

MEMORANDUM

September 27, 2012

From: Ivan Miller, AICP, SEPA Responsible Official
Subject: Transportation 2040 Update – SEPA Background Memorandum

OVERVIEW

The Puget Sound Regional Council has initiated an update of the region's long-range transportation plan, Transportation 2040 and is scheduled to approve a Draft Scope of Work in the fall of 2012. Per federal statutory requirements, Transportation 2040 will be updated in 2014 to reflect changes in the region since the plan was adopted in April 2010 and amended in May 2012.

The purpose of the Draft Scope is to define the focus and limit the range of issues that will be included in the Transportation 2040 Plan Update. The Draft Scope is defined by a set of Principles, nine Work Elements and seven Support Tasks. Approval of the Plan Update is scheduled for PSRC's General Assembly in the spring of 2014.

RELATIONSHIP TO TRANSPORTATION 2040 FINAL EIS

The Principles and Tasks in the Draft Scope have been designed to limit impacts to those already described in the Transportation 2040 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

- The Draft Scope Principles state the following:
 - "The Update will not produce new alternatives. However, a major plan update with alternatives analysis is planned for completion in 2018 (this would be the next required update of Transportation 2040)."
 - "The Update will not include new or expanded projects, programs, or strategies which would have any significant impacts exceeding those contained in the Transportation 2040 Final EIS dated March 19, 2010. There will, however, be a limited call for projects, allowing sponsors to add or amend projects..."
 - "New alternatives, projects, programs, or strategies will be evaluated in the next regular plan update (2018)."

- The Draft Scope's description of the Plan Update's SEPA Process includes the following:
 - "Requirement for the 2014 Plan Update: keep impacts and analysis within the framework and scope of the 2010 Transportation 2040 FEIS."
- Within the discrete Tasks, the Limited Call for Projects task includes a criterion that:
 - "...at a plan level, probable and significant adverse environmental impacts are not introduced that would exceed the scope of the original Transportation 2040 Final EIS..."
- While not stated in the Draft Scope, other key components of the Transportation 2040 Final EIS, such as the Purpose and Need Statement, are also not being revised in the Plan Update.
- The Draft Scope contains multiple Tasks that focus on project, strategy or investment changes that reduce region-wide system impacts.
 - These include an Active Transportation Plan, transit-oriented development strategies, Commute Trip Reduction, Transportation System Management, and others. Beyond reducing impacts, these Tasks have the potential to result in environmentally- and socially-beneficial transportation system improvements.
- The Draft Scope contains Tasks that affect the overall scale and mix of projects and investments included in the Updated Plan.
 - These include a refinement of Maintenance, Preservation and Operation cost estimates, Project Prioritization, and an updated Financial Strategy. These Tasks have the potential to change the plan's impacts (for example, by shifting projects within the "constrained plan" or moving projects into the "unprogrammed" portion of the plan) in a manner that is likely to reduce environmental impacts.

Based on the items in the Draft Scope, PSRC anticipates that the net marginal effects will reduce significant adverse environmental impacts and be within the levels described in the Transportation 2040 FEIS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information or to discuss this memorandum, please contact Ivan Miller, SEPA Responsible Official, at imiller@psrc.org or (206) 464-7549.

For information on the Plan Update visit www.psrc.org/transportation/transportation-2040-update.