state by facilitating the movements of raw materials, finished goods, and people to every region of Ohio.

The macro corridor completion criterion awards points for projects which upgrade macro corridors and enhance mobility, increase capacity, or improve traffic flow. This criterion also reflects Goals 2 and 3 of **ACCESS OHIO**. It is the policy of the TRAC to focus on the completion of corridors throughout the state, preferably to four lanes, since the benefit of completing corridors extends beyond the immediate boundaries of the project itself.

As stated previously, macro corridors were selected based on their importance to economic activity and the connection of these economic activity centers to all other areas of the state.

Thus, just as the interstate highways are important to the economic well-being of all states in the country, macro corridors are important to the economic well-being of all counties in the state.

The TRAC considers a completed macro corridor to be a four lane limited access facility. Macro corridor completion points will be awarded to macro corridor projects that move a roadway toward its completed state. The needs of the corridor may require a less costly upgrade.

Projects which enhance an already completed corridor will not receive these points. For instance, an interstate highway that already has two lanes in each direction does not receive points for a proposal to add a third lane. However, a two-lane rural macro corridor which is improved to a four-lane highway or a Super II highway would receive points. Upgrades on an already-completed section would not receive macro corridor completion points.

## Principle 6 Crash Information - Accident Rate

The crash frequency/density, severity, and crash rate are used to evaluate safety conditions at a project location. Because of the importance of identifying safety deficiencies, this criteria ensures safety is a primary consideration in the development and design of ODOT projects.

Relative Severity Index	Points
1400	3.0
1200-1399	2.0
1000-1199	1.0
0-999	0.0

Crash Rate	Points
3	3.0
2.0-2.9	2.0
1.0-1.9	1.0
0.0-0.9	0.0

Frequency/Density	Points
90	9.0
80-89	8.0
70-79	7.0
60-69	6.0
30-39	3.0
20-29	2.0
10-19	1.0
0-9	0.0

By using a combination of crash frequency, severity, and crash rate, locations with high numbers of accidents, typically on high volume roads, would be recognized in the scoring process. By including factors for crash severity and crash rate, severe locations on lower volume roads will be awarded points.

Goal 4 of Access Ohio - Transportation Safety and Convenience, is address through the assignment of up to 15 point of the base score based on the frequency, severity, and rate of crashes on a facility.

The goal of transportation safety is addressed throughout the department in all of its programs. In addition to Major New Capacity construction, there is a separate Highway Safety Program which specifically addresses high crash locations. The crash frequency is the number of crashes occurring at an intersection. The crash density is the number of crashes per mile occurring along a section of highway (9 Points).

- ◆ The relative severity index represents the relative cost to society of a specific type of crash (head on, rear end, angle, etc.) (3 Points)
- ◆ The crash rate is the rate of crashes per million miles of vehicular travel occurring on a route (3 points)

All these factors will be based on the data for the most recent consecutive three year period. The weightings and scale are presented in the table above.

One weakness noted in this category is that in urban areas, each municipality is responsible for reporting its crash data. Often, the statistics are not reported in a uniform manner, as in rural areas by the Ohio Highway Patrol. This lack of uniformity makes it difficult to determine the crash information for some sections of highway within municipalities.

## Principle 7 Non-ODOT Participation

The project scoring for non-TRAC participation shall be based on a sliding scale intended to encourage local sponsors to increase their share of the project's cost and to decrease the total cost of the project to the state. Project proponents can contribute up to 100 percent of the project cost and guarantee the project's construction if they satisfy all applicable planning and environmental requirements.

Even with 100 percent local financing, a project will have to meet the basic federal planning and environmental requirements including:

- ◆ Being included in the State Transportation Improvement Program
- ◆ If in a metropolitan area, being in the local Transportation Improvement Program
- ◆ Being included in the local longrange plan
- ◆ Having a successful major investment study, if one is necessary
- ◆ Having an approved environmental document
- ◆ If it is a new interchange, having an approved interchange justification study or interchange modification study. Because new interchanges and interchange expansions often require the expansion of the mainline freeway, an agreement on who will pay for the freeway expansion and when must also be completed.

Amount Contributed	Points	% Contributed	Points
Less than \$1 Million	0	11-20%	1
\$1-3 Million	1	21-40%	2
\$3.1-7 Million	2	41-60%	4
\$7.1-10 Million	3	61-80%	6
\$10.1-15 Million	4	81-90%	8
>15.01 Million	5	91-100%	10

For projects not located on the State Highway System and statutorily the responsibility of ODOT, the project sponsor will be required to fund the project development and a minimum of 20 percent of the construction cost. The TRAC will negotiate the final funding split.

The first phase of project development - a feasibility study, major investment study, interchange justification study or traffic impact study - must be completed by the project sponsor before the TRAC will authorize funding of any project.

### **Principle 7A Cost Reduction**

Prior to July 30, 1997, some long-standing projects received points when their sponsors agreed to reduce a project's scope and cost. The reduced cost was treated as a local contribution and points were awarded for it. These were projects for which the concept and scope had long been planned.

Points for cost reduction will not be awarded to any additional requests submitted after July 30, 1997.

### **Principle 7B Congressional Earmarks**

Congressional earmarks for specific projects will be treated as a local contribution and points will be awarded for the amount of the earmark. The receipt of federal earmarks, however, does not guarantee a project will be funded.

Several requirements still must be met before the TRAC would recommend providing the remaining funds necessary to construct a project partially funded by a congressional earmark:

- ◆ The project must be included in the local transportation plan, if the project is in an urbanized area that has a plan.
- ◆ The project must meet the other federal planning and environmental requirements.
- ◆ The project must score highly enough in the project-selection process to warrant the TRAC
- ◆ providing the matching funds.
- ◆ If the project does not score highly enough to warrant matching funds, the TRAC would agree to spend the earmarked funds on the specified project to the extent that the funds would build a smaller, but fully functional project.

## **Principle 8 Interchange Participation**

The TRAC may or may not require the interchange proponent to pay for the entire cost of improvements to the general purpose highway lanes affected by the project. However, at least 50 percent of the cost of the interchange itself must be provided by non-TRAC controlled funds. When general purpose lanes are required to offset the impact of the interchange upon the level of service, the TRAC will negotiate the contribution required. As cited in Principle 11, the TRAC does not award economic points for retail activity in the belief that retail growth largely comes at the expense of other Ohio retailers.

