

# 1. INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Organizational Background

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) had its origin in the Greater Lansing Chamber of Commerce's Highway Committee during 1955 and 1956. One of the major issues at that time was coordination of highway and road development in the greater Lansing area. In July, 1956 the Board of Supervisors of Clinton, Ingham and Eaton Counties each adopted a resolution forming the TCRPC under Public Act 281 of 1945, the Regional Planning Commission Act.

## Transportation Plan Background

In the initial years following formation, the TCRPC worked on development of a regional comprehensive plan to guide and coordinate regional growth. A strong element in that plan was linkage between land use and transportation needs. In 1964 a Transportation Facilities Study was developed to analyze the existing transportation system from a regional perspective. The following year a series of surveys were taken covering roadside, home interview, trucks-taxis and employers. These studies and others were used to develop the transportation element of a regional comprehensive plan. In 1968 the TCRPC adopted The House We Live In: A Comprehensive Growth Plan as a guide for future regional growth. Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the TCRPC began working on more detailed studies for land use, transportation, economic development and natural resources. As a result of these and other studies, the region's first transportation plan, the Street and Highway Plan, was completed in 1973 and updated in 1981.

In the mid 1970's a regional transit study was begun and adopted by the TCRPC in 1978 as The Long Range Public Transportation Plan. Also during the 1970's and 1980's many transportation corridor and technical studies were completed to provide detailed analysis for Transportation Improvement Programs needed for state and federal funding.

In 1990 an Interim Long Range Project Selection process was begun to review roadway needs and project priorities that had evolved since 1981. The updated list of recommended projects guided planning decisions until a new long range Regional 2015 Transportation Plan was completed as required by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).

## Requirements for the TCRPC Regional 2030 Transportation Plan

### Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) was enacted "to develop a national intermodal transportation system that is economically efficient and

environmentally sound, provides the foundation for the nation to compete in the global economy, and will move people and goods in an energy efficient manner.”

A significant change made by this law was the enhanced role of local governments, working through their Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), to direct expenditure of transportation funds in their planning area. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC), as the MPO, already had a long history of working with the state, local governments, transit authorities, road commissions, airport authorities and other transportation providers to plan for current and future transportation needs.

The Regional 2015 Transportation Plan adopted in May, 1995, was prepared under federal regulations as required by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). This Act significantly enhanced the role and requirements for local governments and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), working through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), to direct expenditures of transportation investments within the entire Tri-County region consisting of all of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties. TCRPC has been the MPO for this region since designated by the governor in 1973, and has been coordinating regional transportation decisions continuously since its inception in 1956—long before there were federal requirements to coordinate these activities, which were not enacted into federal law until 1963.

### **Transportation Efficiency Act for the Twenty-First Century (TEA-21)**

Planning requirements established by ISTEA were reaffirmed and amended in TEA-21, when it was enacted by Congress and signed into law in June, 1998. One example was condensing 17 mandatory planning factors to be considered in the planning and programming process to seven broader and more general principles. Similar change was enacted in the National Highway System Act of 1995, which made six mandatory management systems enacted under ISTEA optional, although it continued the requirement for an approved congestion management system in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) over 200,000 population (such as the Tri-County region) as part of the planning process.

A major impact of TEA-21 was to substantially increase federal transportation funds and modify factors used to apportion federal funds to states and metropolitan areas. This fact, and to a lesser extent, changes in state gas tax revenues approved by the Michigan legislature, resulted in a substantial increase in transportation revenues to Michigan and the Tri-County region. These revenue increases meant substantially greater dollars were available to program for regional transportation improvements between 2003 and 2025 than was assumed in the Regional 2015 Transportation Plan adopted in 1995. This resulted in more funds and projects being programmed in the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan when it was adopted in March, 2003.

As Congress completed reauthorization of TEA-21 in late July, 2005, continued higher transportation revenues are estimated for programming in the region during the period from 2005 to 2030 covered in this Regional 2030 Transportation Plan. Details on these

revenue forecasts may be found in Chapter 12. New transportation projects to be constructed in the region during this period are identified in Chapter 13.

### **Planning Process Redesign**

Also in 1998, TCRPC and MDOT executed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) defining roles of the state, MPO's and federal funding agencies in completing federally required transportation planning and programming responsibilities. This process redesign MOU generally calls for establishing local and statewide transportation goals and objectives, developing statewide revenue assessments, identifying evaluation tools for needs assessment, identifying project categories and a program structure which prioritizes project categories based on local revenue forecasts developed cooperatively by the state, MPO and local public transit agencies. These factors are then used as a basis for identifying long term investment strategies, a twenty year project list, and a series of agreed upon five-year investment strategies to guide programming decisions over the first five years of the plan. Implicit in this approach is greater detail on projects identified in this first five year period of the plan, so they can be used to provide a basis for monitoring success at achieving investment strategies, and that the entire process be conducted by the partners within an active framework of public involvement and participation. A flow diagram of relationships between these elements of the new planning process is shown in Figure 1-4.

