

Update for the Central Oregon Transportation Options Plan (COTOP) COIC Board Meeting - 11/4/2010

SECTION I. COIC BOARD ACTION ITEM

COIC Board Action Requested

At this meeting, the COIC Board of Directors, who serves as the Policy Group for the COTOP project, is asked to review the attached Alternative Scenario Development Analysis report, and provide input and formal decision on the Scenarios that will be the subject of further analysis – and the basis for the policies that will be adopted at the end of the project. The report includes a list of ten (10) separate potential scenarios that were discussed with the Technical Committee (TC). The pros and cons of each, with reasons why they should or should not be the subject of further analysis, are described in Section IV below. The TC input is the basis for the five (5) alternative scenarios that are recommended to the COIC Board/Policy Group herein for selection for further analysis.

SECTION II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of the COTOP project is the development of a long range strategic plan to guide local and inter-community public transportation options in Central Oregon to the year 2030 and beyond. Following adoption by COIC as the guiding long-range strategic plan for public transportation investments in the region, a plan for adoption and implementation by local jurisdictions will follow.

Goals and Objectives

The goal is for local governments and the State to meet the year 2030 demand for inter-community trips through cost effective solutions that include investments in public transit and supportive long term land use policies that support transit, as well as other viable transportation alternatives to single occupant vehicles. It is expected that additional outcomes, such as transit supportive development patterns, reduced infrastructure costs and a reduction in greenhouse gases, will be the product of the goals and policies developed through this project. Also, it is the hope that this document will aid local jurisdictions in prioritizing capital expenditures and efficiently using resources to meet the future intercommunity travel demand over the next 20 years.

SECTION III. TECHNICAL REPORT 2 - SUMMARY

Technical Report 2:

Technical Report 2 – 2030 Regional Intercommunity Trip Forecast and Infrastructure Estimate – was prepared in accord with the required scope of work (a copy of the final document is attached). This report is intended as the “status quo” scenario, with data coming from existing TSP’s or where best available. Overall, the report assess the necessity for new/improved transportation infrastructure to accommodate projected regional intercommunity trips based on the existing Comprehensive Plans and build out of existing land use patterns. Also, the cost of accommodating such trips with new infrastructure is also provided. However, the costs are sometimes difficult to ascertain and are again based on existing TSPs and the best available data.

When discussing the information in Technical Report 2 with the TC, there was no disagreement with the data provided. However, it was discussed that this report should include data for the “first intersection” within the City limits to show how the existing development pattern compared to the alternative scenario analysis described in Section IV below will ultimately affect the local jurisdictions (even though it is beyond the stated scope of the project – the scope is for analysis of the regional trips on transportation facilities outside of and between communities). Local municipalities and counties typically do not have responsibility for accommodating additional trips (via new infrastructure or otherwise) on state highways. However, local city/county streets that intersect with the highway are the responsibility of these jurisdictions – with fixes to failing systems that typically have high costs. Thus, it was determined that such data will be a key component to giving the Policy Group/local officials the ability to see how VMT reduction on the highway segments (i.e. inter-city trips) affects their respective communities. The “first intersection data” will be added to Technical Report 2, with the overall report updated as necessary throughout this project to reflect the most accurate data available. The intersections identified by the local jurisdictions for which data will be collected and added are:

Prineville – Highway 126/Highway 26 “Y”

Bend – Highway 97/Cooley Road; Highway 20/Robal Road; Highway 97 (Bend Parkway)/Third Street; and, Highway 20/27th Street

Sisters – Highway 20/Locust; and, Highway 20/Highway 126

Madras – Highway 97/”D” Street

La Pine – Highway 97/Burgess Road; and, Highway 97/1st Street

SECTION IV. ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT (TGM Project Task 2d – Part 1, Alternative Scenario Development)

Results of Second Technical Committee meeting (October 7, 2010)

