



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director  
**DATE:** December 2, 2014  
**SUBJECT:** **Addendum to Appendix M, Regional Transportation Plan, 2014 Update Draft and SEPA Review**

---

On October 30, 2014, the draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Clark County 2014 update was released for a public comment period. Public comments received by RTC and the disposition of these comments are included in the Regional Transportation Plan's Appendix M. Comments included in Appendix M are those public comments received before RTC Board packets were distributed on November 25, 2014. Attached with this Memo, are additional public comments received in the past week between the time of RTC Board packet distribution and today. These additional comments and their disposition, as noted in this Memo's attachment, will be appended to the RTP's Appendix M, Table M-1.

A State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist was also prepared for the draft RTP 2014 update and a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) issued on November 14, 2014. The SEPA review period concluded on December 1, 2014. One comment resulting from the issuance of the SEPA checklist was received from the Washington State Department of Ecology. The comment related to greenhouse gas emissions and is documented in the attached addendum to Table M-1 (comment # 174). After consideration of the comment and its disposition, RTC, as SEPA lead agency, has decided no further review is needed and the Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) is retained. This allows for the proposal to consider adoption of the Regional Transportation Plan for Clark County, 2014 update to move forward.

Attachment

20141202RTCB-Resol121424-RTPPublicCommentsAdditions.docx

# Appendix M, Addendum: Public Comments and RTC Response

---

## **Addendum to Public Comments**

The addendum to Appendix M, Table M-1, includes public comments received after the RTC Board packets were distributed on November 25, 2014. The comments will be appended to Table M-1 of the RTP's Appendix M. These comments represent the remainder of public comments received.

**Table M-1: Summary of Public Comment on RTP Public Comment Draft**

#	Date	Source: Source: First Name	Source: Last Name	Comments	RTC Response
158	11/25/14	Steve	Tubbs	Comments and materials relating to: 1. Global warming and climate change, 2. Electric mass transit options, 3. Future transportation financing options were submitted.	The materials submitted by Mr. Tubbs will be added to the RTC December 2014 RTC Board materials available on RTC's website. RTC will continue to collaborate with statewide efforts relating to greenhouse gases. Chapter 5 of the RTP addresses transportation modal issues and air quality. The multiple issues noted by the commenter will be further addressed in the next RTP update.
159	11/25/14	Christian	Berrigan	Light rail and tolls have been rejected again and again by the citizens of Clark County, and a third bridge first is the preferred solution. If the east county bridge is the most realistic option for a third bridge, then that should be the priority. I live in Brush Prairie and commute from Beaverton three days a week. On any individual afternoon I would gladly take an east county bridge for a savings of 15 to 45 minutes off of my commute. Of course, the existence of the bridge for others' use could make that option irrelevant. Please prioritize an east county bridge and get off of the Light Rail money pit.	Noted for the record. Subject to further analysis and bi-state collaboration on solutions. See Appendix I.
160	11/25/14	Eric	Meisgeier	Please include light rail in future planning for Clark County. Light rail is the most effective way to move people and as demographics switch more and more people will want a dedicated ROW transit option since both freeway and parking space will be insufficient in the future. Planning today should take into account the needs of the future.	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP.
161	11/25/14	Ty	Stober	For thousands of years, Clark County has served as a transportation and trade hub for numerous peoples and cultures. To capitalize on this strategic advantage, we need a world-class transportation infrastructure. Our rich heritage is also a strategic advantage to be leveraged through investing in a world-class transportation infrastructure to draw in valuable tourist dollars. The number one transportation priority for Clark County is improving the I-5 corridor from SR-500 to Hayden Meadows. This must be a multi-modal transportation system that takes into account changing demographic profiles and the habits of younger adults that are prioritizing mass, shared and alternative transportation. It must provide safe and efficient travel for pedestrians and bicyclists. The mass transit option needs to recognize that ridership will decrease with each transfer an individual is required to make. Finally, it is vital	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP. Freight issues, including connections from west Vancouver to I-5 will be studied by planning partners in 2015.

