

Arizona: Linking Performance-Based Planning to Project Programming

Why Link?

In November 2011, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) finalized its 2010-2035 long-range transportation plan (LRTP), [“What Moves You Arizona”](#). For the first time, the LRTP is structured as more of a policy document rather than a list of specific projects. The updated LRTP outlined how the department should plan for the future to achieve the LRTP goals. Traditionally, ADOT approached project selection by assigning budgets around expected revenue and asset types. This LRTP took a new approach, assigning projects to three broad investment categories. ADOT will rank the projects based on contribution to system performance. The three ADOT investment categories are:

- Preservation – activities that preserve transportation infrastructure by sustaining asset condition or extending asset life.
- Modernization – highway improvements that upgrade efficiency, functionality, and safety without adding capacity.
- Expansion – improvements that add transportation capacity through the addition of new facilities and/or services.

ADOT did not have a project ranking or prioritization process that compared projects against one another within investment categories based on

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Early and consistent involvement from a wide variety of business partners.**
- **Time to incubate and vet the process rather than force immediate and drastic changes.**
- **Well-documented and clear process for development and implementation of P2P Link.**

performance, and so ADOT began to create that process in order to implement the LRTP. The initiative, and the resulting report, is called [“Linking the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Construction Program”](#) (P2P Link). P2P Link provides a performance-based link between achieving the goals of the LRTP and project programming. By connecting LRTP goals to ADOT’s Five-Year Transportation Facilities Construction Program, ADOT and its business partners will be able to justify project selection and prioritization based on a project’s support of the LRTP goals.

The ADOT Multimodal Planning Division began developing the P2P Link before authorization of [Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act \(MAP-21\)](#). The adoption of MAP-21 actually helped ADOT garner greater support for the P2P Link from stakeholders because it consolidated funding programs across assets and interests, and legitimized the need for performance-based planning. With P2P Link creation underway, ADOT is well-positioned to adopt Federal performance measures once the P2P Link project evaluation criteria are finalized.

Creating the P2P Link

ADOT hired a consultant to assist with the creation of the P2P Link in spring 2012. The fast turnaround from the adoption of the LRTP to starting the P2P Link process is due in part to the strong support from ADOT leadership. ADOT started by forming working groups that included staff from the



Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and council of governments (COGs), transit agencies, local governments, and other divisions within ADOT. The working groups advised on particular aspects of the P2P Link and allowed the broad inclusion of all interested parties in the development of the P2P Link. In addition to ensure thorough stakeholder involvement, ADOT and its consultant arranged a peer exchange with other State DOTs. Oregon, Colorado, [Utah](#), and [Minnesota](#) DOTs each gave presentations on their unique performance management systems. ADOT was able to take away certain components from each State and create a system that worked best for Arizona.

Through this collaborative and multi-phase process, ADOT and their consultants published the [Final P2P Link Methodologies and Implementation Plan](#) in June 2014. The final report provides the structure through which ADOT and its partners will work to move from current planning and programming processes to the new P2P Link framework.

Implementing the P2P Link

With implementation in the early stages, ADOT understands that it will take time to fully adjust to the new process. The department is currently “incubating” the process, meaning that certain parts of the process still need to be tested and adjusted accordingly. ADOT is developing a scoring tool that includes both a technical and policy score. The technical score is generated by analysis performed by the ADOT division with expertise in that field; for example, a bridge engineer will score the submitted bridge projects based on the technical aspects. The policy score is weighted according to how effectively the project addresses the LRTP goals and performance measures. The scores are then added together and inform the project’s ranking. In order to see how the new project prioritization process compares to the previous approach, ADOT is running the old and the new processes against each other in fiscal year 2015. Presently, ADOT is using simple measures with existing data and will adjust once the Federal performance measures are released. The next LRTP update, scheduled for completion in 2016, will include

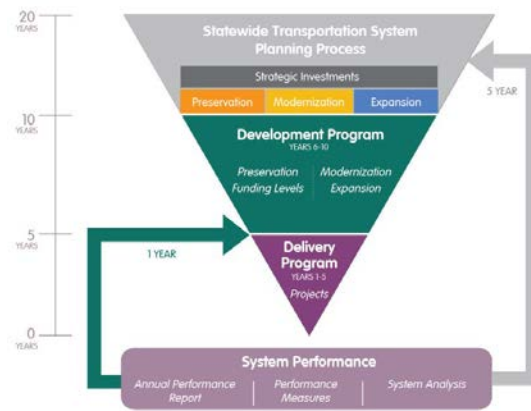


Figure 1 AZDOT's Linking Planning to Performance Pyramid

performance targets for each of the measure areas. Eventually, there will be one competitive pot of funding for each of the three investment categories rather than amounts set aside for each asset and technical group. Because of the long-term five-year construction program the full integration of the P2P Link will occur for projects entering the program in 2019. Internally, this means that the P2P Link project nomination and evaluation process will be piloted as part of 2016 Tentative 5-Year Construction Program development. In just four years, ADOT will have made system performance the foundation for project selection.

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