IDEAS for VISIONS and POLICIES for the 2035 PLAN

April 9, 2010

The following text expresses the ideas coming out of the March 25, 2010 Transportation Planning and Programming brainstorming meeting on visions and policies for the 2035 long-range transportation plan.

VISION IDEAS | QUESTIONS AND CONSENSUS | POLICY IDEAS

VISION IDEAS

System Preservation, Modernization, and Efficiency Vision
- System is maintained in state of good repair (SGR)
- System achieves maximum efficiency and mobility (regionwide) through system preservation, ITS, technology, management and operations (M&O) programs, and a balanced program of strategic investments
- Expansion comes through strategic investments, based on regional needs assessment
- Innovative approaches reduce auto dependency and actively promote other modes
- Modernization of the existing system provides accessibility and access for all; serves more people

Livability Vision
- Land use policies and transportation investments give all residents the opportunity to move (affordably) between where they live, work, get services, and play, using healthy transportation options; promoting a healthy lifestyle
- Multimodal transportation serves business, residential, and mixed-use centers; investments focus on existing activity centers
- In 2035, there will be more density (residential, business, services)
- Community centers thrive with implementation of complete streets and context-sensitive design
- Mobility for persons with disabilities is improved
- Energy use is managed efficiently and alternative energy sources are used

Mobility Vision
- System provides improved access to jobs; education and training; health services; social and recreational opportunities
- There are more transportation options and accessibility for all; all modes (including freight); all corridors
- Delays, congestion, and travel time are reduced; reliability is increased
- Transit ridership and use of sustainable options are increased
- The system meets people's needs; funding is guided by attention to customer service
- Existing transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities are linked in a network

Environment Vision
- Human and environmental health are considered in decision making
- Greenfields are preserved and clean-up of brownfields facilitated as a result of transportation investments in areas of existing development
- Air quality is improved; vehicle emissions (carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, carbon dioxide, and particulates) are reduced to required and/or target levels
- Project design processes protect wetlands and minimize soil, water, and other environmental impacts
- Transportation agencies work with environmental and cultural resource agencies

Regional Equity Vision
- There is equitable mobility, quality, affordability, and access to jobs, educational institutions, and services for low-income and minority residents, the elderly, youth, and persons for whom English is a second language
- Environmental burdens from transportation (existing and future) are minimized; low-income and minority populations are not inequitably burdened
- Expansion projects address regional needs
- Heavily used services, such as those serving low-income and minority neighborhoods, are given priority over new, yet-to-be-proven services

Climate Change Vision
- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are reduced to Global Warming Solutions Act levels
- The MPO remains engaged as a regional participant in climate-change-related actions; the MPO has adopted GHG reduction goals and is acting to meet them
- Transportation infrastructure is protected

Safety and Security Vision
- The transportation system provides safe transportation (personal and operational) on all modes
- The number and severity of crashes are reduced
- The MPO continues to support all-hazards planning; the viability of transportation infrastructure critical to emergency response and evacuations is protected from natural and man-made threats
- Transit has state-of-the-practice ITS and communication systems; transit malfunctions are reduced

QUESTIONS AND CONSENSUS

KEY QUESTIONS

System Preservation, Modernization, and Efficiency
- Do you want to acknowledge the scope of transportation's funding problem and maintenance and SGR needs by making maintenance and SGR a priority for the region?
- Do you want to make expansion a matter of last resort? Do you want to first implement management and operations and modernization strategies to achieve improvements and efficiencies and then approve expansion? Or do you want to expand, knowing the trade-off is deferred maintenance? What is the balance?
- Do you want to give priority to expansion of one mode or some modes over others?

Livability
- Do you believe that transportation planning and programming should link with land use and development decisions?
- Do you agree that in linking land use and transportation, investments should be guided by adopted regional plans that highlight areas for growth and development?
- Do you want to help existing activity centers become more economically and socially viable by investing in human-scale transportation enhancements, and context-sensitive design elements that respect community resources?

Mobility
- Do you want your roadway investments to address mobility needs identified in the Plan/Congestion Management Process?
- Do you want to require bicycle and pedestrian elements in projects and programs you fund? Do you want to give priority to one particular kind of nonmotorized-mode route or path?

