

ENV-1 - Reach Consensus on Scope of Environmental Review

Description

The scoping key decision is a crucial first step of the environmental review phase. Consensus is reached on the data, decisions and relationships that need to be considered, acquired or made throughout environmental review. The scope is informed by the adopted long range transportation plan and corridor plans as well as current information being developed from plans in process.

Relationships with planning partners are formed during scoping. PlanWorks primarily addresses the role of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as the agency responsible for issuing permits under the Clean Water Act. However, relationships should be formed with all agencies who will be responsible for issuing permits for the proposed action at the federal and state levels or who have some degree of authority over the NEPA process. For example, if listed species are present in the vicinity of the project, informal consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) should be initiated. Under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviews all actions requiring an environmental impact statement. The relationship with EPA within the NEPA process is also initiated at this key decision.

In addition to relationships, scoping is a time to begin identifying the process and methods that will be used for the environmental review.

There is information developed in Long Range Planning and Corridor Planning that informs this step.

Purpose

To gather all readily available information to inform the development of the scope, approach, and timeframe.
To meet the federal regulations for conducting scoping.

Outcome

Agreement among planning partners on the overall approach, scope, and anticipated timeframe for the NEPA and permitting process.
Information to create the notice of intent.
Agreements between partners on participation.

Partner	Role Type	Description
MPO	Advisor	Provides support as needed for project scoping in the urban area based on regional information from the LRTP and the TIP.
FHWA/FTA	Decision Maker	Ensures that the environmental review process is inclusive, considers a wide range of options, and meets federal requirements.
State DOT	Decision Maker	Ensures the project scope is comprehensive and inclusive of all interested parties.
Resource Agency	Decision Maker	<p>The USACE is a decision maker, reaching consensus on a scope that is built on planning in the LRTP/corridor process, environmental planning, and sufficiently broad to consider all options. Identify and support the use of an ecological planning region, ecological goals and conservation priorities to the extent possible. Agree to work with transportation partners in a process that is streamlined by earlier agreements and actions.</p> <p>The US EPA is an Advisor to this key decision. Pursuant to Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the USEPA is required to review and comment in writing on all actions requiring an environmental impact statement.</p>
Public Transportation Operator(s)	Advisor	Provides support as needed for project scoping.

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

- Are partners' roles and responsibilities clear?
- Is there a formal interagency conservation and transportation partnership agreement?

Questions about stakeholders, including modal and operational partners

- Are all stakeholders aware that a P3 is either being considered or implemented?
- Have all private entities involved in the P3 project been identified and included?
- How can we ensure participation and accountability from the private sector throughout the environmental review process?
- How will potential private sector developers be involved in the NEPA and permitting processes?
- Is there or will there be a formal pre-development agreement for a public-private partnership? If so, what should be the terms of a pre-development agreement?
- What stakeholders, including modal and operational partners should be included? Are participants' roles and responsibilities clear?
- Which bicycle and pedestrian stakeholders should be at the table, including low income, disabled, and minority populations that rely on bicycle and pedestrian facilities?
- Who are our proponents and opponents?

Questions about the transportation process supporting the decision

- Are our tools up to date and sufficient for this process?
- Are there emerging issues that affect this corridor?
- Are there local operations strategies in place that can be built upon to create a regional operational approach?
- Do you have a regional concept of operations or operations-related plan?
- How does this project contribute to and build upon the regional bicycle and pedestrian network?
- How were the termini identified?
- Is the identified geographic area sufficient to analyze both direct and indirect effects?
- Is the study process established to meet legal requirements?
- Over what time frame is the P3 financing available?
- What are the bicycle and pedestrian issues in the study area?
- What data are available? Are the data sufficient?
- What is our time frame for construction?
- What is our time frame for the environmental study?
- What is the geographic footprint of the initial study area?
- What operational partners, data, and resources will inform the environmental study?
- Will operations strategies be considered during the environmental study?

Questions about other phases

- Is information available from long range planning / corridor planning to inform the consideration of cumulative effects within the consideration of alternatives?
- Is the project description from previous planning / programming processes sufficiently detailed enough to get meaningful input but broad enough not to constrain the decision making process?
- Is there information from long range planning, corridor planning, or programming related to a P3 arrangement? Information may include potential project impacts, financial implications, project scope, financial analyses, and timeframe?
- What changes have occurred in the financial and revenue assumptions that make a P3 project attractive?
- What does the long range and/or corridor plan say about this project?
- What major changes have occurred since the LRTP and/or Corridor plan?
- What plans and programs and linking documents from long range transportation planning and corridor planning are available? Are they carried forward in a consistent manner as tools or data sources?

Questions about non-transportation sectors/processes

- Have land use patterns and growth forecasts been considered in defining the planning region? If so, is there information specific to the project area to consider?
- Is there agreement in the general area of the project with respect to economic and land use impacts?
- Is there agreement in the region with respect to an underlying economic development philosophy or vision that the corridor plan supports?
- Is there agreement on the planning region with respect to ecological assessment?
- Is there an advance mitigation strategy in place for potential negative economic impacts?
- Is there an advance mitigation strategy in place?
- Is there freight information from the long range plan or a corridor study to inform the project?
- What data is available from local economic and financial investment plans and programs that support the development of a P3 project?

