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Memorandum

To: MPO Policy Board
From: Sandy Shackelford, Director of Planning & Transportation
Date: March 13, 2023
Reference: Update on the Toward 2050 Stakeholder Outreach and 2050 Goals/Objectives

Purpose:

In February 2023, TJPDC staff (with their consultant team of EPR and Kimley-Horn) initiated the first substantive engagement step associated with the Toward 2050 process. This initial task involved discussions with over twenty stakeholders to evaluate the 2050 goals and objectives. Staff recorded results from three group meetings in the attached report, which the CTAC will review during their March meeting.

Project Background:

Moving Toward 2050 is the federally required long range transportation plan (LRTP) for the City of Charlottesville and urbanized portions of Albemarle County, which is the area served by the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (CA-MPO). This plan, to be reviewed and adopted by the CA-MPO Policy Board, identifies long range transportation needs, considers possible infrastructure improvements, and establishes priorities to implement projects based on anticipated funding.

This planning process involves robust community and stakeholder engagement that serves to:
- Guide 2050 goals and objectives (a goals-driven phase),
- Identify regional transportation concerns (an issues-driven phase),
- Respond to solution alternatives (opportunities-driven phase), and
- Offer feedback to draft materials.

Issues:

In the opening phase of the 2050 process, TJPDC staff drafted five goal statements and associated objectives that will guide decision-making on the regional transportation network. Planning best practices dictate that small group discussions are the best engagement tactic for vetting goal statements. As a result, TJPDC staff worked with their consultants to identify stakeholder groups that would offer valuable feedback on the 2050 vision statements. The project team determined that businesses, public safety professionals, and other community partners were best suited to help vet the draft goals. The attached report details the three stakeholder meetings, comments received, and how this feedback guides revisions to the goals and objectives.

Actions:

The MPO Committees will discuss the proposed revisions to the goals and objectives. General feedback will determine if there is a need for additional discussion before finalizing the language for the next phase of public engagement. If there are any questions or comments, please contact Sandy Shackelford at sshackelford@tjpdc.org.

Moving Toward 2050

Summary of Stakeholder Feedback on Goal Statements

Moving Toward 2050 is the federally required long range transportation plan (LRTP) for the City of Charlottesville and urbanized portions of Albemarle County, which is the area served by the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization (CA-MPO). This plan, to be reviewed and adopted by the CA-MPO Policy Board, identifies long range transportation needs, considers possible infrastructure improvements, and establishes priorities to implement projects based on anticipated funding.

This planning process involves robust community and stakeholder engagement that serves to:

- Guide 2050 goals and objectives (a goals-driven phase),
- Identify regional transportation concerns (an issues-driven phase),
- Respond to solution alternatives (opportunities-driven phase), and
- Offer feedback to draft materials.

In February 2023, TJPDC staff (with their consultant team of EPR and Kimley-Horn) initiated the first step in evaluating the 2050 goals and objectives. In this first phase, stakeholder groups of individuals representing different organizations identified by staff and MPO committee members were assembled for three group discussions. The following summarizes the results from those meetings.

Approach

Stakeholder discussions were the first substantive step in the Moving Toward 2050 engagement process. TJPDC staff drafted a public engagement plan that called for small group discussions with area stakeholders representing various groups. The main objective of these discussions was to establish a framework describing the Charlottesville-Albemarle region's values related to transportation system operations. Specifically, attendees would offer reactions to the MPO's initial 2050 transportation goals and objectives. Attendees would also:

- Provide feedback on other draft materials from the lens of the community/organization that they represent,
- Guide MPO staff on best ways to engage the communities they represent, and
- Support awareness of the Moving Toward 2050 planning process among the community and their organizations.

