



# Transportation for Communities— A New Tool for Collaborative Decision- Making

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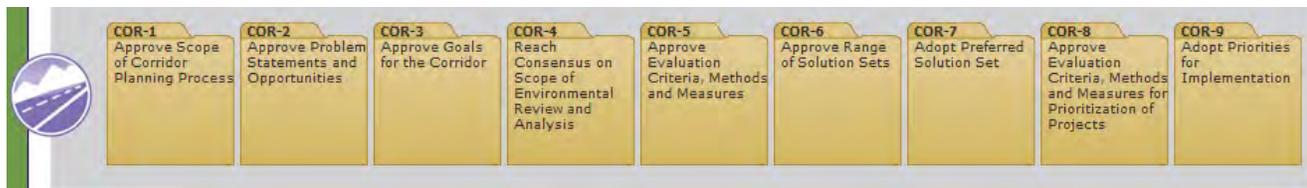
What do you do if you have a “ready-to-go” state transportation project that hasn’t managed to secure funding through traditional avenues? If you’re WSDOT’s Urban Planning Office, you decide to take a fresh look at the project using a new collaborative decision-making tool called, “Transportation for Communities—Advancing Projects through Partnerships” (TCAPP). This tool is still under development, but a significant portion of its content is already available at <http://transportationforcommunities.com>.

**What was the project?** In 2003, WSDOT completed preliminary design and environmental review for the completion of a missing freeway link—connecting SR 509 to I-5 on the south side of SeaTac International Airport. Despite many years of cooperation between WSDOT and its local partners; funding for the project never materialized. This may have been because of the project’s \$1.2 billion price tag; or simply because there are so many competing transportation priorities in the region. In 2009, the legislature directed WSDOT to study the feasibility of tolling the corridor. One key finding—tolling would not only generate revenue, it would also help manage travel demand. This provided an opportunity to phase construction and reduce project costs.

**What was the best way to phase the project?** WSDOT decided to answer that question with the help of TCAPP, a decision support tool that systematically builds collaboration into transportation decision-making by ensuring the right people are at the table at the right time with the right information to make good choices that will stand up to scrutiny. The national highway research program that developed the tool was looking for agencies to test it, and selected WSDOT’s SR 509 extension phasing project as a pilot in 2010.

**Was TCAPP helpful?** After using TCAPP on the SR 509 project, Shuming Yan, Deputy Director of WSDOT’s Urban Planning Office, suggests one of the tool’s most helpful attributes is “its philosophy of identifying and involving all key stakeholders early on so that decisions made later in the process stick.”

**How does TCAPP work?** TCAPP organizes resources for building consensus around key decision points in its “[Decision Guide](#).” For example, the file folders in the diagram below represent the key decision points for a corridor plan.



Each key decision point includes basic information about the purpose of the decision, the expected outcome, and the role of each partner in the decision. For example, the box below shows the basic information for step one in the corridor planning process (approving the scope of the plan).

Basics	Integration	Decision Making Questions	Case Study Examples	Technical Support	Special Topics															
<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>To initiate a corridor planning process, either in a rural or metropolitan area. Issues considered should inclusive of transportation, environment, and community in order to agree on a comprehensive scope and overall direction of the process.</p>		<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>A clearly defined scope to guide the corridor planning process.</p>																		
<p><b>Partner Roles</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Partner</th> <th>Role</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>MPO</td> <td>Decision Maker (urban), No Role (rural)</td> <td>Ensures the scope of the corridor planning study is sufficiently broad and inclusive to consider all potential solutions and opportunities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FHWA</td> <td>Advisor</td> <td>Ensures the process of developing the corridor or sub-area plan is inclusive of appropriate federal and state agencies and considers other accepted plans</td> </tr> <tr> <td>State DOT</td> <td>Advisor (urban), Decision Maker (rural)</td> <td>Provides an understanding of state needs and plans with respect to the corridor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resource Agency</td> <td>Advisor</td> <td>Agree to collaborate in the corridor planning process and ensure appropriate information is brought forward and used. Bring forward the ecological planning region, ecological goals and priorities or ensure information carried forward from LRP is up-to-date.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Partner	Role	Description	MPO	Decision Maker (urban), No Role (rural)	Ensures the scope of the corridor planning study is sufficiently broad and inclusive to consider all potential solutions and opportunities	FHWA	Advisor	Ensures the process of developing the corridor or sub-area plan is inclusive of appropriate federal and state agencies and considers other accepted plans	State DOT	Advisor (urban), Decision Maker (rural)	Provides an understanding of state needs and plans with respect to the corridor	Resource Agency	Advisor	Agree to collaborate in the corridor planning process and ensure appropriate information is brought forward and used. Bring forward the ecological planning region, ecological goals and priorities or ensure information carried forward from LRP is up-to-date.
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Additionally, each decision point includes an extensive list of questions for policy makers and stakeholders to address before making the decision. The following excerpt shows some of these questions for scoping a corridor plan.

