

Annual Report

2016



Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council



Mission of RTC

To encourage and promote the development of a balanced, efficient and affordable regional transportation system to meet the mobility and accessibility needs of people and goods, within and through this region, and minimize transportation-related air pollution.

RTC Board of Directors

Clark County	3 Councilors
Klickitat County	1 Elected Official
Skamania County	1 Elected Official
City of Vancouver	2 Council Members
Camas/Washougal	1 Council Member
Battle Ground/Ridgefield/La Center/Yacolt.....	1 Council Member
Ports of Vancouver/Ridgefield/Camas-Washougal	1 Port Commissioner
Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Area (C-TRAN)	Executive Director
Washington State Department of Transportation	Southwest Region Administrator
Oregon Department of Transportation	Regional Administrator
Metro.....	1 Council Member

Ex-officio Members

14 th Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members
17 th Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members
18 th Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members
20 th Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members
49 th Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members

Legislative Mandate

Federal and State laws mandate regional transportation planning and decision making as a pre-requisite for use of Federal and State transportation investment funds. RTC acts as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) under Federal law ([Title 23, USC 450](#)) and the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) under State law ([RCW 47.80](#)). RTC carries out the duties of an MPO and RTPO on an annual basis and ensures compliance with all applicable Federal and State regulations.

Functions

RTC's 1992 [Interlocal Agreement](#) establishes the organization's responsibilities and select functions are highlighted as follows:

- ◆ Maintain a process for developing plans and programs that consider all modes of transportation and is continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive.
- ◆ Ensure that interstate transportation issues are coordinated between Washington and Oregon. Develop and adopt a [Regional Transportation Plan](#) that is consistent with the comprehensive plans of the counties, cities, and towns within the region and the state transportation plans.
- ◆ Develop a [Transportation Improvement Program](#) for the area.
- ◆ Provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation departments, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity for comment on the long range plan.

RTC prides itself in creating a forum where regional leaders convene to discuss comprehensive plans for investing in and awarding grant funding for strategic improvements to regional transportation infrastructure. Working across three counties, RTC is immersed in these conversations. 2016 marked another significant year for investing in streets, transit and multi-modal projects and for laying the groundwork for those to come. Working together as a region offers our best chance for success in meeting our future transportation needs.

Regional Growth Management Planning & Corridor Conditions

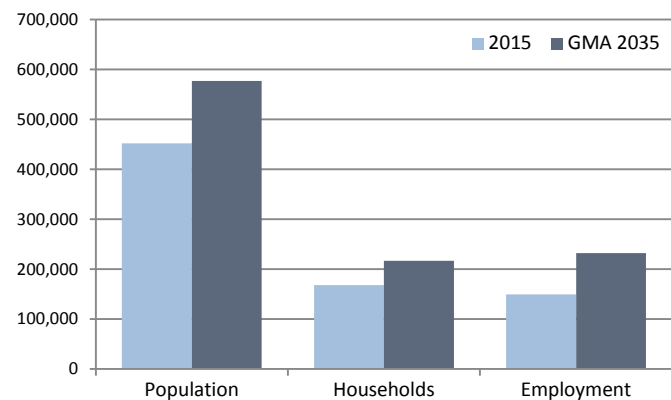
Planning for growth is a cornerstone of RTC's work and 2016 was no exception.

One component of RTC's state mandated role is to participate in Growth Management Act (GMA) planning discussions with member jurisdictions. This past year most member agencies in Clark County were engaged in GMA related planning, and RTC provided technical support in connection with the Act. Forecasts project that by 2035 Clark County population may increase by 28%, growing to over 577,000 persons, and employment could grow by 58%, to over 230,000 jobs.

These regional GMA efforts culminated in adoption of a new countywide growth plan and most local agencies also completed modest updates to the policy and capital facility plan

elements. The RTC Board of Directors was able to review, discuss, and certify each of these plans, setting the framework for a future round of planning and investment in transportation infrastructure across the county.