- What local community, economic, and land use plans and programs are available as resources?
- What plans and programs are available as resources?
- What relevant emission sources will be considered in the environmental review? Is a lifecycle emissions analysis for various project components warranted?
- What specific input is needed from freight stakeholders during environmental review?

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

- How should we engage the public in these decisions? Who, of the public, should be involved?
- What are the things you value and care about in and near the project area?
- What are your concerns?
- What data is necessary?
- What information can you provide us?
- Where and how do you define your community boundaries?

Questions to Incorporate Stakeholder Interests

- Have we conveyed information about a potential P3 project to stakeholders? What feedback have we received and how will it be incorporated?
- How did we incorporate the stakeholders' input into the public involvement plan, scoping, and the rest of the project?
- What information that the stakeholders provided is different from information in previous plans? If it is inconsistent, how are we going to address these inconsistencies?
- What is the rationale for how we handled information from the stakeholders? How has this been communicated to the stakeholders?

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			
From other phases of transportation decision making	Long Range Planning	The extent of time that has passed since the LRTP update and what might have changed in that time.	
	Programming	Analysis of financing and revenue potential of project (LRP-7) Programming project solution (PRO-4) Data from the TIP/STIP, including the prioritization of projects and schedule, related projects, logical termini, and funding identified for the project.	
	Corridor Planning	Corridor solution set evaluation (COR-7) The extent of time that has passed since the corridor plan was adopted and what might have changed in that time. Transportation planning in the corridor area	
	Environmental Review	No Specific Data.	
	Land Use	Land use plans/goals/data (this could incorporate areas of controversy, socioeconomic, demographics, natural resource, land use, etc.) for the study area that should be incorporated in the environmental review process. Local area plans or policies and zoning	
From other sectors and processes	Transportation Conformity	Relevant data for air quality, including information about potential partnerships	
	Natural Environment and Implementing Eco-Logical	Combined map of conservation, restoration and enhancement priorities Conservation planning (ecoregion, watershed) boundaries Ecological plan and embedded regional ecosystem framework; vision and goals; evaluation criteria, methods and measures; crediting method; mitigation strategy Relationships formed between resource agencies, conservation NGOs and transportation agencies	
	Capital Improvement	Other capital improvement plans or development plans Project detail information from those projects currently in development or construction. Transportation planning (city, county)	
	Safety and Security	Relevant data for safety and security, including information about relevant plans and potential partnerships Safety and security plans and stakeholders: freight, emergency management, SHSP, etc.	
	Human Environment	Relevant data for human environment, including information about protected resources and potential partnerships	
	Economic Development	Economic development data, stakeholders and philosophy	
	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Not applicable.	
	Freight	Potential freight stakeholders to engage Truck count data and other engineering support for freight movement	
	From the transportation technical process supporting this key decision	Auto occupancy	
		Bicycle and pedestrian data	
Demographic data (Population, employment, special populations)			
If PDA exists, relevant data from private sector stakeholder			
Multimodal data such as transit operating plans and schedules, bicycle and greenway plans			
Speed and delay			
Traffic count data, crash data, bridge data, and other engineering support data			
Transit data			
Travel time			
From stakeholder collaboration	Emerging issues that may impact the project		
	Identified stakeholders to include in the process (including the full range of transportation, land use, environmental, community, and advocacy stakeholders as well as special needs or special interests including developers if the project could be developed through a P3.)		
	Memorandum of Agreement or decision by stakeholders to participate		
	Proponents and opponents of the project		

Supporting Data for the Key Decision	
	Public involvement plan or policy
	Summary of comments from the public
From public private partnership	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
From Long Range Transportation Planning		
LRP-1 - Approve Scope of LRTP Process	Relevant information in the long range plan scope; including potential stakeholders, available tools and data sources, known human and natural environmental considerations, and others	To inform the scope of the environmental review and permitting process
LRP-2 - Approve Vision and Goals	The vision and goals of the LRTP	To inform the scope of the environmental review and permitting process
LRP-6 - Approve Strategies	The approved range of strategies	To provide a regional context of the range of strategies to inform the environmental review/ permitting phase
LRP-10 - Adopt LRTP by MPO	Relevant information from the adopted long range plan, including strategies and scenarios that were evaluated and eliminated	To inform the scope of the environmental review and permitting process
From Programming		
PRO-4 - Approve Project Prioritization	Detailed information that informed the prioritization of this project, for example local support, project readiness, and cost sharing.	To inform the establishment of logical termini with respect to the approach, scope, and timeframe.
PRO-7 - Approve TIP by Governor and Incorporate into Draft STIP	Funding and schedule provided by the adopted TIP	To make a comparison between the TIP schedule and the estimated timeframe within the environmental review and permitting process. TIP project cost as a context to carry forward through environmental review and permitting.
From Corridor Planning		
COR-1 - Approve Scope of Corridor Planning Process	Relevant information in the corridor plan scope; including potential stakeholders, available tools and data sources, known human and natural environmental considerations, and others	To inform the scope of the environmental review and permitting process
COR-3 - Approve Goals for the Corridor	The goals of the corridor plan	To inform the scope of the environmental review and permitting process
COR-4 - Reach Consensus on Scope of Environmental Review and Analysis	Agreement between the partners as to the scope of environmental review and analysis to support the corridor planning process.	To provide an understanding of the requirements and perspectives of the environmental planning partners
COR-8 - Approve Evaluation Criteria, Methods and Measures for Prioritization of Projects	Priorities for implementation of the individual solutions contained in the preferred solution set	To inform identification of logical termini, study area boundaries and potential sequencing of related projects.

