



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director   
**DATE:** September 24, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** Legislative Affairs Update

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***AT A GLANCE – INFORMATION***

*The purpose of this memorandum is to keep the RTC Board apprised of legislative activities and is presented as a follow-up to the September 2019 meeting discussion.*

**BACKGROUND**

RTC staff presented an update regarding matters of legislative and policy setting interest at the September RTC Board meeting. During meeting discussions, the RTC Board requested additional information regarding projects funded in the most recent statewide transportation investment funding package (Connecting Washington). This memorandum transmits that information and also provides additional updates regarding near-term legislative affairs activities.

**CONNECTING WASHINGTON PROJECT UPDATE**

RTC staff published a memorandum to the Board on September 10, 2019 which described a brief history and current status of regional priority projects funded as part of the Connecting Washington statewide transportation funding package (July 2015). A copy of that memorandum is attached hereto.

**ACCELERATING REGIONAL PROJECT PRIORITIES**

At the September Board meeting, RTC staff presented a discussion of the legislative history and current status of funding for the I-5 / NE 179<sup>th</sup> Interchange project. Additional information was transmitted by staff after the meeting in the Connecting Washington Project Update memorandum noted above. The original inquiry was introduced at the August Board meeting and regarded whether the Board would express by Resolution a statement of support for accelerating project funding for the project: I-5 / NE 179<sup>th</sup> Interchange. The September staff report provided that Board statement of specific regional priorities by Resolution (or other form) is within the scope of Board prerogative. The Board is invited to express follow-up information or direction to staff as needed.

## **CLARK COUNTY ALLIANCE 2019/2020 POLICY STATEMENT**

RTC staff has been engaged by Identity Clark County to assess the status of the CCTA 2019/2020 Policy Statement and recommend project and policy statement adjustments to reflect factors such as: current project conditions, upcoming member agency led advocacy, and to ensure the Policy Statement is consistent with the adoption Regional Transportation Plan (March 2019).

RTC has reached out to each member agency in Clark County to inquire about their upcoming legislative priorities during the 2020 legislative session and is reviewing the Policy Statement for accuracy relative to current conditions. A briefing of a proposed (revised) 2020 Policy Statement is set among partner agencies for mid-October. RTC staff will continue to partner with Identity Clark County in support of the technical review and presentation of the Policy Statement. Once approved for ratification by the Clark County Transportation Alliance, RTC staff will present the final proposed statement for RTC Board endorsement (*estimated for either the December or January meeting*).

A copy of the current 2019/2020 Policy Statement is attached.

## **JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

RTC staff presented a summary synopsis of the upcoming Joint Transportation Committee (JTC): Statewide Transportation Needs Assessment study at the August Board meeting. The study summary from the August 2019 meeting memorandum is restated below:

**Lead Agency:** WA State Legislature – Joint Transportation Committee

**General Description:** The Washington State Legislature has commissioned a comprehensive assessment of statewide transportation needs and priorities over the ten-year timeframe spanning 2022-2031. The assessment must include recommendations on critical, efficient, and effective transportation investments; a complete menu of funding options to fund identified priority investments; and recommendations for measuring the economic impact of a range of the recommended investments. Upon completion of the assessment, facilitation of an appointed panel is also required to review and recommend to the Legislature a timeline and actionable plan for consideration during the 2021 Legislative session.

RTC staff have been monitoring the start-up of this study effort and is advising that RTC be actively engaged to ensure that the RTC region's project interests are strongly and accurately represented in this forthcoming statewide evaluation. It is assumed that the recommendation of the JTC study will be used by the Senate and House Transportation Committees in crafting the project and policy investment framework for the next statewide transportation funding package.

In order to prepare for RTC's engagement in this study, staff will recommend that agency engagement and contributions become a specific Work Plan activity for year 2020. Further, RTC staff is reviewing past reports, such as the [10-Year Transportation Project Priorities Report \(revised January 2015\)](#) which were prepared for similar legislative funding initiatives. Staff is assessing the merits of producing an updated version of that report for 2020, and will advise the Board further on that matter once the JTC study gets underway.

Legislative Affairs Update

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### **NEXT STEPS**

RTC staff will follow-up with any further attention to the issues described in this memorandum consistent with the Board's direction.

