



534 SW Third Ave., Suite 300, Portland, OR 97204 • (503) 497-1000 • fax (503) 223-0073 • www.friends.org

Southern Oregon Office • P.O. Box 2442 • Grants Pass, OR 97528 • phone/fax (541) 474-1155

Willamette Valley Office • 189 Liberty St. NE, Suite 307A • Salem, OR 97301 • (503) 371-7261 • fax (503) 371-7596

Lane County Office • 1192 Lawrence • Eugene, OR 97401 • (541) 431-7059 • fax (541) 431-7078

Central Oregon Office • P.O. Box 8813 • Bend, OR 97708 • (541) 382-7557 • fax (541) 382-7552

Date: June 9, 2005

From: Rob Zako, Transportation Advocate

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee

Cc: Citizen Advisory Committee
Transportation Planning Committee

Re: Regional Transportation Plan Update and Land Use Assumptions

Dear Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) members,

I enjoyed listening to your discussions at today's meeting, some of which touched on the connection between transportation and land use.

As you know, a primary purpose of regional transportation planning is to provide for the transportation needs of the region. People need to get from where they live to where they shop, work, attend school, recreate and so on. Thus residential, commercial, industrial and other types of land uses generate the transportation needs that the transportation system is planned to meet.

The traditional approach to transportation planning is to first plan land uses and then second plan the transportation system. First, cities and counties adopt comprehensive plans, refinement plans, zoning districts and land use ordinances to plan and manage the types and intensities of allowed land uses. Second, transportation planners *assume* existing and planned land uses and strive to develop a transportation system to meet those needs.

Locally, the Eugene-Springfield General Metropolitan Plan (Metro Plan) and the Coburg Comprehensive Plan are the primary plans that specify what types and intensities of land uses are allowed and anticipated.

But there are two problems with this traditional approach.

First, although the Coburg Comprehensive Plan was just adopted and has a planning horizon that extends for roughly 20 years, the Metro Plan has not undergone a significant update in quite some time. We understand the Metro Plan looks out only as far as the year 2015.

Indeed, staff acknowledged this problem when they noted they would need to make *assumptions* about what land uses are likely to develop after the year 2015 planning horizon of the Metro Plan but before the year 2030 planning horizon of the update of the Regional Transportation Plan.

We do not see how the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) can “assume” what the land uses will be nor do we believe that that MPO has the authority to do so. Indeed, in making “assumptions” about what the land uses are likely to be, wouldn't the MPO effectively be making a self-fulfilling prophecy? If you assume land will develop more intensely in a particular part of the region and plan the transportation system to support those expected land uses, isn't it then almost inevitable that the assumed land uses will actually develop as a result of the supporting transportation facilities being built? If so, wouldn't the MPO be turning the traditional approach to transportation planning—land use planning first, transportation planning second—on its head? Wouldn't the MPO effectively be making land use decisions, albeit under

the pretense of making transportation decisions, thereby usurping the authority the state has delegated to the cities and counties?

We appreciate that updating the Metro Plan will be a major undertaking. But to plan the transportation system without having first (or concurrently) planned the land use system would be like a business planning a major expansion of its network of stores without first assessing where its new customers will likely be. To plan transportation without also planning land uses is bad public policy—and most likely would result in limited taxpayer money being squandered.

Second, staff remarked about the difficulty of planning to meet the projected transportation needs even through the year 2025, let alone through the year 2030. Staff remarked that far too little money is being invested nationwide to meet current and projected transportation needs. In Washington, D.C., President Bush is threatening to veto the Senate's version of the federal transportation reauthorization bill, even though this bill arguably falls far short of providing for the nation's transportation needs. Looking at various trends, it is reasonable to expect that there won't be adequate funds to meet transportation needs.

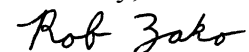
In such a "financially constrained" world, the traditional approach to transportation planning—land uses planning first, transportation planning second—doesn't make sense. We simply can't afford to first plan land uses and then hope that there will be money to fund the roads and other transportation facilities and services those land uses require. It is likely that much of the money won't be there.

Rather, it makes sense to *integrate* land use and transportation planning so that they don't occur separately one after the other but occur together. If one plans land uses in a certain way and then discovers that the needed transportation facilities and services are too expensive, then one can plan the land uses differently to try to reduce the transportation costs to support those land uses.

Your staff is already suggesting there won't be enough money to meet the region's transportation needs. Most of you are responsible for land uses, if not with your MPC hats then with your city or county hats. The responsibilities of the MPC as the policy body for the Metropolitan Planning Organization include assuring that land use and transportation planning is coordinated between the various member jurisdictions.

We urge you to direct your staff to come back with a work program for updating the Regional Transportation Plan that 1) allows the cities and county to retain their authority for making land use decisions without being tacitly overridden by land use "assumptions" that go into the Regional Transportation Plan, and 2) faces the very real financial constraints head on, resulting in a Regional Transportation Plan that realistically plans for the future of the region.

Sincerely,



Rob Zako

Transportation Advocate

1280-B East 28th Ave.

Eugene, OR 97403-1616

Phone: (541) 343-5201

Fax: (541) 683-6333

rob@friends.org