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# 2035 Regional Transportation Plan Update: A New Look at Transportation - Background Information and Proposed Work Plan for Public Participation

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**April 14, 2006**

**TO: Metro Council, JPACT, and Interested Parties**  
**FROM: The ECONorthwest Team<sup>1</sup>**  
**SUBJECT: 2035 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE: A NEW LOOK AT TRANSPORTATION - Background Information and Proposed Work Plan for Public Participation**

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This memorandum provides background for the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update. It describes what Metro staff and consultants have learned and concluded about a direction for the work program for stakeholder and public outreach during the RTP. That recommended work plan is the focus of the Regional Transportation Forum on April 20.

This memorandum has three sections:

- 1. Overview of the RTP** provides context for the 2035 RTP Update: what an RTP is, how transportation planning has been done in the Portland region in the past, and conceptually how this update is proposed to be conducted.
- 2. Framework for Phase 1 of the RTP: Designing a Process for the RTP** describes the objectives of the RTP, how a work plan to meet those objectives should be designed, and specific issues this RTP Update will address.
- 3. Recommended Work Plan** discusses the key element of effective public involvement processes. This section ends with a discussion of the basic components of a recommended work plan that involves decisionmakers, interest groups, and the public in a process that integrates technical work with public discussion, and coordinates the RTP's efforts with other state and local transportation planning, and with regional planning for land use, economic development, and environmental quality.

These sections were written in part by summarizing from longer technical memoranda and other materials assembled or developed as part of this project. Readers wanting more detail can go to <http://metro-region.org/rtp> (click on *2035 RTP Update* to go to the project web page) and find those materials as electronic files (\*.pdf or links to websites) organized under the same three headings. Footnotes in this memorandum reference the key documents; an appendix at the end gives the full list.

This memorandum is about 15 pages long. For the short version, see a separate two-page summary (included in materials sent to participants at the April forum).

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<sup>1</sup> ECONorthwest (ECO), Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG), Kittelson and Associates (KAI), Siegel Consulting, and Moore Information.

# 1. OVERVIEW OF THE RTP

## 1.1 WHAT IS A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN?

Metro is starting an update of its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Metropolitan areas with populations over 50,000 people are required by federal law to have a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and those organizations are required to prepare regional transportation plans that describe, among other things, how federal and state funds for transportation projects and programs will be spent. An MPO must create an RTP that identifies the transportation investments it will make with those funds over a 20-year planning period.

Federal rules require the RTP to be *financially constrained*—that the estimated costs of the identified projects not exceed an estimate of revenues that are “reasonably anticipated to be available” for the 20-year planning period. A transportation project is eligible for federal transportation funds distributed through Metro if it is included in the financially constrained system and is consistent with federal air quality standards.

Though there are many requirements (federal and state) and planning standards that affect the content of an RTP, it is fundamentally about making good choices about transportation investments in the face of competition for limited funds.

## 1.2 WHAT IS THE RECENT HISTORY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING IN THE PORTLAND REGION?

The RTP Update is the first major update to the Portland region’s RTP since the 2000 RTP.<sup>2</sup> The 2000 RTP was the culmination of a five-year effort to overhaul the previous plan to reflect new federal and state regulations and to implement the then newly adopted 2040 Growth Concept. It was the first RTP to be acknowledged by the LCDC as consistent with statewide planning goals.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the 2000 RTP, Metro’s RTPs were almost exclusively about road and transit improvements. The 2000 RTP was the first truly multi-modal plan, integrating land-use and transportation objectives. The plan addressed walking, bicycling, driving, transit, and freight movement, and implemented the broader policy direction established by the 2040 Growth Concept and Regional Framework Plan.

The 2000 RTP was the product of extensive input from residents of the region and from state, regional, and local government partners. A 21-member Citizen Advisory Committee met over a two-year period. Open houses, mailings, press releases, fact-sheets, and other means conveyed the technical information to the public and elicited their opinions on policies, projects, and implementation strategies.

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<sup>2</sup> There were minor updates in 2002 and 2003-04, designed to keep the RTP in compliance with state regulations and federal changes to transportation laws.

<sup>3</sup> See **2004 Regional Transportation Plan** on the 2035 RTP Update website.

