Agenda Item VI

MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors

FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director MHR

DATE: December 28, 2016

SUBJECT: **Clark County Transportation Alliance 2017 Policy Statement**

AT A GLANCE – ACTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to seek RTC Board endorsement of the Clark County Transportation Alliance 2017 Policy Statement.

BACKGROUND

The Clark County Transportation Alliance (CCTA) is an alliance of public and private organizations which was formed as a transportation sub-committee of the volunteer Clark County Governmental Affairs Roundtable. The CCTA Policy Statement (Statement) is a call-to-action statement which advocates for policies and funding which benefit the Clark County region's transportation infrastructure and programs. The CCTA presents a forum for advancing a cohesive regional advocacy on priority transportation investments, and regional advocacy is critical in advancing the region's interests.

The Statement was reviewed by the multi-agency CCTA steering committee on November 14, 2016 and the committee recommended release for agency endorsements. Since then, many agencies have endorsed the Statement to supplement their local legislative efforts. The Statement emphasizes a list of priority regional transportation actions which will be collectively advocated for in the 2017 legislation session.

The Statement was presented to the RTC Board during the Executive Director update at the December 2016 meeting.

POLICY IMPLICATION

The CCTA Statement supports implementation of projects identified in the Regional Transportation Plan (2014). The Statement also supports refinements to the staging of key regional projects funded under the Connecting Washington transportation program and advocates for state policy / programs (ex. Public Works Trust Fund) which further benefit member agency investments in needed regional infrastructure.

ACTION REQUESTED

Endorsement of the Clark County Transportation Alliance 2017 Policy Statement is proposed. By endorsement, the RTC's logo will be added to the Statement indicating support, and staff will participate in the Clark County Transportation Alliance Day in Olympia and share other project related information with the region's Legislative delegation upon request.

