

**Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council  
Board of Directors  
March 6, 2018, Meeting Minutes**

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members**

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by Chair Ron Onslow on Tuesday, March 6, 2018, at 4:00 p.m. at the Clark County Public Service Center Sixth Floor Training Room, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington. The meeting was televised and recorded by CVTV. Attendance follows.

Voting Board Members Present:

Marc Boldt, Clark County Councilor  
Shirley Craddick, Metro Councilor  
Shawn Donaghy, C-TRAN Exec. Director/CEO  
Bart Gernhart, WSDOT (alternate)  
Bart Hansen, Vancouver Councilmember  
Scott Hughes, Port of Ridgefield Commissioner  
Anne McEnery-Ogle, Vancouver Mayor  
Ron Onslow, Ridgefield Mayor  
Eileen Quiring, Clark County Councilor  
Melissa Smith, Camas Councilmember  
Jeanne Stewart, Clark County Councilor  
Rian Windsheimer, ODOT Region 1 Manager

Voting Board Members Absent:

Jim Herman, Port of Klickitat Commissioner  
Tom Lannen, Skamania County Commissioner  
Kris Strickler, WSDOT Regional Administrator

Nonvoting Board Members Present:

Nonvoting Board Members Absent:

Curtis King, Senator 14<sup>th</sup> District  
Norm Johnson, Representative 14<sup>th</sup> District  
Gina McCabe, Representative 14<sup>th</sup> District  
Lynda Wilson, Senator 17<sup>th</sup> District  
Paul Harris, Representative 17<sup>th</sup> District  
Vicki Kraft, Representative 17<sup>th</sup> District  
Ann Rivers, Senator 18<sup>th</sup> District  
Liz Pike, Representative 18<sup>th</sup> District  
Brandon Vick, Representative 18<sup>th</sup> District  
John Braun, Senator 20<sup>th</sup> District  
Richard DeBolt, Representative 20<sup>th</sup> District  
Ed Orcutt, Representative 20<sup>th</sup> District  
Annette Cleveland, Senator 49<sup>th</sup> District  
Monica Stonier, Representative 49<sup>th</sup> District  
Sharon Wylie, Representative 49<sup>th</sup> District

Guests Present:

Ed Barnes, Citizen  
Lori Figone, WSDOT  
Jim Hagar, Port of Vancouver  
Lee L. Jensen, Citizen  
Larry Keister, Port of Camas-Washougal Commissioner  
Casey Liles WSDOT  
Jim Moeller, Citizen  
Don Orange, Port of Vancouver Commissioner  
Diane O'Regan, C-TRAN  
Scott Patterson, C-TRAN  
Sean Philbrook, Identity Clark County  
Devin Reck, WSDOT  
Ty Stober, Vancouver Councilmember  
Marc Thornsby, Port of Klickitat  
Neal Walker, Citizen

Staff Present:

Matt Ransom, Executive Director  
Ted Gathe, Legal Counsel  
Lynda David, Senior Transportation Planner  
Mark Harrington, Senior Transportation Planner  
Bob Hart, Transportation Section Supervisor  
Dale Robins, Senior Transportation Planner  
Diane Workman, Administrative Assistant

**II. Approval of the Board Agenda**

EILEEN QUIRING MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 6, 2018, MEETING AGENDA. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY RIAN WINDSHEIMER AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

**III. Call for Public Comments**

Ed Barnes from Vancouver thanked the RTC Board for the outstanding job they have been doing over the last couple years. He said he especially thanked Matt and his staff for their efforts for transportation projects in southwest Washington. Mr. Barnes said he would again stress the fact that the I-5 Bridge needs to be fixed as soon as possible. He said the Legislature has passed a couple of bills that has to do with statewide significance. Mr. Barnes noted his activity along with Mr. Bauer and Mr. Schaefer on the I-5 Bridge Replacement Group and the Labor Round Table and a resolution that they will bring to the next meeting. They are encouraging everyone to cooperate between Oregon and Washington to get this I-5 project completed.

**IV. Approval of February 6, 2018, Minutes**

SHAWN DONAGHY MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2018, MINUTES. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ANNE MCENERNY-OGLE AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

**V. Consent Agenda****A. March Claims**

ANNE MCENERNY-OGLE MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA MARCH CLAIMS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MELISSA SMITH AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Shirley Craddick entered the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

**VI. Urban Freeway Corridors Study: UPWP and TIP Amendment, Resolution 03-18-05**

Matt Ransom said they are proposing to move a study forward earlier than originally scheduled. Bob Hart will describe the partnership that has developed within the last several months with WSDOT and briefly describe the study that was proposed several years back. He said they are hoping to get that out for activity later this spring.

Bob Hart said that RTC has recently been notified by WSDOT that they have \$450,000 in state funds available to supplement funds that are already programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in the year 2020 for the Urban Freeway Corridors Study. These state funds are available only for the current biennium and must be spent by June 2019. Therefore, because of this they need to move forward with this study this calendar year. Today, they are looking for Board action to amend the FY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to add the study and to also amend the TIP so it can move forward this year.

The Urban Freeway Corridors Study is intended to analyze and recommend operational improvements on the Vancouver urban freeway system to improve mobility and safety. It will focus on improvements within the I-5, I-205, SR-14, and SR-500 corridors.

In addition to the state funds, they also have funds that are already programmed. This will allow a more comprehensive operational analysis. A portion of those state funds will be used to conduct an origin-destination analysis which will provide an understanding of corridor travel patterns and access to and from the freeway along the study corridors. It will also support an additional informational tool for other special study areas that WSDOT is looking at, such as at SR-14 / I-205 and SR-500 / SR-503. It will also provide better information to RTC staff as input to the regional travel model. The analysis of freeway operational needs will identify improvements such as active or advanced traffic management tools, fixing bottlenecks, and transit service enhancements to make the most of the current urban freeway system.

