

CHAPTER 7 – MULTIMODAL ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

7.1 Introduction

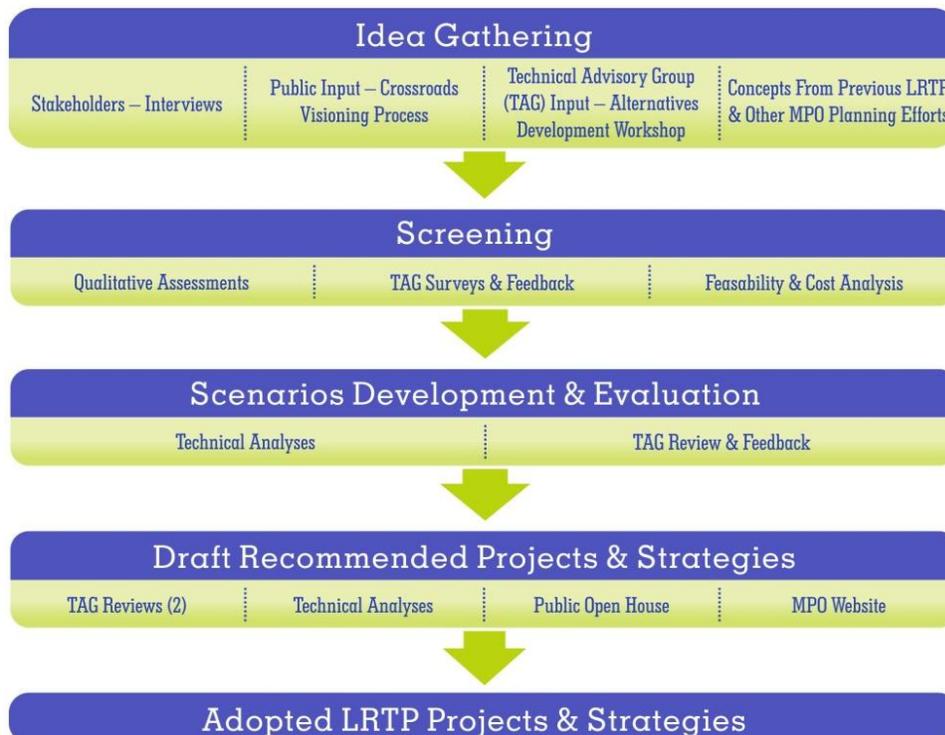
The three pillars of the Long Range Transportation Plan’s (LRTP’s) projects and strategies are:

- The community’s vision, goals, and objectives as established through the Crossroads effort and the LRTP’s Goals and Objectives
- The system’s current and future deficiencies and needs established through the analysis of the existing conditions
- The region’s vision for future growth established through the Crossroads process and regional forecasts for growth in population, housing, and employment.



7.2 Alternatives Development and Evaluation Process

The process to develop and evaluate potential improvements and strategies for the LRTP update included significant public and stakeholder input and technical analyses. The graphic below illustrates the overall process of evaluating options and developing the recommendations of this plan.



Idea Gathering



The initial steps in the alternatives development process were to explore as many ideas as possible. Ideas for improvements and strategies were gathered from stakeholder interviews and public meetings as part of the Crossroads effort; a day-long TAG workshop on June 28, 2012 and follow-up surveys; a thorough review of the 2007 LRTP including TAG surveys; review of other MPO planning documents; and additional stakeholder input.

Screening

The concepts and ideas were screened by the consultant team. Those concepts that did not address the LRTP goals and objectives, lacked support or interest from the TAG, or that were determined to be unrealistic or not feasible, were removed from consideration.

Scenarios Development and Evaluation

The remaining concepts were then assembled into two scenarios of improvements to allow the TAG to once again review and assess improvement concepts and strategies, this time in the context of a potential overall plan. The scenarios were not intended to be alternative plans, but were developed to compare and contrast the individual projects and to provide a means to collect additional input from the TAG related to specific projects and strategies.

A TAG workshop was held on September 26, 2012 to discuss and evaluate the scenarios. A questionnaire was completed both in small groups at the meeting, and individually by those wishing to provide their personal feedback.



Draft Recommended Projects and Strategies

TAG feedback on the scenarios and additional technical analysis was considered and a final draft list of potential projects and proposed planning strategies was advanced. A more detailed evaluation of each project was undertaken, from which the first draft of the LRTP recommended projects and strategies was developed and provided to the TAG for review and comment. This includes a TAG meeting held on November 15, 2012.

The draft prioritized the projects, putting them into tiers, with Tier 1 representing the projects proposed to be included in the fiscally constrained LRTP (see sidebar).

Based on input from the TAG including general comments received, discussion and a prioritization exercise at the meeting, and based on further analysis, a second draft of the LRTP projects and strategies was circulated to the TAG for review. After considering comments received, a third draft was prepared, posted on the MPO website, and presented at a Public Open House meeting on December 5, 2012. Upon consideration of public comments received during and after the open house, the projects and planning strategies were presented to and adopted by the MPO Policy Board on December 17, 2012.

7.3 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria included on the next page were used to help prioritize the projects; however, it should be noted that the prioritization was not solely a “by the numbers” exercise. Judgment by the planning team was necessary to ensure that a realistic and logical plan resulted with complementary projects that would enhance the system and meet the established vision, goals, and objectives. The table on the following page includes the criteria used to assist the planning team with its final recommendations.

What is a Fiscally Constrained LRTP?

By federal law, the projected cost of proposed projects included in an LRTP cannot exceed the amount of funding that is forecasted to be available over the life of the plan. Chapter 8 of this plan describes the funding forecasts that are used to establish the fiscal constraint of this plan. Transportation funding in the region comes primarily from state and federal revenues generated by the sales tax on fuel, which in recent years has been on the decline, while the cost of construction continues to increase. Transportation improvement programs across the U.S. have been greatly affected by this trend.



Table 7-1. Project Evaluation Criteria

Goals Score			
Score = Number of LRTP Goals Directly Supported; divided by 2			
Regional Mobility Score			
4 – Project expected to impact a large number of users	3 – Project expected to impact a large to moderate number of users	2 – Project expected to impact a moderate to small number of users	1 – Project expected to impact a small number of users
Feasibility Score			
<p>4 – Project appears to be feasible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ low level of engineering complexity / risk ■ no anticipated major public opposition ■ minimal private property impacts ■ minimal anticipated negative environmental impacts 	<p>3 – Project is likely feasible with one or more of the following true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ moderate level of engineering complexity ■ potential for some moderate public opposition ■ moderate level of property impacts ■ moderate level of environmental impacts possible 	<p>2 – Project may or may not be feasible, or may be only partially feasible with one or more of the following true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ high level of engineering complexity / risk ■ potential for significant public opposition ■ high level of property impacts ■ high level of environmental impacts possible 	<p>1 – Project not likely to be feasible with one or more of the following true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ very high level of engineering complexity / risk ■ potential for widespread public opposition ■ very high level of property impacts ■ very high level of environmental impacts possible
TAG Preference Score			
<p>Quartile results from Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) Project Ranking Exercise on 11/15/2012 (lowest quartile = 1 star, 2nd quartile = 2 star, etc.). Twenty members of the TAG participated. The TAG is made up of the MPO Policy Board and standing committees of the MPO which include representatives of state and local government, WVU, Mountain Line Transit Authority, and concerned citizens.</p>			