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

- Regional TIP Policy Framework and Vision 2040 for Puget Sound Regional Council

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	Data	Local area plans or policies and zoning that identify land use related physical data, growth patterns and forecasts, goals, and partnerships for the study area that should be incorporated in the environmental review process.
	Decision	Purpose - To establish participation of land use stakeholder in the process. Outcome - Participation of land use stakeholder in the process.
Transportation Conformity	Data	Relevant data for air quality, including information about potential partnerships
Natural Environment and Implementing Eco-Logical	Data From IEF Step 2 - Characterize Resource Status & Integrate Natural Environment Plans	Combined map of conservation, restoration and enhancement priorities.
	Data From IEF Step 8 - Implement Agreements, Adaptive Management & Deliver Projects	Ecological plan and embedded regional ecosystem framework; vision and goals; evaluation criteria, methods and measures; crediting method; mitigation strategy.
	Data From IEF Step 3 - Create Regional Ecosystem Framework	Combined map of conservation, restoration and enhancement priorities with transportation plan informed by long range planning and/or corridor planning.
	Data Between IEF Step 1 - Build & Strengthen Collaborative Partnerships & Vision and ENV-1	Information about the ecological planning region identified at IEF Sub-step 1a is gathered and will inform the development of a study area at ENV-4. The ecological goal data from IEF Sub-step 1d is collected. This data should have been considered during scoping in long range planning and/or corridor planning, but partners can confirm that ecological goals were appropriately considered and can determine whether the data has been updated or if there is more specific information relevant to the project. Any relationships formed between resource agencies, conservation NGOs and transportation agencies as part of transportation planning or IEF Step 1 are recognized, reinforced and strengthened.
	Decision Between IEF Step 1 - Build & Strengthen Collaborative Partnerships & Vision and ENV-1	A joint decision is made between transportation and resource agency partners to work together to maximize the ecological benefit and regulatory process efficiencies that can be achieved. If an ecological plan has been completed, this decision could be to implement the agreements consistent with IEF Step 8 (Implement Agreements and Adaptive Management. Deliver Conservation and Transportation Projects).
Capital Improvement	Data	Capital improvement related data and partnerships for the study area that should be incorporated in the environmental review process.
Safety and Security	Data	Relevant data for safety and security, including information about relevant plans and potential partnerships
Human Environment	Data	Relevant data for human environment, including information about protected resources and potential partnerships
Economic Development	Data	Economic development planning stakeholders Underlying "economic development philosophy" of the region and/or state Economic development data (existing reports, information, and performance indicators)
	Analysis	Economic development related analysis from long range planning and corridor planning or an adopted land use or economic development plan.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Freight	Data	Data from existing long range plans and freight stakeholder input to inform environmental review
Bicycles and Pedestrians	Data	Existing bicycle and pedestrian studies, data to support analysis, and identify stakeholders to engage
	Decision	By transportation decision-makers to invite bicycle and pedestrian partners and stakeholders to participate in environmental review, including low income, disabled, and minority populations. By bicycle and pedestrian partners and stakeholders to participate in environmental review.

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	Collect Information - Identify and collect the P3-relevant data and analysis capabilities, stakeholder perspectives and potential private sector participants. If a PDA exists, obtain all relevant data and information from private sector stakeholder to support the scoping process.
	Data Transfer - Consider prior analyses of financing and revenue potential of the project and viability as part of the scenario evaluation (LRP-7), corridor solution set evaluation (COR-7), or programming project selection (PRO-4) along with collected data to inform the environmental review process with the potential for a P3 alternative, as appropriate.
Planning and Environment Linkages	Collect Information - Identify operational partners and collect relevant data and information.
	Data Transfer - Relevant information on system performance in the project area and potential operational partners to include in the process.
Streamlining a Congestion Bottleneck Project	Scope of Environmental Review for Bottleneck Process - Documented agreement and supporting information moves from LRP to Environmental Review and Permitting to support project streamlining. From this point the Environmental Review phase follows the normal process
	Data Transfer - From B-101 the agreement and supporting information supports scoping. From PRO-6 to provide funding for Environmental Review
Visioning and Transportation	Approve Scope - Identify partnerships from the community visioning process that can inform or be included in the environment review and permitting process.
	Adopt Futures - Consider how the consensus vision and/or adopted future is supported by the environmental review process.
	Data Transfer - Relevant information on the consensus future from visioning and previous planning efforts to LRP 1, COR 1, and ENV 2.