The Urban Freeway Corridors Study was anticipated in 2020, and it is not in the FY 2018 UPWP, so it needs to be amended to be added. This would allow RTC's Executive Director to enter into an agreement with WSDOT for use of the funds. Also, the current 2018-2021 TIP now has \$150,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds programmed for the study. RTC is recommending an additional \$65,000 in un-programmed STBG funds be added for a total of \$215,000 in federal money for the study. These funds would be programmed forward to 2019 instead of 2020. The UPWP work element and TIP project records were attached to the resolution for more detail about the study itself.

In 2016, the RTC Board took action to commit \$150,000 in STBG funds to initiate this study. They first initiated the idea in response to the freeway congestion problems identified in the 2015 Congestion Management Report. At that time, it was assumed that other regional partners would add additional funds for the study. In addition to WSDOT, other agencies may have the option to contribute funds in the future to support other scope activities, for example C-TRAN could contribute additional funds to conduct further development and design of the bus on shoulder on I-5 as an option.

At the February meeting, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) recommended that the RTC Board amend the FY 2018 UPWP and 2018-2021 TIP to include the Urban Freeway Corridors Study.

Action would amend the TIP to include a total of \$700,000 for the Study; it would program the \$450,000 in WSDOT funds for the Study into 2018; and \$215,000 of federal STBG dollars along with \$35,000 in local match in year 2019.

Action on Resolution 03-18-05 would amend the FY 2018 UPWP to add the Urban Freeway Corridors Study work element and include it in the FY 2019 UPWP, which begins July 1, 2018. It also grants authority for the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with WSDOT for the state funds to conduct the Study. It also amends the TIP to program the Urban Freeway Corridors Study to 2019 from 2020.

Jeanne Stewart referred to the last paragraph on the first page of the resolution. She said it refers to identifying low cost strategies to help make the most of the current freeway system. She said she was looking for assurance that the minimal low cost strategies are not the only strategies they are going to look at.

Mr. Hart said there will be some capital projects involved, but it won't be looking at adding full major interchanges or adding a new lane along the corridor. It is going to be more low cost in a sense of what the threshold is. It's not a major capital project they are looking at as a part of the study. They are focusing on the operational aspect of the corridor to improve efficiency of the system.

Councilor Stewart asked how the Study which is fairly narrowly limited based on the description get into a big picture solution for transportation capacity on I-5 and I-205.

Mr. Hart said whatever they look at and evaluate as a part of the study is meant to be things that can be done that would apply for both the current configuration of the freeway system and future capital improvements. For example, adaptive traffic management with variable speeds, responsiveness to current traffic conditions could apply whether in the current configuration of I-5 or expanded I-5.

Councilor Stewart said it indicates that RTC will manage the study and coordinate with WSDOT. She asked what organization or agency will actually be doing the study.

Mr. Hart said they will be looking for consultant services for part of this work. They have not done that yet. After today's action, they will work to develop a Request for Qualifications, write a scope of work for the services they are looking for, and go through a consultant selection process.

Councilor Stewart said her concern about approving this is that based on the title: Urban Freeway Corridor Study, people could be led to believe that what they are going to do is identify what the impediments are to the freeways and potentially look for some kind of fix. She said it is not a broad spectrum look.

Mr. Hart said they did struggle with what to call the study. At one time they called it the Urban Freeway Operational Study, which is maybe more descriptive of what they are doing, but they are not looking at major capital investment. They are looking at lower cost investments and other types of improvements within a five year period.

Bart Gernhart said they have already identified some capital projects on I-205 between Mill Plain and SR-500 and between SR-500 and Padden Parkway. Those projects are in what was adopted by RTC as part of the Clark County Transportation Alliance (CCTA) proposal from a number of years ago. Those were included in a previous study they did in 2014. They also have a need in the Plan to fix the bridge over the Columbia River. Those capital projects identified are not going away. The idea is that in the meantime, before those get funded, which isn't anytime soon, they are going to operate the system more effectively and efficiently. This study is looking at how they more effectively in the meantime operate the system. In order to do that they first need to know where people are coming from and where they are going to; that is the origin and destination study. They then need to adjust the model based on the input. They would then look at a wide variety of these lower cost solutions on all of the freeways in Clark County. This is not looking at identifying new capital projects; they already know what those are. It might give them better insight to those capital projects by giving them better

understanding of the origin/destination of where people want to go. Mr. Gernhart said there is no funding for large projects, and there is no funding even for small projects. But if they can identify them, then they will at least be able to start looking for what the costs might be and what the priorities are.

Shirley Craddick said she was pleased to see that there was acknowledgement of considering the bus on shoulder. She said she has really been impressed with the work that C-TRAN has done on SR-14. She asked if there has been any discussion yet at the state level, at the WSDOT level where any new freeway that is constructed should accommodate space for bus on shoulder (BOS). She thought that would be a good policy to put in place, so the freeway is prepared for BOS for the future.

Bart Gernhart said they are moving forward with the widening of SR-14 between 164<sup>th</sup> Ave. to I-205. That is underway. They are planning to put a wider shoulder on that in order to accommodate the BOS even after they add the additional lanes in the construction.

Councilor Craddick said she was asking more about the policy. She asked if there was discussion about a future policy for any new freeway that is constructed to be able to accommodate buses on the shoulder.

Mr. Gernhart said they haven't got to the policy yet. They are currently doing that as a pilot project. Once the pilot is done, they could then have that conversation around this table.

Anne McEnery-Ogle said she certainly likes the bus on shoulder piece and the success of it. She asked if this would also help them consider ramp metering.

Mr. Hart said yes, that it is part of the technology-based ways to improve the traffic flow on I-5 or the other freeway corridors as well.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle also asked if they were looking into a type of application (app) for iPhones for notifying people when there is a bridge lift.

Mr. Hart said they had not talked about that part of it in terms of mobility app type solutions or applications for that. He said that is probably not part of this study.

