

**Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
Board of Directors
July 7, 2020, Meeting Minutes**

In accordance with Governor Inslee’s Proclamation 20-28, the July 7, 2020, RTC Board of Directors meeting was convened in a remote meeting format. Directors and RTC staff present at the meeting included: Scott Hughes, RTC Board Chair; Ted Gathe, RTC General Counsel; Matt Ransom, Executive Director; Diane Workman, RTC Staff Assistant; and Mark Harrington, RTC Senior Transportation Planner. The meeting was broadcast live via webinar and telephone formats which provided for full participation by all members of the Board of Directors. The meeting was also broadcast live granting public access on CVTV (Comcast channel 23), online at www.cvtv.org, and by telephone.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by Chair Scott Hughes Tuesday, July 7, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. at the Clark County Public Service Center Sixth Floor Training Room, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington. The meeting was televised and recorded by CVTV. Attendance follows.

Voting Board Members Present:

Scott Hughes, Port of Ridgefield Commissioner

Voting Members Present by Phone or Webinar:

Shirley Craddick, Metro Councilor
Shawn Donaghy, C-TRAN Chief Executive Officer
Carley Francis, WSDOT Regional Administrator
Paul Greenlee, Washougal Councilmember
Bill Iyall, Cowlitz Indian Tribe Chairman
Temple Lentz, Clark County Councilor
Anne McEnery-Ogle, Vancouver Mayor
Gary Medvigy, Clark County Councilor
Ron Onslow, Ridgefield Councilmember
Eileen Quiring, Clark County Councilor
Ty Stober, Vancouver Councilmember
Rian Windsheimer, ODOT Region 1 Manager

Voting Board Members Absent:

Jim Herman, Port of Klickitat Commissioner
Tom Lannen, Skamania County Commissioner

Nonvoting Members Present by Phone or Webinar :

Paul Harris, Representative 17th District

Nonvoting Board Members Absent:

Curtis King, Senator 14th District
Chris Corry, Representative 14th District
Gina Mosbrucker, Representative 14th District
Lynda Wilson, Senator 17th District
Vicki Kraft, Representative 17th District
Ann Rivers, Senator 18th District

Larry Hoff, Representative 18th District
Brandon Vick, Representative 18th District
John Braun, Senator 20th District
Richard DeBolt, Representative 20th District
Ed Orcutt, Representative 20th District
Annette Cleveland, Senator 49th District
Monica Stonier, Representative 49th District
Sharon Wylie, Representative 49th District

Guests by Phone or Webinar:

Ron Arp, Identity Clark County
Brendan Finn, ODOT Urban Mobility Office
Kevin Greenwood, Port of Hood River
Larry Keister, Port of Camas-Washougal Commissioner
Greg Thornton, La Center Mayor

Staff by Phone or Webinar:

Lynda David, Senior Transportation Planner
Bob Hart, Transportation Section Supervisor
Dale Robins, Senior Transportation Planner

II. Approval of the Board Agenda

TY STOBER MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE JULY 7, 2020, MEETING AGENDA. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY PAUL GREENLEE AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

III. Call for Public Comments

Mr. Ransom announced that if any public wishing to comment by phone to press * 9 to be placed in the queue to speak. There was no public comment via phone or submitted in writing. One written comment was later received.

Action Items

IV. Consent Agenda

- A. June 2, 2020, Minutes**
- B. Mid-July Claims (ratification) and July Claims**
- C. 2019 congestion Management Process – final Report, Resolution 07-20-19**

SHIRLEY CRADDICK MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS A., B., AND C. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ANNE MCENERNY-OGLE AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Discussion / Information Items

V. I-5 Bridge Replacement Project – Agency Partnering Update

Matt Ransom said for the I-5 Bridge discussion there would be four presenters: Bob Hart, RTC, would provide some history of the I-5 corridor studies, the prior bridge EIS studies, and past RTC Board involvement in setting policy direction. They will be joined by the Oregon DOT Urban Mobility Office Director, Brendan Finn, along with Carley Francis, WSDOT SW Region Administrator, to provide where the state agencies are in their joint management in the restart of that project effort. Mr. Ransom would summarize with a recap of some partnering discussions that he was involved in along with next steps.

Bob Hart said that he would provide a deeper look into the history of the I-5 Bridge project, including some of the policies, plans, and endorsements about the both the bridge and the river crossing by the RTC Board since the early 2000s. He would cover some history on policies and actions regarding the I-5 corridor and bridge. It will note the existing I-5 Bridge conditions and highlight some of the recent local and regional efforts regarding the I-5 Bridge Replacement Project. Also, as Matt had mentioned, Carley Francis and Brendan Finn will talk about the initiatives and actions taken by the two DOTs to restart the project, as well as the partnering process they're developing.

Mr. Hart said the identification of mobility issues and problems in the corridor and the need to do something about these deficiencies has been talked about as their regional discussions around the transportation infrastructure needs for more than 20 years in our region. In 1999,

the Bi-State Transportation Committee identified congestion as one of the primary issues for the I-5 Bridge as well as the need to address capacity constraints in the corridor. The Freight Feasibility and Needs Assessment in 2000 identified I-5 as the primary freight corridor and economic lifeline on the West Coast. In 2001, the Strategic Plan for the I-5 Transportation and Trade Corridor Study identified a series of multimodal improvements on I-5 including the need to both address new highway transit capacity and also the need for improvements that cannot be funded with existing transportation revenues, so new revenue was needed.

