

ITEM 14 - Information

December 21, 2005

Briefing on a Proposal to Report on Progress
Since the "Time to Act" Brochure Highlighting the Region's
Near Term Transportation Capital Funding Needs

Staff

Recommendation: Receive briefing on the attached proposal to prepare a report on the progress made in addressing the critical transportation capital needs and funding shortfalls identified in the 2004 brochure.

Issues: None.

Background: At the November 16 meeting, the Board received a status report on the analysis for the update for the 2006 CLRP which indicates that the region continues to have critical transportation needs that are not funded in the next few years. The Board expressed interest in updating its "Time to Act" brochure which was widely distributed in February 2004 to raise awareness about near term transportation funding needs.

Memorandum

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Arlee Reno, Cambridge Systematics
Kiran Bhatt, K.T. Analytics

DATE: December 14, 2005

RE: Proposal to Report on Progress Since the "Time To Act" Brochure
Highlighting the Region's Near Term Transportation Capital Funding Needs

The financial analysis for the 2006 CLRP Update is underway and, as reported to the TPB on November 16, the preliminary findings about expected transportation revenues and expenditures are similar to the previous 2003 CLRP Analysis. The vast majority of currently anticipated future transportation revenues will continue to be devoted to the maintenance and operation of the existing transit and highway systems. We do not expect a significant change in the overall revenue picture presented in prior CLRP updates. No new revenue sources are being identified and there is a need to identify strategies to address this regional challenge. Leadership at the local, regional, and state levels need to call attention not only to how to fund our important transit needs, but also to the lack of future funds for highway infrastructural renewal and maintenance needs.

The region's short term needs were identified in 2004 in the "Time to Act" brochure which highlighted the transportation capital funding needs and shortfalls over the six year period from 2005 through 2010. The purpose of this memorandum is to propose the development of a concise progress report to be completed in March-April 2006 which will describe the funding accomplishments since 2004, highlight unfunded needs, and discuss potential funding initiatives. Because this is an update of the effort completed in 2004, it will utilize the previous results as a base, identify the currently unfunded short term and longer term needs and projects, and suggest potential funding solutions. The effort will report on :

- "Progress to Date," focusing on the region's accomplishments since TPB's 2004 "A Time to Act" needs analysis;
- "Outstanding and Unmet Needs," focusing on remaining critical short term needs; and

- “Identify Potential Solutions”, drawing upon a review of promising national and state proposals.

Progress to Date

The report will identify the progress made on meeting the investment needs identified in the 2004 “Time to Act” brochure in terms of projects, programs, and funding initiatives accomplished and underway. The Washington region has made significant improvements since 2004, including funding commitments for Metro Matters and specific commitments of public or private funding for certain highway and transit improvements.

Outstanding and Unmet Needs

The agencies will use revenue projections from the 2006 CLRP to provide estimates of available funding for the period from 2006 through 2011. A list will be compiled by updating the previous 2004 effort to identify critical funded and unfunded projects and programs. Each project or program will be identified and the estimated cost will be updated along with the revenues currently available. Categories will include:

- Highway operations, preservation, and maintenance;
- Highway capacity improvements and new facilities;
- Transit operating expenses, revenue and subsidy for existing and new services;
- Transit preservation and maintenance for existing and planned facilities;
- Transit capacity improvements to the existing system and new transit facilities.

The unfunded projects and programs that are not included in the new TIP or the 2006 CLRP programs will be identified. For example, growing funding requirements for highway maintenance and preservation are forecast to crowd out more and more funding for capacity improvements in some jurisdictions.

Potential Solutions

The report will identify and describe potential transportation funding solutions that have been put forth at national, state, and regional levels, including both short term and long term solutions. Potential short and long term solutions will be evaluated, including enhancements to current sources such as the gas tax and testing and implementation of new sources such as VMT fees. A recent U.S. Chamber of Commerce study identified such combined short and long term solutions. Oregon is now testing technologies for collecting VMT fees.

The report will be a brief informational document that describes accomplishments to date, current unmet and unfunded transportation needs of the region, and potential solutions.