When new interchanges, or interchange modifications, serve primarily new retail development, 90 percent of the cost of the interchange shall be required from non-TRAC controlled funds. If the interchange is for a predominantly tourism-oriented development, the amount of the contribution will be commensurate with the amount of economic activity generated and by the length of the tourism season involved.

Because tourism can be seasonal, the traffic impacts are as well. If the tourist season is short-lived and the economic impacts are not year-round, ODOT will expect the local interchange beneficiaries to contribute a higher percentage of the cost.

This policy does not apply to intersections that are upgraded to interchanges because of safety or capacity justification. Such projects are not intended to create new access for economic development, and generally they restrict access by making a site fully limited access. High-volume intersections or high-accident intersections often warrant expansion to interchanges as the only means to reduce the accidents or alleviate the congestion.

The 50 percent local match also does not apply if an existing interchange is to be expanded to accommodate congestion. However, local participation will be strongly encouraged and often may be the only way the project will score highly enough to be funded by the TRAC. Many interchanges were built years ago. Increased traffic volumes have made the ramps and merge lanes highly congested, which can lead to increased accidents.

Every instance of ramp improvement or interchange improvement does not necessarily require a 50 percent minimum local match. However, the 50 percent minimum local match is required when new interchanges, or interchange expansions, are requested for economic development or for access to new land to be used for economic expansion.

An interchange justification study must be completed by the project sponsor before the TRAC will approve any new interchange or interchange modification for Tier I construction.

## Principle 9 Intermodal Connectivity

A project may receive up to five points if it has the following characteristics:

- ◆ A non-highway project that provides passenger commuter service sufficient to provide work trips to a substantial number of persons. Tourist excursion services and other recreational focused facilities are not eligible.
- ◆ A highway project that is intended primarily to connect to another mode of transportation. Examples would include highway park-and-ride lots, highway improvements directly to ports, airports or transit centers, or highway connections to intermodal centers.

Projects which have incidental modal connections shall not receive points. For instance, a project whose primary intent is to expand highway capacity will not receive intermodal points for merely including or connecting to a park and ride facility. If the park-and-ride facility is a minor component of the project's cost or scope, the highway project should not receive multi-modal points.

It must be noted that although this scoring system is primarily intended for highway projects, the TRAC will consider funding other modes.

## Principle 10 Economic Development Scoring

The scoring of economic development factors is performed by the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) in conjunction with ODOT. Department of Development officials utilize strict guidelines to award economic development points. Documentation is required from investing parties indicating the intent to locate, expand, invest, or create employment opportunities, contingent upon the construction of the Major New Capacity project.

The intent is to identify projects which directly create new economic development or job retention which would not otherwise have occurred. The definition of economic development states that new investment or employment or retention must be directly tied to construction of the Major New Capacity project, with benefits realized within three years of project completion.

The department forwards candidate projects to ODOD. ODOD regional economic development representatives, in conjunction with ODOT, analyze each project's economic impacts. Economic development points are awarded only if evidence of intent to create jobs is presented, including the actual construction of a new or expanding facility, or documentation indicating the securing of titles, mortgages, letters of credit indicative of intent, or other formal instruments that provide assurance of commitment.

**Job Creation:** Job Creation is defined as the number of non-retail jobs generated as a direct result of the Major New Capacity project construction. The factor is broken down to measure immediate employment generation, occurring within three years of the project's construction, and future employment generation, occurring three to five years after the project's construction.

A project can be awarded up to 10 points of its total project score in this category. Points can be awarded by utilizing the "Immediate" category alone, the "Future" category alone, or where applicable, by combining the scores from both categories. Regardless of the added score, the total will not exceed 10 points.

The TRAC recognizes the benefit of the tourism industry to the state's economy. In order to evaluate fairly the employment benefits, seasonal jobs are discounted based on the months of employment

each year (example: a tourist facility which operates six months per year is discounted by 50 percent). If a tourist facility is a year-round operation, the number of jobs will be considered equally with other development projects.

**Job Retention:** This factor recognizes the impact that infrastructure investment has on retaining a viable economic base in a community or region. Retention needs to be documented and the connection must be explicit. The job retention factor can account for up to five points of a project's base score.

**Economic Distress:** The Department recognizes that not all Ohio counties have an equal ability to attract new businesses and industries from out of state. Some areas may also be unable to attract economic development because of deficiencies in their existing infrastructure.

To achieve some measure of equity among counties, the level of economic distress is evaluated based on the unemployment rate of each county. The economic distress factor awards points to counties having a five year unemployment rate that is higher than the statewide rate over the same period. The factor accounts for up to five points of a project's base score.

**Cost Effectiveness of Investment:** This factor is a measure of the benefit of a project in terms of employment compared to its cost to complete. This criterion was created to provide more weight to the projects which create the greatest number of jobs for the least cost to the state of Ohio. Cost effectiveness of investment is the total cost of the project (in ODOT-controlled funds) divided by the number of jobs created.

The scoring is based on a best case assumption of a \$5 million project creating 100 jobs as the top effectiveness score, with a \$40 million project creating 100 jobs as the lowest score. The \$5 million/100 job scenario is based upon a diamond interchange, which generally costs about \$5 million, attracting a new 100 job employer. Up to five points of a project's base score can come from this factor.

**Level of Investment:** Level of investment refers to the amount of non-retail, private sector capital investment attracted to the state as a direct result of a Major New Capacity project. Like job creation, the investment has to be generated within three years of a Major New Capacity project's construction. Level of Investment is weighted at up to five points of a project's base score.

Number of Jobs (Immediate 0-3 years)		100 - 199	200 - 399	400 - 599	600 - 799	800
Points:		2	4	6	8	10
Future Number of Jobs (3+ years to 5 years)		100 - 799	800 - 1199	>1200		
Points:		2	4	6		
Number of Jobs Retained		25 - 49	50 - 99	100 - 149	150 - 199	200
Points:		1	2	3	4	5
County's 5-year Unemployment Rate in Relation to Statewide Rate		1 - 10% Greater than Statewide Rate	10.1 - 20% Greater than Statewide Rate	20.1 - 25% Greater than Statewide Rate	25.1 - 30% Greater than Statewide Rate	30.1% or Greater than Statewide Rate
Points:		1	2	3	4	5
ODOT's Cost/# of Jobs Created	>\$400.000 per job	\$300.001 - \$399.999 per job	\$150.001 - \$300.000 per job	\$100.001 - \$150.000 per job	\$50.001 - \$100.000 per job	\$50.000 or less per job
Points:	0	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of Investment (Immediate 0-3 years)		\$50,000 - 4.99 Million	\$5 - 9.99 Million	\$10 - 14.99 Million	\$15 - 19.99 Million	>\$20 Million
Points:		1	2	3	4	5

## Principle 11 Retail and Tourism

The TRAC adopted its policy on proposed retail facilities for these reasons:

The amount of capital available in each household for retail expenditures is fixed\*. In other words, the average family has only so much of its income available for discretionary retail purchases. Providing additional retail outlets, such as new malls, does not increase the amount of disposable income that families possess. New retail outlets tend to redistribute existing retail activity; they do not raise the amount of money available in the economy for retail expenditures.

