GULF COAST FY 2025-2028 TIP PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

Presented To

GULF COAST METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Gulf Regional Planning Commission

Gulf Coast FY 2025-2028 TIP
Project Selection and Prioritization Process

MULTIMODAL GROUP

Projects that mainly focus on mobility and access for vehicles and freight include but are not limited to, expanded capacity, widening, new roads, road extensions, traffic operations, access management, reconstruction, etc. The evaluation and scoring criteria are below:

Economic Vitality. A transportation project can affect an area's ability to attract new businesses and encourage them to stay and grow. Success in such an endeavor can have the public benefit of raising property values in the vicinity of the project. Some projects have obvious economic development impacts that expand a community's tax base and enhance the quality of life for people who live in the area. In addition to selecting the best transportation projects for improved freight mobility, it is important to target projects that spur economic growth and societal benefits.

- Addresses freight bottlenecks and other impediments – Mitigates impediments on freight corridors such as deficient bridges, bridge clearance issues, railroad crossing impedances, road weight issues, commercial vehicle crash locations, congestion, and delay or intersection geometry issues.

  ✓ Tier 1 and Tier 2 freight connectors, Critical Urban Freight Connectors (CUFC), Critical Rural Freight Connectors (CRFC), Intermodal Connectors

- Provides access to developed and undeveloped areas – A road improving access to specific areas affects the likelihood of development.

  ✓ Frontage roads

- Improves the quality of transportation for rural centers – Many of these areas are located just beyond the fringe of the urban area. Travel patterns and population growth in these centers are greatly affected by the metropolitan area due to daily commuting and freight movements. Many of these areas are experiencing high rates of population growth in recent years, hence increasing traffic on the mostly two-lane roads.

  ✓ Projects in defined rural communities

Mobility & Accessibility. FHWA national performance goals for congestion and reliability seek to achieve a reduction in congestion to improve the efficiency of the transportation system. Projects are given priority that provide reductions in traffic delay and congestion through improved operations or expanded capacity. Reducing congestion reduces travel time, which increases efficiency for individuals and businesses. GRPC measures mobility on Gulf Coast

roadways by estimating roadway capacity and operations. Points are given if a transportation project improves a congested location either directly from the roadway project or indirectly in the area of influence.

- Expand roadway capacity where needed - GRPC developed v/c ratios to provide information on the level of congestion and which roads are approaching or have surpassed their capacity. The capacities are developed using guidelines from the *Florida Department of Transportation's Quality/Level of Service Handbook Generalized Annual Average Daily Volume Tables*.

  ✓ Roads that are at or over capacity

- Provides critical linkages enabling more direct travel - Connectivity benefits play an important part in maintaining and expanding the functionality of the transportation system by providing or supporting alternative travel choices. Connections to improve mobility corridors have a significant impact. Linkages on mobility corridors would have a significant impact.

  ✓ Mobility corridor linkages

Safety. FHWA national performance goals for address improving safety by reducing the number of fatalities and serious injuries. Injury crash rates are used to evaluate and prioritize projects. The identification of hazardous locations is based on actual crashes that have occurred. The analysis will be based on the most recent consecutive three-year period. Safety Analysis Management System (SAMS) data, provided by the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), are used to identify crash locations by linking latitude and longitude coordinates to GIS.

- Provides lighting on mobility corridors or interchanges. GRPC promotes the installation of roadway lighting on the Gulf Coast mobility corridors, with I-10 and Highway 90 providing a continuous east-west route across the three coastal counties. North-south routes would radiate inland from the coast along major roadways.

  ✓ US 90, MS 603, Beatline Road, Highway 49, Popp's Ferry Road, MS 609, MS 57, Gautier-Vancleave Road, MS 613, and MS 63.

- Mitigates or eliminates safety concerns on high crash rate road segments – The project improves corridors with high crash rates. The crash rate for road segments:

$R = \frac{100{,}000{,}000 \times C}{365 \times N \times V \times L}$	R = Crash rate for the road segment expressed as crashes per 100 million vehicle-miles of travel (VMT). C = Total number of crashes in the study period. N = Number of years of data. V = Number of vehicles per day (both directions). L = Length of the roadway segment in miles.

- Addresses aggressive driving in areas with high speeds – Bring the 85th percentile speeds on roads in line with the target speed or posted speed. Implements measures to reduce and stabilize operating speeds, such as narrower lanes, curb extensions, raised intersections, etc. GRPC uses NPMRDS data to identify areas with high average speeds.

  ✓ Identified by travel time data or speed surveys.

System Preservation. Work that is performed to improve or sustain the condition of the transportation facility in a state of good repair. Constructing quality pavement preservation treatments will improve functionality while also enhancing safety.

