

## 5.10 LAND USE NEXUS

### INTRODUCTION

Total metropolitan employment and population are essential factors determining travel demand in the Rogue Valley region. How those jobs and dwellings are distributed throughout the region can have an impact on how well the regional transportation system functions in the future. Illustrative modeling performed for the RVMPO and the Rogue Valley Regional Problem Solving project, showed that the careful development of regional employment centers could ease future roadway congestion to a greater extent than could major roadway expansion projects. Although that analysis goes well beyond the planning horizon for this RTP, the results indicate the significance that land use decisions can have.

Although MPOs do not make land use decisions, and adoption of an RTP is not a land use action, MPOs consider land use because of the potential impacts on transportation. Also, the region has a set of Alternative Measures, approved by the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) that require and rely upon RVMPO cities to make certain land use decisions to support the transportation system. Those measures are discussed briefly in this chapter and explained fully in Appendix B.

Land use decisions can also impact transit service availability. Decisions to support high densities (10 units per acre or greater) and mixing employment uses and dwellings, are more likely to support transit service. To be viable in an area, transit must be able to serve concentrations of population, which aren't found at lower densities.

**“How jobs and dwellings are distributed throughout the region can have an impact on how well the regional transportation system functions....”**

This chapter addresses some land use activities in as they relate to the transportation system.

### MIXED USES AND BIKE, PEDESTRIAN, TRANSIT FRIENDLY

Cities are fostering increased densities by integrating land use and transportation. To promote this integration, the RVMPO adopted Alternative Measures, which received LCDC acknowledgment on April 3, 2002. Several of the measures emphasize the effect of the land use pattern on the transportation system. They call for more dwellings along transit routes and in Activity Centers (defined, below), and more employment in Activity Centers.

Activity Centers are defined as follows:

- Areas of development that contribute to achieving mixed-use, pedestrian friendly development

- Neighborhood commercial and employment centers, parks and schools
- Downtown areas / central business districts
- Established Transit Oriented Development (TOD) areas that clearly contribute to achieving mixed-use, pedestrian friendly development
- Development that is vertically or horizontally mixed-use

**“TOD’s locate people near transit services with the intent of providing more transportation options to decrease dependency on automobiles.”**

**Transit-Oriented Design and Development (TOD)** is a general description of a set of development strategies that are designed to encourage the use of public transit by creating an atmosphere that is safe, convenient, and easily accessible by foot, bicycle, and transit. One purpose of transit-oriented design is to increase ridership by shaping and intensifying land use through the integration of transit stops with other activities of the community such as banking and shopping. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is a concept that promotes neighborhood livability and increased

use of the transit system. A mix of residential, public, and commercial uses, a diverse range of dense housing types, and a pedestrian-oriented environment characterize TOD sites. This pattern is a departure from traditional zoning that separates residential and commercial uses.

Urban design strategies associated with transit-oriented development also encourage bicycle and walk travel modes. By reducing reliance on single-occupant vehicles, TOD improves air quality by reducing the number of vehicle trips. Another benefit of TOD is the promotion of economic development by attracting businesses and consumers to the area surrounding the transit stop. By encouraging mixed-use development, transit-oriented design strategies can also increase housing options.

Development of TOD’s in the region is considered to be a strategy for controlling future travel demand. TODs locate people near transit services with the intent of providing more transportation options to decrease dependency on automobiles. While sprawling development patterns necessitate use of automobiles for virtually every trip, TODs - through the creation of higher-density, mixed-use, pedestrian districts - increase the convenience of walking, bicycling, and transit and thereby reduce automobile dependency.

In 1999, the RVMPO undertook a Transit-Oriented Design and Transit Corridor Development Strategies Study (TOD Study). The TOD Study outlined recommendations for ten TOD sites in Central Point, Medford, Phoenix, and White City (in unincorporated Jackson County). The study was intended to provide an alternative land use scenario that would bring the RVMPO into compliance with Oregon’s Transportation Planning Rule (TPR). Many of the study’s land use recommendations are being implemented along with other related approaches, they include the following:

**Central Point TOD** – The Twin Creeks TOD in the northwest section of the city continues to construct homes and will be adding employment and multi-family units pending the construction of a railroad crossing in 2017. A second TOD, the Eastside TOD is also progressing with plans approved for apartments in 2017.



