

Implementation of
INVEST System
Planning Module on
Federal Lands
Collaborative Long
Range Transportation
Plans



Technical Report Documentation Page

1. Report No.	2. Government Accession No.	3. Recipient's Catalog No.	
4. Title and Subtitle <i>Implementation of INVEST System Planning Module on Federal Lands Collaborative Long Range Transportation Plans</i>		5. Report Date January 2017	
		6. Performing Organization Code	
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9. Performing Organization Name and Address WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff 851 SW Sixth Avenue Portland, Oregon 97204		10. Work Unit No. (TRAIS)	
		11. Contract or Grant No.	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address Western Federal Lands Highway Division Federal Highway Administration 610 East 5 th Street Vancouver, WA 98661		13. Type of Report and Period Covered	
		14. Sponsoring Agency Code HFL-17	
15. Supplementary Notes Contracting Officer's Representative: Amit Armstrong, FHWA, HFL-17, 360-619-7668, amit.armstrong@dot.gov			
16. Abstract Using sustainable transportation rating systems to shape transportation planning documents can allow public agencies to be more informed about economic, environmental and equitable attributes of final transportation infrastructure projects. This report details two case studies where the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool (INVEST) System Planning (SP) module was used to evaluate the Federal Lands long range transportation plans for Alaska and Pacific Northwest. This module focuses on agency-wide practices such as integrating long-range transportation plans with economic, environmental and community goals, linking planning with the environmental process, and ensuring financial sustainability of the transportation system. The plans were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alaska Federal Lands Long Range Transportation Plan (Alaska LRTP): The Alaska LRTP was published in September of 2012. The INVEST SP evaluation took place in 2014, two years after the plan was published. The intent of the evaluation was not to get the best "score" but rather to identify the criteria most applicable to FLMAs. The purpose of this evaluation was to identify how to best integrate sustainable practices into the development of future LRTPs. 2. Northwest Collaborative Long Range Transportation Plan (Northwest CLRTP): The Northwest CLRTP was initiated in 2014 and is scheduled for completion in 2017. The INVEST SP evaluation was introduced as the project goals were being developed. The INVEST implementation helped integrate sustainable practices during the development of the Northwest CLRTP. <p>Both plans performed well under the INVEST SP criteria. The Alaska LRTP, although evaluated after it was final, received a bronze rating. It was found that many of the INVEST SP concepts were incorporated into the plan and processes. However, they lacked the documentation required to get credit. The Northwest CLRTP received a platinum rating. It benefited from using INVEST in the early stages of plan development. Overall, the development of LRTPs benefit from use of a sustainability tool, such as INVEST. With the information captured in this report, FLMAs should be able to achieve high standards of sustainability in their LRTPs.</p>			
17. Key Words Sustainability, INVEST, systems planning module, Long Range Collaborative Transportation Plan, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Northwest		18. Distribution Statement No restriction. This document is available to the public from the sponsoring agency's website.	
19. Security Classif. (of this report) Unclassified	20. Security Classif. (of this page) Unclassified	21. No. of Pages 15	22. Price \$0.00

Executive Summary

Using sustainable transportation rating systems to shape transportation planning documents can allow public agencies to be more informed about economic, environmental and equitable attributes of final transportation infrastructure projects. This report details two case studies where the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool (INVEST) System Planning (SP) module was used to evaluate the Federal Lands long range transportation plans for Alaska and Pacific Northwest. This module focuses on agency-wide practices such as integrating long-range transportation plans with economic, environmental and community goals, linking planning with the environmental process, and ensuring financial sustainability of the transportation system. The plans were:

- Alaska Federal Lands Long Range Transportation Plan (Alaska LRTP): The Alaska LRTP was published in September of 2012. The INVEST SP evaluation took place in 2014, two years after the plan was published. The intent of the evaluation was not to get the best "score" but rather to identify the criteria most applicable to FLMAs. The purpose of this evaluation was to identify how to best integrate sustainable practices into the development of future LRTPs.
- Northwest Collaborative Long Range Transportation Plan (Northwest CLRTP): The Northwest CLRTP was initiated in 2014 and is scheduled for completion in 2017. The INVEST SP evaluation was introduced as the project goals were being developed. The INVEST implementation helped integrate sustainable practices during the development of the Northwest CLRTP.

