

FREIGHT MOBILITY STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD

SIX-YEAR INVESTMENT PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 3, 2025 • 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. • Microsoft Teams

Attendance

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Johan Hellman, Chair
Matthew Colvin, Vice Chair
Anne McEnerny-Ogle
Jon Snyder

Not Present:
John McCarthy
Cory Wright

Jay Drye, Ex-Officio

FMSIB STAFF

Brandy DeLange, Executive Director
Joy Dopita, Executive Assistant
Fred Wenhardt, Transportation Planning Specialist

Meeting Convenes

Chair Hellman convened the fourth meeting of the Six-Year Investment Program Committee at 10:00 a.m. There were four voting committee members present.

Six-Year Investment Program Regional Distribution of Projects Recommendations

Director DeLange recapped the previous meeting, which included recommendations related to regional distribution and updates to the WAC. The feedback received from the last meeting included:

- The Committee would like to continue to explore the option of creating Board policy, not codified in the WACs, for regional distribution that creates a funding ceiling for each region.
- Better define project eligibility and categories, as well as modifying the application to be more open-ended so applicants are not pigeonholed into one specific criteria for projects.
- Update language “Freight Systems of the Future” to “Innovative Freight Solutions” to better define and incentivize “innovative projects for board consideration, as well as create more equity amongst applicants. *Director DeLange* reminded the Committee that the full scope of work and Committee recommendations would be presented at the FMSIB Workshop for the Board to consider and eventually approve at the FMSIB Board Meeting on June 13.

Mr. Wenhardt presented the two Regional Distribution of Projects recommendation options:

Option 1 – Adopt RCW 47.06A.020 into WAC; Establish Board policy:

- Amend WAC to include RCW language on regional distribution with a non-prescriptive approach and adopt a Board policy capping funding per region at 50%.

Option 2 – No changes to WAC: Establish Board policy:

- No WAC change, but still adopt the same Board policy cap.

Mr. Wenhardt reiterated the goal is to ensure funding flexibility across Puget Sound, Western, and Eastern Washington while avoiding overly prescriptive distributions that could prevent addressing major infrastructure needs. An emphasis on creating flexible, equitable funding distributions while maintaining responsiveness to actual project needs has also been applied.

Mr. Snyder cautioned against rigid distribution policies that could undermine scoring system merit and emphasized the importance of flexibility and aligning with the Legislature’s non-prescriptive intent. He suggested examining regional distribution over multiple funding cycles (e.g., four biennia) rather than fixating on one cycle.

Chair Hellman supported *Mr. Snyder’s* point on legislative flexibility and agreed that a Board policy goal is appropriate for showing that regional equity is considered and questioned the need to codify RCW language into WAC, seeing it as duplicative and potentially problematic if challenged legally.

Director DeLange provided background on why Option 2 was presented. Previously the group discussed the need for equity in regional funding, including the idea of placing a ceiling, but not a floor, on how much any single region could receive. The statute required regional distribution consideration but was not prescriptive, which allowed room for interpretation with Option 2 to permit flexibility and respond to emerging needs, framing the 50% ceiling as a guiding principle rather than a hard rule.

Mr. Snyder recommended tracking funding distribution over multiple cycles, going forward, and produce a rolling average to show regional balance.

Mr. Drye cautioned against being overly prescriptive, noting that historically, rigid guidance in other grant programs had led to problems and advised keeping policy flexible.

Chair Hellman confirmed the consensus of the Committee formed around Option 2.

Six-Year Investment Program Project Eligibility Criteria Recommendations

Mr. Wenhardt outlined modifications to Project Eligibility Criteria:

Option 1 – Maintain existing targets of recommended funding distribution per category, better define project eligibility and modify the application to better describe project categories:

- Clarified definitions of project categories with examples on the application
- Modified application question of project category to be more descriptive

- Renamed “Freight Systems of the Future” to “Innovative Freight Solutions” to broaden project types, e.g., inland intermodal facilities, GHG reduction and other practical solutions that may fall outside the parameters of maintenance, preservation, grade separation or expansion

Director DeLange shared feedback she’s received from Commissioner McCarthy, who emphasized the importance of tracking tonnage and freight volume and suggested adding subcategories for freight corridors. She noted that part of his concerns are driven by the data collected in consultation with the WSDOT Rail, Freight, and Ports Division on FGTS. She shared that since the data would not be updated until the November Board Meeting it may not be easily reflected in this iteration of applications and perhaps could be better reflected in the 2028 applications.

Director DeLange reminded the Board that there is inherent flexibility in the RCW, particularly around the ability to define new alignments or links to strategic corridors — even when tonnage data is not available. This flexibility could be applied when reviewing applications, especially in the 2026 cycle. She emphasized the importance of considering regional nuances, such as consistent freight volume on I-5 versus seasonal peaks in other areas.

Chair Hellman acknowledged that while equity and data tracking are critical, these considerations may not need to be formally embedded in policy. He warned against over regulating processes that naturally occur through discussion and drew a comparison to mega projects, which often carry their own momentum and influence regardless of policy.

Mr. Drye added that while data tells part of the story, judgment is essential. He used the Interstate Bridge Replacement project as an example where data might suggest heavy investment, but the Board’s funding role is too small to make a significant impact — and might be better used elsewhere. He stressed using Board expertise to consider long-term strategic freight value and not just data points.

Mr. Colvin cautioned against targeting T1 freight corridors too narrowly, as it risks over-concentrating funds in a few geographic areas, such as ports. He emphasized the Board's goal of broad, intentional regional investment.

The Committee agreed to not make further changes to the current language or embed corridor-specific preferences in policy.

Director DeLange provided an outline of next steps to include:

- FMSIB staff would finalize the project eligibility criteria updates and scoring criteria based on this meeting
- The application process and project call schedule for 2026 would be updated and previewed during the next FMSIB Workshop and Board Meeting scheduled for June 12 and 13
- A call for projects is expected January to February 2026, with recommendations submitted to the Governor by July 2026 and to the Legislature by November to December 2026 for the 2027–2029 biennium.

Next Six-Year Investment Program Committee Meetings

The Six-Year Investment Program Committee is scheduled present their findings at the FMSIB Workshop and Board Meeting scheduled for June 12 and 13, 2025 respectively.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.