**Row Houses at Twin Creeks TOD**

**Medford TOD** – Planning for the West Medford TOD continues. Additionally, Medford’s Southeast Plan area is proposed as a large development employing Smart Development principles.

**Phoenix** – Phoenix has developed a mixed-use plan for the City Center area that incorporates TOD policies and standards consistent with the RVMPO’s TOD Study. The TOD site includes much of the existing downtown area, and the city is committed to urban-centered, pedestrian-friendly growth. To that end, the City and its Urban Renewal Agency are investing in the construction of a community center and infrastructure.

**Jacksonville** – North Fifth Street Gateway TOD includes measures to enhance the northern entrance to the city, focusing on transportation and land use issues affecting a group of commercial properties, the most prominent example being the Pioneer Village senior housing complex. The goals of the project included revising and adopting ordinances and street design standards that support transit and pedestrian-oriented development. The plan recommended improvements to circulation and safety at the intersection of Shafer Lane and North Fifth Street, and included conceptual renderings for capital improvements showing sidewalk locations, walkways, crosswalk locations, lighting, potential entry sign designs, and other pedestrian amenities. The City created a Master Plan chapter in its Municipal Code to incorporate the North Fifth Street Gateway Plan, but is now considering code amendments that will remove the chapter and instead apply the transportation provisions and many property design standards to other commercial properties in Jacksonville, while removing standards specific to North Fifth Street.

## OTHER STRATEGIES

**Smart Growth and New Urbanism** strategies concentrate growth in compact walkable urban centers to avoid sprawl. They also advocate compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including neighborhood schools, complete streets, and mixed-use development with a range of housing choices. The goals of Smart Growth and New Urbanism include creating a unique sense of community and place; expanding the range of transportation, employment, and housing choices; equitably distributing the costs and benefits of development; preserving and enhancing natural and cultural resources; and promoting public health. The difference between the two is that Smart Growth is the policy framework, while New Urbanism provides specific strategies of how to implement that framework.

**Complete Streets** is a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation. Complete Streets allow for safe travel by those walking, cycling, driving automobiles, riding public transportation, or delivering goods.

**Example of a “Complete Street”**



**Preserving Future Corridors** – The preservation of corridors may prove to have significant financial benefits for local agencies. By identifying needed corridors for streets, bicycle/pedestrian ways, transit corridors, railroad corridors, and other uses, agencies may be able to avoid development on or loss of access to these corridors. This saves the expense of having to compensate landowners for the value of these developments when the right of way is needed for transportation. Regional corridors also merit protection, particularly in areas likely to urbanize during the planning period. The Regional Problem Solving effort, coordinated by RVCOG, identified existing corridors to be upgraded to urban standards and new connections to accommodate urban levels of development. When enacting ordinances or making plan changes, agencies must comply with applicable laws regarding property rights and may incur financial obligations as a result.

Separated multi-use bike/pedestrian paths are safest if they do not cross local streets at grade. Creating underpasses or overpasses for multi-use paths is very expensive. Typically, multi-use paths are only practical along barriers such as lakes, rivers, cliffs, or airports. Local governments should develop policies to preserve barrier edges for use as multi-use paths.

**Local Street Connectivity** – Poor connections between people and destinations often result in longer trips and more vehicle miles traveled. Cars must travel farther to reach a destination that has no direct route from their point of origin. In addition, poor connectivity makes travel by alternative modes difficult or impossible, since longer trip lengths making biking and walking impractical.

**Traffic Calming** – Where appropriate, local governments should consider the use of traffic calming techniques and reduced street widths to minimize negative impacts of traffic on neighborhoods. Traffic calming is a strategy that can improve livability in residential neighborhoods, by reducing motor vehicle speeds, traffic hazards, and noise. Some traffic calming strategies include traffic circles, speed bumps, street trees, road surface modifications, and narrowing of residential streets.