

## COR-4 - Reach Consensus on Scope of Environmental Review and Analysis

### Description

In order to provide a clear linkage to the environmental review process, this key decision defines the acceptable level of detail for the corridor study analysis. This establishes a common understanding between the planning partners (primarily transportation and resource agencies) about what decisions and analyses will be transferable to the merged environmental / permitting process.

There is information developed in prior key decisions that informs this step.

### Purpose

To determine the data, information, and level of analysis needed for the environmental review, which includes social, cultural, and natural environment.

### Outcome

Agreement on the data needs and level of analysis required for the planning process. This agreement should be well documented so that it can be carried into the NEPA process.

Partner	Role Type	Description
MPO	Decision Maker (urban), No Role (rural)	Provides supporting information to assist in scoping of the environmental review and analysis in order to streamline project implementation.
FHWA/FTA	Advisor	Ensures state and federal agencies are appropriately included in the environmental review scope and analysis.
State DOT	Advisor (urban), Decision Maker (rural)	Ensures that the study is adequate to support environmental review.
Resource Agency	Decision Maker	Agree to a scope that provides a clear understanding of what will be needed in and relevant to the environmental review phase.
Public Transportation Operator(s)	Advisor	Ensures that the study is adequate to support environmental review.

## **Policy Questions**

Questions are a way to elicit information and to validate that the information has been considered. The partners should discuss the listed questions to ensure a broad array of interests is considered at a key decision. Discussions arising from these questions support collaborative decision making.

## **Questions Partners Discuss**

### **Questions about purpose and roles**

- Have any private sector stakeholders provided recommendations?
- What partners were involved in developing the recommendation?
- What role do private sector stakeholders desire in the environmental review process?

### **Questions about stakeholders, including modal and operational partners**

- What stakeholders, including modal and operational partners, provided input and how?

### **Questions about the transportation process supporting the decision**

- Are data and analyses available from the public and private sector to help clarify the potential scope of environmental impacts, including equity and other indirect and cumulative impacts?
- If a P3 is under consideration, is there consensus on assumptions for future land use and socioeconomic growth between the public and private sectors?
- Is the scope comprehensive enough to evaluate accessibility, equity, and other operational impacts that may result from a P3 project (e.g., managed lanes or priced lanes)?
- Is the scope comprehensive enough to evaluate bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity, accessibility, equity, and safety, both along the corridor and across the corridor?
- Is the scope comprehensive enough to evaluate potential risks to the public and private sectors?
- Is the scope of analysis comprehensive enough to sufficiently recognize and evaluate impacts related to problems and opportunities in the study corridor?
- Is the scope sufficient to include operations in the preliminary design?

### **Questions about other phases**

- Are partners who execute the merged NEPA/Permitting process sufficiently satisfied that this scope of analysis will allow outputs from corridor planning to be used in NEPA?
- Does the recommendation properly consider how NEPA may apply to bicycle and pedestrian improvements? See item 10: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/guidance/misconceptions.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/misconceptions.cfm).
- Is the recommendation comprehensive enough to allow consideration of programmatic solutions?
- Is the recommendation comprehensive enough to incorporate the range of data and information needed to inform project level NEPA documentation?

### **Questions about non-transportation sectors/processes**

- Is there agreement on the types of information needed in order to perform a spatial analysis of potential cumulative effects at the corridor and project-specific levels?
- Is there data available from integrated transportation and ecological planning to support the scope of environmental review?
- Is there data on current and future socioeconomic growth and other information available from economic and land use plans to support the scope of environmental review?
- What is the expected timescale for GHG emissions impacts?

## **Stakeholder Inputs**

'Questions to Gather Stakeholder Interests' allow staff to determine which stakeholders have interests at a key decision and to collect those interests for partner consideration. 'Questions to Incorporate Stakeholder Interests' ensure the interests of stakeholders are included in the decision. For more help with stakeholder collaboration visit the Stakeholder Portal

### **Questions to Gather Stakeholder Interests**

- None

### **Questions to Incorporate Stakeholder Interests**

- None

## Data

The following is a list of data needed to support the key decision. Practitioners collect this information for decision makers to consider.

