Challenges Confronting Metropolitan Portland's Transportation Decision System

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The structure and dynamics of the regional transport regime in Portland, Oregon, are discussed and its consensus decision-making process through a series of challenges to the regime is explored. These challenges include (a) cultivating new sources of project finance as the federal government reduces its contribution, (b) integrating transport projects with regional and local land use plans designed to manage urban growth, and (c) intensifying competition between business centers within the region as rapidly growing suburban business centers seek transport projects that will facilitate locally oriented economic growth. Initially, the institutional and normative elements of the regional consensus process are discussed. Then a set of case studies that illuminate the challenges confronting the regime and the nature of regime responses is developed. To conclude, the future stability of the regime is considered. The challenges call into question the stability of the informal institutional character of Portland's regime that has prevailed since it was created. Clearly, an informal, consensus-based decision process functions well when compensatory resources are available to mitigate zero-sum consequences of decisions. Whether the process can sustain itself without being able to remediate the consequences of internal regime resource allocations is the true test of an institutionalized versus a noninstitutionalized regime.

A regional transport regime—a set of urban institutional structures and related behavioral norms, rules, principles, and decision-making procedures governing relations between public and private political actors—evolved in the late 1970s in the Portland metropolitan area (1–4). This evolution took place around the process of withdrawing Mount Hood Interstate Freeway funds and transferring these funds to a variety of other highway and transit projects in the region. The most important product of this regime conversion process has been and continues to be a regional consensus regarding project priorities. The structure and dynamics of this consensus process are discussed through an exploration of a series of challenges to the regime. These challenges include (a) cultivating new sources of project finance; (b) integrating transport projects with regional and local land use plans designed to manage growth; and (c) intensifying competition between central business district (CBD) suburban business centers within the region. The initial discussion focuses on the institutional and normative elements of the regional consensus process. Subsequently, an analysis of contemporary issues illuminates the challenges confronting the regime and the nature of regime responses. The conclusion considers the potential long-term stability of the regime.

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NATURE OF THE CONSENSUS

In the 1970s the Interstate withdrawal and transfer process produced a consensus that a light-rail transit (LRT) line linking the City of Portland CBD with the commercial center of Gresham, a suburban city in eastern Multnomah County (which also includes Portland), should be the region's top priority project. In addition to this LRT line, regime decision makers assembled a package of about 140 other highway and transit projects that were to be undertaken using withdrawal funds. The process demonstrated the crucial importance of a regional consensus in the effort to persuade higher-level governmental decision makers to accept this package. Since state and national officials are reluctant to make choices regarding local projects when local officials are themselves in conflict regarding priorities, presenting a united front plays a key role in facilitating financial commitments by higher levels of government. The regional consensus enabled Portland-area representatives in the state legislature to secure necessary state matching commitments and assisted Oregon congressional representatives in securing funding at the federal level (5).

The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) are the two most important institutional products of the 1970s. The dominant "cultural" feature of these committees is the value they attach to sustaining the 1970s consensus-building process in support of a continuing vision of metropolitan development. This sustaining effort has been greatly facilitated by the relative stability of regime personnel and their commitment to professionalism.

Emergence of METRO

During the 1970s an effort to create a regional government was also under way. Authorized by state legislation and a citizen vote in early 1978, METRO came into existence in January 1979 (Figure 1). The new regional governmental authority was created by merging two existing entities, the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG) and the Metropolitan Service District (MSD). The new entity had an independent board of councilors elected from 12 electoral districts and provided solid waste, drainage, zoo, and planning services in portions of Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. The effect of creating this new entity was to shift the regional transportation planning process out of the hands of local government officials who had dominated CRAG—representing the respective jurisdictions—to a popularly elected governing body representing districts within the
FIGURE 1 METRO boundary.
region. METRO staff assumed responsibility for the development of regional transportation plans, and for support to state and local planning staffs working on transport and land use issues.

