Successful Project Prioritization

Clear Goals, Effective Measures, Transparent Process
Team GA-TN

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Agenda: Successful Project Prioritization

- Why Prioritize?
- Case Studies & Lessons Learned
- Effective Performance Measures
- The Importance of Process
- Key Takeaways
Why prioritize?

Therefore, projects need to be prioritized for implementation.

- Quantitative Measures
- Qualitative Measures
- Social Equity
- Geographic Equity
- Political Will
- Funding Source
Case Studies

● Referendums
  ○ Los Angeles
  ○ Atlanta
  ○ Charlotte
  ○ Nashville

● Internal budget process
  ○ Seattle
  ○ Denver


LA Metro

Developed project list for Measure M

- Bottom-up approach: each Council of Government developed own project list based on own priorities
  - Given flexible sub-regional targets → help make project list more realistic
- At COG level, fully qualitative prioritization
- At county level, Metro staff used performance metrics to rank projects & determine sequencing
  - Mobility
  - Economy
  - Accessibility
  - Safety
  - Sustainability & Quality of Life
Atlanta

- More MARTA half-penny sales tax approved by voters to fund transit improvements within Atlanta city limits.
- MARTA and City of Atlanta signed an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) in January 2018 to establish and guide the process of selecting projects to fund.
  - Established technical and stakeholder advisory committees
  - Included full list of potential projects
  - Established programming process
  - Established the Joint Prioritization Leadership Group to coordinate across agencies
Prioritization of Transit Corridors

- Identified corridors as part of 1998 Transit and Land-Use Vision
- Evaluated corridors based on:
  - Jobs and housing within half mile of transit stations
  - Capital cost
  - Ridership projections
  - Long term need for congestion relief
  - Long term land use opportunity
- Able to evaluate transit corridor alternatives in conjunction with land use growth scenarios
- Prioritized and sequenced development of corridors after referendum
High Capacity Corridor Study

- Building on nMotion, Nashville’s 25 year strategic plan for transit expansion
- 5 corridors identified for High Capacity Transit
- Identified opportunities and challenges on each corridor and prioritized considering:
  - Existing Ridership
  - Residents and Jobs within ½ mile
  - Community Support (based on surveys during nMotion)
  - Existing Development Activity
  - Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure
  - Constructability (high level feasibility considering implementation challenges)
Lessons Learned

- **Bottom-up** processes create buy-in
- **Traffic congestion** is a bipartisan issue
- Local projects, geographic equity, and **local** return matter
- Sequencing projects **based on data** builds legitimacy
- **Leadership** matters
Lessons Learned

- Setting broad **goals first** helps to insulate projects from politics.

- **Messaging, communications,** and **public engagement** creates buy-in throughout the service area.

- Holistically addressing transportation and land use builds support
Seattle-King County Metro:

Developed long-range vision to double transit by 2040

- **Develop guiding principles first**
- Rooted in the county’s fund management priorities
  - Maintain
  - Invest in current service
  - Expand in coordination with vision
- **Prioritization-Quantitative and Qualitative**
  - Equity
  - Ridership
  - Existing partnerships
  - Connection to high capacity network
  - Project readiness/complexity
Denver

- Annual call for projects across agency
- Three main categories
  - Compliance
  - Renewal
  - Enhancement
- Multiple reviews within department, by finance, and by Investment Review Panel
- Projects are graded against mission statement
- Final project list advanced for board approval
Lessons Learned

- Setting broad **goals first** helps to insulate projects from politics
- **Robust community process** up front helps to skirt future opposition and aligns projects with goals
- Must consider ongoing/recurring costs
- Data drives good decision making
Effective Performance Measures

- Lead to project prioritization
- More quantitative than qualitative
- Easily understandable and help to build buy-in and explain the decision making process
- Logically follow the inclusive development of a vision statement
- Consider project readiness
The Importance of the Process

- Goal/vision setting should happen first
- Role should be clearly established from the start
- The process should be collaborative
- Next steps should be dictated from the start
Key Takeaways

- It’s an art and a science; process and measures should be well-integrated.
- Evolving performance measures can help to create more nuanced transit prioritization.
- Near universal buy-in is crucial for a referendum.
- Vision and planning matters.
Thank you

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