

FTA New Starts Process

The federal government funds some new transit projects through a New Starts Process. For regions interested in accessing the federal New Starts funds, a process for comparing major transit investments throughout the county is used. The New Starts Process is intended to make sure that federal funding for transit projects are compared on a level playing field. This way, a project in Boone and Winnebago Counties can be compared with a project in St. Louis or Charlotte or Sacramento or Chicago for funding by the limited federal New Starts dollars. All areas must follow a similar set of evaluation steps. At the end of the process, there are a series of criteria that the FTA will evaluate including:

Effectiveness – the extent to which alternatives solve the state transportation problems in the corridor.

Impacts – the extent to which the alternatives impact positively or negatively – nearby natural resources and neighborhoods, air quality, the adjacent transportation network and facilities, land use and the local economy.

Cost Effectiveness – the extent to which the costs of the alternatives are commensurate with their benefits.

Equity – the costs and benefits of the alternatives are distributed fairly across different population groups.