Immediately upon successfully negotiating agreement with MDOT on the approach described in the summary above and contained in this MOU, TCRPC and its advisory committees initiated an aggressive approach to implementing the new planning process. Existing goals and objectives from the adopted Regional 2015 Transportation Plan were grouped into initial program categories. Committees worked diligently to develop a matrix showing goals and objectives in relation to analytical tools to be used for needs assessment in each project category and drafts of long range (twenty year) and five year investment strategies for the region. Committees of staff members from MDOT and Michigan MPO's developed and agreed upon approaches to cooperatively complete statewide revenue assessments and local revenue forecasts. TCRPC and MDOT successfully tested these new approaches in completing the 2000-2002 Transportation Improvement Program

### **Interim Regional 2020 Transportation Plan, June, 2000**

In June, 2000 TCRPC adopted an Interim Regional 2020 Transportation Plan which reaffirmed and updated the Regional 2015 Transportation Plan.

Federal regulations require MPO's long range plans to have a minimum twenty year planning horizon. While TCRPC intended to complete a major plan update in FY 2000, the relationship between the update and TCRPC's "**Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future**" project, the complex contracting process for that project, along with delays by consultants in developing new socio-demographic data and finalizing calibration of TCRPC's new travel demand model to a 1995 base year, necessitated rescheduling of

a major update of the 2015 plan. Accordingly, TCRPC, MDOT and FHWA staff jointly reached agreement on a method and approach to completing an Interim Regional 2020 Transportation Plan while work towards completing a 2025 plan proceeded in conjunction with the Regional Growth project.

This approach included three elements:

- 1.) Reaffirmation of the technical analysis and remaining chapters of the existing Regional 2015 Transportation Plan.
- 2.) Updating financial forecasts contained in that plan based on current estimates of reasonably expected revenues between 2000 and 2020; and
- 3.) Updating projects to 2020.

## **Regional Growth Project Background**

Beginning in 1997, the TCRPC initiated a multi-phased, multi-year land use analysis and regional visioning activity entitled: “**Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future.**” The goals of this project were to develop a shared vision of future land use and development patterns throughout the region and to establish an action plan to address urban sprawl to guide public and private investment decisions (including transportation investments) for the next two decades. The Commission obtained funding from local, state and federal governments totaling over \$2 million dollars towards this effort, including a federal transportation discretionary grant totaling \$355,000 from the Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program for this project. The mission statement for the project is shown in Figure 1-1.

Examples of activities conducted under this project, in summary, include: extensive information and data gathering efforts, basic research on regional land use change over time, fiscal impact and real cost analysis, imagery of future regional land use alternatives used in visual choice polls and a process for monitoring growth indicators and reporting change. Information gathered for this project was used in an extensive array of public involvement and consensus building activities (including random public opinion surveys and leadership surveys, targeted interviews, focus groups and up to three sets of four facilitated nominal group style town hall meetings at different stages of the project) leading to establishment of regional goals and objectives for land use and transportation. Also, a Regional Transit Coordination Study and identification of regional land use and transportation alternatives was completed. These alternatives were evaluated using a comprehensive alternatives analysis process that included community impact assessment, environmental justice analysis and comparison of various performance measures under each alternative. Results of this land use alternatives analysis and the “**Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future**” project were adopted by the TCRPC, as integrated in the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan, including:

- An adopted “Wise Growth” land use policy map;
- Integrated regional land use and transportation goals, objectives and investment strategies;
- A regional land use vision consisting of 29 principles in five theme areas, such as Government, Transportation and Other Infrastructure or Growth and Redevelopment;
- Implementation policies related to future transportation investment decisions; and
- Other elements.

These results of “**Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future**” are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2 of this plan.

Eight transportation network alternatives were then analyzed based on the “Wise Growth” land use alternative in order to determine which projects and programs should be in the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan. This analysis is discussed in detail in Chapter 11.

Also, as part of the “**Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future**” project, an action program was developed to implement the selected “Wise Growth” land use alternative. Dissemination of education and communication materials to facilitate public awareness of the action program, an evaluation research component and developing a process for reporting implementation results over time was also included.

The Regional Growth project extensively evaluated how changing the region’s land use patterns to reduce urban sprawl resulted in a more efficient transportation system, reduced environmental impacts and the need for costly future public infrastructure (including transportation), improved access to jobs, services and trade centers and examined and encouraged private sector development patterns which achieved these goals.

The Regional Growth project, the new planning process and new regulatory requirements based on TEA-21 all converged and resulted in a substantially different set of transportation investment strategies in the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan than in the 2015 plan. The Regional 2025 Transportation Plan represented an important step in a continuum of TCRPC’s continuing, cooperative, comprehensive and coordinated transportation planning process to incrementally implement best practices in land use and transportation planning on a regional basis.

FIGURE 1-1: MISSION STATEMENT

## **ADOPTED MISSION STATEMENT**

It shall be the mission of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's "Regional Growth: Choices for the Future Project" to actively engage the citizens of the region-to examine implications of regional land use and other growth trends on the region's future and to formulate consensus on a shared vision of regional growth in order to assure improved future regional quality of life and economic competitiveness for our citizens and businesses.

