§ 611.203 New Starts project justification criteria.

(a) To perform the statutorily required evaluations and assign ratings for project justification, FTA will evaluate information developed locally through the planning and NEPA processes.

1. The method used by FTA to evaluate and rate projects will be a multiple measure approach by 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 part and elaborated on in policy guidance. This policy guidance, which is subject to a public comment period, is issued periodically by FTA whenever significant changes to the process are proposed, but not less frequently than every two years, as required by 49 U.S.C. 5309(g)(5).

3. The measures will be applied to projects defined by project sponsors that are proposed to FTA for New Starts funding.

4. The ratings for each of the criteria in § 611.203(b)(1) through (6) will be expressed in terms of descriptive indicators, as follows: “high,” “medium-high,” “medium,” “medium-low,” or “low.”

(b) The project justification criteria are as follows:

1. Mobility improvements.
2. Environmental benefits.
3. Congestion relief.
4. Economic development effects.
5. Cost-effectiveness, as measured by cost per rider.
6. Existing land use.

(c) In evaluating proposed New Starts projects under these project justification criteria:

1. As a candidate project proceeds through engineering, a greater level of commitment will be expected with respect to transit supportive plans and policies evaluated under the economic development criterion and the project sponsor’s technical capacity to implement the project.

2. For any criteria under paragraph (b) of this section that use incremental measures, the point for comparison will be the no-build alternative.

(d) FTA may amend the measures for these project justification criteria. Any such amendment will be included in policy guidance and subject to a public comment process.

(e) From time to time FTA may publish through policy guidance standards based on characteristics of projects and/or corridors to be served. If a proposed project can meet the established standards, FTA may assign an automatic rating on one or more of the project justification criteria outlined in this section.

(f) The individual ratings for each of the criteria described in this section will be combined into a summary project justification rating of “high,” “medium-high,” “medium,” “medium-low,” or “low,” through a process that gives comparable, but not necessarily equal, weight to each criterion. The process by which the project justification rating will be developed, including the assigned weights, will be described in policy guidance.

§ 611.205 New Starts local financial commitment criteria.

In order to approve a grant under 49 U.S.C. 5309 for a New Starts project, FTA must find that the proposed project is supported by an acceptable degree of local financial commitment, as required by 49 U.S.C. 5309(d)(4)(iv). The local financial commitment to a proposed project will be evaluated according to the following measures:

(a) The proposed share of the project’s capital costs to be funded from sources other than New Starts funds, including both the non-New Starts match required by Federal law and any additional state, local or other Federal capital funding (also known as “overmatch”):

(b) The current capital and operating financial condition of the project sponsor;

(c) The commitment of capital and operating funds for the project and the entire transit system including consideration of private contributions; and

(d) The accuracy and reliability of the capital and operating costs and revenue estimates and the financial capacity of the project sponsor.

(e) From time to time FTA may publish through policy guidance standards
based on characteristics of projects
and/or corridors to be served. If a pro-
posed project can meet the established
standards, FTA may assign an auto-
matic rating on one or more of the
local financial commitment criteria
outlined in this section.

(f) As a candidate project proceeds
through engineering, a greater level of
local financial commitment will be ex-
pected.

(g) FTA may amend the measures for
these local financial commitment cri-
teria. Any such amendment will be in-
cluded in policy guidance and subject to
a public comment process.

(h) For each proposed project, ratings
for paragraphs (a) through (d) of this
section will be reported in terms of de-
scriptive indicators, as follows: "high," "medium-high," "medium," "medium-
low," or "low." For paragraph (a) of
this section, the percentage of New
Starts funding sought from 49 U.S.C.
5309 will be rated and used to develop
the summary local financial commit-
ment rating, but only if it improves
the rating and not if it worsens the rat-
ing.

(i) The ratings for each measure de-
scribed in this section will be combined
into a summary local financial com-
mitment rating of "high," "medium-
high," "medium," "medium-low," or
"low." The process by which the sum-
mary local financial commitment rat-
ing will be developed, including the as-
signed weights to each of the measures,
will be described in policy guidance.

§ 611.207 Overall New Starts project
ratings.

(a) [Reserved]

(b) FTA will assign overall project
ratings to each proposed project of
"high," "medium-high," "medium-
low," or "low," as required by

(1) These ratings will be used to:
(1) Approve or deny advancement of a
proposed project into engineering;
(2) Approve or deny projects for
ESWAs and FFGAs; and
(3) Support annual funding rec-
ommendations to Congress in the An-
nual Report on Funding Recommenda-
tions required by 49 U.S.C. 5309(o)(1).

(d) [Reserved]

§ 611.209 [Reserved]

§ 611.211 New Starts Before and After
study.

(a) During engineering, project spon-
sors shall submit to FTA a plan for col-
lection and analysis of information to
identify the characteristics, costs, and
impacts of the New Starts project and
the accuracy of the forecasts prepared
during development of the project.

(1) The Before and After study plan
shall consider:
(i) Characteristics including the
physical scope of the project, the serv-
ice provided by the project, any other
changes in service provided by the
transit system, and the schedule of
transit fares;
(ii) Costs including the capital costs
of the project and the operating and
maintenance costs of the transit sys-

tem in appropriate detail; and
(iii) Impacts including changes in
transit service quality, ridership, and
fare levels.

(2) The plan shall provide for:
(i) Documentation and preservation
of the predicted scope, service levels,
capital costs, operating costs, and rid-
ership of the project;
(ii) Collection of "before" data on the
transit service levels and ridership pat-
terns of the current transit system in-
cluding origins and destinations, access
modes, trip purposes, and rider charac-
teristics;
(iii) Documentation of the actual
capital costs of the as-built project;
(iv) Collection of "after" data two
years after opening of the project, in-
cluding the analogous information on
transit service levels and ridership pat-
terns, plus information on operating
costs of the transit system in appro-
priate detail;
(v) Analysis of the costs and impacts
of the project; and

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