State Rail Plan Goal	Sub-Criterion	Criterion Weight	Potential Metric	Score = 1	Score = 2	Score = 3	Score = 4	Score = 5	Notes
Support Economic Growth and Development	Employment and Prosperity	1.00	Number of new rail-dependent businesses or facilities	Project does not support new rail-dependent businesses in the area		Project modestly supports rail-dependent businesses (as measured relative to other projects)		Project significantly supports rail-dependent businesses (as measured relative to other projects)	Freight movement drives economic growth (long term) around the state (i.e., business expansion, sustainable jobs, new business).
Ensure Connectivity for Critical Industries	Generate Additional Carloads	1.00	Number of new carloads generated	Project does not result in additional carload volume	Project results in infrequent or unpredictable volume of shipments (less than 1 carload per week)	Project results in modest volume of carloads (at least 1 carload per week)	Project results in high volume of carloads (20 carloads per week or greater)	Project results in consistent unit train volumes (90 carloads per train or greater, multiple times per year)	Intent is to maximize the benefits of rail transportation to freight-dependent sectors and also to provide reliable revenue to the railroads to support ongoing financial viability and self-reliance
Maintain State Railroad Assets in a State of Good Repair	Reduction in Slow Order Miles	1.00	Number of slow order miles as a percentage of the railroad's total route miles	Project makes no reduction in existing slow order miles on affected line segment		Project results in modest reduction in slow order miles on affected line segment		Project eliminates all slow order miles on the railroad within the state	Speed improvements help ensure that shippers receive timely service; helps to prevent cascading delays due to hours-of-service limitations for train crews
Maintain State Railroad Assets in a State of Good Repair	Track Classification	1.00	FRA Track Classification of affected segment	Project does not increase maximum authorized speed	Project improves track from Excepted status to FRA Class 1	Project improves track to FRA Class 2	Project improves track to FRA Class 3	Project improves track to FRA Class 4	Class 2 track is widely considered sufficient for short line railroad operations.
Maintain State Railroad Assets in a State of Good Repair	Accommodate Railcars with 286,000-lb Maximum Gross Weight Capacity	1.00	Weight capacity of affected segment	Project makes no improvement in maximum allowable gross weight on affected line segment				Project increases maximum allowable gross weight to 286,000-lbs or greater on affected line segment	286,000-lb capacity is the current industry standard; shippers are at a competitive disadvantage if they cannot make use of maximum loading
Reduce Highway Impacts	Truck Miles	1.00	Total truck miles for affected shipper(s)	Project has no impact on truck miles	Proposed operation requires long-haul trucking of rail shipments to/from rail transload site (greater than 50 miles)	Proposed operation requires short-haul trucking of rail shipments to/from rail transload site (less than 50 miles)	Proposed operation requires short-haul trucking for gathering or distribution only	Proposed operation provides direct rail service to shipper; requires no trucking of inputs or outputs in South Dakota	Considerations related to number of trucks diverted away from urban areas and downtowns may also be made.
Improve Railroad Safety, Security, and Resiliency	Highway-Rail Grade Crossing and Pedestrian Safety	1.00	Expected number of accidents, injuries, or fatalities avoided	Removes 0 grade crossings and/or does not reduce likelihood of accidents/incidents	25% reduction in accidents/incidents	Removes 1 grade crossing or 50% reduction in accidents/incidents	75% reduction in accidents/incidents	Removes more than 1 grade crossing and/or reduces accidents/incidents by 100%	Percentages are provided, but it may be determined (based on data available and project attributes) that the scoring should be relative to the most "safe" project.
Improve Railroad Safety, Security, and Resiliency	Resiliency	1.00	Improvement in infrastructure condition based on asset reliability, longevity, and resiliency against potential failure, compromise, or abandonment	Makes no improvement to existing rail infrastructure assets		Replacement or improvement of rail infrastructure assets in fair condition or at moderate risk of compromise		Replacement or improvement of rail infrastructure assets in poor condition or at high risk of compromise	Consideration should be given to weather and climate-related risks in flood-prone areas
Financial Responsibility	Funding Leverage	1.00	Percentage share of private funding relative to public funding; percentage share of state funding relative to total funding	100% public funding / 100% state funding	1-25% private funding	26-50% private funding	51-75% private funding	76-100% private funding	Projects with larger non-federal share are more likely to be awarded competitive federal funds; larger private share represents anticipated return on investment