The TRAC recognizes that some regions view new retail development as a component of their economic development strategies. If a region's metropolitan planning organization includes retail as a component in its development strategy, the TRAC will take that under consideration in awarding points for economic development.

The TRAC does award points for projects which facilitate new manufacturing, distribution centers, processing plants, or new office development. New manufacturing capacity allows opportunities for exports and for greater manufacturing productivity. Increasing exports, or improving productivity, does create new capital which can be invested in Ohio.

The TRAC initially did not award points for projects associated with tourism, adopting the theory that tourism dollars are very similar to retail dollars - - that is, new development tends to redistribute existing dollars and not create new capital.

The TRAC has received numerous comments from many tourist communities urging that economic development points be awarded for projects which facilitate tourist travel. Some argue that tourism attracts out-of-state dollars and it should be encouraged in the TRAC's project-selection process. After considering comments received during the project selection process public comment period, the TRAC decided to award points for projects related to tourism development.

However, the points are weighted by the length of the tourist season involved. For instance, if a tourist facility is a year-round facility which provides permanent full-time jobs, the number of jobs will be considered equally with other types of development. If the tourist facility is open only four months of the year, the jobs will be discounted by two-thirds to reflect the seasonal nature of the employment provided.

\* **Note:** ODOT reviewed the literature on transportation and economic development before adopting its position on retail employment. The best technical documentation for this position comes from the APrimer on Transportation, Productivity and Economic Development, @ the Transportation Research Board, National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 342, 1991.

## Principle 12 Fixed Transit Line Evaluation

The surrogate measures and the rationale for selecting them are described below:

### 1. Directional Peak Hours Transit Ridership

The existing ADT and V/C measures will be substituted by a single measure called Peak Hours Transit Ridership. The rationale for this substitution is twofold. First, transit ridership, like auto traffic, is

Ridership	Points	Ridership	Points
3,630 +	40	1,695	21
3,380	38	1,452	18
3,045	36	1,210	15
2,905	34	970	12
2,660	32	725	9
2,420	30	485	6
2,180	27	240	3
1,935	24	<240	0

heavily concentrated in the peak work commute periods. Transit's primary benefits occur during the peak work commute periods. Transit's primary benefits occur during the same times when V/C ratios tend to be the worst, and, therefore, transit ridership serves as a comparable surrogate for the V/C measure.

Second, the need for additional highway capacity is based primarily on peak-hour traffic volumes and the corresponding volume to capacity (V/C) ratios rather than ADT. ADT, as an indicator of daily use rather than peak-hour demand, does not effectively measure public transportation's ability to meet the need for additional capacity.

The maximum score available under transit ridership will be 40 points, the same as the combined total score under both the ADT and V/C measures. The threshold values and point scale were derived by first assigning a maximum of 40 points to peak-hour transit ridership in excess of 3,630 passengers. This is equivalent to the minimum number of new transit riders necessary to reduce the V/C ratio of a two-lane urban interstate from 1.5 (the highest ratio currently used in the criteria) to 0.75 (the level of congestion usually necessary for ODOT to seriously consider adding highway capacity). The point scale was then derived for lower ridership thresholds that approximate the respective changes in the V/C ratio between 1.5 and 0.75 as shown in the table on Page 9 of the criteria. Table A identifies the various ridership thresholds and corresponding point totals.

## **2. Roadway Classification**

Major transit investments are usually made to serve travel markets in corridors where an interstate or freeway/expressway already exists and the transit project has the potential to serve as a viable transportation option to driving. Therefore, a surrogate roadway classification equivalent to an interstate (five points) or principal arterial (two points) will be assigned to each transit project. If a proposed transit project parallels either of these types of facilities, it will receive a score based on the classification of the parallel facility. If the transit project parallels both types of facilities, it will receive five points. If a proposed transit project does not parallel an existing highway facility, it will be assigned points equivalent to the classification for the type of highway facility that would be necessary without the transit improvement.

## **3. Accident Rate**

As with roadway classification, transit projects will be assigned a surrogate accident rate for either an interstate or principal arterial highway facility. If a proposed transit project parallels either of these types of facilities, it will receive a score based on the average accident rate of the parallel facility. If the transit project parallels both types of facilities, it will be assigned the highest average accident rate of the parallel facilities. If a proposed transit project does not parallel an existing highway facility, it will be assigned the average accident rate in the region for the type of highway facility that would be necessary without the transit improvement. The threshold values and point totals will be identical to those in the Accident Rate Table.

## **Principle 13 Non-Traditional Project Funding**

The TRAC's focus will be upon the acquisition, expansion, or enhanced operation of highway and non-traditional modes of transportation which facilitate movement of people and goods on corridors of statewide interest. Corridors of statewide interest include interstates, macro corridors, and National Highway System routes. The TRAC intends to leave basic operating expenses and routine maintenance expenses as the responsibility of the localities, transit agencies, and other local entities responsible for transit and other commuter assistance services.

This policy is analogous to the priority given to the higher roadway classifications in the scoring system. The TRAC's priorities will be given to corridors of statewide — not local — significance.

One reason the TRAC is not emphasizing local commuter operations in its Major New Capacity construction program is that it already provides significant funds for multi-modal commuter operations through the Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality funding program. Funding totals equal approximately \$40 million annually for Ohio and are allocated from the federal government to ODOT.

Instead of putting these funds into projects, ODOT intentionally allocates these funds to the eligible metropolitan areas for use in a wide variety of flexible, multi-modal projects in their areas. At \$40 million annually, these funds equal approximately 15 percent of the funds ODOT spends for new construction.

## **Principle 14 Bypass Project Selection Criteria**

This principle summarizes the TRAC policies and procedures for selecting bypass projects. It includes the principles for selecting the scoring criteria and how the criteria are used to score bypass projects. It also contains scoring tables and protocols on how the process will be conducted.