The second Technical Committee meeting was aimed at getting input and obtaining consensus on the Alternative Scenario Development Analysis to be used as the basis for the Technical Report 3 – Alternative Scenario Development and Cost Analysis. Part 1 of Technical Report 3 requires work with the TC and the Policy Group to select specific scenarios for further analysis so that a variety of options can be explored, with a preferred alternative selected for the basis of policy development. Specific questions and discussion related to the following potential scenarios took place:

Potential Scenarios for Further Analysis

The draft Scenario Development Document was discussed in detail regarding the ten options listed therein. The TC was asked for input on the viability of each for further analysis – reasons why and why not were sought for each. The rationale and input of the TC is the basis for the five (5) final recommendations to the Policy Group (listed below). The ten potential scenario options that were discussed are listed below, with the comments for each summarized and shown in italics.

1. No Change Alternative (baseline) – Assumes existing land use development and transportation patterns outlined in adopted City/County Comprehensive Plans and TSPs. The No Change Alternative, or baseline condition, is described in Technical Memorandum 2.

Comment: Essentially this is Technical Report 2. However, it is intrinsically tied to scenario options #3 and #6. See notes under option #3 and #6.

2. Commuter Rail Analysis - Assumes a establishing a new commuter rail within the Highway 97 corridor (presumably utilizing the existing BNSF rail lines or right of way). Primary components will include: land acquisition, stations and track construction, and other necessary improvements, such as street crossings. This scenario is required by the Scope of Work for the project.

Comment: This is a requirement of the scope of work for the project.

3. Compact Land Use/Development Scenario – Assumes strategies at the local (city) level to increase development densities and provide employment and service options within distances that make alternative transportation options attractive and effective. Because existing State and local plans currently limit new development outside of urban growth boundaries, this scenario would likely have a very small effect on meeting either of the project’s two goals.

Comment: This is the current land use strategy envisioned under the Oregon Land Use Planning System (can be combined with #1 and #6 described herein). According to existing land use planning goals and laws, development will continue to occur within a compact Urban Growth Boundary, with land uses guidelines encouraging more efficient use of land and greater densities. This option was not recommended for further analysis.

4. Increased Inter-city Transit Services - Assumes expanded expenditure and physical development of transit facilities between cities in the study area, so that alternatives to single occupant vehicles are increased. Assumes that transit runs regularly (no reservation needed) at cities in the study area.

Comment: This scenario will require a dual analysis that assumes the Intra-city transit service at “adequate” levels (see discussion under #5 for “adequate”) does and does not exist for a true comparison. This scenario was recommended for further analysis.

5. Adequate Intra-city Transit Services– Assumes that all cities within the study area (except Culver and Metolius) have an adequate local transit system that connects to the regional transit system. “Adequate” is defined as (providing 90% of residents and employees access to transit within ¼ mile walking distance to a transit stop, with transit running between 6 am and midnight daily). Assumes that this would lead to a XX% increase in intra-city transit use.

Comment: The definition for “adequate” seemed to be high for most. This assumes Transit Oriented Development (TOD) will occur within the realm of the local land use plan – higher density envisioned within the Oregon land use planning system does not necessarily ensure TOD. The TC was comfortable with this scenario option for further analysis, especially when combined with the Increased Inter-city Transit Service Option. However, the TC thought that the definition of “adequate” needed to be revised with assumptions that did not expect such a high level of availability.

6. Regional Economic/Housing Lands Planning – Correct the jobs/housing imbalance (in both availability and costs as related to proximity). Assumes ???

Comment: The TC stated that this issue would presumably be fixed under the Oregon Land Use System that is currently in place. The existing Comprehensive Plans that guide the growth for each community are based on Economic Lands Analysis and Housing Inventories that are aimed at accommodating the projected population growth for the next 20-years – it is assumed that the ratios of need economic and housing lands are balanced for independent and sustainable

communities. Also, it was stated that there are many other factors that influence the housing/jobs balance between communities and that the scale of such analysis is beyond the realm of this project. This scenario option was not suggested for further analysis.