Transportation planning in the Portland metropolitan region has been, and will continue to be, influenced by other federal, state, and regional policies and requirements,<sup>4</sup> including (but not limited to):

- **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)**, 2005, is the most recent federal transportation legislation that establishes a comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas. Among other provisions, it directs Metro to expand consultation and coordination with planning officials, resource agencies and users of the system, develop a formal public participation plan that provides reasonable opportunities for interested parties to comment on development of the RTP and address eight planning factors, including enhancing security and increasing system management and operations.<sup>5</sup>
- **Oregon Highway Plan (OHP)**, 1999, establishes long-range policies and investment strategies for the State Highway System. Among other things, it directs ODOT to work with local governments to coordinate community and transportation development in ways that reflect local aspirations and ODOT's needs for safety and mobility.
- **Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP)** is the state's long-range (25 years) multimodal transportation plan for Oregon's highways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transportation, airports, pipelines, ports, and railroads. The underlying message in the OTP 2006 update is that decisions about how to manage and fund transportation must adapt to new fiscal and environmental realities. Without additional funding, the plan argues a need to focus on preservation of the current system rather than expansion.
- **Transportation Planning Rule (TPR)** sets state requirements for local transportation planning in Oregon. By state law, local plans in MPO areas must be consistent with the regional transportation system plan (TSP). In the Portland region, the Regional Transportation Plan serves as the regional TSP. Among other things, the TPR has requirements for reducing reliance on any one transportation mode, linking transportation planning with land-use planning, and protection of interchange capacity.
- **Oregon Innovative Partnerships Program (OIPP)** is a state program allowing new partnership opportunities for transportation projects with private businesses, local governments, and ODOT. The goal is accelerate project delivery and encourage innovation by bringing new funding, expertise, and technology together.
- **State Air Quality Implementation Plan (SIP)** is written by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to ensure continued attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for carbon monoxide (CO) in the Portland area, and to comply with the federal Clean Air Act and the policies of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Portland region met CO standards in 1996 and has done so since then. For all listed air pollutants (e.g., ground-level ozone and particulates), the Portland region meets

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<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed summary of the federal, state, and regional policies and requirements, see **Background Documents Review** on the 2035 RTP Update website. This document also identifies the source and location of the actual legislation or document referenced.

<sup>5</sup> For a summary of the SAFETEA-LU metropolitan planning requirements and implications for the 2035 RTP update, see **Detailed Summary of SAFETEA-LU Implications for 2035 RTP Update**. For a full copy of the SAFETEA-LU legislation, see **SAFETEA-LU Legislation**, both on the 2035 RTP Update website.

national air quality standards and has no requirements for maintenance plans or conformity demonstrations.

- Metro's **2040 Growth Concept**, 1995, has text and a map describing the desired urban form for the region in 2040. The broad objective of the Growth Concept is to preserve the region's livability while accommodating expected growth. More specifically, it is a regional commitment to developing a plan that is based on efficient use of land and a safe, cost-effective, and efficient transportation system that supports the desired land uses and serves all forms of travel. The Growth Concept establishes a 50-year transportation framework for achieving the desired urban form, with the RTP serving as the more detailed 20-year implementation plan for this vision.
- Metro's **Regional Framework Plan** contains policies that address land-use, transportation, water, parks and open spaces, and other regional issues to encourage consistency with the 2040 Growth Concept. The Framework Plan is the regional policy basis for Metro's planning to accommodate future population and employment growth and achieve the 2040 Growth Concept.

In addition to these policies and requirements, **A New Look at Regional Choices** (the New Look) is a regional process to update Metro's long-range strategies and policies for managing growth. The process will focus primarily on updating the region's implementation tools to best support the region's vision for urban form, the economy, transportation, and the environment. At the end of 2006, the Metro Council will adopt updated policies and implementation strategies, which may include proposals for the 2007 Oregon Legislature and policy direction on transportation investment priorities to be integrated into the 2035 RTP. The RTP Update is simultaneously the transportation element of the New Look. Metro wants the region's land use and transportation policies work together to enhance the region's economic strength and livability.<sup>6</sup> Section 2.2 of this memorandum further describes how the RTP Update will be integrated with the New Look.