Both plans performed well under the INVEST SP criteria. The Alaska LRTP, although evaluated after it was final, received a bronze rating. It was found that many of the INVEST SP concepts were incorporated into the plan and processes. However, they lacked the documentation required to get credit. The Northwest CLRTP received a platinum rating. It benefited from using INVEST in the early stages of plan development. Overall, the development of LRTPs benefit from use of a sustainability tool, such as INVEST. With the information captured in this report, FLMAs should be able to achieve high standards of sustainability in their LRTPs.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the INVEST System Planning (SP) module for developing long-range transportation plans for Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) with specific objectives to:

- Evaluate the Alaska Federal Lands Long-Range Transportation Plan (September 2012) using the INVEST SP module. Identify those criteria that are most aligned with FLMA Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) development.
- Implement the INVEST SP module to the FLMA Northwest Collaborative Long Range Transportation Plan (Northwest CLRTP) in the states of Oregon/Washington. Since the INVEST review began when the Northwest CLRTP was in its infancy, the feedback from the Alaska LRTP workshop was helpful to the agencies in guiding sustainability planning considerations and decisions.
- Provide feedback on the SP module to FHWA, including possible modifications to the criteria which would have greater applicability to issues/opportunities encountered by FLMAAs.

INVEST System Planning Module

FHWA developed INVEST to help translate triple bottom line sustainability principles into specific actions and to provide a means to measure sustainability for transportation professionals. INVEST is a web-based, voluntary self-evaluation rating tool initially published online (www.sustainablehighways.org) as a Beta version in 2010 and Version 1.0 was released in October 2012. Since 2012, there have been two subsequent version updates to the system: Version 1.1 was released in January 2015 with minor revisions and Version 1.2 was released in September of 2015, which included significant changes to criteria, scorecards, modules, and scoring. The tool continues to be refined with ongoing input from state and local transportation agency officials and staff including those from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

INVEST offers three modules – System Planning, Project Development (covers project planning, design and construction), and Operations & Maintenance. The *System Planning Module* focuses on agency-wide practices such as integrating long-range transportation plans with economic, environmental and community goals, linking planning with the environmental process, and ensuring financial sustainability of the transportation system. Version 1.2 has two sub-sets for the SP module:

- System Planning State (SPS): this module is for states or agencies owning infrastructure, and
- System Planning Regional (SPR): this module is for regional agencies like MPOs, that manage regional planning efforts but does not outright own infrastructure.

In the evaluation of the Alaska Federal Lands LRTP the SP module Version 1.0 was used to understand the current sustainability performance of the plans and identify sustainability opportunities for future multi-agency plans. The Northwest CLRTP used the SPS module from Version 1.2. Both versions of the SP module contain 16 criteria with one bonus criterion as outlined in Table 1.

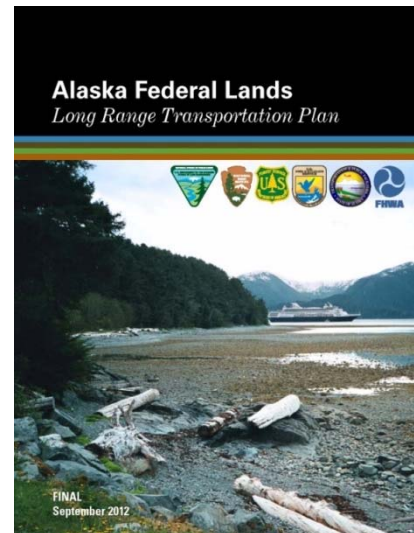
Table 1. INVEST System Planning Module Criteria

