

§611.9 Project justification criteria for grants and loans for fixed guideway systems.

In order to approve a grant or loan for a proposed new starts project under 49 U.S.C. 5309, and to approve entry into preliminary engineering and final design as required by section 5309(e)(6), FTA must find that the proposed project is justified as described in section 5309(e)(1)(B).

(a) To make the statutory evaluations and assign ratings for project justification, FTA will evaluate information developed locally through alternatives analyses and refined through preliminary engineering and final design.

(1) The method used to make this determination will be a multiple measure approach in which the merits of candidate projects will be evaluated in terms of each of the criteria specified by this section.

(2) The measures for these criteria are specified in Appendix A to this rule.

(3) The measures will be applied to the project as it has been proposed to FTA for new starts funding under 49 U.S.C. 5309.

(4) The ratings for each of the criteria will be expressed in terms of descriptive indicators, as follows: "high," "medium-high," "medium," "low-medium," or "low."

(b) The criteria are as follows:

(1) Mobility Improvements.

(2) Environmental Benefits.

(3) Operating Efficiencies.

(4) Transportation System User Benefits (Cost-Effectiveness).

(5) Existing land use, transit supportive land use policies, and future patterns.

(6) Other factors. Additional factors, including but not limited to:

(i) The degree to which the programs and policies (e.g., parking policies, etc.) are in place as assumed in the forecasts,

(ii) Project management capability, including the technical capability of the grant recipient to construct the project, and

(iii) Additional factors relevant to local and national priorities and relevant to the success of the project.

(c) In evaluating proposed new starts projects under these criteria:

(1) As a candidate project proceeds through preliminary engineering and final design, a greater degree of certainty is expected with respect to the scope of the project and a greater level of commitment is expected with respect to land use.

(2) For the criteria under §611.9(b)(1)-(4), the proposed new start will be compared to the baseline alternative.

(d) In evaluating proposed new starts projects under these criteria, the following factors shall be considered:

(1) The direct and indirect costs of relevant alternatives;

(2) Factors such as congestion relief, improved mobility, air pollution, noise pollution, energy consumption, and all associated ancillary and mitigation costs necessary to carry out each alternative analyzed, and recognize reductions in local infrastructure costs achieved through compact land use development;

(3) Existing land use, mass transportation supportive land use policies, and future patterns;

(4) The degree to which the project increases the mobility of the mass transportation dependent population or promotes economic development;

(5) Population density and current transit ridership in the corridor;

(6) The technical capability of the grant recipient to construct the project;

(7) Differences in local land, construction, and operating costs; and

(8) Other factors as appropriate.

(e) FTA may amend the measures for these criteria, pending the results of ongoing studies regarding transit benefit evaluation methods.

(f) The individual ratings for each of the criteria described in this section will be combined into a summary rating of "high," "medium-high," "medium," "low-medium," or "low" for project justification. "Other factors" will be considered as appropriate.

§611.11 Local financial commitment criteria.

In order to approve a grant or loan under 49 U.S.C. 5309, FTA must find that the proposed project is supported