

# Transportation Infrastructure and the Westside Economy

## A White Paper Discussion

September 2012

### Executive Summary

Economic development in Oregon and the Portland region has been, is, and will be driven by private sector investment. But the private sector has come to expect certain things from the public sector that are critical to business functions. Cost-effective and functional infrastructure is one of them, and transportation is among the most important and most expensive.

As anticipated in Metro's 2040 planning, and in other regional and local plans, the Westside population and employment is growing faster than the regional average. That fact makes the Westside economy increasingly important to the health and growth of the regional and state economies. Our cursory review of transportation planning documents suggests, however, that the Westside is not seeing investment in its transportation system that is commensurate with that growth, and that was envisioned in earlier versions of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

A more detailed examination of these plans would help confirm or refine this finding. Related findings include:

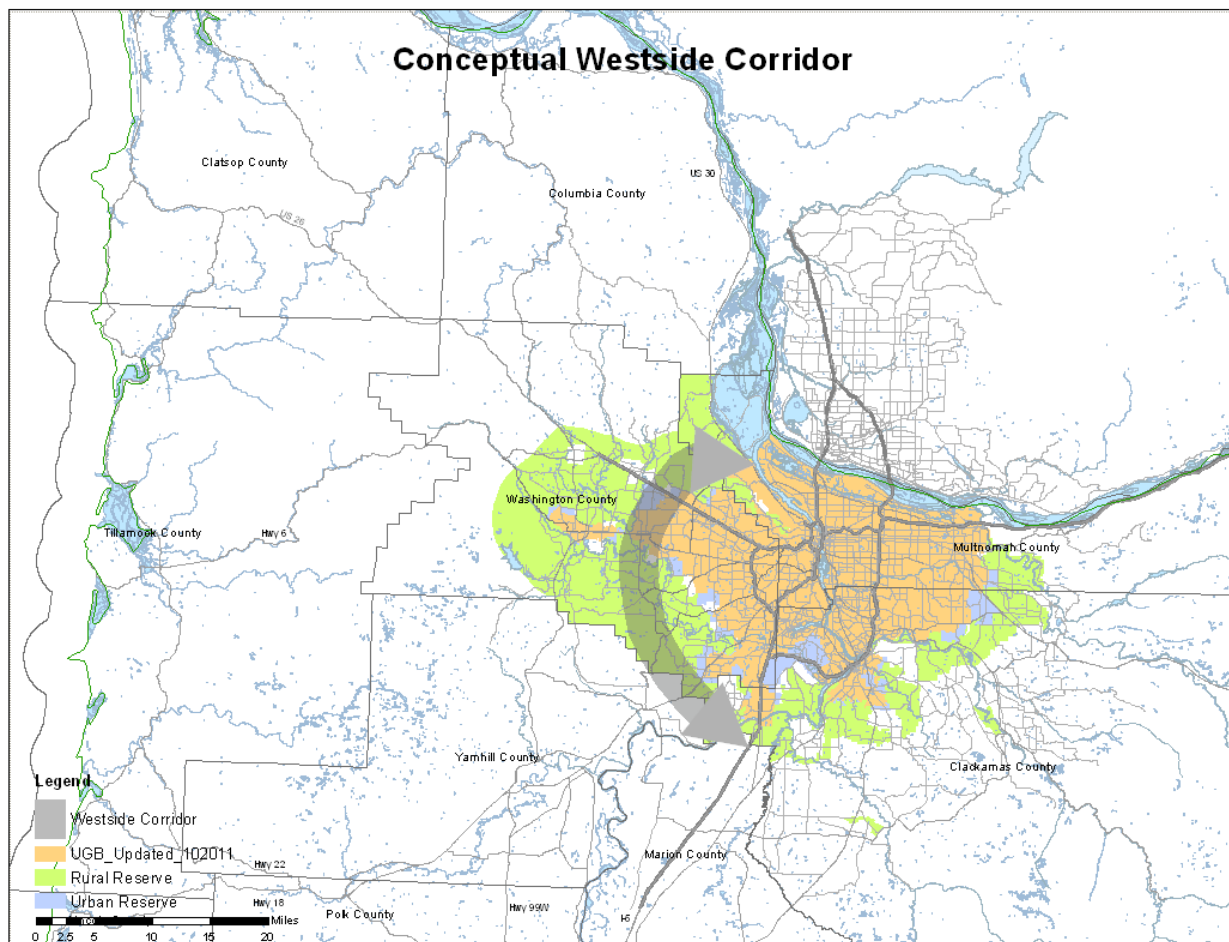
- 16 percent of those who work on the Westside commute from other parts of the region, and they are likely to experience significant traffic congestion in the future in the absence of investment.
- Freight moving into and out of the Westside area is also experiencing increasing delays along major links (US 26 and Highway 217) to the I-5 corridor with connections to the greater regional and interstate highway network and international port systems.
- As growth continues, these problems are likely to increase, even as the highway and transit improvements outlined by the (financially constrained) RTP are realized.

On the one hand, congestion is an inevitable correlate of a successful metropolitan economy, and an indicator of its success. On the other hand, if an already successful regional economy can make cost-effective investments in transportation facilities or operations that reduce congestion, then (other things being equal) the capacity and incentive for economic growth increase. If such cost-effective investments are not made, both theory and empirical work suggest:

- The costs to businesses to move freight will increase
- The costs to employees for longer commutes will increase, which may be partially or largely converted into increasing costs for the businesses that pay those employees
- The higher costs make recruiting new firms (business and industry) to locate in the Westside more difficult (the direction of that effect is clear; its magnitude depends on many other factors)
- The higher costs could slow the growth of the existing firms and companies, and create challenges for business retention
- The higher congestion costs will affect employees' housing decisions, with secondary effects that could put additional pressure on housing stock on the Westside

Transportation systems are, of course, only one of several infrastructure components critical to the health of existing businesses industries and to the attraction of new ones. Business decisions are made based on many variables, many of which cannot be controlled. But transportation—the ability to get people and goods to places of production, and to get products to markets—is a key element of a functioning economy. Keeping that system functioning well (or, at least, well enough) is an ongoing obligation of the public sector that builds and manages that system. Periodic evaluation and investment is essential.

As part of this white paper study we were asked by the City of Hillsboro to briefly examine the relative relief a conceptual westside corridor (shown below) could provide in reducing traffic congestion in the key I-5 and US 26 freight corridors. This concept corridor is among other possible multi-modal solutions (beyond the scope of this white paper) that could be defined to help abate the rise in highway congestion and better serve the freight mobility needs in the Westside.