Led by its Chairman Neil Goldschmidt, CRAG, in one of its last acts (December 1978), adopted a resolution specifying the projects that would be funded with Interstate withdrawal funds in an effort to set the transport agenda for METRO. METRO attempted to adopt this resolution as the region’s federally required transportation plan, but this idea was rejected by the federal government. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) did not view METRO as either a general-purpose government or as composed of representatives of general-purpose governments [a requirement for Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designation]. This was confirmed by a state attorney general’s opinion and led directly to METRO’s creation of the JPACT in 1979. At the same time, the TPAC was formed to provide technical input to JPACT. Together these supplemental bodies allowed METRO to meet the federal MPO requirements.

**JPACT and TPAC**

The composition of JPACT has not changed since it was created. Members include elected officials representing the four counties in the bi-state metropolitan area, elected officials representing the cities of Portland, Vancouver, and other cities within the three Oregon counties, the Oregon and Washington departments of transportation, Tri-Met, the Port of Portland, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and the METRO Council. TPAC consists of technical representatives of FHWA, FAA, and UMTA [now the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)], the Intergovernmental Resource Center of Clark County—the designated MPO for that part of Washington state—and six citizen representatives appointed by the METRO Council.

JPACT does not have permanent funding. Local government dues, Highway Planning and Research funds, UMTA planning monies, Tri-Met and Portland grants, and special project funds compose the overall budget of $900,000 (excluding special project funds).

The organizational relationship of JPACT to METRO was never formally defined. There was a split between those involved in creating JPACT regarding which agency would actually make decisions. An unwritten agreement evolved that allowed METRO to approve JPACT decisions, although it was clearly understood that such approval would be a formality. As a result, the regional consensus process could be maintained in a way not available through METRO alone since it does not represent Washington and Oregon state agencies, or other implementing agencies. Thus, JPACT became the defacto MPO body making recommendations to the federal government through METRO.

JPACT deals with issues in an atmosphere that presumes a continuing cooperative process. Projects are debated on their merits, and each project proposal is given a full and fair hearing. Participants describe the process as a “professional game” in which anyone (citizen, professional, or politician) who plays by the rules can have access. This professional atmosphere contributes to the maintenance of high levels of commitment and trust among those involved. The continuity of JPACT’s formal membership—and of particular committee members—contributes another important element to the stability of the regime. The political trade-offs and compromises involved in assembling packages of projects and in determining regional project priorities have been easily retained within institutional memory. JPACT has, therefore, been able to integrate new project proposals in a manner that is least disruptive to the underlying consensus.

Another crucial aspect of the culture that sustains the regime is the relationship between technical staff and policymakers, and among the technical officials themselves. METRO's Director of Transportation chairs TPAC and serves as Executive Director of JPACT. Reflecting earlier commitments to upgrade METRO's technical capacity, the METRO staff is large and technically sophisticated and has significant resources available to it for planning and interacting with regional, state, and federal governments. METRO staff works closely with JPACT, aided by TPAC. TPAC has been particularly important in providing the technical expertise necessary to clarify the complexities of project planning and implementation resulting from myriad state and federal funding requirements, especially regarding the sequencing of events. There are also close working relationships between METRO staff and staff in local government planning agencies around the region. On occasion, professional staff from TPAC member agencies are loaned to METRO to assist in completing projects.

Structural relationships also contribute to a high degree of interagency cooperation. When METRO was designated as the MPO, a formal agreement was worked out placing responsibility for socioeconomic forecasting with METRO staff. Therefore, local government planners depend on METRO for population, employment, and transportation forecasts. Although local jurisdictions may suggest and test the consequences of alternative growth and development scenarios, the regional data base used for these projections is maintained by METRO and any changes must be adopted by METRO. The high level of interaction among technical people and between technicians and political officials has tended to produce a substantial level of agreement on transport policy issues, as well as on project priorities over time. This is consistent with the findings of Schmitt et al. (6), who found that MPO effectiveness in coordinating transportation planning at the local level was more a function of history and the attitudes of the people involved than of any MPO structural characteristics. The stability of the participants has further reinforced this tendency.

