

Section V. Strategic Planning Process

The Long-Range Transportation Plan identifies a number of future improvements and areas for further study within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Area, and includes the Major Street Plan which is incorporated as part of the Comprehensive Plan by reference.

Sioux Falls 2015 VI-1

A. Introduction to Strategic Planning

Previous Long-Range Transportation Plans have represented a “grocery list” to a much greater extent than a “recipe” for creating a transportation system. In preparation for this update, a document entitled “Methods for Mobility” was created and reviewed by the various Metropolitan Transportation Planning Boards. “Methods for Mobility” helped to set the tone for updating this Long-Range Plan with a new emphasis on strategic planning. Within “Methods for Mobility,” the stated focus of a strategic plan was on producing a transportation system that meets the public’s needs and transportation plans that are understandable and not unduly burdensome for policymakers and staff.

A federal study entitled, Strategic Planning and Management Guidelines for Transportation Agencies, defines strategic management as *“The process of articulating a future vision of accomplishment for an organization and planning, directing, and controlling the organization’s entire range of activities to work towards the desired state or position.”*
Transportation Research Board

Strategic planning/management is different from previous planning processes. This new approach requires MPO staff to identify internal and external influences that may hinder the planning process. At the same time, the plan sets a direction for MPO staff to monitor these influences and an evaluation of the actions needed to meet the objectives.

Strategic planning asks three questions:

- Where are we?
- Where do we want to be?
- How can we get there?

These questions are interactive and ongoing. It requires the process to be continually monitored, because the steps are never completely finished—only one iteration is finished. For this reason, it can be said that the real value of the strategic planning process is in the required communication and interaction between represented agencies.

“Planning is not about what we will do in the future, it is about what we will do now to make the future all we want it to be.”

Hamilton Strategic Management Group, Inc.

B. Mission

The Long-Range Transportation Plan is the comprehensive document that strives to preserve the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Transportation Planning Area’s quality of life and economic vitality by providing a safe and efficient transportation system.

The mission statement was constructed from reviewing the mission of the previous Long-Range Transportation Plan, the comprehensive plans of the affected agencies, the Memorandum of Understanding, “Methods for Mobility,” surveys completed by the Transportation Boards, and the results from the Market Research and Analysis Project.

The results of the analysis project included stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and surveys. These results identified guiding objectives that reflect priorities that are shared by a majority of residents, employers, and transportation stakeholders from both Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties. The **Guiding Objectives** will be used as the guide for prioritizing long-range transportation investments in the study area:

- Maintenance of the existing transportation system.
- Preservation of access across the city of Sioux Falls.
- Development of a cohesive transportation network that effectively links Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties.

C. Strategic Initiatives

The next step in meeting the mission of the Long-Range Plan is to develop initiatives toward the Guiding Objectives. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s “A Guide to Metropolitan Transportation Planning Under ISTEA: How the Pieces Fit Together” has recommended that the Long-Range Plan be based on a performance approach to three types of performance:

A Performance and Objective Approach

<i>DOT – Types of Performance</i>	<i>ETC - Guiding Objectives</i>
Mobility and Access for People and Goods	Development of a cohesive transportation network that effectively links Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties
System Performance and Preservation	Preservation of access across the city of Sioux Falls
Environment and Quality of Life	Maintenance of the existing transportation system

The South Dakota Department of Transportation’s (SDDOT) Intermodal Long-Range Plan states: “The challenge to SDDOT [Sioux Falls MPO] decision makers in the next two decades is to monitor the existing systems, to maintain a high level of public input, to enhance standard operating procedures, to make more efficient decisions, and to be future oriented in making decisions. As South Dakota changes in the next 20 years, so will the transportation system.”

Therefore, staff and decision-makers should use those two DOT goals and the Guiding Objectives to help set long-range transportation priorities for Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties. Decisions on major long-range transportation investments should be reviewed with regard to how the investment supports the objectives. **“Investments that support the guiding objectives should receive higher priority than those that do not.”**
ETC Institute

The analysis project recommends five **Strategic Initiatives**:

- Maximize the capacity of existing corridors and interstates in the city of Sioux Falls.
- Maintain existing links between the city of Sioux Falls and surrounding counties and townships.
- Pursue the acquisition of right-of-way and the development of new transportation corridors in future growth areas.
- Invest in Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).
- Review the way public transit services are deployed.

Specific actions to address these Strategic Initiatives will be addressed in the following sections. As plans and projects are reviewed, staff and the decision-makers need to rely on the previously stated objectives and initiatives to make their determinations.

D. Constraints

At this time, numerous constraints are on the verge of inhibiting the ability to achieve the mission such as: limited funding, project backlogs, the regulatory environment, interagency conflicts, flexibility limitations, and boundaries on innovation. These constraints were discussed during the analysis project. The “stakeholders” have expressed their concerns and now it’s up to the MPO to try and limit the negative impacts. To accomplish these tasks, it’s essential to create an association between approved planning documents and the day-to-day operations and budgets of the various agencies.

On an annual basis, three documents give the MPO agencies the ability to complete a scan of internal and external impacts. The Unified Planning Work Program in June, the Certification Review in July, and the TIP in August. The MPO staff and Transportation Policy Boards need to accept the challenge to cooperatively discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the area’s transportation system at these times.

In the same vein, the Operations Plan is currently being updated and therefore needs to address this concept. This new document needs to give direction to the MPO in working through these issues and assigning responsibilities to the various tasks.

E. Measurement and Tracking

After the initiatives (and actions) have been identified, a process to measure their progress needs to be organized. Meeting all of the initiatives is a goal unto itself. The MPO should work to get as close to this ideal condition as possible, while still addressing the mission.

