



**STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director *MR*  
**DATE:** January 28, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** **Federal Legislative Policy Statement, Resolution 02-20-06**

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***AT A GLANCE – INFORMATION***

*To consider a Federal Legislative Policy Statement in support of forthcoming Congressional discussions for re-authorization of the federal surface transportation (highway and transit) funding programs (FAST Act).*

**BACKGROUND**

In December 2015, Congress passed and President Obama signed a new federal transportation funding bill, referred to as Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act, or “FAST Act”. The FAST Act has provided a multi-year funding plan and certainty for States and local governments to move forward with critical transportation projects.

Since adoption, Congress has consistently appropriated funds to support the FAST Act consistent with the bill’s authorized funding levels. This level of funding predictability has been very beneficial to state and regional grant programs and has expanded the scope and reach of RTC’s regionally competitive grant awards.

**FAST ACT REAUTHORIZATION**

The FAST Act is authorized federal law through September 2020. Beginning this last year, the current federal Administration and Congress have begun the debate of various proposals in anticipation of reauthorization discussions through 2020. There is no guarantee a final reauthorization bill will be developed and signed into law prior to the current bill’s expiration. However, there appears to be significant momentum to develop the policy and program framework for a reauthorization bill proposal, and there is benefit in RTC providing input to members of Congress early on in the developmental process.

**REGIONAL CONTEXT**

Reauthorization of the federal highway and transit programs should be a priority to RTC member agencies, as the federal funding programs benefit each of the counties, cities, transit districts, port districts and tribes. Currently, each RTC member agency utilizes or has access to programs funded by these important federal programs.

Examples of how RTC member agencies utilize the federal aid grant programs administered by both RTC and WSDOT is characterized in the Showcase of RTC Region Projects, which will be appended to the final Resolution 02-20-06 as an information attachment.

**RESOLUTION**

The proposed federal legislative policy statement builds upon the key tenets of existing federal law (*i.e.* *FAST Act*) and incorporates new proposals which might benefit the RTC region and our specific infrastructure needs. Several of the policy recommendations reflect stated federal legislative priorities of RTC member organizations.

The proposed legislative statement supports implementation of regional priority projects as established in the Clark, Skamania and Klickitat county Regional Transportation Plans. The Board periodically expresses legislative priorities when endorsing specific resolutions and also through annual consideration of the Clark County Transportation Alliance (CCTA) Policy Statement. With adopted policy guidance, RTC staff provide support to state and federal legislators (and their staff) by providing specific information about regional projects and programs which serve the region’s transportation mobility needs.

As proposed, Resolution 02-20-06 would act as the RTC Board’s federal legislative policy statement, which supports Congress’ reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program (*i.e.* *FAST Act*).

**POLICY IMPLICATION**

The proposed Resolution is consistent with and advocates for funding and policy programs which would support the RTC region’s timely implementation of the Clark, Skamania and Klickitat county Regional Transportation Plans. Further, the resolution is supportive of RTC member agency implementation of adopted agency transportation capital improvement plans and transportation related operating programs.

**BUDGET IMPLICATION**

None as Proposed.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Adoption of Resolution 02-20-06, setting forth a Federal Legislative Policy Statement.

ADOPTED this 4th day of February 2020, by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON  
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

ATTEST:

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Scott Hughes  
Chair of the Board

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Matt Ransom  
Executive Director

## Resolution 02-20-06

**A Resolution of the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council in support of reauthorizing the federal surface transportation program (FAST Act), guided by the principles herein.**

**Policy Priorities** The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) supports Congress' efforts to reauthorize the federal surface transportation program (i.e. FAST Act), and to achieve the following policy and funding outcomes:

- Address the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund through supplementing existing revenue sources or creation of new and sustainable sources.
- Grow the Federal Highway Funding program by fully funding and expanding currently authorized FAST Act formula and competitive funding programs including:
  - Formula grant programs including STBG, CMAQ, TAP; and
  - Nationally competitive grant programs including BUILD, INFRA, and FLAP.
- Grow the Federal Transit Funding program by fully funding the currently authorized FAST Act formula and competitive funding programs including:
  - Capital Investment Grant Program (Small Starts and New Starts); and
  - Bus and Bus Facility Grant Program.
- Create a new “Bridge Investment Program,” which should be designed as a nationally competitive grant program to address our nation’s highest priority bridge replacement and deferred bridge maintenance projects.
- Expand eligible activities of the National Highway Freight Program and fully fund formula and competitive grant programs which support nationally significant freight system projects, including those activities “inside the gate” at our public ports.
- Retain and expand innovative financing programs (ex. Build America Bonds, TIFIA) to supplement (but not replace) federal aid funding programs.
- Establish an Infrastructure Resiliency Program.
- Streamline regulations and procedures to accelerate project delivery.

**Project Priorities** Where opportunities may arise, the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council supports congressionally directed project spending for high priority projects within the RTC region. Project priorities of RTC can be found in the Clark, Skamania and Klickitat county Regional Transportation Plans.

# Showcase of RTC Region Projects

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## *Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Supports Reauthorization of the FAST Act*

The federal surface transportation funding programs are an essential component of the RTC region's transportation infrastructure funding strategy. RTC member agencies utilize Federal Aid grant funds to maintain critical infrastructure and to build new projects which support the region's growth and economic development strategies. The following project profiles showcase the type and scope of RTC region projects funded using federal grant programs.



### **STBG-Urban**

NE 10th Avenue (NE 154 to NE 164th Street)  
Clark County  
Construct a bridge over Whipple Creek

**Federal STBG Award: \$2,840,000**  
Total Project Cost: \$23,231,000



### **STBG-Rural**

4th St and Pacific Highway Roundabout  
City of La Center  
Construct a roundabout

**Federal STBG Award: \$830,000**  
Total Project Cost: \$2,178,000



### **CMAQ**

Fourth Plain Bus Rapid Transit (The Vine)  
C-TRAN  
Construct BRT between downtown Vancouver and Mall

**Federal CMAQ Award: \$4,000,000**  
Total Project Cost: \$53,120,000



## Transportation Alternatives (TA)

Vancouver Waterfront Trail  
City of Vancouver  
Construct a trail and trail amenities

**Federal TAP Award: \$600,000**  
Total Project Cost: \$13,741,000



## TIGER / ARRA

West Vancouver Freight Access Project  
Port of Vancouver  
Improve rail access to the Port

**Federal Awards: \$36,000,000**  
Total Project Cost: \$275,000,000



## Bridge Program (BR)

Wahkiacus Bridge Repair  
Klickitat County  
Repair rail, guardrail, and bridge deck

**Federal BR Award: \$1,607,000**  
Total Project Cost: \$1,807,000



## Safety Program (HSIP)

NE 119th Street/NE 152nd Avenue Intersection  
Clark County  
Construct roundabout to improve safety

**Federal HSIP Award: \$3,000,000**  
Total Project Cost: \$4,540,000