



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director *MR*
DATE: February 4, 2020
SUBJECT: State Legislative Session Update

AT A GLANCE – INFORMATION

The purpose of this memorandum is to keep the RTC Board apprised of proposed state legislation.

BACKGROUND

The Washington State Legislature will convene for its 2020 session on January 13 and is scheduled to complete the short session on March 12. This legislative session is meant to primarily address interim or supplemental budget adjustments and to consider priority policy bills. A key issue facing the Legislature this session is addressing the impacts of Initiative-976, either on an interim or permanent basis.

In addition to monitoring proposed legislation, staff will also be available to assist Legislators and RTC Member agency staff (or their lobbyists) by providing current information in regards to RTC plans and recommended projects through the Board endorsed Regional Transportation Plan (2019) and current Clark County Transportation Alliance 2020 Policy Statement.

WSDOT STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION BRIEFING

Each year, the Washington Secretary of Transportation provides a “State of Transportation” briefing to the House and Senate Transportation Committees. A link to the Secretary’s presentation to the Senate Transportation Committee is listed here: <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/state-of-transportation/files/2020-state-of-transportation.pdf>

RTC staff watched this briefing and will present select observations with the RTC Board of Directors at the February meeting.

BILL STATUS

As of this report, RTC staff have been monitoring these bills as summarized below. You can access the Bill page by clicking the Bill # hyperlink:

Bill #	Summary	Perceived Impact	Status
SJR 8206	<i>Constitutional Amendment relating to certain sales and use taxes collected from vehicle sales.</i>	<i>Would add new transportation revenue by restricting revenues raised by vehicle sales taxes to highway purposes.</i>	Public Hearings: Pending

<u>SB 6652 / HB 2362</u>	<i>Adding new Local Revenue Option of tax of up to two-percent on the privilege of conducting an electrical energy, natural gas, steam energy or telephone business.</i>	<i>May provide a local revenue option, subject to imposition by local action.</i>	Public Hearings: Pending
<u>SB 6497 / HB 2322</u> <u>SSB 5972</u>	<i>Supplemental Transportation Budget bills.</i>	<i>DRAFT bill for supplemental transportation spending authority. Bill pending further details.</i>	Public Hearings: Pending
<u>SB 6452 / HB 2461</u>	<i>Adding a new statewide transportation policy goal related to: Health.</i>	<i>Would create a new policy goal for statewide transportation planning and project development related to: health and encouraging active transportation outcomes.</i>	Public Hearings: Pending
<u>SB 6398 / HB 2688</u>	<i>Revising statewide transportation policy goals to emphasize: safety, environment, health, resilience, equity, preservation and economic vitality. Establishes performance metrics and process for State Department evaluation prior to inclusion on legislative project list.</i>	<i>Would reform the statewide goals for transportation investment, management and oversight. Would establish new process of state department oversight prior to Legislative budget process.</i>	Public Hearings: House-Jan 22 Senate-Jan 28
<u>SB 6031 / HB 2227</u>	<i>A bill to limit state and local taxes, fees, and other charges relating to vehicles.</i>	<i>Restructures fees and taxes related to I-976 implementation.</i>	Public Hearings: Senate-Feb 4 House-Pending
<u>SB 6245</u>	<i>A bill to limit state and local taxes, fees, and other charges relating to vehicles.</i>	<i>Restructures fees and taxes related to I-976 implementation.</i>	Public Hearings: Senate-Feb 4 House-Pending
<u>SB 6350 / HB 2659</u>	<i>A bill to limit state and local taxes, fees, and other charges relating to vehicles.</i>	<i>Restructures fees and taxes related to I-976 implementation.</i>	Public Hearings: Senate-Feb 4 House-Pending
<u>HB 2285</u>	<i>A bill which reorders statewide transportation policy goals to list maintenance and preservation as priority among state's transportation policy goals .</i>	<i>Bill prioritizes system maintenance and preservation and priority state goal, adds resilience to definition of stewardship and encourage executive branch to establish a plan to reduce preservation and maintenance backlog.</i>	Public Hearings: House-Jan 22
<u>HB 2641</u>	<i>A bill authorizing cities to provide passenger only ferry service.</i>	<i>This bill would provide authority for cities that border the Puget Sound and Lake Washington to</i>	Public Hearings: House-Jan 29