Measurement and tracking of the overall transportation system needs to be organized within the Unified Planning Work Program and the Operations Plan. At this time, the City of Sioux Falls completes two reports entitled Pavement Management Report and Safety Management System Report. These reports help measure progress toward the Strategic Initiatives, and a third program, Congestion Management, while not in a report form, does take place throughout the year and helps address another Strategic Initiative. These management systems need to be enhanced by each representative agency completing the various reports and reporting on the findings. At that point, the TIP and Unified Planning Work Program would represent the tracking of the transportation system to a much greater extent.

F. Evaluating Product

A project should be evaluated according to the objectives set forth by the citizens. To further define the objectives, consider these planning principles:

Quality of Life—Residents and users of the transportation system are concerned about quality of life issues. There is consensus that the transportation system should make net positive contributions to the overall quality of life within the region:

- Access to economic opportunities.
- A safe and secure environment in which to live, work, and play.
- Having a sense of social and cultural cohesion.
- Having clean air, water, and general environment are pervasive characteristics associated with this principle.

Growth Management—Planning in this strategic way will control the timing of development and new financing techniques to help ensure that adequate public facilities are available at the same time as new private development occurs.

Sustainable Development—A sustainable region is one which continuously and deliberately renews and reinvents itself by systematically replacing resources that are consumed, renewing and repairing assets that become obsolete, and conserving resources that are nonrenewable or irreplaceable.

Social and Environmental Justice—Avoid disproportionate impacts on various groups (low income and minorities) and ensure public programs are provided for all citizens. Essential to these principles is the attempt to empower the citizens through education, the free flow of information, and ample opportunities to affect decisions.

In conclusion, when making decisions on the study area's transportation system, the following questions need to be kept in mind. Does the project:

- a. Maintain the existing transportation system?
- b. Preserve access across the city of Sioux Falls?
- c. Develop a cohesive transportation network that effectively links the counties?

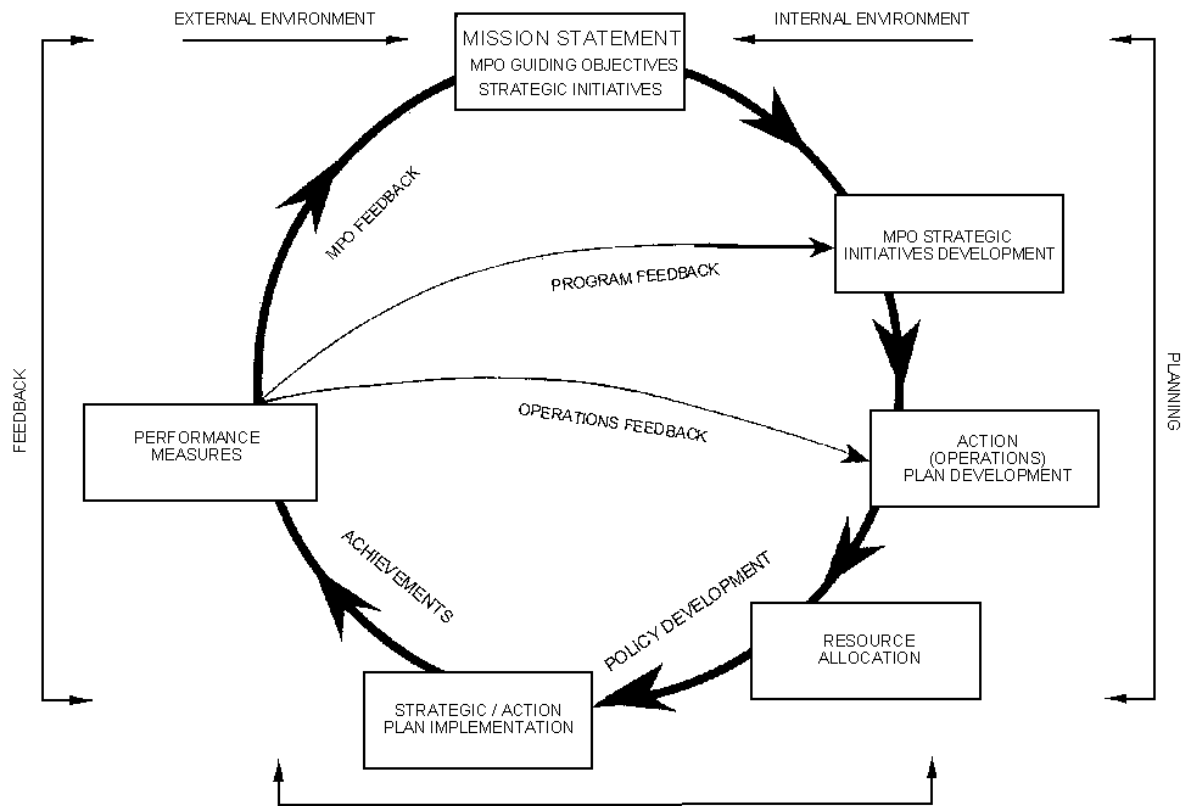
If the answer is No, the project should not receive priority allocations. The final decision will then be based upon the following:

- a. What does the justification study say?
How much will it cost?
What benefits will it offer?
- b. What does the environmental assessment say?
What impacts will it have?
- c. What has the public said about this project?

The Transportation Planning Committees play an integral role in determining the quality of life in the Sioux Falls region. When decisions are made, the decision-maker's responsibility is to the citizens and their families and the relationship to the following quality of life components: access to economic opportunities; a safe and secure environment in which to live, work, and play; having a sense of social and cultural cohesion; and having clean air, water, and general environment.

Chart 8

Strategic Planning and Management Guidelines for Transportation Agencies



Transportation Research Board, December 1990