



MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director   
**DATE:** March 3, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** State Legislative Session Update

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**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 convened 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.

**CLARK COUNTY TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE OLYMPIA DAY - RECAP**

Member agencies and stakeholders to the Clark County Transportation Alliance (CCTA) convened in Olympia on February 18 to advocate for transportation improvements in Clark County as stated in the [CCTA 2020 Policy Statement](#). Meeting topics included a key-note address by Washington Department of Transportation Secretary Roger Millar which was supplemented with other briefings by representatives from key state agencies and also a panel of agency association lobbyists.

Key takeaways:

- The state transportation system needs significant increases in recurring maintenance and preservation funding. Additionally, the diverse needs of the state’s residents and businesses compel WSDOT to deliver a multi-modal transportation program. A copy of Secretary Millar’s State of Transportation report can be found here: <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/state-of-transportation/>
- I-976 related funding impacts and the YR 19-21 Supplemental Transportation Budget. Most lobbyists agreed that the Legislature was likely to present a short-term fix, with most major programs (including the rural transit grant programs) remaining intact and funded through June 2021.

- Association lobbyists agreed that NOW is the time to work with state legislators on the development of the proposed New Law Transportation Funding Package. That includes both on the project list and the revenue side. All focus will turn to the 2021 Legislative Session, since revenue and project impacts not addressed in the 2020 Session will need to be addressed then. With that in mind, regional partners to the CCTA could be well served by engaging with legislators throughout YR 2020 to provide input for regional project and revenue priorities in advance of the 2021 legislative session.

#### New Law Transportation Funding Proposals

To date, the Senate Transportation Committee has held two series of public hearing/work sessions on the Committee Chair's proposed New Law Transportation Funding Proposal. Details of that proposal can be found here:

Draft Revenue Options:

[http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/stBalanceSheet\\_0205.pdf](http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/stBalanceSheet_0205.pdf)

Draft Project List:

[http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/stLEAPDocNL-1\\_0205.pdf](http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/stLEAPDocNL-1_0205.pdf)

The House Transportation Committee is developing a proposal for new law transportation funding. No details have been released publicly to date.

#### **YR 19-21 SUPPLEMENTAL TRANSPORTATION BUDGET**

Both the House and Senate Transportation Committees released and held public hearings on supplemental transportation budget proposals for the 19-21 Biennium during the week of February 24. In both cases, the proposals utilize budget adjustments, cost savings and one-time revenue to provide a one-timer shore-up of transportation program budgets in light of the potential revenue losses associated with I-976 implementation (which is currently being reviewed by the courts).

In regards to the RTC region, the draft budget proposals limit the extent of potential harm to key programs, and most notably retain the grant program awards to the rural transit services for Skamania and Klickitat counties. The RTC region projects that were listed on the Governor's Budget "pause list" may likely be released should the House and Senate reconcile any minor differences in approach in the coming week.

A summary of each proposal can be found here:

Senate Transportation Committee proposal:

[http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/stNarrativeSummary\\_0222.pdf](http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/stNarrativeSummary_0222.pdf)

House Transportation Committee proposal:

[http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/htNarrative\\_0224.pdf](http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/htNarrative_0224.pdf)

As noted in the key takeaways discussion from the CCTA Olympia recap, given the likely outcome of a one-time fix to the transportation budgets, full attention will turn in the coming

months to the development of a comprehensive new law transportation revenue and project package which may likely be the feature issue for the 2021 legislative session.

**BILL STATUS**

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

<b>Bill #</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Perceived Impact</b>	<b>Status</b>
<a href="#"><u>SB 6497 / HB 2322</u></a>	<i>Supplemental Transportation Budget bills.</i>	<i>DRAFT bill for supplemental transportation spending authority.</i>	<b>Public hearings held in both committees week of Feb 24. Further Action is pending.</b>
<a href="#"><u>HB 2461</u></a>	<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>	<b>Passed House  Pending Senate Committee Action</b>
<a href="#"><u>HB 2641</u></a>	<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 provide passenger only ferry service and requiring cities to develop an investment plan and enter into contracts.</i>	<b>Passed House  Pending Senate Committee Action</b>

**OREGON LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

The Oregon Legislature convened 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.

Due to a walk-out of legislative members, it is unclear if any policy or budget bills might pass during the current legislative session.

## **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 presented a detailed briefing to the RTC Board on February 4. Those meeting materials can be found at this link: <https://rtc.wa.gov/packets/board/2020/02/202002-13-ODOTpresent.pdf>

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.