The key findings from the CRC project were that as the main West Coast artery, it is a corridor of national significance and is an important and vital route for regional and national trade and goods movement. It is also one of the worst congestion bottlenecks of the entire I-5 corridor between Canada and Mexico. It is a critical economic link; it connects the region's two major Ports, connects much of the industrial land in the region, and impacts freight movement up and down the West Coast. The congestion and delay in travel demand in the corridor also impacts regional livability.

As the MPO for Clark County, the RTC Board has taken two key actions regarding the Columbia River Crossing. In 2008, the Board adopted the Locally Preferred Alternative as an amendment to RTC's Long Range Plan, which called for a new replacement bridge with high capacity transit. This was affirmed in 2011 with Board adoption of the I-5 Columbia River Crossing Final Environmental Impact Statement.

The problems identified in these previous studies still remain. There continues to be growing travel demand and congestion in the I-5 corridor. It has been one of the main congestion bottlenecks identified in the Congestion Management Process Report for many years, including the 2019 Report presented by Dale Robins the previous month and adopted by the Board today. In addition, other problems include continued safety challenges because of the existing bridge roadway design in terms of freight movement; Limited public transit in terms of congestion delay and the lack of reliability for commuters in cars and freight; poor bicycle and pedestrian facilities with narrow sidewalks close to the travel lanes. The bridge sits on pilings on the river bottom making it susceptible to collapse if an earthquake were to occur.

Since 2017, the Board has continued to support the Bridge replacement and affirmed to the importance of it as a project of statewide significance and the intent to advance it towards the funding and construction on the I-5 Replacement Project within a two-year planning horizon. In October 2018 the Board adopted a resolution supporting a new I-5 Bridge development process consisting of a replacement bridge and high capacity transit with a dedicated guideway.

There have been several actions over the last few years by local jurisdictions to restart the I-5 Bridge Replacement Process and to express support for replacing the bridge and for adding high capacity transit across the river. These different plans and resolutions are similar and call for a corridor planning process that if there are multiple facilities and modes and solutions to improve mobility.

RTC's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) adopted in March 2019 includes an I-5 Bridge replacement project with high capacity transit. The process to restart the bridge replacement process is led by both WSDOT and ODOT. Carley Francis and Brendan Finn will talk about that effort and the collaboration process.

Brendan Finn, ODOT Urban Mobility Office Director, noted a picture of the original Pacific Highway Bridge with a cost of \$1.7 million saying the new bridge will be more than that. Initiating the new efforts, was followed up in August of last year by the Oregon Transportation Commission who made an investment of \$5 million for the restarting of the project. On November 19, 2019, the Governor signed the Memorandum of Intent to really kick start the work and get the two agencies back together. The Legislature has also been busy meeting and tracking that and having lots of conversations with them. They have had three public meetings. They have also been in connection with them regarding some of the work that they would discuss today. They have been in close contact with FHWA during this process to make sure they granted the payment extension.

Initiating the work, one thing that they did was there was a report that was to be given to the legislative body which happened December 1, 2019. Some people here today were part of the facilitated partner process that went for a while. He said it established a really good set of principles that he would go over. Carley would talk a bit more about the start of their new Program Administrator. Mr. Finn said this week they are moving forward on reviewing some of the proposals for general engineering consultants.

They started their facilitated process in early March meeting all together around the table. After that meeting, everything has been a virtual meeting. He said even with that, they have been able to really connect and agree, and they have gone through a lot of three-hour meetings. They were able to come away with the groundwork that they needed to move the project forward. They have specific responsibilities to Federal Highway Administration that will be attending.

The partnering process that they went through with those groups was a lot of three-hour meetings with good facilitation by Carley. They all kind of got to the same page about their commitment to the program. Mr. Finn said he thinks they will be hearing that over and over again from the partnering agencies and our state agencies. That is where they are going to start and that commitment is incredibly strong right now. They also agreed a lot of what they had as far as their community values and how they can be advanced through outcomes and that will be happening from now until they put a shovel in the ground. They also had an approach on how to keep the Advisory Committee structure going throughout the project and how that has a meaningful connection to the communities that they serve.

Carley Francis said stakeholder reengagement in addition to these critical partner agencies that they have engaged with recently because of their direct relationship to the system that would be affected, there are many other parties to engage with including agencies around the RTC table. Part of the key consideration is how they will work with each of those entities to get

them back. And they are looking for advice both from those partner agencies as well as others to ensure that they get wide regional input and guidance into the program. This is all under the guise and in the information here recognizing that there is direction and guidance from legislators and the executive branch of each state. What is critical is that there is a lot of work to do at a lot of different levels, and each level has to recognize and pay attention to the input coming from other levels to make it a successful process. Stakeholder reengagement is starting slowly, but will be getting underway both with the convening of a group with the partner agencies as well as others in reaching out to the public. There is also this key relationship with the federal government both FHWA and FTA, essentially the NEPA process, so making sure that they satisfy those requirements and expectations is really critical moving forward.

Ms. Francis said they are excited to welcome Greg Johnson in the program as the Program Administrator. She said they had a really great national recruitment, and Greg's experience really stretches across the country. He's from Michigan, and served with the Michigan DOT for many years including serving as its Deputy Director. In addition, he worked in Maryland for a few years as their lead for the State Highway Department there. He also has private experience, so he really has a wide array of skill sets. He will be jointly representing both ODOT and WSDOT. He has a great array of project experience even though he's been at an executive level for a while. That experience will be really relevant to the work that they need to do here and also a good awareness of the human side of the project development. He will also have the authority to act on behalf of both DOTs. Brendan and Carley will be supporting him in that space in an ongoing fashion. As he is new to the area and to the project, they will be supporting him in that learning curve, so there will be a transition over the foreseeable future to get him up to speed and in the program.