Source: City of Hillsboro, 2012

The time is probably right for a re-examination of the regional transportation system needed to meet the regional land-use growth plans and economic goals and objectives for the Westside. The region is about to embark on the next RTP update. A full re-examination of Westside transportation needs mindful of the Westside economy should be completed in advance of or part of the RTP update.

## Background

For the last five years, the state of the economy has been a topic of increasing concern among businesses and governments: globally, nationally, and locally. Oregon has been hit particularly hard by the recession that followed the financial crash in the fall of 2008: it fell farther, and has remained down longer, than the economies of most states.

A bright spot in an otherwise grey picture is Gross Metropolitan Product in the Portland region. GMP is the market value of all final goods and services produced within a metropolitan area within one year. Increases in GMP indicate growth in a regional economy; increases in per capita GMP suggest increases in labor productivity. Per capita GMP has grown in the region since 2001, primarily as a result of gains in private goods-producing industries (e.g., manufacturing). Despite the recession, the region continues to punch above its weight among other metropolitan areas on this important indicator of economic activity.

The region's relative success here is driven by the high value of output in what is broadly referred to as the high-tech sector. Moreover, the relatively high-paying jobs in that sector generate higher incomes and property values that are the basis for the taxes that fund the facilities and services of state and local governments.

By any measure (output, employment, number of businesses), the high-tech sector of Oregon is heavily concentrated in the Portland region, and in the region it is heavily concentrated on the Westside, Washington County, and Hillsboro. In poor economic times it is natural for local governments to look to attracting new businesses and new sectors. But it is probably more important to first ensure that the factors necessary for the success of *existing* key sectors are maintained.

Many factors affect the success of business sectors. The factors most important to businesses are an obvious place for local governments to begin an inquiry about actions they might take to help retain, expand, and attract businesses and the economic activity, jobs, and incomes they generate. With a few exceptions, local government actions focus on *supply-side* factors (reducing the costs of inputs to the production functions of businesses) rather than *demand-side* factors (increasing the demand for the products that businesses sell).<sup>1</sup>

Economists and the businesses they study tend to think of factors of production in broad categories. Most need *land*, because they need *built space*, because they have to accommodate *equipment (capital)*, *labor*, and *management*. They need *raw materials* and *services*. And they need *transportation*: they need to get all those factors (people and materials) to a place of production, and to get finished goods to customers.

Getting stuff here and there requires a *transportation system*. Improvements in transportation technology are one of the key drivers of increases in productivity and the growth and health of cities. Transportation alone cannot float an economy, but failing transportation can cause a local economy to drift or founder.

## Purpose and organization of this white paper

These points lead to a key question: What shape is our transportation system in now, and will it continue to provide a level of service necessary to allow and encourage the expansion of the local economy (and, in particular, of the high-tech sector)? That is broadly the question this white paper addresses.

This white paper is prepared for the City of Hillsboro and is intended for circulation among interested state, regional and local elected officials. Calling this memorandum a "white paper" rather than "report" is intentional. It provides just an overview of the issues. Its purpose is to allow elected officials and other

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<sup>1</sup> Local and state governments do some demand-side assistance (e.g., foreign trade missions, programs to encourage import substitution), but the bulk of the actions are for things like providing infrastructure, training a workforce, assembling land—all things that reduce the cost of some factor in a business's production function.

stakeholders to make a preliminary assessment of whether the issues it discusses merit further attention and evaluation (e.g., a full technical report).

This white paper has four additional sections:

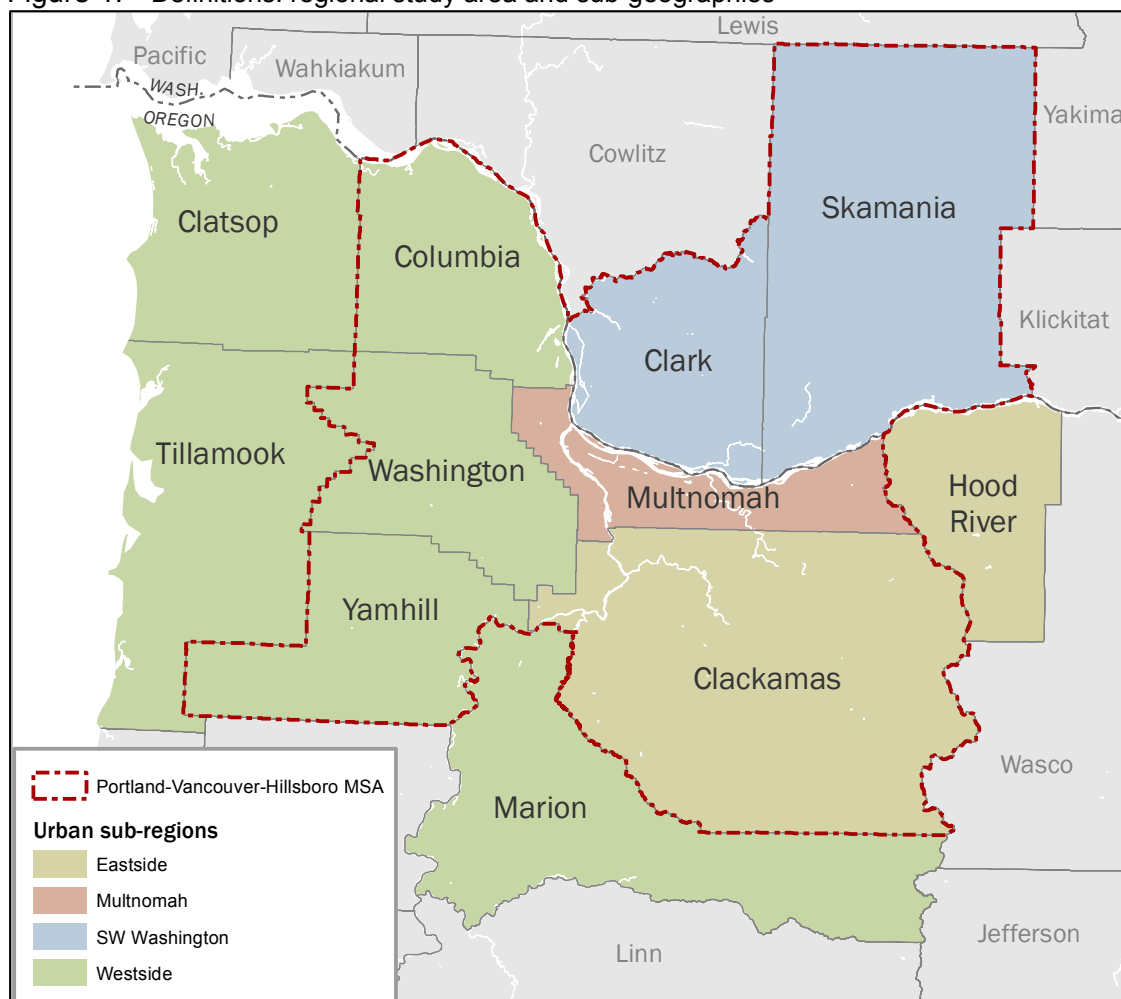
- **Section I, Defining the Westside.** Which Counties are included in the definitions of “region” and “Westside” in this analysis?
- **Section II, Overview of the Westside Economy.** What is Westside’s role in the regional economy?
- **Section III, The Importance of Transportation to the Westside Economy.** How do transportation investments support the Westside economy?
- **Section IV, Current and Likely Future Performance of the Westside Surface Transportation System.** How is the Westside highway/street system performing? How well does the regional transportation plan address regional commuter and freight mobility needs?

