

## Chapter 1: Introduction

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The Dover/Kent County’s Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Long Range Transportation Plan presents a vision of transportation’s role in our community and serves as a guide for transportation investments in the future. The plan was created through a collaborative effort involving state, county and local officials as well as through public input. Every three years this plan is updated to add and revise regional goals, objectives, policies, strategies and projects as needs change. This plan update entitled “*Moving Forward Together,*” builds on previous plans to lay out an achievable vision for the planning area and a strategy to achieve the goals.

As part of the federal government’s surface transportation laws and regulations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO’s) are required to develop long range transportation plans, including a prioritized Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), plus programs, projects and monitoring efforts. The long range plan is a strategic planning tool providing a blueprint for the future blending of transportation, land use and Livable Delaware strategies to define and prioritize programs and projects. The long range planning process provides a common vision for the future supported by plan goals and objectives, a system assessment, identification of future transportation needs, a set of clearly defined fundamental strategies, actions, and a budget and implementation plan to realize the common vision.

### Plan Background

In September 1996, the Dover/Kent County MPO Council adopted the region’s first Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The document was designed to guide transportation investment and programming decisions made by state and local government representatives within the MPO framework. The 2025 plan was developed with a vision supported by transportation goals, a fundamental implementation strategy and basic actions for meeting changing transportation needs through the year 2025. The 2025 plan was adopted on July 5, 2001.

Due to a lapse in the air quality conformity determination in Kent County, federal transportation law required that the MPO create an Interim Plan and TIP identifying projects within the region that are eligible for receipt of Title 23 and Title 49 funds. The Interim Plan and TIP was adopted on July 9, 2004 and maintains project eligibility for federal funds, including exempt projects, as defined by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA 1990) and transportation control measures (TCMs). The Interim Plan extended the planning horizon to 2030. The Interim Plan supplemented the Long Range Transportation Plan for 2025 and served as a companion document until the creation of this 2030 update.

## Overview of the Planning Process and Plan Update

This update reviews the assumptions and priorities developed and adopted in 1996, as updated in 2001, and revisited in the 2004 interim plan. The content and focus of this Plan is very similar to the earlier version, incorporating key planning principles and policies, along with associated strategies and actions to be pursued by the MPO, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and planning partners over the life of this Plan.

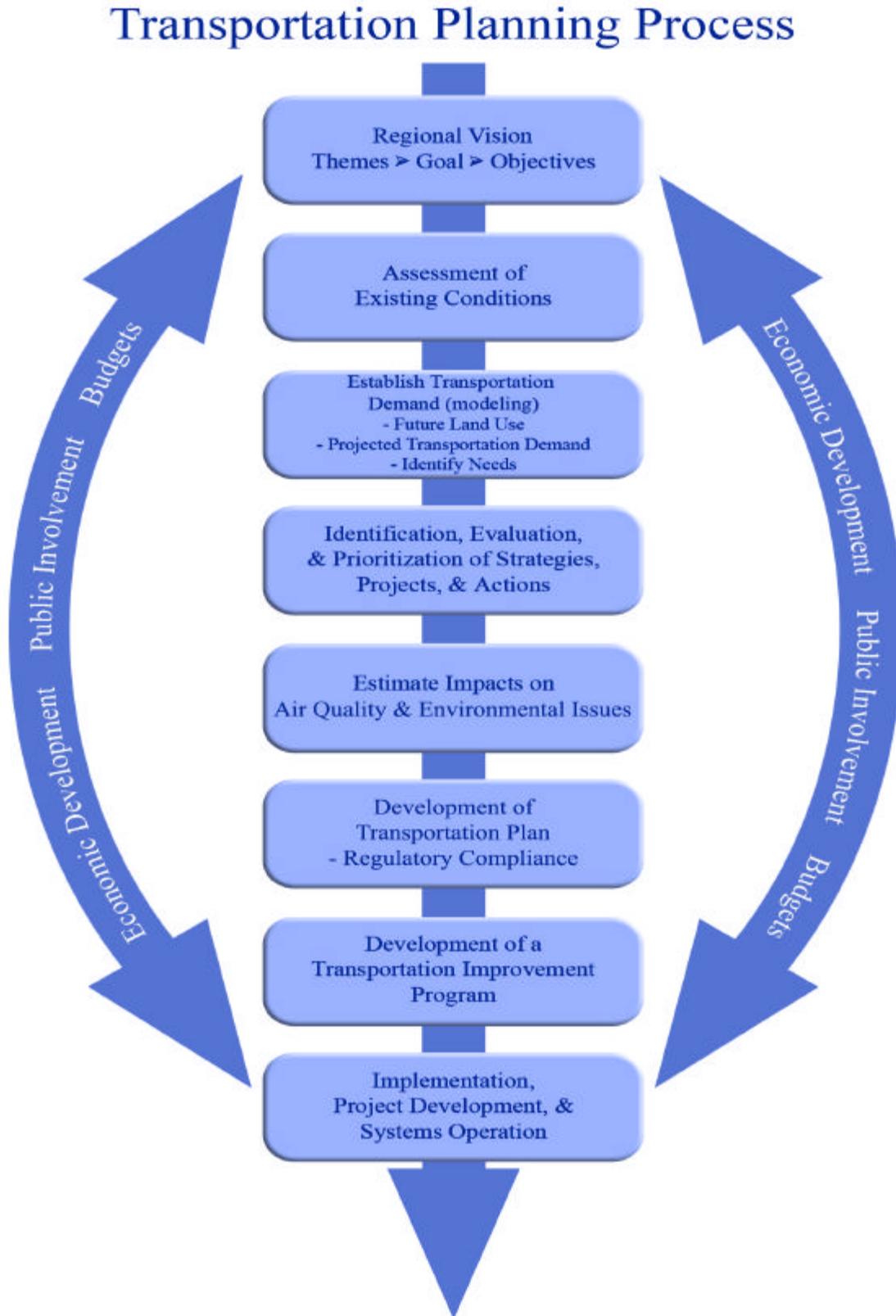
This Plan inventories changes in the transportation system, identifies changes in future needs and presents a revised list of actions to attain the vision. The needs assessment is based on updated population and employment estimates based upon the 2000 Census. It also reflects input received from various communities within the region and input received from the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the general public.