Marc Boldt said the restriping they did on I-205 at SR-500 was pretty fascinating. He asked if that was a part of this study.

Mr. Hart said that project came out of the Access and Operations Study that Mr. Gernhart spoke about earlier that led to some of the bus on shoulder work that they did. Those are the kinds of things that are low cost that will help improve operations.

Councilor Boldt said the study on SR-500 between Falk and Stapleton needs to be pushed as fast as they can. He asked if this study would help that.

Mr. Gernhart said the SR-500 study is going faster than this corridors study. He said they are holding their first Executive Committee meeting on Monday, March 12, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. He said they would like to have a County Councilor or more attend to help provide some guidance and help steer them.

Jeanne Stewart referred to ramp metering and whether the value could be achieved by that. She asked if they looked upstream from the ramp metering to see what the implications and impacts are on the feeder streets where the traffic collects to get on the ramp where the ramp is metered.

Mr. Hart said they definitely do look at those things. That is part of what they have to evaluate under efficacy of ramp metering and how it affects the main line. It is a balancing act between making sure the system is not backed up on the arterial roads to help favor the freeway system. A lot of the systems now are what they call smart meters. These balance access to the freeway with arterial queues.

Bart Gernhart said a number of years ago, they didn't have the ability to collect the data upstream and downstream automatically. In the last ten years or so they have put in a number of meters but put in a fiber optic cable line all around on the freeways in Clark County. Now they have the data they need to make adjustments. The old dumb ramp meters had a set wait time. The new smart ramp meters adjust the wait based upon traffic conditions and immediately make adjustments. You only have to wait for the time that the system decides it is effective for you to move on. It optimizes the efficiency of the whole system. It is quite a bit different from the old meters.

Eileen Quiring asked if ramp metering was found to be one of the improvements that could improve movement along the corridor, is it only the study that would help to tell us, and then it goes onto the capital improvement. She asked if any of the money from this study would be able to be used to implement it.

Bart Gernhart said the plan is not to use any of this money to implement. However, he said the first ramp meter since the SR-14 was installed two decades ago is going in this summer. He said he is pleased to see where it is going in. It is going in on I-205 northbound on SR-500. He said currently in the afternoon from about 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. it is breaking down; it comes to a stop. Mr. Gernhart said it is one of the locations that it should be pretty effective on truly helping the mainline flow of traffic get to where it should be. He said there would be more information about it as the time comes near. There is funding for the next set for the following year 2019/2020, which they will announce that later this spring or early summer.

SHAWN DONAGHY MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 03-18-05, URBAN FREEWAY CORRIDORS STUDY: UPWP AND TIP AMENDMENT. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ANNE MCENERNY-OGLE AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Chair Onslow said the urban area is most of Clark County now, at least as far as the Legislature is concerned. He said when it comes to some of the grants that we have or are asking for, there is very little left that is not urban.

## **VII. RTC Member Contributions (Dues) for YR 2019**

Matt Ransom referred to the memo included in the meeting packet. He said at the March meeting, staff presents a draft recommendation to the Board. At the April meeting, it is desired

that the Board ratify the dues schedule. The dues schedule being proposed would be effective January 2019.

In 2015, the Board took up the matter of RTC member dues/contributions. That was the first comprehensive review of member dues since the organization was formed in 1992. That was a significant effort. The committee that was formed to evaluate the dues reviewed all the pertinent materials and history, as well as how we are organized by population and general characteristics of Board agency involvement of RTC. In 2015, they issued a comprehensive report and made recommendations. Among the recommendations made, including a significant increase in member dues, were recurring review policies. A review would take place annually, with a full review every 5 years. The policies lay out some factors to be used in the assessment. The first being the Employment Cost Index, prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics at the federal level covering state and local government professional workers series. A policy recommendation also was set that a comprehensive review take place every 5 years including a reassessment of population distributions and an assessment of Gorge jurisdiction dues.

Mr. Ransom said RTC covers three counties, but 90 to 95 percent of the work that they do really is within Clark County, within our metropolitan area and given the economic characteristics of the Gorge communities, the Board elected, per the report of the Committee, to update but then freeze the Gorge member contributions for a five-year period. That was recognizing that there are economic surges just in the urban areas.

Their findings show they recommended not adjusting dues last year, and so they have a recommendation this year. One of the factors in their budgeting is that they receive the majority of their funds through grant formula distributions federal source. Among those federal planning funds, they received notification from the state that we are going to receive a reduction based on some reformulation at the state level of about \$8,300 in federal formula funds, effective in their upcoming contract July 1, 2018. Budgeting now and into the future, they will be expecting a little less of the federal formula funds.

They looked at the employment cost index. In comparing 2016 and 2017, they see an increase in that index cost rate of about 4.9%. They did not see a major shift in population. They want to monitor that, because if there is a major shift in population, they want to be responsive of that to recalibrate the numbers.

Factoring all of these adjustments, they are recommending dues increase by \$8,498, which represents the cost index factor of 4.93% for the two years. Mr. Ransom referred to the table listed on page 3 of the memo providing current 2018 contributions and proposed 2019 contributions for each jurisdiction. Mr. Ransom said if this is acceptable, staff would bring it to the April meeting for action.

Shirley Craddick referred to the 4.93% for the two-year adjustment. She asked if that was 2.46% per year or 4.93% for each year.

Mr. Ransom said it is two years combined; 4.93% for both years. He said they didn't adjust dues last year because they got a little bit more state money. Now we are losing a little federal money and need to keep balanced. One of the policy emphases from the 2015 report was to not wait to make adjustments; do it more on an incremental basis than major bumps. They are trying to keep true to that policy.

Mr. Ransom said they would see a resolution next month with this proposal.

Chair Onslow said he was in favor of moving it forward every year if possible rather than waiting four or five years. That makes it easier for the cities, especially the smaller cities, to budget accordingly.