Initial Draft Goals and Objectives

In the opening phase of the 2050 process, TJPDC staff drafted five goal statements and associated objectives that will guide decision-making on the regional transportation network. Precisely, these vision statements will drive the performance measures that evaluate, score, and prioritize the transportation projects that make up a Long Range Transportation Plan. The goals and objectives also help to define transportation needs and guide the MPO's planning initiatives, which are identified and approved in the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

TJPDC staff drafted goal statements using various resources as a starting point. First, staff referred to the MPO's 2045 LRTP. Next, staff completed a benchmarking assessment reviewing the goals and objectives developed by peer agencies. The final input came from the TJPDC's 2022 project prioritization process that the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) supported through their Growth and Accessibility Planning (GAP) Technical Assistance program. The final GAP report, completed in January 2023, offers guidance on the performance-based planning process for the 2050 Plan and includes system evaluation options based on the draft goal statements.

The initial goals and objectives presented at the stakeholder meetings were:

- **Safety:** Improve the safety of the transportation system for all users.
    - Objective: Reduce frequency and severity of crashes.
    - Objective: Improve comfort and safety for users of alternative modes of transportation.
- **Environment:** Reduce the negative environmental impacts of the transportation system.
    - Objective: Minimize impacts of the transportation system on natural and built environment.
    - Objective: Increase use of alternative modes of transportation.
    - Objective: Integrate sustainable infrastructure practices into project design.
    - Objective: Reduce vehicle emissions.
- **Equity & Accessibility:** Improve equitable access to jobs and opportunities through greater availability of mode choices that are affordable and efficient.
    - Objective: Increase mode choice for all users.
    - Objective: Increase access to jobs and opportunities for historically underserved populations.
- **Land Use & Economic Development:** Integrate transportation system improvements with land use planning.
    - Objective: Provide multi-modal infrastructure in designated growth areas, mixed-use areas, and near community resources.
    - Objective: Fill connectivity gaps in multi-modal network.
    - Objective: Improve access to community resources for historically underserved populations.
- **Efficiency:** Increase travel efficiency and system reliability for all modes.
    - Objective: Improve roadway system reliability through operational improvements (intersection reconfiguration, traffic light coordination, etc.)
    - Objective: Increase system capacity at identified bottlenecks.
    - Objective: Maintain the existing system in a state of good repair.

Stakeholder Outreach

Planning best practices dictate that small group discussions are the best engagement tactic for vetting goal statements. As a result, TJPDC staff worked with their consultants to identify stakeholder groups that would offer valuable feedback on the 2050 vision statements. The project team determined that businesses, public safety professionals, and other community partners were best suited to help vet the draft goals. Their organizations and social networks would be most helpful for distributing information about the plan throughout the 2050 process. The following are individuals who attended the stakeholder meetings for each identified group.

Business Stakeholders

The project team hoped to learn how the transportation system influences local businesses and organizations. Because employers have access to large distribution lists, including their employees, this group will be an essential partner for future engagement efforts.

- **Courtney Cacatian**, Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau
- **Ashley Davies**, Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Chamber of Commerce/CADRe
- **Deborah van Eersel**, UVA Foundation
- **Denise Herndon**, UVA Economic Development
- **Sarah Morton**, Piedmont Workforce Development Board/CVPED
- **Dave Stebbins**, UVA Health
- **Juandiego Wade**, Albemarle County Career Center
- **Diana Webb**, Sentara
- **William Weigold**, Sentara
- **Neil Williamson**, Free Enterprise Forum

Public Safety Stakeholders

The TJPDC's consultants found that public safety professionals have an intimate knowledge of the transportation system and can offer detailed information on safety-related issues. This group can also advise on ways to serve vulnerable populations, including the elderly and those with medical needs.

- **Captain Michael Blakey**, UVA Police
- **Kevin Cox**, Crossing Guard
- **Sgt. Dean Dotts**, Albemarle Police
- **Jennifer Fleisher**, Blue Ridge Health District
- **Sgt. Lee Gibson**, Charlottesville Police
- **Kyle Rodland**, Safe Routes to School
- **Evelyn Trice**, CAT Safety Director

Community Partners

The final group was broader and represented various organizations. They offered a service-provider perspective, provided considerations from vulnerable populations, brought an environmental perspective, and represented different age groups.

