



Date: December 3, 2009

To: Metro Council, JPACT, MPAC and interested parties

From: Kim Ellis, Principal Transportation Planner

Re: Regional Transportation Plan Approval and Climate Change

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## BACKGROUND

Approval of the Regional Transportation Plan resolution will move the region forward to address climate change and other goals of the plan. The proposed RTP moves our region forward by supporting jobs and providing significant new investments in centers, employment areas and the region's major travel corridors that will help reduce our region's carbon footprint. It will result in reduced per capita vehicle miles traveled and per capita greenhouse gas emissions. It provides for record levels of investment in transit and bicycle and pedestrian-oriented projects that will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, it sets ambitious targets for evaluating future transportation investments against greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and other targets for safety, equity, active transportation and the efficient movement of goods and freight. The plan also sets a foundation for further efforts to proactively address climate change at the local and regional levels.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO APPROVE THE RTP NOW?

The resolution under consideration provides staff with the direction needed to finalize the RTP between December 2009 and June 2010.

- **Climate change:** The RTP Climate Action Plan approved by JPACT on November 12 outlines immediate and longer-term actions that will be implemented at the local and regional levels, including:
  - **Winter 2010: Measure greenhouse gas emissions** using the yet-to-be approved EPA MOVES model as part of the final system analysis. The model is currently in draft form; EPA anticipates release of a final MOVES model in December 2009. The new model will better account for federal CAFÉ standards and anticipated changes to vehicle technologies.
  - **Winter 2010:** Prepare an overall scope of work, budget and intergovernmental agreements to initiate the **greenhouse gas scenario planning** mandated by the 2009 Oregon Legislature in House Bill 2001.
  - **Winter 2010:** Develop **functional plan amendments** to direct how local governments should update their transportation system plans and projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other goals of the RTP. JPACT, MPAC and the Metro Council will provide policy direction on what requirements will be in the updated functional plan. This work will be coordinated with development of the 20-year regional urban growth boundary capacity ordinance that also commits communities and the region to specific land use actions to minimize contributions to global warming and accommodate a majority of future growth within the current urban growth boundary. Local plan updates will begin in June 2010, after final adoption of the RTP by Ordinance.

- **Winter 2010: Update** the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (**MTIP**) and federal reauthorization **criteria** to help the region prioritize transportation investments that meet all the RTP performance targets including minimizing contributions to global warming.
- **Spring-Summer 2010:** Develop and enhance regional forecasting models, develop baseline regional **greenhouse gas emissions inventory** and conduct additional background research to establish the policy basis and methodologies for new tools and strategies to address climate change at the local and regional levels.
- **June 2010:** Begin, immediately upon final adoption of the RTP, a more comprehensive and thorough analysis of the factors that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and the policies and investments necessary to curb their growth as directed by HB 2001. The results of this **scenarios analysis** will inform the next update to the RTP, beginning in 2012. **If data indicates new policy direction is needed, the RTP and implementing functional plan may be amended prior to the next update.** The HB 2001 scenarios analysis will provide relevant and actionable information the region and local governments can use to evaluate the effects of land use and transportation policies and investments on greenhouse gas emissions. Research, tools and methodologies developed through this effort will be used to further evaluate and prioritize investments in the next RTP update.
- **June 2010-2012: Update local plans** to respond to the new RTP policies and performance targets. New projects and investment priorities would be forwarded for evaluation and prioritization in the next RTP.
- **June 2012:** Initiate the **next RTP update** in coordination with selecting the preferred greenhouse gas emissions reduction scenario. Research, tools and methodologies developed through the HB 2001 scenarios effort will be used to further evaluate and prioritize investments in the RTP update. The update may also result in additional functional plan amendments to direct how local plans will implement the recommended land use and transportation scenario.

**Deferring action on the RTP will delay implementation of these activities.**

- **Regional capacity ordinance and urban growth boundary decisions:** In December 2010, the region will need to decide how to accommodate jobs and housing for the next 20 years. The state component of the RTP includes new high capacity transit projects and other investments that strongly support compact urban development and other outcomes that define a healthy and successful region. RTP projects approved in 2009 will be assumed in the final urban growth report analysis in Winter 2010.

**Deferring action on the RTP projects will defer inclusion of the new high-capacity transit projects and other investments in the final capacity analysis of the urban growth boundary to be conducted in Winter 2010. Absent those projects and land use actions needed to accommodate a majority of future growth in the current urban growth boundary, the region may be forced to expand the urban growth boundary at the end of 2010 in ways that do not support a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.**

- **Near-term Investment Priorities:** The RTP policy framework and performance targets will be translated into project selection criteria in early 2010 to guide near-term investment decisions (e.g., MTIP allocations, federal reauthorization and appropriations requests).