Mr. Ransom said they are doing this at this time of the year so that they are able to communicate it back to member agencies. That way the agencies will have minimum six plus months to be able to factor that into their annual budgets.

#### **VIII. 2017 Annual Listing of Federal Project Obligation**

Matt Ransom said RTC is required to report the annual listing of federal project obligation on their website. He said rather than to just list it in their website, he said he thought it was important that they communicate it publically as to how the dollars have been spent and how many projects are moving forward. This gives the Board a sense of the activity within the community of how the dollars are being used and how they are trying to make improvements.

Dale Robins referred to the memo included in the meeting packet along with the attached report. Mr. Robins said this listing is for federal obligation only. The total list of projects that are actually implemented in any one year are much greater than just the federally funded projects. Federal regulations require MPOs to do this published annual list. RTC takes it a step further and does a short analysis on their obligations from the previous year. Obligation is a federal term that refers to a commitment by either Federal Highway Administration or Federal Transit Administration to reimburse local agencies for the federal share of a project. Obligation occurs prior to actual expenditures. It might be that obligation is in 2017, but construction would not come until 2018 or 2019.

Mr. Robins highlighted the federal obligation totals for 2013 through 2017. It varies every year. One large project can significantly impact obligation levels on a given year. Mr. Robins said in 2015 there was a spike, and that was because of the Fourth Plain BRT project. In 2017, approximately \$35 million in federal funds were obligated for transportation improvements. Of the \$35 million obligated in 2017, approximately 42% went to transit improvements, 20% for preservation, 18% for road improvements and the remaining 20% to other transportation improvement types.

RTC has responsibility for management of a portion of the federal funds that come to the region. RTC Board has adopted policies to ensure a timely obligation of these funds. Last year the region obligated \$8.5 million in RTC selected projects. By meeting their obligation targets, the region ensures that they will not lose federal funds. Mr. Robins said local staff is doing a

great job in meeting their obligation targets. In fact, collectively the region has obligated federal funds in about one year in advance of our targets. This is a good thing; we don't lose to inflation; and we're implementing projects and not in trouble with the state for slow obligation of projects. Mr. Robins said at the back of the report, pages 8 through 11 show a list of obligated projects listed by jurisdiction.

Mr. Robins said RTC is developing a project database that covers projects since 2010 that were selected by the RTC Board. The project database is on RTC's website under the Transportation Improvement Program and can be viewed at [www.rtc.wa.gov/programs/projects/](http://www.rtc.wa.gov/programs/projects/). Projects are listed by agency and show the current status of projects with a location map and pictures of the project. Mr. Robins provided a look at the database and chose a project that has been completed for an example. He said the database allows them to keep the information so it is not lost, and it allows anyone to access the list of all jurisdictions' projects funded by the RTC Board in one location.

Matt Ransom said part of this inventory is designed for agency staff, but it is also accessible to the public allowing transparency as to where funding is going. It is also a historical record, and it is important to document what has been done.

#### **IX. SR-14 Bingen/White Salmon Circulation Study – Final Report**

Matt Ransom introduced the SR-14 Bingen/White Salmon Circulation Study to be presented by Dale Robins along with the next item of the Connecting Washington Program Skamania and Klickitat Projects to be presented by Devin Reck with WSDOT. Mr. Ransom said the WSDOT contracted with RTC to do the SR-14 Circulation Study. It is an important study for the communities of Bingen and White Salmon. It is something that they have been requesting from WSDOT for years. Through the Connecting Washington program, some funds were made available, so RTC was able to help them complete the study to help them understand the types of improvements needed for quality of life, mobility, and safety on SR-14. The second presentation is two projects funded by the Connecting Washington Program in the Gorge. Mr. Ransom noted that they don't get a lot of projects like Clark County does, but within RTC's planning area, these are very vital projects for prosperity and safety in these communities.

Dale Robins referred to the memo included in the meeting packet along with the attached Executive Summary of the Report. Mr. Robins provided a slide with a map of the study area: SR-14 from SR-141 Alternative to just east of the eastern Bingen city limits. The corridor is approximately 3.8 miles in length and includes downtown Bingen and seven major intersections which were highlighted on the map. Located between the Columbia River and SR-14 is the main east-west Burlington Northern rail line which carries about 40 trains a day. This also has significant impact because of its proximity to SR-14 impacting traffic on SR-14.

Mr. Robins said as most are aware, SR-14 is the principal east-west highway on the Washington side of the Columbia River. It serves heavy recreational and freight traffic; approximately 25% of the traffic in this corridor is truck traffic. SR-14 is also the main corridor for local residents

and businesses, and provides critical regional access to the Hood River Bridge. SR-14 serves as the east-west alternate to I-84 in Oregon when incidents occur on the Oregon side of the river.

Mr. Robins said over the last decade, traffic has grown from just over 6,000 vehicles a day to over 10,000 vehicles a day. That is a growth rate of approximately 5% a year. Interestingly to this is that truck traffic has grown at the same rate. It continues to be 25% of the traffic back a decade ago and it continues to be 25% of the traffic today. Summer recreational travel is also significant in this corridor with an average traffic varying by about 30% between winter and summer months. That is much higher than what is seen in the Clark County area.

The study not only surveyed existing roadway, but they collected traffic counts, collision data, parking utilization, rail data, and other data to understand the traffic patterns. They utilized Bluetooth technology to gather origin and destination traffic through the corridor. As part of the SR-14 Circulation Study they were able to confirm that the Port of Klickitat Access Concept 14 developed by WSDOT would provide the highest operational benefits for access within the study area. The Port's property is home to major employers such as Insitu and Custom Interface. Employment at the Port is expected to grow by 50% over the next few decades. WSDOT staff will provide more information on the actual study in their presentation following this item.