In addition to these institutional and political culture factors, the great weight of the Portland CBD in the regional political economy undergirds the transport regime. During the period of the withdrawal of funds, downtown Portland was just beginning to confront suburban pressures for office and commercial investment. The choice of a downtown/radial LRT line—and the reconstruction of a downtown/radial freeway sharing the same corridor—reflected the weight of the Portland CBD in the consensus-building process. Several suburban business centers have, however, grown rapidly in recent years, and the now-familiar pattern of suburban gridlock is evident in these outlying areas. Nevertheless, downtown Portland maintains its dominant position in the region, even as it
facing increasingly intense competition for investment in the activities historically concentrated there. This dominant role is widely, if grudgingly, acknowledged, and the recognition serves as a counterbalance to pressures that would fragment the consensus.

Finally, leading members of the Oregon congressional delegation emerged as effective advocates of the regional consensus with the national government during the withdrawal period and have continued to play this role. The absence of any competing major metropolitan areas in the state has enhanced the willingness and the capacity of the delegation to serve as an effective advocate.

**NATURE OF THE CHALLENGES**

The Portland regime now confronts a set of challenges that generate conflicting pressures on the consensus process. The first challenge is financial. Regional transport activists anticipate a continuing reduction in the level of federal funding for projects, necessitating an increase in state, local, and private-sector contributions to offset the decline (7). On the one hand, reductions in the level of federal investment generate pressure to maintain the regional consensus to effectively compete with other metropolitan areas for a share of a shrinking federal pie. On the other hand, the prospect of lowered funding levels increases the intensity with which project sponsors advocate a higher priority on behalf of particular projects and, therefore, the level of conflict that the consensus process must contain. Moreover, the necessity of including private-sector financial participation may exacerbate these conflicts, because places with poor private developmental prospects will be less able to secure commitments to projects.

A second challenge is the integration of transport projects with comprehensive land use plans. Planners and planning processes were greatly strengthened in Oregon by the environmental movement that surfaced in the 1970s. The new environmentally based planning challenges the relatively narrow concerns of the transportation regime. In the face of this challenge, regime supporters may close ranks to defend against a broadening of perspective that might compromise the effectiveness of transport projects as facilitators of economic growth. At the same time, effective environmentally based planning is widely seen as a crucial competitive advantage enjoyed by metropolitan Portland, as the region struggles to attract investment from Seattle and California urban centers that are portrayed as choking on unplanned urban sprawl. The desire to maintain this widely appreciated competitive advantage creates pressure to restructure the regime as a way of tipping the balance of power between transport projects and land use plans toward the latter.

Generally, the most basic challenge to any regional consensus process is competition between subregions to maintain and attract investment. Competition causes each business center to sponsor transport projects that will enhance its locational attractiveness. Projects become weapons that are deployed to gain competitive advantage. Those projects that concentrate benefits in space, as freeways and rail transit lines do around interchanges and stations, generate the most controversy because they will give a great advantage to some places and a disadvantage to many others (8,9). The package of projects assembled during the withdrawal process enabled the Portland regime to avoid the political stalemates that have characterized other areas.

As noted above, however, the Portland CBD faces increasingly intense competition from suburban business centers, though it continues to maintain its dominant position in the regional economy. The consensus process now includes more assertive suburban activists seeking projects that will enhance the autonomy of their centers. Designing individual projects and assembling packages of projects that will serve the development aspirations of the many competing regions represented in this regime becomes more problematic. At the same time, the continued dominance of downtown Portland encourages CBD activists to insist on the priority of projects that will maintain the privileged position of their region.

