



September 11, 2007

To: Citizen Advisory Committee  
From: Paul Thompson  
Subject: Item 7: Primer on Regional Transportation Plan and Status Report  
on Update

**Action Recommended:** None. Information only.

A Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a long-range plan developed by a federal Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) which includes a balanced mix of projects such as bridges, bicycle paths, sidewalks, transit services, new and upgraded roadways, safety improvements, transportation demand management initiatives and more. By federal law, the RTP must cover a minimum planning horizon of 20 years and be updated every four years in areas which are under certain federal air quality standard constraints (such as the Central Lane MPO area).

The long-range RTP forms the basis upon which the short-range Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) is developed. (The MTIP programs up to four year's out the projects which are funded and ready to go to construction – or some other phase – during those four years.)

As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the central Lane County area, the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) is responsible for development of the RTP for the Cities of Eugene, Springfield and Coburg, and the immediately surrounding unincorporated area of Lane County. The RTP is developed in cooperation with municipal, county and state agencies, public transit operators, other stakeholder groups and the general public.

The MPO works with its planning partners to develop the RTP, a process which can take anywhere from one to three years based on numerous factors such as the complexity of issues being addressed and the amount of effort required to reach regional consensus. Regardless of the amount of time required, the RTP development process consists of the following general major steps:

- Developing or confirming a clear and measurable set of RTP goals.
- Understanding and quantifying short and long-range transportation system needs.

- Incorporating local and regional decisions regarding project priorities over the 20+ year planning horizon of the RTP.
- Developing and using financial forecasts based on the latest available data and information.
- Constraining the planned expenditures to the anticipated revenues.
- Modeling the future planning horizon scenario for performance of the transportation system, including reporting the current actual and future modeled anticipated system performance across a set of performance measures.
- Demonstrating conformity to the applicable motor vehicle emissions budget developed under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Each step of the process outlined above involves a significant amount of coordination and outreach to planning partners and the general public. Formal opportunities for public comment on the final draft product(s) are provided by the MPO during the process – federal law only requires one formal comment period prior to adoption. In addition to these formal opportunities, comments on draft products or the development process are also often solicited, either formally, or as part of the MPO’s Policy Board consideration of elements of the RTP.

The regional planning process thus ensures that the planning activities and investments of the local jurisdictions are coordinated in terms of intent, timing, and effect. Projects in the RTP are initiated at the local and state level (i.e., within the planning processes of the cities of Eugene, Springfield, and Coburg; Lane Transit District, Lane County and the Oregon Department of Transportation – ODOT). Those projects that anticipate Federal funding or are regionally significant with potential impact on air quality must be included in the RTP.

The region’s transportation system is vital to our economy, our community and our lives. The Regional Transportation Plan is the blueprint that guides investments in the region’s transportation system to reduce congestion, build new sidewalks and bicycle facilities, improve transit service and access to transit and maintain freight access. The plan:

- Sets the direction and guides planning for future investments in the region's transportation system
- Establishes policies and priorities for all forms of travel – motor vehicle, transit, pedestrian, bicycle and freight – and street design and the efficient management of the overall system
- Anticipates the region's current and future travel needs based on forecasts of growth in population, households and jobs as well as future travel patterns and analysis of travel conditions
- Evaluates federal, state and local funding that will be available for transportation improvements
- Estimates costs of projects and proposes funding strategies to meet these costs.

While the plan recognizes that most travel in the region will continue to be by auto, alternatives to driving alone, such as transit, walking and bicycling, are also recognized as important. The RTP provides a vision for new ways to get around, such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT, or EmX) and vanpools, and includes transportation demand management (TDM) strategies such as telecommuting, ridesharing and other programs designed to reduce demand on the transportation system. The policies focus on ensuring that all layers of the region's transportation system work together in the most effective way possible, including the efficient management of the overall system. In addition, the policies recognize the importance of the movement of goods and services to our regional economy.

The Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization's Regional Transportation Plan was last adopted in December, 2004, and subsequently approved by US Department of Transportation. Previously, the document known as TransPlan served as both the federally-required Regional Transportation Plan and the state-required local Transportation System Plan (TSP) for Eugene/Springfield. Now, with the 2003 expansion of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundary to include Coburg (due to population growth determined in the 2000 Census), the RTP serves as the federally required plan for the new MPO area, while TransPlan continues to serve as the state-required TSP for the Eugene/Springfield area.

As part of the long-range RTP, lists of transportation projects are included detailing the anticipated transportation improvements that will be required over the 20+ year horizon of the Plan. The MPO's RTP contains three sets of capital investment project lists: Roadway Projects, Transit Projects, and Bicycle projects. Each of these three sets is divided into two distinct lists, as required by federal regulations: a financially constrained list, and an illustrative list. The financially constrained list contains only those projects for which a reasonable expectation exists that there will be sufficient funding over the RTP planning horizon. The illustrative list contains the remaining projects. Furthermore, financial constraint for each project list is analyzed *per jurisdiction* – that is, ODOT's capital investments in Roadway Projects are financially constrained by reasonably expected revenues *for that purpose*, as are Eugene's, etc.

The current update of the RTP extends the planning horizon to 2031, updating the Roadway, Transit and Bicycle/Pedestrian project lists, financial forecasts and other elements. In March 2007, both the CAC and the MPC reviewed the draft RTP's financially constrained and illustrative project lists for all of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) projects contained in the RTP. At that time, MPC provided input on the ODOT project lists, which were incorporated into the draft lists and presented again to MPC in April.

At the April 2007 MPC meeting, the Committee discussed the RTP's updated 2031 planning horizon in light of local planning horizons. As was discussed at that and subsequent meetings, the 2031 RTP reflects anticipated growth in the MPO area through 2031 under current planning assumptions, and, once local policy and planning direction is updated beyond the current local horizons, subsequent RTP updates will reflect those new directions.

At the April, May and/or June 2007 CAC and MPC meetings, all of the draft 2031 RTP project lists were presented for review. This review included a summary of all of the new, changed and deleted projects since the 2025 RTP. In addition, the RTP environmental consultation materials were presented for review.

The August 2007 MPC meeting included a review of the complete Preliminary Draft RTP. The September 2007 MPC meeting includes a review of the complete Final Draft RTP, as well as a public hearing on the document. Both the Preliminary Draft and Final Draft documents are available on-line here <http://www.lcog.org/mpo/rtp.html>. Adoption of the updated 2031 RTP is scheduled for the October 2007 MPC meeting.

Attached to this memo are several extracts from the Final Draft 2031 RTP. At the September 19<sup>th</sup> CAC orientation and meeting, staff will provide additional information on the RTP and be available for discussion.

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1: *Context of Transportation Planning in the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Area*
- Attachment 2: *Clarifying Language on Federal and State Plan Interaction*
- Attachment 3: *RTP Figures 1, 2 & 3*
- Attachment 4: *RTP Goals, Objectives and Consolidated List of Policies*
- Attachment 5: *Table 4: RTP Costs & Revenues and Strategies*
- Attachment 6: *Table 5: Constrained RTP Costs & Revenues*
- Attachment 7: *Table 8: Summary of Key Performance Measures*