- Improves roadways with a low pavement PASER rating - Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) uses visual inspection to evaluate pavement surface conditions, identifying different types of pavement distress and linking them to a cause.

  ✓ PASER rating

- Bridge sufficiency rating - A bridge sufficiency rating presented by the Office of State Aid Road Construction will be used to score bridge project submittals.

  ✓ Bridge rating

Management & Operations. Strategies to optimize the performance of existing infrastructure through the implementation of projects designed to preserve capacity and improve the reliability of the transportation system.

- Utilizes innovative technology to improve conditions – Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) projects prepare the region's infrastructure for advanced technologies that provide information, data, communication, and integrated corridor management such as adaptive signalization, signal upgrades, traffic signal priority, surveillance, motorist information systems designed to improve the operation of the transportation system.

  ✓ Technology project

- Apply access management. Limit driveway access and reduce conflict points, including controlling business access.

  ✓ Driveway management, medians, etc.

Resilience & Environment. The ability of the Gulf Coast transportation system to move people around in extreme weather events, major accidents, and equipment or infrastructure failures. The key to resilience is providing alternatives, enabling people to get around despite a disruption.

- Addresses infrastructure that is repeatedly damaged by extreme weather events - Roadways that have low-lying areas are subject to the damaging effects of stormwater inundation during severe weather events.

  ✓ Stormwater inundation history

- Addresses current or future vulnerabilities to evacuation routes - Increased flooding and hurricanes could present extreme public health and emergency management challenges.

  ✓ Evacuation route

- Located in or directly benefits "Communities of Concern" – 23 CFR 450 specifically mandates that MPOs must "seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems.

  ✓ Benefits GRPC identified concentrations of minority or low-income populations

- Provide redundancy in the transportation system.

  ✓ Parallel roads, etc.

- Carbon Reduction Program

  ✓ Projects identified in the Mississippi Carbon Reduction Strategy

Multimodal Connectivity. Connectivity is one of several concepts to describe the ease with which people can travel across the transportation system. Multimodal network connectivity allows people to walk, bike, or use transit to get to where they want to go easily and safely. This is especially important for people who do not drive or do not have access to a motor vehicle.

- Provides pedestrian pathways – Sidewalks or pathways should be included on all roadway projects.

  ✓ Sidewalks or pathways included

- Provides suitable bicycle facilities – FHWA's Bikeway Selection Guide provides guidance for how vehicle volume and speed can be taken into consideration to determine the bikeway that would make roads suitable for bikes. Multiuse pathways and protected bike lanes provide the separation needed for high-volume and high-speed roadways. Shared-use lanes or in-road bike lanes may be suitable for lower speeds and volumes. Wide shoulders should be used in rural areas.

- ✓ The project meets guidance provided by FHWA's Bikeway Selection Guide for bicycle suitability.

- Improves access to transit stops – The project improves safety for pedestrians and bicyclists at transit stops.

  - ✓ Fixed route transit stop

- Locate park and ride lot locations and transit hubs accessible from I-10.

  - ✓ Park and ride lots

Bonus.

- Project Readiness - Project readiness will help ensure that the project is completed as quickly as possible to satisfy federal project delivery performance goals.

  - ✓ A planning study was completed, no right of way required, and preliminary engineering was completed or underway.

- Leveraged Funding

  - ✓ Project uses more than the standard 20% local match.

- National Highway System (NHS) or Mobility Corridor - The NHS includes principal arterials and other connectors important to the economy, defense, and mobility. The NHS was developed by the Department of Transportation (DOT) in cooperation with the states, local officials, and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).

  - ✓ NHS roadway

BICYCLE – PEDESTRIAN – TRANSIT GROUP

Over the past decade, GRPC has demonstrated a consistent effort to improve and expand non-motorized travel options across the region. Since the advent of FHWA safety performance measures to reduce non-motorized injuries and fatalities, this priority is even more crucial to the TIP investment strategy. Ideally, every roadway in the urban planning area would be made suitable for biking and walking. In an effort to realize this goal, the MPO sets aside funding to support the continued improvement and expansion of the bicycle and pedestrian travel network. The primary focus of this group is to provide for improved access and safety for alternative modes of transportation. These "independent" projects will usually be stand-alone in nature, not associated with other federally funded roadway improvements such as reconstruction or widening. Independent projects that provide bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access, such as sidewalks and multiuse pathways. Projects supporting transit could also be funded by this group, including park and ride lots, transit stops, or other transit infrastructure. The evaluation and scoring criteria are below:

- Provides suitable bicycle facilities – FHWA's Bikeway Selection Guide provides guidance for how vehicle volume and speed can be taken into consideration to determine the bikeway that would make roads suitable for bikes. Multiuse pathways and protected bike lanes provide the separation needed for high-volume and high-speed roadways. Shared-use lanes or in-road bike lanes may be suitable for lower speeds and volumes. Wide shoulders should be used in rural areas.