Policy Questions	
Questions about purpose and roles	How, when, and by whom will decisions within the corridor planning process be made?
	Who should be involved in the corridor planning process? (Partners)
Questions about stakeholders	How will the public be involved?
	Who are the proponents and opponents?
	Who should be involved in the corridor planning process? (modes, stakeholders, etc.)
Questions about the transportation process supporting the decision	Are the tools up to date and sufficient for this process?
	Are there emerging issues that affect this corridor?
	Is the identified geographic area sufficient? How were the termini identified?
	Is the scope set up to consider both people and freight movement?
	What additional information outside of plans and programs is available to complete the corridor planning process?
	What are the potential risks to a timely completion of this corridor planning process?
	What is the anticipated cost/funding available?
	What is the geographic scope of the plan?
What is the time frame?	

TCAPP also details the data needed for each decision point and summarizes the tools and technology available to support the decision. The following excerpt shows some of the data needed for scoping a corridor plan.

Supporting Data for the Key Decision		
<p> The following is a list of data needed to support the key decision. Practitioners collect this information for decision makers to consider. You may add to this list using the comment box at the bottom of the page.</p>		
From other phases of transportation decision making	Long Range Planning	Background information on the initial identification of partners
		Long range planning boundary
		Transportation deficiencies
		The approved range of strategies
		All scenarios considered in the long range planning process and reasons for eliminating scenarios
	The adopted LRTP including information related to recommended improvements to the corridor	
	Programming	Information about potential funding sources
	Corridor Planning	Planning boundaries from corridor and small area plans
Multi-modal plans or facilities		
Environmental Review	No Specific Data	

Finally, TCAPP links case studies to each decision point to help users understand how to apply the concepts in the real world.

In addition to the Decision Guide, TCAPP provides [Collaboration Assessment](#) tools. These tools include surveys for partners and stakeholders that help pinpoint where team dynamics are not supportive of collaboration. For example, here is a portion of the collaboration survey related to process:

Process Steps					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Team members rarely voice disagreement with the documented process.	<input type="radio"/>				
The process steps are clearly stated/documented.	<input type="radio"/>				
The process steps are logically arranged.	<input type="radio"/>				
The process steps are necessary and important.	<input type="radio"/>				
The process steps can be adapted to our needs without sacrificing quality and consistency.	<input type="radio"/>				
The process steps are easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>				

TCAPP also helps teams with collaboration challenges by identifying possible strategies to get the team back on track. For example, if the assessment results show a team has issues with process, TCAPP describes process mapping and process improvement steps the team could consider.

**How did WSDOT use TCAPP?** The project team used the collaboration assessment surveys available in TCAPP at each meeting of the stakeholders. The surveys helped WSDOT determine whether:

- Specific meeting objectives were being accomplished.
- Stakeholders had specific concerns that were not being addressed (and therefore needed additional attention).
- Stakeholders continued to have faith in the process of developing project recommendations.

The surveys served as an excellent management tool for the project team. They helped the project team identify project weaknesses before they became critical issues, and assured stakeholders their views were important to the project leadership.

The project team also used the case study examples from the TCAPP Decision Guide to identify potential problems and issues that could hinder project decisions later in the process. The team then took the necessary steps to avoid these problems. For example, after looking at a case study from New Jersey, the project team noticed that its own stakeholder committee did not include some influential and important groups.

## Planning Resources and Webinars

[\*\*\*The Role of Transportation Systems Management & Operations in Supporting Livability and Sustainability—A Primer\*\*\*](#). This Primer highlights the connections between Management & Operations (M&O) and livability and sustainability objectives and the importance of a balanced, comprehensive approach to M&O in order to support those objectives. (Website)

[\*\*\*Tort Liability Defense Practices for Design Flexibility\*\*\*](#). This digest by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (Project 20-6) is a framework to assist transportation agencies and legal counsel with documenting and defending design decisions made following the principles of context sensitive solutions. (pdf 3.9 mb)

[\*\*\*Going the Distance Together: A Citizen's Guide to Context Sensitive Solutions for Better Transportation\*\*\*](#). This National Cooperative Highway Research Program guide is designed to help citizens "ask the right questions at the right time" during planning to help ensure that transportation projects fit with the context of their communities. (pdf 2.97 mb)

[\*\*\*The Model Design Manual for Living Streets\*\*\*](#). Los Angeles County produced a Model Design Manual for Living Streets. It was created during a 2-day writing charrette, which brought together national experts in living streets concepts. It seeks to accommodate cars while ensuring that pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users can travel safely and comfortably. (Website)

[\*\*\*Livability Initiative\*\*\*](#). This Federal Highway Administration's Livable Communities webpage is intended to provide information on the FHWA Livability Initiative. This website provides links to livability activities, livability videos, livability newsletter, fact sheets, and more. (Website)

