



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director
DATE: September 29, 2020 
SUBJECT: Smart Communities Assessment – Final Report

AT A GLANCE

RTC staff will present the final report for the regional Smart Communities Assessment project. The Smart Communities Assessment project is a multi-agency (RTC, City of Vancouver, Clark County, C-TRAN, and WSDOT) initiative to gather information and conduct a self-assessment regarding the region’s capabilities and adoption of strategies and technologies to amplify the emerging benefits of smart technologies and infrastructure in operating the region’s transportation networks.

BACKGROUND

To better understand the needs and goals, as well as the successes and challenges within the region, the Smart Communities Assessment project employed a multi-step assessment methodology to gauge organizational awareness, capacity, and willingness to pursue adoption of “smart” technologies and infrastructure within the regional transportation systems. The project was initiated and led by a multi-agency steering committee, comprising RTC (project management) City of Vancouver, Clark County, C-TRAN, and WSDOT. Each partner helped fund the activity and provided active guidance during project development.

The Project was deployed under three distinct phases. Those included:

- 1) Regional leadership engagement interviews. (February 2020).
 - Common themes heard during the interviews were the need for coordination and communication from top to bottom and across jurisdictions and being creative in finding funding opportunities and connectivity.
- 2) Stakeholder workshops for agency policy leaders and technical staff. (March 2020)
 - The first part of the day was attended by 16 policy makers and elected officials. The second session included about 45 staff with expertise in information technology, economic development, planning, transportation, and public safety. While topic areas were the same for both sessions, the second session had breakout sessions and more detailed discussions of the topics presented which included areas such as artificial intelligence and the internet of things, and how integrated technology can advance urban planning, community engagement, and sustainability. Smart Communities processes can also stimulate agency investment on critical technology needs and infrastructure.

3) Stakeholder assessment and benchmarking survey. (August 2020)

- A multi-dimensional survey was fielded with sponsor agency policy and technical staff, the Regional Technical Advisory Committee members, and was transmitted to the RTC Board of Directors. Over 180 surveys were distributed achieving a 43% response rate overall. The findings of the survey were analyzed compared to national peers, establishing a benchmark of regional awareness, readiness, and implementation of smart communities' strategies.

SURVEY ASSESSMENT AND BENCHMARK REPORT

Project consultant Curt Savoie, of IDC, will present findings of the Survey at the October 6 RTC Board meeting. The survey was conducted by the study partners over the summer and is a key component of the Smart Communities Assessment Study. It compares the Vancouver region with other public agencies around the country, allowing the region to be benchmarked against their peers regarding smart communities, and planning and implementation of advanced technologies. The maturity assessment survey, originally scheduled to be distributed in May and delayed due to COVID 19 related shutdowns, was reinitiated in mid-July.

Survey analysis results are intended to support the implementation of emerging technologies for mobility and transportation by looking at key performance areas for digital transformation including vision, culture, process, key technologies, and data. The survey looked at factors such as open data and data sharing, data analytics, procurement processes, leadership, organizational structure, community engagement, and other factors essential for effective smart and digital city implementation. Survey insights can also support enhancements to waste and water management, law enforcement, and other community services to improve agency operations.

The benchmarking results can be used by RTC and regional agencies in further organization capacity building, adoption and implementation strategies to position the Clark County region for the anticipated system and user benefits which may be achieved by building a smarter and more advanced regional transportation network technologies and systems. IDC will present information on the survey results, benchmarking with other regions, and findings and recommendations.