The existing points scale for ADT and ADTT will be reduced by half and the percentage of ADT and ADTT diverted from the current facility to the new facility will replace the reduction in points. The points

awarded for v/c ratio will also be reduced by half and points for the number of impediments avoided by the traffic on the new facility will be added. Points for the size of the community/communities bypassed will replace the points normally awarded for roadway classification.

All other criteria under the categories of economic development, non-ODOT participation, intermodal connectivity and urban revitalization remain the same.

Major New Bypass Project Selection Criteria		
GOAL	FACTORS	MAXIMUM SCORE
Transportation Efficiency	Average daily traffic - volume of traffic on a daily average.	5
	Percentage of vehicles diverted - percentage of vehicles projected to be diverted from current location in twenty years.	5
	Number of impediments avoided - the number of recurrent congestion points that would be avoided by the bypass.	10
	Volume to capacity ratio - a measure of a highways congestion.	10
	City size - population of city/cities being bypassed.	5
	Macro corridor completion - Does the project contribute to the completion of a macro corridor?	10
Safety	Accident Rate - number of accidents per 1 million miles of travel during a 3-year period.	15
<b>Transportation points account for at least 70% of a project's base score</b>		<b>70</b>

**Transportation Factors:**

**1) Average Daily Traffic**

Average daily traffic is the volume of existing traffic on the existing route annualized to a daily average. For purposes of major new capacity project data analysis, the traffic is averaged over the entire length of the project. ADT is provided by ODOT traffic counts.

Truck ADT	Points	ADT	Points
>9600	5	>64000	5
7201 - 9600	4	48000 - 63999	4
4801 - 7200	3	32000 - 47999	3
2401 - 4800	2	16000 - 31999	2
0 - 2400	1	0 - 15999	

**2) Percentage of Traffic Diverted**

Percentage of traffic diverted is the percentage of average daily traffic and average daily truck traffic that would be diverted from the current facility on to the bypass if constructed in the design year. The diversion percentage will come from feasibility studies and origin and destination studies that will be completed for the project area. ODOT will review and provide consistency.

% of Trucks Diverted	Points	% ADT Diverted	Points
>50	5	>52	5
40-49	4	44-51	4
30-39	3	36-43	3
20-29	2	28-35	2
10-19	1	20-27	1

**3) Impediments**

The number of impediments is the number of recurrent congestion points on the current facility that would be avoided by traveling on the proposed bypass. Specific items that qualify as an impediment would be a signalized intersection, un-signalized intersections with stop signs, a reduction in the

Number of Impediments	Points
>18	10
18	9
16	8
14	7
12	6
10	5
8	4
6	3
4	2
2	1

geometrics of the roadway such as a bridge pier that does not allow standard roadway or shoulder widths, a drawbridge, or a non-grade separated railroad crossing.

#### 4) Volume to Capacity Ratio

Volume to capacity (v/c) ratio is a simple, accurate, universally recognized measure of congestion. It is TRAC policy to use the v/c ratio as a criterion because the v/c ratio reflects the following policy objectives:

- ◆ Reducing congestion improves the quality of life
- ◆ Reducing congestion reduces travel time thereby increasing economic efficiency. Time lost to delay is expensive to businesses, translating into economic inefficiencies which raise the cost of doing business, making Ohio less competitive.

Inherent within the v/c ratio are factors which reflect other transportation goals:

- ◆ High congestion contributes to accidents.
- ◆ The v/c ratio is sensitive to local conditions. A rural, two-lane route with many curves and hills, narrow pavement, narrow shoulders, and significant truck volumes has a very low capacity.

Even without high volumes, as experienced in urban areas, a rural route with a lowered capacity because of its narrow pavements or truck volumes still may have a high volume-to-capacity ratio. Therefore, the v/c ratio is a good reflection of factors important for safety, congestion relief, local economic development, and regional diversity.

Like average daily traffic, the v/c ratio is averaged over the entire length of the existing facility. Volume is equal to ADT and capacity is the design volume of the facility. The v/c ratio is calculated for the mainline of a facility, and does not consider intersection congestion. The v/c ratio is calculated by ODOT with the same capacity thresholds for each of the roadway classifications statewide.

VC Ratio	Points
>1.45	10
1.35-1.45	9
1.25-1.34	8
1.15-1.24	7
1.05-1.14	6
0.95-1.04	5
0.85-0.94	4
0.75-0.84	3
0.65-0.74	2
0.55-0.64	1

This criterion relates to **ACCESS OHIO** Goal 3 (Transportation Efficiency).

#### 5) Community Size

Community size is the population of the village, city or cities that are proposed to be bypassed. A community is defined as an incorporated city or village. The scoring scale for this factor is adjacent.

This criterion was selected because of the impact that this factor can have on the long term economic vitality of the bypassed community. Academic studies show that communities with more population are more likely to sustain their economic activity once a bypass has been constructed around it.

Community Population	Points
>25,000	5
20,000 - 25,000	4
15,000 - 19,999	3
10,000 - 14,999	2
2,000 - 9,999	1

Communities with less than 2,000 persons will receive no points from this criterion because of their low probability to recover economically from a bypass. Communities may combine their population for this criterion if more than one is being bypassed. The source of population figures will be the Ohio Department of Development's projections for the current year.

## **Principle 15 Urban Revitalization**

The TRAC recognizes the importance of urban revitalization to the state's long-term economic and social health. Economic development in Ohio's inner cities can be the driving force to resolving many of the challenges faced by these areas.

Projects that support re-investment in an urban core, attract economic development into the city or which help a city retain existing jobs would be given higher priority.

In order to identify these projects we will utilize the focus areas from the *Ohio Urban Revitalization: Policy Agenda & Task Force Report*. The focus areas referred to as community asset partnership (cap) zones are defined as municipalities with populations in excess of 19,000 as reported in the most recent decennial census. In addition, the CAP zones must be comprised of two or more contiguous census tracts, each of which has at least 20 percent of the population at or below the national poverty level. The zones may include other census tracts contiguous to the high poverty tracts and within the urban area. Also, the median income with the CAP zone must be below the state family median income as reported in the most current decennial census.

The TRAC also recognizes the importance of brownfield site development. Brownfield sites are defined as abandoned, idled, or under used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. To qualify as an abandoned or underutilized site in this category, the site should previously have supported economic or residential activity, excluding agricultural production, or served a public purpose. The majority of these sites are located in urban areas where heavy manufacturing and other industrial activities have occurred, but some can be found in the smaller areas where some form of contamination is suspected to exist.