Principle activities of the "Regional Growth: Choices of the Future" project sponsored by the Commission will include:

- 1) Collect and objectively evaluate regional land use and other growth trend information;
- 2) Actively engage local governments, citizens and stakeholder groups in examining implications of these trends on the region's future;
- 3) Identify and evaluate alternatives to these trends, as appropriate;
- 4) Formulate consensus on a shared regional vision about a preferred alternative; and
- 5) Develop tools, techniques and action strategies to implement the shared vision and preferred alternative.
- 6) Establish a regional process for monitoring and evaluating success at implementing these strategies.

## **The TCRPC Regional 2025 Transportation Plan**

The primary function of a regional transportation plan is to guide expenditures of transportation funds in the region. Projects that reduced traffic congestion, improved air quality, enhanced safety and supported the Regional Growth vision were given priority. The plan identified transportation system deficiencies and projects through the year 2025. In order to implement proposed projects in the plan, they must also be included in a shorter term three year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which identifies projects to receive funding in the first three plan years. For projects to receive federal funding under TEA-21, each project must appear in both the plan and the TIP.

As noted earlier, the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan marked a major milestone in the Tri-County region by integrating land use and transportation decision-making within the program structure as agreed to in the planning process redesign MOU. Efforts undertaken as part of the “**Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future**” project have received national recognition by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, various national professional associations and in numerous best practices reports, including: public involvement, land use/transportation integration, mapping and data information, funding, innovative partnerships and other areas.

The core of these earlier efforts on the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan remain the core of this new, updated Regional 2030 Transportation Plan.

## **Recent Developments**

Since adoption of the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan in March, 2003, several major work activities and events with a significant bearing on development of this new Regional 2030 Transportation Plan have occurred.

### **Congestion Management System (CMS)**

First, in March, 2004, TCRPC approved a federally required Congestion Management System (CMS) for the Tri-County region. Federal law requires that any new roadway projects which add highway capacity for single occupant vehicles (SOV's) must be drawn from an approved CMS process. This document, available under separate cover, identifies the “Wise Growth” land use alternative as the region's primary congestion management strategy, along with ancillary supporting strategies like access management and traffic impact studies in congested corridors. It also identifies an integrated approach to land use and transportation system management and operations as the region's second highest priority for congestion management and analyzes and identifies other strategies for managing congestion in the Tri-County region.

The CMS document also identifies an implementation process, evaluates impacts of alternate congestion mitigation strategies as required by federal law and further extends that analysis to all projects contained in the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan, which

(in part) implements the CMS process through development of the Transportation Improvement Program.

### **New Transit Planning Agreements**

Second, in September, 2004 TCRPC completed negotiating new MOU's or planning agreements with the region's three operators of public transit service: the Capital Area Transit Authority (CATA), the Eaton County Transit Authority (EATRAN) and the Clinton Area Transit System (Clinton Transit). These similar but separate planning agreements were each approved by the TCRPC and the respective boards of each transit agency as required by federal law. They outline respective roles of the parties in the metropolitan planning process, and further commit each transit agency and the MPO to implement the same new planning process as agreed to between MDOT and the MPO.

### **Development of the 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program**

Third, in June, 2005 TCRPC also completed the first new TIP under the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan which fully applied all results of the new planning process, the approved CMS process and the Regional Growth project to the programming process, marking another milestone in implementation of these agreed upon plans and procedures.

While these efforts are ongoing and continuing, and no doubt will be modified based on further experience, completion of the 2006-2008 TIP represented a culmination of a substantial regional effort to fully redefine how metropolitan transportation planning and programming decisions are made in the Tri-County region cooperatively by all planning partners, consistent with federal requirements and integrated with an adopted regional land use vision.

### **Air Quality Non-Attainment Designation**

Fourth, in April, 2004 the Environmental Protection Agency designated the entire Tri-County region as a non-attainment area for the new eight hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone, effective June 15, 2004. The non-attainment designation subjects the region to additional planning and modeling requirements to demonstrate conformity with the State Implementation Plan for achieving compliance with ozone standards.

Conformity is a technical term for the now mandatory process of demonstrating that the region's transportation plans, programs and projects do not result in increases of emissions over a 2002 base year and do not contribute to any violations of the NAAQS. These determinations are made using the regional travel demand forecasting model and an EPA approved emission model.

An initial demonstration of conformity on the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan and 2004-2006 Transportation Improvement Program and a joint conformity finding by the

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was required by June 15, 2005 in order to allow any future roadway capacity expansion projects to proceed.

TCRPC completed the required conformity demonstration in March, 2005 and the required FHWA/FTA conformity finding was issued on June 6, 2005.

The designation of the region as an ozone non-attainment area has profound implications on the region's transportation planning process. Conformity demonstrations are now required on each TCRPC transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program or any amendment to either document which adds any project which increases roadway capacity for single occupant vehicles and certain types of public transit projects.

If a conforming long range plan horizon drops below the minimum 20 year period, projects contained in it may proceed, but before any amendments are made which require a federal action, an updated plan must be completed and a new conformity finding must be made. Failure to accomplish this, or to meet any deadline related to the plan update requirements, can result in a "conformity lapse," during which no regionally significant transportation project or capacity improvement project can proceed until a new conformity finding is made. In addition, the CMS requirements also become much more onerous—reasonable travel demand reduction and operational management strategies may be required as part of a roadway capacity expansion project.

