

Chapter 21: Outstanding Issues

Introduction

This MTP update is intended to conform with state and federal requirements; to reflect changes to the MPO's transportation network; and update existing and planned future land uses and socioeconomic characteristics that have occurred since the adoption of the previous plan in 2007. It also integrates recently completed regional transit and ITS plans into the MTP. It has produced a new financially constrained project list that is based on updated travel demand projections as well as an updated revenue and financial forecast for what transportation funding is expected to be available over the planning horizon.

This update is not intended to be an intensive update of all elements of the plan as was completed in 2007. It is expected that the land use patterns within the MPO (which is a fundamental assumption that drives transportation needs) will be revised in the next few years as part of the City of Bend's current Urban Growth Boundary update efforts. Once that is complete and a new future land use pattern and UGB boundary is established, a comprehensive update of the BMPO's MTP can be completed to be consistent with those land use plans, including the Bend Area General Plan and the Bend Transportation System Plan. This effort will be a focused update of the current MTP to conform with state and federal requirements, reflect changes and work completed since the current plan's adoption, and, to the extent possible, incorporate goals of the latest federal transportation bill (MAP-21).

Stage II MTP Development

The Stage II MTP update will begin in early 2015. This update will:

- Include a more comprehensive public involvement that involves a broader range of stakeholders and interested parties.
- Assess the finding and projects outlined in this Stage I (September 2014) Update based on the new Redmond-Bend regional travel demand model that is currently being developed and make updates as needed.
- Update the MTP for additional MAP-21 requirements as they become clear.
- Address additional concepts desired by the partnering agencies such as Alternate Mobility Standards and more in depth evaluation of the needs of US97 (Parkway) and US20 in the BMPO area.
- Provide a detailed update of the Security section. A key component of this update will be to address the transport of hazardous material through the MPO area.
- Update the Goals, Objectives, & Performance measures upon which the plan priorities are based.

Key Outstanding Issues for Future Planning

The improvements, funded and unfunded, called for in this Plan do not solve all of the identified transportation issues. In fact, some of the more obvious issues are not fully addressed by the improvements identified in this Plan. The reasons for this are:

- 1) The nature of these issues is very complex and further analysis is required to adequately understand the underlying travel demand contributing to the issues;
- 2) Several potential approaches might be useful, either alone or in combination, to address these issues;
- 3) The lack of funding available to implement the solutions, or restrictions on the funds available that preclude their use in being applied toward a particular issue;
- 4) No consensus solutions are currently identified to address these issues, and additional public deliberation and input is required before a preferred alternative can be selected and included in the Plan; and
- 5) Several of these issues are the subjects of current ongoing planning studies and as such do not have any recommended solutions at this time.

This chapter summarizes the outstanding issues that were identified in the preceding chapters, along with some broader issues facing the region. In addition to those outstanding issues discussed below, other problem areas will likely be the subject of further study as part of the development of local Transportation System Plans by jurisdictions in the region, or as part of specific study processes associated with updating local comprehensive land use plans.

Although interrelated packages of improvements for each of these outstanding issues will likely be identified as a result of the ongoing planning studies, there may be instances where specific projects or actions to preserve right(s)-of-way for eventual improvements are warranted prior to the completion of the entire study. If such actions can successfully demonstrate consensus support and operational separability (i.e., the action or improvement is warranted on its own merits and will not preclude elements of a comprehensive solution), then they may be advanced individually and remain consistent with this Plan without being specifically identified in it.

Bend Urban Growth Boundary

The City of Bend is assessing its needs for economic and residential lands for the next 20 years. The goal is to ensure Bend satisfies Oregon state planning laws with a 20 year supply of buildable land inside its Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for needed housing and employment. In April 2009, the City and Deschutes County submitted a jointly adopted Urban Growth Boundary expansion map and supporting materials to the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) for review. In November of 2010, the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) issued its final order remanding the decision back to the City for work and revision consistent with the order. Since March of 2011, the City has completed a number of the tasks required in the remand and just recently started a more intensive public involvement process to complete this work. This process began in 2014 and is expected

to extend to 2016. The current goal is local adoption of a final UGB proposal in April of 2016. The outcome of the UGB expansion could have profound impacts on the transportation system. Upon completion of the UGB expansion process, the MTP will need to be reviewed and revised.

Funding Issues

As can be seen in the preceding chapters, the region is facing a shortfall in revenues when compared with the projects that have been identified as being needed and in regards to operating and maintaining the existing system. This shortfall impacts all aspects of the transportation system, from the roads and highways, to the operation of bus service. With no solution to the dilemma of decreasing resources, the area will need to make do with reduced levels of maintenance of roads and bridges, increasing congestion, and constrained transit services.

As shown in the financial chapter of this Plan, there is a considerable difference between the amount of revenues that will be available to the region during the horizon of this Plan and the costs of the improvements necessary to address all the issues that face the transportation system. The financially constrained selection of projects presented in the previous chapters addresses the federal planning requirements related to financial constraint.