Ms. Francis said they are also working to get critical resources into a program office, specifically that looks like working on procuring consultant support. They have had an advertisement out on the street. That process is moving forward. They are having interviews with those parties. There is also a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise goal as part of that work. So that will mean that they will be looking to make sure there is good representatives for businesses engaged in their work and are excited about how the firms that have applied seem to be embracing that goal.

The other thing that is important to recognize is that as they are getting closer to starting a lot more of the core work is what the priorities are that they have in mind. Ms. Francis said as she mentioned earlier, program development will be guided by expectations and milestones established by the legislatures, governors, and departments of transportation. There is this framework that they have to navigate within, but above and beyond that there are these other components that are critical. They're being guided by the values and priorities identified in their work with the community and partners. As they start to reengage with the legislative committee, they're going to reconvene shortly, as well as reengaging with partners and the public, that's going to be a lot of the early conversation; what are the problems that need to be solved, and how should they solve them. Critical for that is comprehensive and inclusive and

extensive community engagement and trying to find ways to meet people where they're at and figure out what the community needs and values are and reflect on the program.

There are also federal NEPA guidelines construct and also other federal permitting partners. Meeting those expectations are also critical, and navigating that process with the transparent data-driven approach prioritizing equity and inclusion is a critical value for the department. They have seen this in legislative values included in the budgets that have come forward to help this program get to the point it is now, recognizing that there is past work to rely on and use when it is appropriate within current contexts. They will need to leverage that work as much as possible, but also leveraging it within the world that exists now. Recognizing that BRT exists where it didn't before and other conditions have changed.

Ms. Francis provided milestone goals for the Interstate Bridge Replacement; those for Legislative and those provided to FHWA. These are milestones for the next set of time, and milestones are contingent upon funding and effective work with bi-state partners to reach a Bi-State Agreement.

Representative Paul Harris asked what was happening with the I-5 corridor with regards to the Rose Quarter work. Brendan Finn said they have been working through some of the news coming out of the past week that a couple of their partners have left the process for now. They have worked really hard to create an inclusive process in the form of community around the Rose Quarter Project in establishing some of the values and outcomes as they're doing with the Interstate Bridge project. They have a little more work to do. Mr. Finn said they know they need to do better to get their partners back at the table, and they fully intend to do that. This week they are getting a construction contractor on board. They're utilizing the CMGC approach. The project is only about 15% design, so there is still a lot of work to be done. Mr. Finn said they look forward to getting that contractor on board and really working hard to meet the expectations of the community here; that's really important to them. They really value Portland and want them at the table. He said he thinks they were a little concerned about how slow things are moving on some of the things that they desired as part of the project. He said they own that; they need to do better, and they will. Mr. Finn said they look forward to having the contractor on board to help them meet some of those expectations and desires that came from their community partners.

Carley Francis added that there is a recognition between ODOT and WSDOT about the interrelated nature of the Rose Quarter and the Interstate Bridge and tolling. She said part of the reason they've been trying to link arms in the process is to be sure they're watching and navigating that. Every program has its ups and downs as Mr. Finn was describing, but she said that is their commitment; to really pay attention to all of those things as they relate and tie together. While they are kind of doing separate things on separate timeframes, to do as best they can to keep an eye on all of those moving pieces and parts and understand how they fit together and navigate that as a team.

Representative Harris said the Washington State Legislature has never had a problem with the I-5 Bridge. So, going forward on that, if there is anything they can do as legislators to help them in this venue, he said he is fully committed to this project, and he will do what he can to help them, because he has been on both sides of this issue.

Mr. Finn thanked Representative Harris. He said they understand the importance of the corridor to the entire Pacific Northwest and West Coast. The Rose Quarter, being a bottle neck for that, runs through a community that is impacted that has been impacted by the construction of the freeway, and they're doing some recognition of that. That is something that they need to walk through, but there is an understanding of how important the project is to the greater statewide significance but also Pacific Northwest and West Coast significance as far as a freight corridor and a transportation and mobility corridor for the entire megaregion. Mr. Finn said they have a commitment to seeing that through so it meets the needs of their entire region.

Representative Harris said he doesn't care if the Rose Quarter goes first or the Bridge goes first. It doesn't really matter; both need to be fixed at some point. That is his position.

Gary Medvigy noted to Carley Francis that he was surprised to see both of the rights-of-way so far pushed out as far as the milestones. He said he was happy to see the additional milestones put in place. Councilor Medvigy noted the NEPA process, especially with all of the environmental work that has been done over the past years. He asked what was driving both of those issues. He also asked if they still didn't know where the rights-of-way need to be acquired or if it was dependent on funding or just the process. On the environmental side, he thought they were going to be able to use a lot of the work previously done.

Carley Francis said to move into purchasing real estate, one needs to have a completed Record of Decision, generally. There are some places where there are exceptions to that, but that is typically what would be anticipated. That is specific to a federal perspective on what a right-of-way actually means. It is understanding that from a federal perspective, the request to get an extension on federal repayment was essentially contingent on moving into the next phase. So, then the project development phase, which is what they are getting into now, they see a right-of-way phase and they see a construction phase. It is the right-of-way phase with respect to when they might be able to complete the revised NEPA process and have also then the funding to move into that right-of-way purchasing. The applicability of the previous work and for the timeframe for getting the updated Record of Decision is really contingent upon going back and figuring out both where the context changes within the build environment but also where the context changes within the social environment and what people want to see out of the program. It has been clear what they have heard from the legislature that a replacement bridge ends up being what folks are expecting with respect to highway improvements. However, with respect to transit improvements, what they are seeing here and also in Oregon is recognizing that the arena for transit now is different. It used to be that light rail came up to the Expo Center and there was express bus from satellite locations in Vancouver near major business areas and also just that local connection. Now we have high capacity transit in

Vancouver. So, all of the data that is related to transit is different and the analysis will be different. That will likely need to be revisited. There are other components of work that they have done such as soil studies and foundation types. These are reasonable, but it is very dynamic by area of what is reasonable and when.