### 1.3 HOW WILL THE 2035 RTP UPDATE BE CONDUCTED IN THE PORTLAND METROPOLITAN REGION?

In broad terms, the RTP will be created, reviewed, and adopted in five phases:<sup>7</sup>

- **Phase 1: Scoping (February – June 2006).** Collaboratively develop a work plan for technical work and policy development and public participation plan to guide these efforts.
- **Phase 2: Research and Policy Development (June – December 2006).** Identify regional transportation issues, needs and deficiencies based on an evaluation of historical, current, and likely future conditions for transportation system, financial, land use, economic, and demographic factors that influence growth and the performance of the regional transportation system. Identify the public's priorities for transportation and willingness to pay for the transportation services and programs desired.

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<sup>6</sup> See **New Look** on the 2035 RTP Update website for more information about the New Look regional planning process, including fact sheets and public opinion research results.

<sup>7</sup> See **RTP Update Key Milestones and Products** on the 2035 RTP Update website for the overall timeline, major tasks, and products for each phase of the update process.

- **Phase 3: System Development and Analysis (January – September 2007).** Develop and evaluate a financially constrained system of projects and programs that address transportation needs, achieve desired outcomes, and implement policy direction from the New Look. Prepare a discussion draft Regional Transportation Plan that identifies a set of consistent outcomes, policies, strategies, and performance measures, implements New Look policy visions, and meets federal and state planning requirements.
- **Phase 4: 2035 RTP Adoption Process (September – November 2007).** Provide a formal process for interested parties to express ideas and concerns about the discussion draft plan policies, projects and implementation strategies, and compile a public comment report that responds to all comments received prior to the final decision.
- **Post-Adoption Federal and State Consultation Process (December 2007 – March 2008).** Conduct an air quality conformity determination to corroborate that the updated plan meets federal and state air quality requirements. Submit the updated plan to federal and state regulatory agencies for approval, prior to the current plan's expiration in March 2008. *(This set of technical and public participation tasks is outside of the scope of the RTP update process described in this memorandum.)*

Moving from this broad description to a detailed work program is the purpose of Phase 1 of the RTP Update process and the focus of this memorandum and the Regional Transportation Forum. The next section provides a framework for developing such a work program.

## **2. FRAMEWORK FOR PHASE 1 OF THE RTP: DESIGNING A PROCESS FOR THE RTP**

### **2.1 OBJECTIVES FOR AN RTP WORK PLAN**

#### **General objectives**

Though there are many requirements (federal and state) and planning standards that affect the content of an RTP, it is fundamentally about making good choices about transportation investments in the face of competition for limited funds. The process leading to an adopted RTP, and the transportation investments it authorizes, must incorporate public opinion and technical information in a public discussion of:

- What the region wants from its transportation system (outcomes).
- What projects and programs are most likely to produce those outcomes efficiently and fairly.
- What obstacles (especially financial ones) are there to implementing those projects and programs.
- What projects and programs to pursue.

In sum, the RTP planning effort should provide:

- Good information (accurate, relevant, and understandable)
- About project and program performance (benefits and costs)
- In an open process

- That facilitates decisions about transportation investments
- That best advance the 2040 Growth Concept and are efficient and equitably serve the public.

## New directions and emphasis

In part because of federal requirements, but primarily because of Metro Council and staff desire to improve the process for, and results of, regional transportation planning, two elements of the planning process are to be given particular attention in the 2035 RTP Update:

- **Integration and coordination with other regional planning processes.** The 2000 RTP was coordinated with development of the 2040 Growth Concept; this update will build on this coordination. The process for plan development and review must coordinate with other planning processes to achieve common regional goals and outcomes. There are important links between transportation improvements and strategic investments that forward goals for land use and the region's economy while also supporting goals for protecting the environment. Consultation with a broader spectrum of interests will also be integrated into the process as the RTP update is integrated within the broader New Look planning process.
- **Focus on good information about desired outcomes, actions to achieve them, and the ability to afford those actions given realistic financial expectations.** The values and desired outcomes of the public are very important, and the decisionmaking process will focus on those values and outcomes to develop a priority list of transportation projects that is calibrated with realistic financial expectations for funding priority transportation services and programs to maximize benefits across the region.

The next section describes in broad terms how these objectives will be addressed. Section 3 provides more detail about a work program consistent with the objectives.