Version			Criteria Title
1.0	1.2		
SP-01	SPS-01	SPR-01	Integrated Planning: Economic Development and Land Use
SP-02	SPS-02	SPR-02	Integrated Planning: Natural Environment
SP-03	SPS-03	SPR-03	Integrated Planning: Social
SP-04	SPS-04	SPR-04	Integrated Planning: <i>Bonus</i>
SP-05	SPS-05	SPR-05	Access and Affordability
SP-06	SPS-06	SPR-06	Safety Planning
SP-07	SPS-07	SPR-07	Multi-modal Transportation and Public Health
SP-08	SPS-08	SPR-08	Freight and Goods Movement
SP-09	SPS-09	SPR-09	Travel Demand Management
SP-10	SPS-10	SPR-10	Air Quality
SP-11	SPS-11	SPR-11	Energy and Fuels
SP-12	SPS-12	SPR-12	Financial Sustainability
SP-13	SPS-13	SPR-13	Analysis Methods
SP-14	SPS-14	SPR-14	Transportation Systems Management and Operations
SP-15	SPS-15	SPR-15	Linking Asset Management and Planning
SP-16	SPS-16	SPR-16	Infrastructure Resiliency
SP-17	SPS-17	SPR-17	Linking Planning and NEPA

Alaska Long-Range Transportation Plan

Process Description

The Alaska Federal Lands *Long Range Transportation Plan* was published in September 2012. The plan resulted from a partnership between the NPS; USFWS; FS; BLM; Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and the FHWA WFL Highway Division. The plan states: “This LRTP assists FLMAs to consolidate efforts through long-term coordination in transportation planning and decision-making processes. Such cooperation is accomplished through developing common goals and objectives; setting priorities for implementing projects; facilitating objective decision making for the transportation system; and developing common actions that benefit each FLMA in furthering the common goals and objectives.”¹ This regional, multi-agency approach to long range transportation planning is the first of its kind, and is now being replicated state-by-state in compliance with federal legislation.



¹ Alaska Federal Lands Long Range Transportation Plan, September 2012.

In parallel with the statewide LRTP, each federal agency also prepared their own long range transportation plan, called drop-down plans, for lands within their jurisdiction (See Figure 1). Drop-down plans elaborated upon topics discussed in the Alaska Federal Lands LRTP with agency-specific details including baseline conditions, transportation needs and gaps, project selection processes, funding opportunities, performance measures, and recommended future actions. The formation of the umbrella plan with individual agency drop down plans occurred through an organic and iterative process. The agencies provided continuous feedback with FHWA and with each other, which created a process

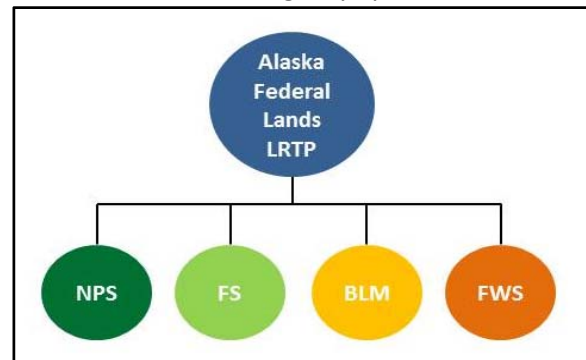


Figure 1. Alaska LRTP Tiered Approach

through which they could learn from each other and share ideas.

The FLMAs shared the following benefits realized through this new multi-agency approach:

- The multi-agency LRTP brought all modes of transportation, as well as large federal land holdings, together into one vision, set of goals and performance measures.
- The state of Alaska is unique in that the visitor experience often relies on multiple modes of transportation; thus, joint planning efforts can create a more seamless, and multi-modal, planning process moving forward.
- The LRTP will be updated jointly into the future; thus, the four FLMAs involved can now be on the same timeframe and planning horizon moving forward.
- Sharing of resources has been an added benefit. A combined user survey to determine performance measures, for example, was applied for jointly rather than individually. Rather than applying to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for survey clearance, the agencies approached OMB together and received clearance for FLMAs nationally. This approach streamlined approvals which could otherwise have taken years to secure.
- Public involvement efforts became more efficient. Over the course of the LRTP formation, agency representatives attended meetings and spoke on behalf of each other, saving valuable time and resources (rather than attendance by each individual agency).
- The LRTP process created a forum for shared communication; once per year (or more often) the agencies meet to discuss the plan and share plans/ideas. Agencies better understand one another's plans for the future, which in turn has helped expedite project delivery.
- Each agency came to the table with a different baseline of plans and policies. Many of these plans were completed at the unit (i.e. park, forest, etc.) level. Statewide, most agencies only had operations plans, not long term planning documentation.
- Each agency has a different mission; the challenge was in making the umbrella plan broad enough to cover the agencies' missions while being specific enough to help guide performance metrics.