Even though TCRPC's Regional 2025 Transportation Plan was approved in March, 2003, effective January 1, 2006, the mandatory 20 year planning horizon would be breached, which would mean no new amendments could be made after this date, even though the minimum update cycle requirement might not occur until later. In short, an update of the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan is necessary immediately as a result of the new deadlines associated with the region's new non-attainment designation. While the basic core of the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan and work done on it is retained, this updated Regional 2030 Transportation Plan is being completed to address these new air quality conformity requirements, and the required conformity demonstration is documented in Chapter 16.

It should be noted that the initial conformity determination made on the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan and 2004-2006 TIP was based on emissions modeling done for the years 2002, 2010, 2015 and 2025. Projects contained in these earlier emission model runs are unchanged in the current plan, in part due to the short turn around time required to complete this Regional 2030 Transportation Plan in order to meet air quality deadlines. Financial forecasts, socioeconomic data and related elements of the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan have been updated and extended to 2030. New capacity projects are only being added to this plan for the period from 2025 to 2030. This reduces the need to re-run travel and emissions models for earlier years, which saves both time and tax dollars while allowing TCRPC to meet initial deadlines mandated by the region's non-attainment designation.

However, immediately upon completion of this Regional 2030 Transportation Plan, TCRPC will begin an aggressive update to the region's socioeconomic forecasts, calibration of the regional travel demand model and completing a much more thoroughly updated Regional 2035 Transportation Plan by approximately January 1, 2010, consistent with new plan update requirements. At that time all projects and assumptions in the Regional 2030 Transportation Plan will be reviewed and revised as appropriate.

### **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005**

Fifth, as noted, a new reauthorized federal aid highway and transportation program was approved by Congress in late July, 2005 and signed into law by the President in August, 2005. While broad parameters of this new legislation are known, including raising overall funding levels and adding or modifying requirements to the planning process, many specific implications of the new legislation are not yet known. For example, although new funding levels are set nationwide, the complex apportionment process making new funding levels known to individual states will not be completed until after action on this plan. In other cases, new regulations may be needed to fully implement new requirements, or grace periods may be allowed before some new requirements go into effect. Accordingly, this updated Regional 2030 Transportation Plan, already in progress at the time of reauthorization, is being completed based on assumptions for continuation of programs in TEA-21 and assumes the best available information from state and federal agencies on the impacts of this new legislation on those programs at this time. As additional information and apportionment data become available, amendments to this updated Regional 2030 Transportation Plan may be necessary to accommodate impacts of this new reauthorization legislation.

### **Network Alternatives Analysis**

As part of the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan and the Regional Growth project, TCRPC also evaluated eight different transportation networks based on alternative assumptions concerning different approaches to address regional transportation problems. Examples of these network alternatives include high and medium levels of transit system improvements, a management and operations/demand reduction option, an unconstrained "highways only" solution and a financially constrained highway project solution. Various combinations or "packages" of these alternatives were also evaluated. After this analysis, the Commission adopted an alternative package which included a set of strategically applied "medium" transit system improvements, the management and operations/demand reduction option, the financially constrained road project list and the "Wise Growth" land use alternative identified as part of the "**Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future**" project.

This network alternatives analysis was further integrated in the region's CMS process. Results of this network alternative analysis are shown in Chapter 11. By agreement

between TCRPC, MDOT and FHWA staff, due in part to the short turn around time of completing this Regional 2030 Transportation Plan, TCRPC is not updating this analysis in the current document. Instead, the alternative adopted in the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan will be re-modeled for 2030 and shown along side results from that earlier analysis for comparison purposes. The existing alternatives analysis model runs will remain in place for use in the TCRPC CMS process until the Regional 2035 Transportation Plan is completed in 2010.

Results of comparative network alternative analysis in Chapter 11 and integrated in TCRPC's CMS document may be factored as necessary to extend them to 2030 based on results of the adopted 2030 model run. Fundamental relationships between alternatives would not substantively change if they were re-modeled, hence their continued application is considered indicative of the relative impacts of these options for comparative analysis or CMS purposes.

### **Relationship to State Long Range Plan**

The current multi-modal State Long Range Plan (SLRP) provides a framework for investment in Michigan's transportation system through the year 2025. While MDOT is initiating an update to the SLRP, this update will not be completed before TCRPC completes this Regional 2030 Transportation Plan. However, the basic principles contained in the SLRP are still applicable to this Regional 2030 Transportation Plan, as summarized below. Any changes in the next SLRP update will be addressed as necessary in TCRPC's Regional 2035 Transportation Plan, to be completed in 2010.

The current State Long Range Plan emphasizes investment in the transportation system must not only preserve it, but make sure it operates efficiently, effectively and safely. The plan notes a balanced and robust transportation system enhances quality of life by providing access to a broader range of jobs, more options in housing, shopping, recreation and health care. It reduces costs of production and distribution by allowing business better access to labor, raw materials, supplies and larger product markets.

MDOT recognizes effective transportation planning requires a partnership of federal, state, regional and local governments working together. Transportation providers at all levels will need to manage and operate the system effectively to reduce congestion. Especially in urban areas, public agencies will need to work with each other, and with the private sector, to identify future funding.