Bill Iyall entered the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Ms. Francis said they need to have a robust conversation with the public about all of this. If they don't have a robust conversation with the public about this they run the risk of moving forward with something that doesn't have that broad base support that is necessary to move a project forward effectively for funding from the legislature, to get through the NEPA process, and other things. She said if there was a clear message from everyone saying pick up the old things and run forward, they might be able to make it a little quicker, but that is not what they have heard. It's a lot of work.

Paul Greenlee said he thought that the time table on the EIS was significantly driven by the public process and the Notice requirements that you have to go through. You can't march forward on the course of a few months. The notice requirements are onerous

Ms. Francis said of these requirements, she thinks specifically of the Federal Register. The notice is the most critical, but it is doing a robust, open, public transparent process. In addition to making sure that they have the technical analysis for some of the long lead permitting items, they need to figure out what still works and what needs to be adjusted. It is really still the same three to five years and \$50 to \$100 million to get back to that Record of Decision in the last year and a half, two years. Also reflected in how they have worked to get things rolling is a very deliberate intention to get people back to the table and try to build trust with all of the partners about how they move forward. It does take time on the front end. The intention with that is to make sure that folks have that strong base of foundation to move forward on and that they can build on that. This allows them to move quicker over time.

Bill Iyall said that the Cowlitz Tribe is ready to engage anytime WSDOT is. He said it is a very important project for the region, and they have a lot invested in the process already. His question was regarding right-of-way. He said he thought there had been some acquisition of right-of-way on the south bank and asked if that was true.

Ms. Francis said no, there has not been any acquisition of right-of-way. There was an article earlier this year about a development that was being proposed at the north side of the river on the west side of the bridge. The developer asked the Department about whether or not there might be early acquisition possible and to determine whether or not there might be an agreeable set of terms between the parties around that. They have yet concluded that process and that depends on a willing buyer willing seller set of firms there, and that depends on whether or not that could be a viable outcome and that is certainly in process.

Ty Stober said one of the areas that was a point of contention around the former project was financial disclosure around the project. He said big numbers have already been put out there, and it has not gotten better. He asked if they are putting thought in place on how financial

transparency can be baked into this process and more readily available so they can try and be in front of any issues there.

Carley Francis said it is an item that their program office as they set it up their office and according things, it is something that they want to pay attention to. She said one component previously is a plain reality of a bi-state project, which is that the accounting practices from Washington State are different than accounting practices in Oregon and then there is project accounting. The reports that they provided for public accounting was the best record that combined everything. The way that those dollars were tracked within WSDOT and ODOT were a little different, and may have caused some confusion. They will continue to seek to provide information that is an accurate picture of a part of this. There was a grant that was received by California, Oregon, and Washington. Washington actually received that grant. California walked away from it, but it was received on behalf of both Oregon and Washington. So, then when she looks at Washington, she sees an entire grant. That is an example of where it is concentrated. They are working with departments to figure out how information can be posted regularly online. This project is bigger than anything else in the region, so the scale of dollars that is necessary to move this forward is different than most of what they see. The development of work and depth of detail that is needed with sufficient investment will effectively move that project forward.

Mr. Ransom provided a summary of the discussion with more detail around his participation on this multiagency partnering workshop process on behalf of RTC. He said if he could capture the essence of what Carley said, and he agreed both professionally and personally, that trust building and time spent on the front end can yield dividends on the back end both in terms of trust, speed, efficiency, and just knowing where they are all starting as they try to reengage. As Mr. Finn presented, there were ten agencies that convened at the request of the Departments of Transportation beginning in late February through May. Over the course of that time, there were a series of both executive elected workshops, those he participated in on behalf of RTC, as well as a series of staff workshops in the development of the materials that he provided in the memorandum for the meeting.

A key outcome as part of that was to talk about issues that are overhanging the prior process. So, they needed to talk about that and bring their issues of legacy to the table and talk about that and move forward. Most importantly, start to build a foundation for how they move the project forward. This is recognizing that each of the participating agencies doesn't own the project per se. They are just a partner in the project.

In summary to the workshop process over the course of some 15 to 20 hours, of his direct participation, there are three principle three products that were developed. Mr. Ransom said he thinks they become the foundation for the group of partners. He referred to the document called Partner Expectations, which was included with the memo, and provided a couple highlights. One is that they are not starting from scratch. They know what the issues are but may need to fine tune how they want to solve those issues. So, they are building from a solid beginning of issues and understanding of what the inadequacies of this corridor and this bridge

specifically are. Then they need to figure out what they want to do with them now, recognizing that the prior solution was not the acceptable solution. He said they are all in agreement and so they can move forward from there. Some of the key problems to address don't ever go away, including as noted in the document seismic vulnerability. It's still an issue. Congestion is still an issue. Bicycle and pedestrian facility is still an issue. Mr. Ransom referred to some of the shared principles. This is how the departments want to restart this process: extensive, inclusive, and continuous public engagement. From RTC's perspective and the prior resolutions committed to by the Board of Directors, there is a recognition of urgency. The longer they wait, the more expensive and the more potential risk they are bringing to their community. Let's try to move forward as quickly and purposefully as possible; not to skip things, but to do things in a purposeful urgent way.