Attachments:     Connecting Washington Project Update (September 10, 2019)  
                      Clark County Transportation Alliance 2019-2020 Policy Statement



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director   
**DATE:** September 10, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** **Connecting Washington Projects Update**

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### *AT A GLANCE – INFORMATION*

*The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information to the RTC Board regarding the history of the Connecting Washington state transportation funding bill.*

### **BACKGROUND**

On July 15, 2015, Governor Inslee signed into law the state's most recent statewide transportation funding package. This package was named Connecting Washington. As adopted, the Connecting Washington package provided a comprehensive response to both the state and local government's transportation project and funding needs. Notably, the Connecting Washington packages provided many direct project earmarks and limited increases in funding to state facility maintenance and operation's needs, the program also provided some direct distribution of revenues to local government.

The new law also set in motion new policy and project delivery processes at both WSDOT and the Legislature. For WSDOT, the new law incorporated a methodology for project delivery for WSDOT, formalizing the initial implementation framework of WSDOT's "practical design" project development methods. For the Legislature, the new law guaranteed that the Legislature would retain oversight over project funding levels and programming schedules, and it created incentives for cost savings and redistribution, by establishing a mid-term assessment of statewide costs savings and an opportunity for the Legislature to fund new projects from that cost savings fund.

### **CONNECTING WASHINGTON: RTC REGION PROJECTS**

Upon adoption of Connecting Washington, the direct project set aside for the RTC Region represented approximately \$238 Million across thirteen projects. The details of the new law project list can be found at this web link:

[http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2015/cTLEAPDoc2015NL-1\\_0629.pdf](http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2015/cTLEAPDoc2015NL-1_0629.pdf)

A summary of the RTC Region projects and original funding program biennium is listed in Table 1.

**Table 1**

**RTC Region**

**Priority Projects funded by CONNECTING WASHINGTON**

*(Connecting Washington signed by Governor on July 15, 2015)*

<b>Projects in Clark County</b>	<b>Total (1,000)</b>	<b>Funding Biennium*</b>
I-5 Mill Plain Interchange	\$98,700	2023
SR-14/Camas Slough Bridge	\$25,000	2015
SR-502 Main Street Project/Widening	\$7,700	2015
I-5/179th St. Interchange	\$50,000	2023
SR-501/I-5 to Port of Vancouver	\$6,000	2017
Ridgefield Rail Overpass	\$7,768	2015
West Vancouver Freight Access	\$1,900	2015
27th Street Extension & Rail Overpass	\$7,500	2015
Brady Road	\$6,000	2019
Street Imp. Near School for Blind	\$50	2015
<i>sub total</i>	<b>\$210,618</b>	
<b>Transit Projects in Clark County</b>		
Vancouver Mall Transit Center	\$3,200	2015
<i>sub total</i>	<b>\$3,200</b>	
<b>Projects in Gorge Region</b>		
SR-14/Bingen Overpass	\$22,900	2015
SR-14/Wind River Junction	\$5,150	2015
<i>sub total</i>	<b>\$28,050</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$238,668</b>	

Note: \* **Initial Year of funding** . Funding may be programmed across multiple biennium

Connecting Washington enacted for FY2016-FY2031

Compiled by RTC, July 2015. Based on Washington State Senate, 2015 LEAP Document NL-1, June 28, 2015

## CHANGES SINCE JULY 2015

As with most major statewide funding packages, changes to project scope, years of funding programming, and revised implementation schedules are adopted in subsequent legislative sessions.

Notable changes affecting the RTC region projects include the following:

Projects in Clark County	Changes
I-5 Mill Plain Interchange	\$1 Million in PE funding was moved from this project to project (SR-501/I-5 to Port of Vancouver), in order to coordinate improvements at the Mill Plain Blvd interchange with the SR-501 project.
SR-14/Camas Slough Bridge	Local agencies coordinated with Legislative delegation to move funds to another priority project. Project was swapped out for project: SR 14 Widening (I-205 to Se 164th Ave)
I-5/179th St. Interchange	An additional \$500K in non-Connecting Washington funds was awarded to this project for pre-design work to promote advance coordination with the Clark County's local improvement plans.