Alaska LRTP Findings

A sustainability workshop was held on January 7, 2014 with FHWA FLH, FLMAs involved in the development of the multi-agency LRTP and the consultant team. The FLMAs in attendance included BLM, USFWS, NPS and FS. Objectives of this workshop were to:

- Better understand the process utilized to develop the LRTP;
- Review and discuss the INVEST SP module and its applicability to the Alaska LRTP; and
- Identify lessons learned from the process as well as identify future opportunities for sustainability enhancement.

The challenge in reviewing the SP module criteria at this point in time was that the plan was evaluated in retrospect; thus, the criteria were not explicitly incorporated into plan development from the beginning. In many cases, the agencies incorporated the concepts into their process but may not have documented it in a way that is required to achieve points. With that in mind, the goal of working through the criteria was not to calculate the best “score” but rather to identify the criteria most applicable to FLMAs. The goal in doing so was to facilitate prioritization of criteria with the most relevance and importance to FLMAs so that sustainability can be better integrated into the planning process from the beginning. Table 2 details how the Alaska LRTP was evaluated under the INVEST SP module.

Table 2. Alaska LRTP INVEST System Planning Module Score Breakdown

Criteria ID	Operations and Maintenance Criteria	Score/Points
SP-01	Integrated Planning: Economic Development and Land Use	0/15
SP-02	Integrated Planning: Natural Environment	15/15
SP-03	Integrated Planning: Social	10/15
SP-04	Integrated Planning: Bonus	0/10
SP-05	Access and Affordability	4/15
SP-06	Safety Planning	2/15
SP-07	Multi-modal Transportation and Public Health	2/15
SP-08	Freight and Goods Movement	0/15
SP-09	Travel Demand Management	6/15
SP-10	Air Quality	8/15
SP-11	Energy and Fuels	11/15
SP-12	Financial Sustainability	5/15
SP-13	Analysis Methods	2/15
SP-14	Transportation Systems Management and Operations	1/15
SP-15	Linking Asset Management and Planning	7/15
SP-16	Infrastructure Resiliency	8/15
SP-17	Linking Planning and NEPA	10/15
Total:		91/250

Although sustainability was not a specific focus area within the formation of the plans, agencies included discussions of certain topic areas, such as climate change, within their drop-down plans. Further, even though the Alaska FLMAs did not have access to the FHWA INVEST SP module during development of

the LRTP, the agencies performed well in many areas including natural environment, social, energy and fuels, air quality, and linking NEPA and planning.

Criteria topics that aligned with the agencies' missions but may have lacked documentation and therefore did not receive as strong scores included economic development and land use, multi-modal travel and safety. While the agencies often considered these criteria during the development of the LRTP, they need to be better tailored (and integrated) into the LRTP process.

A portion of the criteria are written in a way that is not applicable to FLMAs for various reasons such as:

- Other agencies (such as the State DOT) lead the effort. FLMAs may have a supporting role but may not control the outcome
 - SP-08, Freight and Goods Movement, for example, is handled at the State and MPO level, with FLMAs in a supporting role
- The required approach to secure credit necessitates a level of detail that the FLMAs do not undertake at the shared LRTP level
 - SP-13, Analysis Methods, requires detailed documentation that would not typically be collected as part of a multi-agency plan.
- The topic is not relevant. For example, congestion management may be an issue in certain parks or public spaces but is not a key focus area. Mobility and user experience, however, are focus areas.
 - SP-14 Transportation Systems Management and Operations requires actions to control congestion

By taking the Alaska LRTP through the module, the team learned a number of valuable outcomes. One is that application of a module such as INVEST brings sustainability to the forefront early on in systems planning, which can then carry through the project development process. If sustainability is integrated into the LRTP, it will have a greater chance of flowing through to project purpose and need statements, environmental analyses and design and construction. The criteria also raise awareness of available processes, such as asset management, and the value of integrating these processes into planning-level decision making. Some criteria are more effective and relevant than others depending on the agency and their purpose for using it. The scorecard criteria can be customized to better align with an agency's sustainability mission, goals and objectives. The overall purpose and value in using the scorecard is to select the sustainability topic areas that an agency can focus on moving forward and will bring the most value in terms of sustainability outcomes.