South Dakota Department of Transportation
Rail Improvement Program

1. Applicant Information

    a. Entity: _____

    b. Point of Contact: _____

    c. Address Line 1: _____

    d. Address Line 2: _____

    e. City: _____

    f. State: _____

    g. Zip Code: _____

    h. Phone Number: _____

    i. Email: _____

2. Project Location

    a. Please describe the geographic location of the project. If the project covers one or more line segment(s), describe the geographic or mile post limits of the project in relation to these line segment(s).

3. Project Description

    a. Please describe, in general terms, the purpose and need of the project and summarize the work to be performed.

4. Project Funding

a. Requested Funding

Funding Partner	Funding Program	Amount (in US Dollars)
Federal		
State		
Applicant		
Other (Please Describe)		
Other (Please Describe)		
Total Project Cost		

5. Anticipated Benefits

a. Is this project intended to create or support new economic development opportunities? Yes   No

If yes, please describe

b. Will this project generate additional freight carloads on the affected segment? Yes   No

If yes, please describe

c. Is this project intended to reduce slow order miles? Yes   No

If yes, please describe

d. Is this project intended to upgrade track to a higher FRA track classification? (i.e. Class 1 to Class 2) Yes   No

If yes, please describe

e. Is this project intended to upgrade track or structures to allow 286,000-lb maximum gross weight carloads? Yes   No

If yes, please describe

f. Is this project intended to divert freight from truck to rail Yes   No

If yes, please describe

g. Is this project intended to yield highway-rail grade crossing or pedestrian safety benefits? Yes   No

If yes, please describe

h. Is this project intended to support an ongoing state-of-good-repair or preserve an existing rail corridor for continued or future use? Yes   No

If yes, please describe

6.   Project Readiness

a. If seeking federal funding for construction, has this project undergone Preliminary Engineering (PE) and appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation at this time? Yes   No   N/A

b. Please indicate if this project has been documented in any of the following planning documents:

i.   South Dakota State Rail Plan Yes   No

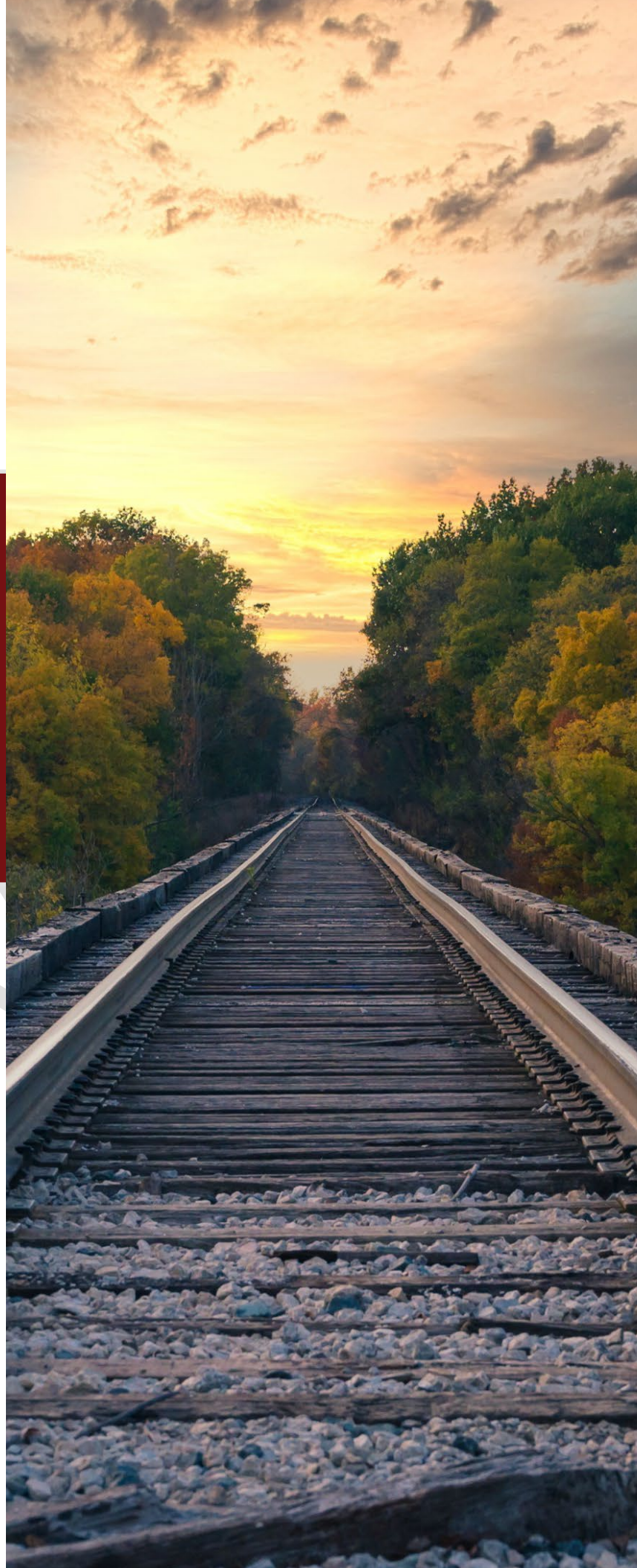**ii.** South Dakota State Freight Plan Yes   No