## CURRENT PROJECT STATUS

The current project list and funding programming is reviewed each year by WSDOT's regional project offices and the Senate and House Transportation Committees. Any adjustments made to project scope and funding timing must be approved by the Legislature. Updates or changes to projects are then incorporated into annual supplement budgets and reflected in budget documents. The current law project list and funding program can be found on the state Office of Financial Management website and linked here:

[http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/leapdocs/CTLEAPDoc2019-2\\_0428.pdf](http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/leapdocs/CTLEAPDoc2019-2_0428.pdf)

A summary of the current status and funding biennium for RTC region projects is listed in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Current Law Project List and Status**

<b>Projects in Clark County</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Funding Biennium</b>
I-5 Mill Plain Interchange	<i>No activity</i>	2023-29
SR-14 Auxillary Lanes: I-205 to 164th Ave	PE Phase	2017-23
SR-502 Main Street Project/Widening	PE Phase	2015-21
I-5/179th St. Interchange	Pre-design Phase	2023-29
SR-501/I-5 to Port of Vancouver	PE Phase	2017-21
Ridgefield Rail Overpass	CN Phase	2016-21
West Vancouver Freight Access (Rail)	Complete	
27th Street Extension & Rail Overpass	CN Phase	2016-19
Brady Road	CN Phase	2019-21
Street Imp. Near School for Blind	Complete	
<b>Transit Projects in Clark County</b>		
Vancouver Mall Transit Center	Complete	
<b>Projects in Gorge Region</b>		
SR-14/Bingen Overpass	PE Phase	2015-21
SR-14/Wind River Junction	CN Phase	2015-21

*Status Descriptions: PE = design engineering; CN = Construction*

**NEXT STEPS**

RTC staff will follow-up with any further attention to the issues described in this memorandum consistent with the Board's direction.

# Clark County Transportation Alliance 2019-20 Policy Statement



## Sponsoring Organizations:

Battle Ground Public Schools  
 Building Industry Association of Clark County  
 Camas School District  
 Camas-Washougal Chamber of Commerce  
 City of Battle Ground  
 City of Camas  
 City of La Center  
 City of Ridgefield  
 City of Vancouver  
 City of Washougal  
 Clark College  
 Clark County  
 Clark County Association of Realtors  
 Columbia Corridor Association  
 Columbia River Econ. Dev. Council  
 Columbia River Steamship Operators' Assn.  
 C-TRAN

