

## ENV-4 - Reach Consensus on Study Area

### Description

Consensus on an initial geographic area of study (the area within which any alternatives will fall) is reached at this key decision. The initial study area may be modified as the environmental review process continues and new information is acquired. The determination of the study area is informed by the environmental review and analysis conducted during any corridor studies as well as by land use and capital improvement planning activities. The study area is closely linked to ENV-3 (Approve Purpose and Need/Reach Consensus on Project Purpose).

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

### Purpose

To define a geographic area for the environmental study

### Outcome

A defined study area for the project.

Partner	Role Type	Description
MPO	Advisor	Informs consideration of study area from regional/ corridor planning.
FHWA/FTA	Decision Maker	Ensures consideration of an appropriate study area for the beginning of the environmental review process.
State DOT	Decision Maker	Ensures a comprehensive study area for initiating the consideration of alternatives.
Resource Agency	Decision Maker	Reach consensus on an initial study area that is sufficiently broad to include all transportation options and consideration of indirect and cumulative impacts. Support the consideration of the ecological planning region(s) - in the development of the study area.
Public Transportation Operator(s)	Advisor	Informs consideration of study area from regional/ corridor planning.

## **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 among partners on the boundaries of the study area?

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

- Does the current study area reflect comments received during scoping and the Notice of Intent?

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

- Does the study area take into account needs of operational partners (such as emergency service providers)?
- Has private sector input on the potential area of impact of the P3 project been incorporated?
- Is the geographic area identified during scoping sufficiently broad to address cumulative impacts and support alternatives analysis, including potential alternatives with operations components?
- Is the geographic area identified sufficiently broad to address all potential economic impacts on the relevant communities (including transfer effects)?
- Is the study area broad enough for consideration of the full range of issues that need to be addressed?
- Is the study area identified sufficiently broad to address all potential operational, equity, environmental justice, and other impacts that may result from P3 projects (e.g., projects involving tolls or user fees)?
- Is the study area sufficient enough to evaluate bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity, accessibility, equity, and safety?

### **Questions about other phases**

- No specific questions

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

- Are logistics considerations accounted for in defining the study area; including key regional or statewide freight transportation facilities such as bridges, rail yards, or major manufacturing activity clusters?
- Does the proposed P3 project relate to existing financial or economic planning in the region? If so, how does this inform the selection of the study area?
- Has a regional economic development plan or strategy been developed? If so, how does this relate to the proposed project study area?
- Has a regional ecosystem framework been developed? If so, how does this intersect with the proposed project study area?
- Is there a study area from ecological planning? If so, how was it considered in the development of the proposed project study area?
- Is there a study area from other economic or land use plans that is relevant to this? If so, how was it considered in the development of the proposed project study area?
- Were land use patterns and growth forecasts considered in the development of the study area?

## **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 agree with the study area identified?
- Is there anything missing from the study area? How should it be extended?
- What do we need to consider within the study area?
- What resources within the outline study area do you value?

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

- Is the information we received from stakeholders consistent with what we had? 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		
<b>From other phases of transportation decision making</b>	Long Range Planning	Fatally flawed scenarios to inform the extent of the study area
	Programming	Programmed projects in the TIP
	Corridor Planning	Study area used in corridor planning
		The scope of the environmental review and analysis process during corridor planning.
Environmental Review	ENV-3: Project purpose and need	
<b>From other sectors and processes</b>	Land Use	Detailed land use data in the study area; for example, zoning maps, growth forecasts, land use patterns, and parcel data
	Transportation Conformity	No Specific Data.
	Natural Environment and Implementing Eco-Logical	Combined map of conservation, restoration and enhancement priorities with transportation plans
	Capital Improvement	Data related to the approved capital improvements identified within the study area
		Planned improvements in the area
	Safety and Security	Relevant data from approved safety / security plans
	Human Environment	Data related to community context for protected community resources
	Economic Development	GIS data for nearby major development or redevelopment sites
	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Not applicable.
Freight	Key freight transportation facilities and infrastructure (bridges, rail yards, intermodal locations)	
	Major manufacturing activity clusters	
<b>From the transportation technical process supporting this key decision</b>	Access management guidelines, driveway permitting regulations and land use policies that identify access controls or restrictions	
	Crash analysis data	
	Emergency response data, including route identification	
	Municipal boundaries	
	Traffic signal data, where applicable	
	Surrounding population characteristics (e.g., how many people live within walking and biking distance of the corridor that may need to access destinations along the corridor) and facilities that may attract pedestrians and bicyclists.	
<b>From stakeholder collaboration</b>	Summary of comments received on the proposed study area from the stakeholders and rational for how those comments were addressed	
<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>From Long Range Transportation Planning</b>		
LRP-7 - Approve Plan Scenarios	Scenarios considered in the long range planning process that may impact the selection of alternatives and reasons for eliminating scenarios	To consider scenarios included and eliminated in long range planning in order to focus the study area on alternatives that are in consistent with regional multimodal improvements
<b>From Corridor Planning</b>		
COR-4 - Reach Consensus on Scope of Environmental Review and Analysis	Information on the study area used in the corridor planning process.	To inform the selection of the study area

## **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	Detailed land use data in the study area; for example, zoning maps, land use patterns, growth forecasts, and parcel data
	Analysis	Analysis/validation of land use implementation decisions (i.e. zoning and building permits) compared to land use plan assumptions for adopted land use / corridor plans.
Transportation Conformity	Analysis	Nonattainment/maintenance area boundaries for transportation-related pollutants should be a consideration in defining the overall study area, even though specific criteria apply when deciding where to perform hotspot analysis. (E.g., traffic data collection and modeling might be limited to the defined study area, but hotspot analysis might be required outside of that study area.)
Natural Environment and Implementing Ecological	Data From IEF Step 3 - Create Regional Ecosystem Framework	The combined map of conservation, restoration and enhancement priorities with transportation plans from IEF Step 3 should also inform the study area for environmental review.
	Data From IEF-1 Build & Strengthen Collaborative Partnerships & Vision	The ecological planning region from Sub-step 1a of the IEF would have been acquired at ENV-1. The region should inform the study area for environmental review. If additional data is known at the site level (e.g., if specific information is known about species populations or other important resources), this could affect the ecological study area and should be taken into consideration.
Capital Improvement	Data	Data related to the approved capital improvements identified within the study area
Safety and Security	Data	Relevant data from approved safety / security plans.
Human Environment	Data	Data related to community context for protected community resources
Economic Development	Data	GIS data for major development or redevelopment sites within or near defined study area to determine potential risks associated with indirect and cumulative impacts if these areas were to be developed.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Freight	Data	Data to support an understanding of freight logistics including identification of key activity centers/infrastructure for freight movement
Bicycles and Pedestrians	Data	Data needed to support an understanding of bicycle and pedestrian networks and activity
		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	<p><b>Collect Information</b> - Private sector information on potential impacts to inform the selection of a study area that is sufficiently broad to evaluate P3 interests.</p> <p><b>Data Transfer</b> - Data specific to P3 in the study area to allow comparison of private sector impacts along with environmental impacts for each alternative in ENV 6 and 7.</p>
Planning and Environment Linkages	<p><b>Provide Information</b> - Support the determination of the initial study area with information about traffic movement and restrictions.</p> <p><b>Data Transfer</b> - Data and information on access, travel patterns, signalization, crash analysis and system performance characteristics in the general area.</p>
Streamlining a Congestion Bottleneck Project	<p>Reach Consensus on Study Area</p> <p><b>Data Transfer</b> - None</p>