Recommendations to Enhance Sustainability in the Alaska LRTP Process

Although the Alaska FLMAs were not specifically asked to address sustainability in their LRTPs, a number of concepts were included in some way to varying degrees. The following outlines opportunities for sustainability enhancement of future LRTPs. Opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Creating a LRTP sustainability framework that:

- Defines sustainability for the multi-agency organization. The sustainability definition should include fully encompassing principles and values unique to the agencies or partnership.
- Develops sustainable transportation goals and objectives. This process often begins with identifying focus areas followed by more specific goals that realize the holistic nature of sustainability.
- Develops and implements performance measures that are quantifiable and can be used to track progress towards specific goals or objectives. Performance measures should be tailored to the policies and processes already in place, with an eye toward integrating sustainability into all agency activities.
- Tracks performance measures and continually refine/improve to identify successes and limitations of their performance. For example, if an agency has a goal to improve safety and measures performance of whether safety is being achieved by tracking the number of incidents; in the future, the agency may consider expanding evaluation of surface transportation-related incidents to non-road (i.e. air modes) if applicable given geographic context, as in a state like Alaska where air travel is necessary.
- Considers a systematic way of linking performance to inform decision making. Agencies need a system for tracking the progress of performance measures that can be synthesized into a format that informs decision making (e.g., identifies knowledge gaps, opportunities for efficiency, successful practices, etc.) for current and future plans and programs while also linked to other relevant agency reporting efforts (e.g., financial, safety, etc.).
- Supporting the pilot-testing of innovative strategies and enabling innovative, yet proven, strategies to be incorporated into future plans and programs. Ensure documentation takes place to recognize performance in a systematic way. This will also ensure sustainability continually matures and evolves within the organization(s) and associated planning efforts.
- Researching and selecting the best sustainability evaluation tool that best fits the organization(s) and/or plan. The key is to find the system that is most relevant or flexible to suit the organization(s) or plan(s) and to use the system to foster continual improvement. Using these systems should raise awareness, encourage creating thinking, and focus on long-term sustainability outcomes.
- Generating consensus among the agencies on items and criteria that should be included, tailored, or noted as not applicable within the evaluation system.
- As factors may not all carry equal importance to an agency or plan, consider using an evaluation tool with a scoring system that weights factors in order to normalize criterion and can be applicable to projects, or in this case, plans of all types.
- Utilizing feedback from other projects/plans evaluated through a rating system to learn and apply to future plans, programs, and projects. Sharing of best practices among industry peers broadens lessons learned and helps move the industry and sustainability outcomes forward.

Northwest Collaborative Long Range Transportation Plan

After the development and successful release of the Alaska LRTP, the FHWA, FLH, and WFL Highway Division initiated the development of a Northwest Collaborative Long Range Transportation Plan (CLRTP) process to address transportation to and within Washington and Oregon’s federal lands. The Northwest CLRTP is a unified collaborative multi-agency regional long range transportation plan representing five federal land management agencies, including: BLM; NPS; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); USFWS; and USFS. Several additional Federal, state and local agencies also contributed to the CLRTP’s development, including: FHWA; Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT); Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT); Washington State County Road Administrative Board (CRAB); and, Association of Oregon Counties (AOC).

