

Lane Economic Committee

Response to Region 2050 Project

June 20, 2005

The Lane Economic Committee was asked to provide feedback on the economic impacts of various scenarios being evaluated under the Region 2050 program. The LEC heard several different presentations from LCOG staff and also analyzed a report prepared by Tim Duy, professor of Economics at the University of Oregon. The LEC would like to make the following comments:

- The Region 2050 process can help residents and public agencies to understand that we are unified by our regional economy. We support the direction of inter-jurisdictional cooperation and regional thinking that underlie the efforts of Region 2050.
- The project should continue to strive to generate greater involvement from the business community. This is essential to maintain a proper perspective from a major driver of growth opportunities in the region.
- The 50 year planning horizon greatly reduces the ability to do an accurate projection. Most businesses will not do any formal planning beyond a ten year horizon. Those businesses which do the longer range planning will usually include options for flexibility depending on unanticipated economic changes.
- Economic market forces need to be understood as part of economic development planning. Local economic planning is limited in what it can control. There are economic forces involved in development that are not easily controlled. It is usually best to maintain flexible development alternatives.
- Long range planning for infrastructure is essential given the long time horizons required to implement solutions to these challenges. However, recent developments such as the impacts of computers, use of the Internet, and cell phones show that it is much more difficult to determine long-range business needs.
- Rural communities have had and can continue to have a vital economic and cultural impact on this area. The plan should provide options for rural economic growth.
- The three development scenarios proposed and analyzed to date by the 2050 program appear overly limited. It is very likely that the eventual outcome will be a blend of one or more of these scenarios.
- The purpose of the three proposed scenarios needs greater clarification. There is a general perception that the purpose of the 2050 program is to force development into one or the other of these scenarios. Comments from staff often run counter to this aforementioned perception. The perception nonetheless exists.
- The results and conclusions of the 2050 program should be used to help our region avoid negative growth outcomes and pitfalls like those that have occurred in other areas. We should not expect the 2050 program to provide simple alternatives to be chosen between and forced upon any area.