iii. South Dakota Long Range Transportation Plan Yes   No

iv. Local/Regional Planning Documents (Please Describe) Yes   No

Appendix A: Intake Form User Guide

South Dakota State Rail Plan

South Dakota Rail Investment Guide

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SD DOT

CONTENTS

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

a. Entity:

Provide the legal name of the business/organizational entity seeking to partner with SDDOT.

b. Point of Contact

Provide the name and contact information for the Applicant entity point of contact, including title. This information will be used to establish a primary point of contact for SDDOT communications regarding the proposed project.

c. Address Line 1
d. Address Line 2
e. City
f. State
g. Zip Code
h. Phone Number
i. Email Address

2. PROJECT LOCATION

Describe the geographic location of the proposed project, including identification of rail line segments, mileposts, facility locations or other relevant information.

If there are multiple project components, please identify and locate each major project component in relation to the segments and milepost locations. This information will be used to support project identification mapping.

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Describe, in general terms, the purpose and need for the proposed project, including identification of any challenges the project will address, or benefits that the project seeks to provide, and explain how the proposed project can address those needs/benefits.

Provide a general description the process or planning used to identify and develop the project to date.

Describe the work to be performed. If there are multiple project components, include a specific description of each project component necessary to support the project's purpose and need. This information will be used to help define project scope and enable evaluators to assess the project's merits

4. PROJECT FUNDING

Please provide an estimate of the anticipated total project cost, inclusive of all project components.

Please fill out the enclosed project funding table identifying requested funding amounts from federal and/or state partners. If applicable, provide an estimate of the available funding to be provided by the Applicant and/or any other contributing parties to support project implementation.

5. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

Information from this Section will be used to evaluate the types of anticipated project benefits a project is expected to produce and assist with aligning the project with various potential state and federal funding priorities.

a. **Economic Development Opportunities?**

Please identify whether the project is intended to create new or support existing economic development opportunities. If yes, please provide a description of the new/existing economic opportunity, and provide an explanation of how the project will support rail dependent businesses or facilities in the creation of new or enhanced employment opportunities, new market opportunities, etc.

b. **Additional Freight Carloads?**

Please identify whether the project is anticipated to generate additional freight carloads on the affected/involved rail segment(s). If yes, please provide an estimate of the number of additional freight carloads and expected frequency of carloads compared to existing freight volume levels expected as a result of the project.

