FINAL MEMO #4: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

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Project: Wasco County Transit Development Plan

Subject: Final Evaluation Framework Memo (Task 2.6)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum identifies an evaluation framework with potential criteria that can be used to evaluate future service opportunities later in the Transit Development Plan (TDP) process. Goals articulated for the future of transit service in Wasco County, along with established evaluation criteria, will help guide the development of appropriate strategies to enhance transit service, facilities, and amenities.

GOALS

Goal statements have been developed by drawing on "best practices" policies from the desired outcomes from Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting #1, the objectives established for this planning process, and other Oregon transit plans. The Oregon Public Transportation Plan (OPTP) helped shape the proposed goals and policies, given its focus on the customer experience and increased coordination and collaboration. These goals and policies can provide general guidance for the TDP and the transit service providers including Wasco County and MCEDD. They also provide the framework for developing evaluation criteria that will be applied later in the project.

- **Goal 1: Customer-Focused Services** – Provide services that are safe, attractive, and convenient for all riders.
- **Goal 2: Accessibility and Connectivity** – Improve access and connections within and between communities in the service area as well as key destinations outside the service area.
- **Goal 3: Coordination** – Collaborate with public and private partners to maximize services.
- **Goal 4: Health** – Foster public health by reducing vehicle emissions, increasing people's use of active travel, and improving access to healthcare,
- **Goal 5: Sustainability** – Foster environmental, economic, and fiscal sustainability through transit investments.

These goals will be further refined in Memo #6: Updated Goals, Policies, and Practices.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Table 1 presents the draft evaluation criteria and describes the development or use of the criteria. Criteria are generally categorized according to the five goal areas outlined in the previous section. In addition to the goals for this project, evaluation criteria also include those used by funding sources (e.g., access for low-income populations, a STIF criterion) and guidance provided in *TCRP Report 88: A Guidebook for Developing a Transit Performance-Measurement System.*

The evaluation criteria will be used to assess potential costs and tradeoffs, and to categorize and prioritize service opportunities. For example, service alternatives that require additional buses and thus higher capital costs may be cost-prohibitive to implement in the short-term, while service alternatives that do not require additional buses could be implemented with no capital costs.

Evaluation criteria can conflict with each other. For example, adding stops on a transit route may increase travel time but will increase the number of people and jobs with access to transit. Adding service hours could provide increased ridership but with lower productivity (rides per hour). These tradeoffs will be considered alongside the pros and cons of all criteria.

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Description
Customer-Focused Services	
Service Frequency	Can be further distinguished by frequency during peak periods vs. off-peak
Service Span	Number of hours per weekday and weekend day service is provided
Geographic Coverage	Measures the amount of an area has access to transit, using proximity to bus stops and transit stations as well as temporal data (such as service frequency and span of demand-response services) as analysis parameters
Accessibility and Connectivity	
Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections	Considers existing and potentially improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to bus stops, measured by the percentage of stops with direct access to low-stress walking and biking facilities
Population within ¼ Mile of Transit Route or Service	Provides ridership proxy using population near stops or service
Employees within ¼ Mile of Transit Route or Service	Provides ridership proxy using employment near stops or service, and evaluates the connections to large employment centers

Criterion	Description
Transit-Dependent Populations within ¼ Mile of Transit Route or Service	Measure of access to transit for transit-dependent populations
Coordination	
Connections to Other Routes/Providers	Evaluates how well an alternative is integrated with other routes and mobility services
Health	
Access to Health-Supporting Destinations	Evaluates how many connections are made to grocery stores, parks, community spaces, health care, and social services
Sustainability	
Rides per Hour	Cost-efficiency measure comparing potential ridership to service hours provided
Cost per Ride	Evaluates the cost-efficiency of the system
Total Capital Costs	Provides capital costs needed to start service alternative
Total Annual Operating Costs	Provides operating costs to maintain service alternative

NEXT STEPS

This memorandum was reviewed with the Project Management Team (PMT) and Advisory Committee (AC) and will be used to inform the Transit Development Plan by establishing the evaluation framework to evaluate future service opportunities and meet the needs of the community.