The consensus that was constructed during the 1970s was built using federal funds, so the challenge of making up for recent reductions in these contributions has only recently surfaced. Spraying 140 projects around the region effectively addressed the challenge of competition in the 1980s. The LRT line and the reconstructed freeway primarily benefited downtown Portland; however, the location of LRT stations enabled CBD activists to form an alliance with their counterparts in Gresham at the end of the line. Including in the package the myriad highway and transit projects throughout the metropolitan area induced activists from suburban Washington and Clackamas counties to support the consensus. Finally, the 1970s coincided with the start-up phase of Oregon’s statewide land use planning program. The jurisdictions in the region, including METRO, were busily mapping urban growth boundaries and preparing a comprehensive land use plan that would accommodate a substantial amount of development. The projects included in the original consensus did not engender any significant conflicts with emerging land use goals. How well a transport regime born in an era of plenty can hold up to these internal and external challenges is examined in the case studies presented below.

**WESTSIDE BYPASS**

The proposed Westside Bypass (Figure 2) presents a more serious land-use-based challenge to the regime for two reasons: (a) many jurisdictions are directly affected by the bypass, including several suburban cities and Washington County at the western edge of the region, and (b) part of the proposed route would lie outside of the METRO-adopted regional urban growth boundary. The bypass will be a north-south arc traversing the western edge of the metropolitan area and has raised the specter of traffic-induced sprawl. The bypass has been Washington County’s top-priority project for some time, especially for the western part of the county, which has experienced an electronics-industry-related employment boom. County activists have been pointing out that traffic increasingly circulates within the county instead of between the county and Portland and that the bypass was crucially important to serve the growing economic autonomy of the area.

Following JPACT and METRO Council decisions to add the bypass to the regional consensus priority list, *The Oregonian* lectured Washington County officials on their responsibilities. A lecture was seen as necessary because of the per-
ception that Washington County had historically been insufficiently attentive to regional concerns, had displayed a "go-it-alone," independent attitude, and was prone to pursue narrow, growth-related objectives.

*The Oregonian* (10) editorialized two challenges to county officials:

One is to show that participation in a metropolitan partnership is genuine and not just lip service masking insular inclinations. The other is to show enough backbone in controlling development to give the rest of the region confidence that the bypass would not lay open land supposedly protected by the urban growth boundary.

Washington County's Director of Land Use and Transportation Planning, a TPAC member, had already promised to work out a program immediately to resolve land use issues with METRO. JPACT approved funds for Washington County to begin preliminary engineering. At that point, the bypass project was conceived as a long-term effort that would be built in stages, the first stage of which would not involve any growth-management-related concerns. The sections of the bypass that would cross over the urban growth boundary were several years away.

The land use brew thickened when the Washington State legislature expressed interest in a third bridge over the Columbia River, several miles west of the existing Interstate bridge on the freeway connecting downtown Portland and Vancouver, Washington. This project was especially exciting to Clark County officials as one that would encourage the Oregon members of the regional transport regime to extend the Westside Bypass in a northeasterly direction all the way to the new river crossing, providing a much more direct connection between Clark County and industrial development zones in western Washington County. The bypass extension would, however, cross Portland's Forest Park, one of the largest urban parks in the United States, much of which is forested. Intense environmental opposition soon surfaced in Portland and in Clark County because of the routing of the connecting highway. The Intergovernmental Resource Center, the Clark County MPO, strongly supported the idea and was studying it at the request of the Washington state legislature. The legislature recommended a much more elaborate third bridge study to be jointly funded by Washington and Oregon agencies. Clark County officials readied a presentation to JPACT to secure a regime commitment. A Washington County transportation planner approved the logic of extending the bypass. However, a city of Portland transportation planner and TPAC member sounded a note of caution, arguing that before funds were committed to a third bridge study, a policy question ought to be resolved: Was opening up new lands for economic growth the objective, or was relieving traffic congestion on an existing bridge the main concern? This planner thought the former goal was uppermost in the minds of Clark County officials. TPAC's chair, who was also METRO's Director of Transportation Planning, thought so as well. The Portland regime's agenda, however, was concerned with the latter.