Supporting Data for the Key Decision		
<b>From other phases of transportation decision making</b>	Long Range Planning	GIS data from the long range transportation planning process.
	Programming	No Specific Data.
	Corridor Planning	No Specific Data.
	Environmental Review	No Specific Data.
<b>From other sectors and processes</b>	Land Use	Data from land use planning
	Transportation Conformity	No Specific Data.
	Natural Environment and Implementing Eco-Logical	No Specific Data.
	Capital Improvement	Current economic sensitivities
	Safety and Security	No Specific Data.
	Human Environment	Current social sensitivities
		Data needed to implement the agreed to scope of the environmental review and analysis, where applicable
	Economic Development	Data from economic planning
	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Analysis requirements for considering GHG
Freight	No Specific Data.	
<b>From the transportation technical process supporting this key decision</b>	Analysis that has been done to reconcile or validate existing data	
	Detailed analysis of fiscal and physical operational needs	
	Field survey data that is available for the corridor	
	GIS layers available for the corridor	
	Potential P3 risk factors	
	Private sector input on scope of environmental impacts, where applicable	
	Source, type and magnitude of current and anticipated future impacts affecting identified sensitivities including existing land uses, allowable or planned land use, predicted or forecast land use	
<b>From stakeholder collaboration</b>	No Specific Data.	
<b>From public private partnership</b>	No Specific Data.	

## Links to Decisions

This table identifies how a key decision is connected to other key decisions. The linkages are a two-way transfer of information. Understanding and applying these linkages means that partners will recognize how a decision will impact other specific key decisions. Recognizing that the transportation processes are linked will: (1) encourage practitioners to produce information that can be used later and (2) remind them to look at information from previous key decisions.

### linkages to other phases of transportation decision making

Key Decision	What is Linked?	Purpose of Linkage
<b>To Environmental Review/NEPA Merged with Permitting</b>		
ENV-1 - Reach Consensus on Scope of Environmental Review	Information on the scope of the environmental review and analysis process	To confirm that the information and analysis transferred is adequate for the merged environmental review / permitting process.
ENV-4 - Reach Consensus on Study Area	Information on the scope of the environmental review and analysis process	To determine whether or not the geographic study area for the corridor planning study is sufficiently broad enough to meet the requirements for the NEPA study area.
ENV-6 - Approve Full Range of Alternatives	Agreement reached on the scope of the environmental review and level of analysis required	To support solutions eliminated in corridor planning during the NEPA process

## **Examples**

In-depth case studies of successful practices in collaborative decision making were used to develop the Decision Guide. Links in this table point to a specific paragraph or section of a case study that supports a key decision. It is not necessary to read through an entire case study to find the example; however, full versions are available in the Library.

### **PlanWorks Case Study Examples**

- None

### **Other Examples**

- None

## Integrated Planning

Integrated Planning looks at the interaction between the transportation decision making process and other processes. Considering these inputs will ensure that important values and goals outside the transportation process are recognized and considered. For a full understanding of a specific process and how it influences transportation decisions, visit Applications.

Process	Integration Type	Integration Description
Land Use	Analysis	Assess whether there is data available from land use plans to support the scope of environmental review and analysis.
Transportation Conformity	None	None. Conformity does not apply at this level, so the screening process used for air quality, if any, is at the discretion of the project team.
Natural Environment and Implementing Eco-Logical	Analysis From IEF Step 8 - Implement Agreements, Adaptive Management & Deliver Projects	Availability of data from the ecological plan to support the scope of environmental review and analysis.
Capital Improvement	Data	Current economic sensitivities
Safety and Security	None.	None.
Human Environment	Data	Data needed to implement the agreed to scope of the environmental review and analysis, where applicable Current social sensitivities
Economic Development	Analysis	Availability of economic development data to support the detailed analysis required for environmental review
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Data	Potential GHG reduction impacts and information needed for analysis at the corridor.
Freight	None.	None.
Bicycles and Pedestrians	Data	Data needed to implement the agreed scope of the environmental review and analysis Current bicycle and pedestrian sensitivities

## Special Topics

This table provides an overview of the relationship between a key decision and individual special topics. A special topic may be an external process, a new regulation, or any emerging issue requiring collaboration. For a full understanding of a specific topic and how it influences transportation decisions, visit Applications.

### Key Decision Relationship to Other Topics

Topic	Description
Public-Private Partnerships	<b>Consider Potential P3 Involvement</b> - Based on public acceptance, environmental perspective and other factors, consider the feasibility of P3 involvement to complete corridor planning and initiate environmental review.
	<b>Decision Transfer</b> - Reach agreement on the potential role of the private sector stakeholder in the environmental review process.
Planning and Environment Linkages	<b>Consider Operations Options</b> - Consider the influence of traffic operations in the corridor and the data available in determining the scope of environmental review.
	<b>Data Transfer</b> - Data about the performance, reliability, operations and management of the corridor sufficient for environmental review.
Visioning and Transportation	<b>Approve Scope</b> - Consider the relevant plans, key issues, and supporting environmental data from community visioning.
	<b>Data Transfer</b> - Data from community visioning inform the selection of evaluation criteria to COR 5.