

Section 1. Introduction

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Local Development District (LDD), and Economic Development District (EDD) for Southwestern Pennsylvania. In these roles, SPC is the leader in regional planning for Southwestern Pennsylvania and is charged with developing both the regional long range transportation plan and the comprehensive economic development strategy. SPC integrates these two plans into a coordinated regional program of projects and actions that are guided by the principle that the relationship between economic development and the region's transportation system is fundamental.

Long Range Transportation Planning

In 2012, Congress enacted the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) legislation. MAP-21 emphasized the eight planning factors that must be considered in the metropolitan planning program (see sidebar), and also established a new emphasis on performance-based planning. The framework for performance-based planning is in answering the questions:

- Where do we want to go? (strategic direction setting)
- How are we going to get there? (analysis of trends, strategies, and priorities)
- What will it take? (financial analysis and resource allocation)
- How are we doing? (performance monitoring)

Since the enactment of MAP-21 in 2012, Pennsylvania and its MPO and RPO planning partners have been on the forefront of developing robust, data-driven, performance-based planning programs that are used to inform and monitor investment strategies and priorities. Examples of these types of programs can be found across the state, including the Congestion Management Process;

Federal Planning Factors

Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.

Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

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Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.

Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.

Promote efficient system management and operation.

Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

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operations and safety planning; asset management planning; and, multimodal project selection/prioritization methodologies.

With an extensive peer and stakeholder outreach component, SPC has developed a set of performance measures that are clear, concise and represent indicators that monitor the attainment of the shared Regional Vision developed during its Project Region scenario planning initiative, which is outlined in Section 2. Scenario planning explores alternative land use and transportation investment strategies and the impacts and trade-offs in each scenario.

SPC established a Regional Vision providing strategic direction for the region through a nationally recognized process (Project Region). This extensive scenario planning process evaluated trends and alternative scenarios for regional development with policy level goals and strategies to achieve a new Regional Vision for ***Transportation and land use that supports and enhances the regional economy and the communities within it.***

This plan, *Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan*, prioritizes programs and projects that have been developed to address the region's pressing needs to maintain and preserve our existing transportation assets for the sustainability of the region's economic competitiveness and the vitality of our communities.

This plan projects fiscal resources considered reasonably available to us under guidelines established by federal law. It allocates the anticipated fiscal resources within the federally constrained projections. The plan provides a new set of enhanced performance metrics that allow us to better track changes on items considered important by respondents to detailed presentation of trend data and investment priority preference surveys.

In addition, this plan recognizes that new opportunities arise and projects develop over time that can be significant contributors to achievement of the region's vision. The plan presents illustrations of sample projects that could represent significant opportunities related to the Regional Vision along with general parameters of the fiscal challenges they would need to overcome.

Overall, *Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan* responds to both the challenge of continuing fiscal constraints and also the potential for taking advantage of new opportunities within the context of the Regional Vision by allocating available resources consistent with the vision. The plan represents a continuing process in pursuit of the Regional Vision that is updated regularly to reflect changes in trends and opportunities as we go forward.