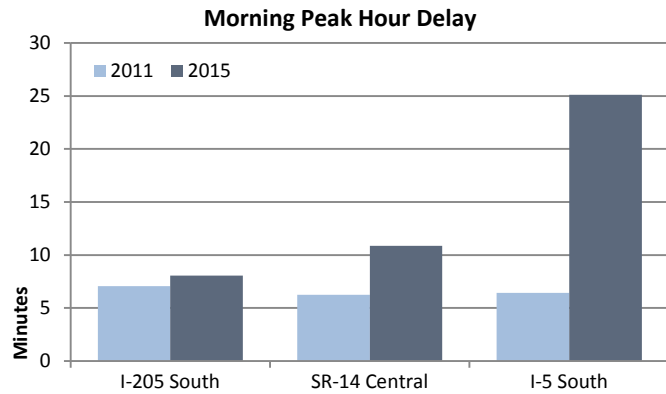
Beyond growth planning, RTC takes a prominent role in collecting and monitoring regional transportation conditions and reporting those annually as part of the agency's [Congestion Management Process](#) monitoring report. This year's report took a deeper look at the major interstate corridors, and found that conditions on these corridors have significantly deteriorated in the last five years, notably I-5 and I-205, concurrent with the rebound in the economy. To no surprise, the report found that the two principal interstate corridors serving the four-county Vancouver-Portland metropolitan region were both the most highly traveled (I-205) and most acutely congested (I-5) within the bi-state area.



In response to this report, various regional agencies have initiated activities designed to assess near term opportunities for system operations or service enhancements. RTC has partnered with C-TRAN and WSDOT in the assessment of shoulder running bus

operations as part of the [Bus on Shoulder Feasibility Study](#), and WSDOT has initiated a comprehensive planning review of on-ramp meters to assess viability for near-term implementation. These efforts, combined with the RTC Board of Directors approval of additional grant funds for I-5 corridor specific operations study (programmed for 2020), begin to provide short-term study and actions, providing system enhancements along these important regional commute corridors.

Convening pro-active conversations with member agencies about needed transportation infrastructure investments and exploring future trends and issues that will shape our region's growth and mobility patterns is the ongoing work of RTC.



Key 2016 Results

The remainder of the report highlights major 2016 Work Program accomplishments, each of which support regional progress towards investing and building the systems and infrastructure needed to handle future population growth and to sustain a vibrant and resilient economy. The results are reported by line of business as follows:

1. Grant and Project Funding;
2. Regional Planning;
3. Technical Services;
4. Regional Partnerships and Collaboration; and
5. MPO Administration.

Grant and Project Funding

Transportation Programming Guidebook

The [Transportation Programming Guidebook](#) was adopted by the RTC Board of Directors at their June 2016 meeting. The Guidebook brings the overall regional transportation Improvement Program and regional grant process and procedures into one document. The Guidebook is used as a programming resource document to assist local agencies in the development of regional grants and projects.

Grant Project Awards

RTC administers the largest annual seed investment grant fund in Clark County. On average, the investment fund awards approximately \$9-10 million in competitive grants for regional roadway improvements each year. In 2016, the [RTC Board of Directors](#) awarded eleven grants, investing \$8.8 million in ten projects.

Over the past ten years, RTC has awarded over \$110 million in grants. It is believed these seed investment dollars are further leveraged, creating a multiplier effect of hundreds of millions in regional street investments being catalyzed by the RTC investment fund over the past decade.

Proposed STP-Urban Projects

Rank	Agency	Project	Phase	Score	Award	Total
1	RTC	Urban Freeway Operations Study	PE	n/a	\$150,000	\$173,410
1	RTC	UPWP & CMP	PE	n/a	\$340,000	\$393,064
1	RTC	VAST/TSMO Coordination	PE	n/a	\$325,000	\$375,723
4	Clark County	NE 119 th St. East, 87 th Ave. to 112 th Ave.	CN	79	\$3,100,000	\$8,377,000
5	Vancouver	NE 137 th Ave., 49 th St. to Fourth Plain	RW	73	\$950,000	\$5,400,000
					\$4,865,000	\$14,719,197

Proposed STP-Rural Projects

Rank	Agency	Project	Phase	Score	Award	Total
1	RTC	UPWP & CMP	PE	n/a	\$60,000	\$69,364
2	Clark County	NE Blair Rd., SR-500 to MP 2.47	CN	64	\$1,000,000	\$2,050,000
					\$1,060,000	\$2,119,364