## I. Defining the Westside

Several different definitions of the “Westside” and the “Portland region” are commonly used in economic and transportation studies; analysts make choices about which definition to use based on the research question being asked, the purpose of the analysis, and the data available. A narrow definition of Westside (Washington County) keeps a focus on the Portland metropolitan area, and would be consistent with the way the region’s policy discussions use the term Westside. Broader definitions allow analysis to account for a larger set of inter-county economic and transportation connections that affect that more narrowly defined Westside economy.

In this analysis we define the region and the Westside more broadly to better account for the economic and transportation context that affect policy and funding decisions. Figure 1 provides a map that shows the regional study area and the sub-geographies (Westside, Eastside, Southwest Washington, and Multnomah County) referenced in this white paper.

Figure 1. Definitions: regional study area and sub-geographies



Source: ECONorthwest, 2012

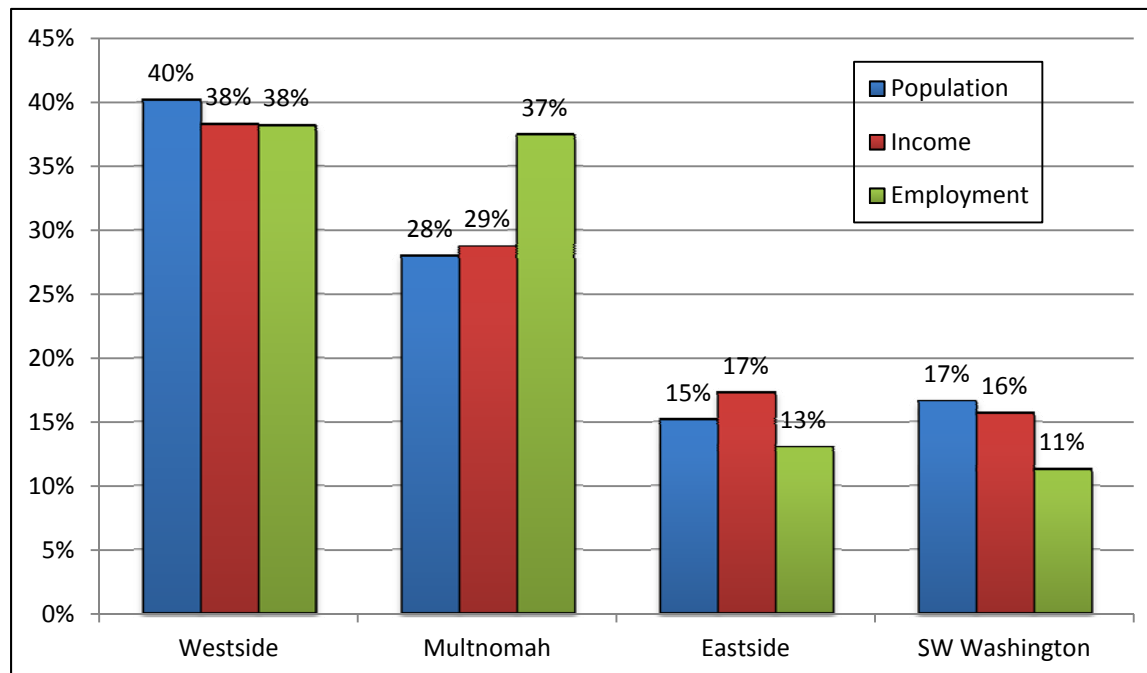
## II. Overview of the Westside Economy

This section gives an overview analysis of the Westside economy and its relation to the regional whole. It describes employment, income, population, growth, and integration with the rest of the economy, and preliminarily identifies the industries that are most concentrated in the Westside relative to the region and the nation. The analysis supports a key conclusion: **the Westside accounts for a significant portion of regional economic activity and, more important, it has contributed a disproportionate share to regional growth.**

### The Westside share of regional population, income, and employment growth

The Westside, however defined, contains a significant share of the regional economy. Figure 2 shows the share of population, personal income, and employment by sub-region. For each outcome, the Westside (some combination of the counties colored in green in Figure 1) contributes around 40 percent of the broad regional total and 30 percent of the seven county MSA (the area outlined in red in Figure 1).

Figure 2. Total Population (2010), Income (2010), and Employment (2011) for sub-geographies relative to the region as a whole