The study was intended to identify current and future transportation needs. The local communities do not have a large transportation budget so they attempted to use a practical design to identify cost effective strategies that could be implemented in the near future. They identified an affordable list of seven standalone improvements that could be implemented for a total of under \$1 million. These improvements include projects to enhance safety at the intersection of SR-141 Alt., signal modifications at the Hood River Bridge, enhanced pedestrian crossings in downtown Bingen, and speed control to improve safety in the downtown area. The most challenging need is the implementation of traffic control at Oak and Maple Streets, which are located just west of the Bingen access project that WSDOT will be presenting.

They also identified long term needs. Mr. Robins said they did not go into heavy detail and produce cost estimates, but while short term improvements may work over the next 20 years, the community will need to start thinking about long-term needs. As traffic continues to grow, SR-14 access and congestion will become a significant issue in this corridor. The strategies such as creating a downtown boulevard, traffic control at additional intersections, adding lanes, adding a multi-use path, and potential intersection realignment may be needed to maintain traffic flow through this important corridor.

Melissa Smith asked how they collected information by Bluetooth technology.

Mr. Robins said they have portable Bluetooth readers that capture anyone that has a cell phone or other Bluetooth devices that travel by. It captures when they enter the corridor and when they exit the corridor so they know where they came from and where they leave the corridor. It captures around 8 to 12% of the actual traffic. Mr. Robins said they don't know which actual

home they are coming from; but they know when they enter the corridor and where they exit the corridor so they see the travel patterns through the corridor.

Mr. Ransom asked Mr. Robins to briefly comment on where they were with the study and recommendations; what the local governments might do to carry them forward. He also said these are small communities with small budgets and asked how they might ultimately implement these projects through the different grant programs; a strategy going forward.

Mr. Robins said this study is making recommendations. It is up to the local agencies to decide which ones they want to implement and which ones they can afford to implement. There are a number of improvements listed; some of them would most likely be led by WSDOT, such as the traffic signal at the Hood River Bridge. Other recommendations in the downtown core would be implemented by the City of Bingen. They could seek funds through the State Safety Grant fund to implement some of those improvements. They can use their local resources that they have available, and potentially seek after federal grants to implement. It is really about the City of Bingen, the City of White Salmon, Klickitat County, and the Port of Klickitat having discussions about which of the recommendations they want to implement.

Shirley Craddick asked who had responsibility for the Hood River Bridge.

Mr. Robins said the Port of Hood River owns the Hood River Bridge. They maintain the existing bridge.

Councilor Craddick asked if there were any discussions about replacement of the Hood River Bridge.

Rian Windsheimer said the Port of Hood River completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) several years ago with the help of RTC. RTC is currently in the process of helping the Port of Hood River contract for EIS consultants to help them develop their EIS with a \$5 million earmark from the Oregon State Legislature. There is currently conversation about how that will happen and the exact timeline. It is being managed by the Port of Hood River which owns and operates the bridge and is ultimately responsible for replacing it.

Marc Boldt asked if they were doing Dock Grade Road.

Mr. Robins said this study has no improvements to Dock Grade Road. This study is looking at improvements to SR-14. Dock Grade Road does intersect and is an important access up to the City of White Salmon, northbound only. He said the intersection works quite well. It has a very low collision rate. No trucks are allowed on that roadway.

Councilor Boldt asked if they were going to analyze trucks on SR-14.

Mr. Robins said they did analyze truck traffic. It does vary a little going from about 24% to 28% through the corridor.

Councilor Boldt asked WSDOT if they would think about opening a scale on SR-14. He said there are a lot of overweight trucks on that roadway.

Bart Gernhart said he did not know about opening a scale. Mr. Robins said there is a weigh station there that is open occasionally.

Chair Onslow asked if the Bingen area communities have received a report on the study.

Mr. Robins said he has made a presentation to the City of Bingen, and the City Council had a discussion about it. He said he has not been back to hear their position. They were talking about submitting for a City Safety Grant that is up for a call this year. There was some discussion whether they were going to submit that for the speed radar sign and pedestrian improvements in the downtown core area.

Chair Onslow asked if the report was well received.

Mr. Robins said yes, he thought overall, they were very excited to have the report. It is something that they have been looking forward to for many years.

Eileen Quiring asked when the presentation was made to the City of Bingen.

Mr. Robins said he made the presentation in January of this year. The study was completed in December of 2017.

#### **X. Connecting Washington Program – Skamania and Klickitat County Projects Update**

Matt Ransom invited Devin Reck, Project Manager for WSDOT, to provide this presentation. He is the Area Engineer covering Skamania and Klickitat Counties and managing these two projects. Mr. Ransom said these are long-standing needs that have been funded by the Connecting Washington Program. These two projects were granted to these communities because of the deficiencies in the roadway for one project and access for economic development purposes for the other. Mr. Ransom said as WSDOT is orchestrating the development of the projects, it's using all the skills that they have: practical design, community needs, and trying to design SR-14 to be suitable for future purposes.

Devin Reck said he covers the Gorge area and other areas as needed. He had two video clips to show the design work they have developed for the two projects. The first project is the Wind River Road intersection with SR-14. Mr. Reck said there are two ways into Carson; Hot Springs Avenue and Wind River Road. Hot Springs Road has a number of issues; it is sloughing off down into the river. He said they have made a number of improvements over the years to try to fix the road; it is basically cost prohibitive. Mr. Reck said they have sought FEMA funds to fix some of those things and completed that. The idea came up to combine the state funds as well as some FEMA funds for this project before they lose the road, which is the major truck route to get into Carson. Mr. Reck said there are some current movements that cannot be made at Wind River Road, which can be seen on the video. Mr. Reck said that eventually, the idea is that Hot Springs Avenue will go away and everything will be switched over to Wind River Road. This would require a realignment of Wind River Road.

