



## Memorandum

To: Long-Range Plan Task Force  
From: ICF Team and TPB Staff  
Date: October 12, 2017  
Re: Potential Processes for LRPTF and TPB to Select Among Initiatives and Factors to Consider

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Resolution R16-2017, which established the Long-Range Plan Task Force, charges the task force to “develop a process by which the TPB will later endorse a final selection from among these [ten initiatives] for future concerted TPB action.” In its October 18th meeting, the task force will discuss and finalize the process by which it will select initiatives from among the ten analyzed to recommend for TPB’s endorsement. After completion of the sketch planning analysis of the initiatives, the task force will use this process in its December 6th meeting to select the initiatives to put forward for endorsement by the TPB. Both the process used and the recommendations will be presented to the TPB at its December 20th meeting for action.

This memo contains three components:

1. Definition of the intended outcomes of this process;
2. Factors to consider in selecting among initiatives; and
3. A recommended process for selecting initiatives.

## Outcomes of this Process

While the TPB will determine what its endorsement means, we anticipate that it would mean that the concepts represented by the endorsed initiatives have the potential to improve the performance of the region's transportation system beyond what is anticipated by its current long-range transportation plan and deserve to be comprehensively examined for implementation. We believe that the endorsement would allow including the concepts represented by these improvement initiatives in the aspirational element of the 2018 update of the TPB’s long-range plan, *Visualize 2045*.

While the TPB will determine what constitutes future concerted action, we believe that at a minimum it would involve a commitment by all TPB member jurisdictions and agencies to collaborate and undertake a further examination of the concepts represented by the endorsed initiatives to identify short- and long-term implementation actions. The intent of

such an effort is that these actions are pursued with the goal of ultimately including them in future updates to the region's long-range transportation plan.

## Factors to Consider in Selecting Among Initiatives

Each task force member and the task force body as a whole will consider many factors as they compare and evaluate the initiatives. We anticipate that the members will use the measures of effectiveness (MOEs), which relate to each of the region's identified challenges, as important factors for comparing how each initiative performs relative to the others. In addition, other factors not captured in the MOEs will also be important considerations. The technical analysis will not be providing any quantitative estimates for these other factors. Staff will provide some qualitative information, where possible and as noted below, that could inform the members' consideration of the initiatives worthy of TPB's endorsement.

### Measures of Effectiveness

As noted earlier, MOEs that are being analyzed (listed below) include both quantitative and qualitative measures and will reflect the regional goals and challenges.

#### Measures of Effectiveness

1. Travel time (average travel time per trip for each mode)
2. Traditional congestion (vehicle hours of delay)
3. Accessibility by transit (% change in # of jobs accessible within 45 min transit commute)
4. Accessibility by auto (% change in # of jobs accessible within 45 min car commute)
5. Mode share for work trips (non-single occupant vehicle, transit)
6. Daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or VMT per capita
7. Rail transit crowding (qualitative)
8. Transit options for households (share of households in high capacity transit zones)
9. Transit options for employment (share of jobs in high capacity transit zones)
10. Reliable trips (share of trips on reliable modes – express lanes, BRT and transit)
11. Access/reliability to interregional hubs (major airports and Union Station, qualitative)
12. Mobile/on-road emissions (VOC, NOx, and CO2)
13. Water quality/habitat (qualitative)
14. Open space development (qualitative)
15. Safe walking and biking options (qualitative)
16. Metrorail repair needs (qualitative)
17. Roadway repair needs (qualitative)

## Other Factors beyond the MOEs

In addition to the MOEs, several other factors that members may wish to consider are identified below:

- *Costs of Implementation.* Public sector costs for implementing the initiatives – including potential capital and on-going operating costs – may be an important factor to consider in relation to the ability of the region to advance the initiative. The ICF team/TPB staff will provide qualitative (high-medium-low) estimates for comparing the rough order of magnitude of implementation costs. More detailed cost estimates would depend on project details that are more specific than are available at this time, including phasing, alignment, and right of way costs.
- *Affordability and User Costs.* Some of the initiatives will reduce users' transportation costs (e.g., transit fare reductions) while others will increase some costs or create options (e.g., toll roads) that might be unaffordable for low and moderate income households. In addition, congestion relief and shifts to transit can reduce vehicle operating costs. While these costs are difficult to compare and will not be quantified, the team will identify what aspects of each initiative might tend to increase or decrease users' transportation costs.
- *East-West Divide and Equitable Distribution of Benefits.* Only one initiative explicitly addresses the East-West divide, but some may appear to benefit one portion of the region over the other. Although this will not be assessed quantitatively, this may be a factor for some members to consider.
- *Right-of-Way and Community and Other Environmental Impacts.* Due to the coarse representation upon which these initiatives are being studied – which, for example, do not define specific alignments – the project team is unable to estimate detailed right-of-way costs and potential threats to environmentally sensitive areas. However, some initiatives will require new right-of-way, which may cause displacements of homes or businesses, create community impacts (e.g., noise, barrier effects), or affect environmentally sensitive areas. These and other considerations would need to be explored more in later stages, but these can be important considerations. To assist with their consideration, the team will identify whether each initiative will or will not require the acquisition of new right of way.
- *Placemaking.* In addition to effects on transportation system performance, the initiatives differ in terms of likely effectiveness in supporting transit-oriented development, mixed use development, and placemaking. To assist with this consideration, the team can identify likely positive or neutral/negative impacts.
- *Public Support and Implementation Feasibility.* Each of the members represents different constituents with different priorities. The members may want to consider whether the projects will receive support or staunch opposition from any of the jurisdictions that the project would need support from to be implementable. They may also want to consider the likelihood of passing any required supporting legislation or policies.

## Relationship of Initiatives

In addition to the impacts of initiatives and other factors identified above, it may be valuable for the members to consider the relationship of initiatives to each other. For instance, some initiatives may have *synergistic effects* – meaning that some initiatives (particularly those focused on policies and programs) can help to support and enhance the effectiveness of others. In contrast, some initiatives may have *antagonistic effects* or *overlap* in ways such that implementing multiple initiatives would not generate greater benefits. For instance, this may be the case for rail and express bus services, which may serve the same or similar markets, and so combining an additional major transit service on the same corridor may tend to take ridership from the other.

Within the constraints of this effort, the team will not be able to analyze initiatives in combination, but could potentially provide a qualitative assessment of those that are mutually supportive and those that are not as part of the discussion deliberation.

## Recommended Process for Selecting Initiatives

There are multiple processes available by which the task force could select from among the 10 initiatives, and for the TPB to endorse a final selection. The process below is recommended as a workable solution to come to consensus within the constraints of the time-frame of this effort.

### Rules, Guidelines, and Definitions

Before finalizing the process, it will be useful for the task force to agree upon some rules, guidelines, and definitions so that the members have a common understanding.

Specifically:

- **Endorsing a concept (not all individual components)** – It will be important for the TPB to keep in mind that endorsement of any of the initiatives does not mean endorsing every individual component of that initiative (for instance, it would not necessarily mean endorsement of each individual transitway facility, rail extension, or express lane facility within an initiative concept) or specific alignments. It would mean that the members believe the broad initiative concept (e.g., regional transitway expansion, a regional express lane network, etc.) is worthy of additional exploration and regional efforts to advance the concepts through further detailed project studies, program development, or policy initiatives. The meaning of TPB's endorsement would not be a mandate from the TPB for its member jurisdictions to alter their own plans, programs, or policies or to design, fund, and implement these initiatives without further study.
- **Meaning of “future concerted TPB action”** – The task force should have a common view of what endorsement for future concerted TPB action means. For instance, we recommend that endorsement means that the TPB finds the concepts/ideas in the endorsed improvement initiatives hold promise to make significantly better progress towards achieving the goals laid out in TPB and COG's governing documents and the TPB urges its member jurisdictions to commit to undertaking a more thorough and detailed examination of these improvement concepts/ideas.