c. **Reduction of slow order miles?**

Please identify whether the project will reduce the number of slow order miles currently in place on the affected segment(s). If yes, please indicate the total number of slow order miles currently in place as a percentage of the railroad's total overall route miles, and the expected reduction of slow order miles as a result of the project.

d. **FRA Track Classification Upgrade?**

Please identify whether the project will result in an upgrade to the existing FRA Track Classification for the affected segment(s). If yes, please identify the current FRA Track Classification(s) in the project area(s), the new anticipated FRA Track Classification as a result of the project, and identify the total track miles, including milepost boundaries, of rail anticipated to be upgraded as a result of the project.

e. **Accommodating 286,000 lb. carload capacity?**
Please identify whether the project will deliver improvements that result in the ability of rail infrastructure to accommodate 286,000 carload capacity. If yes, please indicate the current capacity constraints of the rail and/or other involved infrastructure and identify the specific improvements that will result in the upgraded carload capacity (ie: bridge replacements, heavier rail, etc). Please also indicate how many rail miles will be upgraded and provide the milepost boundaries as applicable.

f. **Diversion of truck traffic to rail?**
Please indicate whether an outcome of the project will be a diversion of existing or projected new truck traffic off highways and onto rail. If yes, please identify the projected diversion and indicate which highways will be primarily affected by the diversion. Provide an estimated distance freight will need to travel via truck to a rail facility, as applicable.

g. **Grade Crossing or Pedestrian Safety Benefits?**
Please indicate whether the project will make improvements to existing at-grade crossings (including elimination) or whether the project will implement pedestrian related safety improvements. If yes, please identify the crossing (if applicable) and describe how the improvements are expected to result in enhanced safety, providing an estimate in the anticipated reduction in accidents if possible.

h. **Supporting State of Good Repair or preserving an existing railroad corridor for continued rail use?**
Please indicate whether the project is intended to bring railroad assets into a state of good repair, supporting continued use, or intended to preserve a current railroad corridor for further use by preventing abandonment or discontinuance of rail service? If yes, please explain the current state of the railroad asset and identify how the project improvements will enhance state of good repair, including longevity, resiliency and reliability, or continued rail use. Please also identify, as

applicable, whether the project improvements are being implemented in an area prone to climate or weather related risks such as flooding.

6. PROJECT READINESS

a. **If seeking federal funding for construction, has this project undergone Preliminary Engineering (PE) and appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation at this time**

Please explain, as applicable, if the status of project preliminary engineering and environmental analysis, including any environmental studies and/or applicable FRA Class of Action determinations or environmental decisions under NEPA. If possible, for projects seeking federal funds, please provide the anticipated FRA Class of Action (CE, EA or EIS), if NEPA activities have not commenced.