The video showed the design of an expanded roundabout on SR-14 that would allow for large truck turns on to and off of Wind River Road. Mr. Reck explained the movements on SR-14 and

access to and from Wind River Road. The roundabout design is a much safer configuration; it slows traffic in that area and allows trucks, buses, and emergency services to make the connections safely. Mr. Reck said they met with the community, emergency services, the school district, and a large crane business that is in the area. With the weather patterns in that area, there was concern of being able to navigate the turns with ice and snow. The video captured the benefit of the configuration. Mr. Reck said they have held a number of different community outreaches and gone to a couple of open houses. They wanted to make sure the businesses were accommodated. Mr. Reck said they have been working with Skamania County and that has been very good. They looked at a number of different options, but with the area being so tight, the roundabout was the best fit.

Shirley Craddick asked how they inform the truck drivers as to how to use and maneuver the turns in the roundabout such as the idea of going around the roundabout before heading up the hill instead of just turning up the hill.

Mr. Reck said there is some striping on the road itself to show the different movements you can make as you go into them. He said the way a roundabout is designed, you can go around as many times as you like. He said in their discussion with the truckers, their first question was if they could go around before heading up the hill. That is how it was designed to be used for the larger vehicles allowing them a better line up the hill.

Marc Boldt asked if they were going to lower the speed.

Mr. Reck said that is a very valid concern and something that they need to look at. He said they recognize that, and it is those details that they need to still consider.

Shawn Donaghy asked if they could just turn right to go up the hill without going around the roundabout.

Mr. Reck said yes. It is an option; depending on what you are driving would help determine that decision.

Mr. Ransom asked Mr. Reck to make a couple comments about working with the Gorge Commission. He said what is unique about work in this area, if you are not familiar with this intersection, is that it sits outside of the urbanized area. So the consultation requirement upon WSDOT, and a testament to try to balance the relationships as well as needs, is working with the Gorge Commission in terms of the visual esthetics issues and the impact issues. He said the roundabout is unique in the sense that the visual intrusion of a traditional signal system and its operation goes away. That is one of the attributes that speaks to the design complexity of this location.

Mr. Reck said that Mr. Ransom hit on the issues. He said this requires cutting into the hillside and taking out trees, and the whole area is a slide area. Trying to manage and do all those things while maintaining the esthetics of the area, Mr. Reck said he felt the roundabout enhanced that. He said they are working very closely with the abutting property owners there, and the Gorge Commission has helped them through the process. He said the center of the

roundabout itself has some features that help beautify as well. They have a theme, such as a dry creek.

Chair Onslow asked why the school district was pleased with the roundabout.

Mr. Reck said currently, it is very difficult for them to get out of that intersection safely. Buses are very slow, and this allows for a safe passage. They welcomed the idea – safety first.

Bart Gernhart said they are also going forward next year installing two roundabouts in Washougal to help access. Those will not only have advanced notice signs, but radar signs that say how fast you are going. Speed limit signs will be posted, and these will tell your speed. The signs will be posted at each end: as you approach Washougal from the Gorge and as you approach Washougal from Vancouver. Mr. Gernhart said they will consider these signs at Wind River Road as well.

Mr. Reck presented a video with the SR-14 Bingen Project which is access to Bingen Point or the Port of Klickitat. This is a Connecting Washington project for the City of Bingen. He said Mr. Robins talked about the access study as a part of that. They looked at up to 14 different options on how to provide different access. There is really only one way to get into the Port area at Maple Street. Another access is Walnut Street. This is very tight corridors with Marina Way, the rail road tracks, a strip of properties, and then SR-14. Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) has certain requirements to go either over them or under them with certain height requirements. There are homes and businesses. Mr. Reck said they looked at everything from outside of town to inside of town up to 14 options. Cost was an issue. This project, any Connecting Washington project, has a finite budget. Trying to implement some of those practical solutions, this one was out of the box. He said the public pushed for something closer to town. The option is literally in town utilizing a roundabout. They were able to take advantage of some vacant properties to minimize the impacts to the community and the public. Mr. Reck said they have shared it with the City Council, and they have taken ownership of it. He said it is really part of the community. They are looking at how they can beautify it, and be a statement for the community to hold onto. Mr. Reck said they are currently starting to dive into some of the details. He said it is early on in the design, and they are going through the refinement processes on enhancing it. The Port area has a pedestrian path so they have sidewalk to tie those two together along with the sidewalks in downtown. Mr. Reck said the roundabout and underpass will accommodate a semi-truck or log truck.

Mr. Reck said this video and the previous video were produced by their VERG Group (Visual Engineering Resource Group). They take their actual design files and model that to create a video like these. Mr. Reck said he showed the video to all of the potentially impacted property owners for all of the options. He said they have met with them very early on in trying to make sure that everyone is onboard and following the process to make sure they are well informed. Mr. Reck said it has been good work with the City and the Port.

Shawn Donaghy asked how much disruption there would be on rail traffic where the roadway goes under the double track of railway.

Mr. Reck said they have been in conversation with BNSF. He said they had another situation where they have seen where they actually go through and drive sheet pile between the tracks. They can then take one side out and have them use the other side while they replace the one and then switch to do the other side. Mr. Reck said they did not anticipate disruption for them. He said they are still evaluating the options. They may just go in and do the work for the bridge part first, and then it is complete. Then another project would go in and tie in the road.

#### **XI. 2018 WA Legislative Session – Wrap Up Report**

Matt Ransom referred to the distributed memo. He said he expanded the Legislative Update to include state and federal legislation because there was a proposal for federal budget in legislation that was released since the last RTC Board meeting.