Similar to the Alaska Federal Lands LRTP, the Northwest CLRTP is an umbrella plan for the five primary agencies. Taking the lessons learned from the Alaska LRTP process, individual agency-specific “drop-down” regional long range transportation

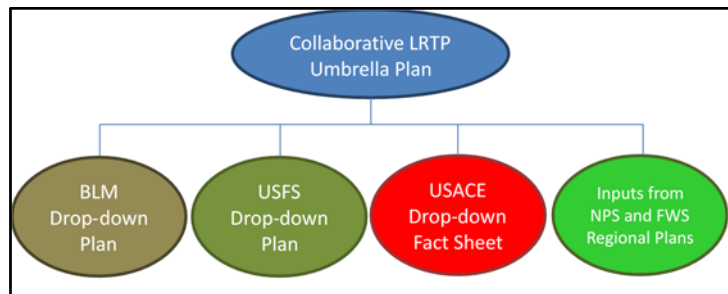


Figure 2. Northwest LRTP Tiered Approach

plans were developed in parallel. The drop-down plans identify shared and

agency-specific transportation goals and objectives, conditions, needs and gaps, performance measures, funding sources, action items, and meaningful agency partnerships. The plans also document transportation project prioritization processes, define the data and processes used to communicate need, and identify strategies for overcoming gaps between needs and available funds. The Northwest CLRTP established six goals with accompanying objectives and strategies. These goals are the foundation of the umbrella plan and are represented in each drop-down plan.



Process Description

The development of the Northwest CLRTP was initiated in 2014. INVEST System Planning criteria were introduced early in the development of the plan. A sustainability workshop was held on July 2, 2014 with individuals from most the representing agencies: FHWA, WFL, USFS, USFWS, NPS, WSDOT, CRAB, and

USACE. Objectives of this meeting were two-fold: (1) to provide an overview of the FHWA INVEST tool for long range transportation planning for the Northwest CLRTP, and (2) to discuss how INVEST can work for LRTPs and inform future LRTP plan development.

At the time of the sustainability workshop, goals and objectives of the plan were being drafted. The intent of holding the sustainability workshop at such an early stage of plan development was to use the lessons learned from the Alaska LRTP and apply them to the Northwest CLRTP effort. Further, the FHWA and WFL team thought that bringing INVEST into the planning effort early-on would set sustainable principles as the foundation of the plan. The early draft Northwest CLRTP goals and objectives were compared to the Version 1.0 INVEST System Planning Criteria as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Northwest CLRTP Goal Alignment with INVEST System Planning Criteria

No.	INVEST System Planning Criteria	Initial Alignment to Draft Goals and Objectives
SP-01	Integrated Planning: Economic Development and Land Use	
SP-02	Integrated Planning: Natural Environment	Goal #1: Protect Resources
SP-03	Integrated Planning: Social	
SP-04	Integrated Planning: Bonus	Goal #6: Place-Based Collaboration This is also being done now through the agencies undergoing this process continuously, collaboratively, and comprehensively.
SP-05	Access and Affordability	Goal #3: Provide Access and Enhance Connectivity Goal #4: Nurture Visitor Experience
SP-06	Safety Planning	Goal #2: Ensure Safety
SP-07	Multimodal Transportation and Public Health	
SP-08	Freight and Goods Movement	
SP-09	Travel Demand Management	
SP-10	Air Quality	
SP-11	Energy and Fuels	
SP-12	Financial Sustainability	Goal #6: Place-Based Collaboration
SP-13	Analysis Methods	Templates will be reviewed by each FLMA and approved at the national level for use across the country.
SP-14	Transportation Systems Management and Operations	
SP-15	Linking Asset Management and Planning	Goal #5: Protect Assets
SP-16	Infrastructure Resiliency	
SP-17	Linking Planning and NEPA	

After the initial sustainability workshop, the Northwest CLRTP team finished developing the goals and objectives. In the fall of 2014 an initial INVEST “desktop evaluation” of the fully drafted goals and objectives was conducted. The purpose of the early evaluation was to identify areas of strength and gaps from a sustainability standpoint and suggest implementation actions to overcome those gaps. The

agencies involved in the development of the Northwest CL RTP were able to use the information from the desktop evaluation to refine the Northwest CL RTP as the plan continued to be developed.