		<i>provide passenger only ferry service and requiring cities to develop an investment plan and enter into contracts.</i>	
<u>HB 2913</u>	<i>A bill which adds new gas taxes beginning in YR 2020, to be allocated to the Fish Passage Barrier Removal Account.</i>	<i>Would add new gas taxes of roughly 1 cent per gallon, for years 2020 – 2029, and which net taxes would be dedicated to resolve the state mandate to eliminate fish passage barriers.</i>	Public Hearings: Pending

FUTURE TRANSPORTION ISSUES

On February 5, the Senate Transportation Committee will convene to hold a public comment hearing on the Senate Transportation Committee’s Chair’s “New Law Transportation Funding Proposals (2/5/2020)”. The Proposal is similar to the concepts proposed in YR 2019. RTC provided comments and testimony at the public comment hearing for the YR 2019 proposal. The YR 2020 proposal includes a program/project funding strategy and a “new” revenue proposal for public comment and legislative review. Materials related to the Proposal can be found at the following link:

<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/detail/2020/st2020p.asp>

A synopsis of the program/project and revenue strategies follows:

- Within the program/project funding strategy, the specific project list proposes commitments to key projects within the RTC region, including the I-5 Bridge Replacement (project #1) and Columbia River Bridge Replacement/Hood River to White Salmon (project #12). Additionally, the funding strategy includes commitments to state Highway Preservation/Maintenance, Fish Passage Barrier Removal, and many other programs that benefit both state and local agency system investments. A summary of the Proposal’s program/project list can be found at the following link:
http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/stLEAPDocNL-1_0205.pdf
- The revenue strategy presents two “new” revenue options for public comment and Legislature consideration. The Proposal includes both a “new” revenue option, combined with series of smaller taxes and fee adjustments. The Proposal’s Option 1 is a new Carbon fee. The Proposal’s Option 2 is a new Cap & Invest fee. A summary of the Proposal options can be found at the following link:
http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/stSummary_0205.pdf

In addition, through 2020 the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) will be reviewing the work of their ongoing [Statewide Transportation Needs Assessment](#) study. This study is designed to document the overall transportation system needs at a statewide and multi-modal level (across all transportation service providers). In addition to the assessment of needs, the study will report on revenue options and case studies. The culmination of this study will provide the JTC with a

summary of needs and revenue options, and a short list of high-impact transportation projects that must be addressed at the state level due to extraordinary scale, scope, and/or cost.

It is expected that the Statewide Transportation Needs Assessment work will lead to recommendations to the Legislature for consideration during the 2021 legislation session.

OREGON LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Oregon Legislature convenes for their annual legislative session on February 3, 2020. The Oregon YR 2020 legislative session is a proposed 35-days.

Like Washington, the Oregon Legislature utilizes the “short” legislative session to address supplemental budget issues for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and to also consider priority policy issues. In regards to significant policy proposals, the Oregon Legislature is likely going to consider again a new law proposal to create greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and program in [SB 1530](#), which is often referred to as a “carbon tax” program. As proposed, that program would create new revenue to Oregon for distribution to transportation related purposes. If enacted into law, ODOT could experience a net increase resources which could affect operating and capital programs.

OTHER OREGON

Beyond legislative session matters, several key projects and a key initiative are being developed further. They include:

- **I-5 Rose Quarter Project.** The Oregon Transportation Commission is evaluating ODOT reports and community comments, and is expected to make a decision regarding project next steps and schedule at a forthcoming commission meeting. Additional information can be found at that project website: <https://www.i5rosequarter.org/>
- **I-205 and I-5 Tolling Program.** The Oregon Transportation Commission has authorized additional project work in evaluating the proposed tolling programs for portions of the I-205 and I-5 corridors in Oregon. ODOT staff will present a detailed briefing to the RTC Board on February 4. Additional information can be found at that project website: <https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/tolling/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Metro 2020 Transportation Investment Measure.** Metro is evaluating a proposal to advance a region wide transportation investment program measure (levy). As proposed by the project’s Task Force, the proposed transportation investment measure would fund specific regional corridor improvement projects and studies, and would levy certain taxes/fees to fund the program. It is expected the Metro Council will make a decision regarding the scope and timing of the proposal this spring. Additional information can be found at the project website: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/2020-transportation-investment-measure>

NEXT STEPS

RTC staff will continue to monitor proposed bills which are currently or may be introduced during this legislative session. In addition to monitoring, RTC staff will provide information and input to the Board, Legislators, and RTC Member agency staff as requested.