Proposed CMAQ Projects

Rank	Agency	Project	Phase	Score	Award	Total
1	Multi-Agency	Small Cities ATMS	PE	n/a	\$276,000	\$371,400
2	Clark County	STEVE 2	PE/CN	82	\$342,000	\$460,000
3	WSDOT	Centralized Signal System Enhancement	PE/CN	82	\$335,000	\$450,000
4	C-TRAN	Hybrid Buses	All	80	\$1,925,000	\$3,624,250
					\$2,878,000	\$4,904,650

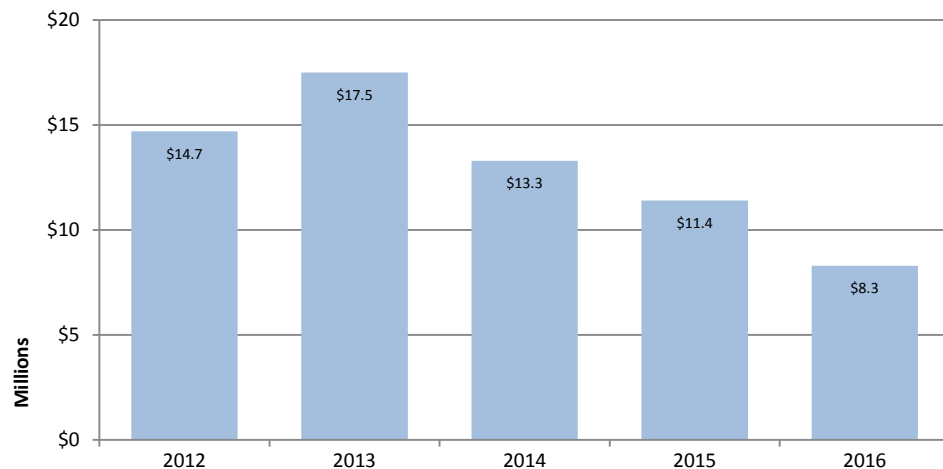
Regional Projects Moving Forward

Through federal fiscal year 2016, local agencies obligated \$8.3 million in regional federal funds. Regional obligation policies were revised in 2016 to actively manage obligation levels within federal allocation levels. Although this resulted in lower obligation levels, the region continues to significantly exceed required statewide obligation targets.

Funds were obligated for the following regionally selected projects in 2016:

- ◆ Signal Timing, Evaluation, Verification (STEVE), Clark County
- ◆ Working to Refine IntelliGent Highway Transportation (WRIGHT), Clark County
- ◆ Highway 99 Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvement, Clark County
- ◆ Clark County Transportation Demand, Vancouver
- ◆ Vancouver Urban ITS Device Infill, WSDOT
- ◆ Main St.-Columbia St. Traffic Signal Integration, Vancouver
- ◆ Bus on Shoulder Feasibility Study, RTC
- ◆ BRT Corridor Fort Vancouver/McLoughlin, Vancouver
- ◆ Vancouver Urban ITS Device Infill, WSDOT
- ◆ NE 18th Street, Four Seasons to 136th Avenue, Vancouver

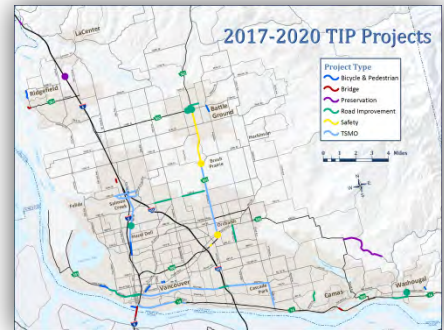
Obligation by Calendar Year



RTC staff also administered [sixteen amendments](#) to the 2016-2019 [Transportation Improvement Program](#) to ensure regional projects had timely access to awarded grant funds.

2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program

The [RTC Board of Directors](#) adopted the 2017-2020 [Transportation Improvement Program](#) in October 2016 and programmed \$219.3 million in funds for regional transportation investment over the next four years. Of which, \$96.3 million are federal funds.



