



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director 
DATE: April 24, 2018
SUBJECT: **Regional Transportation Plan – 2018 Update, Student Research Projects**

AT A GLANCE - Discussion

Development of the Regional Transportation Plan – 2018 Update has included partnership with two students affiliated with Washington State University-Vancouver. Two research projects will be presented at the RTC Board meeting as culmination of this partnership.

BACKGROUND

The long-range Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) is a part of the required federal and state transportation planning process and represents the collective strategy for continued development of the regional transportation system to provide mobility, accessibility, and reliability for person trips and freight. The Plan includes all transportation modes and presents the framework plan to guide the longer-term development of the regional transportation system.

In conjunction with the 2018 Plan update, RTC has partnered with students affiliated with Washington State University-Vancouver to complete in-depth research into two topics that help inform the Plan update process. The students have undertaken research into: best practices for Metropolitan Planning Organizations in outreach to communities in response to Environmental Justice concerns; and an analysis of recent public opinion surveys to garner additional insights into public opinion in relation to regional transportation issues and needs.

RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

The following brief descriptions highlight the project scope and researcher.

Project 1: Environmental Justice Policy Review. An examination and recommendations for best practices in regards to how Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and the RTC could engage with local communities while implementing applicable federal Executive Orders regarding planning for Environmental Justice communities. Researcher: Zachary Johnson (*WSU-Vancouver, Senior Research Associate of the Initiative for Public Deliberation*).

Project 2: Synthesizing Public Opinions on Transportation Issues and Needs. An examination of recent public opinion surveys using contemporary linguistic analysis methodologies to gauge and quantify public sentiment regarding contemporary regional and bi-state transportation issues and needs. Researcher: Andrew Harris (*WSU-Vancouver, Master's Degree Candidate*).

FINAL REPORTS

A final report for each project will be presented at the RTC Board meeting, and recommendations drawn from each project will be incorporated into the Regional Transportation Plan development as appropriate. Reports will be available at the RTC Board meeting.