



## Memorandum

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Chris Kerr, Senior Planner

**DATE:** November 14, 2008

**SUBJECT:** New Transportation System Plan ("TSP"); amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and associated Community Development Code ("CDC") amendments (PLN-08-07 / CDC 08-01)

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This Memorandum is intended to serve as background and a basis for discussion for our upcoming November 24<sup>th</sup> Worksession.

Based on the direction provided by the Commission at the November 5 public hearing, Staff has completed an additional review of the City *Imagine West Linn* ("*Imagine*") vision document as well as the *West Linn Sustainability Strategic Plan* ("*Sustainability Plan*"). The Commission requested that Staff review these documents for consistency with the proposed legislative item and to propose any modifications that will help the city to reach the goals outlined in these documents. Staff has completed its review and finds that the proposal is consistent with, and will further the specific goals in these documents. It also satisfies several of the recommended actions specified in these documents, as enumerated below. Furthermore, the proposal before the Commission does not include any measures that contradict any elements of these documents. A summary of the applicable sections of these documents is provided at the end of this memorandum.

### BACKGROUND

The *Imagine* document was approved by the City Council in 1994 and most recently updated in September of this year. This document represents a preferred vision of West Linn, with suggested action items to achieve that vision. The Sustainability Plan was approved by the City in 2006 and includes recommended actions to be taken by the City to achieve greater sustainability in the community. Please keep in mind, however, that neither of these documents represent adopted City of West Linn policy. They serve as vision documents and they include specific recommendations to achieve that vision. Their purpose is to guide the City in the development of its policies and implementation measures (e.g. TSP, Comprehensive Plan, CDC, Public Works requirements, etc.). Therefore, reviewing these documents for consistency with the proposed TSP and Comprehensive Plan amendments is appropriate.

## RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS TO THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

Staff is proposing that the following additional Action Items from the Imagine document be included as 'Policies' into the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments.

*(Taken from the Transportation Action Items Section of the Imagine document)*

#3. **Coordinate with the Oregon Department of Transportation in implementing the Oregon Highway 43 Conceptual Design Plan.** *(Proposed new Street Action Measure #8)*

#4. **Encourage the expansion of transit in the West Linn area and the development of links along the periphery of the City and metropolitan area. Advocate for West Linn's interest in transit connections to Milwaukie and Lake Oswego as those communities pursue enhanced bus, light rail and/or street car service.** *(Proposed new Transit Action Measure #4)*

#9. **Reduce vehicle miles traveled through mixed use development in planned centers and regulations that encourage home-based businesses that are compatible with residential areas.** *(Proposed new Policy #4 Transportation Demand Management)*

Additionally, Staff is recommending that the following portion of the originally proposed Transit Policy #11 be amended as follows:

11. *Support a public transit system that is accessible to the largest number of people by:*
  - a. *Locating transit-oriented development around transit stations, along major transit routes, and in the designated Town Center area.*
  - b. *Supporting more intense and mixed-use zoning designations in areas around transit stations, along major transit routes, in the designated Town Centers, the OR 43 Corridor and along designated Main Street areas identified in the Metro 2040 Growth Concept Plan, through provisions in the CDC. **The City will seek higher concentrations of employment opportunities, residential development and commercial uses in these areas. Future proposed land use changes or rezonings that will result in increased residential densities, additional employment opportunities, or commercial activity should be located in these areas.** The City will ensure that development is built consistently with the density allowed by zoning, while protecting the livability of existing neighborhoods.*

This modification to proposed Transit Policy #11 is based on the fact that while numerous City policy documents state the desire, benefits and importance of increasing public transit options in the City (and recognize that public transit is only viable in areas with sufficient

density and/or employment intensity to support it), it has never been a clearly enunciated City Policy to specifically “*seek higher concentrations of.....in these areas*” as was originally proposed under this application. The revised amendment is consistent with the City’s desire to focus mixed-use higher density/commercial activities along existing transit lines and will increase the percentage of riders near transit stops. It also clearly illustrates the desire of the City to protect the character of existing single-family residential neighborhoods by concentrating any future growth along our transit corridors. The proposed language does not state that the City will seek out any increases in development in these areas, only that it is appropriate that any future growth be located there. Examples of how other the *Imagine* vision document, the current TSP, and Sustainability Plan address this exact issue are found below.

