



Orange County Public Works Department - Project Prioritization

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Version 1.0

INTRODUCTION

Orange County is developing a prioritization methodology for its Major Road Widening, Safety, and Operations Program. Each program is treated independent of each other but share common elements. Because these three programs share common elements, individual projects may overlap or span across multiple program areas.

The prioritization methodology is built on the foundation purpose, as described below:

Major Road Widening – The primary focus of this program is to increase capacity and reduce congestion through the busiest corridors across Orange County. As part of the major road widenings, this program should provide a secondary benefit to pedestrian and bicycle users, improve safety and equity, and increase resiliency for all emergency events.

Safety – This program focuses on improving safety across the county’s most dangerous corridors and intersections for all users.

Operations – This program focuses on the non-major road widening projects. The primary focus is on maintaining the existing infrastructure conditions such as the pavement condition. These projects are not candidate projects for widening but with other safety/mobility improvements, the corridors or intersections will function much better.

Projects that overlap will need to be coordinated. Certain project locations may appear on any of the three programs, in addition to other County programs, so coordination efforts are required. To treat the project overlaps, these projects should be brought to the County’s leadership team to determine how or where these projects will be funded.

Orange County Prioritization Factors



The prioritization framework is guided by the following principles:

- A simple, repeatable process that can be applied consistently across all corridors and intersections in the major road widening, safety, and operations programs.
- Reliance on accurate, up-to-date traffic counts
- Existing conditions, committed growth, and approved developments will be considered without applying growth factors. Data should reflect current conditions and generally be no more than two years old.
- The Development category evaluates the scale of planned developments and projected trip generation documented in Traffic Impact Analyses (TIAs) and Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs).
- Use the County provided volume over capacity (V/C) Ratio to evaluate corridor performance
- Emphasis on safety, with particular attention to pedestrian-related crashes
- Leveraging the K-factor rather than relying solely on peak-hour volumes. K-factors provide a holistic view as far as how much of the daily traffic occurs in the peak hour vs the peak hour factor focuses on the peak hour volumes.
- Recognition that transect zones vary by segment, which can introduce complexity when evaluating a single corridor that spans across multiple zones.

PROCESS

The prioritization process follows a five-step sequence:

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1. Develop and define evaluation factors and weighting,
2. Apply weighted factors toward Orange County project list,
3. Identify and map candidate project corridors,
4. Apply weighted factors toward Orange County network and identify additional projects, and
5. Refine, adjust, and formally adopt the final prioritization.

The prioritization methodology will be developed through a collaborative process involving Orange County departments and divisions. While the goal is to incorporate the needs and priorities of all stakeholders, conflicts may arise when interests differ. In such cases, the Public Works Leadership team (Director and Deputy Directors) will serve as the final decision-making authority for the prioritization factors and associated weighting criteria. Departments and divisions may submit requests to modify factors or weights; however, the Public Works Leadership team will have the ultimate authority to approve, reject, or adjust those requests.

The prioritization factors and weighting criteria should be reviewed and updated every five years, or more frequently if recommended by the Public Works Director. The purpose of the prioritization process is to provide the County with an objective, data-driven ranking of roadway corridors and intersections, supporting both near-term project implementation and the development of a long-range transportation improvement program.

Funding decisions and budget allocations among transportation programs and Commissioner Districts will be determined independently of the prioritization methodology. The prioritization process is intended solely to identify and rank transportation needs and should not be used as a mechanism for allocating available funding.

PRIORITIZATION

Major Road Widening

Orange County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) transportation policy is guided by a set of project-funding prioritization criteria, including:

- Safety for all transportation users, including vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and micromobility users.
- Addressing capacity constraints or deficiencies in level of service.
- Availability of right-of-way needed for projects.
- Opportunities for partnerships with other agencies or organizations.

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- Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan and coordination with MetroPlan Orlando and FDOT District 5 programs.
- Support for alternative transit options and non-motorized transportation modes.
- Relief of congestion on heavily used or backlogged facilities.
- Efficient and optimal use of existing transportation infrastructure.
- Support for emergency evacuation, response, and post-disaster recovery. This aims to prioritize roads that connect emergency evacuation routes.
- Participation in grant programs and other alternative funding resources.

The prioritization framework incorporates federal merit criteria, recognizing that major road widening projects may require supplemental funding through state or federal grants.

Current federal transportation policy¹ emphasizes:

- Safety
- State of good repair and asset condition
- Economic competitiveness and mobility
- Environmental sustainability and climate resilience
- Project readiness and technical feasibility
- Funding strategy and cost effectiveness
- Innovation and technology
- Participation in grant programs and other alternative funding resources

These federal priorities are translated into quantifiable evaluation factors and integrated into the prioritization process.

¹ USDOT federal grant prioritization

Orange County Prioritization Factors

The following table reflects the combined County considerations and presents the recommended prioritization factors and associated weighting.