The above statements, adapted from the Executive Summary of the State Long Range Plan: 2000-2025, are still consistent with goals of the TCRPC's Regional 2030 Transportation Plan. This plan, like MDOT'S, also relies on partnerships between governments at all levels and the private sector to achieve the plan's goals. Decisions made at the regional and local level concerning land use and development have a major impact on our transportation system. That is why the Regional Growth project remains an integral part of the 2030 plan. Successful implementation of the regional vision at the sub-regional and local level will be a key element in managing congestion and

lowering costs of future transportation infrastructure. Chapter 4 covers the State 2025 Plan and its integration with TCRPC's Regional 2030 Transportation Plan in more detail.

## **Goals and Objectives**

Goals and objectives in this plan are virtually unchanged from the Regional 2025 Transportation Plan but do reflect changing community attitudes from previous plans. An extensive public involvement process was used to reconsider the relationship between land use and transportation goals and objectives as part of the “**Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future**” project. Feedback from the growth project is reflected throughout the transportation plan, but in detail in Chapter 3, Goals and Objectives and Chapter 13, Regional 2035 Transportation Plan, which includes tables that relate goals and objectives to the 25 project funding categories.

## **Plan Development**

The TCRPC Regional 2030 Transportation Plan was developed with cooperation and support of many transportation providers, planners and local government officials. The TCRPC already had in place an extensive advisory committee structure for transportation planning, including the Capital Area Regional Transportation Study (CARTS) Technical Advisory Committee, their Long Range Plan Task Force and several sub-groups (such as the Non-Motorized Task Force) to focus on specific plan elements. These task forces were extensively expanded as a result of the regional growth project to include many new stakeholders. A Model Calibration Steering Committee also provides oversight on modeling (see Figure 1-2, TCRPC Coordination of Commission, Committees and Task Forces).

## **Plan Area**

The policy structure for developing the plan has been in place since January, 1993 when TCRPC restructured to include transportation providers on the MPO policy board. The three road commissions, two transit authorities and the Michigan Department of Transportation were given seats at the policy level to conform to the intent of ISTEA. In February, 1993 the TCRPC/MPO designated the entire three-county region as the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) under ISTEA requirements (see Figure 1-3). This area has always been the TCRPC transportation planning area, but under ISTEA and TEA-21 this designation takes on additional importance in programming funds, coordinating planning and determining consistency with air quality rules. With the 2000 census urban boundary expanding, the Federal Aid Urban Boundary has now been adjusted to include portions of Shiawassee County in a small area of Woodhull Township. This area is now in TCRPC's MAB.

## **Status of Implementing the New Planning Process**

The new planning process (as shown in Figure 1-4) has essentially been implemented in the Tri-County region by completion of elements adopted in the Regional 2025

Figure 1-2: Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Coordination Commission, Committees and Task Force