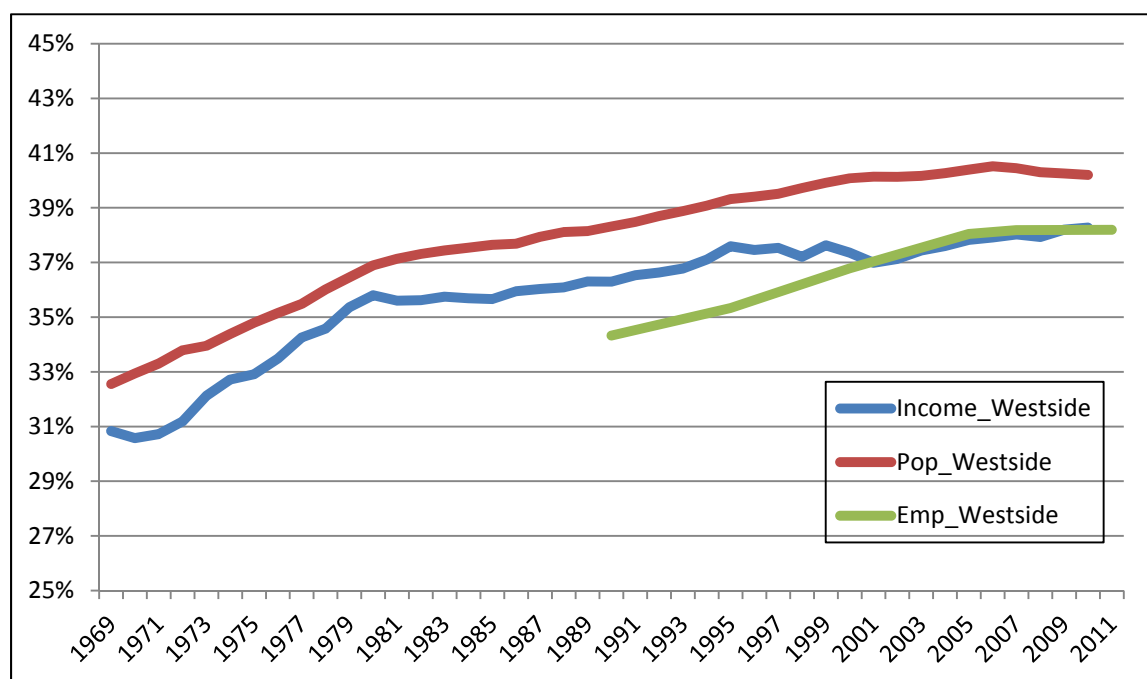
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). County Business Patterns (NAICS). Calculations by ECONorthwest.

#### Some observations:

- The total population of the Westside was 1,058,825 in 2010, or 40 percent of the regional population. Restricting the calculation to only the seven county MSA, the Westside population was 680,352 in 2010, or 30 percent of the regional population. The main source of the difference in Westside shares is the exclusion of Marion County (which is a significant metro area by itself).
- The total personal income of residents of Westside Counties was \$39 billion in 2010, nearly 40 percent of the regional total. Within the seven county region, the Westside earned \$26.5 billion, or about 30 percent, of regional personal income.
- Finally, 438,652 people worked at non-farm jobs in the broadly defined Westside, 38.2 percent of the region's 2011 total. Within the seven county region, total non-farm employment was 283,209, or 28.9 percent of the regional total.

The Westside economy has grown faster than the regional economy; thus, its share of the regional economic activity has grown. Forty years ago, the Westside contained approximately 30 percent of the broad regional economy and 20 percent of the seven-county region (as measured by population, personal income, or employment). This was 10 percentage points smaller than it is today. Figure 3 below shows the change in the Westside's share of regional population, income, and employment between 1969 and 2010.

Figure 3. Total Westside Shares of Income, Population, and Employment, 1969-2011



This growth reflects a general trend towards increasing mix of land use that is more urban in nature. Average annual growth rates for the Westside are approximately equal to the average annual growth rates for the Eastside and the Washington counties and faster than the growth rates in Multnomah County, though the regional share and concentration of economic activity are much higher in the Westside than in these other geographies.

## Westside economic specialization and regional contributions

The Westside contains a large share of the region's employment, but in what industries is it concentrated? To explore that question, ECO calculated location quotients for regional economic sectors that are traded sector, and determined the portion of those that industries that are located in the Westside. First, definitions of key terms:

- Location quotient (LQ).** Location quotients describe the extent to which a particular industry is concentrated in one area relative to a larger area.<sup>2</sup> LQs greater than one indicate that the industry is more represented in the smaller area (e.g., the region) than it is in the larger area (e.g., the nation), while location quotients less than one indicate that the industry is less represented in the smaller area than it is in the larger area. In short, the higher the location quotient, the more concentrated the employment in that industry is in the area.
- Traded sector (TS).** TS industries are important to a local economy because they export goods and services and bring new dollars into the region rather than just recycling existing dollars. In concept if two sectors had the same LQ and value added, but one exported most of its value

<sup>2</sup> Location quotients are interesting, but their interpretation is not straightforward. One common interpretation is that location quotients show the comparative advantage of an area in attracting and retaining various industries, and that they reflect the degree to which firms find an area advantageous. While this interpretation is probably correct, it is not clear that location quotients tell much about trends. A high regional location quotient in an industry might signal that the region is "tapped out," and employment growth in that industry might stagnate unless there is national growth in that industry. A low location quotient might, in contrast, indicate untapped potential. In any case, location quotients do show, at a point in time, the concentration of an industry in an area.



added and the other did not, the former would be more valuable to the local economy (other things being equal): it would have a greater *multiplier effect* on the local economy.<sup>3</sup>

Table 1 below shows the ten TS industries with the highest LQ that also have at least 2500 employees in the 11-county region.<sup>4</sup> It also shows what portion of regional employment in those industries is contained in the Westside. Here are examples of how to interpret the results:

- Employment in “Cutlery and Handtool Manufacturing” 7.6 times more concentrated in the region than that in the nation, and 16% of the employment in that industry is located in the Westside.
- Employment in “Semiconductor and other Electronic Component Manufacturing” is 4.1 times more concentrated in the region than that in the nation, and 54% of regional employment for that industry is located in the Westside.

Overall, Table 1 shows that **40% of employment in the largest and most concentrated industries is located in the Westside, about the same percent it has of the total employment in the region (Figure 2). There are also important segments of the broadly defined Westside economy that share interest in the quality of the region’s freight mobility and transportation network services, including key agriculture, nursery, viticulture, tourism and timber.**

Table 1. Industries with the highest LQ and at least 2500 employees, Portland region, and percent employed on Westside, 2010

Industry Name	Regional LQ	Percent Employed on The Westside
Cutlery and Handtool Manufacturing	7.6	16%
Semiconductor and other Electronic Component Manufacturing	4.1	54%
Computer and Peripheral Equipment Manufacturing	4.0	32%
Foundries	3.7	1%
Pulp, Paper, and Paperboard Mills	3.1	61%
Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	2.8	7%
Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing	2.4	73%
Bakeries and Tortilla Manufacturing	1.6	19%
Other Food Manufacturing	1.6	49%
Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical, and Control Instruments Manufacturing	1.6	47%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). County Business Patterns (NAICS). Calculations by ECONorthwest.

