



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director
DATE: July 30, 2013
SUBJECT: 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Capital Facilities Review

AT A GLANCE – DISCUSSION

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the RTC Board with a status report on review of the adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan's list of identified capital facilities projects. Transportation system performance results using a slower growth scenario for the 2035 horizon year will be presented to help inform transportation decision-making on the most-needed projects.

BACKGROUND

At the March RTC Board meeting, RTC staff introduced the 2013 RTC work program element to review the list of twenty-year capital projects identified in the current 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP, adopted December 2011) and to compare the set of transportation needs with a slower population and employment growth projection for 2035 than forecast in the adopted Plan. At the August meeting, RTC staff will provide an update on work underway. The item had been included on the RTC Board's June 2013 agenda but time constraints resulted in deferring the item until August. The presentation will include June's region-wide performance analysis as well as more detailed sub-area analysis.

INTRODUCTION: CONCEPT, PURPOSE, SCOPE

The purpose of the MTP Capital Facilities Review is to review the adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan's list of projects identified for the Designated Regional Transportation System in light of a slower growth projection for 2035. The work activity will review the adopted MTP's list of projects and analyze performance of the regional transportation system using a slower growth rate to determine which projects are the most critical to have in place by year 2035. Slower growth will mean reduced demand on the transportation system but it will also lower the revenues available to meet transportation needs.

This work item was included as part of the 2013 RTC Work Plan. The work scope calls for looking at travel demand resulting from a slower growth scenario with trips assigned to a committed transportation network. The objective is to identify where key transportation projects are still needed.

This Memo will address comparative demographic forecasts, regional transportation system performance, sub-area transportation system analysis, consideration of a changing transportation vision, preparation for MTP and Comprehensive Plan updates, timeline and next steps. Additional detail will be provided in the August 6 presentation.

DEMOGRAPHIC FORECAST: SLOWER GROWTH SCENARIO

Figure 1, below, summarizes base year 2010 demographics compared to the existing MTP 2035 demographic forecast and the “slower growth” forecast.

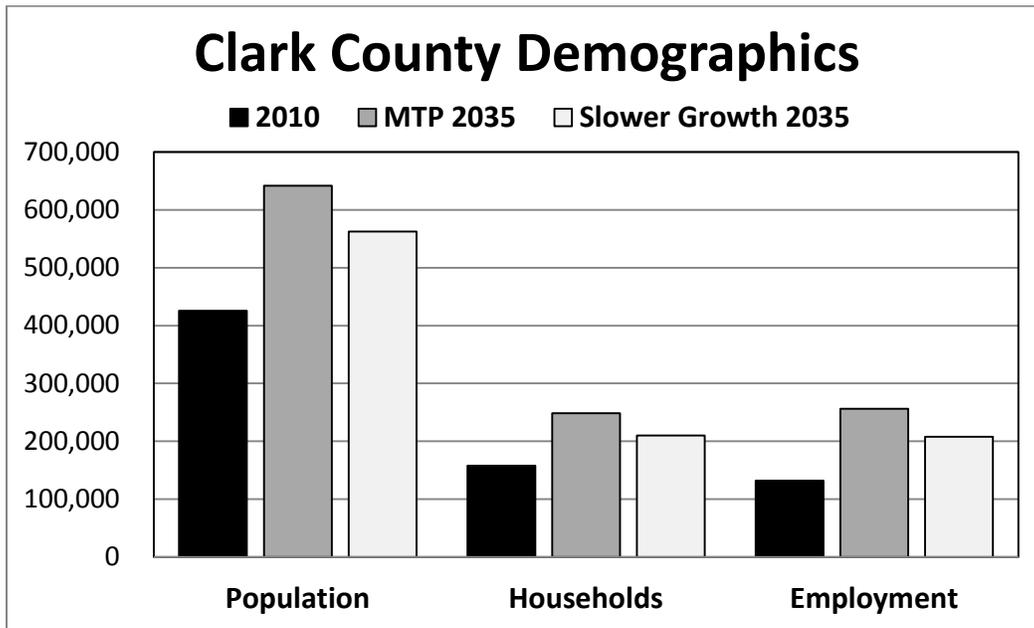


Figure 1: Clark County Demographics, 2010, MTP 2035 and Slower Growth 2035

In comparison with the MTP’s 2035 demographic forecast, the slower growth scenario has 15.7% less households and 18.9% less employment than the MTP 2035 forecast.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

RTC staff worked with local jurisdictions in February/March to develop the slower growth demographic forecast scenario. A regional travel forecast model scenario was developed to analyze the travel demand resulting from the slower demographic growth assigned to the “Committed” transportation network. The Committed network in Clark County includes projects included in 6-year Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs).

