



Case Study:

Western Federal Lands – Evaluating Sustainability in Federal Lands Long-Range Transportation Plans

Alaska and Pacific Northwest Region

Lead Agency: Western Federal Lands Highway Division

INVEST Module: System Planning (SP)

Link: <http://www.akfedlandslrtp.org/lrtp.html>

<http://nwfedlandslrtp.org/>

The Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) used INVEST to evaluate the extent to which sustainability was incorporated into two long-range transportation plans: the Alaska Federal Lands Long-Range Transportation Plan (Alaska LRTP) and the Northwest Collaborative Long-Range Transportation Plan (Northwest CLRTP). The INVEST scoring for the Alaska LRTP took place after the development of the plan, and was used to assess future opportunities for incorporating sustainability into LRTPs, as well as which INVEST criteria are and are not applicable to Federal Lands. WFLHD used INVEST at several stages of the development of the Northwest CLRTP, and based on the results of the evaluation refined the initial goals and the draft plan to better incorporate sustainability.

Alaska LRTP

The Alaska LRTP was published in September 2012, and the INVEST evaluation began in 2014. The LRTP was developed by several Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMAs) operating in Alaska (National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management), as well as the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the WFLHD. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify the INVEST criteria most applicable to FLMAs, and how to best integrate sustainable practices into the development of future LRTPs.

A sustainability workshop was held in January 2014 with WFLHD, the FLMAs involved in the development of the multi-agency LRTP, and a consultant team. At the workshop, participants reviewed and discussed the INVEST Version 1.0 System Planning (SP) module and its applicability to the Alaska LRTP, and identified future opportunities for sustainability enhancement.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the plan scored 91 out of 250 possible points, for a Bronze rating. Although sustainability was not a specific focus area for the development of the LRTP, the plan performed well in many INVEST criteria, including SP-02 Natural Environment, SP-03 Social, SP-10 Air Quality, SP-11 Energy and Fuels, and SP-17 Linking NEPA and Planning.

In several cases, criteria topics aligned with the agencies' missions, but the agencies lacked the documentation required by these criteria and therefore did not score highly. Criteria in this category included SP-01 Economic Development and Land Use, SP-06 Safety Planning, and SP-07 Multi-modal Transportation and Public Health. Finally, a portion of the criteria were not applicable to the Alaska FLMAs because other jurisdictions (e.g., the State DOT) are responsible, or because the topic is not a priority in a Federal Lands context. These included SP-08 Freight and Goods Movement, SP-13 Analysis Methods, and SP-14 Transportation Systems Management and Operations.

Table 1. Alaska LRTP INVEST SP 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

Northwest CL RTP

The Northwest CL RTP is a collaborative, multi-agency long-range transportation plan for Federal Lands in Washington and Oregon. The plan was developed by five FLMAs, WFLHD, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the Washington State County Road Administrative Board (CRAB), and the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC).

The INVEST evaluation began as the plan’s goals were being developed, and helped to integrate sustainable practices into the Northwest CL RTP. The following steps were taken to incorporate sustainability into the development of the Northwest CL RTP:

- A sustainability workshop was held in July 2014 with individuals from many of the agencies participating in the development of the Northwest CL RTP. In the workshop, the early draft Northwest CL RTP goals and objectives were compared to the Version 1.0 INVEST SP criteria.
- The Northwest CL RTP team finished developing the goals and objectives of the plan. In the fall of 2014, the project team conducted an INVEST desktop evaluation of the fully drafted goals and objectives. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify areas of strength and gaps from a sustainability standpoint, and to 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 INVEST desktop evaluation to refine the Northwest CL RTP as it continued to be developed.
- A non-public draft of the plan was provided to the consultant team in the spring of 2016, who evaluated it using the INVEST Version 1.2 System Planning for States (SPS) module. The draft Northwest CL RTP received 155 out of 250 possible points, for a platinum rating (see Table 2 below for a detailed scoring breakdown).
- The Northwest CL RTP remains under development and is anticipated to be released in 2017.

Table 2. Northwest CL RTP INVEST SPS 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

Using INVEST to assess the Northwest CL RTP led WFLHD to identify how to more fully integrate sustainability into long-range planning. Although the INVEST evaluation was conducted as the Northwest CL RTP was being developed, it began after the goals and objectives of the plan had been defined. Therefore, goals and objectives related to sustainability were not integrated into the plan as fully as they could have been. WFLHD recommended that in the future agencies incorporate sustainability into the initial scoping stage of a LRTP, before the goals and objectives are established. In addition, WFLHD recommended including monitoring requirements in an LRTP. Monitoring is required by a number of INVEST criteria, and can demonstrate to the public and partner agencies that sustainable practices are being implemented.

Key Outcomes of Using INVEST

- WFLHD used INVEST to incorporate sustainability into the development of statewide and multi-state LRTPs for Federal Lands.
- Conducting the INVEST evaluations at several stages of the planning process underscored the importance of incorporating sustainability early in the development of a transportation plan, before goals and objectives have been determined.
- WFLHD identified INVEST SP/SPS criteria that may not be relevant for a Federal Lands context, and recommended that in future updates to the SPS module agencies be allowed to exclude criteria that are not relevant to the project type or do not fall under the agency’s jurisdiction.