Alternate Mobility Standards/Performance Measures

Current policies of the City of Bend and ODOT use traditional traffic operations performance measures (delay and volume-to-capacity ratios) to evaluate system performance. In recent years, many agencies (including those in central Oregon) have expressed interest in evolving the manner in which the transportation system performance is measured and evaluated. The main goal of this evolution is capture the needs of the broad range of transportation users (drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, freight) and to capture other priorities, such as safety, and incorporate these in the performance evaluation. Recent planning efforts in central Oregon, such as TRIP97, have taken initial steps in assessing alternate standards and performance measure that will allow stakeholders to more effectively monitor, plan for, and invest in the transportation system. It's the MPO's goal to continue this discussion among MPO partners to establish a more holistic set of transportation performance measure for the MPO area that are reflective of the communities goals and priorities.

Rail

Rail issues include the safety of railroad crossings, traffic congestion associated with rail crossing closures, and at-grade rail crossing impacts on emergency services. Forecast future increases in the number of trains will only exacerbate these issues. Efforts should be focused on providing alternate routes, construct overcrossings, and enhancing the safety of at-grade crossings.

Other outstanding issues that cannot be fully addressed by this document include: 1) the preservation of land that is currently capable of being served by rail and noise associated with the trains, and 2) the study/evaluation of moving the rail line to the east of the current urban growth boundary.

Roads

As outlined in the Motor Vehicles chapter, there is limited funding to address all of the roadway system needs identified. A prioritized list of reasonably funded projects had to be developed with the remaining needs outlined on an aspirational (but unfunded list). That is not to say that these needs are not important; they are captured in the aspirational list so that they can be addressed as additional funding or funding partnerships become available or if priorities of which projects should be on the funded list evolve. Key areas of note that still remain on the unfunded needs are:

- US 97 at the north end of Bend (unfunded improvements identified in the US 97 North Corridor EIS)
- US 20 at the north end of Bend (potential for future funding for improvements through land development)
- Central City congestion
- Greenwood-US 20 from 3rd Street to Pilot Butte
- Bend Parkway (see discussion below)

Bend Parkway Study

As with previous long range planning efforts, this MTP update identified future traffic congestion and constraints for the Bend Parkway to meet current mobility standards in the future. The Bend Parkway is a heavily used transportation facility through the MPO area and serves a significant volume of commercial, commuter, and recreational traffic within the Bend MPO as well as through central Oregon. There will be limited options for adding traditional lane capacity to the Parkway in the future due to financial constraints, physical constraints, and community values. A priority for future study will be a refined planning effort for the Bend Parkway to determine what capacity, efficiency, and safety measures can be implemented to maintain safe and effective transportation performance on the facility in the future.

A key component of this Parkway study will be the evaluation and recommendation for improvements to the Powers Road area. As discussed in Chapter 6, the long range forecast indicates the needs for capacity, connectivity, and safety improvements at the existing Powers Road interchange with the Parkway. Funding constraints do not allow for full funding of an improvement here with the currently projected revenue from State sources and more detailed study is required to determine what the best solution for the area will be. Focus on the Powers Road area is recommended as part of the study to resolve these issues and provide a comprehensive solution.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects

The majority of the future pedestrian and bicycle projects were assumed to be completed with the funding allocated to the City's future local transportation projects as part of this update to the MTP. As noted in Chapter 7, the City of Bend and the Bend MPO are in the process of developing the *Strategic Implementation Plan for Walking and Biking Infrastructure*. When completed, it will outline a strategy for incorporating bicycle and pedestrian focused projects into the City's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). To date, the effort has identified five "Pedestrian Zones" where walkable areas have the most potential. The zones were prioritized against each other and specific projects identified for the top three zones. The City has received project ideas from the public related to upgrading/completing existing facilities, improving crossings of multi-lane roads, and creating new connections within these zones. The plan is also identifying important corridors where accessibility improvements are needed. The final outcomes of this Plan should be reviewed during Phase II to determine if some projects (including sidewalks, major roadway crossings, bicycle facilities, etc.) should be incorporated into the Preferred Plan as individual projects rather than the City's allocation for future local improvements.

Increasing Reliance on Non-Automobile Modes

The Oregon Transportation Planning Rule (TPR) requires that the MPO and the local jurisdictions in the urban area develop measures and benchmarks that will demonstrate that the Bend area is increasing its reliance on non-automobile modes. It is believed that land use changes will be required in order to facilitate this change from the status quo. Upon completion of the Bend UGB expansion, analysis will likely be initiated to examine the use of mixed land use centers, corridors, and high transit service levels as methods for reducing automobile reliance. These studies will be designed as the basis for meeting the TPR requirement for the area jurisdictions to develop an "integrated land use/transportation plan." The types of measures that may be considered to demonstrate increased non-auto reliance include: the number of people who live within a $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile walk to a transit stop; non-auto mode share; number of dwellings close to retail services and employment. In terms of the development of the MTP, recent guidance has reinforced the federal mandate that the MPO plan be based upon *currently adopted Local Comprehensive Land Use Plans*, including only those land uses and developments that can be considered likely to occur over the planning horizon.

The BMPO *can*, however, provide modeling outputs useful in the evaluation of alternative future land use scenarios, *if such outputs are requested and defined by a member jurisdiction, and those local comprehensive land use plan changes are in the pipeline for adoption by the affected local jurisdiction*.