**Deferring action on the RTP will delay integration of the new RTP policies in these activities. The RTP must be approved in 2009 to allow the policies and targets to be considered in these funding discussions in early 2010.**

- **Analysis:** The final system analysis and air quality conformity will take six to eight weeks to complete, and must be completed by mid-February to be part of the Spring 2010 final public comment period. Closure on the RTP projects is needed because this analysis requires project-specific definition.

**Deferring action on the RTP will delay the start of this analysis. In addition, revising the RTP project list in Spring 2010 will require an additional round of air quality conformity analyses and further delay final adoption of the RTP by Ordinance. Adoption of the RTP by Ordinance formally triggers necessary updates to local transportation system plans to begin addressing greenhouse gas emissions.**

- **Legal requirements:** State mandates require us to adopt a final RTP by June 2010. The Land Conservation and Development Commission approved the current expanded timeline in May 2008. The Transportation Planning Rule requires the state component of the RTP to be completed within one year of the federal component, which was approved in December 2007.

#### **JPACT ACTION REQUESTED TO RECONCILE CONFLICTING MPAC AND TPAC RECOMMENDATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

Concerns have been expressed by officials from the City of Portland and advocacy organizations that the proposed RTP will have the effect of increasing greenhouse gas emissions by 49 percent by 2035, according to scenario modeling conducted by Metro. It is important to note that the analysis conducted to date utilized the current EPA-approved Mobile 6 air quality model and does not account for anticipated (but not yet enacted) changes in land use policies and public investments, or improvements in fuel or vehicle technology. In addition, the modeling also assumes a nearly 50 percent increase in population and continual urban growth boundary (UGB) expansions without consideration of urban reserves that may be designated in 2010.

The City of Portland representatives proposed amendments to the RTP at the November 18 MPAC meeting that would approve all components of the RTP except the project list, which would be accepted only for conformity with the federal Clean Air Act. The City's amendments also directed Metro staff to conduct further greenhouse gas emissions analysis to determine which projects may have greater adverse impacts on greenhouse gas emissions and report back to MPAC and JPACT in the early spring, at which point the project list might be reconsidered and amended.

On November 18, MPAC endorsed the City of Portland's proposed amendments. TPAC did not recommend JPACT approval of the same amendments when it considered them on November 20. Details of the MPAC and TPAC recommendations can be found on pages 2 through 4 in Exhibit F of Resolution No. 09-XXXX.

On December 3, the City of Portland proposed revised amendments for JPACT consideration on December 10. The revised City of Portland amendments are as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council:

- 1) Accepts the RTP project lists for the purposes of obtaining public comment and determining conformance with the Clean Air Act.
- 2) Directs Metro staff to:
  - A. Use existing RTP data and analysis and other currently available information to sort projects from the 2035 RTP project lists into three categories based on the **potential** of the project to increase CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: Negative to Low, Moderate, and Higher;
  - B. Denote projects in the “Higher” category with a “potential for higher emissions” label on the 2035 RTP lists;
  - C. After adoption of the RTP and project lists, conduct further GHG analysis on projects in the “Higher” category before proceeding with additional funding, planning or construction;
  - D. Report these findings for discussion and consideration by JPACT.

#### **IMPLICATIONS FOR JPACT CONSIDERATION:**

The amendments direct Metro staff to categorize projects based on their potential to increase carbon dioxide emissions and to conduct further analysis of the projects after final adoption of the RTP before “proceeding with additional funding, planning or construction.”

If JPACT chooses to approve the revised amendments:

1. **January 2010 – More process and policy direction needed.** Policy direction is needed in January in order to complete the final analysis of the RTP on schedule. Additional technical and policy committee discussions will be needed to (1) define the criteria and/or project characteristics that would constitute a “negative to low,” “moderate” and “higher” potential to increase carbon emissions, and (2) define the status and/or restrictions that should be placed on projects in the “higher” category within the final RTP.

As described previously, a number of significant work program items remain to finalize the RTP by June 2010, including development of functional plan amendments that will direct how local plans will implement the new RTP policies to address climate change and other goals of the plan. Advisory committee discussions to categorize RTP projects would be in addition to other policy discussions already planned for Winter 2010.

**Any delay would further delay final adoption of the RTP and implementation of the RTP Climate Action Plan, including the HB 2001 scenarios work program.**

2. **Post June 2010 RTP adoption – More analysis and policy direction.** Policy direction will be needed after June 2010 on: (1) the timing and extent of the additional analysis requested; and (2) the planning and funding status and/or restrictions that should be placed on projects as a result of the analysis. This discussion would consider the impact on HB 2001 earmarks, federal earmarks, projects identified in the State Transportation Improvement Program and MTIP, and locally-funded projects.

In addition, the timing and extent of the additional analysis should consider the impact on: (1) other planning and analysis already underway in the region (e.g., Columbia River Crossing, Milwaukie light-rail, Eastside streetcar, Sunrise Project); (2) planning and analysis for the next priority refinement plan and high capacity transit corridor that may begin as early Winter 2010; and, (3) analysis to be completed as part of the HB 2001 scenarios work and local plan updates beginning in June 2010.