POSSIBLE CONSENSUS STATEMENTS

System Preservation, Modernization, and Efficiency
- Maintenance, modernization, and SGR get priority
- Technology and M&O strategies will be used to maximize performance of the system (in both operations and capacity)

Livability
- Embrace MetroFuture: focus resources in existing and planned smart growth areas (smart density matters)
- Expand sustainable and healthy transportation options
- Investments should be context sensitive

Mobility
- Providing better access to transit and improved accessibility are important ways to improve mobility
- Improving trip quality (reliability, travel-time savings, accessibility) can help address mobility needs
- A mode-balanced and strategic approach will be used in programming; M&O, SGR, technology, needs identification, and system enhancements are the basis for these strategies
- Strategies include judicious expansion as part of the project and program mix; should show a strong cost-benefit (ridership, ADT affected, travel-time savings, closing a gap)
- Bottlenecks and capacity constraints should be addressed before major expansion

POLICY IDEAS

System Preservation, Modernization, and Efficiency Policies
- Put a priority on programs, services, and projects that maximize efficiency through ITS, technology, TSM, and M&O; turn to technology before expansion
- Bring and keep the network (particularly the transit, bike, and pedestrian facilities) into an SGR; set funding objectives for this
- For roadway investments, give priority to maintaining regional network of bridges and roads
- Refocus local road maintenance toward Chapter 90 programs

Livability Policies
- Invest in projects and programs that are consistent with MetroFuture land use planning (serving already-developed areas; locations with adequate sewer and water; areas identified for economic development by state, regional, and local planning agencies; and density)
- Support health-promoting transportation options; expand and close gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian networks; promote a complete-streets philosophy
- Consider urban and context-sensitive design to protect cultural, historic, and scenic resources, community cohesiveness, quality of life; fund enhancements at reasonable cost
- Support state-of-the-practice parking policies

Mobility Policies
- Improve mobility for all; support improvements in all corners of the region, urban and suburban
- Strengthen connections between modes; close gaps in the existing network
- Improve access and accessibility to transit
- Improve transit frequency, span, and reliability
- Expand transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks; focus bicycle investments (lanes and paths) on moving people between activity centers (and access to transit)
- Integrate payment methods for fares and parking across modes
- Support TDM, TMAs, shuttles, and carpooling
- Address low cost capacity constraints and bottlenecks in the existing system before expansion

Environment Policies
- Avoid investments that increase pressure on developing greenfields; support investments that facilitate clean-up of brownfields
- Promote fleet management and modernization
- Support high-occupancy-vehicle travel options
- Protect natural and cultural resources; plan early to avoid and mitigate impacts
- Promote energy conservation and use of alternative energy sources
- Avoid funding projects that increase exposure of at-risk populations to ultra-fine particulates
- Promote investments and give priority to projects and programs with lower life-cycle costs and emissions
- Invest so as to increase mode share of transit and nonmotorized modes

Regional Equity Policies
- Continue MPO outreach and analysis to identify equity needs; continue to monitor system performance
- Address identified equity needs related to service and removing or minimizing burdens (air pollution, unsafe conditions, community impacts); give these priority over everything except bridge/tunnel maintenance
- Work with implementing agencies
- Follow environmental justice principles
- Reduce trip times for low-income and minority neighborhood residents and increase transit service capacity

Climate Change Policies
- Define targets for reducing vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) and act to meet them
- Pursue stronger land use and smart-growth strategies
- Tie transportation funding to VMT reduction
- Increase transit, bicycle, and pedestrian options
- Invest in adaptations that protect critical infrastructure
- Encourage transportation demand management (TDM) commuter strategies
- Invest in projects and programs for fleet management and modernization, idling reduction, alternative fuels
- Energy use will be part of the environmental impact analysis of all projects. Total energy use in the Plan will be (x%) less than 1990 transportation-related energy use in the MPO region

Safety and Security Policies
- Continue to participate in all-hazards planning and take appropriate actions
- Maintain the transportation system in an SGR
- Use state-of-the-practice safety elements; address roadway safety deficiencies (after safety audits) and transit safety (including federal mandates)
- Support incident management programs and ITS
- Protect critical infrastructure; address transit security vulnerabilities; upgrade key transportation infrastructure to a "hardened" design standard
- Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists; ensure that safety provisions are incorporated into shared-use corridors
- Give priority to safety projects that reduce the severity of crashes, especially those that improve safety for all
- Support reduction of base speed limit (municipalities) to 25 miles per hour