



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS IN REGIONAL PLANNING

What is environmental review of a transportation project?

When a transportation project, such as a roadway, bridge or transit is planned for your area, you are probably interested in how the project will impact your community. Impacts include both the benefits and the potential problems a project may bring. To ensure that these impacts are identified and addressed, public agencies must meet the requirements of **The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969**, (NEPA) before a project can go into construction.

The purpose of a transportation project needs to be clearly established based on the needs it is intended to address, such as accessibility, congestion or bottleneck relief. For every project, a series of reasonable alternatives must be investigated so that the best possible project can be identified.

Essential to this review is the identification of potential environmental impacts. Once the potential impacts have been established, corresponding **mitigation** plans must be developed to offset any potentially negative impacts. Very significant to the process is the solicitation of the **public to provide input** into the review.

How does transportation planning connect with environmental review?

Transportation projects are implemented through a rigorous process that includes the concept being evaluated, selected and vetted. Once part of an adopted transportation plan, a project proceeds through design and right-of-way determination before construction begins.

To streamline implementation of projects, federal law requires planning agencies to consider a transportation plan's environmental impact as part of the initial planning process. This happens before detailed design work that refines the project scope.

Included in this preliminary consideration are:

- Identification of environmental resources and environmentally sensitive areas
- Descriptions of air and water resources
- Demographic trends and forecasts
- Projections of future land use, natural resource conservation areas and development
- Existing wildlife conservation plans, watershed plans, and habitat conservation plans

WHAT IS PLAN 2040?

PLAN 2040 is metro Atlanta's long-range planning process for land development and transportation needs through the year 2040. It will guide growth by addressing not only land use and transportation issues, but economic, environmental, housing and human services challenges, as well.



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION



Who participates in the planning process environmental review?

ARC provides a setting for interaction between the region-wide transportation planning process and project-specific environmental decisions. Studies sponsored by ARC and its planning partners, in addition to needs identified during the PLAN 2040 development process, provide information that can help planners to answer environmental questions and serve as useful inputs into the detailed NEPA review process once it begins.

Consultation with federal, state, wildlife and other regulatory agencies is an integral part of the planning process. These agencies share their existing plans and their advice so transportation planners can accurately identify potential environmental impacts and develop mitigation remedies if needed. Agencies representing the following disciplines are involved in this discussion:

- Land use management
- Natural resources
- Environmental protection
- Conservation

How can someone participate in developing Plan 2040?

Metro Atlanta residents can participate in ARC's Plan 2040 activities in several ways:

- Regularly visit the Plan 2040 Web site at www.atlantaregional.com/plan2040 for the latest information about the planning process. Check the "Get Involved" section of the site for discussions, meetings and other ways to share thoughts and ideas.
- Email comments to ARC at plan2040@atlantaregional.com
- Share ideas at ARC's group page on LENS on Atlanta at www.lensonatlanta.org
- Call ARC with comments or questions:
 - 404. 463. 3272
 - TTY number is 404. 463. 3272

Helpful links for more info

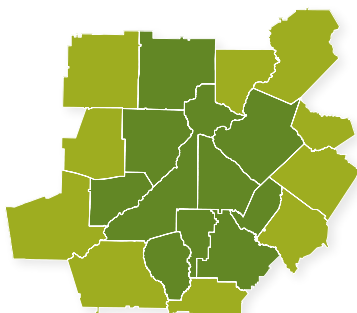
- [FHWA Planning and Environmental Linkages Resource Guide](#)
- [FHWA Planning and Environmental Linkages Implementation Resources](#)
- [AASHTO- Using the Transportation Planning Process to Support the NEPA Process](#)
- [Georgia Department of Transportation Plan Development Process](#)

This document can be found on ARC's Web site at www.atlantaregional.com/plan2040. For assistance in viewing this document, contact plan2040@atlantaregional.com or 404.463.3272.



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

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WHAT IS THE ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION?

ARC is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the **10-county** metropolitan area. For transportation planning, ARC's area of responsibility includes all or parts of **20 counties** and the City of Atlanta.