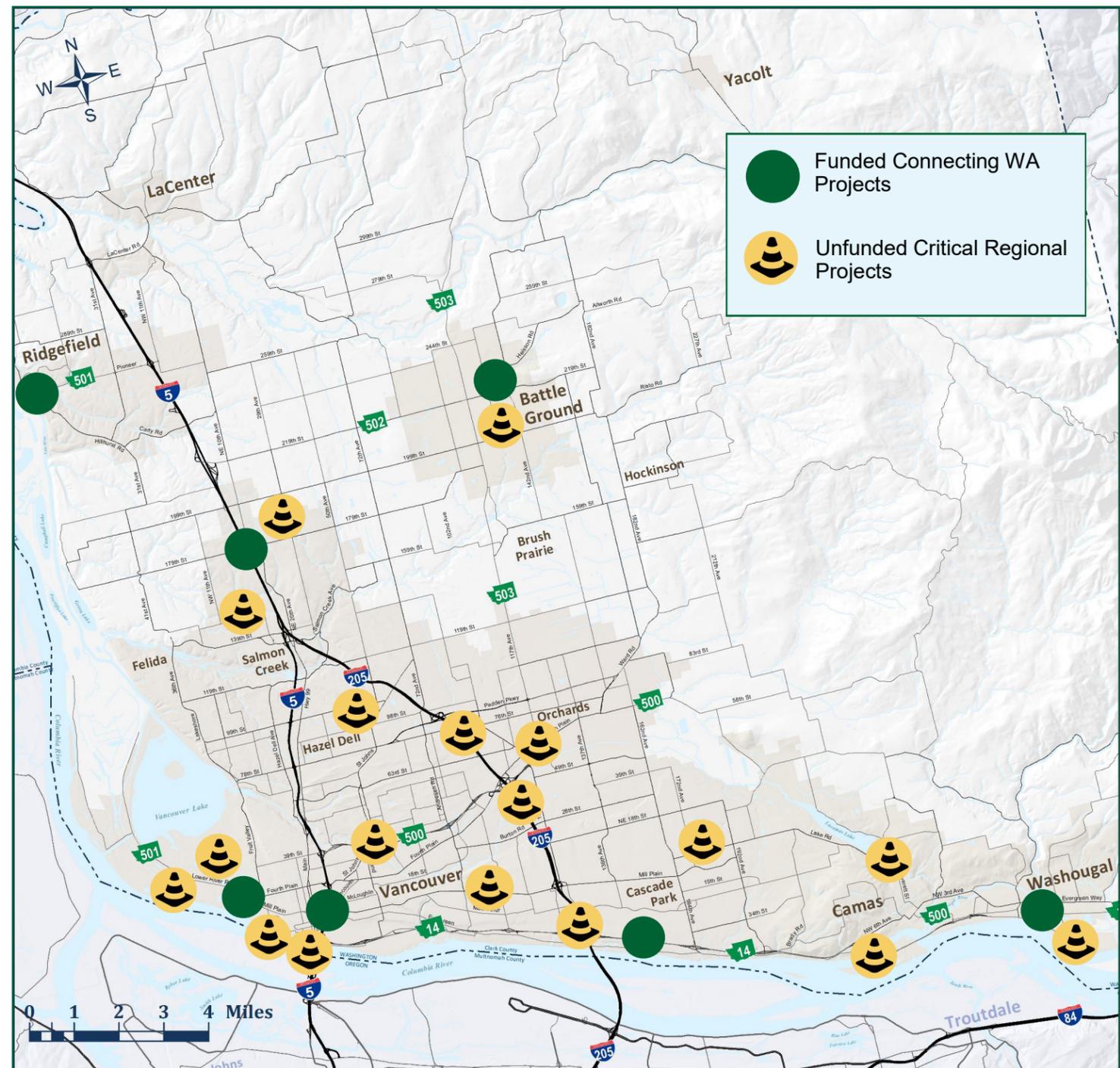
East Vancouver Business Association  
 Evergreen Public Schools  
 Greater Portland 2020  
 Greater Portland, Inc.  
 Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce  
 Hazel Dell/Salmon Creek Business Assn.  
 Hockinson School District  
 Identity Clark County  
 IBEW Local 48  
 Labor Roundtable of SW WA  
 Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center  
 Neighborhood Traffic Safety Alliance  
 Pacific Building Trades  
 Pacific Northwest Waterways Association  
 Partners in Careers  
 PeaceHealth Columbia Network  
 Port of Camas-Washougal

Port of Portland  
 Port of Ridgefield  
 Port of Vancouver  
 Portland Business Alliance  
 Regional Transportation Council  
 Ridgefield School District  
 SW WA Central Labor Council  
 SW WA Contractors Association  
 SW WA High Technology Council  
 SW WA STEM Network  
 The Historic Trust  
 The Vancouver Clinic  
 Vancouver's Downtown Association  
 Vancouver Public Schools  
 Visit Vancouver USA  
 Washington State University Vancouver  
 Washougal School District

For more information, contact [admin@iccbusiness.org](mailto:admin@iccbusiness.org) or call 360.695.4116

As of 1/31/19

# Clark County Transportation Alliance 2019-20 Policy Statement



# A CALL TO FURTHER ACTION

Clark County's residents, employers, workers and guests are experiencing serious transportation constraints from rapid growth and urbanization. Already the 12<sup>th</sup> worst congested commute among 240 cities (INRIX), traffic pressures will magnify as southwest Washington welcomes 140,000 more residents and 86,000 jobs (RTC), and Portland adds 500,000 residents and 350,000 jobs (Metro/RTC) by 2040.

As the second-largest metropolitan area in the Pacific Northwest, our top priority is addressing deficiencies in the I-5 bridge and influence area, including replacing its outdated, chronically congested and accident-prone spans. Traffic crawls at below 30 mph seven hours a day, and at just 9 mph on I-5 during peak hours (RTC) as 135,000 trips are made daily between Washington and Oregon – 300,000 when including I-205.



Century-old I-5 bridge is only Interstate lift span in the West

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

## I-5 Bridge Replacement and Influence Area Improvements

### Action #1

**Create an I-5 Bridge Replacement Project Office (\$15M):** pursue bi-state legislative consensus, prepare critical permitting pathway, develop funding plan, begin permitting work

**Complete Supplemental EIS Process:** re-evaluate prior scope and EIS, restart permitting work, submit and achieve approvals, secure funding commitments, develop construction packages (\$50-100M, depending on scope)

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 over time will require substantial maintenance investments to remain operational. Broad support is demonstrated through the process framework established in SSB 5806 along with widespread regional business and governmental statements supporting immediate action.