## 2.2 A STRUCTURE FOR MEETING THOSE OBJECTIVES

### Integration and coordination

The RTP process and resulting planning must be integrated both internally and externally. Internally, the planning must coordinate the *technical analysis* with the *public-participation process*. The rest of this memorandum uses the terms *Technical Analysis Plan (TAP)* and *Public-Participation Plan (PPP)* to refer to the efforts in Phase 1 of the RTP to design technical and outreach work programs that make sense separately and function together.

The PPP describes how decisionmakers, stakeholders, and the public will be engaged in the process. It describes a communication plan for getting information to and from all these groups, and how this information will be used to update the plan. The consultant work in Phase 1 and the rest of this memorandum address primarily the PPP.

The TAP describes all the tasks of information collection and analysis that typically fall to technical staff as part of policy development and evaluation: Metro staff and consultants; planners, policy analysts, engineers, economists, urban designers, and others. Examples of

technical work that a TAP would coordinate are the collection of travel data, transportation modeling, project costing, financing, and project evaluation.<sup>8</sup>

The integration that Metro desires for the RTP process is both internal and external. *Internal integration* means that the RTP process is designed so that the technical information is available for the public process and decisionmakers when it is needed, and the public process does not consider policy issues before the right technical information can be made available. *External integration* means that the RTP process is coordinated with other planning efforts and documents in the region: that transportation in the RTP coordinates with other transportation planning (e.g., by ODOT at the state level) and with other planning efforts that are focused on land use, the economy, and the environment.

The Portland region is held as a model around the country for coordinated regional planning on transportation and land use. Through a combination of good work and good timing, Metro is concurrently updating the region's long-range growth management plan, supporting transportation plan, and implementation tools in its *New Look* planning effort.<sup>9</sup> This overlap of planning efforts allows for efficiencies in both technical analysis and outreach, and is more likely to satisfy decisionmakers and the public that current information about all the important issues is being considered.

Figure 1 illustrates how the RTP update fits in the New Look planning process.

The circle at the top of Figure 1 shows *the New Look* as the comprehensive evaluation of development issues in the Portland region. The New Look has three main components, each with many technical elements:

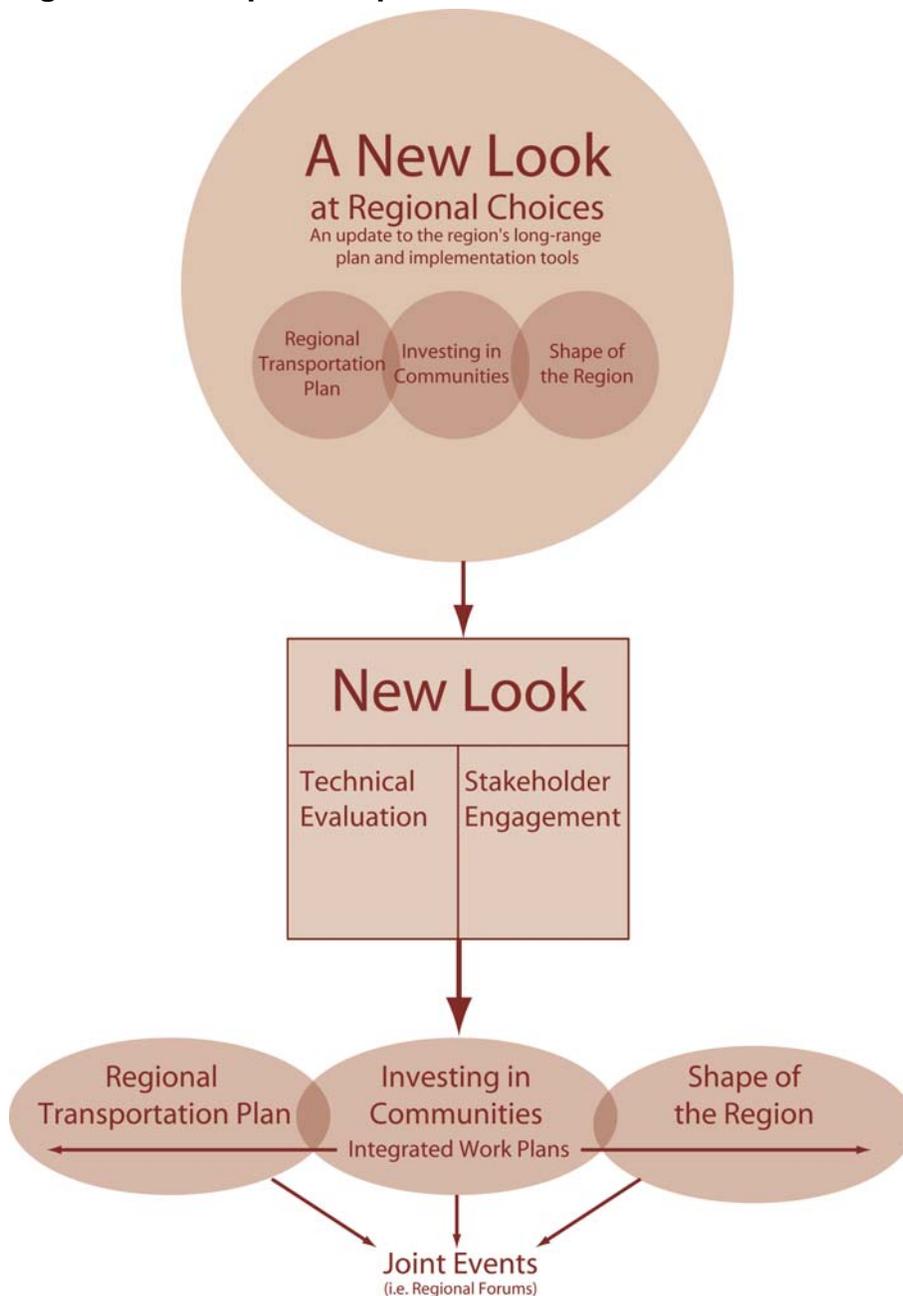
- *Investing in our Communities* focuses on growth and development *inside* the current urban growth boundary (UGB).
- *Shaping the Region* focuses on growth and development at the urban fringe, primarily *outside* the current UGB.
- *A New Look at Transportation* (which is simultaneously the required federal process for creating an RTP) is supports (and also influences) the vision for growth and development that emerges from the previous two components. The RTP will focus on all types of transportation—highways, transit, alternative modes, freight, and others. By working within the umbrella of the New Look, the process will take into consideration how those transportation investments affect land use, the economy, and environmental quality.

The box in the middle of Figure 1 illustrates that the planning processes under the New Look will have both *technical* and *process* (stakeholder engagement) components. Those two components must be coordinated so that the public discussion is informed by the technical information it needs on a schedule that allows that information to be provided (internal coordination and consistency). That requires an integrated work plan, which is what Phase 1 of the RTP process is about.

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<sup>8</sup> See **Draft Technical Analysis Plan** on the 2035 RTP Update website for a summary of the major technical and policy development tasks.

<sup>9</sup> The New Look will focus primarily on updating the region's implementation tools to best support the 2040 Growth Concept land-use concepts and policies for urban form, the economy, transportation, and the environment.

**Figure 1. RTP Update is part of New Look**

Those integrated work plans must also fit with other plans (external coordination and consistency). At one level that means that *within* the New Look the technical and process tasks of Investing in Communities, Shape of the Region, and the RTP must fit together. One obvious example is that many of the big public outreach efforts for these three components can be done more effectively and more efficiently by combining them. The arrows between the bottom ovals illustrate the need for this coordination. As a practical matter, the way such coordination occurs is by having staff working on the different plans exchange ideas as they are developing the work plans for their respective efforts. That coordination should lead to, among other things, agreement on key joint events (e.g., integrating RTP outreach into the scheduled New Look Regional Forum).

Not illustrated in Figure 1 is the fact that the external coordination extends beyond Metro to coordination with the plans and activities of other agencies.

To assist with creating the kind of integrated work plan described in Figure 1, Metro hired the ECONorthwest team. The consultant team's primary responsibility is for the *outreach / public-participation component* of the transportation (RTP) component. The secondary tasks responsibility is to help coordinate (1) the outreach component of the RTP with the technical component of the RTP (where Metro staff have primary responsibility); and (2) the RTP planning process with the New Look planning process.