When the Clark County members of JPACT presented their bistate study idea to TPAC, the technical officials clearly indicated that a third bridge would be a low-priority item on the regional transport project list. They recommended against regime participation in the study. TPAC's chair recommended instead that METRO and Clark County's Intergovernmental Relations Center cooperate in a study of congestion on existing routes and the possibilities of extending light rail transit into the county. A Clark County official asked that a vote on this recommendation be delayed while further discussions were pursued. JPACT later agreed to delay a decision.

When JPACT did consider Clark County's invitation to a study, the Clark County officials' presentation of their request
markedly changed. They now stressed traffic congestion in general and the third bridge as one possible answer to corridor congestion concerns. JPACT later decided to reject any examination of a third bridge, but to support a bistate study along the lines suggested by the TPAC chair. This was to involve an earlier and more concentrated look at possible LRT lines linking downtown Portland and the city of Vancouver than JPACT had previously contemplated. The Washington State JPACT delegation was pleased, having decided to give priority to LRT in the face of the third bridge idea. JPACT member Earl Blumenauer, a leading LRT supporter, noted that the city of Portland would likely participate financially in such LRT studies.

The resolution of this issue illustrates the way in which the regime was responsive to Clark County concerns. The regime responded in a manner that maintained the integrity of the existing consensus regarding project priorities, as well as recognized the dominant role of downtown Portland—and its congestion concerns—in the regional political economy.

Although JPACT dealt with Clark County issues, the level of conflict on the Westside Bypass dramatically increased. 1000 Friends of Oregon, the state’s land use law watchdog, legally challenged the status of the bypass in Washington County’s transportation plan on the grounds that land use issues had not been addressed before the county committed to the freeway in its plan. The state Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), which administers Oregon’s land use laws, filed a separate appeal, arguing that the county’s plan lacked an explicit agreement that the bypass would be dropped if state land use requirements were not met. There had been an understanding on this point between the county and the state. The state had permitted the county to include the bypass to facilitate the search for financial support through the consensus process. However, the official plan failed to make the understanding explicit. Both 1000 Friends and DLCD were concerned about the sprawl-inducing effects of those portions of the bypass located outside the existing urban growth boundary.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners quickly moved to include the explicit agreement sought by DLCD and to do a study that would determine whether the bypass should be excused from land use laws protecting agricultural land outside urban growth boundaries. In addition, the county committed itself to study alternatives to the bypass in case the project could not be exempted under state land use laws. DLCD then dropped its appeal. However, 1000 Friends refused to follow DLCD’s lead, intending to press their appeal unless Washington County dropped all reference to the bypass in its transportation plan and addressed the land use question of whether a freeway was needed in that corridor. The attorney representing 1000 Friends said, “We think this is going to be used to bust the urban growth boundary” (11). This constituted a direct challenge to the transportation regime, which had approved the bypass in JPACT’s and METRO’s transport plan.

The regime countered with a METRO Council decision to intervene in the case being heard by the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA):

METRO should be “at the table,” the Council’s presiding officer said, if 1000 Friends and Washington County wind up negotiating some sort of settlement that could affect METRO’s system for reaching consensus on transportation problems. (12)

LUBA decided in favor of 1000 Friends’ position ordering Washington County to redo its transportation plan so that it did not appear that the county was already committed to the project. Land use analyses at determining whether a freeway was needed in the corridor had to come first, according to LUBA. 1000 Friends hailed the LUBA decision as a “major rerouting of the mindset” regarding the project. Washington County and METRO representatives disagreed, claiming that LUBA had not altered the transportation planning process they had been following. County commissioners were saddened, however, that the decision would set back construction of the crucial first stage of the project for 2 years while the need for the entire freeway was restudied.

The Oregonian saw the LUBA decision as a victory for comprehensive planning, which would consider land use and transportation issues together. In the wake of the bypass ruling, a DLCD official pointed out the implications of the decision for projects being planned elsewhere in the region, particularly in Clackamas County, where similar urban growth boundary concerns were likely to emerge. State land use and transportation officials began meeting to clarify the rules regarding when the transportation planning process would have to take state land use goals into account, particularly those concerning defense against urban sprawl, and when particular projects would be exempt. The TPAC chair pointed out that current rules were unclear and welcomed the effort at clarification.