7. Transportation Demand Management Implementation – assumes that all employers with more than 10 employees living in another city have an incentivized vanpool or carpool plan in place, and that XX% of eligible employees use the service.

Comment: There was not a lot of discussion in this regard. Overall, the TC thought this scenario option needed to be included for further analysis. The group pointed to Commute Options as a local source for specific data in the region. The comments related to the incentives provided for many TDM options were discussed in the realm of the disincentives assumed under option #10 below.

8. Increased Highway Infrastructure/Capacity Development - ???

Comment: This was originally provided as an option with the assumption that some transportation improvements could be done ahead of necessity. The TC scaled this back and stated that it is more likely akin to a scenario whereby every improvement listed in the local TSP's would be fully funded and constructed as anticipated (including and most importantly within anticipated timeframes). Even though this is the basis for the "status quo" scenario that is the basis for Technical Report #2, it was decided that this was not likely to occur and was not a viable option for further analysis).

9. Pricing/Increased Costs Associated with VMT – Toll roads, parking fees, gas taxes, increased auto prices, etc.. (Most studies show this to be an essential and key component to substantially reducing VMT).

Comment: This was recognized as being a primary contributor to reduced VMT. However, it was decided that there is very little control over some factors, and that others are not politically likely to occur. However, it was decided that this scenario option had components that might be discussed in the same realm as the incentives provided under the TDM option. More thought about how these can be calculated or anticipated will be necessary to effectively incorporate them into this report.

10. Allowing Increases in Congestion – Do Not Build Infrastructure. Assumes that no projects listed in existing TSPs or the STIP are constructed.

Comment: It was decided that allowing conscious increases in congestion (as a general rule for reducing trips) is not likely to occur. This would effectively be a "no-build" option. This would be a complete departure from current policy and would be linked to "no-growth" policies. Not practical for safety and other reasons as well. This scenario option was not recommended for further analysis.

Overall, options 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 9 were thought to be appropriate scenarios for analysis and fit within the scope of the project. It was also discussed that as the analysis ensued and a preferred scenario was being selected for further policy development (still months down the road), that it would be most likely that a combination of scenarios (or components thereof) would be the most likely result.

It was acknowledged that other influencing factors, such as social, political, legislative, economic, etc., will all contribute in some manner. However, it was decided that the degree to which was hard to factor. More input on these as influencing factors for scenario analysis will be sought from the TC and the Stakeholders Committee as the project continues.

Scenarios Recommended for Further Analysis

Task 2(d), Part 1 of the Long-Range Strategic Plan for Public Transportation Central Oregon Transportation Options Plan (COTOP) requires the identification of scenarios related to long-term transportation and land use. The scenarios are intended to describe different approaches that could potentially reduce the capital costs of roadway improvements and the production of transportation-related greenhouse gases. Overall, the intent of this project is to develop and adopt a set of policies through the scenario analysis that could potentially reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) between the cities in the Central Oregon region over the next 20 years (to Year 2030).

A scenario is one view of what the future might turn out to be—not a forecast, but one possible future outcome. Scenarios are not intended to be unerringly predictive. Rather, their job is to present a vision of the future that is plausible in light of known information. The scenarios examined as described herein were developed through review of existing literature on similar scenario planning processes and input from the Technical Committee.

The purpose of examining different scenarios that could potentially result in lowering VMT is to determine their effectiveness at meeting two goals: 1) improving the cost effectiveness of our transportation expenditures by moving people more efficiently; and, 2) reducing the production of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This project focuses on intercity travel on the main travel corridors, which are also state highway segments, as measured between city boundaries (see Technical Report 1). The results of the scenario analysis will be used to develop long-term policies to help the region make effective transportation investments and achieve GHG reductions.