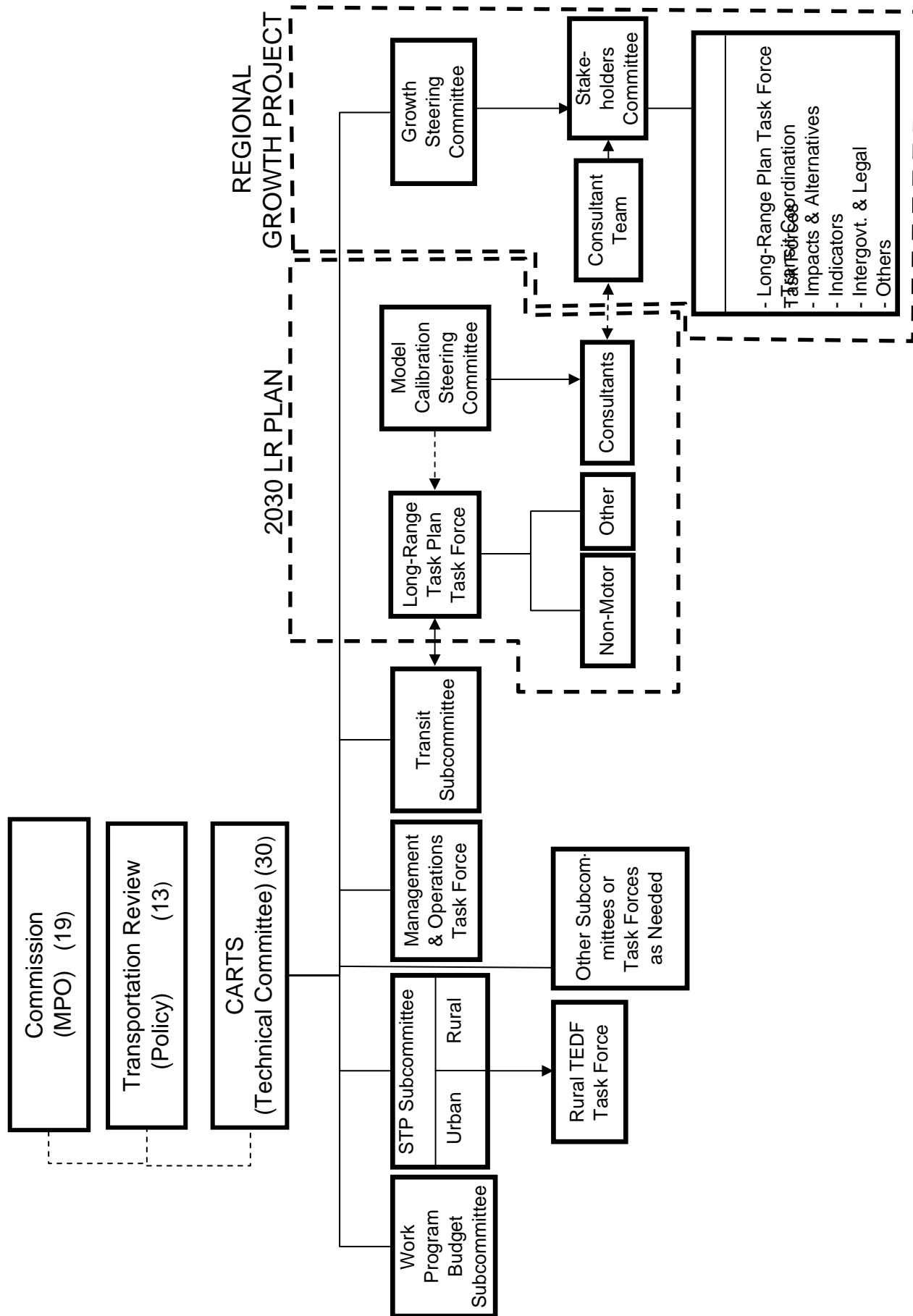
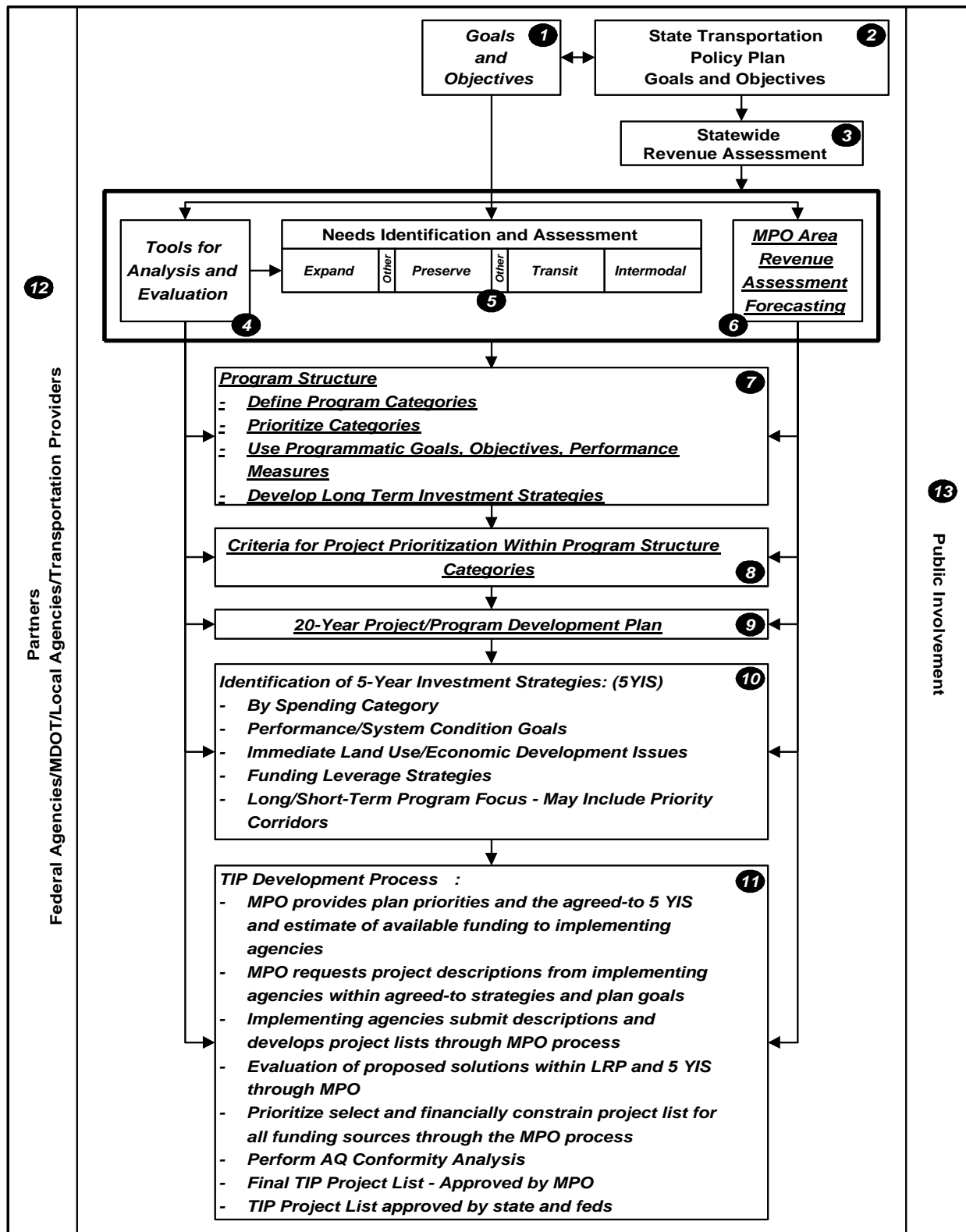




Figure 1-4: Schematic Diagram of New Planning Process

## MPO Forum Transportation Plan Development Process



Transportation Plan, Interagency Planning Agreements with local transit agencies and its continued application in preparation of the 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program.