The Northwest CL RTP remains under development and is anticipated to be released in 2017. A non-public draft of the plan was provided to the consultant team in the spring of 2016. This draft was evaluated using the INVEST SP module version 1.2 for states (SPS). In addition to the draft plan, team members provided insight and explanation for sustainable information that was not present in the draft plan based on the understanding that it would be reflected in the final Northwest CL RTP.

Northwest CL RTP Findings

The sustainability workshop was held during early development of the Northwest CL RTP. This was useful as it revealed that some of the INVEST System Planning Criteria were not particularly well-aligned with some of the FL MAs. The project team identified early on that their use of INVEST was to help identify and guide where agencies may need to focus to further sustainability efforts. Similar to the experience on the Alaska Federal Lands LRTP, many of the criteria topics aligned with the agencies’ missions but the agencies did not have sufficient documentation to definitively attain points as written. During the sustainability workshop, agency representative acknowledged that some of the criteria may need to be open to interpretation to make them applicable to the Northwest CL RTP.

Overall, the draft Northwest CL RTP performed very well under the SPS criteria, receiving 155 points, well over the 144 required for a platinum certification. Table 4 details how the Alaska LRTP was evaluated under the INVEST SP module.

Table 4. Northwest CL RTP INVEST System Planning Module Score Breakdown

Criteria ID	Operations and Maintenance Criteria	Score/Points
SPS-01	Integrated Planning: Economic Development and Land Use	15/15
SPS-02	Integrated Planning: Natural Environment	15/15
SPS-03	Integrated Planning: Social	15/15
SPS-04	Integrated Planning: Bonus	10/10
SPS-05	Access and Affordability	15/15
SPS-06	Safety Planning	14/15
SPS-07	Multi-modal Transportation and Public Health	13/15
SPS-08	Freight and Goods Movement	0/15
SPS-09	Travel Demand Management	4/15
SPS-10	Air Quality	7/15
SPS-11	Energy and Fuels	4/15
SPS-12	Financial Sustainability	0/15
SPS-13	Analysis Methods	7/15
SPS-14	Transportation Systems Management and Operations	2/15
SPS-15	Linking Asset Management and Planning	7/15
SPS-16	Infrastructure Resiliency	14/15
SPS-17	Linking Planning and NEPA	13/15
Total:		155/250

While many of the criteria were easily attained, others required interpretation and further discussion among team members to clearly delineate whether the criteria was achieved or not. Table 5 provides a few examples of points that were received with little or no documentation in the draft plan.

Table 5. Northwest CL RTP Examples of Applying Criteria

SPS Criteria	Requirement	Northwest CL RTP Interpretation
SPS-01.4: Integrated Planning, Economic Development and Land Use – Provide Leadership	Provides institutional leadership in encouraging transportation planning that is consistent with other plans and that supports sustainable practices. (2 Points)	Clear and definitive documentation was not available at the time of the evaluation to demonstrate how this is accomplished. However, leadership is implied in Goal 1, Place-Based Collaboration, of the plan. Reaching to understand the role of each federal agency represented in the Northwest CL RTP and their role within each state as well as how they communicate to the public led to the understanding that the providing safe, convenient and sustainable transportation access to and within federal lands is a priority.
SPS-03.4(a-c): Integrated Planning, Social – Demonstrate Sustainable Outcomes	<p>a: Agency implements transportation investments that support the community's vision and goals and help achieve sustainability outcomes. (1 point)</p> <p>b: LRTP includes sustainability performance measures to assess effectiveness of public involvement process. (2 points)</p> <p>c: Agency monitors progress towards goals for at least one year and show measurable advancement towards stated goals and sustainable outcome. (3 points)</p>	Goal 2, Protect Assets, has objectives and strategies that clearly demonstrate how the plan achieves (a) and (b). However, there was no documentation for (c), how the performance measures will be monitored. Discussions among team members confirmed that monitoring will be a part of the final Northwest CL RTP.
SPS-05.3(a-b): Access and Affordability - Regular Monitoring of Plans and Programs	<p>a: LRTP includes sustainability-related performance measures that can be used to monitor the effects of plan implementation on transportation accessibility and affordability. (3 points)</p> <p>b: Agency monitors progress against performance measures and adjusts efforts as necessary to meet its goals. (3 points)</p>	Goal 2, Protect Assets, and Goal 5, Provide Access and Connectivity, have objectives and strategies that clearly demonstrate how the plan achieves (a). Similar to SPS-03.4(c), the draft plan did not clearly delineate how progress against the performance measures would be monitored. However, discussions among team members confirmed that monitoring will be a part of the final Northwest CL RTP.

