



2. Guiding Principles, Objectives, and Policies

INTRODUCTION

The guiding principles for the 2040 MTP Update establish the vision and key focus areas for this planning effort. They combine the guidance given through MAP-21 federal legislation with State targets and the overall goals of the region. The guiding principles, objectives, and policies developed through the MTP Update serve as the foundation for performance measures that are used to prioritize the projects in the transportation needs assessment. It is important that the plan’s guiding principles and objectives are associated with evaluation criteria that have the ability to be monitored over time. This ensures the plan is performance-based and directly contributes to the project prioritization of the cost feasible plan.

BACKGROUND

In order to develop a robust set of guiding principles that can effectively serve as the backbone of the 2040 MTP, many different factors must be considered. These factors include the federal guidance provided through the MAP-21 transportation legislation, statewide strategic priorities, and goals from the region’s previous Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Information on the purpose and content of each of these factors is included in this section.

MAP-21 PLANNING FACTORS

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was signed into law on July 6, 2012. This legislation continues the advancement of eight key planning factors from the previous SAFETEA-LU legislation. Since the MTP is a federally-mandated document, it must address each of these planning factors as a part of its planning process.

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
5. 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;

6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system management and operations; and
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

MAP-21 NATIONAL PERFORMANCE GOALS

The MAP-21 legislation places a major emphasis on the use of performance-based planning. As a part of this process, a set of national performance goals were identified as listed below. Although these goals were developed specific to the federal-aid highway program, many of these objectives have a universal application over all travel modes.

- Safety: To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads
- Infrastructure condition: To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair
- Congestion reduction: To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System
- System reliability: To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system
- Freight movement and economic vitality: To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development
- Environmental sustainability: To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- Reduced project delivery delays: To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies’ work practices



TxDOT 2011-2015 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

In 2010, TxDOT released a five year strategic plan for the years 2011-2015, helping to identify the vision for the agency. The currently adopted 2035 Texas Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan is based around these goals. In addition, the Texas Transportation Plan 2040 is currently under development, using the goals established in the TxDOT Strategic Plan to establish a performance-based statewide plan that responds to the intent of MAP-21. The strategic plan goals are as follows:

1. Develop an organizational structure and strategies designed to address the future multimodal transportation needs of all Texans.
2. Enhance safety for all Texas transportation system users.
3. Maintain the existing Texas transportation system.
4. Promote congestion relief strategies.
5. Enhance system connectivity.
6. Facilitate the development and exchange of comprehensive multimodal transportation funding strategies with transportation program and project partners.

2035 MTP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The 2035 MTP placed an emphasis on compliance with the SAFETEA-LU Planning Factors. Combined with a vision statement, these two elements comprised the goal setting component of the plan. The vision statement reads “The Metropolitan Transportation Plan’s goal is to create an integrated, multi-modal transportation network to better serve the citizens in the Sherman-Denison-VanAlstyne-Howe-Gunter-Pottsboro Metropolitan Area.”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

By using the planning factors and goals stated above as a starting point and then soliciting feedback from the MTP Subcommittee, a series of guiding principles were developed. This section outlines the elements within each guiding principle and also details the transportation themes, objectives and policies that will help guide the development of the 2040 MTP Update.

ORGANIZATION

Each Guiding Principle consists of three major elements: a transportation theme, supporting objectives, and supporting policy measures.

TRANSPORTATION THEMES

Drawing from the major goals and planning factors referenced above, a set of six transportation themes have been identified for use in the 2040 MTP Update. These transportation themes are intended to be high-level categories that encompass the broad range of issues that need to be addressed through the planning process. Each transportation theme consists of a word or brief phrase, and is supported by text describing the need for and importance of each theme. The six transportation themes are:

- Safety
- Maintenance and System Efficiency
- Congestion and Freight Reliability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Transportation Choices
- Economic Vitality

OBJECTIVES

Once the set of transportation themes was developed, an objective statement was established for each theme. The purpose of these objectives is to clearly establish the intent of the transportation theme. Each objective statement provides an aspirational goal directly addressing the needs described in the transportation theme.

POLICIES

The final component of the guiding principles is a series of policies developed for each transportation theme. The purpose of these policy statements is to more clearly define the potential actions to be taken in order to address the identified objective. Policies outlined here will influence the identification and evaluation of projects within the 2040 MTP Update, and can also be used to shape available programs and guidance documents in the future.