- **Mandy Burbage**, Piedmont Housing Alliance
- **Morgan Butler**, Southern Environmental Law Center – He was unable to attend in person but provided feedback through email.
- **Allie Hill**, Rivanna Trails Foundation
- **Tamara Jones**, JABA
- **Peter Krebs**, Mobility Alliance/Piedmont Environmental Council
- **Holly Sims**, UVA Student (Student Government Association)
- **Peter Thompson**, Charlottesville Area Alliance

Discussion Format

TJPDC staff hosted three 90-minute meetings at the Water Street Center in February 2023. In total, more than twenty stakeholders participated in these discussions. Staff and their consultants started each session with a PowerPoint presentation that included an overview of Moving Toward 2050, what the plan does, a description of the planning process, how staff will use feedback, and a summary of the draft goals. The TJPDC's consultant team facilitated these group discussions and scribed feedback on each goal and objective. Meeting notes also included general comments that did not necessarily apply to the vision statements. The following section records those discussions and the main takeaways.

Figure 1: Stakeholder Group Discussions at the Water Street Center

The three stakeholder meetings included:

- **Meeting #1:** Business Stakeholders (February 3, 2023)
- **Meeting #2:** Public Safety Stakeholders (February 16, 2023)
- **Meeting #3:** Community Partners (February 16, 2023)

Summary of Feedback

The following are summary descriptions of what TJPDC staff and their consultants heard during the three meetings. Each group may have emphasized different points during the stakeholder discussions, but most comments were consistent.

Safety Goal and Objectives

Stakeholders commented on the safety goal language and responded with the following questions and feedback. As would be expected, public safety stakeholders spent the most time on this topic.

Safety Goal Language:

- **All Modes:** All stakeholder groups emphasized that the safety goal should apply to all users and modes. There was a discussion on how to make that clearer in the goal language.

Safety Objectives Language:

- **Alternative Modes:** Several stakeholders questioned using "alternative" to describe modes. First, they asked whether the region should refer to non-automotive modes in this way, as it implies that they are inferior. Second, the groups questioned whether this description included automotive travel.

- **Close Calls:** One group asked if the objectives could include near misses or locations with *potential* safety issues. Currently, the goal emphasizes crashes.

Other Safety Comments:

- **Predictability:** Some participants emphasized the importance of transportation being predictable. For cyclists, this means consistent accommodations that avoid unexpected features. For pedestrians, predictability means addressing gaps in the sidewalk network. With transit, this concept applies to consistent headways. Predictability also applies to motorists.
- **Retrofitting Existing Roadways:** Most new projects address predictability and safety effectively. However, there are more issues with existing roadways that the region should address.
- **All Modes:** The groups continued to emphasize all modes, including micro-transit. Other modes should not be secondary, in terms of safety, to automobile travel.
- **Education and Enforcement:** While not necessarily applicable to the Long Range Transportation Plan, participants discussed the importance of education and enforcement with safety.
- **Consistency with Local Plans:** Stakeholders asked the TJPDC to ensure consistency with Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville goals and initiatives.
- **Comfort:** Stakeholders discussed the perception of safety and comfort. People will avoid any travel mode that feels unsafe. In this way, comfort and safety could undermine or support multi-model objectives.

Environment Goal and Objectives

The environment goal also attracted much discussion. There were no comments on the goal language, but stakeholders had tweaks to the objectives. Most of the discussions involved other comments that could feed into new objectives, performance measures, or goal narratives.

Environment Objectives Language:

- **Alternative Modes:** Again, stakeholders discussed whether this was the appropriate terminology.
- **Connectivity:** For the second objective, participants suggested that the language include connecting users to multi-modal options.
- **De-Carbonize Travel:** For the fourth objective, one group suggested that the language be more specific, to "reduce the *total amount of* vehicle emissions." The 2050 goal should be de-carbonize transportation. The City, County, and State's goal is to be carbon neutral by 2050.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Another group suggested that objective four focus on improving energy efficiency.

Other Environment Comments:

- **Preservation:** Several stakeholders added that the objectives should serve to protect and maintain green space. This comment includes sensitive environmental areas and other natural resources.
- **Wildlife:** One group thought that the objectives needed to mention protecting wildlife.
- **Prioritize Transit:** During the discussions, participants focused on improved transit service.