Note: Region is defined as the 11-county region in Figure 1 of this white paper: Clackamas, Clark, Clatsop, Columbia, Hood River, Marion, Multnomah, Skamania, Tillamook, Washington, and Yamhill

<sup>3</sup> In this report, we classify industries as traded industries following the approach in the following: Jensen, J.B. and L. Kletzer, 2005. “Tradeable Services: Understanding the Scope and Impact of Services Offshoring.” Brookings Trade Forum 2005: 75 – 116.

<sup>4</sup> The analysis presented here should not be confused with a detailed “cluster” analysis, nor with an analysis that identifies regional specialization. Many studies have looked at industry specialization in the region, and then grouped industries together to form “clusters”, or groups of industry sectors that might create agglomerative activity, as a basis for policy decisions around economic development. Those studies probably highlighted different industries and sectors as “top producers”. The analysis presented does not group sectors and did not include any of the other analytic steps that would be necessary to complete a cluster or specialization study. Its purpose is to better understand, at a high level appropriate for a white paper, what portion of the key regional employment is based in the Westside. More analysis might produce slightly different results, but it is likely that the key finding would remain the same: the Westside contains an important share of the employment in the most important sectors in the region.

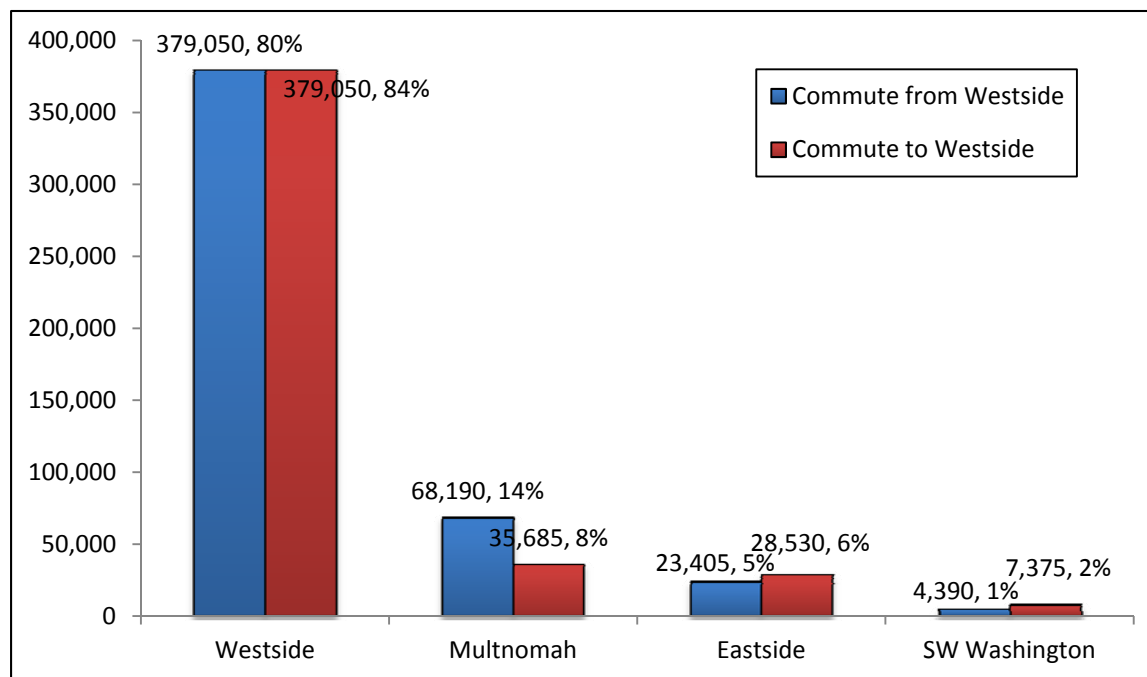


## The Westside relationship to the rest of the region

The Westside economy is part of the larger regional economy. To illustrate the integration of the regional economy, Figure 4 presents commuter flows between the Westside and the other parts of the region. The blue bars show where people who live in the Westside travel to work: 80 percent stay in the Westside; 14 percent go to Multnomah County; 5 percent go to the Eastside, and 1 percent go to SW Washington. The red bars show where the people who work in the Westside come from: 84 percent come from other parts of the Westside, 8 percent come from Multnomah, 6 percent from the east side, and 2 percent from SW Washington.

**When thinking about transportation investments, more important than the percentages are the absolute amounts: 168,000 people are commuting into or out of just the Portland Region Westside boundary every day.**

Figure 4. Commuting Patterns, ACS 2006-2008



## III. The Importance of Transportation to the Westside Economy

Local transportation networks play a central role in determining regional economic production possibilities, as all significant economic activity depends on the efficient transport of people and goods within, across and through regions.

**Transportation infrastructure is a big part of the public capital stock at the foundation of all regional economies: transportation improvements can expand the economic potential of a region in much the same way as increasing the region's supply of skilled labor.**

Transportation investments improve economic potential in the following ways:

- Allowing new or relocated manufacturers to distribute products more efficiently than previously possible, and to use existing resources more efficiently to create additional output. Lower transportation costs allow firms to create more output with a given level of privately-owned inputs.
- Increasing production possibilities through the increase in potential traffic flow. Any reduction in transportation cost lowers the total cost of production and, as a result, increases the rate of return on private investment in productive capacity.
- Lowering production costs by reducing firms' needs to stockpile large inventories of raw materials, intermediate goods, or finished products to hedge against market changes. This is referred to as "potential use" of the system.

**Economic theory suggests the following connections between transportation investments and economic development outcomes:**

1. Efficient transportation networks are fundamental to a functional economy.
2. All else being equal, a region with a better-developed transportation network will attract more economic activity than a region with poorly-planned or under-built roads.
3. Investments in transportation infrastructure can allow the economy to grow larger than it otherwise would, but cannot do it by themselves.
4. When the existing roadway network is under-built and severely congested, investments in roadway capacity can generate significant economic development benefits.
5. Effective transportation investments create net benefits—their effect is not just a redistribution of economic growth from one area to another.

In short, investments in the transportation system make possible an expansion in production possibilities, but do not actually create those expansions on their own. Nonetheless, certain broad types of projects are more likely to create specific, appreciable economic development benefits. For example, when the existing roadway network is under-built and severely congested, investments in roadway capacity can generate significant economic development benefits. A network of roads that cannot handle existing demand can seriously hinder the flow of goods and services within and between regions, providing more prospects for realizing economic development benefits through roadway improvements. In these cases, construction of new capacity can significantly lower the cost of exploiting economic opportunities.