#	Date	Source: First Name	Source: Last Name	Comments	RTC Response
				the project recognize that Clark County is part of the Portland Metropolitan transportation system. Completing this project will both improve our competitiveness and draw outside dollars into the County's economy. The second priority is improving the freight corridor from the Port of Vancouver to I5. The current solution has failed causing a dispersion of traffic to local arterials not meant to handle the congestion.	
162	11/25/14	Bryan	Wray	We need a new I5 bridge so badly. We need to stop treating the river like a wall between us and Portland and instead draw on the strength of our community and businesses to show Portland that we have just as much to offer as they do. In my opinion, one of the single most important aspects to that future is that we build a bridge with better interchanges, wider lanes, and most importantly, mass transit. The federal government is practically giving away the funds for mass transit. To not take advantage of these grants is irresponsible and disrespectful to the next generation that will be stuck footing the ENTIRE bill, instead of having federal funds help us out. Please ignore those with self-made million dollar megaphones and help those of us that need an effective, reliable way to get to and from Portland. Build a bridge. Build it with light rail.	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP.
163	11/26/14	Michael	Emrick	No east side bridge!!! We need to replace the existing I-5 bridge and add light rail!	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP.
164	11/26/14	Sue	Emrick	What is the purpose of proposing to reinvent the wheel here? Studies have been done regarding the best locations for a bridge. The best location is where the I-5 exists. The I-5 corridor is hugely important for commerce for the west coast as well as the nation. There is no 'east county' option, regardless of Madore's statements to the contrary. A bridge requires sides; Oregon has been quite clear that there is not an 'east county' option. The funding was approved by Oregon and the feds but was derailed by fiscal regressives in Washington. Now Madore wants to spend more tax dollars on studying a 'bridge to nowhere'. That is not fiscally responsible by any definition and just demonstrates (again) that Madore is not interested in what is best for Clark county. The fiscally and practical response is to replace our aging drawbridge. The existing traffic problems will only increase along with an increased risk of structural damage due to age. I also agree with the use of tolls to help defray cost and set money aside for maintenance. There have been bridges locally with tolls so it's not unheard of here. Replacing the I-5 bridge will result in good paying, livable wage jobs for Clark County. This, to me, is being fiscally responsible as well as investing in our community and the country.	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP.
165	11/26/14	Beckie	Grider-Lundblad	Please focus the RTC's priority on addressing, funding, and constructing projects related to the safety, congestion, capacity, and transit needs on the I-5 corridor before investing any further effort exploring the proposed east county bridge. The east county bridge to nowhere lacks the political will and funding to get anywhere and should be shelved until the I-5 corridor challenges are resolved.	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP.
166	11/26/14	Anonymous		There needs to be a light rail connection between Vancouver and Portland.	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in