While not the current Policy of the City, but related to the issue of locating higher densities along transit corridors, it is interesting to note that the current, existing TSP for the City includes the following discussion in the “Needs and Deficiencies” Section of the Transit Chapter:

*“Transit works best where population and employment densities are high, and it is most effective where street travel is slow and parking costs are high. West Linn is primarily a low density community where income and car ownership is high. There is currently little inducement to use transit. One of the keys to providing better service is the development of densities and intensities of use in the newer areas of West Linn currently un-served or under-served by transit which are consistent with greater transit usage, as outlined in the “Imagine West Linn” document. As contemplated by the West Linn Comprehensive Plan and the “Imagine West Linn” document much of the future development within the established communities of West Linn will consist of higher density residential development, commercial development, and re-development which intensifies existing uses. Public transit and such development have a symbolic relationship; such uses need public transit to survive and prosper, while increased public transit will not occur if such uses don’t exist.” (Page 6-3 - City of West Linn TSP)*

Also worthy of note is that prior to the last changes made to the City’s Comprehensive Plan in 2003, it was the City’s stated Policy to locate higher densities along transit corridors:

*“Policy #14. Allocate high land use densities within the Comprehensive Plan along transit oriented corridors that support public transportation services.”*

(Public Transportation Section City of West Linn Comprehensive Plan prior to 2003 amendments)

## **CONSISTENCY WITH THE *IMAGINE WEST LINN* DOCUMENT**

### Imagine West Linn

As stated above, Staff is proposing that three (3) of the Action Items in the Transportation Section of the *Imagine* document be incorporated as Policies directly into the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

and the new TSP will further the goals of the following specific Sections of the *Imagine West Linn*:

Preferred Future:

*To maintain the livability of West Linn, Highway 43 is improved only to three lanes its entire length through the City, consistent with the Oregon Highway 43 Conceptual Design Plan. Tri-Met bus service is complimented by an inter city jitney service which links West Linn with the regional bus and rail lines, including connections to rail transit in Milwaukie, Oregon City and Lake Oswego. An improved West Linn web site connects citizens to City Hall, as well as to one another, and delivers educational and civic services to home-bound residents and the large number of in-home businesses in the City.*

Sense of Community Action Items

*#2 Continue to build on the network of parks, natural areas, walkways and bike paths in the community, and create a river walkway or promenade, a town square, community center, a permanent farmer's market space, community gardens, an amphitheater and a multitude of parks connected by greenways.*

*#10 Pursue establishing a local jitney transit system that maintains a 15-minute interval schedule, providing transportation to destinations within the City and connection to the regional transit systems. Encourage ridership through positive incentives such as free trips in exchange for two driver-issued or business-issued script. Jitney stop should be no farther than 1/4 mile from any resident. Jitneys may also be called by telephone, with the possibility of allowing riders to be picked up and dropped off as desired. Neighborhood associations could be called upon to assist in the education and ridership programs.*

*#11 Encourage ride sharing and carpools by pairing up commuters. Similarly assist those in need of transportation to after-school events and senior programs.*

Housing Action Item

*#4 Adopt land use policies and regulations that allow for flexibility in housing types to meet the needs of the elderly with alternative lifestyle needs. These policies should provide for affordable housing, close to needed services and should encourage modes of transportation beyond the single occupancy vehicle.*

Commercial Development Action Item

*#2 Continue to plan for mixed use development and increased development densities along transit corridors.*

*#7 Implement the recommendations of the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Task Force.*

Transportation Action Items

*#1 Review and update the City's street standards, consistent with sustainable development practices. Implement green street technology as a means of slowing stormwater runoff and improving water quality in area streams.*

*#2 Continue to make improvements in the planning and design of streets, trails and buildings to promote alternative modes of transportation and to reduce the miles traveled by automobile.*

*#3 Coordinate with the Oregon Department of Transportation in implementing the Oregon Highway 43 Conceptual Design Plan.*

*#4 Encourage the expansion of transit in the West Linn area and the development of links along the periphery of the City and metropolitan area. Advocate for West Linn's interest in transit connections to Milwaukie and Lake Oswego as those communities pursue enhanced bus, light rail and/or street car service.*

*#5 Support a transit link with the proposed Willamette Valley high-speed rail line station in Oregon City.*

*#7 Promote grid pattern street development with context-sensitive design standards to help interconnect City neighborhoods. Where hillsides preclude a grid pattern, obtain pathway connections between hillside neighborhoods.*

*#8 Implement the transportation-related action items under Sense of Community.*

*#9 Reduce vehicle miles traveled through mixed use development in planned centers and regulations that encourage home-based businesses that are compatible with residential areas.*

## **CONSISTENCY WITH THE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

### Sustainability Plan

The new TSP and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as proposed will further the goals of the following specific Sections of the West Linn Sustainability Strategic Plan:

(directly quoted below from Sustainability Plan --**bold** added by staff for emphasis)

#### *“MAJOR ISSUE*

*Car Dependency (Social issue) - With rising gas prices and peaking oil supplies, West Linn needs to make it easier for people to get around without automobiles. This includes completing the bike trails and side walks, **encouraging the use of public transportation, and emphasizing transit-friendly, mixed-use developments along major arterials.***

