

ENV-3 - Approve Purpose and Need/Reach Consensus on Project Purpose

Description

At this key decision the agreed to purpose and need for both NEPA and the Section 404 permitting process are documented. If alternatives do not meet the stated purpose and need they will be eliminated. There should be as much specificity as possible in the purpose and need statement in order to effectively analyze alternatives. For this reason, there is a close link to this key decision and ENV-4 (Reach Consensus on Study Area) and ENV-5 (Approve Evaluation Criteria, Methods and Measures) and some sources suggest combining these decisions. It should also be noted that the purpose and need statement may be modified, or made more specific, as information is developed through the analysis. If there are supporting goals or a secondary purpose, consider agreement and documentation of those at this key decision.

Input from partners and stakeholders is important at this step to substantiate the project purpose and need, to gauge the public reaction to the purpose and need, and to identify any missing aspects of the purpose and need.

There is information developed in prior key decisions that informs this step. In order to effectively execute this key decision there is essential information created at COR-2 which provides the problem statements and opportunities that are relevant to the project.

Purpose

To formally document the purpose and need for the project and supporting goals if applicable.

Outcome

An approved Purpose and Need Statement with supporting goals if applicable.

Partner	Role Type	Description
MPO	Advisor	Informs project purpose and need based on regional analysis of deficiencies and identified need.
FHWA/FTA	Decision Maker	Approves the development of the purpose and need in accordance with federal requirements.
State DOT	Decision Maker	Ensures purpose and need is supported and documented with agreement by all partners.
Resource Agency	Decision Maker	USACE approves a purpose and need that can be used for Section 404 requirements. Other resource agencies are advisors, supporting a purpose and need that represents the true need for the project and can be supported by all partners.
Public Transportation Operator(s)	Advisor	Informs project purpose and need based on regional analysis of deficiencies and identified need.

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

- Is there agreement to move forward on the Purpose and Need Statement?

Questions about stakeholders, including modal and operational partners

- Has the purpose and need been made publicly available?

Questions about the transportation process supporting the decision

- Does the purpose and need address any bicycle and pedestrian network gaps?
- Does the purpose and need consider bicycle and pedestrian networks, accessibility, safety, and equity (including the needs of the elderly and the young)?
- Have all existing and future financing and revenue needs been identified to inform the development of purpose and need for a P3 project?
- If transportation operations are part of the purpose and need, is this clearly articulated in the statement?
- Is the need for and purpose of the project apparent and substantiated? Have all the purposes of and needs for the project been included in the statement?
- Is the purpose and need consistent with current federal regulations?
- Is the purpose and need statement broad enough to address the full range of alternatives that consider both direct and indirect effects?

Questions about other phases

- Has information from other planning phases on the decision to develop the project as a P3 been considered?
- Is the purpose and need consistent with the LRTP and TIP (i.e., documentation has been carried forward)?

Questions about non-transportation sectors/processes

- Are freight interests represented in the purpose and need?
- Are there potential non-transportation purposes or benefits that the project might fulfill?
- Do the purpose and need account for land use forecasts and growth patterns?
- Do the purpose and need account for the impacts of smart growth on travel demand and congestion?
- Does the project offer the opportunity to affect transportation-related emissions? If so, what is the emissions reduction that would achieve the purpose?
- Does the project provide a way to raise revenues or financing for other non-transportation needs?
- Have any economic investment or other goals been identified that should be considered in the development of the purpose and need for a P3 project?
- Have ecological goals been identified that should be considered in the development of the purpose and need or supporting goals for the project?
- Have economic development and competitiveness goals been identified that should be considered in the development of the purpose and need?
- To what extent are smart growth principles to be included in the project?

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

- Do you see additional needs and/or purposes that are not incorporated?
- What do you think this project should accomplish? What do you think the outcome of the project should be?
- What is your reaction to the outlined purpose and need?

Questions to Incorporate Stakeholder Interests

- Are there conflicts in the stakeholder interests that we heard?
- How were the public, private and general stakeholder comments considered in the development of the purpose and need?
- Is the understanding of deficiencies met by the P3 project consistent across the public and private sectors?
- What are the economic and land use related problems and opportunities identified by stakeholders?
- What is the rationale for how we handled information from the stakeholders? How has this been communicated to the stakeholders?
- What were the stakeholders' comments regarding the Purpose and Need?