#	Date	Source: First Name	Source: Last Name	Comments	RTC Response
					the RTP.
167	11/26/14	Bobbi	Olson	As someone who was raised in Vancouver, I have spent way too much time sitting in traffic due to problems associated with the I-5 bridge and I strongly support replacement/expansion of the bridge as your highest priority. When I returned to Vancouver after an absence I purposely moved east in order to avoid using the I-5 bridge to go to Portland. Although I currently live east of the Glen Jackson bridge, I adamantly oppose construction of a bridge at 192nd. There is no viable funding identified, no government jurisdiction has shown any interest except a government body that has no authority to act, no one want to go to Portland (or anywhere else) via Airport Way and tolls are a reality that the public needs to accept.	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP.
168	11/26/14	Anonymous		I believe focus should remain on the replacement of the existing I-5 bridge. I drive it daily and I am a licensed Professional Engineer and certified bridge inspector. I give credit to ODOT and their partners at WSDOT for continuing to find creative maintenance solutions, but both bridges' sufficiency ratings will continue to drop over time.	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP.
169	11/27/14	Nicholas	White	Hope for a multiple bridge bridge plan including replacing the train bridge to eliminate the barge s curve and reduce I5 bridge lifts. Also a Woodland and Camas bridge crossing would be nice.	Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP.
170	11/28/14	Karen	Hengerer	<p>The level of detail and data provided in the 2014 Update DRAFT of the Regional Transportation Plan is indicative of a thorough process and indeed a great deal of work by both the RTC and its staff.</p> <p>There is one area of concern that is either missing, nuanced, or perhaps reflective of a philosophy that the huge projected increase of hazardous freight is not the bailiwick of the RTC. Accepting the fact that perhaps the RTC does not want to comment on issues currently under consideration by the EFSEC process, it would seem advisable to insert appropriate caveats in several specific areas where hazardous freight will impact several areas of the RTC vision and values, namely: Safety &amp; Security, Environmental impact, and employment trends. The EFSEC process is dealing only with oil terminals at our ports. EFSEC is not commenting on the viability of significant increases in hazardous rail freight, so it would seem appropriate for this increase to be included in appropriate areas of the RTP.</p> <p>In the current plan, Chapters 1-5, there is no discussion of the potential impact of significant increases in hazardous freight on our rails. This type of transport will have an impact on our roads (especially at crossings), on passenger travel by rail (which becomes secondary to freight), environmental pollution, potential safety issues of significant import (1K blast zone, and an estimated \$1B cleanup required). How will the RTP deal with evacuation planning should a disaster occur, either next to other forms of transportation, or by requiring significant public emergency and/or evacuation routes to be established and cleared for public safety? There is not one 'Emerging Issue to be Tracked' related to these potentialities.</p> <p>Perhaps it is in Chapter 6, 'System Performance Monitoring, Plan Development and Implementation', that the RTC could most easily insert some information and/or concern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6-1 – MAP21- and Performance Monitoring should include specific details and targets for monitoring rail traffic, traffic</li> </ul>	Rail transportation is addressed at the statewide level in WSDOT's <a href="#">rail plan</a> . The Clark County Emergency Services Agency (CRESA) addresses evacuation planning in the Clark County region. RTC will be working with planning partners early in 2015 to further address Commute Trip Reduction with review of current plans.

#	Date	Source: First Name	Source: Last Name	Comments	RTC Response
				<p>speeds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6-2 – Congestion Management – The 2013 Congestion Monitoring Report needs to be updated to include projected increase in hazardous rail traffic, including monitoring criteria.</li> <li>• 6-2 – Air Quality Monitoring – Although the RTC currently concerns itself with the air quality impacts of its own transport systems, the proximity of rail to those systems requires that this monitoring include pollutants from open Coal train cars, and release of noxious gases regularly released by Oil Tank rail cars.</li> <li>• 6-2 – Commute Trip Reduction Law needs to consider the fact that the CTR Efficiency Act was released in 2006 and must be appropriately updated.</li> <li>• 6-5 – Economic Development – significant increase in hazardous materials by rail may enhance the profits of both rail and oil companies (none of which reside in Washington), but at the same time preclude other significant local development (Vancouver Waterfront), that will provide both significantly more jobs and tax revenue at significantly reduced risk. One would think the wording of this section might be considered a bit outdated.</li> <li>• 6-5 – Access to Ports. Much of the work providing additional access to the ports was completed in the early 2000’s, long before the possibility that the Ports would introduce this new and potentially hazardous industry to Washington State. In addition, the freight movement study was completed 3 years ago, long before the increase in hazardous rail freight was considered. Here is another place in the plan, where comments/concerns should be addressed.</li> <li>• The BNSF feasibility study was completed in May 1999. This greatly outdated study needs to be updated as soon as possible, and the findings included in both the RTP as well as regular discussions at the RTC.</li> </ul> <p>It would indeed seem that the ‘Emerging Issues to Track’ section of Chapter 6 is the most appropriate location for significant additions related to hazardous rail/freight transport to be highlighted.</p>	
171	11/29/14	Ronnie	Riske	<p>As a resident of Clark County, and as a student that does not drive, I think that creating some form of light rail in Clark County would be beneficial to many in the area. As a student, I need to frequent areas surrounding Vancouver, and sometimes Portland. Not being a driver, I feel at a disadvantage when it comes to getting around. Taking the bus takes more time when getting from the Orchards area in Vancouver to Downtown Portland. Light rail would be beneficial to many students, and people, like myself. With gas prices on the rise, and the reduction in some people driving due to those costs (or to reduce their impact on the environment), light rail covering most of the Clark county area into the Portland area to connect with the MAX would make travel more time efficient and environmentally friendly. For me to take a bus from Orchards to the Downtown Portland transfer station, it would take approximately three bus transfers and around three hours to only get to one section of Portland. It would increase by another half an hour to forty-five minutes to get to where I would like to go in the Pearl District area. I would like you, the members of the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, to consider even more closely a plan to bring light rail to the county. I understand that many will not agree with light rail simply because they have no use for it, however, I would like you to consider bringing it for those that have a great need for it.</p>	<p>Noted for record. A series of I-5 improvements are included in the RTP.</p>