Category	Prioritization Factor / Metric	Evaluation / Scoring Scale	Weight
Safety	5-Year KSI Crash History	Corridors will be quantified by percentile ranking of KSI rate per vehicle miles traveled	10
	Vision Zero Action Plan	100: Yes, project is included in the Vision Zero Action Plan 0: No, project is not included in the Vision Zero Action Plan	5
Mobility / Capacity & Development	Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) Ratio (Committed Trips from Concurrency Data)	100: V/C >1.1 85: V/C 1.01-1.1 65: V/C 0.91-1.0 50: V/C 0.81-0.9 0: V/C < 0.8	25
Right-of-Way	Right-of-Way Required	100: No ROW needed 50: Minor ROW needed 0: Major ROW required	10
Transit & Multimodal	Transit Routes	100: ≥ 48 Total daily, bi-directional transit counts. 75: ≥ 36 Total daily, bi-directional transit counts. 50: ≥ 24 Total daily, bi-directional transit counts. 25: ≥ 12 Total daily, bi-directional transit counts. 0: none	10
	Support for Non-Motorized Modes (existing conditions)	100: Multi-use Trail/Path 50: Traditional Sidewalk 25: Bike Lane	5

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Category	Prioritization Factor / Metric	Evaluation / Scoring Scale	Weight
Environmental & Resilience	Environmental Constraints / Wetland Impacts	Wetland Impact • 100: No impacts • 80: ≥ 0 to 1 acre of impact • 60: >1 to 5 acres of impact • 40: >5 to 10 acres of impact • 20: >10 to 20 acres of impact • 0: >20 acres of impact	10
	Partnership Potential	• 100: If the project is included in: • Executed or proposed interlocal agreement. • Confirmed financial contribution. • Required local match. • Grant eligibility. • Maintenance commitment. • Right-of-way or in-kind contribution. • Project is contingent on the completion of another project • 0 – No partnership potential.	10
Partnership & Funding	Cost Effectiveness	• 100: $BCA \geq 1.5$ • 50: $BCA \geq 1$, but <1.5 • 0: $BCA < 1$	15

These factors were considered during the project prioritization evaluation; however, they were not included in the final scoring for the following reasons:

- AADT — Average Annual Daily Traffic is already incorporated within the Level of Service (LOS) analysis, which captures traffic volumes and operational performance.
- Regional Connectors — While corridors that function as regional connectors across multiple jurisdictions are important, additional emphasis on these corridors is applied during broader corridor planning rather than within the prioritization scoring.

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- **Commissioner District** — Commissioner districts are not included as a prioritization factor. Instead, the use of commissioner district funds should be addressed during project level planning to ensure equitable distribution and coordination.
- **Project Costs** — Similar to commissioner districts, project costs are evaluated during project level planning. In the prioritization process, cost effectiveness is included through the Benefit Cost Analysis, which serves as a proxy to assess return on investment.
- **Development** — This factor was considered for known trips that have been formally approved as part of the overall scoring. While it can serve as a proactive measure for anticipating future growth, the current scoring approach prioritizes addressing existing needs before allocating some resources toward future development-driven demands.
- **85th or 50th Percentile Speeds** — Major roadway widening projects aim to reduce congestion and improve mobility. Travel speeds are captured within the LOS analysis, which quantifies user delay and operational performance.
- **Context Classification** — Once Vision 2050/Orange Code is adopted Context Class will shift towards the use of Transect Zones. This factor was excluded because Orange Code 2050 has not been adopted as of yet.

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Safety Projects

The Safety Prioritization Program is founded on the principles of Orange County's Vision Zero Action Plan and focuses on reducing fatal and serious injury (KSI) crashes through a data-driven, performance-based approach. Crash trends and roadway characteristics were evaluated to identify those factors most strongly associated with severe crash outcomes and where safety investments are likely to have the greatest benefit.

An analysis of the County's crash data indicates that 65.2% of all KSI crashes occur along roadway corridors, demonstrating the importance of implementing systemic corridor improvements in addition to site-specific treatments. Of the KSI crashes occurring at intersections, 48.5% occur at signalized intersections and 51.5% occur at unsignalized intersections, supporting the need to evaluate and prioritize improvements at both facility types.

Although vulnerable roadway users represent a relatively small percentage of total crashes, they account for a disproportionate share of fatal and serious injury crashes. Pedestrian crashes represent 1.3% of all reported crashes but 12.0% of KSI crashes. Bicycle crashes account for 0.8% of all crashes and 4.0% of KSI crashes, while motorcycle crashes comprise 1.3% of all crashes but 11.5% of KSI crashes. These findings emphasize the importance of incorporating safety considerations for all roadway users, particularly vulnerable users, into the prioritization process.

The analysis also found that roadway corridors with higher posted speed limits experience a greater share of fatal and serious injury crashes. Corridors with posted speed limits of 45 mph or greater account for approximately 53.8% of all KSI crashes, compared to 15.8% on 40-mph roadways, 12.5% on 35-mph roadways, and 14.7% on roadways posted at 30 mph or less. While posted speed alone does not determine crash risk, these findings support its inclusion as one of several factors used to identify corridors where safety improvements may provide the greatest benefit.