To receive points for brownfield site development, the project must have phase I and II (if warranted) environmental assessments complete and must have a finance plan in place to fund the cleanup.

Projects providing direct access to CAP zone eligible areas or brownfield sites will be given up to ten additional points. This criterion will further the goals established by the urban revitalization task force report dated June 2000.

## **Principle 16 Intelligent Transportation Systems**

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are defined as computer hardware, software, electronic data collection/dissemination systems, and traffic control devices designed to improve the operation of an individual roadway, or the multi-modal operation of a regional transportation system.

The policy of the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) is to use ODOT's Major New Capacity funding to improve the federal and state transportation network. In keeping with this policy, only ITS projects on the state and federal system are eligible for Major New Capacity program funding. While local and county road systems are important to mobility and economic development, other funding sources exist (and indeed have historically been used) to fund ITS projects on such roadways.

In terms of priority, Major New Capacity Program investments in ITS will be focused on the following

functional classifications of roadways:

- ◆ Urban Interstates
- ◆ Other urban freeways/expressways (i.e., “interstate look-alikes”)
- ◆ Rural Interstates
- ◆ Other rural freeways/expressways (i.e., “interstate look-alikes”).

Major New program funding is limited to the capital cost of ITS projects, defined to include field devices, hardware and software, telecommunications, preliminary engineering, design, and systems integration costs associated with the start-up of such systems.

Annual operating and maintenance costs of ITS are ineligible for funding from the Major New Capacity program.

TRAC will consider only ITS projects that are sponsored, planned and designed by ODOT. This does not imply that local public agencies cannot be partners in an ITS project, co-sponsors in its operation, and/or co-sponsors of its capital and operating cost. Indeed, such cooperation is encouraged in the development and operation of the eventual system. However, the TRAC is very concerned with the effective management of these systems, and finds that a leadership role by ODOT is of paramount importance to successful ITS projects. Therefore, all TRAC applications for ITS projects should be submitted by the ODOT district deputy director.

The TRAC has also been concerned with the detail and specificity of previous applications for ITS funding. Therefore, ITS applications for Major New Capacity program funding should be supported by a detailed project plan, which clearly articulates the concept of operation for the system and provides confidence as to the scope, schedule and cost estimate. Importantly, ITS project proposals shall utilize the most cost effective concepts and designs, in keeping with ODOT's *Best ITS Management Practices and Technologies for Ohio* (July, 2001; copies available from the ODOT Office of ITS Program Management).

#### *Eligible Projects*

Through various research efforts, ODOT has determined that incidents are the primary source of delay on Ohio's freeway/expressway system. Therefore, TRAC ITS investments will be focused on freeway management systems, with incident management and traffic control being the primary system functions. Since the moniker “ITS” encompasses a broad range of technologies applied to transportation, TRAC provides the following list to illustrate the type of project elements that are **eligible** for Major New program funding:

Freeway management systems, defined as to include,

- ◆ incident detection systems
- ◆ dynamic message signs
- ◆ closed-circuit television cameras
- ◆ Speed and volume detection
- ◆ weather detection
- ◆ ramp meters
- ◆ telecommunications systems
- ◆ control centers
- ◆ reference markers as part of a new freeway management system
- ◆ traveler advisory telephone systems

Components installed on contiguous or intersecting roads, intended to improve freeway operation. For example,

- ◆ dynamic message signs on arterial roads approaching freeways
- ◆ integration of arterial signal control with freeway management system components.

ITS components located off of the freeway system, which do not enhance the operation of the freeways, are **ineligible** for Major New program funding. Examples include:

- ◆ arterial signal systems
- ◆ public transit signal preemption/priority systems
- ◆ emergency vehicle signal preemption/priority systems
- ◆ public transit dispatch systems
- ◆ public transit electronic payment systems
- ◆ automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems that do not contribute to freeway/expressway operations

#### *Transportation Management Center Capital Cost*

The TRAC is mostly concerned with the functionality of ITS investments, rather than the physical appearance of components such as transportation management centers. To this end, TRAC has found that very functional transportation management centers can easily fit within 1,500 to 3,000 square feet of office space. TRAC encourages agencies to collocate transportation management functions within the existing office space of ODOT, transit, or city agencies.

If an ITS project application includes construction of a transportation management center, only the space dedicated to freeway management activities will be considered eligible for Major New program funding; local public agencies will be required to fund the balance of transportation management center costs. For other shared infrastructure, such as central computer server for database and operating system, only the prorated share for freeway management activities will be eligible.

Ranking of ITS applications will follow the Major New project selection criteria

# Protocols and Procedures

## Section I

### Duties and Mission

The powers, duties and responsibilities of the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) are delineated in Ohio Revised Code 5512.02 to 5512.09. To summarize the duties of the TRAC:

- ◆ Prioritize Major New Capacity projects for the Ohio Department of Transportation.
- ◆ Publish a selection process explaining how it prioritized the Major New Capacity construction projects.
- ◆ Keep the Major New Capacity Program in reasonable fiscal balance.

As cited in the state statute, the TRAC's duties are limited to ODOT's Major New Capacity Program. The TRAC is not involved in the day-to-day operations of ODOT, nor is it involved in other areas such as the selection of projects to repair deficient bridges or pavements. The TRAC's role is limited to the Major New Capacity Program, typically about 20 percent of ODOT's construction program.

In fulfilling its duties, the TRAC operates under the following mission statement:

**To develop and implement a decision making process to direct the Major New Capacity investment decisions of ODOT.**

## Section II

### Nominating and Ranking Projects

#### Nominations

The TRAC's process of prioritizing projects begins with the nomination of a project. The TRAC does not initiate projects. It reviews and ranks projects submitted to it.

Projects may be nominated by:

- ◆ The Ohio Department of Transportation
- ◆ Metropolitan planning organizations
- ◆ County engineers
- ◆ Transit authorities
- ◆ County commissions
- ◆ Municipalities
- ◆ Port authorities

The TRAC discourages members of the general public from nominating projects. The TRAC encourages members of the general public who desire a project to secure a local governmental entity as the sponsor. The TRAC desires to construct projects that are compatible with local planning priorities. If a project is proposed by individuals, it will have to be referred to the local planning officials to ensure its compatibility with local plans. Therefore, it would be preferable for local project advocates to consult with their local officials before approaching the TRAC.

## Nominating forms

To nominate a project, an entity must submit a project application signed by the sponsoring agency and the appropriate ODOT deputy director, signifying his or her awareness of the project. In addition, the application form must be signed by the appropriate MPO, if applicable, signifying that it had been approved or reviewed and commented on.