These elements remain in place with only minor adjustments in this Regional 2030 Transportation Plan.

In general the new process is working well in the Tri-County region and will continue to be refined with additional implementation experience as part of the Regional 2035 Transportation Plan update in 2010.

### **Future Plan Updates**

Prior to the recent reauthorization legislation, TEA-21 and TCRPC's designation as an ozone non-attainment area required that the TCRPC Regional Transportation 2030 Plan be updated every three years to adjust for changes in transportation priorities, growth and development patterns. This was a change from the mandatory five-year update cycle for areas not designated as air quality non-attainment areas. The new SAFETEA-LU legislation provides for mandatory four year updates, hence adjusting our next update cycle target to approximately January, 2010. In addition, a process has been established to monitor changes in socioeconomic data over time as an input to future estimates of growth. Future plan updates will also continue to include extensive modeling to demonstrate that future projects conform to air quality requirements.

### **Plan Amendment Procedures**

Occasionally circumstances require changes to an approved plan. If the change is considered to be major, then a formal amendment is required. This procedure follows the full process of public notice, committee reviews and recommendation to the TCRPC for formal action prior to submission to the MDOT.

If changes are minor or administrative in nature, or the result of an administrative amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), then the plan may also be amended administratively following procedures established by the TCRPC as described below. Projects in the 20 year time frame, but beyond the TIP time frame, may also be administratively amended if they meet criteria in procedures adopted below.

**Administrative Plan Amendments** – There are cases where TCRPC staff may administratively amend the plan based on local request. The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission's general policy shall be that the Commission, as the MPO, approves projects and priorities, including allocation of funds to program categories and Urban STP funds. Project details such as minor changes in project costs, scope, termini, technical descriptions and funding sources may be approved by staff administratively using discretion and judgment as appropriate to delivery of the program of projects. Staff, at its discretion, may still elect to follow a full plan amendment process as appropriate on a case by case basis, and may consult with the Executive Director, state and federal officials, the CARTS Committee Chair, representatives of

local jurisdictions, the Commission Chair or the Executive Committee of the Commission for guidance on specific discretionary decisions. The following listing of examples is intended to indicate places where staff's discretion to approve amendments is specifically granted. This listing is not comprehensive in that it may not be possible to always determine in advance the particular circumstance for any given project. A consultation process may be appropriate to determine how to apply this guidance in any given situation. However, an administrative amendment by staff is expressly permitted in the following cases.

1. Projects that are subject to MDOT's selection authority and identified with Commission priorities on the Illustrative List of Unfunded Projects (Appendix D) may be moved administratively into the plan upon selection by MDOT. Examples of these project types include but are not limited to Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ), Enhancement, Safety, Local Bridge and Small Urban STP programs.
2. Projects may be postponed within the plan provided that financial constraint is maintained and that there are no implications on any air quality conformity analysis as determined by staff in consultation with the Interagency Work Group. In such cases, if additional balances are the outcome, the STP Subcommittee will be convened at the earliest convenience to consider any projects that may be ready for advancement.
3. Implementing agencies may swap one preserve project for another, thereby allowing a project to move forward, provided that the federal share of cost is not changed and provided that the one moved forward is already in the approved plan.
4. Minor changes in descriptions to clarify project termini, provided that there is no change of scope and any associated federal cost increase does not exceed 120 percent.
5. Project cost changes greater than 120 percent of the total project cost may be approved administratively where there are compelling reasons to do so to advance a project and the decision has no direct effect on other agencies' projects or funds.
6. Changes in source of funding where there is no impact on another agency's projects or funds.
7. Changes in total project cost that reflect increased local or non-federal share for the convenience of, and at the request of the local agency, including matching ratios or non-federal eligible costs, or changes to MDOT general program account funding levels.
8. Minor clarifications of scope or project technical descriptions where needed to advance an approved project.
9. Changes in dollar cost less than 120 percent of estimated total cost shown in the document, provided there is no impact on other agencies' funds or projects.

