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**Date:** September 13, 2007

**From:** Rob Zako, Transportation Advocate

**To:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Cc:** Citizen Advisory Committee

**Re:** Request for Additional Information on the Final Draft 2007–2031 RTP

## Executive Summary

In order to adequately review the final draft 2007–2031 RTP and how well it meets transportation needs, we are requesting more detailed information than is available in the plan itself.

Dear members of the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO),

Now that the final (i.e., complete) draft 2007–2031 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is available, we are beginning our detailed review of this document.

The section titled “Summary of Needs Analysis” (Chapter 3, Page 3) states:

“Transportation needs for the Central Lane area were assessed using standard methods typically employed in regional transportation planning. The analysis of needs was based on population and employment growth forecasts consistent with statewide forecasts. The population and employment forecasts were used to establish overall demand for transportation.

“In the development of the 2001 TransPlan, a wide range of strategies were identified to address this demand, including land use, TDM, and TSI strategies. Different combinations of these strategies were formulated as alternative plan concepts and test using a computer-based travel-forecasting model. The alternative plan concepts ranged from a Base Case consisting of trends to an alternative designed to meet the vehicle miles traveled reduction targets of the Transportation Planning Rule. These strategies are reflected in this Regional Transportation Plan.

“The alternatives development and evaluation included consideration of state and local needs consistent with the Oregon Transportation Plan, *Metro Plan*, and state and local improvement programs. Surveys were conducted to provide data on travel behavior and input on a wide range of alternative strategies. ...”

The section titled “Part Two: Projected Plan Performance” (Chapter 4, Page 5) states:

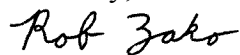
“... The data presented in this chapter stems from extensive computer modeling analyses of different combinations of land use, Transportation Demand Management, and Transportation System Improvements programs and capital investments. The analysis draws on recent surveys of transportation patterns and behavior in the Eugene-Springfield region. ...”

These brief explanations quoted above prompt several questions and requests:

1. The most recent document listed in Appendix C: List of Supporting Documents is dated June 2004. What studies, technical memoranda and other documents since June 2004 have been relied on in developing this RTP update? Would you please make these more recent supporting documents available to the public?
2. In particular, specifically which “recent surveys of transportation patterns and behavior in the Eugene-Springfield region” were used in developing this RTP update? Would you please make the results of these surveys available to the public?
3. In the development of this RTP update, how many different combinations of strategies (alternative plan concepts?) were modeled and what are they?
4. In particular, for each alternative plan concept, what assumptions (population and employment forecasts, projected land uses, etc.) are used and what combinations of capital investment and other actions are modeled?
5. How, if at all, do any of the alternative plan concepts take into account Measure 37 or House Bill 3337, both of which have gone into effect since the 2004 RTP update? (Note that the impact of Measure 37 would likely not be so much to increase development inside the MPO area, but rather to increase development outside the area, thus increasing the flow of regional traffic in and out of the area.)
6. Which of the alternative plan concepts is reflected in Chapter 3, especially the capital investment actions?
7. Which of the alternative plan concepts is reflected in Chapter 4? What are the performance measures for the other alternative plan concepts not reflected in Chapter 4?

We look forward to your prompt reply to our questions and requests so that we can continue our review of the final draft RTP.

Sincerely,



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**Date:** September 28, 2007

**From:** Rob Zako

**To:** Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Cc:** Citizen Advisory Committee

**Re:** Capacity-Adding Roadway Projects in the Final Draft 2007–2031 RTP

## Executive Summary

We recommend not including capacity-adding roadway projects #27, #30, #1003, #506 and #333 in the financially constrained list, but rather in the illustrative list.

Dear members of the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO),

## How transportation decisions can drive land use decisions

Planning to build this transportation project or that might sometimes seem like a pointless exercise, especially when no funding has yet been identified. What difference does it really make whether a particular project is “planned” or not, or in the financially constrained list as opposed to the illustrative list?

In fact, it matters a great deal, and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) you are currently considering has real consequences for how our community develops.

As anyone who has been paying attention knows, many proposed big new developments such as hospitals, Wal-Marts and Home Depots have gotten hung up on transportation issues. The basic idea in the state Transportation Planning Rule (TPR),<sup>1</sup> which implements Statewide Planning Goal 12 (Transportation), is clear: Don’t approve land use changes to allow new developments unless the transportation facilities to support those developments are “reasonably likely” to be built.<sup>2</sup> Thus the new PeaceHealth hospital in Springfield was contingent on the Interstate-5/Beltline project; the McKenzie-Willamette hospital in Eugene is contingent on improvements at Beltline and Delta Highway.

But who decides which projects are “reasonably likely” to be constructed, hence can be relied upon to support new developments? As it happens, to a great extent, you do. The MPO has the authority to decide which transportation projects are “reasonably likely” to be built, hence where new developments can be approved contingent on those projects.

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<sup>1</sup> OAR Chapter 660, Division 012, available online at [http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS\\_600/OAR\\_660/660\\_012.html](http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_600/OAR_660/660_012.html)

<sup>2</sup> OAR 660-012-0060 (“Plan and Land Use Regulation Amendments”) specifies how land use changes must be supported by existing and planned transportation facilities.

How this works is simple: According to the TPR,<sup>3</sup> transportation projects in the RTP's financially constrained list are considered to be "reasonably likely" to be built. Period.

In fact, most projects in the financially constrained list don't yet have funding, and in some cases may never get funding, hence might never be built. But there is a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy at work here. If you decide to include a project in the financially constrained list, and then a local jurisdiction approves new developments assuming the planned project is "reasonably likely" to be built, the development will lead to new traffic that will ultimately require the planned project be funded and built.