The Washington State Legislature is still in session and is expected to wrap up by Friday, March 9. Mr. Ransom said most of the policy bills did not advance. There was one about a study of a new west side bridge alternative, two other bills, House and Senate versions, dealing with projects of statewide significance, which ran into a bit of an issue the previous weekend in terms of floor work, and Mr. Ransom said he was not sure of the final disposition. The state capital budget was approved earlier in the session. For the proposed WSDOT operating budget, one of the proposed outcomes is for the state as a whole, that there be an increase to RTPO funding of \$500,000 to compensate for some expanded RTPOs that have been designated in the last several years. That may trickle through to RTC's budget. It is based on a formula statewide, so RTC is likely to receive a little bit of an uptick if it is passed. Also, the difference between the House and the Senate version is related to trying to implement a revision to state rules governing designation of a project of statewide significance. There is some money set aside proposed. In one of the versions for the rule making process, the House Transportation Committee has asked for some reconciliation because of the differences between the two bills. Mr. Ransom said there are not a lot of bills that will have a direct impact to RTC, but if the project of statewide significance bill moves forward, that would be another positive step in the movement of activities for expecting that we line up policy as well as strategy and the reconvening of the I-5 Bridge conversation.

Mr. Ransom said he did monitor the Oregon law. He said they are out of session. They wrapped up after a 28 day session. Washington had a two month session. He said he did not believe there were major policy bills that would have a substantive effect to the RTC region.

On the Federal Legislative side, on February 12, 2018, current Federal Administration released a Legislative Outlook for Rebuilding Infrastructure in America. It is about 58 pages describing the priorities for budgeting, and in some sense, reshaping of federal transportation policy and budget priorities. Mr. Ransom said overall the proposal is a \$200 billion net-new contribution of funding (sources unknown) and reprioritizing it into transportation. This is with the intent of catalyzing up to \$1.5 trillion of infrastructure investment. They would achieve the proposal by federal decline in contributions. Because the federal gas tax has not been increased since 1993, its purchasing power has been losing due to inflation and cost increases, etc. combined with

capping certain programs, the actual federal contribution rate. The general idea is they are going to start to propose at a policy level capping federal share cap at 20%. That means 80% funding by others, 20% funding by Feds. The other way they achieve that \$1.5 trillion is to open up user fees to expand the use of user fees. Examples would be tolls and airport landing fees. Currently, to toll an interstate highway, existing is not permissible in federal statute unless you get an exception. You can toll a new roadway or a reconstructed roadway under federal statute. The proposal is saying you can toll anything you want, for maintenance and preservation. That would shift federal policy. There is also an emphasis on privatization. This is just a proposal; and will change. He said key to RTC is the trend. If the Feds are saying they are not going to contribute as much and we need to contribute more. How do we contribute more? Possibly assess user fees, maybe privatize, also public-private partnerships. Mr. Ransom said how it applies to RTC when looking at our 20-year Plan, we probably should not expect massive amounts of money from the Feds. That means we need to rely on ourselves; locals and regions and states need to raise their own money. That is what we are already doing. Mr. Ransom said in Oregon at Metro with their Regional Plan, they are starting to have that conversation that asks what regional levy would need to be developed at some point in the future. Mr. Ransom said we need to be aware and not be unprepared. Mr. Ransom said he knew many members have spent time in WA DC as part of their legislative activities. He asked if anyone had anything to contribute from that.

Shirley Craddick said she had heard President Trump mention raising the gas tax, but she did not see that in this information. She asked if any more detail about that was available.

Mr. Ransom said he had heard that in the various things that were said. The proposal itself is what he considers to be what is stated and it is not proposed there. Mr. Ransom said that might come out of committee; out of the Senate or the House. He said the 18.4% federal gas tax rate has not changed since 1993.

Chair Onslow said he visited in Washington, D.C. at the Department of Transportation, and after that they met with Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell. He said they found out more than what the Senators knew. He said there was a disconnect. Chair Onslow said the Senators were glad to hear what they had to say, because they knew then that they needed to get someone over to the Department of Transportation to find out what was going on.

Mr. Ransom clarified a statement in the memo that he was made aware of late this afternoon. He had used an example where he said one of the recommendations is to expand competitive grant programs; he had an example of the Tiger program. It turns out he found that the Tiger program is proposed to be wiped away in this proposal. What they are doing is creating a different competitive program.

In response to that, Chair Onslow said they had told them in the Department of Transportation that they had already picked 50 projects for the Tiger grants and Senators Murray and Cantwell did not know that either.

## **XII. Other Business**

### From the Board

Bart Gernhart said he had mentioned earlier about the SR-500 Study Executive Committee meeting on Monday, March 12 at WSDOT (SR-500 / 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue) at 10:00 a.m. They also have a survey that they are collecting input from the public that went out a couple of weeks ago. The survey will end on March 16. Access the survey by googling SR-500 WSDOT Safety Study to reach this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SR50042Ave54Ave>. Mr. Gernhart said they hope for input from the public; their goal for the survey is 1500, and they are well on their way for reaching that.

### From the Director

Matt Ransom referred to the Project Showcase that was distributed. This was a Clark County project: Highway 99 Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements. Mr. Ransom congratulated Clark County on this project. He said it was a big change with much needed safety improvements. This project had \$550,000 in RTC funding in two categories \$250,000 in the STBG Program and \$300,000 in the TA Program. The total project cost was \$2,417,000. This project implemented what the County designed years ago. The project constructed and widened sidewalk, removed/adjusted utilities, ADA and APS upgrades, added midblock pedestrian crossing and HAWK signal, enhanced bike lane striping, and transit stop relocations/upgrades.

Mr. Ransom said he attended the Portland Metro Area Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis Policy Advisory Committee meeting the previous week. The Board was given a presentation by the ODOT project manager Judith Gray at their January meeting. They were studying a range of concepts. A handout was distributed that Mr. Ransom highlighted.

The Policy Advisory Committee studied eight concepts initially. At the most recent meeting, they brought back some consultant findings and ODOT findings with five concepts to review further. Concept A is northern I-5 priced lanes, converting NB HOV to a HOT and creating a HOT lane south in that same area. Concept B is to toll all lanes on I-5 near downtown Portland Multnomah Blvd. to Going St. both directions. Concept C is to do all lane congestion tolling on I-5 and I-205 in the complete study area. There are two smaller concepts on I-205 near Oregon City. Concept D is a new priced lane on I-205 Stafford Road to OR 99E including the Abernethy Bridge. Concept E is to toll both directions on the Abernethy Bridge.