Project Showcases

Shortly after regionally selected projects are completed, local agencies are required to prepare a one-page project showcase. Project Showcases are intended to be a regional reporting tool. The following Project Showcases were brought to the RTC Board of Directors in 2016:

- ◆ Clark County – Hazel Dell-Felida Traffic Signal Optimization
- ◆ Clark County – Barberton Traffic Signal Optimization
- ◆ WSDOT – SR-503 Traveler Information, NE 119th St. to SR-502
- ◆ WSDOT – SR-14 Traveler Information, SE 164th Ave. to NW 6th Ave.
- ◆ Clark County – Salmon Creek Ave. Pathway
- ◆ Camas – NW 38th Ave., SE Armstrong Rd. to NW Parker St.
- ◆ C-TRAN – Hybrid Buses



Regional Planning

Regional transportation planning is a primary responsibility of RTC. Multiple long-range plans were developed within the RTC region through 2016 and are highlighted as follows. Each plan is designed to identify needs and smart investments to keep the region's regional transportation system safe, accessible to all populations, and moving to support economic growth.

Congestion Management Process



Annual evaluation of [traffic and congestion conditions](#) within Clark County was completed in June 2016. As part of this effort, RTC produces an annual summary report that enhanced bi-state indicators. The 2015 report was reformatted to include a side dashboard that provided a quick summary of data changes.

Clark County data confirm that the region's 2015 traffic exceeds pre-recession travel levels. Region-wide traffic congestion has been on the rise for the past five years, and has resulted in an increase in both morning and evening peak hour delay. Morning peak hour delay has significantly increased across the Columbia River bridges, with the I-5 corridor experiencing a 291% increase in morning delay over the past five years. The [2015 CMP Summary Report](#) is available for download.

Vancouver Area Smart Trek (VAST)



RTC worked closely with the [VAST](#) agency partners to identify projects and develop funding applications for the partner agencies. Federal funds totaling \$1.9 million were programmed through the VAST process in 2016 including projects for signal optimization, traveler information, expanded transit signal priority, common software platforms, and program oversight projects. Implementation of transit and travel time data feeds into the multi-agency [PORTAL data-warehouse](#) system will augment the region's ability to research and plan the next wave of system investments with a robust multimodal transportation archive. VAST partners have continued work to prepare for "connected" and smart vehicle technologies and future-proof the transportation system by investing in high powered signal controllers that can process large amounts of data and communicate with vehicles and other roadside devices.

RTC led the development of an expanded multiagency transportation partnership by building upon the joint central signal system project programmed last year between WSDOT and Clark County. The new project would add Battle Ground, Camas, and Washougal signals into the central signal system with the County and WSDOT, and will allow data sharing, better traffic flow, and shared management of corridors along multiple jurisdictions.

Working together, the VAST program is staging the RTC region to utilize advanced signal and data technologies and increase the efficiency and operating capacity of the regional transportation system.

VAST agencies completed an update to the Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) Plan, first developed in 2011. The TSMO Plan guides the implementation of operational strategies and supports Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies. The TSMO Plan notes that, like any transportation infrastructure, communications networks, controllers, cameras, and other roadside devices need to be maintained and replaced. The plan calls for developing a systematic approach and sustained funding strategies to ensure asset replacement and continued long term operation of the system.

The Regional ITS Communications Plan was also updated this year. The updated plan describes the existing fiber communications networks (of Clark County, the City of Vancouver, and WSDOT), identifies gaps in the network and other system needs, and develops a cohesive set of regional strategies to maintain and improve the network, as well as identify future communications needs. The linking of the operations and communications plans, through VAST, ensures that the non-capital component of the regional transportation system is coordinated to manage the system most effectively without adding new roadway capacity.

Growth Management Planning

Under Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA), RTC is responsible for certifying the transportation element of local comprehensive plans and any update to these plans. With updates to many local plans due in 2016, RTC worked with local jurisdictions to review and clarify RTC's certification process. In March 2016, the RTC Board of Directors adopted a Guide to RTC's Certification Process and accompanying Checklist to help jurisdictions and RTC fulfill certification requirements.