#	Date	Source: First Name	Source: Last Name	Comments	RTC Response
172	11/30/14	John	Veneruso	<p>I've lived in the Felida neighborhood of Clark County, Washington for over 18 years and my three kids all attended grade school, with two now at WWU. During this time, I've been happily employed by high-tech employers that have been located in Hillsboro, Beaverton, and Portland. I've done my best to use the C-Tran Express bus to Portland and carpool whenever I can. Yet it is clear that as the Portland area continues to grow over 2% a year, my efforts and those of others to commute responsibly is simply not sufficient to live within the current transportation constraints that are imposed by the I-5 and I-205 bridges. Several years ago, the rallying cry for those commuting south along the I-5 corridor was to widen Delta Park, a constricted patch of two lanes. Now that this area has been widened, the bottleneck simply starts a mile south and doesn't end until you're past downtown Portland. It's clear that for the morning commute, the bottleneck is not the Interstate Bridge. It's the lack of roadway on I-5 and I-405 that circles downtown Portland. It is because of this constraint that transportation computer models of the proposed CRC showed negligible improvement in rush hour travel times. The argument between 10 lanes and 12 lanes totally missed the point. Some of my coworkers on the Portland side have argued that the freeways ringing downtown should be widened, but the vast majority believes that this is lunacy. Downtown Portland is already bumping against the clean air standards several times a year. The land on either side of I-5 and I-405 is fully developed and the cost of demolishing so many high-valued buildings to make way for widening is prohibitive. ODOT can easily confirm all of this. In the CRC plan, there was also the light rail element. Many people saw light rail as reducing future congestion as more people switched to mass transit. Yet practically speaking, the extension of the Max Yellow Line had a serious problem. It takes 31 minutes to travel by light rail from the Expo center to Portland City Hall at SW 5th and Jefferson, assuming no wait times. This time is so long because this train has multiple stops and rarely exceeds 25mph. The estimated speed of this train over the CRC bridge was 5mph for at least a third of the distance across the river due to the relatively steep grade. This translates into another 10-12 minutes of travel time. All told, it would take about 50 minutes to get from a light rail stop in downtown Vancouver to downtown Portland. Even on a bad day, the C-Tran 105 and 134 express buses can easily best this time. Given that the vast majority of daily Vancouver commuters work in downtown Portland or further West or East of downtown, the extra stops that the Yellow Line provides simply don't add value. I write this as someone who loves light rail. I personally would like to see light rail crisscross the greater Vancouver area, especially once our population density has risen sufficiently to make it worthwhile. But as a rider trying to commute to work, time is of the essence. We're much better off as a community in increasing the frequency of the C-Tran express buses than we are in extending the Yellow Line light rail to Vancouver.</p> <p>So where does this leave us? Replacing the Interstate Bridge won't solve any regional transportation problems, but it is an impressive public works project. Billions of dollars spent on anything will certainly create plenty of construction jobs. But when the project is done, those jobs vanish and the area is left with a very large bill to pay that saps economic vitality for at least a decade or two. I can think of many other ways to spend billions of dollars that has a significantly higher net present value to the area. We can do a few minor things to increase</p>	<p>The detailed comments are noted for the record. Bi-state transportation challenges will continue to be analyzed and addressed as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process. The status of plans and project implementation will be addressed in future RTP updates.</p>