Key outcomes expected: One of the principle outcomes is to replace the bridge with a seismically fix, modern design, appropriately costed, and appropriately sized. These are some of the fine-tuning details that need to be worked through. A clear expectation of RTC's participation going forward is for them to be collaborative and constructive. Mr. Ransom said he wanted to emphasize to the Board as he participated and looked at this material and staff at RTC were in workshops to develop the material, he said there was not a statement or word that is in the document that at least wasn't recognized. He said the months spent working on this was purposeful and time well spent.

Mr. Ransom turned to the Issues List and highlighted a few of those. The list is what they would get involved in as they participate in the next phase of the study. The expectation is that they work in support or maybe at times critically in support of the departments achieving a Final Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision and hopefully in partnership with other partners: State Legislature partners, community partners, and Federal Congressional partners. Develop a project that can be funded and built and accepted by the community. RTC at times may want to input strategies in terms of how they engage with the community. RTC is an association of governments, a collection. Each member in their direct government role may have more direct interface with their constituents. As an RTC table, they try to bring the commonalities together. To the extent of the Board of Directors to RTC, they can represent a common regional vision and values.

Mr. Ransom referred to the Working Process Diagram noting that it was not a typical community process. There are many people that need to have a point of input. The Executive Steering Group is where RTC and the ten partners sit. It is at the center of the diagram, and they take input from the Community Advisory Group. The Executive Steering Group refines and validates, and provides critical points of input and observation and helping the departments and the Executive Team that is leading the project. Mr. Johnson, specifically, in helping him understand what the key issues are that need to be addressed; where the threats or opportunities are; and where the win wins are for the community. One of the roles of the Executive Steering Group is to hold the project accountable. Accountability in terms of you should improve this, but also accountability like you're doing a good job, do more of that.

The next steps include the departments, ODOT and WSDOT, and convening the Executive Steering Group and a Community Advisory Group. They have reached out to RTC in a letter the last week of June asking for delegates from RTC to participate. They will likely reach out to each of the local agencies, groups, or associations asking for ideas of who should be involved with the Community Advisory Group. These groups will meet over the course of several years.

Mr. Ransom said RTC does have an invitation to participate, signed by the Secretary of Transportation in Washington and the Director in Oregon, on the Executive Steering Group. The future actions for RTC are twofold. There are only limited formal actions that the Board will take by resolution. Those would pertain to RTC's expected co-signatory status in the EIS documents. There is a role in the federal planning process under Metropolitan Planning Rules. This means when the agency in future years looks at the EIS, it says that we determined that the process was sufficient and it was consistent with RTC's Regional Transportation Plan.

Mr. Ransom said they would probably have briefings with the Board quarterly. In looking back at the previous work over ten years' time from the late 1990s to the early 2000, the Board had over 40 briefings. They will also be involved in committing staff to support some of the technical exercises. One would be the traffic modeling. There will be an extensive review of the future forecasting modeling. Mr. Ransom said he has already started to talk to Mark Harrington about that process. It is assumed that they would delegate some staff and some of their time to participate in those processes. As it occurred in the prior effort, the Departments would reimburse RTC for that service. Likely, they would enter into an Interlocal Agreement for reimbursement for time spent.

The discussion returned to RTC's participation on the Executive Steering Group. Mr. Ransom said he has been participating on the Partners Workshops, which was more developmental and he didn't invite the Chair to participate. In the CRC EIS, at the time, RTC and Metro had the standing Bi-State Committee. So, the RTC delegate to the CRC EIS was RTC's Chair to the Bi-State Committee. In recent years, that committee has gone dormant. For the time being, the most prudent thing to do would be to delegate the RTC Chair and the Executive Director (as alternate) to be the delegates to the Executive Steering Group. They would guide this Board's input. In critical milestones, all the decision making comes back to the RTC Board. In terms of meeting attendance and time commitment, that would be the most prudent thing. Mr. Ransom asked for input on that or any questions. There were none.

Mr. Ransom concluded by saying he thinks they are all in this together. He has represented the agency's interest saying they're at the table. The Board of Directors has stated get this project done. He said if there is one thing that they carry forward in the process both years and months ahead, let's listen to the community; let's express urgency, but let's actually deliver the project. The region is best served by doing that.

VI. Hood River – White Salmon Bridge Replacement Project Update

Mr. Ransom introduced Kevin Greenwood with the Port of Hood River. He is the Bridge Replacement Project Director. The Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement project is

another bi-state effort. Mr. Greenwood provided his first report to the Board a year ago. For RTC's involvement on this current EIS activity, Mr. Ransom serves, at the request of the Port of Hood River, on their Executive Steering Group. He and Dale Robins, RTC staff, have attended Executive meetings convened by the Port of Hood River to do much of the same as the I-5 Bridge. How do they deliver a replacement of a critical piece of infrastructure on bi-state relations?

Kevin Greenwood said in listening to the I-5 presentation, they are going to hear a lot of similar themes. As far as preliminary cost estimates and those things, He is hearing that this project is about a tenth the price, give or take, of the I-5 project. There are a lot of similar themes: trust, transparency, and improve safety.

Mr. Greenwood provided a re-cap of the current conditions of the bridge, and why they are doing this. They have a sub-standard horizontal clearance, and had a collision of a barge with one of the pilings several years ago. They have extremely narrow travel lanes, just a hair over 9-feet wide. They have no bike/pedestrian facility. There is no storm water collection system. Many aging components, and the bridge is weight limited. They are currently going through analysis that may even reduce the 80,000 lbs. limit even more. It is a critical facility for both sides of the river. In 2017, House Bill 2017 appropriated \$5 million to complete the Final EIS and Record of Decision.

