



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director 
DATE: November 6, 2017
SUBJECT: **YR 2018 RTC Work Program – ODOT Value Pricing Study**

AT A GLANCE – ACTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize a quick assessment of the YR 2018 Work Program related to RTC engagement on the topic of the ODOT Value Pricing Study.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Oregon Legislature passed a statewide transportation funding and policy bill (HB-2017), and in that legislation it ordered the Oregon Transportation Commission to study the implementation of Value Pricing on segments of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro area.

CONTEXT

Tolling in Washington State is pretty well established legislative policy, and WSDOT has already implemented several projects in recent years in the central Puget Sound region. Among those existing WSDOT tolled corridors, are systems that use “variable pricing” to influence system performance. Existing WSDOT tolling projects include and are planned for the following corridors: Tacoma Narrows Bridge; SR-167 HOT Lanes; Evergreen Point (SR-520) Bridge; I-405 Express Lanes; SR-99 Tunnel (*planned*); Puget Sound Gateway (SR-167/SR-509) (*planned*).

Further, two toll bridges currently operate within the RTC planning region. The Bridge of the Gods and Hood River Bridge are toll bridges operated by port authorities of the state of Oregon (i.e. Port of Cascade Locks and Port of Hood River).

ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

RTC staff have been monitoring the developments of the Oregon proposal since spring 2017 and have begun earnest evaluation of the final legislation and resultant Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) study work plan.

To date, RTC has been invited to participate in a technical modeling committee, which has been formed by ODOT and their consultant to provide technical oversight of the forthcoming traffic modeling analysis. RTC management has delegated the appropriate staff to participate on that committee to monitor and provide input per RTC’s modeling assumptions.

RTC has engaged in multiple individual briefings with RTC Board members whom desired additional information or background regarding this specific proposal, or tolling more generally. And this specific topic has been discussed informally at each of the three most recent RTC Board

meetings, by both the RTC Director and or other Board members. Further, the RTC Director has reached out to RTC Board members whom have been appointed to the ODOT study Policy Advisory Committee and committed to provide technical briefings during that study process to the extent the member requests such briefings or perspective.

PROPOSED RTC BOARD - 2018 WORK PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Scheduling meeting time for RTC Board discussion of this topic in YR 2018 is underway. RTC is aware that the ODOT study schedule is planned to be fast-paced, with an expected final recommendation by the Study committee(s) expected by May/June.

Considering that schedule and the interest and need for RTC engagement, it is expected that the RTC Board will be briefed on substantive findings and recommendations as they are developed by the ODOT study at several meetings (*as appropriate*). Further, it is assumed that the RTC may need to weigh-in with some observations/recommendations to ODOT on any final value pricing implementation proposal, to the extent such proposal affects the RTC region's transportation system and strategy as defined by the RTC Board's plans and policies.

NEXT STEPS

RTC staff will continue to engage in the technical review committee work already underway. Further, RTC staff will schedule RTC Board briefings on policy and substantive issues that are of interest and could affect the RTC region's regional transportation system performance as those issues manifest.

Lastly, it is assumed that a final proposal will be shared with the RTC Board, and that RTC staff will present recommendations for the Board's consideration for formal input and comment in late spring (est. May/June 2018; *subject to ODOT's study schedule*).