The process is designed to foster involvement by all interested parties, community groups, environmental organizations and the general public. The planning process includes a number of steps. These steps include:

- Develop a vision for the future based upon input from various community stakeholders
- Monitor existing conditions
- Forecast future population and employment growth
- Assess projected land use in the region and identify the demand for transportation services over a 20 year planning horizon
- Identify problems and needs associated with various transportation services and improvements
- Develop capital and operating strategies
- Estimate the impact of the transportation system on air quality
- Develop a financial plan
- Prepare and implementation plan to guide decision makers with respect to transportation improvements

The plan update that was prepared as a result of this planning process is consistent with DelDOT's Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan. The following figure, Figure 1.1, depicts the planning process undertaken to support plan update efforts.

Figure 1.1 Transportation Planning Process



The air quality analysis takes into account changes in trip-making characteristics and new State Implementation Plan (SIP) budgets; and the fiscal reasonableness includes new assumptions based on changes in state and federal funding.

This update is in accordance with federal requirements. The plan must be updated every three years as a requirement of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. An update at this juncture is also logical because:

- The state has made updates to state policies and investment levels in the *Strategies for State Policies and Spending* as part of the Livable Delaware initiative.
- Several towns including Milford, Dover and Symrna have recently completed the update of their local comprehensive plans and/or zoning ordinances and have annexed areas to accommodate planned growth;
- The MPO has worked collaboratively with planning partners to integrate land use and transportation throughout the planning process to support a plan update;
- The state and county continues to work to implement community development strategies that provide incentives for new growth to occur in desired areas through the Livable Delaware Initiative.

There is no one policy, project or action that will meet the future needs of the planning area. Instead, the fundamental strategies described in the plan will serve to guide decision making for transportation investments. This approach is aligned with the state's Livable Delaware initiative and the county and municipalities' long range plans. The policies articulated in all plans including this plan set up a hierarchy for making future transportation investments by:

- Preserving the existing system;
- Managing the system efficiently;
- Expanding travel options beyond the private automobile;
- Expanding the highways system when needed; and
- Focusing transportation investments to complement county and state growth management goals (*integrating transportation with land use*).

These strategies continue to provide the basis for project identification and evaluation and all other actions. The actions recommended in the plan are multi-modal. They include transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, aviation and rail facilities, and highway improvements. They are intended to complement one another to provide an efficient transportation system that offers a wide range of options.

### **Integration of Land Use and Transportation Planning**

The Dover/Kent County Long-Range Transportation Plan Update stands as a guideline for integrating land-use and transportation planning to support “*Moving Forward Together.*” The Dover/Kent County MPO utilized a land use model, referred to as CORPLAN, in conjunction with DeLDOT’s transportation model TRANPLAN to successfully integrate land use and transportation planning efforts. The community based planning model (CORPLAN) estimates regional land development potential. This model provides a framework for assessing impacts of various growth patterns across the MPO. The capabilities of both models were utilized to assess the impacts of various future scenarios comparing a preferred scenario for future development and two alternatives scenarios. The long range planning study area includes all of Kent County, the southern portion of New Castle County and the northern portion of Sussex County.