The work plan recommended in this memorandum is the primary topic for the Metro Council, JPACT, and other participants at a Regional Transportation Forum on April 20. Metro staff and consultants will use the information provided on April 20 to develop a final technical work program and public participation plan for review, amendment, and approval by JPACT and the Metro Council in June 2006.<sup>10</sup>

### **Focus on outcomes**

The current 2004 RTP includes nearly 1,000 multi-modal projects estimated to cost more than \$10 billion, but the region anticipates receiving less than \$5 billion in revenue over 20 years. Furthermore, these are capital costs that compete for the same sources used by state, regional, and local governments for operations and maintenance. This funding shortfall creates problems not only for providing needed transportation infrastructure investments, but also for the achieving the desired land-use patterns envisioned in the 2040 Growth Concept.

That gap between the cost of desired transportation improvements and the ability to pay for them is a central concern of the 2035 RTP Update. To address the funding challenges Metro wants to modify the traditional process the region uses to evaluate and select transportation improvements. It wants a process that defines the critical transportation issues facing the region in the context of the New Look and choices for prioritizing needed transportation improvements. A goal of this planning effort is a more streamlined plan and a list of transportation priorities that (1) support the Region 2040 Growth Concept and the New Look policy direction, and (2) collectively do not cost more than realistic estimates of revenues. The process should engage citizens and their elected and appointed representatives to elicit their opinions about what transportation improvements are most important to them to inform prioritizing transportation investments.

Metro originally asked the consultant team to design a process based on an approach called "Budgeting for Outcomes." The approach builds from three premises: (1) there are specific outcomes the public desires; (2) there is a price the public is willing to pay for government services that has remained relatively constant over time; and (3) establishing budget priorities within that willingness to pay should be based on public input.

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<sup>10</sup> Standing advisory committees will have opportunities to review and comment on the work program and public participation plan in May 2006. The committees include the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC), the Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC), the Metro Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC), and the Metro Committee for Citizen Involvement (MCCI). See **Regional Decision-Making Process: Roles and Responsibilities** on the 2035 RTP Update website for an explanation of the committees and their roles.

Because the “Budgeting for Outcomes” approach is designed for a single jurisdiction to make budget priority decisions for an individual jurisdiction, Metro and the consultant team are adopting its principles but adapting its procedures to fit within the complex transportation funding and multi-jurisdictional environment that exists in the Portland metropolitan region. The clear desire is to move away from a plan that is a compilation of locally desired projects with an unfundable cost, to one that focuses on delivering specific results (e.g., outcomes) that citizens value (e.g., priorities) at a price they are willing to pay. The 2035 RTP Update process will enable citizens and decisionmakers to work together to identify the highest priority transportation projects and programs—ones that provide a relatively high amount of net benefits for the entire region.<sup>11</sup>

Better information about what transportation improvements people want and are willing to pay for is essential to the creation of an RTP that provides efficient transportation improvements and is financially constrained. What people are willing to pay (in their various roles as transportation users and federal, state, and local taxpayers) theoretically establishes the financial constraint. Given that context, an RTP (like any plan for public investment) should try to:

- *Identify what matters to citizens.* This requires identifying the public’s desired outcomes and transportation priorities in the context of limited transportation funding.
- *Measure what matters.* This requires the development of outcomes-based performance measures that should include qualitative assessments of impacts (e.g., public opinion) as well as quantitative ones (e.g., the outputs of travel-demand models or environmental justice analysis) while being careful not to double-count either a benefit or a cost.
- *Identify choices to be made through public policies and/or investments.* Though the choices are ultimately political ones (made by a small group of decisionmakers elected or appointed to represent a larger public), the hope is that the choices made roughly conform to a ranking of projects based on net benefits (cost-effectiveness), subject to constraints imposed by goals for the distribution of net benefits (fairness, equity).

This logic has been fundamental to proponents of effective decisionmaking and public policy for a century. The RTP update technical evaluation must fit into and inform a larger process of public decisionmaking. The ECONorthwest Team will work with Metro staff to design a *decision-aiding* public process that also recognizes the broader political realities and roles and responsibilities in the region. Our belief is that a public decisionmaking process that is informed by good information (understandable and accurate, with assumptions and variability clearly documented) will result in better and more informed decisions.