#	Date	Source: First Name	Source: Last Name	Comments	RTC Response
				<p>the evening flow across the existing Interstate Bridge that may slightly reduce congestion. We can close the City Center I-5 northbound exit. We can extend the SR-14 exit road straight north by a 1000 feet, with a short tunnel underneath the other I-5/SR-14 exit/entrance roads, so that it enables cars to exit more quickly off of I-5. This SR-14 exit road would then curve near East 5th Street to rejoin SR-14 eastbound. Portland can also do their part by eliminating the Jantzen Beach entrance and exits and building a small regional bridge from Portland's North Marine Drive to Hayden Island. During non-rush hour, these changes would significantly smooth the flow of traffic, reduce the frequency of accidents, and provide improved emergency access to the residents of Hayden Island. Despite the closure of the City Center exit Northbound, the businesses there would benefit because the smoother traffic flow across the bridge would reduce driver frustration, which is valued much more highly than an extra minute or two of travel time. I'd like to emphasize this point. The psychological stress of driving to Vancouver is a much bigger detriment to cross-river business than the financial cost of traveling this extra distance. Although helpful, the changes that I've described above won't be nearly sufficient to cope with 2% compounded population growth over the next 20 years. Simply put, we're going to have to invest heavily in new multi-mode transportation corridors. In densely populated areas of Europe, bicycling and rail are heavily favored over automobile commuting. Now that the Portland area is over 2 million residents, we're just a handful of years away from the reality that adding more pavement won't be able to entirely solve our transportation problems.</p> <p>This leaves us with the need to find at least one new crossing over the Columbia River. I'm very big on incremental transportation planning, abhorring big mega-projects unless the engineering and business reasoning are exceptionally solid. Since the Vancouver area doesn't yet have the population density to make light rail worthwhile, our first increment should focus instead on moving the truck traffic from the Port of Vancouver and Seattle off of the Interstate Bridge. It is this truck traffic that notably causes major back-ups on I-5 southbound on Tuesday through Thursday every week. Additionally, speeding up truck traffic from the Port of Vancouver will have significant economic benefits to the area. An arterial road from Mill Plain (Erwin O. Rieger Memorial Hwy - Route 501) just west of the railroad tracks could be run to Port Way. From there Port Way would be expanded to a four-lane arterial road across a new bridge that runs parallel to the Burlington Northern Rail Road Bridge to the intersection of North Marine Drive and North Portland Road. This new bridge could also provide a valuable connector for bicycle and e-bicycle commuters from Vancouver to Portland, helping them to bypass the byzantine path that they currently traverse the Interstate Bridge corridor. Because this bridge is primarily to aid truck traffic for both the Port of Portland and Port of Vancouver, we have the opportunity to sell this as a mutual economic benefit. A future light-rail corridor could be penciled in to the plan to make it even more palatable to the City of Portland. This corridor would run along the route of this new bridge and parallel to the Burlington Northern Railroad line to NW Saint Helens Road (Hwy 30) and then east along Hwy 30 to join up with the Max Light Rail system near Union Station. This proposed light rail line has the added benefit of providing a high-speed connection between Vancouver and Portland with just one stop on Hayden Island and one stop in the St. Johns neighborhood of Portland before arriving near Union Station.</p>	

