

Creating the Preferred Option

In September 2021, the MPO Board directed MPO staff to develop an option for the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan that better reflects the [bold goals and objectives](#) that the MPO Board adopted for the plan. The MPO Board indicated that the most ambitious of the three alternatives developed for the [Alternatives Analysis](#), the All Together alternative, was insufficient to achieve the MPO's goals related to climate change, equity, connectivity, and safety. MPO staff developed the Vision scenario in response to this directive from the MPO Board.

The Vision Scenario reduces the number of new and widened roadways in the region while increasing investments in transit and bicycle and pedestrian projects to better support the MPO's adopted goals.

Alternatives Analysis: Three Original Scenarios

Alternatives are a combination of a transportation network and land use assumptions that are used to create a scenario for public discussion. Previously, the preferred option was to be developed based on elements of the following three alternatives:

Plans and Trends

Also known as business-as-usual, this alternative distributes 2050 population and employment based on current land use plans and policies, and creates an improved transportation system based on the current long-range transportation plan.

Shared Leadership

This alternative could be called the we-can-do-better scenario. It increases the intensity and mix of land use at major employment hubs and travel corridors, and assumes additional transportation funding for transit facilities, services, and a few roadway improvements.

All Together

This balanced-and-equitable alternative increases the intensity and mix of land uses at major employment hubs and travel corridors, and works to link minority, low-income, and zero-car households to jobs. This alternative focuses on biking and walking facilities, and provides transit services in major commuting corridors, often instead of increased roadway capacity.

The consistent increase of new and widened major roadways in all three alternatives is likely the component that mostly drove the failure of the alternatives to meet the MPO's goals and objectives. The increased roadway capacity, for example, encouraged large increases in vehicle miles traveled that greatly increased greenhouse gas emissions.

The Vision Scenario

Developed as a fourth scenario at the directive of the MPO Board, the Vision Scenario consists of the following types of transportation projects from all modes:

Highway:

- Funded highway projects in the first four years of the State Transportation Improvement Program
- Highway modernization projects, which improve the operation, safety and multimodal features of highway facilities but do not significantly increase the capacity of roadways
- Grid projects that provide a grid to support bicycle and pedestrian and transit trips and reduce vehicle miles traveled by providing more direct routes. Grid projects are mostly developer built and may also improve safety.
- Projects of local or regional interest that do not meet the above criteria

Transit: Transit projects from the Vision Scenario are similar to those in the All Together Scenario. Transit Investment include enhanced bus service, bus rapid transit throughout the region, and a Triangle Commuter Rail.

Bicycle and Pedestrian: Specific bicycle and pedestrian projects are not usually identified in the MTP. The level of bicycle and pedestrian facility investment is based on a compilation of the MPO's local government plans, including:

- 175 miles of sidewalk per decade
- 70 miles of shared use paths per decade
- 80 miles of protected bike lanes per decade
- 20 miles of bicycle boulevards per decade

The land use of the Preferred Option increases the intensity and mix of land uses at major employment hubs and travel corridors, and links minority, low-income, and zero-car households to jobs. These land use characteristics help reduce the growth of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases, and supports the MPO's goals concerning equity and connectivity.

The Preferred Option

The MPO Board has authorized the release of the Vision Scenario as the preferred option to the public. Staff will rely on public comments and a fiscal analysis of the preferred option to develop the first draft of the 2050 MTP.