



## MEMO

TO: Stakeholder Working Group

FROM: Abbot Flatt, Associate Transportation Planner

RE: Multimodal Mixed-Use Area **DRAFT** Boundary Recommendation

DATE: August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015

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Clackamas County initiated the *CRC Connections* project to analyze the usefulness of designating a "multimodal mixed-use area" (MMA)<sup>1</sup> in the Clackamas Regional Center Area (CRCA), a dominant activity center for both Clackamas County and the Portland metropolitan region. The CRC Project takes a closer look at:

- Whether plan or zoning code amendments would be needed to allow for a multimodal mixed-use area,
- What transportation barriers there are to supporting a MMA and
- If an MMA is an appropriate tool to implement the CRCA goals and visions.

The purpose of this memo is to summarize the key findings to-date and develop an initial recommendation as to whether a multimodal mixed-use area boundary is appropriate and necessary tool to achieve the desired outcomes in the Clackamas Regional Center Area.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**1. The Clackamas Regional Center Design Plan** includes the following vision for the area:

*Over the next 20-50 years, the Clackamas Regional Center Area will be:*

- *The dominant commercial and business center for the east Portland metropolitan area;*
- *A cultural, civic and transportation center for the east Portland metropolitan area;*
- *An area of diverse residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, natural features, and public attractions and spaces that serve both the local community and the region.*

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<sup>1</sup> An MMA is provided for in the Transportation Planning Rule (TPR), Oregon Administrative Rules, Chapter 660-012, administered by the Department of Land Conservation and Development. The TPR implements Statewide Planning Goal 12 (Transportation) to provide and encourage a safe, convenient and economic transportation system. OAR 660-012-0060, *Plan and Land Use Regulation Amendments*, regulates the process for such amendments as they relate to the transportation planning process.

In 2012 the state adopted new TPR standards for an option to using performance measures related to vehicle traffic congestion to evaluate amendments. Now alternative performance measures, such as safety for all travel modes, may be used to evaluate amendments that would be applied in an area defined as an MMA. The MMA definition further detailed the range of land uses, residential density and development standards that must be applied within an MMA boundary. (OAR 660-012-0060(10)(b))

This vision was supported by comments made at the joint Technical and Stakeholder working group meeting in July, which showed that people envision this area as a vibrant multimodal center for the community.

**2. The State Transportation Planning Rule (TPR)** allows an MMA designation to be applied by local governments to support the development of a vibrant mixed-use area. The designation may be applied to regional centers, main streets or other areas inside an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) where the local government determines that the following conditions exist:

- High-quality connectivity to and within the area by modes of transportation other than the automobile;
- A denser level of development of a variety of commercial and residential uses than in surrounding areas;
- A desire to encourage these characteristics through development standards, and
- An understanding that increased automobile congestion within and around the MMA is accepted as a potential trade-off.

An MMA designation is a specific tool that can be used when there are plan or zoning code amendments that will be denied because of significant negative effects on vehicular mobility. After an MMA boundary is adopted, the amendments proposed for properties within the MMA do not need to be tested for “significant effect” on vehicle traffic congestion. Instead, the MMA provides flexibility in plan and zone amendment review by allowing other performance measures such as safety, the completeness of the pedestrian and bicycle networks, network connectivity and freight accessibility, to be used to evaluate the amendments. The MMA designation has a specific function and is used only during comprehensive plan and zone changes.

## KEY FINDINGS FROM THE EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

The existing conditions analysis provides information to answer the following questions:

- *Do the current zoning designations in Clackamas Regional Center meet the requirements of an MMA designation?*

Yes, overall the current zoning designations do meet the requirements of an MMA designation and allow for the development of a multimodal mixed-use area. The primary requirement that is not met relates to TPR section (8)(b)(H): “Limit or do not allow low-intensity or land extensive uses, such as most industrial uses, automobile sales and services, and drive-through services.” The attached map shows where there would need to be changes in existing zoning to comply with MMA requirements.

- *Will comprehensive plan or zone changes be needed to implement the vision of the Clackamas Regional Center?*

No, we don’t expect that Comprehensive Plan designations will need to be changed to implement the vision in the Clackamas Regional Center. The Clackamas Regional Center Design Plan and subsequent area planning projects in the area have the area planned as a mixed-use community. There are Planned Mixed-Use and Station Community Mixed-Use areas in the Clackamas County Comprehensive Plan, and the City of Happy Valley also has mixed-used designations in the area.

Only one of the mixed-use designations is zoned significantly differently from mixed-use -- an approximately 46-acre low-density residential area that makes up approximately 2% of the total study area. Despite this area being zoned differently than the Comprehensive Plan, it is not expected to change to Planned Mixed-Use for quite some time because there is opportunity for more dense development in the current designations and the low-density residential area has multiple ownerships.

- *What are the gaps and deficiencies in the existing transportation system?*

Overall, the roadway network is fairly complete in the Clackamas Regional Center area. There are several projects in planning, design or construction phases that will provide additional needed connections.

The bikeway and pedestrian networks are less complete, and many of the pedestrian facilities are substandard. CRCA stakeholders have provided ample comments on much needed crossings in the area. The county's Transportation System Plan (TSP) and Clackamas Regional Center Pedestrian / Bicycle Plan identify projects to address some of the issues. Additional needed projects will be identified in the next few months as part of CRC Connections project.

Safety concerning all modes is also an issue. Current issues are mostly on 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue with a few locations along Sunnyside Road and Johnson Creek Boulevard. Some solutions are identified in the TSP, and analysis being done that will provide additional information.

- *How does the transportation system function under the existing and anticipated future conditions?*

The current performance measure used to evaluate how the transportation system functions is a volume-to-capacity ratio. Currently, one intersection in the study area -- Johnson Creek Boulevard at 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue -- fails to meet the performance standard.

Analysis for 2035, which includes projects from the county's 20-year capital projects list, shows that all intersections in the study area are expected to meet the standards, though two intersections -- Johnson Creek Boulevard/82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Sunnyside Road/Harmony Road/82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue -- are very close to exceeding the standard.

## **TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (TWG) DISCUSSION**

At the TWG meeting on August 5, 2015, representatives from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), Metro, Clackamas County and the consulting team discussed the key findings and had the following comments:

- The Clackamas Regional Center Design Plan is in line with multi-modal goals. An MMA is not needed to implement the CRC Plan.
- If we're not adding density (e.g., expecting to change the county's Comprehensive Plan or Zoning Development Ordinance), there is no need to do an MMA.
- Since the future conditions analysis does not indicate we will exceed vehicle congestion standards, there is no benefit to having an MMA.

- Some drive-through's and car-oriented services will be grandfathered in. An MMA wouldn't do anything to change these existing businesses.
- An MMA is not needed to accomplish the CRCA goals.
- There doesn't seem to be much benefit to adopting an MMA.

### **INITIAL RECOMMENDATION**

The initial recommendation is that adopting an MMA designation in the Clackamas Regional Center Area is not necessary to create a vibrant, multi-modal center. The primary reason is that the MMA designation is designed to be an alternative solution when significant, negative effects on vehicular mobility are expected to arise through zone changes or comprehensive plan amendments, and that is not expected in the CRCA. The existing zoning designations allow, for the most part, a multimodal mixed-use community to evolve in the area.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Even though it seems that an MMA is not the right tool for the CRCA, it is still important to discuss a boundary within the study area for the next phases of the CRC Connections project. For this boundary, we'll need to discuss alternative performance measures that may potentially be used during the development process to better support the CRCA as a multimodal mixed-used area.