- **Education and Incentives:** While not necessarily applicable to the Long Range Transportation Plan, people suggested education and incentives to encourage people to use other modes, aside from single-occupancy vehicles. This comment included "bike to work day" or open street events.
- **Land Use:** For local decision-makers, the groups discussed how land use is the best way to consider the environment. Greater density would make transit more efficient and decrease vehicle miles traveled.
- **Charging Stations:** People suggested that charging stations be included in projects and MPO efforts. One group also discussed the infrastructure for e-bikes.
- **Solar:** One group discussed the possibility of adding solar to transportation infrastructure, with solar panels installed with the transportation system.

Equity and Accessibility Goal and Objectives
The groups have overlapping comments about the equity and accessibility goal language. There appeared to be consensus in many areas.

Equity and Accessibility Goal Language:

- **Rewording Jobs and Opportunities:** The stakeholder groups reacted negatively towards the "jobs and opportunities" language in this goal. They thought this wording neglected other travel needs. One group suggested "community resources" as an alternative. Another group suggested "destinations" and discussed the need to access food and health services.

Equity and Accessibility Objectives Language:

- **Diversity Mode Choice:** For objective one, a group suggested rewording to "diversity of mode choice for all users."
- **Questions about All Users:** For objective one, a group asked if "all users" included single-occupancy vehicles.
- **Clarity on Objective One:** A group asked for more clarity on objective one. They asked what that statement meant.
- **Marginalized:** For objective two, a group asked to replace "underserved populations" with "marginalized populations."
- **Connect over Access:** For objective two, a group changed "increase access" to "connect."
- **Jobs and Opportunities:** The questions about rewording "jobs and opportunities" arose with objective two language.

Other Equity and Accessibility Comments:

- **Engaging Marginalized People:** Stakeholders asked TJPDC staff to engage marginalized people during the Toward 2050 process.
- **Quality Transportation:** One group emphasized that equity should mean everyone has access to quality, safe, and reliable transportation options.
- **Navigation:** While not necessarily covered by the LRTP, one stakeholder mentioned the need to help people navigate their travel options, especially with transit. She asked for improved navigation of transportation options and digital literacy. This comment also included language barriers.
- **Make it Easier:** A group focused on maximizing the ease of use for other modes.

- **Equity with Automobile:** A group discussed how automobiles could be more equitable, using car sharing or cooperatives.
- **School Connections:** A group asked to prioritize walk routes to schools. Also, include children and student populations in the planning process.

Land Use and Economic Development Goal and Objectives
Overall, there was less discussion about the land use goal and objectives.

Land Use Goal Language:

- **Exclude Economic Development:** Stakeholders felt that economic development was an awkward fit for this goal.

Land Use Objectives Language:

- **Marginalized:** Again, a group asked to replace "underserved populations" with "marginalized populations" under objective three.
- **Community Resources:** A group asked for more clarity on the "community resources" language in Objective three.
- **Consistent Language on Multi-Modal:** One group mentioned that there should be more consistency in how the goals and objectives refer to multi-modal. For example, some statements use "alternative" or "other modes."

Other Land Use Comments:

- **Rural Needs:** One stakeholder discussed rural needs, as there are many areas of the MPO boundaries that have rural characteristics. Regarding land use, these areas are different from the growth areas. This comment also included connections between urban and rural portions of the region.
- **Supportive Service:** Another stakeholder said to think of transportation as a support service to the community.
- **Helping People Live their Best Lives:** One stakeholder said that a better goal would be land use to help people live their best lives. Current land use planning language focuses on economic development, but connecting people to the resources they need is critical. There are more difficult trips than commuting to work.
- **Connections to Essential Destinations:** One group discussed how few options exist to access the community college. It is not connected to the rest of the urban area and difficult for students to access. Also, UVA students need more connections to community resources.

Efficiency Goal and Objectives
There were no comments on the efficiency goal and objectives. However, participants offered other general comments.

Efficiency Comments:

- **Induced Travel:** Some participants asked if efforts to reduce congestion would result in induced travel and more traffic.