The project sponsor must submit a resolution from its governing body authorizing the submission of the application to the TRAC. Since one of the guiding principles of the TRAC is to foster an open process that benefits Ohio's overall transportation system, the TRAC strongly urges that project sponsors notify in writing all local governments that might reasonably be believed to be affected by construction of the project. The notification can be made about the time of the TRAC application's submission.

The intent of the application form is to provide the TRAC with an understanding of the project and enough information to rank it. In addition, the TRAC wants to ensure the following screening questions have been answered:

- ◆ Is there a local consensus that the project truly is a priority?
- ◆ How does the project's priority compare to other locally requested projects?
- ◆ Has a transportation problem been clearly identified and does the project solve the identified problem?
- ◆ Have lower cost alternatives been considered?
- ◆ What is the economic development potential of the project?

## Timing of Nominations

Projects may be nominated at any time of the year. However, the TRAC will operate on an annual cycle. Sponsors nominating projects mid-cycle probably will wait until a new statewide projects list is published before receiving an official response to their nomination. Nominations normally will occur by May and a draft list of projects will be published approximately in December. A final project list usually will be adopted by June 30.

## Annual Cycle

The typical annual cycle will be as follows:

**May** - MPOs, ODOT districts and other responsible parties submit project nomination requests to the TRAC.

**August through October** - TRAC holds up to six public hearings and other working meetings to review nominated projects.

**October to December** - ODOT and metropolitan planning organizations begin process to update the biennial Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

**December** - Draft Major New Construction Program released for public comment.

**January through March** - MPOs and ODOT districts hold public meetings on projects under their jurisdiction to be included in the upcoming State Transportation Improvement Program.

**April 1** - The draft STIP is to be published for public comment.

**July** - Updated, four year Major New Capacity program published by TRAC to coincide with State Transportation Improvement Program. The STIP will include all categories of projects, with the Major New Capacity program as one component.

These annual dates are tentative. Because of the large number of federal approvals necessary for adoption of the State Transportation Improvement Program, the final adoption can occur as late as October. However, these dates represent the desired annual cycle.

### **Transportation Scores**

ODOT's Division of Planning will conduct the technical analyses of projects to provide the TRAC with recommended transportation scores. The staff will review the various transportation components of a project to award a draft score for transportation. As part of the hearing and public comment process, any interested party can comment on the sufficiency and accuracy of ODOT's draft transportation scores. ODOT staff will meet with interested parties and review data provided by them. Staff will consider whether attributes such as traffic volumes, levels of congestion and accident rates need to be revised based on the information presented by them.

The ODOT staff will make recommendations to the TRAC as to what the transportation score of each project should be. If a score is disputed by the project advocate, the ODOT staff shall inform the TRAC members that a score has been appealed. The TRAC will make final decisions on what project scores should be.

### **Economic Development Scores**

Draft economic scores will be presented to the TRAC by the Economic Development subcommittee. The regional economic development officers of the Department of Development will meet with the ODOT's Office of Economic Development. Based on their knowledge, they shall agree on a common economic point recommendation for each project.

TRAC's Economic Development Subcommittee will then facilitate a meeting with the ODOD regional economic development officers and ODOT district planning and programs administrators to review all economic scoring prior to presenting the scores to the TRAC.

The TRAC's Economic Development Subcommittee will consist of three TRAC members, a representative of ODOT's Office of Economic Development and a representative of ODOD.

### **TRAC Decides Appeals**

As with the transportation scores, the TRAC will be the final arbiter of any disputes regarding economic development scores.

Any interested parties can appeal the economic development scores to the TRAC. If the TRAC requests, staff will review any information presented to appeal a score and advise the TRAC whether the score should be changed. Final decisions will be made by TRAC.

### **Scoring on Non-Traditional Projects**

Periodically, non-traditional projects will be nominated to the TRAC. Projects such as intermodal transfer facilities, transit stations, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), or water port improvements will be requested. These projects do not lend themselves to the same type of analysis and ranking that is used for highway projects. ODOT does not have a formal ranking process to cover non-traditional projects. The staff will evaluate these projects using the following criteria:

- ◆ Cost
- ◆ Consistency with local transportation plans
- ◆ The stated preference of local officials for the project in comparison with other local requests
- ◆ Affect of the project upon the movement of goods and people
- ◆ Whether the project advances other transportation goals
- ◆ Estimated volume of usage and comparison of that usage to other transportation projects' ability to transport goods and people

Based on the qualitative and quantitative measures, ODOT staff will make a recommendation to the TRAC as to whether a project should be funded.

### **Selection of Projects**

It should be emphasized, the TRAC process does not require that a selected project have a numeric ranking nor that the TRAC must fund projects in order of their ranking. The ranking is a means to help the TRAC generally prioritize and rank projects in order of their transportation and economic development benefits.

However, it is explicit TRAC policy that projects can be selected regardless of their score, ranking, cost, or functional class. The reason is that no ranking system can completely measure all project attributes. If other factors arise that the TRAC finds important to a project, the TRAC can select the project for funding. Such circumstances will happen most frequently with projects that are non traditional.

The Ohio Department of Transportation did extensive review of project-selection processes in other states. No state has devised a process that uniformly and objectively ranks all types of projects in a common ranking system. Comparing dissimilar projects - such as a freight transfer facility compared to a highway widening - is not easily done with one ranking system. Rather than devise many ranking systems for different types of projects, the problem is addressed by allowing the TRAC the latitude to select projects based on other, subjective factors beyond a project's score.

### **TRAC Options**

The TRAC has several options after it reviews a project. It may:

- ◆ Agree to fund a project for construction during the following four-year period.
- ◆ Agree to share funding of a project with another entity.
- ◆ Agree to fund some phase of project development, such as preliminary engineering, design or right of way acquisition to prepare it for construction funding in a later year.
- ◆ Ask the staff to provide a more in-depth feasibility analysis to clarify the potential cost and benefits of a project if few project details are certain.
- ◆ Ask the project sponsor to scale back the project and re-submit the project in a lesser form.
- ◆ Reject the request for funding.

## Section III

### TRAC Decision-Making Process

#### Arranging Projects in Tiers

After reviewing all project requests for a given year, the ODOT staff will present a draft, updated Major New Construction Program to the TRAC. The program will be divided into three categories: Tier I, Tier II and Tier III.

The following definitions and policies will apply to the tiers:

Tier I - The group of projects recommended for construction during the upcoming six-year construction period.