The Policy Advisory Committee concluded the meeting after much good dialog around the table. Mr. Ransom said he was not sure where the project team goes from there, but he offered next steps for the RTC Board. He said he has invited the project manager Judith Gray to report back to the RTC Board at the May meeting. He said at the May meeting they may have final concept ideas. It could be what the Policy Advisory Committee is going to see as a final proposal. Mr. Ransom said he anticipated a Board discussion in May but dedicate some time in June for the Board to further discuss the issue as it relates to the Washington side of the river. It would also allow for discussion of any comments that they may want to formulate to send back to the committee. The Policy Advisory Committee finalizes their proposal in June and

reports it to the Transportation Commission at the end of that month. The committee will be doing a deeper look at analysis, mitigation, and equity issues.

Rian Windsheimer said Matt had provided a good summary. Mr. Windsheimer said the next Policy Advisory Committee meeting is on April 11 with a focus on equity, and trying to understand those issues and how they might be addressed. He also shared that he and a couple of his Transportation Commissioners had the opportunity to meet with The Columbian Editorial Board to discuss the Value Pricing Study. He said it was videotaped so there was likely a link on their website. Mr. Windsheimer said they discussed questions and concerns that were raised, and gave their approach. He said he thought it was insightful and a lot of good back-and-forth in terms of questions of folks in Washington State. Mr. Windsheimer said they also had an outreach meeting with the Cowlitz Tribe, which he thought went very well. He said he expected that they will continue to be a participant in this process moving forward. Mr. Windsheimer said they reached out to all of the tribes, and they were the first to request a specific briefing and consultation. That process is continuing.

Mr. Windsheimer said he thought the way that Mr. Ransom laid out the engagement for the RTC Board to move forward was good. He said one thing to keep in mind as you are watching the live streams of the meetings is that the recommendation that the Transportation Commission is going to receive is going to be at a very high level. Feedback and suggestions as far as not just about the proposal but also moving that forward what additional things need to be considered; how to treat some of those things. All of that feedback is going to shape the overall proposal and the project moving forward. Mr. Windsheimer said he was hopeful at the April meeting and also May to continue to get back additional results and additional information. Mr. Windsheimer said one of the things that he has conversations with about folks on both the Oregon and Washington side is that it is really difficult to have a conversation about it right now until they have a better understanding of what the benefits are. He said when you ask someone to pay a toll or a user fee for something that is there today, they just assume that it is going to be exactly the same, but they are paying a fee. That is not what they are trying to achieve. They are trying to figure out how to create a benefit that is worth it, that makes people want to say: actually that is a good idea; I would be interested in paying that additional fee in order to experience an additional benefit. Mr. Windsheimer told the Members that are on the Policy Advisory Committee that he really appreciated their willingness to participate and the questions and comments that they are raising are helping make the process better. He thanked them.

Shirley Craddick said a comment that she heard is that the Value Pricing is based on the system to have all the other projects planned on that freeway system to be completed; the expansion of the Rose Quarter, the Abernethy Bridge, and widening of I-205. Value Pricing would come after those projects are complete. She asked if that was correct.

Mr. Windsheimer said not necessarily. All of the modeling that is being done to inform this process assumes projects in the Regional Transportation Plan that are anticipated to be completed by 2027 are included in all of the modeling. It is just a way to continue to make sure

that they are comparing apples to apples with those. As they start to project into the future the folks that are moving to this region both to Vancouver and to the Portland metro area, those projects are also assumed.

Eileen Quiring commented on the Committee's last meeting. She said she was really looking forward to the next meeting, because they will be talking about mitigation, which they did not get to at the last meeting because of the robust discussion that took place. She said she has grave concerns about some of the options. She said she thought they would affect Washingtonians much more than some of the other people that are using these freeways. She said mitigation will be very important along with equity as they discuss this. Councilor Quiring said in looking at the diagrams where they are talking about the sections, we need to make our voice heard and not just the three on the Committee. These concepts are going forward for further analysis. Councilor Quiring said there was good input from Vancouver and good public input from the Washington side of the river at the last meeting. She said it would be good for RTC to provide input.

Anne McEnery-Ogle said she agreed. At the January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting, a large number of SW Washington folks participated in that engagement. She said there is no engagement planned from now through April 11, so last week she asked the two co-chairs to let them know if they had any engagement planned for SW Washington, and she has of yet to hear from them. If they don't hear anything from them this week, the City of Vancouver will be interested in setting up their own opportunity and invite the community. She said their community expects to be notified and engaged in the decision making process. Many were not able to attend the January 30 meeting, so they have a large number of individuals who do not know about this who want that opportunity and want to be kept abreast of this. She hopes to hear back from them, and there is another opportunity available for our SW Washington citizens to weigh in on this and stay abreast of how this is moving forward.

Mr. Windsheimer said they have spoken with the city staff a number of times since that meeting about trying to get things coordinated and set up. They have a few suggestions. He said he liked the idea of having something at the city and having the ODOT folks come and do a presentation and participate in that. He said his staff is talking with city staff about how to have some more engagement on this side of the river. Mr. Windsheimer said they can only do a number of open houses, but they can continue to come and do presentations and they are looking for other opportunities. He said if others around the table have ideas for chambers, or groups or others that are interested in presentations they would like to do those. The City of Vancouver opportunity sounds great. He would like to figure out how to make that happen.

Mr. Ransom said the team at RTC is monitoring this study and directly involved in some of the technical work. Mr. Ransom said he is starting to think about the issues that RTC needs to specifically examine and then how we raise those. He said then craft substantive feedback.

Chair Onslow agreed that we need to move on this issue forthwith. He said he didn't think they should wait and think about it for too long. He thought that RTC needs to be aware and be proactive.

The next RTC Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 3, 2018, at 4 p.m.

**XIII. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

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Ron Onslow, Board of Directors Chair