

October 1, 2003

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee
From: Tom Schwetz
Subject: Item 4b: Overview of Regional Transportation Plan Update

Introduction

As noted in the federal certification review process, the Central Lane MPO is required to update its long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) by December 2004. This raises several issues in terms of the scope of such an update and coordination with the state requirements for local agencies' Transportation System Plans. This memo provides an overview of the specific federal requirements for an RTP update and provides a possible framework for its coordination with state planning requirements.

Scope of Federal Requirements for RTP Update

Federal regulations require the development of a Transportation Plan as a key product of the metropolitan planning process. Specifically:

“The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing at least a twenty year planning horizon. The plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.”

The transportation plan is to be updated every three years in non-attainment and maintenance areas to ensure its consistency with changes in land use, demographic, and transportation characteristics. The regulations also identify a number of required elements that must be addressed in a Regional Transportation Plan, including:

- Demand analysis;
- Congestion management strategies;
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle facilities;
- System preservation;
- A multimodal evaluation of the transportation, socioeconomic, environmental, and financial impact of the overall plan;
- A financial plan that documents “the consistency of proposed transportation investments with already available and projected sources of revenue”

- Public official and citizen involvement, including participation during the early stages of plan development, and availability of document for public review,
- Air quality conformity determination in non-attainment and maintenance areas

While there are several requirements listed above, the currently adopted TransPlan already meets most of them. Federal officials consider what is required to be a minor update and as part of the Certification Review, indicated that the scope of this region's RTP update could be limited to the following modifications to the existing plan:

1. Extend the planning horizon to 2025;
2. Update the financial constraint analysis;
3. Expand Boundary to include entire census-defined urbanized area (including Coburg)

Thus, there would be no changes made to the policy set. Most of the additions to the financially constrained project list would be drawn from the future list included in the current plan. The process used for the update would include public involvement as required in federal regulations. As indicated in the final report of the federal Certification Review, the RTP Update would need to be completed by December 2004.

Coordination with Local Plans and State Planning Requirements

While this memo focuses on the requirements and process for updating the federally-required Regional Transportation Plan, that update must be coordinated with state-required local Transportation System Plans (TSP). As noted in previous discussions, the situation of having separate plans is actually the norm for most MPO areas across the country, and all of the other MPOs in Oregon. Currently TransPlan satisfies this requirement for LTD, Eugene, Springfield, and Lane County. Coburg has its own TSP.

Federal and State planning requirements affect each of these plans somewhat differently. While virtually all of the federal requirements apply only to the RTP, state requirements affect all three plans, though to different degrees. Thus, certain changes require all parties to amend their plans (e.g., new projects) roughly concurrently, while others need only be synchronized at logical points (e.g., financial constraint analysis).

The attached table provides a summary of how changes to different elements (projects, policies, etc.) would affect the three different plans. As an example, transportation projects required for the new federal Courthouse need to be amended into both the MPO plan (RTP) and TransPlan. The RTP needs amending because the new projects will be using federal funds and those funds can only be authorized for projects included in the RTP. TransPlan needs amending in order for the Courthouse development to move through the local process and meet state planning requirements. The RTP would require a financial constraint analysis and air quality conformity determination, while TransPlan would not.

In general, it is important to note that, because amendments might arise for different reasons, the two plans do not always need to be amended simultaneously. The MPO

plan would not need to be amended until federal funds are needed for a project, whereas TransPlan might require more immediate action to proceed with construction or other parts of the local development process which would not typically trigger any changes to the RTP.

For updates to a plan as a whole (as opposed to amendments for a specific purpose), a great deal of the process is similar for the three plans. Most of the technical work required for the local plans can be drawn from the effort required to maintain the RTP. Depending upon the timing of various update efforts, the RTP public involvement process could be used to satisfy some of the public involvement necessary for the local plan updates.

Discussions by TPC staff to date have led to the belief that a coordinating framework can be established to help ensure that the three plans are consistent. In November, TPC will bring to MPC a more detailed outline of how the RTP Update will proceed and how it will be coordinated with the other plans.

Action Requested: Information and Discussion only. Staff will provide a more detailed work program in November.

Attachments: Summary of RTP-TSP Coordination Issues