



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director   
**DATE:** August 7, 2018  
**SUBJECT:** **Bi-State Grant Proposal: “Columbia Connects”**

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### Background

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has announced a national competitive grant solicitation, inviting applicants to propose National Economic Partnerships for Innovative Approaches to Multi-Jurisdictional Coordination. FHWA website: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/megaregions/partnerships/>

In response to this grant solicitation, RTC and Metro have partnered with a consortium of local government and non-profit agencies to propose a bi-state study of economic partnerships within the Portland / Vancouver region.

### Current Status

RTC and Metro’s joint Letter of Intent (LOI) was submitted to FHWA on July 2 and was approved for final application submission on August 27, 2018. In the coming weeks, RTC, Metro, and identified partners/stakeholders to the study will be refining the grant proposal prior to the final application submission.

### Grant Proposal Summary

The LOI submitted in July outlines a request of \$250,000 of FHWA grant to support the following objectives:

- Build on existing bi-state and multi-jurisdictional collaborations by forming a new level of coordination between transportation and land use agencies and economic and workforce interests.
- Employ innovative tools with applications nationwide and identify and implement projects to help overcome infrastructure deficiencies that currently impede economic advances in the national freight and commerce corridor where Interstate 5 and Interstate 205 span the Columbia River.
- Establish a shared investment plan with near-term actions to provide immediate relief for moving people and goods while preparing for future interstate improvements to ensure shared economic prosperity.

### Area of Study

The project area is vital to the region’s economy but faces unique challenges in achieving coordinated and shared economic success. The area contains the two largest cities and ports,

most concentrated population of marginalized communities, the bulk of the employment land, and an international airport used heavily by both states. Completion of large-scale transportation projects is not expected in the short term, and there are significant constraints on the existing system.

The primary study area is highlighted in “**blue**” shading in the attached vicinity map.



### Leadership / Stakeholder Committee Process

Specific committee processes, which will be designed to guide the proposed study are forthcoming. It is assumed that the **Bi-State Coordination Committee** will become a component of a policy / executive level leadership committee to the study.

### Next Steps

In the coming weeks, RTC, Metro, and identified partners to the study will refine the proposal for the August 27 submission. It is assumed that RTC would partner in providing a local funding match contribution of \$50,000 (*final amount TBD*), which would be recommended for a future year annual budget authorization. Other partners may also participate directly or in-kind, to shepherd forward this unique regional partnership effort.