In addition to improving economic potential, investments in the transportation system create benefits for users and non-users of the system.

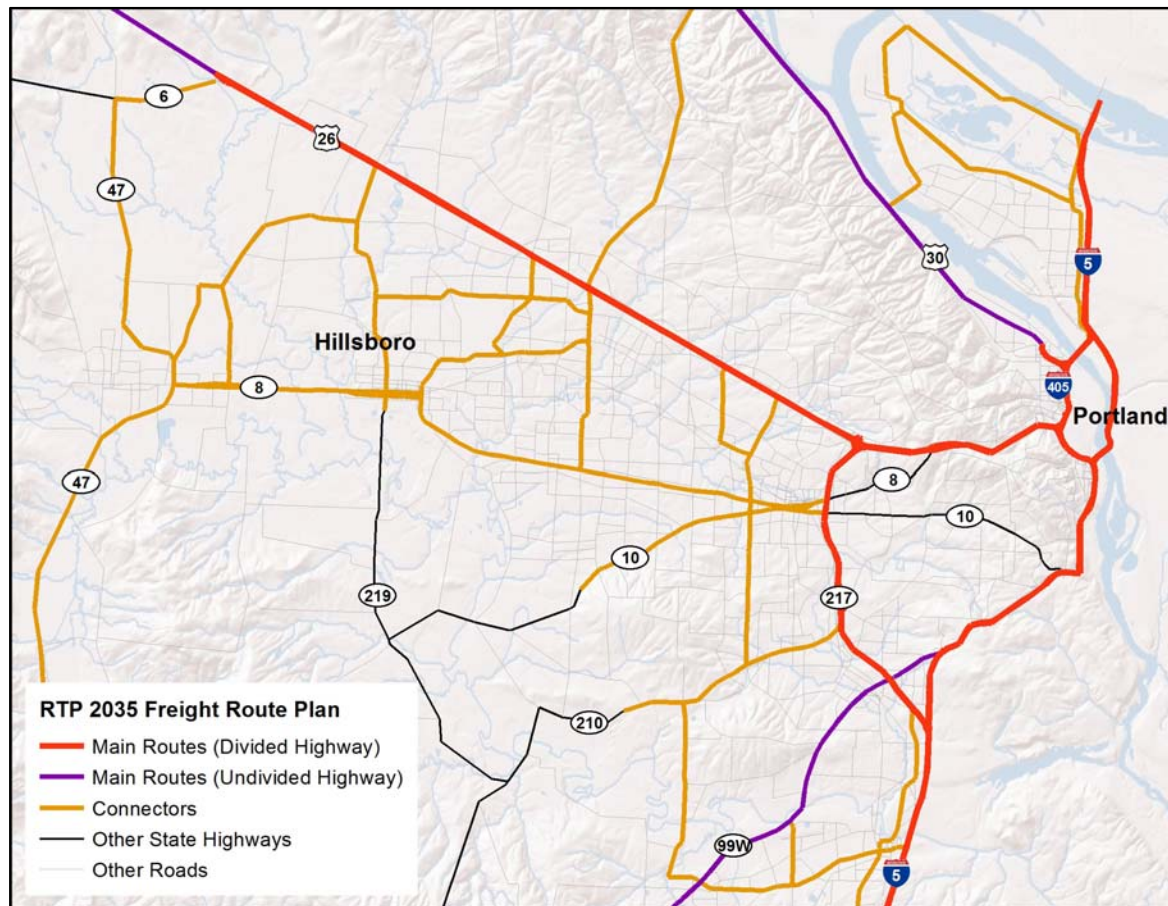
**There are very practical implications for the Westside economy and its transportation system. Key economic segments and local business (including agriculture, nursery, viticulture, tourism and timber) all generate local freight traffic and rely extensively on US 26 and I-5 for efficient and reliable shipment and deliveries in and through the region. Rising congestion increasingly results in reduced travel-time reliability, a significant challenge faced by all economic segments.**

## **IV. Current and Likely Future Performance of the Westside Surface Transportation System**

For several decades the metropolitan region has collaborated in the study of highway, arterial, trucking and transit needs and solutions. Figure 5 illustrates the regional freight-mobility plan routes in the Westside urban area. US 26 serves as the primary and near-singular east-west route for freight and

commerce travel from the Westside with connections to the I-5 corridor and Port of Portland facilities (water-borne and air shipping).

Figure 5. Regional Freight Mobility Plan Routes



Source: Metro, 2035 RTP

The current (2010) Regional Transportation Plan (Metro) contains some Westside highway and transit system capacity enhancements, with varied certainty regarding future funding capability and commitment. Past RTP's have focused on surface street and highway performance measures, and have targeted peak-hour vehicle capacity (time-periods typically dominated by work force commuters, not necessarily freight shippers).

The 2010 RTP expanded the systems analysis with additional performance measures *emphasizing travel time reliability* on key state highways and freeways for peak hour and mid-day conditions. From these measures the RTP process better indicates where, when and to what level chronic congestion can affect freight mobility.

Key to Westside regional highway users are the US 26 and Highway 217 corridor links to I-5, with connection to the greater regional and interstate highway network and international port systems. Figure 6 shows **US 26 continuing to experience peak hour congestion spreading into mid-day hours (especially in the eastbound direction), impacting both the local and larger regional industry shippers of goods and services from and through the Westside area, including commerce from outlying rural counties. These levels of congestion and the impact on vehicle speeds are more significant on I-5. Growth in congestion, particularly outside the traditional commuting hours (morning and afternoon) further reduces reliability – a key factor for local shippers and suppliers.**

Figure 6. September 2012, Time of Day Speed Profile: US 26



Source: PSU/ODOT Portal, 2012 – average speeds from all sensor stations, 185<sup>th</sup> Avenue to I-405

## Where did past plans expect us to be now?

In the mid-1990's, the Western Bypass Study concluded that an alternative set of regional highway, transit, and systems and demand management policies and programs better met the study's objectives in lieu of a new, access-controlled expressway linking US 26 to I-5. Study findings and recommended projects were largely folded into the ensuing RTP (1997):

- Widen US 26 to six lanes, west to 185<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Widen Highway 217 to six lanes, I-5 to US 26
- Extend Westside LRT (MAX) to Hillsboro
- Implement frequent bus service on TV Highway and between Beaverton and Lake Oswego/Tualatin
- Build commuter rail service (WES) between Wilsonville and Beaverton

## Where are we now?

Since the mid-1990s, Washington County, Hillsboro and other Westside communities have acknowledged and adopted local land use and transportation plans, largely consistent with the Regional RTPs (2004 and 2010). There is more emphasis on systems management and demand management in these RTPs than in previous decades.