Because the INVEST process was not introduced into the Northwest CL RTP until the goals had already been established, the ability to truly affect and change the goals to be more aligned with the INVEST criteria was difficult. Since achieving a high score with INVEST was not the sole purpose of the CL RTP, it was not interpreted as a high priority to consider new goals or revising the goals. That does not mean that the plan does not strive to achieve sustainable principles, it just did not fully embrace INVEST as a tool for shaping the end result. In retrospect, holding the INVEST workshop as part of the project kick-off, before goals had even been considered, could have ensured all the tenets and requirements of INVEST SPS were engrained in the plan.

Recommendations to Enhance Sustainability in the Northwest CL RTP

Processes

Similar to the Alaska LRTP Process, sustainability was not a specific item to be address in the Northwest CL RTP. Although sustainability is included throughout the plan, there are opportunities for improvement. The sustainability enhancement opportunities listed earlier in this document in the Alaska LRTP recommendations are relevant here as well. The following specific lessons learned from the Northwest CL RTP should be considered and applied to future LRTP processes.

- The draft Northwest CL RTP did not include monitoring requirements, which are required by a number of INVEST criteria. Monitoring is important to demonstrate that sustainable practices are being implemented. In addition, the results of performance measuring and monitoring can be shared with the public and supporting agencies.
- The INVEST evaluation started after the Northwest CL RTP goals and objectives were defined and there was no clearly defined goal for sustainability integration. Because of this, sustainable objectives were not engrained in the plan as well as they could have been.

Overall Pilot Findings and Lessons Learned

Since LRTPs set agency wide priorities and sustainability goals, it is of utmost importance to integrate these in long range planning process. It is never too early to discuss sustainability when initiating the development of planning documents. Ideally, sustainability would be discussed during the project scoping, before a kick-off meeting is even scheduled. The agency project manager and all supporting agencies need to agree that sustainability is a top priority of the project and should consider incorporating sustainability as a specific goal of the plan or weave it into multiple plan goals. This will ensure sustainability is accounted for throughout the plan development process and reflected in the final plan.

INVEST System Planning has very specific requirements for documentation. Some agencies do not capture their planning-level sustainability practices in the same format. In many cases, the INVEST documentation requirements are considerable and may be a significant undertaking in and of themselves. For instance SPS-6: Safety Planning has a documentation requirement as follows: “Agency vision statement(s) that document the integration of the Toward Zero Death vision into the agency's vision for transportation planning.” This very specific requirement may not be feasible for all agencies. The Northwest CL RTP, for instance, sought to incorporate safety to all extents feasible, but did not

include “Toward Zero Death” specifically. Because of this, some interpretation was needed to identify how the plans met the intent of the INVEST SP criteria. Interpretation should be noted or outright encouraged in the INVEST requirements.

Allowing agencies to exclude one or more of the criteria if they are not relevant to the project type should be considered. For instance SPS-8: Freight and Goods Movement were not relevant to either the Alaska LRTP or Northwest CLRTP as freight movements are most commonly the responsibility of state and regional governments. A total of 15 points are available to this criterion, but they are essentially unavailable to this project. Although points were not an issue for the Northwest CLRTP, it may be easier for other projects to highlight their sustainability efforts through achieving a higher rating from INVEST.

Overall, both projects benefited from using the INVEST SP module to evaluate the ability of the plans to achieve sustainable outcomes. Although both plans received ratings (bronze for Alaska Federal Lands LRTP and platinum for Northwest CLRTP), there is clear benefit from using a rating system on the outset of long-range plans. With a tool such as INVEST, sustainable approaches and solutions are identified early on in the plan development and can be incorporated into the document more easily. The Alaska Federal Land LRTP is currently being updated to integrate sustainable approaches and solutions as a result of this evaluation.