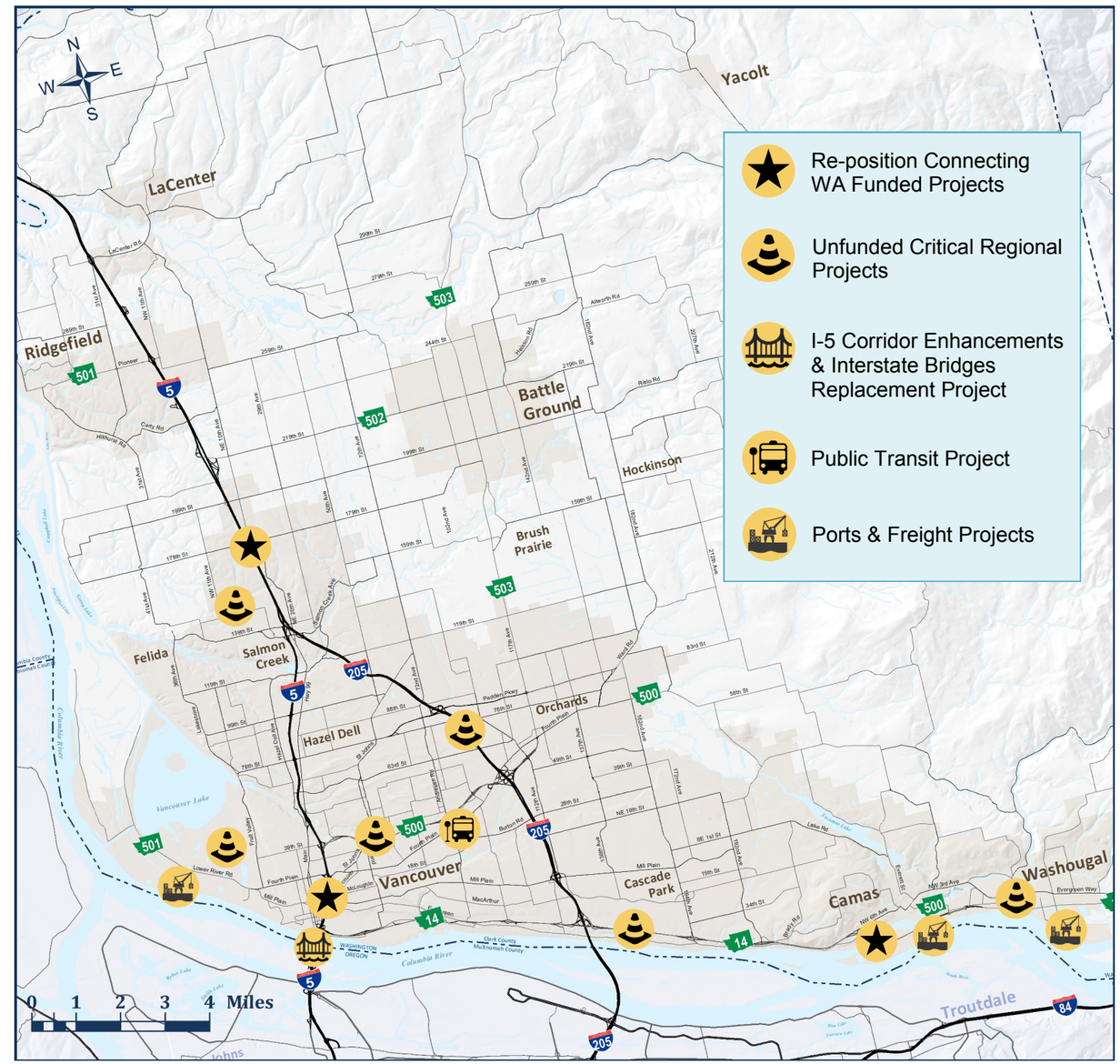
Attachment

Clark County Transportation Alliance
2017 Policy Statement

Sponsoring Organizations:

Camas Washougal Chamber
City of Battle Ground
City of Camas
City of La Center
City of Ridgefield
City of Vancouver
City of Washougal
Clark College
Clark County
Clark County Association of Realtors
Columbia River Economic Development Council
East Vancouver Business Association
Fort Vancouver National Trust
Greater Portland 2020
Greater Portland, Inc.
Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce
Hazel Dell/Salmon Creek Business Association
Identity Clark County
Partners in Careers
Port of Camas-Washougal
Port of Portland
Port of Ridgefield
Port of Vancouver
The Vancouver Clinic
Vancouver's Downtown Association
Vancouver USA Tourism
Washington State University Vancouver

Clark County Transportation Alliance
2017 Policy Statement



A CALL TO FURTHER ACTION

Clark County continues to face significant transportation related challenges. Addressing the deficiencies in the I-5 corridor and outdated interstate bridges remains the region's top priority.

In the months and years ahead we need for our local state legislators to be our champions in addressing these needs and in supporting the specific needs listed below.

I-5/Vancouver Corridor Enhancements and Bridge Replacement

The Clark County Transportation Alliance (CCTA) is very supportive of efforts by our local state legislative delegation to advance solutions to known deficiencies along the I-5 corridor through Vancouver, including replacement of the two outdated and collision prone bridges across the Columbia River that are near their end of life.

We also applaud efforts by Oregon transportation leaders to address I-5 corridor deficiencies through the I-5/I-84 interchange (a.k.a. the Rose Quarter) in Portland. A bi-state approach towards making significant short-term progress through this primary freight, commerce and commuter corridor—now an internationally recognized choke point—is imperative.

Recent Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) data found a greater than 50% year-over-year increase in peak-hour vehicle and truck delays on this stretch of I-5. Freight trucks now account for nearly 10% of traffic on this corridor and the two functionally obsolete spans constrict commerce flow and compromise safety, freight mobility and economic development. Steady growth in the Vancouver/Portland metropolitan area will surely worsen these conditions in the future.

The time is now to find a new pathway forward to address these known deficiencies, and the CCTA stands ready to assist in these efforts.

Re-Position Connecting WA-Funded Projects

Connecting WA will fund many critically important Clark County projects over 16 years. We urge repositioning flexibility with select projects to achieve greater immediate and overall impact.