- **Technology:** Discussions included a desire to use technology to improve efficiency in various modes. These comments include building systems and infrastructure around data. Others asked for maps that tracked bus locations.
- **Communication on Delays:** Discussions included communication to travelers during delays caused by construction or service changes. One participant brought up events at Carter's Mountain and backups on Route 53.
- **Trails:** One stakeholder stated a desire to view the trail network as a transportation asset, not just a recreational asset. Part of this issue is a shortage of parking at trailheads.
- **Transit Capacity:** The number of buses came up during one discussion. A stakeholder asked for more transit capacity. They also thought that improved transit coordination would add to capacity. The bus driver shortage also came up in the discussion.

Other Comments

During the introductions period, stakeholders provided their names and what they would like to see from the region's transportation system. Staff recorded these responses, below.

- **Electric Vehicles:** There were hopes for electric buses and an emphasis on electric vehicle infrastructure.
- **Transit Dependability:** Stakeholders hoped to see more dependable transit services. One participant focused on regular and dependable transit service to Boar's Head and the Research Park.
- **Transit-Ready Land Use:** One participant wanted to see transit-ready land use, where new developments incorporate transit access.
- **Improved Connection:** Several people wanted improved connections to essential destinations, including the research parks, employment areas, food, health services, and other locations.
- **Connections for Visitors:** One participant asked for improved access to outdoor recreation and tourism assets.
- **Healthcare Access:** Several stakeholders expressed a need for improved connections to health services. They also discussed a need to improve how providers get to work and patients.
- **Options for Commuter:** Stakeholders expressed a desire to provide safe, quality, and reliable transportation options for commuters.
- **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** One participant hoped for a transportation system that worked well, and managed peak-hour travel.

Proposed Revisions

Based on this feedback, TJPDC staff developed a list of recommended adjustments to the original goals and objectives that were reviewed by the stakeholder discussion groups. In addition to adjustments to the goals and objectives statements, there were two overarching themes that were integrated into the development of the goal and objectives statements that needed to be called out to emphasize their importance: the importance of climate action goals and the importance of considering marginalized populations. In addition to the recommended adjustments to the goals and objectives language, TJPDC staff is also recommending that the MPO uses a **climate action** and **equity** lens approach to the established framework of prioritizing transportation system needs and identifying project priorities.

Because of the recommendation to incorporate this lens approach, the draft language has been edited to remove these as standalone goals/objectives, and staff will work to develop language that

captures the importance of integrating these considerations throughout the development of the goals and objectives framework.

- **Safety:** Improve the safety of the transportation system for all users.
    - Objective: Reduce frequency ~~and severity~~ of serious injury and fatal crashes.
    - Objective: Improve comfort and safety for users of ~~alternative modes of~~ the multi-modal transportation system.
- **Environment:** Reduce the negative environmental impacts of the transportation system.
    - Objective: Minimize impacts of the transportation system on natural and built environment.
    - ~~Objective: Increase use of alternative modes of transportation.~~
    - Objective: Integrate sustainable infrastructure practices into project design.
    - ~~Objective: Reduce vehicle emissions.~~
- **~~Equity &~~ Accessibility:** Improve ~~equitable~~ access ~~to jobs and opportunities~~ through greater availability of mode choices that are affordable and efficient.
    - Objective: Increase mode choice for all users.
    - ~~Objective: Increase access to jobs and opportunities for historically underserved populations.~~
- **Land Use & Economic Development:** ~~Integrate~~ Align transportation system improvements with ~~land use planning~~ local land use goals.
    - Objective: Provide multi-modal infrastructure in designated growth areas, mixed-use areas, and near community resources.
    - ~~Objective: Fill connectivity gaps in multi-modal network.~~
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- **Efficiency:** Increase travel efficiency and system reliability for all modes.
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    - Objective: Increase system capacity at identified bottlenecks.
    - Objective: Fill bicycle and pedestrian connectivity gaps.
    - Objective: Maintain the existing system in a state of good repair.

Next Steps

With these comments, TJPDC staff has developed the proposed revisions to the 2050 goals and objectives for review and comment by the MPO Committees. Once the final language is agreed upon, the goals and objectives will be used to:

- Guide updates to the performance measures used in project prioritization,
- Identify and catalog regional transportation needs,
- Shape and define transportation projects and designs, and
- Guide the MPO's annual UPWP.