  ✓ Project meets guidance provided by FHWA's Bikeway Selection Guide.

- Located in or directly benefits "Communities of Concern." Based on US Census data, GRPC identifies concentrated areas of minority and low-income populations to assess potential neighborhood or community impacts of transportation projects because of the requirements associated with environmental justice. The identified areas are also used to guide pedestrian and bicycle projects to areas that may have higher than average people without cars that may be walking or biking to jobs, grocery stores, and transit. Projects that improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility in these underserved communities or enhance ADA accessibility are given priority.

  ✓ GRPC identified high concentrations of low-income or minority populations.

- Provides suitable bicycle facilities on mobility corridors – Bicycle facilities that are separated from the travel lanes would be needed on mobility corridors in the urban area due to speeds and volumes on these roadways. GRPC promotes a network of separated paths that would improve bicycle mobility and increase connectivity throughout the Mississippi Gulf Coast area. The Gulf Coast mobility corridors with I-10 and Highway 90 provide a continuous east-west route across the three coastal counties. North-south routes would radiate inland from the coast along major roadways. Some segments of these routes would not be suitable for the installation of separate paths but could be

adapted to accommodate bicycle travel safely. Priority is given to projects that help to make important Gulf Coast mobility corridors suitable for bicycles.

- ✓ US 90, MS 603, Beatline Road, Highway 49, Popp's Ferry Road, MS 609, MS 57, Gautier-Vancleave Road, MS 613, and MS 63.

- Improves access to transit stops – Project improved safety for pedestrians and bicyclists at transit stops.

  - ✓ Serves a fixed route transit stop

- Demand Index - People who live or work in more dense areas may be more likely to walk to a bus stop, walk to work, or ride a bicycle home or to the store if the facilities that make non-motorized travel safe and convenient are there for them to use. GRPC's Active Transportation Plan uses a demand index to depict existing and potential bicycle trip activity in an area. Demand is estimated by population densities and proximity to land uses that are likely to generate pedestrian and bicycle trips to places such as parks, medical, transit stops, schools, and employment centers.

  - ✓ GRPC Demand Index "high" and "medium."

- Connectivity. Connectivity benefits play an important part in maintaining and expanding the functionality of the transportation system by providing or supporting alternative travel choices, including both diverging paths and multiple travel routes.

  - ✓ Projects that extend the physical limits of previous projects or provides system-wide continuity by filling gaps in the bike/ped network.

- Vision Zero Safety Action Plan. This plan identifies areas of concern for pedestrian and bicycle projects based on crash history. Priority is given to these projects.

  - ✓ Identified in Gulf Coast Vision Zero Action Plan

Bonus.

- Project Readiness - Project readiness will help ensure that the project is completed as quickly as possible to satisfy federal project delivery performance goals.

  - ✓ A planning study was completed, no right of way required, and preliminary engineering complete or underway.

- Leveraged Funding

  - ✓ Project uses more than the standard 20% local match.

INTERSECTIONS GROUP

This focus area aims to improve the safety and operations of intersections on the Gulf Coast. Treatments may range from improvements to signal timing, signing, adding turn lanes or pavement markings, intersection widening, or reconstruction.

- Provides improved pedestrian crossings – Increases safety and access for pedestrians crossing at intersections by upgrading or installing pedestrian signals, crosswalks, pedestrian refuges, reducing pedestrian exposure, ADA infrastructure, curb ramps, etc.

  ✓ Improved pedestrian crossing

- Improves traffic flow at intersections – Operational improvements improve the efficiency of traffic flow. These projects also reduce vehicle idling, lessening harmful emissions.

  ✓ Measured by volume/capacity ratio or travel time data.

- Mitigates or eliminates safety concerns at high crash rate intersections – There are many intersections on the Gulf Coast with high crash frequencies, which may indicate the presence of safety concerns that are potentially correctable in a cost-effective manner.

  ✓ Identified in the Gulf Coast Vision Zero Safety Plan

- Improves safety at railroad crossings - The safety of rail operations over rail grade crossings continues to impact and concern Gulf Coast communities. Improving grade crossing safety is a top priority.

  ✓ RR crossing project

- Carbon Reduction Program

  ✓ Projects Identified in Mississippi Carbon Reduction Strategy

<u>Bonus.</u>

- Project Readiness - Project readiness will help ensure that the project is completed as quickly as possible to satisfy federal project delivery performance goals.

  ✓ A planning study was completed, no right of way required, and preliminary engineering complete or underway.

- Leveraged Funding

  ✓ Project uses more than the standard 20% local match.