10. Adjustments to project scheduling for projects already contained in an approved plan which do not impact other agencies' projects or funds.
11. "Advance Construct" is a technique in which a local agency designates a project for future federal aid reimbursement, but starts the project using local funds. At a subsequent date the project so "advance constructed" is "converted" to a federal aid project and the local agency gets reimbursed for the federally eligible amount. This technique is used to start a project earlier than might otherwise occur and also allows some "spreading" of local and federal aid costs from one budget year to the next. Staff may amend the plan at any time administratively to designate a project as advance construct at the request of MDOT or a local agency, may adjust the ratio of federal aid to local funds within an advance construct project at the request of MDOT or local agencies, may shift advance construct funds from year to year and/or may remove the advance construct designation at any time at the request of MDOT or local agencies, provided that there are no impacts on other agencies projects or funds. These changes can also be made by staff (at the request of MDOT or a local agency) to manage the program of projects in a way which might have an impact on other agencies' projects or funds with the written agreement of the other agency (or agencies) so requested, or based on a positive affirmative vote of the Rural Task Force, the STP Subcommittee or CARTS (as appropriate) where there are compelling reasons to do so to advance a project or facilitate local reimbursement for a project. The likely circumstance contemplated by this scenario is the practice of "borrowing" or repaying of costs and overruns among or between jurisdictions to offset gains or loss in fund balances in order to avert loss of funding to the region. A consultation process shall be used to inform and guide this process as appropriate.
12. To correct errors or omissions or in the event that a previously approved project must be added to the plan, provided such action does not impact other agencies' projects or funds or any air quality conformity analysis.
13. Emergency relief or actions necessary to advance an otherwise approved project may be taken at staff's discretion upon consultation with state or federal officials, the Executive Director, the CARTS or Commission Chair, or the Executive Committee of the Commission as appropriate.
14. Minor modifications to the plan transit element (including but not limited to adding or deleting line items, increasing or decreasing costs, changing quantities, or shifting funds from one line item to another) may be made administratively by staff on request provided that the requested amendment will involve currently available or anticipated FTA funds and will not negatively impact other local road or transit agencies.
15. Unless otherwise required by law (such as a conformity requirement) a Congressionally designated earmark or high priority project may be amended into the plan once authorization has been signed into law.
16. Staff shall report any actions to CARTS, the TRC and TCRPC (as appropriate) at the earliest opportunity following the action.

The following examples of project types and cases must always be referred to the full Long Range Plan amendment process unless they involve changes as provided above.

1. Any addition of a new project not previously reviewed or prioritized by the Commission.
2. Actions which may have an adverse impact on another agency's project or funding.
3. Any major change of scope which increases capacity through addition of a new road or major widenings, such as adding a lane. Minor widenings such as shoulders, passing bays, turnouts or intersection modifications will not be considered major capacity improvements.
4. Major changes in cost which may impact financial constraint, a local matching share, or adversely impact another agency's projects or funding programs. As a general rule any Urban STP project cost in excess of 120 percent of the project's approved federal cost should be reviewed through the formal amendment process. Failure of an agency to submit such an amendment request in a timely manner, may at the Commission's discretion, result in the project being capped at 120 percent of the approved federal aid amount.
5. Any major state or local infrastructure project changes which have potential for broad or compelling adverse impacts on any local jurisdiction, the natural environment, or the traveling public. With the region's designation as a non-attainment area for ozone, adding or deleting any projects determined to be non-exempt from conformity analysis by state and federal transportation and environmental protection agencies or the Interagency Work Group shall be treated as full plan amendments.
6. Any changes or removal of a major capacity improvement project from the current plan shall be treated using the same process as for addition of a similar project in order to assure that conformity, financial constraint and public participation requirements are met.

These general policies may be reviewed and amended from time to time and are intended to be flexible to accommodate special circumstances not foreseen at this writing. When doubt exists about the circumstances in any given case a consultation process should be used to obtain guidance on interpreting the circumstance.

## **Plan Contents**

The TCRPC Regional 2030 Transportation Plan contains the following major elements:

- Chapter 2     Tri-County “**Regional Growth: Choices for Our Future**” project – A summary of the project's findings and implications on future transportation needs in the region.

- Chapter 3 Goals and Objectives – A description of the process of developing goals and objectives and how specific goals relate to different transportation program funding areas.
- Chapter 4 Sub-State Plan Coordination – A summary of the State Long Range Plan, sub-state planning process and integration of state and sub-state plans.
- Chapter 5 Public Participation Information Program – This element summarizes public involvement in the plan development process.
- Chapter 6 Socioeconomic Projections – This covers population and employment projections used as input into the travel forecasting model and plan.
- Chapter 7 Overview of Existing Transportation Services – A summary of transportation services currently provided in the region.
- Chapter 8 Management Systems – A description of management systems as they currently exist and their future role as defined in the plan.
- Chapter 9 Travel Forecasting Model Development – A description of the model as a tool to project future traffic, transit, parking volumes and deficiencies.
- Chapter 10 Transportation Deficiency Analysis – An analysis of future year capacity deficiencies and other related transportation system deficiencies.
- Chapter 11 Network Alternative Analysis – An analysis of eight alternatives and their projected deficiencies and performance measures.
- Chapter 12 Financial Analysis – The past history and future projections of funds that will be available for transportation projects over the next 20 years.
- Chapter 13 Regional 2030 Transportation Plan – The planned 5 and 20 year projects by funding category.
- Chapter 14 Environmental Justice Analysis – A description of the environmental justice analysis used in developing the plan.
- Chapter 15 Consideration of Planning Factors – A summary of how each of the seven TEA-21 planning factors were addressed in the plan.
- Chapter 16 Air Quality Conformity Analysis