The GMA-required certification process has RTC review the transportation element within local comprehensive plans to assure conformance with the state's GMA, consistency with the [Regional Transportation Plan](#) and meets the requirements of Washington State's Level of Service Bill. In November 2016, the RTC Board of Directors completed RTC's certification of updated plans from Clark County and the cities of Camas, Washougal, Battle Ground, Ridgefield, and La Center.



Performance Based Planning

The federal transportation act, [MAP-21](#) (2012), instituted performance driven transportation planning and decision making, and these provisions are carried into the current federal transportation act, the [FAST Act](#) (2015). Transportation Performance Management is a strategic approach that uses system information to make investment and policy decisions to achieve national performance goals. It is systematically applied as part of a regular ongoing transportation planning process. In 2016, RTC reviewed USDOT proposed and final rulemakings on how to implement the performance provisions. RTC staff has collaborated with WSDOT as members of statewide committees and working groups, has attended peer exchange sessions, and has collaborated with bi-state partners in preparation for full implementation of the new federal transportation rules.

Focused Planning Studies

RTC has partnered with member agencies to provide project management services for focused planning studies within the RTC region.

Bus on Shoulder Feasibility Study

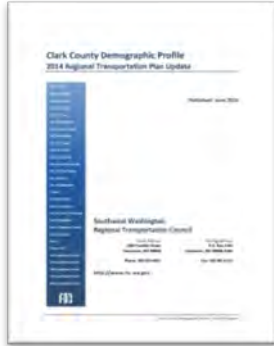
RTC has partnered with C-TRAN and WSDOT to assess shoulder running bus operations as part of a regional and bi-state [Bus on Shoulder Feasibility Study](#). The study is designed to assess the potential implementation of shoulder running bus service as a low-cost and practical solution to enhance transit service and reliability on the region's congested commute corridors. Study findings and recommendations are expected in spring 2017.

Bingen / White Salmon Circulation Study

Within the Columbia Gorge region, RTC has partnered with WSDOT to provide project management services in support of a community circulation study within the Bingen and White Salmon communities. The study is designed to evaluate traffic circulation and port access needs along and adjacent to SR-14. The study findings will help to inform implementation of a [Connecting Washington](#) funded Bingen Overpass project, in addition to providing valuable insights into future community circulation needs. Study will be completed in 2017.

Technical Services

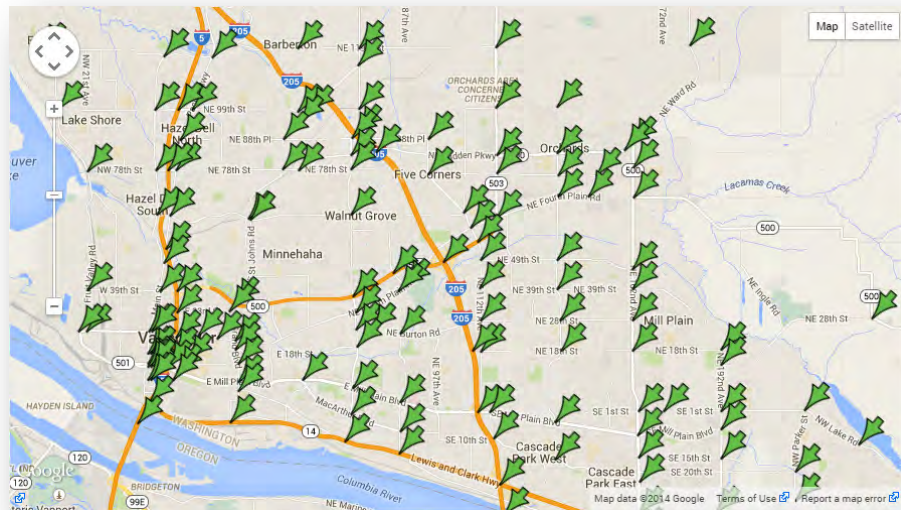
Growth and Demographic Forecasting



RTC staff continued to provide technical services and analysis to member agencies in conjunction with the [Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update](#) process. A 2040 land use forecast and transportation analysis zone allocation was initiated after the adoption of local jurisdiction comprehensive plans to support RTP development for both RTC and Portland Metro. Demographics for RTC's [Limited English Proficiency and Title VI plans](#) were updated using the most current data available from the US Census Bureau.

