Agenda Item VI

MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors

FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director MHR

DATE: December 22, 2017

SUBJECT: **Clark County Transportation Alliance 2018 Policy Statement**

AT A GLANCE – ACTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to seek RTC Board endorsement of the Clark County Transportation Alliance 2018 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 20, 2017, 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 2018 legislation session.

The Statement was presented to the RTC Board during the Executive Director update at the December 2017 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 2018 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
2018 Policy Statement

[Sponsor agency names and logos here.]

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Clark County Transportation Alliance
2018 Policy Statement

A CALL TO FURTHER ACTION

Clark County's residents, employers and guests are experiencing serious transportation constraints from rapid growth and urbanization. These constraints will only become more challenging as southwest Washington expects 116,000 more residents and 78,000 jobs (RTC), and Portland expects to add 260,000 residents and 140,000 jobs (PBT), by 2035. As the second-largest metropolitan area in the Pacific Northwest, our top priority remains addressing deficiencies in the I-5 corridor, including its outdated, chronically congested and accident-prone bridges.

We urge our local, state and federal legislators to be our champions in addressing specific needs described in this policy statement.

I-5 Bridge Replacement and Corridor Enhancements

The Clark County Transportation Alliance (CCTA) fully supports replacement of the I-5 bridges and related corridor improvements. The I-5 spans are functionally obsolete and fast approaching large mechanical upgrades to remain operational. The process framework established in SSB 5806 is an important initial step to delivering practical project solutions.

A bi-state approach focused on finding significant, practical solutions through this primary freight, commerce and commuter corridor is imperative, in keeping with the I-5 Corridor Strategic Plan (2002). We applaud efforts by the Oregon legislature to fund projects that address I-5 corridor deficiencies, especially the I-5/I-84 interchange (a.k.a. "The Rose Quarter") in downtown Portland. Just seven miles apart, the Rose Quarter and I-5 Bridge rank among the nation's 50 worst chokepoints (ATRI).

We also place high priority on long-range transportation corridor planning, given steadily rising population and commerce forecasts. The Portland-Vancouver metro area suffers as the nation's 12th worst congested commute among 240 cities (Inrix). Regional data (RTC) indicates slow travel below 30 mph is now experienced seven hours a day for the nearly 300,000 trips between Oregon and Washington, and just 9 mph on I-5 during peak hours.

Connecting WA-funded Projects

We appreciate our legislators' success in shifting funding for an SR-14 project improving the Camas Slough Bridge to an even more urgent SR-14 widening project east of I-205, and in advancing planning funds for the I-5/ Mill Plain interchange.

We encourage financing innovations that will allow local agencies to accelerate planning and construction with confidence that the state will reimburse local agency expenditures as funds become available. This would help the I-5/179th St. interchange project, where early project construction will facilitate economic opportunities.

Pursue Funding for Critical Regional Projects

We ask our elected officials to help find funding for these "regionally critical" projects as defined by RTC:

- **I-5 Bridge and Corridor:** see previous section
- **I-205/SR-500 to Padden Expressway ($30M):** add auxiliary lanes
- **SR-500 Intersections at 42nd Ave and 54th Ave ($80M):** capacity and safety improvements
- **NE 10th Ave from 149th to 164th St/Whipple Creek ($15M):** alternative north-south corridor for I-5
  Note: this project was awarded a $7M PWTF loan, which was subsequently swept.
- **SR-14 Phase 2 Access Improvements ($44M):** road improvements, connectors and rail over/underpass at 15th St, 32nd St, 27th St, and Index St.
- **SR-500/Fourth Plain/SR-503 ($59M):** intersection improvement
- **SR-14 Camas Slough Bridge ($35M):** parallel bridge structure for westbound traffic
- **NW 32nd Ave Industrial Corridor ($3M):** planning, environmental review for north-south arterial
- **I-5/179th St. Interchange:** accelerated planning and construction (see previous section)
- **I-205/SR-14 (TBD):** interchange and operational improvements

Public Transit

Public transit is a vital component of our region's transportation network. In 2017, C-TRAN successfully launched the Vine, the Portland-Vancouver metro area's first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line. It opened on time, under budget and ridership along the corridor is growing.

Building upon that success, C-TRAN's board has authorized planning for its next BRT corridor along Mill Plain Blvd. We seek state funding for planning and capital costs to help complete this important next initiative in our public transportation network, and encourage further exploration of lower-cost solutions such as additional Bus on Shoulder projects.

Ports and Freight

We appreciate the legislature's broad support to create jobs and freight-dependent economic development along the Clark County-owned Chelatchie Prairie Railroad. Infrastructure investment in our freight, ports and rail system brings jobs and direct economic benefit to our region.

We urge continued attention to the following:

- Preserve and modernize the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad for improved freight service and economic opportunity.
- Support the Port of Vancouver's efforts to replace its Terminal 1 dock which serves as a key riverboat cruise ship terminal on the Columbia River and a seismic disaster relief staging area.
- Support 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 Financing and Economic Development

Southwest Washington's economic future is tied to strong and efficient investment in infrastructure projects. There is imminent need for a broader array of infrastructure financing methods, including tax increment financing, design-build, public/private partnerships (P3), and continued Public Works Trust Fund and CERB funding. These tools can support development of employment centers throughout the region.

Embracing Technology, Safety and Accessibility for all Users

We encourage legislators to actively explore smart regulations which enable public and private sector innovations and emerging technologies that could ease pressures on our transportation grid and increase safety for all users. Examples include autonomous vehicle integration and better traffic flow techniques such as electronic signage and ramp meters.

Safety and accessibility improvements are needed in both urban and rural areas, including safe pathways, sidewalks and street crossings throughout the transportation network. Increased funding for grant programs will improve safety and accessibility for everyone who relies upon our roadways.

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