



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director
DATE: March 6, 2018
SUBJECT: State and Federal Legislative Update

AT A GLANCE – INFORMATION

The purpose of this memorandum is to keep the RTC Board apprised of state and federal legislation.

WA STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Washington State Legislature convened for its 2018 session on January 8 and is scheduled to complete its full session on March 8. At the outset of the legislative session, RTC staff began tracking bills that would revise laws that govern transportation funding, planning, and RTC operations.

In addition to monitoring proposed legislation, staff are also assisting Legislators and RTC Member agency staff (and their lobbyists) by providing current information in regards to RTC plans and recommended projects through the Board endorsed Regional Transportation Plan (2014) and current Clark County Transportation Alliance 2018 Policy Statement.

CURRENT STATUS

As of this report, RTC staff have been monitoring these bills as summarized below. You can access the Bill page by clicking the Bill # hyperlink:

Table with 4 columns: Bill #, Summary, Perceived Impact, Status. Row 1: HB 2352, Would establish a study of all available options and conceptual designs and cost estimates for a bridge or other connection between Southwest Washington and Oregon; west of I-5, - Countywide agencies: potential for conflicts with existing local/countywide GMA plans and policies. - RTC agency: TBD in regards to staffing and or incidental support to study efforts. - RTC Plans: initiates additional study of new corridor options as identified in the RTC Regional Transportation Plan (2014) Appendix I: the Strategic Regional Transportation Plan., DID NOT ADVANCE in SESSION

<p><u>SB 6118</u></p>	<p>Would clarify the work and meeting requirements of the I-5 Columbia River Bridge project, joint legislative action committee. Scope: The revision to RCW 47.01.505 would provide that in-lieu of OR Legislative participation, that the WA Legislative delegates can continue to meet and conduct their business in accordance with the requirements of statute.</p>	<p>- RTC agency: TBD in regards to staffing and or incidental support to study efforts. - RTC Plans: actions related to advancing the replacement of the I-5 Columbia River bridges are consistent with implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan (2014).</p>	<p>DID NOT ADVANCE in SESSION</p>
<p><u>HB 2646</u> <u>SB 6195</u></p>	<p>Would create new criteria and processes for designation and facilitation of transportation projects of statewide significance.</p>	<p>- Countywide agencies: would establish a process for local agencies to endorse and provide local resources to support implementation of the transportation project of statewide significance. - RTC agency: RTC would be included in local agencies of interest upon a project designation, and may be asked to support project implementation activities. - RTC Plans: Designation of the I-5 Columbia River bridge replacement as a transportation project of statewide significance is consistent with Board Resolution 02-17-03.</p>	<p>SB 6195 PASSED SENATE CHAMBER</p> <p>HB 2646 DID NOT PASS HOUSE CHAMBER</p> <p>FINAL DISPOSITION: TBD</p>
<p><u>HB 1075</u> <u>SB 6090</u> & <u>SB 6095</u></p>	<p>Would establish a state capital budget and designated project appropriations (contingent upon approval of bonding authority).</p>	<p>- Countywide agencies: several RTC agencies are awaiting passage of the Capital Budget to advance needed regional infrastructure improvements. - RTC Plans: several projects contained in the Capital Budget would advance implementation of needed regional infrastructure.</p>	<p>Bills Approved, Signed by Governor</p>
<p><u>SB 6186</u></p>	<p>Would establish a new requirement under GMA for counties and cities</p>	<p>RTC agency: impacts are uncertain beyond incidental</p>	<p>DID NOT ADVANCE in</p>

	<p>to monitor population growth annually, produce a growth monitoring report annually, and amend their GMA Plan if certain growth related criteria are met.</p> <p>The Bill would also compel Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (like RTC) to amend the Regional Transportation Plan to reflect county and city related amendments.</p>	<p>additional work and staffing commitments; only if county/city GMA plans are amended, triggering Regional Transportation Plan amendments.</p>	<p>SESSION</p>
<p><u>Governor's proposed WSDOT Operating Budget</u></p>	<p>1) Includes a recommendation to increase the annual operating budget for the <i>statewide</i> Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) program by \$500,000 (annually and recurring). <i>These funds are distributed to RTPO programs statewide, based on pre-existing formula.</i></p> <p>2) Includes \$100,000 budget set-aside for state agencies to facilitate rulemaking to implement a new Transportation Project of Statewide Significance. <i>Final Disposition of this budget proposal may hinge on results of Conference Committee Reconciliation.</i></p>	<p>RTC agency:</p> <p>1) If approved, a portion of this operating budget increase would flow to RTC, and would supplement current grant funds provided by WSDOT to fund the RTPO programs and services. Currently, the RTPO program funding represents roughly 8.6% of the YR 2018 RTC operating revenue.</p>	<p>PASSED LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS IN DIFFERENT FORM:</p> <p>AWAITING CONFERENCE COMMITTEE RECONCILIATION</p>

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The current Federal Administration released a Legislative Outline for Rebuilding Infrastructure in America (Outline) on February 12, 2018. This broad proposal, if implemented into federal budgets and law, would have wide ranging effects upon the funding and delivery of transportation infrastructure systems.

(web link: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/INFRASTRUCTURE-211.pdf>)

In brief summary, the proposal offers bold proposals specifically aimed at transforming federal funding systems and sources. Specifically, the Outline proposes contributing \$200 Billion of net-new federal funding (sources unknown) with the intent of catalyzing up to \$1.5 Trillion of infrastructure investment. The Transportation program would achieve the proposed return-on-investment by: reducing the federal funding share and methods of contributing federal grant funds to state and regional transportation programs and broadens the funding resource pool by placing further emphasis on allowing user fees (ex. tolling) and privatization of federally designated infrastructure.

In relation to federal funding of projects, the proposal recommends further deployment of competitive grant programs (ex. like the Tiger program) and proposes to reduce federal funding share in projects, capping the federal share at roughly twenty-percent of total project cost. As proposed, grant projects would compete for federal funding, and those funds would be contributed as an outcome based funding incentive. *(Note: this proposal would likely not affect current formula based re-distributions of gas tax funds to states and regions.)* In relation to funding sources, the proposal advances the transformation of federal policy to promote the expansion of user fees (ex. tolling) as a means of both funding and operating/maintaining existing as well as new assets (ex. expanded use of tolling on the interstate highway system).

Like most federal policy development, the current Administration has presented this Outline as a starting point for Congressional review, debate, and budgeting. It is unlikely that the Outline would be incorporated into law and budgets as-is. However, what is noteworthy is the Outline's documentation of key trends, which include: 1) continued decline in direct federal investment in the designated highway and regional transportation systems and 2) expanded utilization of user fees and privatization as a project funding methodology.

LOOKING FORWARD

As the RTC region contemplates future regional transportation system needs, it is beneficial to keep apprised of the key trends in state and federal funding. As a policy proposal, the current federal Administration's Outline for rebuilding America's infrastructure paints a potential future forecast for how federal funding may flow to regional projects. What is unmistakable in this proposal (and recent history) are policy and budget responses which reinforce the key trends in federal transportation system funding.

These trends are longstanding and are unlikely to change. As such, the trends should be factored into long-term financial planning in conjunction with RTC's (and local agencies) current and future regional transportation planning efforts.