The problem of integrating land use plans and transport projects has been noted in analysis of the state land use planning program (13). Integration is clearly more than a technical challenge for the regime. 1000 Friends of Oregon is an extremely well-organized, attentive, and politically and technically sophisticated organization. The organization has prospered in its watchdog role and it stands ready and willing to oppose the regime on land use and environmentally related transport matters. The group members will closely monitor the formulation and implementation of the rules that emerge from the process of clarification now under way. The question is, Will the regime accommodate plans, or will the logic of the project continue to drive the urban development process?

LIGHT-RAIL TRANSIT PLANNING

After the federal government committed funds to build the eastside LRT line in place of the Mount Hood Freeway in 1981, the regime turned its attention to the next LRT project. A westside line, linking downtown Portland and the eastern Washington County city of Beaverton, emerged as the top-priority project. From the viewpoint of Portland CBD leaders, this route would add commuter capacity in the increasingly congested Sunset Highway Corridor. The proposed line would not, however, extend significantly into western Washington County.

JPACT had endorsed a particular westside LRT alignment in 1983; however, the Tri-County Metropolitan Transit District (Tri-Met) hesitated to apply for funds from the federal government to begin preliminary engineering on this project
because it lacked the financial resources to apply for a matching grant. In addition, however, opposition to the project had surfaced in western Washington County. At the same time, Clackamas County transportation and economic development planners had joined with planners at the Port of Portland to propose an LRT line running south from Portland International Airport through a connection with the eastside LRT line to a major regional shopping center in Clackamas County. This line was to share a corridor with the recently constructed eastside bypass freeway, I-205, for most of its length.

Washington County transport activists, particularly those in the west, were shifting their focus away from a westside LRT line to the bypass freeway. Applauding this shift, *The Argus,* one of Washington County’s leading newspapers based in the western county seat of Hillsboro, editorialized, “We should far rather see money spent to facilitate north-south traffic in Washington County—where it is urgently needed—rather than boosting travel from our County into downtown Portland” (14). The fact that the JPACT-approved alignment did not reach into the western portion of the county—even though all Washington County business firms paid a payroll tax to Tri-Met—underlined what many in the west believed was yet another effort by downtown Portland to use transit to capture Washington County office workers and shoppers.

Clackamas County officials stressed the complementary nature of their LRT proposal, arguing that the airport link would boost patronage on the eastside LRT line. However, they also pointed out that their LRT line would cost a great deal less than a westside line, since virtually all the necessary right-of-way was in governmental hands, and that it could be constructed much more quickly than a westside counterpart. JPACT responded by authorizing a search for possible funding sources.

Tri-Met began preliminary engineering on the westside line in 1987 (Figure 3). During the course of this work, Tri-Met was reluctantly forced to conclude that the 1983 JPACT-approved alignment was no longer acceptable. During the intervening years, parts of the approved route had been built over, and a great deal more employment and residential development had taken place in the western portion of Washington County than had been anticipated. The new alignments to be considered would reach all the way to Hillsboro in the west. What was most disturbing about the alignment discovery was the prospect of having the regime go through the regional consensus process once again to reach agreement on a new route.

While westside LRT proponents contemplated major changes in their project, Clackamas County government and technical officials continued to press their LRT line forward as a high-priority endeavor. These officials called for building both westside and I-205 LRT lines as part of a regional package, ushering in a new era of cooperation between Clackamas and Washington counties, which historically had found themselves competitors for limited transport funds. Clackamas County’s assertiveness troubled Washington County officials, however, particularly when the former attempted to compare the I-205 line with the westside line in a manner that reflected less favorably on the latter’s regional priority. A Washington County commissioner and JPACT member said she thought Clackamas County officials no longer supported westside LRT as the region’s top priority. She argued that adding more lines to the regional list would jeopardize funding for Number 1: “You can’t do a little part of everything, or nothing gets done” (15). A Clackamas County commissioner, who was also a JPACT member, countered that he was “shocked and appalled” by the accusation that his county was trying to disrupt the regional consensus (16). Clackamas officials stressed their allegiance to the regime and to the westside LRT as they continued to argue that there would not be any competition between the two projects because various funding sources likely would be involved.

