

REGIONAL INVESTMENT

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:

- Reduction in regional commitment to existing infrastructure, from 80% to 77%, a \$1.8 billion drain of resources from existing communities.
- 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.
- The use of project “readiness” as a criteria to determine which infrastructure to fund, rather than the benefits of a project or the regional priorities addressed by a project.

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

**Available at <http://www.cnt.org/tsp/trans/ctaqc/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
9		First draft had a table showing traditional 60/40 split in revenues between highways and transit. Removal of the table obscures actual apportionment. Plan fails to mention that highway funds can be "flexed" for transit and other purposes.
9	Footnote to page 9: Shared Path 2030 assumes that construction of some new facilities (both highway and transit) will be financed with user-generated revenues. The might include, but is by no means limited to, traditional tax, toll and fare arrangements.	The amount needed from new, unspecified sources is \$7 billion (page 198).
17	Regional transportation policy should consider the opportunities presented both by capital and long-term management and operations planning.	The Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) enacted Statement No. 34 (GASB-34) in 1999. These new standards will require that state and local governments develop, maintain and present capital accounts in their balance sheets. These financial statements must also accurately reflect spending, the conditions and value of existing infrastructure and outline goals for improvement. This document does not set a framework for beginning that process.
46	. . . significant new segments to the region’s major highway and passenger rail system were introduced with the intent of accommodating or managing forecast growth.	There is no commitment to redirecting growth to disinvested communities; instead taxpayers in existing communities finance the drain of investment from their own communities.

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75	While the RTP has historically endorsed (strategies like) community planning, environmental protection, and sound transportation management, it does not typically allocated a specific amount of the projected transportation revenues to these strategies. The RTP's role in this area has been to provide a statement of regional intent and to provide general guidance, delegating their exact specification to the project design and programming process.	This is the crux of the deficiencies in the document. The goals of the plan, and the common themes identified by the public (page 74) would be better served by committing resources to these strategies. Instead the emphasis is on expensive new projects, many of which will serve few travelers but open up development opportunities on the fringes of the region.
98	The RTP recommends a single amount of forecast revenue for use among the strategic regional systems; the fundamental guidance being that the strategies being designed and implemented will improve the performance of a unified multi-modal transportation system.	Without dedicated funding all modes competing with highways for this funding will be at a disadvantage. The 2020 update allocated \$225 million to pedestrian and bicycle improvements. The amount was small, less than ½ of 1%, but the public could ascertain what the region's commitment to ped/bike travel was.
98	Strategic Regional Systems"	This heading was "Strategic Shared Use Systems" in an earlier draft. In the final draft, the only strategic mode is highway -- the Strategic Regional Arterials. Traditionally designation as "strategic" has created priority status and greater likelihood of funding.
99	Shared Path 2030 avoided making modal distinctions up to a point in consideration of a unified multi-modal approach. The RTP's major capital project recommendations, while mode-specific, include specific strategy discussions intended to provide implementation guidance to promote choice between and among travel modes.	The refusal to prioritize transit and walkability heightens concern that continued heavy roadway investment is the intention.
99	Multimodal transportation design, implementation, management and operation has been one of the most enduring topics during Shared Path 2030 discussions. In addition, the emergence of "context-sensitive" transportation solutions indicates a priority for sharpening and expanding the considerations given to improving existing "shared-use" transportation facilities.	The loud and clear message from the public is reported in this document, but the investment strategy offered in this plan is not responsive to the taxpayers' message.

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105	Expressway and tollway interchanges in order to improve accessibility and support efficient economic development.	This bullet point is in the Strategic Regional Systems section. Use of dollars that are supposed to be dedicated to shared use systems to enhance expressways and tollways is a misuse of those funds.
105	Strategic Regional Arterials	This is the only remaining "strategic" system within the Strategic Regional Systems section. All other subheadings have been downgraded.
108	Regional Transit	This section heading was originally "Strategic Regional Transit System."
108	Potential SRA additions proposed during Shared Path 2030 include: (see comments)	The new SRA segments are in sparsely populated parts of the region, primarily in Will County.
110	Pedestrian and Bicycle	This section heading was originally "Strategic Pedestrian and Bicycle System."
111	The RTP acknowledges federal guidance to give due consideration to bicycle and pedestrian facilities improvements when improving or constructing transportation facilities.	There are two problems with this statement: 1) acknowledgement that pedestrian and bicycle are considered not for their own merits, but because of a federal mandate and 2) there is no commitment to freestanding pedestrian or bicycle improvements. Only when a road is being built or improved can pedestrians or cyclists hope for some relief.
111	Regional Freight	The section heading was originally "Strategic Regional Freight System."
119		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.
195	<i>Implementing the Major Capital recommendations</i>	The financial section is extremely difficult to read, and has become more difficult rather than less, in successive edits.
195	Moving toward capital project implementation requires elaborating the proposal in sufficient detail to demonstrate that its purpose and need is being met. This will permit detailed project engineering and allow necessary funding to be secured. Only once there is consensus that a proposal is "ready" can a proposal be implemented.	"Project readiness" is a poor substitute for regional priorities in selecting projects or determining in what order they should proceed.

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195	\$1.3Billion are already programmed for these recommendations in the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).	The list of projects that follows does not match the list of funded projects in the “conformity” list or the list in the newsletter.
197	Upon reviewing these alternatives, <i>Shared Path 2030</i> made an initial set of plan recommendations combining the strongest and most viable elements of each alternative.	It isn’t possible for the public to determine the components of each alternative; we are being asked to take this plan “on faith” as the best for the region.
198	<i>Shared Path 2030</i> felt it reasonable to assume that about \$7 Billion from new sources could be sought based on a practical desire to construct at least a portion of the proposed major capital recommendations.	Some of the funding needed to implement the plan is speculative at this point in time.
199	Table 15: Financial allocation of recommended major capital projects	The figures in this table add up to \$62.3 billion rather than the \$61 billion referred to at the front of the document (remarkably, the \$61 billion figure is not restated anywhere in the financial information at the end of the document. Subcategories of expenditure are allocated without a reminder of the size of the overall investment).