They are currently deep in the NEPA process. They are about two-thirds through the process. They are validating some of the earlier work. The original draft EIS was signed on in 2004, so considerable time has passed. As part of that first quarter of 2019, reevaluation determined that for example, some of the standards and criteria for endangered species were not even on the books. So, habitat was not even considered as ESA criteria. It was elements like that that changed over the 15 years since the draft EIS that required pretty extensive updates on the 16 different technical studies. That is what they have been doing over the last 18 months. They are just finishing up the Biological Assessment, and the Supplemental Draft EIS is planned to open for public comment in November 2020. They have had community engagement meetings and Working Group Committee Meetings. The Working Group Committee is focused on the EIS. Matt represents RTC on the committee, along with members of the Gorge Commission and several others. The project is a partnership with FHWA, ODOT Region 1, and WSDOT SW Region.

The Preliminary Preferred Alternative has continued to survive. Mr. Greenwood provided an aerial view of the proposed bridge and location. It is about 50 yards to the west of the current bridge. He noted on the west side of the bridge on the Hood River landing side are some docks. That is a Treaty Fishing Access Site that is owned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and managed by the Columbia River Intertribal Fishing Council. They have been working very closely with both of those entities to ensure that their input on the project is considered. On the Oregon side, the biggest impact is to the Port of Hood River Administrative and Maintenance Offices.

Earlier this year, the Coast Guard gave a preliminary approval for the navigational opening for the proposed bridge. The current bridge has a 246-foot navigation opening. They are looking at expanding that 450 feet. When the lift is closed it currently has a 57-foot clearance, and when it is open it is 148 feet. After they did the navigation survey, it was determined that they could have an inner envelope of 90-feet in height and 80-foot height at the far ends.

As part of the NEPA process transparency and communication is key. Federal Highways approved the two sets of images that were displayed one taken from the Oregon side and one from the Washington side. They each showed the current bridge alongside the proposed bridge. It allows the public to see what the proposed bridge looks like in relation to the current bridge. There are quite a few less pilings on the proposed bridge. There is a Waterfront Trail along the Hood River Side that goes under the bridge that would continue under the proposed bridge. In the view from White Salmon, you could easily see there were less pilings going from 21 to 14. Mr. Greenwood said they have been working with the Columbia River Gorge Commission, which has a lot of say as to these types of structures that are built in the Columbia River Gorge. One of the reasons that there has been support from the Columbia River Gorge Commission is the fact that the proposed bridge has a very low profile. Many have said if you are in the Gorge and you are looking at the bridge, you are missing the point. So, we want to be looking at the natural environment and not focused on the bridge.

Mr. Greenwood said he had mentioned the lack of a bike and pedestrian facility. The proposed bridge includes a 12-foot bike/pedestrian lane on the west side of the bridge with the bump outs for sitting and overlooking the river. In the details as far as the architectural treatments and colors and those types of elements will be a component of the construction contract and will have very robust public involvement with it. That will not be a specific part of the NEPA process.

Mr. Greenwood said one thing he did want to focus on and had mentioned earlier was their consultation with their Tribal Partners. They have seven Tribes, Tribal Agencies that they have been working with. He said it has been a little difficult with the COVID pandemic to get access to many of the Tribes, but they were able to get three significant meetings scheduled prior to a lot of the closures. In talking with Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), they suggested that the project produce another graphic that he had shown earlier, that shows what the bridge will look like from that Treaty Fishing Access site. Mr. Greenwood said the following Friday he is meeting at the Treaty Fishing Access Site with members of CRITFC and the Bureau of Indian Affairs and talking photos and ultimately creating a graphic so that the fishers that use that facility can actually see a visual representation of what the proposed bridge will look like and how it may impact their fishing. Mr. Greenwood said it has been a great opportunity to hear from Tribal Fishers about how they use the current bridge to assist with their fishing. They are looking forward to find out if there are smaller things they can do to design the bridge that can actually facilitate fishing for the Tribal Fishers on this part of the Gorge.

Mr. Greenwood said there has been a lot of interest in the Mid-Columbia region about what happens after NEPA. Right now, it is very unique. The Port of Hood River similar to the Port of

Cascade Locks owns the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge and Cascade Locks owns the Bridge of the Gods. Governance is a big issue for the region. One of the things he heard from the prior discussions was trying to develop trust. In this case, the trust is really trying to build up the relationships between local government officials in Klickitat County and Hood River County. He said there has been some really good work done on that front since the earlier part of this year.

When they look at Phase 5 Construction, they are anticipating a 3-year construction window, that was the negotiated window through the Biological Assessment process, with a three-year demolition window, so they have a six-year window in that Biological Assessment for construction of the new and demolition of the existing.

Mr. Greenwood provided the next steps for the region as they go through the final third of the NEPA process. He focused on the Bi-State Working Group which is a subset of the EIS Working Group. The Bi-State working Group is made up of the mayors of White Salmon, Bingen, and Hood River; County Commissioners from Klickitat County and Hood River County; Commissioner from Port of Hood River; Carley Francis and Michael Williams from WSDOT; Rian Windsheimer and Kristen Stallman from ODOT; FHWA Oregon Administrator Phil Ditzler; as well as, Mike McElwee, the Executive Director from the Port of Hood River. Mr. Greenwood said during this initial time over the last six to eight months, they have started to see some cohesiveness between both sides of the river. They are just starting to get some good robust discussions on some of the trickier issues like P3 or public and some of the toll policies. Mr. Greenwood said it is great that they are at a point to where the elected officials are really talking to each other one-on-one.