### **2.3 ISSUES THIS UPDATE OF THE RTP SHOULD ADDRESS**

The region has implemented state policy calling for reduced reliance on any single mode of transportation by complementing the region’s roads and highways with a comprehensive public transit network; taking seriously the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in addition to cars; and integrating land use and transportation planning by promoting compact urban form and mixed-use development. Providing for future transportation needs has challenges, all of which have

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<sup>11</sup> See **Making Decisions Using An Outcomes-Based Approach To Evaluate Choices** on the 2035 RTP Update website for a more detailed discussion of processes for evaluating transportation projects.

important implications for the region's ability to achieve its economic and community goals:

- **Growth.** As the region expands to accommodate the one million new residents that are expected to be living here by 2030, major new transportation investments will be required to serve both developed and developing areas.
- **Congestion.** A 2005 study found that the region's excellent rail, marine, highway, and air connections to national and international destinations position it as both a hub for the distribution of goods across the country and a gateway for global trade. These connections make the region's economy highly dependent on transportation. Projected growth, however, in freight and general traffic cannot be accommodated on the current system. Increasing congestion in critical corridors—even with currently planned investments—could harm the region's ability to maintain and grow business.
- **Funding.** State and local funding for roads and transit is failing to keep pace with current needs, to say nothing of the growth expected in the coming decades. Funding has been identified for less than half the \$10 billion cost of the projects in the current Regional Transportation Plan. Furthermore, these capital expenditures compete against critical needs for operations and maintenance of the existing transportation system.
- **Quality of Life.** Metro is updating the Region 2040 blueprint for growth in the Portland region to provide a framework for planning and development to protect our quality of life from the negative effects that rapid growth and urban sprawl have brought in other regions. The RTP and other implementation plans will implement this vision, but may need significant revisions in order to carry out the updated Region 2040 plan.

More specifically, the RTP Update will address many issues tied to transportation investments, including:

- How should the region prioritize transportation projects given current funding constraints? How can the region respond to rapid population growth if funding does not grow also?
- What is the appropriate balance between large projects that serve freight and economic development and other projects that support transportation choices and vibrant centers and neighborhoods?
- Where will the funding come from for the significant infrastructure investments needed to serve new urban areas brought inside the urban growth boundary?
- How can the region ensure that major highway projects solve existing problems rather than inducing demand from outside the region and creating new problems?
- How can the region fund multi-modal projects that are critical for community livability but not eligible for highway-fund dollars?
- How can the region reconcile the fragmented ownership of its transportation facilities with the need for coordinated governance of the system?
- How can the region best monitor whether its transportation system is successful in meeting regional goals and policies?
- Which new transportation funding sources should the region pursue and for which elements of the Regional Transportation Plan?

### 3. RECOMMENDED WORK PLAN

#### 3.1 INTEGRATING TECHNICAL AND OUTREACH TASKS

Section 2.2 discussed the importance of coordinating the technical analysis (as described in the Technical Analysis Plan) with the process for public outreach and participation (as described in the Public-Participation Plan). This section adds a little detail.

Metro has prepared a draft of the Technical Analysis Plan. It is not detailed, but at this point it need not be. It will be expanded before June 2006. For the purposes of this memorandum—the design of the Public-Participation Plan—it is enough to have a broad idea of the Technical Analysis Plan, and the process by which technical information might integrate into an evaluation process.

#### 3.2 BEST PRACTICES IN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A public outreach process that effectively and fully engages the community serves a dual purpose: it guides policymakers and helps them to make effective and informed decisions, while at the same time building capacity at the community level. This has a self-reinforcing effect as community guidance drives better and more responsive democratic decisionmaking while at the same time serving to educate and involve the public. Effective community involvement efforts create good citizens, and those citizens are a valuable resource for ensuring effective policy. For Metro's New Look and Regional Transportation Plan update, a robust effort to engage citizens in a dialogue regarding values, priorities, and desired outcomes will be important.

An effective public involvement effort must address:

- **Equity.** Effective public involvement ensures that all voices in a community are heard, from elected officials and senior staff to traditionally underrepresented communities. This allows for dialogue, the growth of community capacity, and helps to build social equity.
- **Efficiency.** Community engagement can require a considerable initial expenditure of time and effort. However, in the long term, an effective engagement effort can increase efficiency and lower cost by achieving community buy-in early in the process.
- **Quality.** Involving the community early and effectively allows for projects to more accurately reflect community needs and priorities, thereby enhancing the overall quality of the project.

