



MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: May 11, 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 – high quality natural 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. These layers may also be used for the local area allocation and prioritization of regionally significant projects. 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 prepared as part of the plan’s development. Staff is seeking feedback and guidance on the initial universe of layers, particularly as the proposed layers relate to the Transportation 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?

The following groups of layers are especially relevant for the Transportation Committee's consideration. The first relates specifically to constrained capital projects while the remainder of the list is expected to reflect broader transportation and land use recommendations for and by transportation implementers, counties, municipalities, and other local actors. 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.

- **Regionally significant projects (RSPs):** Development is ongoing. This layer will illustrate the fiscally constrained capital projects included in ON TO 2050.
- **Highway needs and opportunities:** Development is ongoing. This layer will identify corridors most appropriate for different operations strategies, as identified initially in the [Highway Management and Operations Strategy Paper](#), as well as priority corridors for implementing congestion pricing over the longer term.
- **Transit needs and opportunities:** This layer is intended to identify areas and facilities presenting significant opportunities for transit, including potentially areas with moderate to high transit access, areas with transit market growth potential, areas in need of pedestrian access improvements, and corridors where investments in operations strategies may be needed. Development should be coordinated with RTA strategic plan recommendations.
- **Critical Urban Freight Corridors and other components of the National Highway Freight Network:** This layer will designate priority freight corridors to receive funding through the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.
- **Freight planning areas:** This layer will identify concentrations of freight assets and freight-supportive land uses to assist more detailed sub-regional or local planning.
- **Regional trails:** Development is expected in 2016. This layer will identify existing and proposed regional trails via the Regional Greenways and Trails Plan update.

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion



Table 1. Universe of other potential layers

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
Critical growth areas	Land not yet developed in the municipal envelope in transitional parts of the region
Key agricultural areas	Areas with high quality soils and critical massing of farms that are prime for agricultural preservation
Housing market areas	Ongoing; areas with similar socioeconomic/ 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
Vulnerable populations	Ongoing; working definition for inclusive growth includes low-income limited English proficient or minority residents. May include other characteristics (seniors, disabled residents) for other policy areas
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
Environment	Description
High quality natural areas	Ongoing; areas with existing high quality natural resources
Green infrastructure restoration	Areas with significant potential for ecological restoration, especially to buffer high quality natural areas
Green infrastructure retrofits	Urbanized areas that have significant potential for green infrastructure retrofits
Climate vulnerability areas	Areas that may experience difficulty in responding to increased flooding and heat; would incorporate vulnerable populations and other social factors
Access to parks and open space	Areas with low access to parks and open space
Water source protection	Group areas by drinking water source; include Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas (SARAs)
Water quality	Combined and separated sewer communities, along with combined sewer overflow events, impaired or high quality streams, watershed quality, impervious coverage
Priority flooding areas	Priority urban and riverine flooding locations to target for green infrastructure and other interventions