- **What constitutes sufficient support for initiatives to recommend to the TPB** – As part of developing a process to select improvement initiatives to recommend, the task force should determine what constitutes sufficient support for inclusion in the set to be recommended to the TPB. For instance, it will be important to consider whether majority support of the task force is sufficient to recommend an initiative or whether a higher standard of “consensus” is desired. (Should a majority that supports an initiative hold sway even if there is opposition, or should the goal be consensus among all members in the value of advancing an initiative?) We recommend that a higher standard than simple majority be used to ensure a reasonable degree of consensus on priority projects, programs, and policies for future action. Consequently, a 2/3 minimum threshold for support is proposed.
- **How many of the ten initiatives should the TPB endorse** – It will be valuable for the task force to consider how many initiatives to recommend, recognizing that including all ten or nearly all ten would make it challenging for the region to focus on priority projects, programs, and policies for future concerted action. That said, we do not recommend that the task force set a specific limit to the number of initiatives to move forward for TPB endorsement. Using a threshold, such as minimum 2/3 support, will likely limit the number of initiatives that result from this process, and we believe that the task force should have flexibility to advance those initiatives that the task force consensus believes should be endorsed.

### Task Force Process for Selection

One option for selecting initiatives would involve the task force developing a single quantitative system where each MOE, along with other evaluation factors, would be weighted and scored, and then use that system as a means of prioritizing the initiatives. Although we considered this option, we believe that developing a common weighting system would be challenging for members with disparate interests develop. There likely would be a lot of difficulty and considerable time involved in determining and agreeing upon the weights associated with each factor and the score to assign to each measure based on the combination of qualitative and quantitative assessments.

Therefore, we recommend a simpler process building on a straw poll, in which members use their own judgment to consider each of the factors discussed above. This process would involve the following steps:

1. The task force will begin with a straw poll in which each member votes for the initiatives he/she wishes to advance. Each member would not be limited to voting for a specific number of initiatives, but could choose to support as many as he/she believes would be valuable to advance (from zero to all ten).
2. As part of the voting for initiatives, the members would assign a priority to each initiative based on their assessment of the MOEs and other factors. For instance, a member who votes to advance initiatives 10, 9 and 4 would mark which of the three initiatives would be his/her first, second and third priority. This supplemental information will be used later when determining the degree of support for the initiative to be part of the package recommended to the TPB. Voting would occur by putting numbered votes in “buckets” for each initiative, rather than a “hands up” or

visible recorded vote for each member.

3. The TPB staff will tabulate the votes to determine: a) the overall level of support to advance each initiative and identify how many of them reach a 2/3 votes threshold. Additionally, TPB staff will develop an overall score for each initiative which will be calculated by assigning 10 points for 1<sup>st</sup> priority, 9 points for 2<sup>nd</sup> priority, etc. This overall score totals will not be used as a threshold but simply to provide supplemental information for how members have prioritized the initiatives.
4. The task force will then engage in a discussion to debate the pros and cons of the various initiatives, starting with the set that reached the 2/3 threshold to determine whether all of these should be advanced, should it be whittled down, or if there may be others to add. Significant time will be provided for discussion, in which there can be a robust exchange of ideas on the perspectives and priorities of members.
5. Members can then make a motion to remove initiatives from those passing the 2/3 threshold or adding initiatives from those that did not pass the 2/3 threshold. These motions will be debated and discussed in order to come to agreement on a final set that is moved forward to the TPB as the task force's consensus recommendation.
6. The task force then may choose to hold a second round of voting to support the final list of initiatives recommended for TPB endorsement as a way to formalize the results (this could also offer an opportunity for a member to abstain or be on record against the consensus, if that is desired).

### TPB Process for Endorsement

We recommend that a resolution be drafted for the TPB to endorse the consensus set of initiatives recommended by the task force. Discussion on the resolution can reflect the various considerations brought forth by the task force, as well as other perspectives that may wish to be addressed by the TPB members. The TPB's voting process will govern its action on this resolution including providing members of the Board an opportunity to make changes to the recommended set of initiatives that the full body will vote on.