SAFETY

Mobility is a task that every person deals with on a daily basis. No matter what the trip time, distance, or method, people need to travel every day. As the transportation system is used by walkers, bikers, transit riders, or drivers, it is essential that those users are traveling as safely as possible. User behavior can be a reason for unsafe conditions; however it is essential that our infrastructure system is safe for all users.

In Texas, over 3,400 people have died every year in motor vehicle crashes since 2003, which has cost society about \$21 billion every year in lost wages, insurance, medical costs, and emergency services. Transportation officials at every level of government hold traffic safety at the highest level and priority; therefore it is essential that our transportation dollars be focused not only on moving traffic but moving traffic safely.

- O.1. The region’s transportation system should strive to reduce crashes for both motorized and non-motorized users.
- P.1.1. The 2040 Plan will identify projects that eliminate unsafe conditions on high-speed facilities such as freeways and highways including on-ramps and off-ramps.

- P.1.2. The 2040 Plan will identify policies that improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians within the walking shed of elementary and middle schools.
- P.1.3. Transportation improvements will be considered that increase safety for vulnerable users such as pedestrians, bicyclists, disabled travelers, and children.
- P.1.4. Efforts of TxDOT and local agencies should be supported to upgrade all road facilities to reasonable safety standards wherever potentially hazardous conditions exist, and where feasible to maintain adequate shoulders to allow emergency vehicles to bypass traffic congestion.
- P.1.5. TxDOT and local agencies should partner with railroads to increase awareness of railroad-crossing safety issues.
- P.1.6. Efforts of local agencies should be supported to incorporate safety features into the design and maintenance of transportation facilities, including lighted streets, walkways and bikeways, clearing brush and debris away from walkways and bikeways, and provision of security personnel at transit stations and centers.
- P.1.7. The MPO should encourage enforcement of TxDOT’s access management policy for all arterial roads within the region.





MAINTENANCE & SYSTEM EFFICIENCY

With limited transportation funding opportunities and higher maintenance costs, MPOs and local jurisdictions have to come up with innovative ways to extend their transportation funds. Addressing the challenge of increasing maintenance costs and a growing list of maintenance repairs needed on the extensive road network in Texas is reducing the ability for regions to focus on new transportation capacity projects regardless of travel mode.

Timely preventative maintenance and preservation are necessary to ensure the proper performance of the transportation infrastructure. Maintenance can be a cost-effective way of extending the life of transportation facilities and therefore is eligible for federal funding. Using lower-cost system preservation methods can improve system conditions, minimize road construction impacts on the public, and better manage the resources needed for long-term improvements such as reconstruction or expansion.

There is also the opportunity in the Sherman-Denison region to increase corridor capacity not only by adding more concrete, but by implementing low-cost operational techniques to extend the life and capacity of a congested corridor. At the most basic level, this can include techniques such as signal timing, but can also include travel demand management tools such as carpooling and dynamic messaging.

- O.2. The region's transportation system should preserve and enhance existing facilities while improving system efficiency and operations.
 - P.2.1. Investments in the region should include technologies that enhance the network and make it more efficient.
 - P.2.2. The efficiency of the existing transportation system should be maximized by improving system operation and reducing vehicle demand.
 - P.2.3. An adequate level of maintenance and preservation of our existing transportation facilities should be promoted by encouraging a pavement management system in each jurisdiction.





CONGESTION & FREIGHT RELIABILITY

Congestion results when traffic demand approaches or exceeds the available capacity of the system. Even though congestion can be an indicator of a thriving local economy, it also demonstrates that the infrastructure needs are not meeting the transportation demands in the region. In the Sherman-Denison region, congestion can result in reduced daily productivity for employees because more time is spent commuting. Congestion can also reduce the response times for emergency responders and degrade the region's air quality.

Freight carriers are also concerned with congestion and travel time reliability. American businesses and households depend on the reliable movement of goods. Manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and fleet operators consider reliability and other characteristics of the transportation network when choosing the best way to deliver goods and materials to both factories and to consumers and when deciding where to base their jobs and services. Variation in travel times for

freight can be frustrating and costly while degrading the economic potential of the region.