Mr. Greenwood said it looks like the Bi-State Compact is likely to be the preferred long-term governance structure for future bridge ownership and management. They are working with Steve Siegel who has a long history on working on large municipal projects in the Portland Metro area. Mr. Greenwood said there will be a Memorandum of Understanding for a Joint Work Plan to be created so that all of the parties understand what it is they will be working towards, and also realizing that funding may come from different states or from different grant applications. He said they are looking at definitely needing some legislation in both states, not just for funding, but also to allow a Bi-State Compact to occur. They look to begin 15% engineering after the NEPA process. They really just have conceptual drawings and some design criteria. The project delivery will also be evaluation. There is still some interest in studying P3s if the bridge is a toll bridge and has been since 1924, so that will continue to be evaluated. Additional toll policy analysis developing a long-term financial plan, and then speaking with one voice as they look for funding for the post NEPA activities.

Mr. Greenwood said he wanted to thank the RTC for their past support in this project. He said as mentioned earlier, House Bill 2017 from the Oregon legislature allowed for the \$5 million to be appropriated for completing the final EIS and Record of Decision. But he said, it's really been Southwest Washington back in the days of the earmarks that allowed the prior studies to be funded and completed including: the Feasibility Study, the Draft EIS, and the Type, Size, and Location Study. The RTC facilitated the current consultant RFP process which resulted in WST

being the lead consultant to complete the Final EIS and Record of Decision. Mr. Greenwood said they look forward to continuing the partnership between the RTC and Hood River County.

Scott Hughes asked if they have P3 authority in Oregon to do this.

Mr. Greenwood said yes. As part of that 2017 Legislative Session, the Port of Hood River did receive P3 authorities. They spent 2019 working with Steve Siegel and the Port Commission and adopted P3 rules if and when the Port in the region chooses to do that. The reason they wanted to do that early was so that if and when it made sense to pursue P3, they don't have to stop and create those rules. They've already been created. Mr. Greenwood thanked everyone for the opportunity to present to the Board.

VII. Federal and State Legislative Updates

Mr. Ransom said months ago when they were at their Clark County Transportation Alliance Day in Olympia and also earlier this year when the Board of Directors approved a Federal Legislative Policy Statement in support of FAST Act reauthorization, they committed to continue to engage on a quarterly or as needed basis to really work the legislative issues both at the federal and state level to ensure that our region was positioned properly. Also, and probably more importantly so that our representatives both in the State House and then in Congress understood where we were at in terms of support and need for infrastructure improvement. In the last couple months things have significantly changed. If not the need for infrastructure has never gone away, but funding issues associated with infrastructure have become more acute. More importantly, to you at your local government level, they understand that there have been many both immediate and abrupt decisions that you've had to make related to your maintenance and capital improvement programs on the transportation side that do have ripple effects now, to both your agency staff and constituents, then in the months and perhaps years forward. Mr. Ransom said the point of this is to just keep us all on the same page and have a common understanding of what the moving parts are, and then we'll figure out in the months ahead how we want to engage.

Last week, the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. moved forward and approved their piece of FAST Act reauthorization that was bundled up in this larger infrastructure stimulus package. The FAST Act reauthorization did move out of House Committee and across the House floor. The word out is that it may not go anywhere, because the Senate may want to do something else. Conversely, however, as reported in the memo that the Senate Environmental Public Works Committee, which is the purview over FAST Act in the Senate side, did move a bill forward for reauthorization last year. Somewhere in this is what Congress is going to do. Both the House and the Senate have at least put forward proposals, moved them out of Committee and out of the House to reauthorize the FAST Act. The reason that is important is that RTC as an organization have a statement that says we need Congress to commit to the Federal program given its importance for local governments, state governments, and certainly running the Metropolitan Planning Program. We also had some refinements that we expected or wanted in law, which is to create a specific set aside for bridge replacements or

improvements. Both the Senate and House bills in their respective ways have created a new program that the Federal Law reauthorize and fund at the proper levels; the Federal Transit program commitments, specifically for the Capital Improvement grants, which C-TRAN has been a recipient of in the past. Also, that they continue in federal law to make refinements about project delivery, efficiency, environmental enhancements in terms of how those procedures and rules are carried out in the field.

If Congress doesn't reauthorize FAST Act in law by the end of September, most likely they would have a continuing resolution, which is a funding commitment level at the same authorized law provisions and they just move funding level commitments forward until they can as a Congress and administration agree on what the package is. Mr. Ransom said he did send a letter to Representative Herrera Beutler prior to the House votes continuing to remind her of RTC's advocacy for FAST Act reauthorization.

At the State level, Mr. Ransom referred to the State Transportation Revenue Forecast and the highlights listed in the memo. He noted reductions on the order of maybe 5 to 7% over the biennium. It's a two-year biennium, there is immediate cash fallout due to demand restrictions. It gets leveled out over the course of two years, but it is still a reduction.

Mr. Ransom said one of the most important issues they can get involved in is the State Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Statewide Transportation Needs Assessment. The JTC, the House and Senate Joint Transportation Committee, have convened in law and authorized late last year a study of statewide needs, and all know we have probably more needs now than we did. The needs didn't go away, but became more profound, and the issues that are affecting that are certainly I-976. There were the arguments in front of the Washington Supreme Court last week. Not sure how quickly they render a decision about constitutionality, but everybody is waiting to see how that plays out.

Mr. Ransom referred to a table from the JTC with Anchor Investments, statewide projects that are given, or assumed, or they should be funded mega projects. A link was provided in the memo. Listed are the I-5 Columbia River Bridge Replacement and/or the Hood River Bridge Replacement. Mr. Ransom highlighted the other 5 projects.