In this way, although the lawyers will argue that you aren't technically making land use decisions, your decisions about what to include in the financially constrained list will heavily influence which land use decisions are approved and which aren't, hence where growth will occur and where it won't.

In simple terms:

Approving a capacity-adding project in the financially constrained list gives a "green light" to and drives new land uses around the project.

## Capacity-adding projects in the financially constrained list

We have heard many times your desire to not make land use decisions at the MPO table, but rather to merely coordinate decisions that have been made elsewhere. Given that a decision to include a capacity-adding project in the financially constrained list effectively pre-approves future land use decisions, your choice should be clear:

Don't include any capacity-adding projects in the financially constrained list until the local comprehensive planning calling for such projects has been completed.

Thus we consider capacity-adding roadway projects proposed to be added to the financially constrained list. As best as we can tell, there are five such projects, as shown in the table below:

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<sup>3</sup> OAR 660-012-0060(4) provides:

...

- (a) In determining whether an amendment has a significant effect on an existing or planned transportation facility under subsection (1)(c) of this rule, local governments shall rely on existing transportation facilities and services and on the planned transportation facilities, improvements and services set forth in subsections (b) and (c) below.
- (b) Outside of interstate interchange areas, the following are considered planned facilities, improvements and services:
  - ...
  - (C) Transportation facilities, improvements or services in a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) area that are part of the area's federally-approved, financially constrained regional transportation system plan.

...

**Table 1: Capacity-Adding Roadway Projects Added to Financially Constrained List**

Name	Geographic Limits	Description	Jurisdiction	Estimated Cost	Length	Number
<b>Project Category: New Arterial Link or Interchange</b>						
Eugene-Springfield Hwy. (SR-126)	@ Main St.	Construct interchange	ODOT	\$50,000,000	0.00	27
Eugene-Springfield Hwy. (SR-126)	@ 52nd St.	Construct interchange	ODOT	\$40,000,000	0.00	30
<b>Project Category: Added Freeway Lanes or Major Interchange Improvements</b>						
I-5	@ City of Coburg (Phase 1)	Interchange Improvements	ODOT	\$22,000,000	0.00	1003
North Eugene transportation improvements	River Rd. to Delta Hwy.	Improve capacity across Willamette River within north Eugene area	ODOT	\$51,292,000	1.76	506
<b>Project Category: Arterial Capacity Improvements</b>						
W. 11th Ave.	Green Hill Rd. to Terry St.	Upgrade to 5-lane urban facility	ODOT, Eugene	\$20,000,000	1.51	333

These five projects are not included in the financially constrained list in the 2004–2005 RTP.<sup>4</sup> They also are not included in the financially constrained list in the July 2002 *TransPlan*, which is a functional plan of the *Eugene-Springfield General Metro Plan*.

More to the point, we as yet see no evidence in the draft final 2007–2031 RTP (or supporting documents) that the inclusion of these five projects is consistent with locally adopted comprehensive plans or that the decision to include these five projects in the financially constrained list has been vetted at the local level (in particular, with public hearings by the responsible jurisdictions).

Note: The situation with project #1003, interchange improvements for the I-5/City of Coburg interchange, requires further comment. This project was not included in the financially constrained list in the 2004–2025 RTP. In August 2005, the MPO amended the 2004–2025 RTP to include this project in the financially constrained list.<sup>5</sup> That said, we see no documentation in the final draft 2007–2031 RTP itself, nor in Resolution 2005-10 amending the RTP, that this project is consistent with the City of Coburg Comprehensive Plan. We would be happy to see such documentation. Lacking such documentation, our concerns about not wanting transportation projects in the RTP to drive land uses remain.

<sup>4</sup> A draft list of new/changed projects from the 2004–2025 RTP is available online at [http://www.lcog.org/meetings/mpc/0607/MPC4\\_e-Attachment7-RTP-ProjectList-ChangedProjects.pdf](http://www.lcog.org/meetings/mpc/0607/MPC4_e-Attachment7-RTP-ProjectList-ChangedProjects.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The staff cover memo is available online at [http://www.lcog.org/meetings/mpc/082005/MPC4c\\_CoverMemo\\_CoburgRTPAmendment.pdf](http://www.lcog.org/meetings/mpc/082005/MPC4c_CoverMemo_CoburgRTPAmendment.pdf)  
Resolution 2005-10 is available online at [http://www.lcog.org/meetings/mpc/082005/MPC4c\\_Attachment1\\_Resolution\\_2005-10.pdf](http://www.lcog.org/meetings/mpc/082005/MPC4c_Attachment1_Resolution_2005-10.pdf)

## Conclusion

As we appreciate the desire of the MPO to avoid making—or driving—land use decisions, we cannot support the inclusion of these five projects in the financially constrained list, *at least not without additional documentation of their consistency with land use plans covering the relevant time periods.*

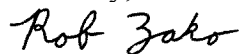
In conclusion:

We recommend not including capacity-adding roadway projects #27, #30, #1003, #506 and #333 in the financially constrained list, but rather in the illustrative list.

Please understand we have no specific objection to any of these projects. Moreover, once the necessary local land-use planning has been completed, the door would be open to amending the RTP to move these projects from the illustrative list to the financially constrained list.

Lastly, we note that we have found no documentation in Chapter 3 (“Plan Implementation”) of the RTP explaining the criteria for which projects to include in the financially constrained list, nor any process for selecting projects to include. In previous iterations, staff evaluated projects against the goals, objectives and/or policies in Chapter 2 (“Policy Element”) of the RTP, recommending including the projects most consistent with the policy element in the financially constrained list. If Chapter 2 of the RTP is to have any relevance at all, it must be used to guide the selection of projects in the financially constrained list, and this process must be documented.

Sincerely,



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