Based on these findings, the Safety Prioritization Program establishes separate evaluation criteria for corridors, signalized intersections, unsignalized intersections, and vulnerable roadway users. The recommended prioritization factors incorporate crash history, roadway characteristics, and established safety initiatives, including Orange County's Vision Zero Action Plan and the MetroPlan Orlando High Injury Network, to identify projects with the greatest potential to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes.

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The following tables present the recommended prioritization factors and associated weighting for each project category. As the program is implemented, funding allocations among the various safety categories should consider documented safety needs, anticipated crash reduction benefits, project readiness, available funding opportunities, and overall program objectives. While each category's share of KSI crashes provides a useful planning reference, the final distribution of Safety Program funding should remain flexible to ensure investments are directed where they will achieve the greatest overall safety benefit.

Corridors

Category	Prioritization Factor / Metric	Evaluation	Weighting
Crash rate per VMT	KSI Crash History	Corridors will be quantified by percentile ranking of KSI rate per vehicle miles traveled	35
Speed	Posted Speed Limits (PSL)	100: PSL $\geq$ 45 mph 80: PSL = 40 mph 60: PSL = 35 mph 0: PSL < 35 mph	15
Project Cost	Cost Effectiveness	100: BCA $\geq$ 1.5 50: BCA $\geq$ 1, but < 1.5 0: BCA < 1	15
Right of Way	Right-of-Way Required	100: No ROW needed 50: Minor ROW needed 0: Major ROW required	10
Pedestrian/Bicycle/Micromobility	5-year crash frequency (crash per mile)	100: >5 pedestrian/bicycle crashes per mile 80: >4-5 pedestrian/bicycle crashes per mile 60: >3-4 pedestrian/bicycle crashes per mile 40: >2-3 pedestrian/bicycle crashes per mile	25

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		20: >1-2 pedestrian/bicycle crashes per mile 10: 0-1 pedestrian/bicycle crashes per mile	
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Intersections – Signalized and Unsignalized

Category	Prioritization Factor / Metric	Evaluation	Weighting
Crash rate per VMT	KSI Crashes	Relative weighting to other signalized and unsignalized intersections	50
Project Cost	Cost Effectiveness	100: BCA > 1.5 50: BCA > 1, but <1.5 0: BCA < 1	15
Right of Way	Right-of-Way Required	100: No ROW needed 50: Minor ROW needed 0: Major ROW required	10
Pedestrian/Bicycle/Micromobility	5-year crash frequency (crash per mile)	100: >5 pedestrian/bicycle crashes 80: >4-5 pedestrian/bicycle crashes 60: >3-4 pedestrian/bicycle crashes 40: >2-3 pedestrian/bicycle crashes 20: >1-2 pedestrian/bicycle crashes per mile 10: 0-1 pedestrian/bicycle crashes	25

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Additional considerations are made for schools. Since addressing school safety is treated as a network of corridors and intersections, a separate safety program can be created to address school safety.

Operations Project

The Operations Projects focus on operational and safety improvements to improve traffic congestion. This applies for traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. Additionally, the overall pavement condition is important in maintaining a state of good repair.

Category	Prioritization Factor / Metric	Evaluation / Scoring Scale	Weight
Safety	KSI Crash History	Corridors will be quantified by percentile ranking of KSI rate per vehicle miles traveled	15
	Vision Zero Action Plan / High Injury Network	100: Yes 0: No	15
Mobility / Capacity & Development	Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) Ratio (Committed Trips from Concurrency Data)	100: V/C >1.1 85: V/C 1.01-1.1 65: V/C 0.91-1.0 50: V/C 0.81-0.9 0: V/C < 0.8	25
Right-of-Way	Right-of-Way Required	100: No ROW needed 50: Minor ROW required 0: Difficult / Major ROW required	5
Pedestrian	Infrastructure Present	100: No sidewalk present 50: Sidewalks but gaps present / no shared use path 0: Shared Use Path (existing) & Sidewalk	10
Bicycle	Infrastructure Present	100: No existing bicycle infrastructure 67: Sharrow (same lane for bike share) 33: Regular bike lane (5')	10

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Category	Prioritization Factor / Metric	Evaluation / Scoring Scale	Weight
		0: Buffered bike lanes	
Transit & Multimodal	Transit Level of Service	100: ≥ 48 Total daily, bi-directional transit counts. 75: ≥ 36 Total daily, bi-directional transit counts. 50: ≥ 24 Total daily, bi-directional transit counts. 25: ≥ 12 Total daily, bi-directional transit counts. 0: none	10
	Support for Non-Motorized Modes	100: Multi-use Trail/Path 50: Traditional Sidewalk 25: Bike Lane	5
Cost effectiveness	Cost Effectiveness (Max to determine a generalized factor for BCA)	100: $BCA \geq 1.5$ 50: $BCA \geq 1$, but < 1.5 0 : $BCA < 1$	5