b. **Please indicate if this project has been documented in any of the following planning documents:**
    a. **South Dakota State Rail**
        The South Dakota State Rail Plan will be published in 2022; amendments to the State Rail Plan may be published as needed to include new rail projects.
    b. **South Dakota State Freight Plan**
        The most recent South Dakota State Freight Plan was published in 2017.
    c. **South Dakota Long Range Transportation Plan**
        The most recent South Dakota Long Range Transportation Plan was published in 2021.
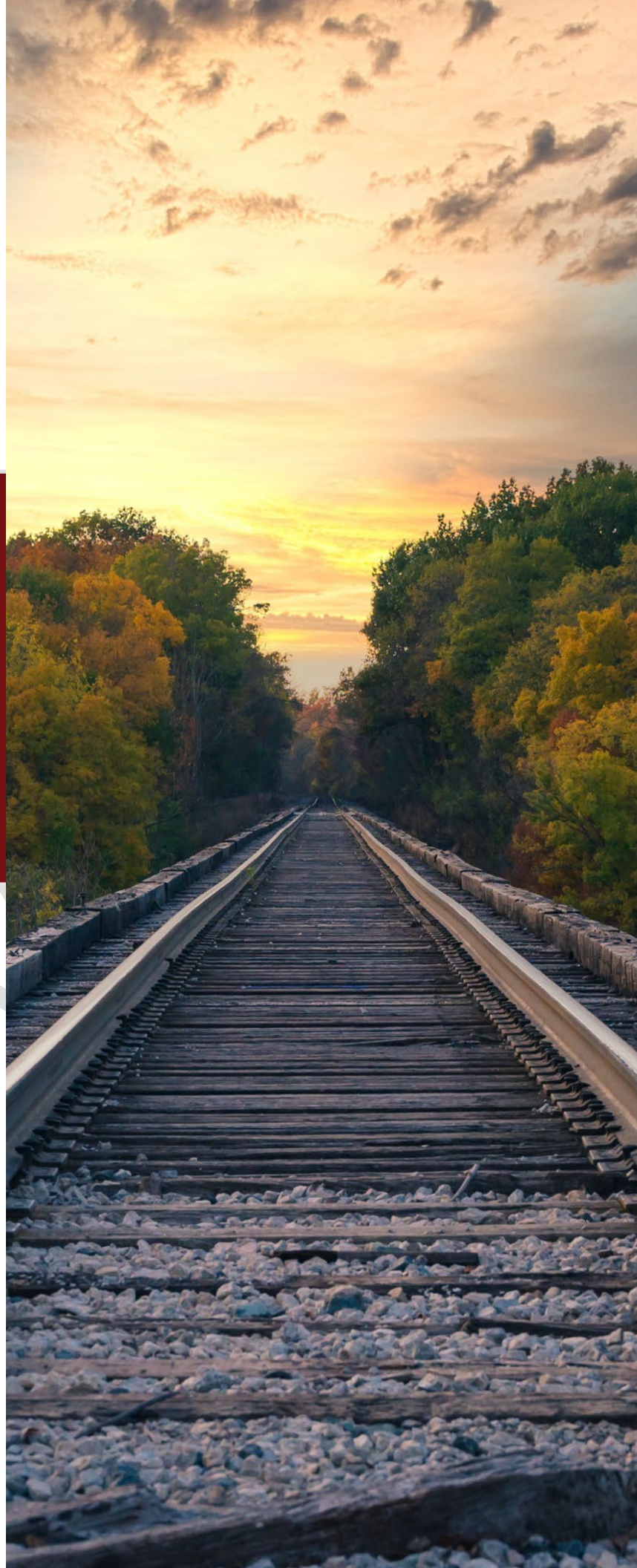   d. **Local/Regional Planning Documents**
        Identify the name of the plan and year of publication, as applicable.

Appendix B: Evaluation Matrix User Guide

South Dakota State Rail Plan

South Dakota Rail Investment Guide

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CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE

The Evaluation Matrix is intended to establish objective scoring criteria aligned with the South Dakota State Rail Plan Goals and Objectives and administration priorities, to aid in the evaluation of potential partnership opportunities presented to the South Dakota of Transportation's Air, Rail and Transit Office and the State Railroad Board.

2. BACKGROUND

The Evaluation Matrix presents the State Rail Plan and SDDOT Goals and identifies criteria/sub-criteria correlating to each of the goals. Each of the Criteria are designed to be numerically scored on a scale of 1-5, with appropriate indicators supporting scoring ranges as stated for the applicable criteria. Due to the variety of goals and supporting criteria, it is possible that not all criteria directly apply to a proposed project. Each sub-criterion carries a weighted score of 1 (though this weight can be adjusted to better align with specific priorities at any given time). Applicants are asked to indicate whether a project will produce a variety of benefits that align with the evaluation criteria, and it is not necessary for project to score highly in each sub-criterion in order to be favorably evaluated. Evaluators are encouraged to review the information provided by the applicant and use independent judgement when applying the criteria to produce a numeric score.

3. GOALS/SUB CRITERIA

a. **Goal: Support Economic Growth and Development**

Sub-Criterion: Employment and Prosperity

Metric: evaluated by the number and quality of rail-dependent facilities that will contribute to economic development opportunties.

