

October RAC Transportation Systems Table Notes

(Summary of Committee Members Discussion)

Summation: Some feel freeways are a boon for Central Arkansas while others cite several ills from continuing expansion. The inability to meet the public's "new urbanist" desire stems from a disconnect between transportation and land use. The arterial network may be too far along to vastly improve, and there is a dire view of alternative modes being able to alleviate its necessity. Regardless, planning across jurisdictions need to strengthen to improve the network, and we should invest in other modes because some cannot afford a car. Technology and other cultural trends will make it hard to predict what the future will hold for transportation.

Question 1. Are freeways a cause or symptom of our transportation problems?

- Freeways are serving their designed purpose and I-630 and I-30 will or are getting needed capacity improvements.
- Interstates have improved mobility.
- Freeways through cities can divide and segregate communities.
- Interstates/Freeways are turning the region into a doughnut and de-populating the center of the region relative to outlying areas.
- Benton, Cabot and other outlying areas would not have been able to grow without interstates.
- Freeways affect business location (and land use patterns) with commercial properties trying to locate near interstates/freeways.
- There is a disconnect between the public's stated desire for new-urbanist destinations/development and what we have built in the last couple of decades
- The affect of freeways on Central Arkansas's transportation system is not unique to this region, freeway/interstates and our ensuing land use patterns are in many ways an American experiment that has failed in many ways but has succeeded in others.
- Metroplan and ArDOT need to coordinate their planning better.
- **Question 2. How can we invest on the arterial network to accommodate motorists while mitigating impacts to... other transportation modes, like biking and walking? Downtowns? A community's sense of place? Neighborhood connection (physical separation)?**
- Access management can be unpopular in urban areas, as businesses do not want access to their particular business impacted. However, when managed property roadways can provide access to adjoining property while preserving the capacity of the roadway. To be successful, access management must be supported with land development planning.
- ArDOT has transitioned from planning exclusively for highways to planning for transportation; ArDOT no longer focused on just moving cars and now are focusing on all modes.
- Bicycling is not feasible for most commuters in the region.
- Bicycle routes are not compatible with high volume arterials

- Rail transit is not really an option in our region yet due to the smaller population and low population densities. Also, rail transit needs supporting transit options to get people from stations to their final destination.
- Arterials can be barriers to transit users, such as on Cantrell, especially when signalized crossings are widely spaced.
- It is hard to get around the region on just arterials. Freeways need to be used for longer trips in the region.
- The region may be too far down the road to make major improvements to the arterial system that can greatly impact the transportation system.
- Cities need to ensure there is enough R.O.W. in the future for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Collectors performance thru residential areas can be hampered by driveways.
- Region needs to work/plan across borders and cities need to stick to master street plans to allow for regional connections
- The region needs more nodes that allow people to work, live, play in one area.
- Last mile delivery is difficult for freight.

Question 3. Is major roadway widening inevitable, or might future work, shopping, and service trends change our transportation needs? If so how (on freeways, arterials)?

- We have set up a highway system that is destined to grow and grow outward. Development is going to move farther from the core causing the decline of closer in suburbs.
- It is difficult to predict what is next, telecommuting and on-line education could have some impact on transportation in the future.
- Job access is difficult for those without cars.
- Rock Region Metro needs a dedicated funding source.
- Buses serving park and ride lots may be an option that could work.
- We need somehow to incentivize riding transit.