

Framework for the River Valley Region Investment Criteria

Definitions:

- Unconstrained Example Investment List – an example list of projects that comport with approved criteria developed by the Director of Planning. List does not have to be fiscally constrained.
- Constrained *Draft* Investment List – developed from the Unconstrained Example Investment List by the Roundtable’s Executive Committee in collaboration with the Director of Planning; list is fiscally constrained by the projected revenue of a 10-year sales tax.
- Constrained *Final* investment List – developed from the Constrained *Draft* Investment List (and amended with projects from the Unconstrained Example Investment List, if needed) by the Roundtable and approved; list is fiscally constrained by the projected revenue of a 10-year sales tax and deliverable within the 10 year timeframe.
- Discretionary Funds- 25% of all revenue collected by the sales tax will be redistributed to the counties and cities within the region using the LARP factor (a combination of population and centerline paved and unpaved lane miles). Each jurisdiction will determine how to spend these dollars. Projects are not subject to the criteria or the Roundtable’s approval. However, these projects will play an important role in the public’s approval of a regional sales tax.

Process:

- After the criteria are approved by the Roundtable, the Director of Planning, in collaboration with the River Valley Regional Commission, Columbus Metropolitan Planning Organization and local jurisdictions, will develop the Unconstrained Example Investment List by evaluating the extent to which submitted projects satisfy the approved screening criteria.
- Projects that meet the criteria, align with the SSTP, TIP, and other planning documents are currently listed in plan and can be delivered within the timeframe of the regional sales tax will be eligible for inclusion on the Unconstrained Example Investment List.
- Next, the Director of Planning will determine the specific public benefits to be expected upon the completion of each project on the Unconstrained Example Investment List and assess how each project furthers the goals of the River Valley region’s investment criteria. A number of performance goals will be used to evaluate each project’s contribution. The performance goals and public benefits will be provided along with the Unconstrained Example Investment List to the Roundtable and the Executive Committee. These are intended to assist the Executive Committee and the Roundtable in selecting the best projects and provide the region’s citizens a solid evaluation of the use of their sales tax dollars.
- The Executive Committee in collaboration with the Director of Planning will use all this information and public feedback to create the Constrained Draft Investment List from the Unconstrained Example Investment List (due to the Roundtable no later than August 15, 2011). The law only requires two public hearings, but it is the intention of the Roundtable to do extensive public outreach.

- The Roundtable may also use this information to amend the Constrained Draft Investment List with projects from the Unconstrained Example Investment List to create the Final Investment List (Roundtable must approve by October 15, 2011).
- Finally, if the regional sales tax referendum is approved by the voters of a special district, the Director of Planning will track and report on the funding, execution, and performance of the projects in the district's Constrained Final Investment List.

Final Criteria for the River Valley 16-County Special Tax District

Final Criteria for the Development of an Investment List of Projects and Programs Excludes 25% Local Share to be distributed by formula to Cities and Counties

- I. The project list should support the **performance goals** of the Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan:
- Support Georgia's, the region's and its local governments' economic growth and competitiveness.
 - Ensure safety and security.
 - Maximize the value of Georgia's, the region's and its local governments' assets, getting the most out of the existing network.
 - Minimize the impact on the environment.
- II. The project list should achieve the following **outcomes**:
- Achieve the best value for taxpayers' dollars and improve the region's transportation network.
 - Transportation projects¹ delivered on time and on budget.
 - Public support for projects funded by the regional sales tax and public trust that state and local governments will deliver on their promises.
 - Investments should improve regional mobility.
- III. The project list development should be guided by the following **principles**:
- Investment list is developed with a focus on deliverability.
 - Projects should come from existing plans and/or studies (for example, the GDOT work program, Columbus MPO long range plan and short range program, , county transportation studies and county and city comprehensive plans etc.).
 - Investment list is consistent with the policies of the SSTP, Columbus MPO TIP and policies of the River Valley Region.
 - Investment list encourages effective multimodal solutions that appeal to a broad spectrum of the region's citizens.

¹ "Project" means, without limitation, any new or existing airports, bike lanes, bridges, bus and rail mass transit systems, freight and passenger rail, pedestrian facilities, ports, roads, terminals, and all activities and structures useful and incident to providing, operating, and maintaining the same. The term shall also include direct appropriations to a local government for the purpose of serving as a local match for state or federal funding.

- The Roundtable may deviate from the criteria to provide maximum flexibility throughout the project list development process.