Tier I projects will exceed the funding available for new construction by no more than 20 percent over the six-year period. The 20 percent figure will provide a reserve of projects so that more projects can be ready for construction if funding exceeds projections or if scheduled projects are delayed.

Tier II - The group of projects funded for additional environmental, design or right of way development activities necessary before the projects would be available for construction.

While Tier I projects are the projects selected for construction in the next six-year period, Tier II comprises the projects under development for the period beyond the current six-year planning horizon. In other words, projects in Tier II are projects under development without committed construction funding.

Tier II projects also comprise a pool of ready projects that could be accelerated should additional funding become available during the six-year period. The dollar volume of projects under development in Tier II should not exceed 100 percent of the likely funding level for an eight-year period.

Included in Tier II could be projects that are under review for feasibility but are not undergoing fullscale environmental studies or actual design. Because some project requests are only generally described and lack environmental or engineering details, some low-cost feasibility analysis may be necessary before a project can be adequately ranked. Projects undergoing such a feasibility study would be placed in Tier II. Subsequent analysis, however, could result in a decision not to fund the project.

By placing a project in Tier II, the TRAC is not obligated to fund that project sometime in the future. Most Tier II projects are expected to eventually be constructed but it is possible that each year new, higher priority projects will be proposed. These projects could lead to the halting of work on other Tier II projects. In other words, Tier II projects are under active development but they are not guaranteed construction funding in later years. They merely are the most promising of the many projects which are not presently funded for construction.

Tier III is the group of projects which are reviewed by the TRAC but are not recommended for further development. Projects can be placed in Tier III status for several reasons including:

- ◆ A lack of funding
- ◆ Low scores
- ◆ Excessive cost

Generally, Tier III projects will not be funded or advanced through the Major New Capacity program. Any local community that expends funds to develop a Tier III project in hopes that it will later have a higher score does so at its own risk. By placement in Tier III, the TRAC is indicating it expects not to fund the project with Major New Capacity funds.

Traditionally, the Major New Capacity Program funds about 12 percent of all the funding requested over a four-year period. Many projects are relegated to Tier III, not because they lack value but because funding is limited and only the highest-scoring projects are selected. Project sponsors whose projects are in Tier III are advised there are several other possible means for financing, but each has criteria that must be met. Other funding sources are:

- ◆ **Safety Funding** - If the project improves a site that has a demonstrated accident history, it may be eligible for ODOT's safety program. ODOT allocates about \$30 million annually for high-accident sites. Sites must appear on the list of the top 350 accident locations statewide, have a clear accident potential or be in a locality's top 10 highest crash sites to be funded.
- ◆ **Small Cities Program** - ODOT provides small cities under 25,000, not located within an MPO, with up to \$1 million every four years for highway improvements. The projects must be developed by the localities, which also must provide a 20 percent match. These are federal funds and therefore all federal environmental, design and right of way standards must be met. ODOT spends about \$7 million annually on this program.
- ◆ **Metropolitan Planning Organizations** - About \$100 million annually is allocated to Ohio's 16 metropolitan planning organizations. In addition, ODOT provides about \$40 million in Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality funds to MPOs in areas with air pollution problems.
- ◆ **County Bridge Program** - ODOT provides \$30 million annually to county engineers for rehabilitation and replacement of county bridges.
- ◆ **County Surface Transportation Program** - ODOT provides \$20 million annually to county engineers for roadway, bridge and safety projects on local roads.
- ◆ **City Bridge Program** - ODOT provides \$8 million annually for the replacement and rehabilitation of bridges within municipalities.
- ◆ **Railroad/Highway Crossings** - ODOT provides \$15 million annually to the Ohio Rail Development Commission to place flashers and gates at railroad crossings.
- ◆ **Transportation Enhancements** - ODOT provides about \$18 million annually to local communities for enhancement activities, such as bikeways, landscaping and pedestrian paths. A competitive statewide process selects projects outside MPO areas; MPOs select projects within metropolitan areas.
- ◆ **Pavement Funding/Bridge Funding** - ODOT spends more than \$300 million annually on state route pavement improvements and about \$220 million annually on bridge repairs on the state highway system.
- ◆ **State Infrastructure Bank and alternative financing** - ODOT is one of the few states to operate a State Infrastructure Bank (SIB.) The SIB is a revolving loan fund. Project sponsors can borrow money from the SIB for their project and repay the loan under better-than-market rates. SIB loans have been repaid with MPO funds, local taxes, property assessments, tax increment financing and other means.
- ◆ The Department of Development's **Roadway Development Fund**.

ODOT's *Program Resource Guide* further explains these and other state/federal transportation programs. The sponsor of any Tier III project can consult with the local ODOT district office to determine if its project qualifies for one of these other programs.

## The Role of Environmental Analysis

The TRAC does not directly rate projects based upon their environmental impact. However, the environmental impact has a significant influence on whether a project is constructed and in what form the project is constructed.

The first environmental screening comes at the local planning stage. Every metropolitan planning organization adopts a long-range plan. The TRAC can fund only projects which are included in the longrange plan. If a region does not want projects in environmentally sensitive areas, it can exclude such projects from its plans. Neighborhoods, parklands, agricultural areas, historic districts, well fields and other such resources can be protected if the MPO keeps out of its plan projects any which would impact those areas.

Separate from the TRAC and the MPO planning process is the long-standing federal environmental process commonly referred to as the NEPA process, for the National Environmental Policy Act process. This federal process involves evaluating each proposed project individually for its impact on the natural and human environment. This analysis occurs prior to the design of the project. This stage would normally be a Tier II activity. The TRAC will make a specific and explicit decision whether to invest the funds necessary into a Tier II project to complete the expensive and time-consuming environmental process. As a result of the environmental process, three outcomes are possible:

- ◆ The project could be built as envisioned.
- ◆ The project could be altered to avoid environmental impact.
- ◆ The impacts could be determined to be so great that the “No Build” option is selected.

The decision not to build a project because of its environmental impact is always an alternative in the environmental process.

Project sponsors should realize that placement in Tier II and the commencing of environmental studies does not guarantee a project will be built. At the end of the environmental phase, the TRAC will have to reconsider each project to determine if its costs and its benefits have been altered as a result of the environmental process. It is possible for a project's cost to rise significantly during the environmental process as alignments are changed to avoid impacts.

