

# PROJECT SELECTION

This review will be more easily understood as annotated comments on problem areas in the 2030 RTP.\* The 2030 RTP was considered from the point of view of public comment during 2001 and 2002, particularly the comment found in *Changing Direction: Transportation Choices for 2030*.\*\*

Thematic issues that impact this section include:

- Refusal to “flex” funds; persistent use of the old 60/40 highway/transit split, in spite of overwhelming public support for more transit and almost universal controversy on major highway projects.
- Use of implementer “readiness” to determine priority for deploying projects over time, rather than regional priorities.
- No discussion of the great degree of controversy surrounding some of the expressway and arterial projects proposed.
- Failure to conduct real alternatives testing; no indication which strategies from “alternatives” were chosen to form the final plan.
- Refusal to meaningfully incorporate NIPC Evaluation Measure scores. Use of a “composite” score for projects, without showing individual scores, is ineffectual and uninformative.

\* Available at <http://www.sp2030.com/CommentSite/index.html>.

\*\* Available at <http://www.cnt.org/tsp/trans/ctagc/cc/theplan.htm>

*The chart below offers specific page references and quotes from the Regional Transportation Plan and commentary on why each quote is relevant or problematic*

Page	Quote	Comment
72	<i>Capital intensive approaches also improve performance of the existing system, particularly with regard to reduction in traffic congestion as well as providing new transit choices in developing areas.</i>	Reduction in traffic congestion through road building has repeatedly been shown to be a short-term solution. New transit choices in developing areas have low overall benefits; usually they do not improve job access from the most populous communities and serve small numbers of commuters on the fringes.
116	<i>A major capital project recommendation’s appearance in the RTP was consensus that discerned the following about each project: - Building the project can improve the performance of the transportation system. - There is a commitment to steady progress toward implementing the project in support of the plan’s goals and objectives. . . .</i>	Faulty logic includes: there is no consensus on these projects, some are hotly contested; progress toward implementation should not be substituted for objective criteria on the value of a project. Projects should have been selected to provide maximum benefit to the greatest number of people and to reduce environmental impacts.

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August 2003

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117	<i>Rather than rank proposals by their forecast demand, the benefits for proposals under consideration should be identified in terms of their performance as part of one of the thematic alternatives.</i>	There is no way for the public to discern which project was selected from which alternative. The plan does not reveal which projects were assigned to the alternatives for the "analysis." The public can't judge the utility of the project because the number of anticipated users is withheld from the public.
118	<i>To this end, for capital proposals in which sufficient data existed, preliminary demand and cost data were compared and in some cases refined by project champions for inclusion in the appropriate alternative.</i>	None of this data is available within the 216 page document.
118	<i>To gain broad support for the major capital projects, we should seek to: - Balance capital investment among all modes . . . .</i>	The public has clearly asked for a shift from the former "balance" of modes to more investment in transit. This plan maintains the old 60/40 road to transit split, but obscures the actual allocation.
118	<i>Shared Path 2030 sought to diminish a selection approach that focuses on single project merits in favor of trying to demonstrate that a project is consistent with a desired theme of transportation improvements. Nonetheless, the analysis of the future regional alternatives organized around these themes can be decomposed to provide project level information which might be useful in prioritizing the costs/benefits of a particular project.</i>	This confuses rather than clarifies the issue of how projects were selected.
119	<i>In a dense urban area, nearly all major project proposals are able to forecast some benefit to travelers and transportation system performance.</i>	This plan devotes a large proportion of new investment (over 50%) to the portions of the region that are sparsely populated, therefore the projects have little benefit to existing communities and may deplete resources needed for existing communities.