- O.3. The region's transportation system should strive to improve the person-capacity of congested corridors.
- P.3.1. MPO projects should maintain reasonable levels-of-service for all modes of travel.
- P.3.2. Efforts should be made in the region to maintain and improve intersection level-of-service.
- P.3.3. Roadway improvements along truck routes should be designed for the vehicles using the facilities.
- P.3.4. Corridor and network signalization should be reviewed to ensure traffic is flowing as smoothly as possible.





ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Transportation is essential to our economy and way of life. How we choose to build the infrastructure to accommodate our transportation needs has varying consequences on the environment. Balancing the need for transportation infrastructure and the impact that infrastructure on the environment is important when planning for future growth. According to FHWA, a sustainable transportation system is holistic – “one in which (a) current social and economic transportation needs are met in an environmentally conscious manner and (b) the ability of future generations to meet their needs is not compromised.”

In the Sherman-Denison region, environmental sustainability seeks to avoid negatively impacting sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodways, lakes, and streams. Our transportation system can also have a significant impact in the quality of our air and water sources. It is important as we continue to make key transportation decisions that we consider the impact to these natural resources.

O.4. Transportation improvements should be focused on reducing environmental impacts.

- P.4.1 The transportation network should be designed to protect air and water quality, manage storm water runoff and preserve green space.
- P.4.2. The MPO and local jurisdictions should continue to encourage the use of alternative fuels.
- P.4.3. Environmental documents for major transportation improvement projects should be reviewed and if necessary modified to ensure alternatives and mitigation measures being studied are consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
- P.4.4. The MPO should support local and state actions to minimize the risk of transporting hazardous materials through heavily populated, congested, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- P.4.5 The MTP should support efforts of local agencies and TxDOT to locate new transportation systems in places that minimize environmental and socioeconomic impacts.





TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

Providing more options for transportation users is an important element for a healthy transportation system. Alternative modes such as walking, bicycling, transit, and carpooling can provide transportation access that otherwise might not be available to those that reside in the region due to financial hardship or geography. These alternative modes also provide the additional benefit of increased health due to the increased physical activity associated with many of these modes. Multi-modal improvements can help reduce system demand, increase corridor capacities, encourage economic growth, and support a higher quality of life for those people using the system.

It is essential for the region to consider multi-modal improvements to the transportation system as roadway projects are considered and implemented. Multi-modal improvements can be implemented at a much lower cost if combined with improving the roadway or utility infrastructure along key corridors.

O.5. The region's transportation system should be enhanced to improve mobility options for all transportation users.

P.5.1. The MTP should incorporate multi-modal street improvements through context-sensitive design.

P.5.2. Project recommendations should identify ways to include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations with roadway improvements.

P.5.3. The MPO should work with TxDOT and local jurisdictions to promote systemwide ADA compliance.

P.5.4. A transit needs study for the area should be conducted.

P.5.5. The MPO should support efforts of TxDOT and local agencies to construct continuous bicycle and pedestrian facilities that are sufficiently wide and clearly marked, and to maintain them to reasonable safety standards.

P.5.6. The MTP should promote increased connectivity between rural and urban transit activities.

P.5.7. The MPO should provide adequate transportation facilities and services to serve areas of existing and planned higher-density, mixed-use development.

P.5.8. The MTP should explore Park and Ride options for commuters to the DFW area and DFW airport.





ECONOMIC VITALITY

Our transportation system has a significant impact on local businesses and the economy. The transportation investments that are made in the next 25 years can go far in helping establish vibrant business and commercial corridors. The scope and scale of area businesses is also affected by our transportation decisions. A logistics firm heavily relies on the interconnectedness of the highways and truck routes in the region. This can be in contrast to a small business on Main Street in Denison that relies on slower speeds for visibility, wide sidewalks for pedestrian access and on-street parking for customers. There is not a single transportation solution that helps grow all economies in the region.

However, it is important that the Sherman-Denison region's transportation investments work towards assisting in expanding the economy and improving the region's competitive edge.

- O.6. The transportation system should strive to increase the economic vitality of the region.
 - P.6.1 The MTP should provide transportation projects that improve both regional and neighborhood vitality.
 - P.6.2. In order to improve global and regional competitiveness, the MPO should partner with local agencies and jurisdictions to provide enhanced transportation services such as regional transit.