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 endorse 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. We also place high priority on long-range transportation corridor planning given steadily rising population and commerce forecasts.

## Regionally Critical Projects and Needs



### Action #2

**Fund Regionally Critical Projects to Address Immediate Needs:** secure funding either through single-project awards or as part of the next statewide transportation funding package for regionally critical projects

**Fund Critical Area Planning:** Find additional maintenance, planning and traffic operations funds for critical urban areas (SR-14, SR-500, I-5, I-205) to provide increased response

We support the acceleration of projects in the Connecting Washington package, such as **economically vital interchange improvements at I-5 and 179<sup>th</sup> St.** We support project budget adjustments where labor, materials and right-of-way costs have risen substantially.

Funding is requested for additional regional system priorities that serve the growth needs of communities, reduce congestion hotspots, improve safety and provide multi-modal enhancements. Each project has been vetted through the regional planning process.

The following is a list of critical regional projects:

**SR-500 Intersections at 42nd Ave and 54th Ave (\$6M):** implement cost effective safety improvements from 2018 practical solutions study; additional investments including overpasses may be warranted

**I-205/SR-500 to Padden Expressway (\$30M):** add auxiliary lanes to address congestion hotspot

**I-205 at Mill Plain Blvd to SR-500 (\$25M):** add auxiliary lanes and active traffic management facilities to increase flow and capacity; project study underway

**SR-500/Fourth Plain/SR-503 (\$60M):** intersection improvement to address congestion hot spot; project study underway

**SR-14 Camas Slough Bridge (\$35M):** parallel bridge structure for westbound traffic and added capacity

**SR-14/I-205 Interchange (TBD):** provide funds for congestion relief; project study underway

**SR-14 Phase 2 Access Improvements, Towncenter Connectors and Railroad Grade Separation (\$64.8M):** road improvements, connectors and rail over/underpass at 15th St, 32nd St, 27th St, A/Addy St. and Index St.

**NE 10th Ave from 149th to 154th St/Whipple Creek (\$10M):** completes new north-south corridor for I-5

**NE 15th Ave from 179th Street to NE 189th St vicinity (\$15M):** adds new arterial connection to increase capacity in conjunction with 179th/I-5 interchange upgrade

**NW 32nd Ave Industrial Corridor (\$3M):** planning, environmental review for north-south arterial

**SE 1st Street at 164th to 192nd Avenue (\$7M):** arterial widening and multi-modal upgrade; leverages significant private sector investments

**SR-500 (Everett Street) and NE Lake Road Intersection (\$5M):** new roundabout at intersection to improve capacity and safety

**SE Grace Avenue at SE Rasmussen Blvd to East Main Street (\$6.6M):** arterial street realignment and new signal for upgraded capacity

**Public Transit (\$5M):** C-TRAN is building upon its 2017 Bus Rapid Transit debut on Fourth Plain and is assembling plans for a similar BRT line along Mill Plain. It also seeks to expand its successful Bus on Shoulder project on SR-14 with a project along I-5 Southbound from the 99th St. Park and Ride to the I-5 bridge. It is consolidating and modernizing its maintenance and operations and seeks \$5M in capital support for the \$30M project.



C-TRAN introduces the region's first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

## Facilitating Transportation Mobility and Economic Growth

We urge legislators to embrace the following priorities where possible:

- Enhance or expand funding programs to improve safety and accessibility for everyone, including increased funding for safe bike and pedestrian pathways, sidewalks and street crossings
- Support broadband infrastructure to disperse economic opportunity, foster telecommuting and better compete in the gig economy
- Fund regionally significant improvements for marine access within the Columbia River, and rail access improvements and track upgrades for ports and the county-owned Chelatchie Prairie Railroad
- Support the Port of Vancouver USA's Terminal 1 Waterfront development project for safety, commerce and tourism
- Reform and fund the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) to assure a healthy environment
- Create a broader array of infrastructure financing methods, including tax increment financing, design-build, public/private partnerships (P3), and continued Public Works Trust Fund, CERB, FMSIB, TIB and FRAP funding
- Actively embrace smart technologies to ease pressures on the transportation grid and improve safety for all users.