Local cities and Washington County are also completing their arterial street networks, employing new multi-modal street policy and design parameters that encourage walking, bicycling and transit access.

Taken together, these improvements are simultaneously raising the vehicular capacity to serve local commerce and commuter mobility needs, while supporting walk, bike and transit user needs.

Regarding regional state highway policy and plan direction, the greater emphasis within recent RTPs has been on lower-cost, systems management (efficiency) rather than expensive capital improvements is helping abate peak-period vehicle congestion, consistent with statewide policy as noted in the Oregon Transportation and Highway Plans. This direction is by regional policy intent and consistent with statewide policy as noted in the Oregon Transportation and Highway Plans. (One could argue further that this direction is in large part reflective of the historical decline in federal, state and local funding levels (per capita and in some cases absolute) to build new or expand existing state highways.)

Regional planning and transportation systems development in the Westside has progressed since the 1990s, though not to the level the plans aspire to.

- US 26 widening is mostly complete (widening the remaining section between 185<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Cornelius Pass Road is imminent)
- Operational and systems management plans have been implemented on Highway 217, and some interchange capacity improvements have been completed, but the larger widening project has yet to be fully defined with regional commitment for secured funding
- WES commuter rail service is operational (since 2009), but has limited service hours and carries a relatively low passenger demand (mostly peak hour commuters: about 1,300-1,500 daily riders)
- LRT extension to Hillsboro was completed as part of the Westside MAX project, is operational (since 1998), and carries significant daily passenger loads (65,000+ daily riders, Blue Line from Hillsboro-Gresham)
- Frequent bus service has not been implemented on TV Highway and between Beaverton and Lake Oswego/Tualatin - future implementation is subject to extremely limited transit capital and operations funding, in a revenue-constrained environment where TriMet is required to reduce existing bus service in some areas, rather than expanding service in new areas

### **Where do current plans expect us to be?**

Notwithstanding these important and recent regional highway and transit improvements, 2010 afternoon peak hour traffic conditions in 2010 reflect high levels of congestion in the key Westside corridors. In Figure 7a routes with wider and darker bands (yellow, red and purple) indicate key highway and freight routes where traffic demand exceeds their practical capacity). Portions of I-5, Highway 217 and US 26 (particularly at the I-405 junction) have high levels of congestion.



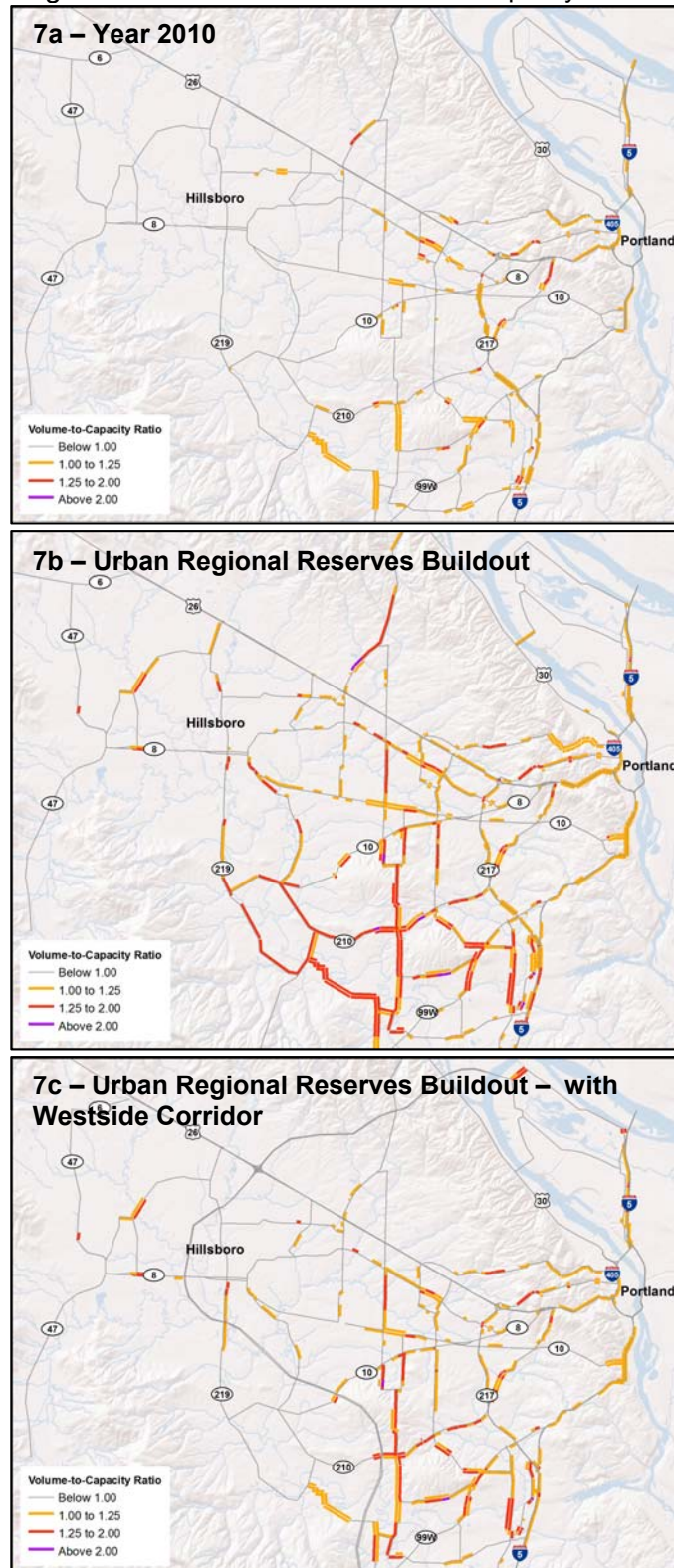
By 2035, these conditions are expected to become significantly worse, as shown in Figure 7b. Significant traffic growth and higher levels of congestion are anticipated on the key Westside connections US 26 (Sylvan) and Highway 217. The period peak congestion spreads further into the mid-day hours (much more than it does today).