Extending westside LRT to downtown Hillsboro would permit that city to join an alliance with downtown Portland and downtown Beaverton. An appropriately chosen alignment would enable the three business centers to coexist peacefully, each enjoying an enhanced capacity to reach potential workers and shoppers locating in the rapidly growing parts of Washington County. The Hillsboro city council strongly supported efforts to bring LRT to town, as did the city council of Forest Grove, a small city beyond Hillsboro that hoped to secure a place on the line for the future.

However, two obstacles were present. The first was the concern that adopting a new alignment all the way to Hillsboro would necessitate a restudy of the entire project, delaying efforts for up to 2 years. The federal government had approved preliminary engineering funds solely for the 1983 alignment. In an effort to dispel any thoughts about foregoing the extension, a Washington County newspaper (17) editorialized the crucial significance of the Hillsboro connection:

A project that ends (at the point designated by JPACT in 1983) will primarily serve commuters travelling between Beaverton and downtown Portland. A project that extends to Hillsboro will not only serve a greater number of commuters, but it will also provide a new route for intracounty travel. . . . Indeed, the support of many Washington County residents and officials is contingent upon seeing the line extended to Hillsboro. Proceeding with plans to build the line only to (the 1983 end point) could fracture consensus that is starting to grow for the light-rail project.

Washington County’s Director of Land Use and Transportation Planning, a TPAC member, voiced the same concern.

The other obstacle involved the politics of route selection. An association representing land development and industrial firms in the corridor adjacent to the Sunset Highway argued for an alignment that would follow the highway all the way from downtown Portland to Hillsboro, relocating that portion of the LRT route in the central portion of the county between Hillsboro and Beaverton. Beaverton’s planning director opposed this alignment, arguing that the Sunset Highway Corridor route would not support the land use plans of many Washington County cities, including Beaverton. A citizens advisory committee to the Tri-Met Board of Directors recommended that the Hillsboro-Beaverton route, instead of the Sunset Highway Corridor, be chosen. This route had also been approved by the local governments in the county.

While westside LRT work went forward, Clackamas County officials became increasingly concerned that their LRT project was languishing. The County’s Director of Transportation Planning, who was a TPAC member, thought that “Portland and Washington County have formed a pretty formidable coalition. What they want, they get. Unfortunately, they do not speak for Clackamas County” (18). Earl Blumenauer bri-
dled at the accusation that political power tactics were keeping LRT out of Clackamas County. He defended his cooperative efforts on behalf of county interests and his support for bringing LRT to the county.

This was clearly a critical period for the regime. Competition for LRT funds was intensifying. Bringing western Washington County into the LRT alliance was problematic. At the same time, the Westside Bypass project was under attack, and Clark County officials were concerned about the capacity of the regime to meet their needs. A leading member of the Oregon congressional delegation, whose district includes Washington County, announced that he intended to lead an effort to seek additional federal funds to study the Hillsboro westside LRT extension and to permit this study to be done without having to restudy the entire route, thus saving 2 years. The significance of this plan is that the project would be eligible for 75 percent federal funding, instead of the 50 percent contribution that the federal government intended to institute when its funding formula expired in 1991.

The Oregon delegation was successful. House and Senate transportation bills incorporated language directing UMTA to permit the Hillsboro extension to be conducted without delay and providing funds for the work. Moreover, the Oregon delegation’s efforts stimulated a similar effort by their Washington state counterparts, who lined up funding for LRT studies in a broad corridor including Clackamas County, Portland, and Clark County. Two possible Clackamas County–Clark County alignments, one via I-205 and another via downtown Portland, would be eligible for study within this broad corridor notion. The LRT program for the entire region was boosted, greatly enhancing the stability of the regime.

