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CENTRAL LANE SCENARIO PLANNING

2015 Report to the Oregon Legislature

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Introduction

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2001, the Jobs and Transportation Act (JTA). Section 38a of the JTA directs the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to undertake scenario planning, and for the local governments in the Central Lane MPO boundary – the cities of Springfield, Eugene and Coburg and Lane County – to cooperatively select a preferred land use and transportation scenario. 38a(7)(b) of the JTA¹ directs the Central Lane MPO report to the 2015 legislature on the implications of implementing the selected land use and transportation scenario. This report fulfills that requirement.

The Central Lane Scenario Planning process included three major steps: understand, test and learn, and refine and select. The steps are shown in Figure 1. The public was engaged at each step through public workshops, an online scenario building tool called Future Builder, and a telephone survey.

Implications and outcomes

The preferred scenario meets the state’s greenhouse gas reduction target by reducing per capita greenhouse gas emissions from light vehicles by 20%. The preferred scenario would result in the following benefits (as compared to the reference scenario):

- Improved economic vitality. The preferred scenario shows in a 37% reduction in hours of congestion.

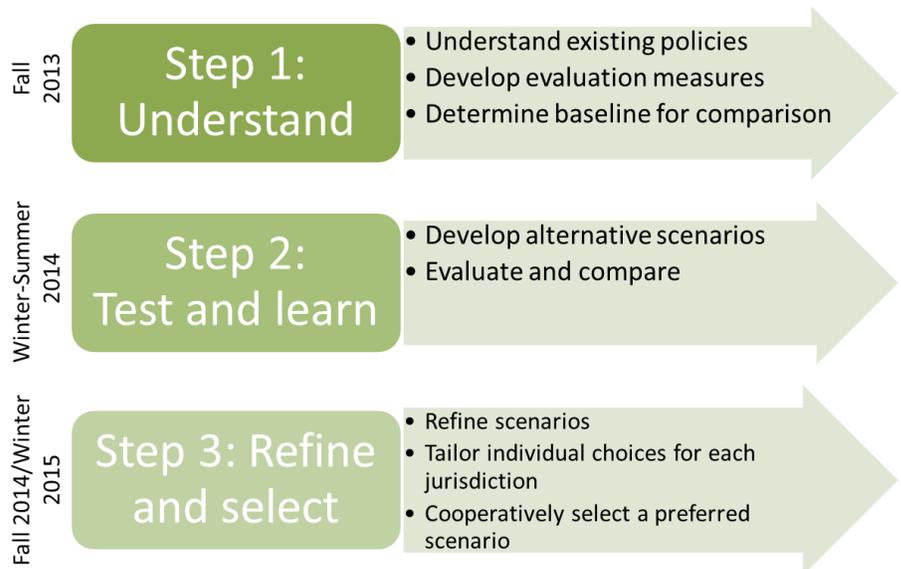


Figure 1. Central Lane Scenario Planning process

¹ Chapter 865, Oregon Laws 2009.



- Improved public health. The preferred scenario could save the region \$22 million in health care costs.

The cooperatively selected preferred scenario is described at www.clscenarioplanning.org. The region identified the following key lessons from this process:

1. Implementing the preferred scenario would not represent a dramatic shift in the region's transportation and land use policy. The process highlighted successful policies and reinforced that local and regional plans already support state greenhouse gas reduction goals.
2. Achieving the preferred scenario – and in many cases achieving policies in existing plans – would require substantial additional funding for education and marketing programs, transit and active transportation infrastructure, and operations and maintenance for the entire system.
 - a. Funding for transit operations and maintenance is particularly important in the region. Current funding mechanisms, which focus on capital development, not operations, have placed Lane Transit District (LTD) in a position where they struggle to operate the existing system. Even if LTD could identify funding for system expansion, the agency would need additional funding to operate and maintain that system.
 - b. Further changes to state funding programs to create more opportunities for competitive, multimodal grants would help local governments achieve state goals.
3. Outcomes related to economy, public health and equity were more important to some local decision makers than greenhouse gas reduction benefits.
4. The scenario planning process allowed local governments to look beyond existing plans and understand what the implications would be of making changes without requiring implementation. Partners tested new ideas and set aspirations that could inform future decisions.
5. The scenario planning process was limited to the MPO boundary. Because transportation issues are not contained by the MPO boundary, this artificial limit made it difficult to fully understand the impacts and benefits of scenarios to the rural areas that surround the MPO.
6. Implementation of the preferred scenario should remain voluntary to allow each governments in the region to use the results of the process to inform future planning processes.
7. The preferred scenario is necessarily flexible. The scenario would allow each community to select actions that maximize co-benefits like an improved economy, public health and equity in addition to greenhouse gas reduction. The process also allowed culturally different communities in the region to find tailored policies that met local needs and regional goals.
8. Because the process was complex and time consuming, the region is not likely to undertake a similar effort without state support.