### Project Cost Increases

As projects progress through the development process, it is not unusual for the cost estimate of a project to increase. Often, an accurate cost estimate cannot be determined until well into the final design. Because the TRAC is dealing with a four year program of projects, it is necessary to select projects for construction prior to the completion of the design stage. To ensure that all projects are treated fairly during the selection process, the TRAC adopts the following guidelines:

**Cost increases less than 10 Percent.** The ODOT Major New Program Manager may approve project cost increases up to 10 percent if the costs are justified. The program manager will work with the ODOT district and local public agency (LPA) sponsor to review the reasons for the cost increase.

**Cost increases between 10 and 20 percent.** The ODOT Major New Program Manager and TRAC staff will review the justification for the cost increase with the project sponsor. Depending on the cause, the program manager and TRAC staff can approve the increase or refer it to the TRAC for consideration.

**Cost increases over 20 Percent.** The project sponsor must request a supplemental increase from the TRAC.

**Cost increases in excess of \$5 Million** All cost increases greater than \$5 million, regardless of the percentage cost increase, will be referred to the TRAC for consideration. If a project is under construction and necessitates immediate attention, the ODOT director may approve additional funding for the project. The TRAC will be notified by the director of such action.

## **IV TRAC Rules of Order**

### **Rules of Order**

All open meetings of the TRAC shall be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

### **Officers**

The officers of the TRAC shall be a chairman and a vice chairman. The officers shall perform the duties described in the TRAC Rules of Order. The director of ODOT shall serve as TRAC chairman. The vice chairman shall be elected annually to serve a term of one year and until a successor is elected. The vice chairman shall preside at all meetings of the TRAC when and while the chairman is absent.

The chairman shall appoint an ODOT staff member to act as secretary to the TRAC. The secretary shall attend all meetings of the TRAC and keep accurate records of the proceedings. In the absence of the secretary, a secretary pro tempore shall be appointed by the chairman.

### **Notice of Meetings**

Notice of meetings shall be provided as specified in Section 5512-1-01 of the Administrative Code. A public hearing held pursuant to Section 5512.05 of the Revised Code is a regular meeting of the TRAC, and notice shall be given as required for a regular meeting. The TRAC may schedule a working session or any other meeting as a special or emergency meeting, and appropriate public notice shall be provided. Meetings may be called by the chairman, vice chairman or a majority of the TRAC members.

ODOT Central Office and district staff may assist any interested party in preparing presentations to the TRAC if the interested party requests assistance.

### **Vote Notice**

No vote on a policy or project can occur unless all TRAC members have been given 14 day notice that the vote was to occur. To waive the 14-day rule, at least two-thirds of the members in attendance must vote to waive the 14-day notice.

ODOT staff will make every reasonable effort to schedule all TRAC meetings 30 days in advance so that all TRAC members can attend. It shall be ODOT's goal to schedule all working meetings and all hearings so that all TRAC members may attend.

### **Proxies**

TRAC members may not send representatives to the meetings in their place and members may not vote by proxy.

## **Quorums**

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the TRAC members.

Quorums must be present for the following actions:

- ◆ A change of any TRAC policy.
- ◆ A decision regarding the disposition of any project.
- ◆ The adoption of any draft or final Major New Capacity Program.
- ◆ Adoption of the preliminary engineering, design or right of way list.

## **Votes**

Actions of the TRAC require a formal, recorded vote of the TRAC members. Five affirmative votes are needed to approve:

- ◆ A change of any TRAC policy.
- ◆ A decision regarding the disposition of any project.
- ◆ Adoption of the preliminary engineering, design or right of way list.
- ◆ Adoption of any draft or final Major New Capacity Program.

All other votes require an affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum present.

## **Minutes**

All open meetings of the TRAC shall be audio or audio/video recorded. The secretary shall maintain and secure all minutes, recordings, correspondence, records, documents and files of the TRAC. The written minutes shall specify the date, time and place of the meeting, which members were in attendance, and a copy of the agenda. The minutes also shall contain a written summary of all motions and votes. The summary shall include the date, time, issue, and the number of yeas, nays and abstentions. Upon approval of the TRAC, the minutes shall be signed by the secretary.

Any person may receive a copy of the written minutes and recording, upon request and the payment of the actual cost of copying.

## **Project Summaries and Record**

A written, official summary of each project considered by the TRAC shall be recorded. The disposition of each project also shall be recorded. The written, secure record of each project shall be kept by the Office of Planning and shall include at least the following:

- ◆ The official project application form.
- ◆ The official economic development background and scoring form.
- ◆ Any written material presented by project advocates or opponents.
- ◆ A formal, written staff recommendation to the TRAC regarding the disposition of the project.
- ◆ A formal, written explanation of the TRAC's disposition of that project.

## **TRAC Review and Comment**

When reviewing the draft and final projects list, members will have the right to challenge any project score. Any projects so identified will be pulled from the draft list for discussion and review by the TRAC members. Ultimately, if a consensus is not reached, the Chair will at some point call for a vote on each

disputed project and a majority vote of five members will decide the disposition of any individual project.

In deciding on the disposition of a project, the TRAC can consider additional factors beyond a project's score. Issues that can be considered include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Timing of the project's development in relationship to other governmental or private sector activities, such as economic or urban development schedules.
- ◆ Whether the project is non-traditional and has valid attributes which are not captured by the scoring system.
- ◆ Emergencies such as natural disasters or catastrophic infrastructure failures.
- ◆ Very low or very high costs associated with projects. Inordinately high costs may preclude funding despite a project's score whereas low-cost projects may be funded with a lower score.
- ◆ Previously unanticipated delays to a project's readiness which may force a delay regardless of the project's score.


### **Public Review**

Once the TRAC has agreed to the disposition of all projects, the projects will be assigned to a tier and to a stage of development or study. A draft Major New Construction program shall be published and submitted to a public comment period. To the extent possible, ODOT will attempt to coordinate this public comment period with the update of the State Transportation Improvement Program. The details of the public comment process for the State Transportation Improvement Program are available under separate cover. In summary, the STIP process calls for a public comment period for all MPO project lists and for the statewide projects list.

After the public comment period, the TRAC will review the comments received. It may alter or amend the Major New Construction program based upon the comment. Again, the altering or amending of any project must be subjected to a vote of the TRAC. A final, complete, four-year Major New Construction program will be subjected to a final vote by the TRAC before its final adoption.

### **Report to the Public and General Assembly**

At least once every biennium, the TRAC shall publish a summary of its policies, its project list and its decision-making process in developing the project list. This report shall be the official report of the TRAC to the General Assembly as required by the Ohio Revised Code.

  
Gordon Proctor, TRAC Chairman  
December 9, 2003