Measures used to analyze region-wide transportation system performance include:

- Lane miles of congestion in the evening peak hour
- Percentage of congested lane miles
- Vehicle hours of delay

Regional travel forecast model output allows us to compare regional transportation system performance given a slower growth projection assigned to the committed transportation network. Performance results for each of the hierarchical transportation system facility types (Interstates,

Expressways and Principal Arterials, Minor Arterials and Collectors) will be presented at the August 6 meeting.

SUB-AREA TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM ANALYSES

In addition, sub-area analyses will be presented at the August 6 meeting. The sub-areas include: West Vancouver, East Vancouver, Battle Ground, Camas/Washougal and the Discovery Corridor. Slower growth household and employment demographic data as well as initial suggestions for core transportation project needs will be presented for each of the sub-areas.

A CHANGING TRANSPORTATION VISION?

Regional transportation system analysis carried out to date has focused on “traditional” travel performance measures largely emphasizing mobility. However, you may recall that changes in demographic, lifestyle, and financial trends discussed at the March RTC Board meeting are resulting in a shift in the way transportation system performance is viewed and analyzed. Transportation policy changes would need to go hand-in-hand. The transportation paradigm shift moves from a policy and investment vision focused on mobility and capital capacity expansion to consideration of safety, reliability, accessibility, and modal choices in addition to the traditional mobility approach. With reduced revenues available for transportation investments, we need to be focused on the top priorities of the region.

The demographic and lifestyle changes that are influential in this shift include an aging population, slowing in-migration, increase in minority populations, changing aspirations and lifestyle expectations of Generation Y, flattening or decreasing incomes and revenues, and downward trend in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). These trends are partly the reason for a paradigm shift in transportation planning with the new paradigm expanding the range of transportation modes, objectives, impacts and options considered in planning. It is now recognized that some transportation corridors in the region are already built-out and cannot be widened. In these corridors, demand management and system management under such programs as the Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) become more significant. With the paradigm shift, transportation accessibility and reliability are valued as well as mobility. Accessibility is peoples’ ability to reach services and activities by various transportation modes such as automobile as well as by walking, cycling, public transit, telework, or delivery services, etc. Transportation planning is becoming increasingly integrated with strategic planning for land uses and health.

PREPARATION FOR MTP AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES

The analysis carried out as part of the 2035 MTP Capital Facilities Review is preparing us for the MTP update due in 2015. Results of transportation system analysis using the slower growth scenario will not only have value in preparing for scoping the MTP update but will also be of value to local jurisdictions as the next round of updates to local Comprehensive Plans are addressed. The work element also provides opportunity to consider alternative policy approaches to transportation solutions as called for via “least cost” planning principles and

WSDOT’s Moving Washington principles “to operate efficiently, manage demand and add capacity strategically.”

TIMELINE

A timeline for the MTP Capital Facilities Review is provided in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Proposed MTP Capital Facilities Review Timeline and Topics	
RTC Board Meeting	Presentation:
Aug. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region-wide and sub-area transportation system performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ base year ○ slower growth forecast for 2035 (RTC, based on OFM forecast, Apr. 2011) ○ current 2035 MTP (adopted Dec. 2011) • Focus on slower growth 2035 forecast on “Committed” transportation system (projects programmed in Transportation Improvement Programs) as first step to identify highest priority Metropolitan Transportation Plan projects
Sep. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the highest priority 20-year transportation projects? • 20-year MTP Capital Facilities Review in preparation for MTP update
Nov. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this analysis of slower growth, transportation system performance and current MTP projects feed the next MTP update?

NEXT STEPS

To recap, the purpose of this MTP Capital Facilities review is to re-look at the list of the MTP’s transportation capital projects given a slower demographic growth forecast. The most critical projects with the highest benefit for transportation system performance and for transportation users are those that must be included in the next MTP update. This work element will result in an analysis of transportation system needs and will feed the next MTP update as well as local jurisdictions’ Comprehensive Plan and Capital Facilities Plan updates.