A high-scoring project will directly support rail-dependent businesses, for instance by producing or sustaining quality job opportunities. This metric is primarily targeted for economic development projects, such as the introduction of rail access to an otherwise unserved facility.

b. **Goal: Ensure Connectivity for Critical Industries**

Sub-Criterion: Generate Additional Carloads

Metric: evaluated by the anticipated new number of freight rail carloads to be generated as a result of the project. Applicants are asked to provide existing freight volumes and predict how many additional carloads would be handled as a result of the project.

A high-scoring project would present evidence of consistent high carload volumes anticipated as a result of the project, occurring regularly. This metric is primarily targeted to evaluate industrial access and expansion projects by correlating industrial output into increased freight rail traffic for the transportation of those output commodities.

c. **Goal: Maintain Railroad Assets in a State of Good Repair**

Sub-Criterion: Reduction in Slow Order Miles, Track Classification, Accommodate 286,000-lb Carload Capacity

Metrics: Recognizing the State of Good Repair for railroad assets can be evaluated in different manners, the metrics evaluate:
- Whether a project would result in a reduction of slow order miles. Applicants are asked to indicate whether slow order restrictions exist on the affected line segment, and provide information on how the project would reduce those slow orders, if applicable, based on percentage of the affected track segment.
- Whether the project will result in an anticipated upgrade to the FRA Track Classification for the affected segments. Applicants are asked to indicate the applicable FRA Track Classification and indicate how the project will result in an upgrade, such as removal of Excepted track status, as applicable.
- Whether the project will allow for the affected rail segment to accommodate 286,000-lb. modern loading capacity. Applicants are asked to provide information on current infrastructure capacity and indicate the type of improvements that would result in the line's accommodation of 286,000-lb. capacity, as applicable.

A high-scoring project would present evidence that because of the improvements, there is a quantifiable change to state-of-good-repair benchmark metrics that generally result in faster, more reliable rail shipments accommodating more capacity and facilitating ease in operations and minimizing the risk of product loss for shippers. These metrics could potentially be subject to certification, through appropriate inspection, after the completion of the project.

d. **Goal: Reduce Highway Impacts**

Sub-Criterion: Truck Miles

Metric: For economic development projects, the total truck miles anticipated to support transport for affected shippers, based on anticipated truck travel distance to a transload facility. Applicants are asked to indicate, if applicable, how trucking will be involved in the end supply chain for the particular project, and what is the anticipated routing of those trucks.

A freight project that requires 'first-mile/last-mile' trucking from a rail-served site is not disqualified from scoring highly in this sub-criterion. However, the SDDOT does wish to promote rail in such a way that it minimizes impacts on rural roads and urban streets that are not designed to handle high volumes of truck freight.

e. **Goal: Improve Railroad Safety, Security and Resiliency**

Sub-Criterion: Highway-Rail Grade Crossing and Pedestrian Safety, Resiliency

Metrics:
- Whether the project is anticipated to reduce accidents, injuries, or fatalities at a highway-rail grade crossing or through other safety improvements. Applicants are asked to provide information explaining how the project improvements will help enhance safety and provide an estimate of the reduction in accidents that can be anticipated as a result of the project.
- Whether the project will result in more resilient and reliable infrastructure that can better resist failure, compromise, or abandonment and support ongoing continued rail service. Applicants are asked to indicate whether the project is being undertaken in an area subject to climate or weather-related threats such as flooding, and describe how the project will increase reliability of the rail line for continued rail use.

A high scoring project would present evidence that the project will result in improvements that will quantifiably reduce the number of accidents, or enhance infrastructure reliability by making it more resilient against environmental factors that could potentially contribute to future rail service disruptions.

f. **GOAL: Financial Responsibility**

Sub-criterion: Funding Leverage

Metric: how much non-state funding is being proposed to support the project, in terms of percentage of the estimated total project cost. Applicants are asked to provide a funding estimate breakdown that indicates how much federal, state, and private funding would support the estimated total project cost.

High-scoring projects offer a higher percentage of private funding investment in the project, relying less on federal or state contribution to the total estimated project cost.