#### *UNDER SOCIAL CAPITAL*

*Transportation: The City has a number of bike/walking paths but the topography limits the practicality of these modes. West Linn is largely car-dependent. **Ensure that practical alternative transportation modes are available to common destinations. Multiple alternative transportation options are available to destinations.***

#### *SITUATION ASSESSMENT*

*Long-Term Trends and Threats - The Task Force examined a number of social, economic and environmental trends to understand how these might threaten the cherished features of West Linn.*

*1. Car Dependency (Social Issue) - It is likely that gasoline prices and energy prices in general will stay high and go higher..... However, the aging population may mean that we will not be able to depend on these modes of transportation entirely. **Beefing up public transportation should be a priority. We should try to develop the commercial districts with mixed uses, such that they could provide a majority of needed services and supplies locally, including more office space, so that car travel or at least long distance car travel is less necessary.** As fuel becomes more precious, it may also affect our ability to provide basic services....*

#### *TRANSPORTATION*

***Recommendation- Given the rise of fuel prices and the likelihood of increasingly tight supplies, we must enhance alternative transportation options for our citizens as well as products and services. The following specific recommendations will help us toward that goal.***

- ***Develop Safe Pedestrian and Bike Pathways***

*To reduce car dependency, provide safe sidewalks and bike pathways connecting neighborhoods with local business districts and other attractors. e.g., schools, parks and bus routes. Reduce the emphasis on car travel by developing landscaping schemes and vehicle barriers to protect and promote pedestrian use of walkways. Discourage cul-de-sacs and encourage connected neighborhoods with pathways for bikes and pedestrians. Develop a trail connectivity program with neighbor cities to improve access to business services and enhance the pedestrian travel from one end of West Linn to the other. Promote appropriate business development adjacent to neighborhoods that allows the community to meet the majority of needed services and supplies locally. Keep posted speed limits low to provide a safer environment for pedestrians. Make pedestrian crosswalks safe to use through proper lighting and signage. Oppose expansion of automobile capacity (wider, more or faster roads).and invest in practical alternatives instead. The new Bolton Center could serve as a transit center to facilitate information from Tri-Met.*

- ***Promote Use of Public Transportation***

*Retain and improve direct non-transfer service to downtown Portland. Lake Oswego and Metro are doing a transportation corridor study, which may result in the elimination or reduced convenience (e.g., no express service to downtown Portland) of bus service on Hwy 43 north of Lake Oswego. Identify the feasibility of shuttle services to expand bus service in the City and to link the Business areas within the City and between nearby cities. Encourage use of Tri-Met for short hop trips to high school or longer trips for shopping along Hwy 43. Build bus shelters to call attention to availability of public transportation along frequently traveled roads and make the wait more tolerable. Ask students to take the school bus instead of driving personal vehicles to school. Expand park and ride for public transit.*

## **Recommendations for City Government**

### *Short Term (1-2 years)*

- Cluster highest density housing zones near public transportation**
- Work with Tri-Met to develop better public transportation options within West Linn and to other destinations.**
- Encourage business to promote alternative commuting.** This may include bus passes, bike storage, and showers for employees.

### *Intermediate Term (3-5 Years)*

- Designate a transit center along Hwy 43.*
- Assuming a streetcar is the locally preferred option, work with Metro to ensure the resulting proposals from the Lake Oswego to Portland Transit.*
- Alternative Analysis (Hwy 43/Trolley corridor) provides logical extensions of multi modal alternatives through West Linn to Oregon City, but do not provide services to the Stafford Basin for urbanization of the Stafford Triangle*

### *Long Term (6-10 years)*

- **Transportation**
  - Fund a local shuttle to provide transportation between the neighborhoods and commercial centers in West Linn and connect to regional bus lines.*
  - Complete the trail and bike path system and sidewalk in-fill program."*

## **CONCLUSION**

The proposed TSP, Comprehensive Plan amendments, and CDC changes include specific policies, action items, programs and regulations to further each of the goals and policies outlined above. Specifically, these amendments include measures that address:

- connections between neighborhoods,
- providing for alternative modes of transportation,
- increasing transit opportunities for the greatest number of people,
- adding sidewalks and bike lanes,
- inclusion of recommendations from the OR 43 Design Guidelines
- inclusion of the recommendations of the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Task Force
- transportation demand management measures to decrease automobile travel, and;
- decrease the negative environmental impacts of unnecessary single-occupancy vehicle trips.

As a result of satisfying many of these action items and bringing the City closer to the vision and goals prescribed in the Imagine document and Sustainability Plan, these amendments will result in a more sustainable community and enhance the quality of life of the City's residents.

Therefore, with the addition of the three (3) new Policies (described below), Staff can make a finding that the proposed amendments and TSP will be fully consistent with the City's *Imagine West Linn* and Sustainability Strategic Plan and recommends their adoption.