IV. Projects will be evaluated by the following **criteria**:

a. Applicable to All Program Areas

i. Emphasis will be on the construction phase or acquisition of capital equipment; however project phases other than construction can be included in the Unconstrained Example Investment List. Preference will be given for preliminary engineering, right-of-way, and environmental reviews which ultimately deliver a construction project within the 10-year sales tax period.

ii. Each project phase included in the investment list, and each phase necessary to complete the same, regardless of funding source, must demonstrate full funding.

iii. Emphasis will be on delivery. All project phases funded with Transportation Investment Act revenue should be able to be completed or underway within ten years. The Director of Planning recommends that approximately 40% of the total expected Transportation Investment Act funding should be allocated to project phases that could be completed or underway within six years of the start of the regional sales tax, and the remaining funds should be allocated to projects that could be completed or underway within ten years of the start of the regional sales tax. (Excludes 25% discretionary local share to be distributed by formula to cities and counties.)

b. Roadway Capital

The projects that qualify under “roadway capital” serve origins or destinations of trips to/from and within major employment and activity centers throughout the region.² These projects could include, but are not limited to new roads, roadway widening, interchanges, interstate improvements, bridges, paving dirt roads, resurfacing, intersection improvements, economic development corridors, etc.

c. Roadway and Bridge Maintenance (asset management)

² Major regional employment and activities centers may be defined at the discretion of the Roundtable.
Final Criteria for the
River Valley Special Tax District

- i. Priority for resurfacing/rehabilitation needs is on state routes, routes that are considered regionally significant as defined by roads that connect major regional employment or activity centers throughout the region, and off-system routes. Priority will be based on risk and may be based on PACES ratings provided by GDOT.
- ii. Bridge maintenance and replacement shall be determined based on ratings provided by GDOT and local governments.

d. Safety and Traffic Operations

i. Safety

- a) Projects that align with the key emphasis areas of the Governor's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).
- b) Priority is given to projects that correct or improve a road location or feature with high potential for safety improvement, or addresses a specific highway safety deficiency. The objective of each project must be to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.
- c) Projects may include, but are not limited to, intersection improvements to address safety concerns, shoulder widenings, pedestrian/bicycle safety improvements, hazard eliminations at rail-roadway crossings, traffic calming measures, installation of guardrails, crash attenuators, traffic signal upgrades, signage, and pavement marking improvement projects, etc.

ii. Traffic Operations

- a) Projects that improve or enhance the region's intelligent transportation system network, incident management program, or signal coordination and timing.
- b) Projects addressing an existing operational issue resulting in an improved level of service or reduction in delay or other congestion costs.

e. Freight and Logistics

- i. Projects that address the demand for goods movement into, out of, and within the state as identified through the Statewide Freight and Logistics Study (ongoing). Projects that enhance the flow of freight transported by trucks and/or rail.
- ii. Projects that facilitate the transfer of freight between modes. In particular, projects that improve the flow of freight into/out of Georgia's existing ports.

f. Aviation

- i. Projects at new or existing airports that are contained in the airport's 5-year Airport Capital Improvement Program submitted annually to GDOT and FAA. The types of projects included in this area are runways, taxiways, aprons, and navigational aids.
- ii. Projects consistent with the goals and objectives of Georgia's Statewide Aviation System Plan.

g. Bicycle and Pedestrian

- i. Projects consistent with a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

- ii. Projects that provide connectivity to/from or within a major regional employment or activity center.
- iii. Projects that provide connection to/from existing or planned transit including bus stops and multi-modal centers.

(Note: Projects such as landscaping and recreational paths should be pursued using the 25% discretionary share.)

h. Transit³ Capital

- i. Capital expenditures may include new, systematic replacement, upgrades, refurbishment, and other capital project expenditures.
- ii. New fixed guideway facilities should also include a 20-year operating plan. Funds for the operations may come from any identified source including Transportation Investment Act transit operation funds and its authorized reserves under O.C.G.A. 48-8-241(c).
- iii. Transit service for the proposed project should ultimately connect to employment centers or activity centers in the region and provide increased mobility for individuals.

i. Transit Operations and Maintenance

Any funding must first preserve the existing regional transit service. After the existing service is addressed, operations and maintenance funding from the regional sales tax would then be allocated to new transit projects. Existing regional service is defined as the transit service in operation/under construction in the River Valley Region as of January 1, 2011,

³ Transit means any new or existing bus and rail mass transit systems, passenger rail, and all activities and structures useful and incidental to providing, operating, and maintaining the same.

APPENDIX A: Illustrative Investment Guidelines

- a. The table below illustrates how investments could be allocated to meet the goals of the Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan, priorities of the regional transportation roundtable, and the Columbus MPO TIP:

Program Areas	Investment Guidelines (%)	Illustrative Estimate Over 10 Years Based on Draft Economic Projections⁴ (\$)
Roadway Capital	50% - 70%	\$230 - \$320 Million
Roadway & Bridge Maintenance (Asset Management)	0% - 10%	\$0 - \$46 Million
Safety and Traffic Operations	15% - 50%	\$69 - \$230 Million
Freight & Logistics	2% - 10%	\$9.2 - \$46 Million
Aviation	0% - 5%	\$0 - \$23 Million
Bicycle and Pedestrian	0% - 5%	\$0 - \$23 Million
Transit Capital	0% - 10%	\$0 - \$46 Million
Transit Operations & Maintenance	0% - 10%	\$0 - \$46 Million

⁴ These numbers may change based on the final projections to be provided by the State Economist.
Final Criteria for the
River Valley Special Tax District