MEMORANDUM

To: **Environment and Natural Resources Committee**

From: CMAP Staff

Date: May 25, 2016

Re: Place-based approach: universe of layers

A "place-based approach" is a framework for catering the content of a regional plan to local (and other) partners through more spatially specific recommendations. Earlier this year, CMAP staff introduced the working committees to two place-based approaches – typologies and layers – and recommended incorporating the layers approach into ON TO 2050. The layers approach will be used to further key policy areas in ON TO 2050 by mapping data related to each policy area and using the maps and contextual information to provide more specific, sub-regional guidance pertinent to local partners and other stakeholders. The layers approach will integrate well with ongoing plan development, allow the plan to speak more specifically about a wide range of topics, and provide valuable data, information, and guidance to partners.

Two primary activities are underway to further develop the layers approach. First, two pilot layers – conservation areas and high priority reinvestment areas – are being developed to test out the approach, determine how layers could be integrated in the regional plan, and estimate the level of effort associated with developing layers. Second, CMAP staff have created an initial "universe of layers" that correspond to the policy areas being explored for ON TO 2050. This list of potential layers is a starting point for discussion with working committees and partners, and will inform additional layers to be considered as well as the selection of layers to be developed as part of the plan's development. Staff are seeking feedback and guidance on the initial universe of layers, particularly as the proposed layers relate to the Environment Committee members' areas of expertise.

Universe of layers
To develop the initial universe of layers, CMAP staff considered ON TO 2050's ongoing and upcoming policy development work, and which particular policy areas might benefit from an increased level of spatial detail. The purpose of layers is not solely to provide data sets or descriptive maps. Rather, layers should shed light onto a priority policy area and inform more specific recommendations for plan implementers.

In assessing potential layers, staff used several screening questions:

- Does the layer relate to a key policy area for ON TO 2050?
- Would the layer inform better and more specific recommendations? What recommendations might come from the layer's development?
- Can we reasonably assume that the layer will help forward implementation of the regional plan by inspiring action among local implementers?
- How complex is the layer to create? Would consensus-building among partners be necessary to ensure implementation of the recommendations associated with the layer?
- Do we have access to the data or information needed to create the layer?

When thinking about potential layers to specifically assist the communication of environmentally-focused recommendations, CMAP staff drafted the following guiding principles:

- **Cover the region:** while specific layers may not identify spatial features in all communities, the combination of all environmental layers should provide regional coverage and identify environmental assets in all communities.
- **Recognize the interconnectedness of layers:** the data and information in some layers can help inform priorities and recommendations in another layer. Future work on layers will determine the best way to approach these intersections.

The following potential layers are especially relevant for the Environment Committee's consideration. In addition, the universe of other potential layers is shown in Table 1. Committee feedback on these potential layers, as well as additional ideas, are welcomed.

- **Potential expansion areas:** land not developed near municipalities in parts of the region where new development is likely.
- **Key agricultural areas:** areas with high quality soils, critical massing of farms, and other factors that are prime for agricultural preservation, as well as those areas already protected for agricultural purposes
- **Vulnerable populations**: development is ongoing. The inclusive growth team has identified a vulnerable populations definition that includes low-income limited English proficient or minority residents. Vulnerable populations may also include other characteristics, such as seniors or disabled residents, for other policy areas. Staff is in the process of refining the terminology used to describe vulnerable populations
- **Conservation areas:** development is ongoing. This layer will feature areas with existing high quality natural resources that are prime for conservation efforts
- **Green infrastructure restoration:** areas with significant potential for ecological restoration, especially those that may help to buffer or connect conservation areas
- **Climate vulnerability areas:** areas that may experience difficulty in responding to climate impacts, such as increased flooding and heat. This layer would incorporate vulnerable populations and other social factors
- **Access to parks and open space:** areas with low access to parks and open space. This layer was included in GO TO 2040, but could be enhanced by considering socioeconomic factors, land constraints, etc.

- **Water source protection:** group areas by drinking water source to create more targeted recommendations by user
- **Water quality:** identify the spectrum of watershed conditions by impervious coverage, impaired or high quality streams, , and, combined sewer overflow events to illustrate water quality issues
- **Flood risk areas:** priority urban and riverine flooding clusters to target for green infrastructure and other interventions, considering both existing and future flood risk due to climate change

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion

Table 1. Universe of Other Potential Layers

Transportation	Description
Regionally significant projects (RSPs)	Ongoing; fiscally constrained capital projects
Highway needs and opportunities	Recommended corridors for operations strategies and priority corridors to implement congestion pricing
Transit needs and opportunities	Areas and facilities presenting significant opportunities for transit; will be informed by RTA Strategic Plan
Critical Urban Freight Corridors and other components of National Highway Freight Network	Ongoing; priority freight corridors to receive funding through the FAST Act
Freight planning areas	Concentrations of freight assets and freight-supportive land uses
Regional trails	Ongoing; existing and proposed regional trails per the Greenways and Trails Plan update
Land Use	**Description**
Infill opportunity areas	Areas in the region that are prime for infill
High priority reinvestment areas	Ongoing; areas of high priority for reinvestment as identified by local plans
Disinvested areas	TBD by inclusive growth and disinvested areas work
Housing market areas	Ongoing; group areas with similar socioeconomic and physical characteristics for future collaborative housing planning
Housing opportunity areas	Areas with stable housing, as well as low crime, good schools, access to jobs, and many amenities
Economy	**Description**
Employment centers	Industrial and commercial employment concentrations
Municipal tax base or base growth	TBD; possible metrics include tax capacity, largest revenue source by municipality, or growth in tax base
Community capacity	TBD; goal is to provide insight on municipal barriers to implementing regional goals