Mr. Ransom stressed the need. Unfunded and deferred maintenance and ongoing maintenance of a system are not ever fully funded and probably never have been; maybe never will be. But there is a need to continue to commit new resources to those issues. Those are just day in day out fixes and personnel to pay to do that. There is significant costs associated with that. They need to be as all budget agencies do, over time address those as they can, but it's become more of an acute issue now with some of the drop off in taxes. There are tens of billions of dollars in capital needs. The table listed the needs by jurisdictions: State, Tribal Nations, Counties, Cities, Port Districts, and Public Transit Authority.

The JTC did report out new revenue will be on the table for discussion in the year 2021, and the question is what the source is. In talk in months past, in the Senate workshops and hearings that they held even most recently this year, there were prominent proposals on the table

including a carbon type tax or carbon pollution fee, and cap and trade. Those will probably be back on the table for discussion.

Relative to the JTC Study, there is a phase two that is starting now. They have convened an advisory panel. On that panel is a representative from Southwest Washington, Julianna Marler, CEO to the Port of Vancouver. She has been appointed to the JTC Phase 2 Advisory Panel. It is presumed that that panel would work with the JTC to make a recommendation for legislative consideration in 2021 or maybe it doesn't make it to the legislature, but they would probably make a recommendation. Julianna has been appointed on behalf of the Washington Public Ports Association, but certainly a constituent stakeholder here in Southwest Washington. Mr. Ransom said he has committed to keep in touch with her on what is going on with that process. Mr. Ransom also said that he understood from the JTC Phase 2 work that they intend to do statewide listening sessions. It may be that those are virtual, but when they convene one for Southwest Washington, he said they might want to make some comments as part of that listening session. It is possible also that they would have an opportunity to give a more extensive agency briefing on needs here for all the agency types.

Ty Stober said as a cross reference point, Mr. Ransom had talked about the fish passage barrier replacements. Councilor Stober said the Association of Washington Cities, which Vancouver and others around the table are on, had on its Legislative agenda last year that in terms of fish passage, that that be dealt with the State taking a watershed approach and not just deal with their own passage ways, but think through the local jurisdictions. This is so that when the state fixes their problems, it doesn't just move the problem to the jurisdictions to try and figure out for themselves. That is something potentially for them adapting for the future, and around that point, it is maybe calling for a more watershed approach.

Mr. Ransom thanked him for the comment. He said he was less familiar with that and he would commit to looking into that and bring it to the Board as to what might be a good place for them to be.

Other Business

VIII. Other Business

From the Board

Gary Medvigy said he wanted to comment on the I-5 Bridge Report. He said he was not sure if he had the numbers correct. In looking at 1980 and the number of trips across the Bridge before the I-205 was built was about 108 trips across the river. About 20 years later in 2000, we roughly had twice that number. Another 20 years later, we had over 300,000 weekly trips on both of the bridges. Councilor Medvigy said we know what congestion looks like. He said the recommendation is to replace the I-5 Bridge, but he thinks that's a misuse of the term. If they fix the Rose Quarter, do the metering right, and get all the bypass lanes in, at some point there is a metric that is going to tell us that this single corridor with parallel roads across I-205 and I-5 is saturated. He said they have exceeded the carrying capacity of those two roads. He questioned at what point do we say, we can't improve this and we really need another bridge

somewhere. Councilor Medvigy said at some point we just really need to start looking at another bridge. He said he is hopeful to get it on the work plan and start looking at this and doing some work on the I-5 / I-205 corridor and whatever could be a third bridge in the future.

Representative Paul Harris said in regard to the third bridge, one of the discussions that the Bi-State Bridge Commission has started is that dialogue which actually comes more from the Oregon side, specifically those in the Rose Quarter area. The representatives from the Rose Quarter area are concerned about air quality in the Rose Quarter, and have mentioned numerous times of starting to have that dialogue. Representative Harris said he thinks that something that will come out of the Bi-State Bridge Commission is dialogue on the third bridge, eventually. But he said he didn't want to mislead them. The first criteria is to replace the I-5 Bridge.

From the Director

Mr. Ransom said he wanted to recognize that he has received through chat during the meeting that there were some audio issues and some feedback on the members side and apologized. He said they will commit to try and figure out how they can make it better. He appreciated them letting us know there are some issues so that they can try to troubleshoot.

Mr. Ransom had a Project Showcase to present. This also may be a marketing opportunity for the Columbia River Gorge and our partners out there. The Stevenson Waterfront Trail was a project of the Port of Skamania County and funded by RTC with \$200,000 TAP funds; total project cost \$430,903. Mr. Ransom said he has been along the new trail and that it is now just wrapping up. He said it has iconic landscape environment.

Mr. Ransom provided an update on where they stand with COVID operations at RTC. He said they continue to be largely by telecommute. For Board meeting days, the few convene in the meeting room and do proper distancing. They will continue to operate in that fashion. He said he was going to bring to the Board of Directors a meeting resolution really communicating to the public that probably through to the end of the year these Board of Directors meetings will likely be held on Zoom. They had talked about this last month. Mr. Ransom said he decided not to bring the resolution, because he thought he would wait to see what the Governor had to say. The Governor spoke today and he might be reissuing some guidance as it relates to public meetings. Mr. Ransom said if they see it on next month's agenda, the purpose would be that they just want to be transparent with our public partners and anybody that would like to certainly call into the meeting or listen into the meeting.

The next RTC Board meeting will use this same format and held on Tuesday, August 4, 2020, at 4 p.m.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Scott Hughes, Board of Directors Chair