The nature of rail transit projects—the fact that they concentrate access around a small number of station locations—greatly complicates the process of regional consensus building. The Portland transport regime illustrates one possible solution to the problem posed by the spatial concentration of benefits: a “coverage” strategy, including alliances between leading business centers based on transit network design. The success of the congressional delegations, in turn based on the underlying stability of the regime, enabled the regime to pursue several rail transit possibilities simultaneously, thereby covering the region with potential rail transit benefits. The regime has also been sensitive to issues of alliance-sustaining network design. The coverage strategy requires large amounts of funding, however, to make it work (19). Finding the funds to construct and operate these projects is the remaining challenge to the regime that we discuss.

FUTURE OF REGIME

The case studies illustrate the ways in which the Portland transport regime has responded to changes in its environment. The financial challenge to JPACT includes greater dependence on state and local sources for planning monies, which might disturb the consensus process. If one or a small number of regional or local jurisdictions ends up shoulderling a much larger share of the burden of financing JPACT studies—TriMet, for example—the regime’s consensus building process will be more complicated than when federal funds were shared around the metropolitan area. The challenge of competition is also reflected in the concern felt by smaller cities in the region that they are under-represented on JPACT. As these smaller cities grow they will become increasingly interested in projects that will enhance their position in the metropolitan economy, and in articulating their interest through JPACT.
Pressures on JPACT to respond to this concern will likewise complicate the consensus-building process.

Integrating transport projects and land use plans is a different sort of challenge from dealing with funding shortfalls and an increasing number of project sponsors. These latter sorts of difficulties produce conflicts, but these conflicts are internal to the regime. Often led by its technical members, the regime has been able to learn to deal with them without undermining the culture of consensus. The fact of downtown Portland's continuing dominance in the regional hierarchy and the absence of rapid economic growth pressures should moderate disruptive tendencies, permitting the regime to continue to deal with these conflicts in the ways that have produced the region's past successes. Conflicts between transport project and land use plans, however, arise from sources external to the regime; the package assembly approach to maintaining consensus does not apply.

The integration conflict represented by the Westside Bypass challenges the regime in two profound ways. One issue is the possibility of policy learning across belief systems; another involves the relationship between JPACT and METRO. Learning within a policy domain, such as urban transportation, most readily takes place when the core values adhered to by activists within the domain are not challenged. The funding and competition conflicts do not directly call into question the core values of the transport regime, which involve assembling packages of growth-facilitating transport projects. The regime has learned and continues to learn how to deal with these. However, integrating transport projects and environmentally based land use plans, as represented by the urban growth boundary, necessitates learning across systems. 1000 Friends of Oregon and the other citizen activist groups opposing the bypass hold to a different set of core values, including the priority of environmental goals and the subordination of growth-facilitating transport projects to these goals.

Sabatier hypothesizes (20) that policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely to occur when there is an intermediate level of conflict between advocates and when experts of the respective coalitions are forced to confront each other in a forum that is dominated by professional norms. Given the legal and political resource of its environmental challengers, the question is whether METRO, JPACT, and TPAC will attempt to defeat their opposition in an effort to maintain the integrity of the existing consensus on projects or whether the professionalism that has characterized JPACT and TPAC deliberations can be extended to include the advocates of land use and environmental planning.

Finally, the integration challenge calls into question the nature of the informal relationship between METRO and JPACT that has prevailed since JPACT was created. Since METRO has jurisdiction over the urban growth boundary for the region as well as the regional transportation plan, METRO may have to take a more distant, critical view of JPACT's project recommendations to address the land use concerns that are also within the agency's domain. Perhaps the conflicts surrounding integration will produce a forum that will enable METRO transportation and land use professionals to produce the policy-oriented learning necessary to transcend the existing limits of Portland's transport regime.

REFERENCES
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