[\*\*\*Envision Freight A Roadmap to Freight Compatibility\*\*\*](#). This website provides information about freight and its importance to people's everyday lives; illustrates types of conflicts between freight and other land uses and their consequences; and provides tools and resources to prevent or resolve these conflicts. (Website)

[\*\*\*State and Metropolitan Transportation Programming \(Online\)\*\*\*](#). This is a Rutgers course that provides an overview of the basic concepts, components, and participants in the transportation programming process. (Website to Access the Course)

The project team expanded the stakeholder committee to include representatives from the legislature, freight community, business community, and residents. This broader inclusion has proven to be instrumental in achieving a high level of consensus on the preferred phasing option.

**What were the results of using TCAPP?** Using the TCAPP tools and techniques, the WSDOT project team worked collaboratively with stakeholders to define the scope of a "Phase 1" SR 509 extension project. The Phase 1 scope reduced the initial project implementation cost by about \$400 million, while preserving most of the project benefits. For more information about the SR 509 extension plan, visit the web page: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Tolling/planning/SR509Extension.htm>.

**Could TCAPP help advance your transportation decision-making?** TCAPP provides a systematic approach for reaching collaborative decisions about adding highway capacity that enhances the environment, the economy, and the community. While the final website won't be available until the end of 2014, you can get a sneak peek of some of the great resources on this website that might help advance your next transportation planning or programming project. Check it out at <http://transportationforcommunities.com>.

## Benton-Franklin Council of Governments Hosts a Regional Information Forum

On March 29, 2012, [Benton-Franklin Council of Governments](#) (BFCG) hosted a one-day informational forum for the land use planning and public works staffs of jurisdictions in Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla Counties. The forum included updates on the status of statewide efforts concerning several topics related to land use, transportation, and health.



- Len Pavelka, (BFCG). [Mr. Pavelka](#) explained the role of Regional Transportation Planning Organization's (RTPOs) in reviewing the transportation element of comprehensive plans ([RCW 36.70A.070, Comprehensive Plans—Mandatory Elements](#)) including the requirements for RTPOs to certify the transportation element in local comprehensive plans and ensuring consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan. Mr. Pavelka indicated that while jurisdictions are making a good effort in their GMA plans, they are most often strong on goals and policies, and weaker on technical components relating to transportation.
- Dave Andersen, ([Department of Commerce](#)). [Mr. Andersen](#) provided information on Commerce's ongoing efforts to update the [Transportation Planning Guidebook](#). He indicated that the last update to the guidebook was in 1993 when statutory and planning practices were much different and transportation itself in transformation.
- Len Pavelka and Dave Andersen talked about ongoing, statewide climate change efforts by WSDOT and Commerce respectively. They noted areas of focus for addressing climate change, including maintaining competitive energy prices, fostering a clean energy economy and jobs, and meeting obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. ([Executive Order 07-02—Washington Climate Change Challenge](#) and [Executive Order 09-05—Washington's Leadership on Climate Change](#)).
- Ian Macek, ([WSDOT](#)). [Mr. Macek](#) described WSDOT's efforts in the areas of [Complete Streets](#) and [Active Communities](#), including how complete streets protect vulnerable road users, provide mobility options, and create healthy, livable communities.
- Carol Moser, ([Benton Franklin Community Health Alliance](#)). [Ms. Moser](#) presented information on Active Communities and Health in the Mid-Columbia Basin. She provided a profile of the community's health through data gained by surveying the community. ([Community Health Needs Assessment](#)).

Approximately 35 people attended the forum. Attendees included city and county planning and public works staff, WSDOT, economic development agencies, League of Women voters, and private citizens. If you have questions regarding the Regional Information Forum contact [Len Pavelka](#).

## Planning Resources and Webinars

[What is a Neighborhood Greenway](#). This website from the Portland Bureau of Transportation provides information on Portland's bike boulevards. (Website and Video)

[2012 Webinar Series: "Health and Equity in Transportation: Promising Methods and Modes to Improve Health Outcomes"](#). This series is on critical health and equity issues within the transportation sector. (Webinar Series)

[Transportation—Visioning for Communities \(T-VIZ\)](#). This website is intended to assist transportation agency practitioners in assessing the possibilities of visioning, in identifying practical steps when engaging in visioning, and in establishing links between vision outcomes and transportation planning and project development processes. (Website)

[Technical Assistance Workshops](#). Smart Growth America's Leadership Institute provides workshops, training, and consultations to help local governments develop smart growth implementation strategies and tools to help move their communities from visions to plans to execution. (Website)

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### ADA Information:

Materials can be provided in alternative formats for people with disabilities by calling Shawn Murinko at 360.705.7097 or [murinks@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:murinks@wsdot.wa.gov).

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