Recommendation - Based on all the above listed discussion, the following scenarios are recommended to the COIC Board/Policy Group for selection for further analysis for this project:

1. No Change to Existing Plans – This scenario assumes implementation of the land use and transportation patterns outlined in each city or county’s adopted Comprehensive Plans and Transportation System Plans. This scenario assumes that future development will largely contained within each community’s Urban Growth Boundary, with land use policies and guidelines resulting in an efficient development of land to the densities described in each community’s Comprehensive Plan. In addition, this scenario assumes that the existing Comprehensive Plans that guide the growth for each community are based on Economic Lands Analysis and Housing Inventories and therefore reflect balanced economic and housing development.

Under this scenario, greenhouse gas emissions and infrastructure costs associated with transportation will continue to increase at projected rates.

2. Establish Commuter Rail – This scenario assumes that commuter rail service of some type would be established along the Highway 97 corridor, initially between Bend and Redmond and eventually extending to Madras and La Pine. Primary components will include: land acquisition, stations and track construction, and other necessary improvements, such as street crossings.

There are three sub-scenarios within Scenario 2: (1) shared use of existing heavy rail line with BNNR, (2) construction of a parallel rail line within the existing BNNR railroad right of way, and (3) construction of a new rail line (most likely light rail) within the right of way of Highway 97.

A commuter rail scenario is required by the Scope of Work for the project.

3. Improve Inter-City Transit Service – This scenario assumes that there would be an expansion of transit service between the eight cities in the study area (Bend, Culver, La Pine, Madras, Metolius, Prineville, Redmond, and Sisters). This scenario assumes that transit stops regularly (at least twice a day – morning and afternoon/evening, with no reservation needed) between cities in the study area.

There are two sub-scenarios within Scenario 3: (1) inter-city transit remains in its existing condition within the cities of the study area, and (2) all cities within the study area (except Culver and Metolius) have an adequate inter-city transit system that connects to the regional intra-city transit system.

4. Implement Transportation Demand Management (Van or Car Pool) – This scenario assumes that all large employers (those with an average of at least 100 employees on payroll annually) have an incentivized inter-city vanpool or carpool plan in place, and that 10% of eligible employees participate at least once a week.

5. Increase the Costs Associated with Single Occupancy Vehicle Use – This scenario assumes that factors such as fuel prices, gas taxes, or other transportation-related fees such as carbon taxes significantly increase the cost of single occupancy vehicle use in Central Oregon. Some studies indicate that a 10 cent per gallon increase in gasoline tax could potentially reduce carbon emissions by 1.5%, and that a sustained increase in gas prices of 10% might result in a reduction in gasoline consumption of up to 4%.

Comment: This was recognized as being a primary contributor to reduced VMT. However, it was decided that there is very little control over some factors, and that others are not politically likely to occur. However, it was decided that this scenario option had components that might be discussed in the same realm as the incentives provided under the TDM option. More thought about how these can be calculated or anticipated will be necessary to effectively incorporate them into this report.

Note: The scope of work suggests the possibilities of creating scenarios that include “compact development” and “increases in densities” within the UGBs. The Technical Committee considered this suggestion and rejected it for the following reasons:

- The TC decided that this study should focus on inter-city rather than intra-city transit trips. Increased densities and compact development primarily have an effect on intra-city transportation patterns. Scenario No. 3 recognizes that there is a positive effect on inter-city transit use when the intra-city transit services are improved, but does not go into detail about *how* intra-city transit could be improved. This was determined to be beyond of the scope of work for this project.
- Several TC members suggested that Oregon Land Use laws already encourage or require (depending on the size of the city) compact development and increased densities within UGBs. Thus, a change in the existing land use patterns was assumed to occur over time and not recommended for further analysis within the scope of this project.

SECTION V. FUTURE STEPS

Next Steps

Month 4 through 6 of this project will include analysis of the Scenarios selected by the Policy Group. Regular meetings with the Technical Committee will continue. Also, once the Scenarios are chosen, meetings with a Stakeholder Committee will begin – the purpose of the Stakeholders input is to obtain user group advice and knowledge on specific factors that affect the community. Ultimately, during months 7 through 10, the preferred alternative will be selected and more detailed policies will be drafted toward that selection with the input of all Committees.