Re-scope to Achieve Practical Design Solutions. We support the Legislature's efforts to pursue practical design through Connecting WA. Regionally, several projects will better achieve corridor improvement goals by re-scoping project limits or amending the overall project scope to implement practical design.

- **SR-14/ Camas Slough Bridge ($25M)** Re-scope to address the even more critical SR-14/ I-205 to 164th Avenue widening, to address acute corridor congestion and benefiting the cities of Washougal, Camas and Vancouver.

Pursue Early Scoping Opportunities. We support providing advance planning funds on complex projects. This opens leverage possibilities through intermediate-term federal and public/ private sources, encourages practical design and avoids costly re-work.

- **I-5/Mill Plain Interchange ($1M)** Fund early project scoping of the 2023 I-5/ Mill Plain Interchange while planning the 2017 SR-501/Mill Plain: I-5 to Port of Vancouver corridor improvements.

Implement Innovations in Financing Tools. We support new financing tools that allow local agencies to accelerate planning and construction with confidence the state will reimburse expenditures as funds become available (per current law biennium programming). This approach is successfully deployed in other states.

- **I-5/179th Street Interchange ($50M)** Implement financing innovations to allow for early project construction.

Pursue Funding Opportunities for Critical Regional Projects

Regionally critical projects remain unfunded. We ask our local legislators to work with local transportation leaders to help find funding for a number of transportation projects that have been identified as "regionally critical" by the RTC, including:

- ***SR 14/ I-205 to 164th Avenue Widening:** add auxiliary lanes ($38M—*funding strategy noted on the previous page)*
- **I-205/ SR-500 to Padden Expressway:** add auxiliary lanes ($30M)
- **SR 500 Intersections at 42nd Avenue and 54th Avenue:** capacity and safety improvements ($80M)
- **NE 10th Avenue from 149th to 164th Street/ Whipple Creek project:** new bridge and capacity improvements creating an alternate north-south corridor for I-5 ($15M)
  Note: This project was awarded a $7M PWTF loan, which was subsequently swept.
- **SR-14 Phase 2 Access Improvements:** 15th Street, 32nd Street, 27th Street and Index Street road improvements and rail overpass and connectors ($35-$41M)
- **NW 32nd Ave Industrial Corridor:** planning and environmental review funds for a north-south arterial extension, the Fruit Valley Road/ BNSF railroad bridge replacement and capacity improvements at Fruit Valley Road and 78th St ($1M)

Public Transit

Public transit is a vital component of our region's transportation network, providing people with safe, reliable and affordable transportation to get to work, school, shopping, and other important places.

In addition, public transit also provides "special needs" transportation (para-transit service) for our most vulnerable urban and rural citizens who need it most.

It is important for the state to increase funding levels for special needs transportation in order to better meet the needs of these citizens.

Ports and Freight

Our ports and rail system play a vital role in the region's economy. Infrastructure investment in our freight system brings jobs and direct economic benefit to our region.

Targeted regional freight priorities have also been identified and endorsed by the private sector SW Freight and Commerce Task Force, including:.

- Preserve and modernize the Clark County-owned Chelatchie Prairie Railroad for improved freight service and enhanced economic development opportunities.
- Support regional initiatives to secure funding through state and federal competitive grant programs aimed at funding freight-related improvements and at-grade railroad intersection projects.
- Maintain strategic improvements in marine access by ensuring adequate dredged channel maintenance activities.

Infrastructure and Economic Development

Local legislators should champion enhanced infrastructure and economic development partnerships between the state and local governments. This Alliance supports reinstating the Public Works Trust Fund.

There is a statewide need for a broader array of infrastructure financing methods, including tax increment financing, design-build, public/private/ partnerships (P3) and unsolicited private venture proposals.

Local agencies also endorse clarifying state authority(s) that enable the state to repay project expenditures advanced early by local agencies in delivering the Connecting WA and other state aid funding programs.