#	Date	Source: First Name	Source: Last Name	Comments	RTC Response
				Once this first increment of transportation infrastructure is complete, we can turn our sights on the politically more challenging east county bridge project as sketched out in the "Transportation Corridor Visioning Study" of 2008 - Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council. Although there is a strong desire to consider a transportation corridor in isolation, it's clear that to win political support from both Washington and Oregon voters the plan needs to include the impacts on the entire Portland Metro Statistical Area. Realities such as the physical constraints of downtown Portland and the location of major employment areas will need to be embraced in any winning plan. An incremental approach is much more likely to gain the needed financial backing, especially in light of the Washington Class Size Reduction Measure, Initiative 1351 that imposes over a \$4 billion/year unfunded mandate on our state. At the same time, the transportation budgets of both Washington and Oregon will continue to be pinched as gasoline taxes continue their inexorable decline. The economic and perceived psychological benefit of any infrastructure proposal will have to be compelling if it is to move forward. Thank you for representing me and my neighbors on this issue.	
173	12/1/14	Deborah	Larner	<p>**Add the Toll Free East County Bridge to your strategic plan**</p> <p>**I Oppose the CRC Light Rail Tolling Project. Light Rail is the wrong choice for Clark County**</p> <p>**Instead, please prioritize new freight corridors across the Columbia River**</p>	Noted for the record. Subject to further analysis and bi-state collaboration on solutions. See Appendix I.
174	12/1/14	Gail	Sandlin	Washington State Dept. of Ecology: noted that the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) checklist issued to support a Determination of Non Significance (DNS) for the RTP, 2014 update, includes a discussion of initiatives to reduce mobile source air emissions and commented these same strategies may also reduce greenhouse gas emissions. DOE suggests checklist could benefit from a qualitative discussion of greenhouse gas emissions.	Chapter 5 of the RTP addresses greenhouse gases. RTC will continue to collaborate with statewide planning partners and resource agencies to further address greenhouse gas emissions as part of future planning efforts.
175	12/2/14	Margaret	Tweet	<p>I do not support the adoption of this RTC plan because it ignores the input of the voters of Clark County, WA. November 6, 2012, over 56.51% of Clark County Ctran voters rejected Ctran Proposition 1 "Resolution BR-12-009 and RCW 81.104 authorize a proposition to increase the sales and use tax by 0.1 percent, or one penny on a ten dollar purchase, to fund the C-TRAN share of the maintenance and operations costs ONLY of the Columbia River Crossing Project light rail extension between Expo Center and Clark Park &amp; Ride and the local capital share and operations and maintenance costs of the Fourth Plain Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit project."</p> <p><a href="http://www.clark.wa.gov/elections/results/2012/2012Nov6ElectionResults.pdf">http://www.clark.wa.gov/elections/results/2012/2012Nov6ElectionResults.pdf</a> Every city in Clark County rejected CTRAN prop 1 of 2012</p> <p>In 2013, county-wide advisory votes were held on light rail, and separately BRT. Voters directed Clark County</p>	Results of the advisory votes are included in the RTP in Appendix I. Funding suggestions are noted. Funding programs are described in Appendix D. Many funding programs can only be applied to specific transportation uses.

#	Date	Source: First Name	Source: Last Name	Comments	RTC Response
				<p>Commissioners NOT to move forward with light rail (68.39%) or Bus Rapid Transit (62.79%) unless a public vote that supported either action was held. The majority of the CTRAN and RTC boards have ignored the vote results of the 2012 CTRAN prop 1 as well as the 2013 countywide votes, and voted in support of contracts for both light rail and Bus Rapid Transit. All county residents pay the CTRAN sales tax should have a vote on CTRAN issues just like they used to in 2004 before the voting district was gerrymandered down. I also object to the unrealistic growth factors that CTRAN and RTC have used, and how the ridership numbers are padded to create unrealistic future ridership predictions. Rosy predictions for future ridership seems to be a pattern in WA state. <a href="http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/blog/post/state-auditor-confirms-sound-transit-light-rail-ridership-forecasts-are-unrealistic">http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/blog/post/state-auditor-confirms-sound-transit-light-rail-ridership-forecasts-are-unrealistic</a>  <a href="http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/blog/post/state-auditor-confirms-sound-transit-light-rail-ridership-forecasts-are-unrealistic">http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/blog/post/state-auditor-confirms-sound-transit-light-rail-ridership-forecasts-are-unrealistic</a>. Costly high capacity transit is being imposed in Clark County, while road maintenance and improvement suffers. Roads carry freight, commuters, buses, commercial and service vehicles, emergency vehicles, tourists etc and are the lifeblood of our region. The RTC plan should prioritize funds for needed roads improvements and maintenance, and affordable public transit that can utilize the roads as well such as bus or van service.</p>	