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	Data from the long range plan, including: transportation deficiencies, vision and goals, preferred plan scenario, traffic forecasts, roadway and system characteristics, and financial expectations.
	Programming	No Specific Data.
	Corridor Planning	Data from the Corridor Plan: including, problem statements and opportunities, goals for the corridor, traffic forecasts
	Environmental Review	ENV-4: The study area should be closely related to the purpose and need and may be considered simultaneously ENV-5: Evaluation criteria, methods and measures should be closely related to the purpose and need and may be considered simultaneously
From other sectors and processes	Land Use	Data from comprehensive / land use planning
		Data from public involvement related to the land planning process
		Smart growth principles
	Transportation Conformity	No Specific Data.
	Natural Environment and Implementing Eco-Logical	Combined map of ecological plans with conservation and restoration priorities
	Capital Improvement	No Specific Data.
	Safety and Security	No Specific Data.
	Human Environment	No Specific Data.
	Economic Development	Data informing economic needs and deficiencies which the project may impact
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Not applicable.	
Freight	Appropriate freight stakeholders to participate in advisory committees or working groups	
	Project mobility, safety, and other benefits for freight	
From the transportation technical process supporting this key decision	Community characteristics data	
	Context to be included in the project development process	
	Crash history data	
	Emergency response data, if available	
	Local land use and economic development plans	
	Performance and reliability data	
	System operations data	
From stakeholder collaboration	Summary of public comments received in response to the purpose and need and justification of how those comments were addressed	
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-2 - Approve Vision and Goals	The vision and goals as approved for the LRTP	To ensure the approved purpose and need is consistent with the regional transportation vision and goals
LRP-4 - Approve Transportation Deficiencies	Information about the transportation deficiencies documented in the LRTP	To ensure that the purpose and need is consistent with deficiencies in the LRTP.
From Corridor Planning		
COR-2 - Approve Problem Statements and Opportunities	The problem statement and opportunities defined in the corridor plan	To provide a foundation for the development of the purpose and need
COR-3 - Approve Goals for the Corridor	The goals for the corridor	To inform the purpose and need for the environmental 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

- Hollister Bypass

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	Data from public involvement related to the land planning process Data from comprehensive / land use planning; including local land planning activities to support the need for the project, and data from an approved regional land use model, where applicable. Land use context to be included in the project development process
	Analysis	If smart growth principles will be integrated, analysis demonstrating that purpose and need or supporting project goals account for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> land use patterns and growth forecasts the performance and safety of the whole system the need to balance mode choices the need for greater mobility without expanding the road network the need for greater accessibility the impacts of smart growth on travel demand and congestion If smart growth principles will be integrated, analysis demonstrating that project purpose and need or supporting project goals are supportive of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> community visions and plans growth management economic development environmental preservation, conservation, and restoration the equitable distribution of impacts and benefits improved quality of life
Transportation Conformity	None.	None.
Natural Environment and Implementing Eco-Logical	Analysis From IEF Step 1 - Build & Strengthen Collaborative Partnerships & Vision, IEF Step 2 - Characterize Resource Status & Integrate Natural Environment Plans, and IEF Step 8 - Imp	Data around ecological goals and priorities was collected at ENV-1. The ecological vision and goals coming from IEF Step 1 will be broad and high-level. The result of IEF Sub-step 2h is a combined map of ecological plans with conservation and restoration priorities. Both the high-level vision and goals, and more specific conservation and restoration priorities coming from these two IEF steps should be analyzed in order to develop a purpose and need or supporting goals for the transportation project that is compatible with or complimentary of ecological goals. If the IEF process is complete, the goals incorporated from the completed plan (at IEF Step 8) would inform ENV-3.
Capital Improvement	Data	Capital improvement context to be included in the project development process.
Safety and Security	Data	Safety and security context to be included in the project development process.
Human Environment	Data	Human environment context to be included in the project development process
Economic Development	Data	Data from economic development plans to determine and formally document the purpose and need for the project.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Freight	Data	Information about the potential benefits and freight stakeholder needs associated with the project
Bicycles and Pedestrians	Data	Information about the potential benefits and bicycle and pedestrian stakeholder needs associated with the project.

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 - Consider data from other planning phases on why developing the project as a P3 might or might not be a consideration (e.g., financial feasibility, need for "non-traditional" funding sources such as tolling), to inform the purpose and need for the project.
	Data Transfer - The language/content of the purpose and need statement as it relates to a P3 to support the identification and evaluation of alternatives. If a P3 is the only feasible project delivery option, this should be incorporated in the purpose and need. If it is only one of many models for project delivery, it may not be included in the purpose and need.
Planning and Environment Linkages	Provide Information - Support the development of purpose and need by providing information on system operations and performance relative to the general project area.
	Data Transfer - Data and information on system operations and performance, reliability, crash history and emergency response, where available, to evaluate the contribution of operations to the purpose and need.
Performance Measures	Selection of Performance Measurement Factors - The purpose and need defined for a project should be a guiding factor in the selection of performance measurement factors to be used in the environmental review, in addition to the standard environmental performance measurement factor.
	Data Transfer - The selected factors are transferred to ENV-5 to inform the selection of specific measures.
Streamlining a Congestion Bottleneck Project	Approve Purpose and Need - Information associated with the project concept at the point of transfer contains transportation deficiencies, regional vision and goals, and additional information available from scoping.
	Data Transfer - Approved purpose and need (project purpose) for alternative evaluation in ENV-6/PER-3
Visioning and Transportation	Approve Scope - Consider the relevance of the visioning problem statement to the environmental review.
	Adopt Futures - Consider the final goals, values, and consensus vision for relevance in the environmental review.
	Data Transfer - Relevant information from the community visioning scope and adopted future(s) to ENV 5.