Traffic Counting and Data

RTC collects, stores, and makes available to all member agencies and the public [historical traffic count records](#). The count database was expanded in 2016 to add an additional 31 new traffic count locations to the database. Through the [VAST](#) partnership efforts, additional software enhancements are now underway which will result in live traffic count feeds into the database structure.



Regional Traffic Modeling

RTC provided future travel forecast modeling in support of the County Comprehensive Plan Update process; including a new 2035 land use forecast and allocation, and new 2035 model transportation networks, based on changes to updated local transportation Capital Facilities Plans. RTC staff continued to participate in a statewide expert panel in support of WSDOT's efforts to develop a statewide transportation modeling tool as well as training in the application of new regional travel forecasting tools that are currently under development. Additionally, RTC provided a workshop on regional transportation forecast modeling for member agencies and local consultants.



Project Traffic Modeling

RTC provided travel model forecasts for internal and external transportation studies and projects, including support for the following studies:

- ◆ City of Battle Ground – Rasmussen Boulevard Extension
- ◆ City of Washougal – Subarea Modeling for Proposed Zoning Changes in the northwest and northeast urban growth area
- ◆ Clark County – NE 119th Street

Fee-for-Service

RTC provides technical data and modeling services to private business on a pay-for-service basis. During 2016, RTC processed twenty-eight data requests and billed private vendors for direct hours of service, creating a net revenue stream to RTC.

Regional Partnerships and Collaboration

Agency Outreach

Over the past year, RTC continued to solidify existing, and build new, relationships with external stakeholders and member agencies. The agency spent considerable time and attention to the growing conversations in the Columbia Gorge region regarding transportation planning for bi-state traffic circulation and growth induced needs within the [Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area](#). RTC was an active participant in the partnership planning with the [Mid-Columbia Economic Development District](#) and the [Columbia River Gorge Commission](#) as they sought updates to transportation policy and plans affecting Columbia Gorge communities. Staff also outreached with the recently formed [One Gorge](#) advocacy efforts.

Within Clark County, RTC continued to mature its partnership with [Identity Clark County](#) in development of the freight advocacy group, Southwest Freight and Commerce Task Force (SW-FACT) and RTC provided direct consultation services to select members for grant applications which are in development for key regional projects. Lastly, RTC technical staff spent considerable time in partnership with member agencies, providing consulting services for regional traffic studies and also provided training for member agency staff in regards to regional traffic modeling and planning services.

Regional Initiatives

As part of RTC's [VAST](#) Program, RTC and member agencies have established an ongoing partnership with [Portland State University](#) and Portland area transportation agencies to maintain and improve the data archive hosted by the ITS Lab at PSU known as Portal. The archive contains, in a single location, historical and real-time transportation data from agencies in the Vancouver-Portland region.



This ongoing bi-state regional initiative continues to broaden its scope of data collection and reporting. Added this past year are new transit, arterial, and freight systems data feeds. As a contributing member, RTC helps to guide the design and growth of this database, ensuring that the value and integrity of this system creates value for member agencies planning and evaluation of system performance outcomes and future needs.

MPO Program Administration

Federal and State Program Compliance



RTC remained fully compliant with federal laws governing MPO business through 2016. RTC's FY 2017 [Unified Planning Work Program](#) was approved by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration on June 27, 2016. After public outreach efforts, minor updates to RTC's [Public Participation Plan, Title VI, and Limited English Proficiency Plans](#) were approved in November 2016. Plans now reference the current federal transportation act, the FAST Act, maps and data were updated using the 2014 American Community Survey, and an added section in the Public Participation Plan describes C-TRAN's Program of Projects and linkage between it and RTC's Transportation Improvement Program.

General Administration

RTC continues to achieve high marks from the Washington State Auditor for financial accounting and reporting, and RTC's annual audit was completed with no recommendations for improvement. Multiple Service Agreements were established with member agencies to provide project management services for important regional studies. RTC took significant strides to align the organization with existing administrative regulations, and the RTC Board of Directors ratified and updated Procurement Policy to ensure that those firms seeking to do business with RTC can do so with the knowledge that policies and procedures are in place to ensure fair and open competition for work.

RTC

Member Agencies