As part of its research, the ECO team conducted a review of outreach processes, focusing on MIG's award-winning RTP outreach efforts in Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay area in order to outline "best practices" in public involvement. More detail about the advantages and disadvantages of specific techniques (e.g., workshops, surveys, speakers' bureaus) is in an appendix.<sup>12</sup> That evaluation was the basis for the recommended program for public involvement, summarized in the next section.

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<sup>12</sup> See **Best Practices in Public Involvement** on the 2035 RTP Update website for further discussion of regarding best practices in public participation.

### 3.3 RECOMMENDED PLAN FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The consultant team considered the various techniques for participation in the context of Metro's objectives for participation, including:

1. Focus on good information about desired outcomes, actions to achieve them, and the ability to afford those actions given realistic financial expectations.
2. Emphasize internal and external coordination.
3. Work within budget constraints.

The team develop a Public-Participation Plan that incorporates the most appropriate outreach and involvement techniques into the framework described earlier in this memorandum. The details of that plan are in an appendix.<sup>13</sup> In summary, the recommended participation plan has three parts:

- **Part 1, Initial Outreach and Education.** The plan starts with public education and engagement, using five primary methods to engage the public in focused input and discussions: a regional forum, opinion surveys, focus groups, targeted workshops, transportation hotline and an interactive website. This part is expected to begin at the first forum for the New Look (June) and to conclude at the second forum (December 2006).
- **Part 2, Agency and Jurisdiction Coordination, Collaboration, and Outreach.** The intent is to bring agencies and jurisdictions together to discuss the implications of the findings of the previous component's outreach effort, and to ensure effective regional and local collaboration and cooperation. The proposal is for (1) agency and jurisdictional outreach, and a collaboration, and (2) a cooperation effort focused on specific technical topics and interest areas. This part will be conducted along a roughly parallel timeframe with Part 1.
- **Part 3, Draft RTP Public Review and Comment Period.** This part focuses on soliciting input on the draft RTP through a series of public hearings held around the region, transportation hotline, web-based outreach, and a public information campaign. It will begin after of Parts 1 and 2 are complete and a draft RTP is available.

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<sup>13</sup> See **Recommended Public Participation Plan** on the 2035 RTP Update website for a more detailed description of the recommended Public Participation Plan.

## APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF SUPPORTING TECHNICAL MATERIAL

Readers wanting more detail can go to <http://metro-region.org/rtp> (click on *2035 RTP Update* to go to the project web page) and find these materials as electronic files (\*.pdf or links to websites) organized under the same three headings.

### 1. OVERVIEW OF THE RTP

- **2004 Regional Transportation Plan** has downloadable versions of the current 2004 RTP and Technical Appendix.
- **Background Documents Review** summarizes recent plans and regulatory changes that have implications for the update to the Regional Transportation Plan. The document is organized by federal, state, regional and local planning effort or legislation and includes web site addresses when available.
- **Detailed Summary of SAFETEA-LU Implications for 2035 RTP Update** summarizes SAFETEA-LU metropolitan planning requirements and implications for the 2035 RTP update.
- **SAFETEA-LU Legislation** provides a link to more detailed information about the recent federal legislation.
- **New Look** provides more detailed information about the New Look regional planning process, including fact sheets and public opinion research results.
- **2035 RTP Update Key Milestones and Products** graphically displays the overall timeline, major tasks and products for each phase of the update process.

### 2. FRAMEWORK FOR PHASE 1 OF THE RTP: DESIGNING A WORK PLAN FOR THE RTP

- **Draft Technical Analysis Plan (TAP)** provides a more detailed summary of the major technical and policy development tasks that will be completed to support the RTP update process.
- **Regional Decision-Making Process: Roles and Responsibilities** summarizes the membership and respective roles and responsibilities for Metro's standing advisory committees.
- **Making Decisions Using An Outcomes-Based Approach To Evaluate Choices** describes the necessary elements of an outcomes-based (i.e., criteria-based) approach to decision-making.

### 3. RECOMMENDED WORK PLAN

- **Best Practices in Public Involvement** provides an overview of best practices in public involvement in the context of regional transportation planning.
- **Recommended Public Participation Plan** describes the recommended Public Participation Plan.