Many of the suburban and rural highways that link Hillsboro, Cornelius and Forest Grove with Beaverton, Tualatin, Tigard and Wilsonville, will experience heavy congestion. These routes were not designed and built to withstand the growth in urban commuter and freight mobility demand expected in the future. Traffic safety will be an obvious, key concern on these routes.

These estimates, though briefly defined, indicate that the historical and current plans for high capacity transit and key state highways connecting the Westside to I-5 are likely to be insufficient to meet future demand. This conclusion applies to commuters, who may have substantive transit alternatives, but more importantly for local and regional business and industry shippers who rely extensively on these corridors and have no or very limited routing options.

For illustrative purposes, this white paper briefly examines the implication of a conceptual, limited access parkway that links the Westside: south to 99W and possibly I-5 (in the Tualatin area), and north to US 30 and across the Willamette River to the Port of Portland terminal facilities (and I-5). Figure 7c summarizes the year 2035 traffic conditions, reflecting the conceptual expressway and its general but significant impact in reducing congestion on critical regional routes.

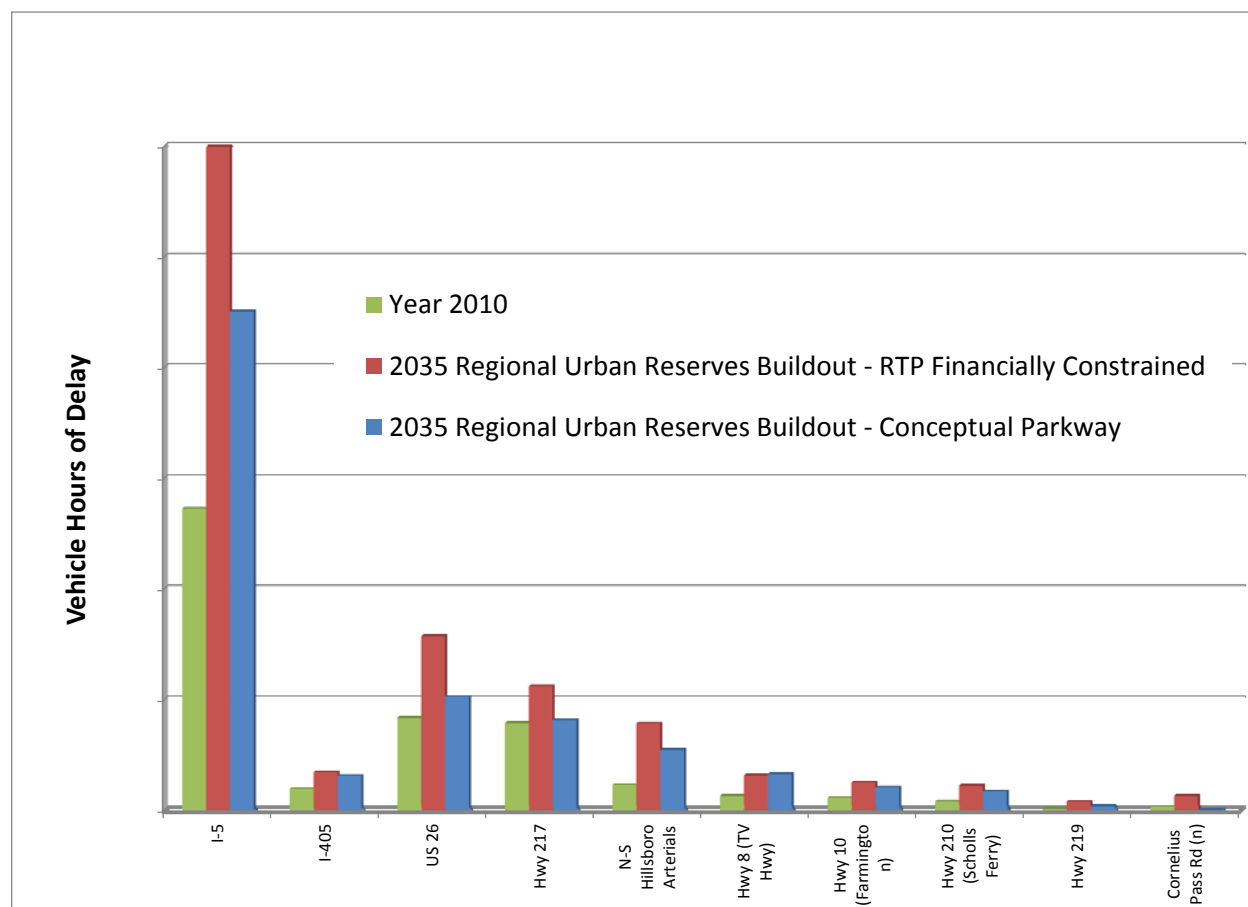
Figure 7. PM Peak Hour Volume-to-Capacity - Westside



Source: City of Hillsboro, Regional Travel Demand Model

Figure 8 provides a closer examination off Westside traffic congestion (vehicle delay, PM peak-period – 2 hours). It compares base year 2010 and future Regional Urban Reserves Buildout scenarios. The former reflects the current RTP highway and transit solutions as financially constrained (including the widening of Highway 217 to six lanes and other high capacity transit plan solutions); the latter adds the conceptual parkway.

Figure 8. Westside Traffic Congestion Growth: PM Peak Period (2 hours)



Source: City of Hillsboro, Regional Travel Demand Model – Relative Changes in Estimated Vehicle Hours Delay – Summary by Transpo Group

Levels of congestion on US 26 and I-5 will almost double upon buildout of the Urban Regional Reserves scenario. This condition will most certainly compound the peak period problem, with high congestion spreading well into mid-day hours. Congestion will continue to grow in the Highway 217 corridor, even when assuming completion of the planned widening project to 6 lanes. The magnitude of growing congestion may not be as large on other area state highways and urban arterial, but the rate of congestion growth is quite significant in nearly all major freight routes within the Westside. **The conceptual parkway would have an impact within the Westside area, with significant contribution towards reduction in the growth of congestion along key routes - US 26, Highway 217, Hillsboro's arterial system and other state highway routes in the area. These impacts are not exclusive to the Westside: I-5 gets significant, future congestion relief with the added parkway concept.**

A re-examination of the regional transportation system needed to meet the regional land-use growth plans and economic goals and objectives for the Westside should be undertaken. The region is about to embark on the next RTP update. A full re-examination of Westside transportation needs mindful of the Westside economy should be completed in advance of or part of the RTP update.