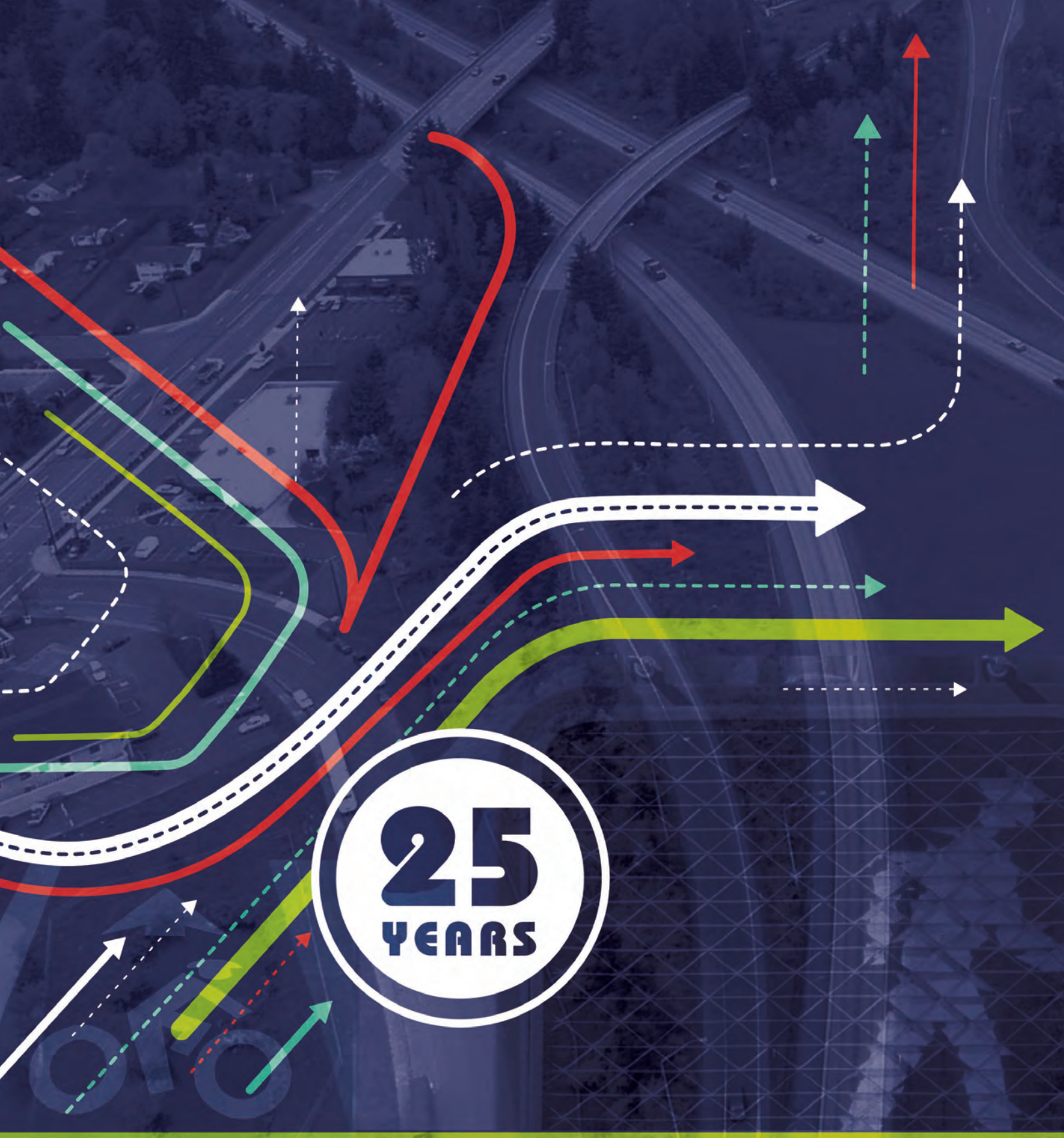
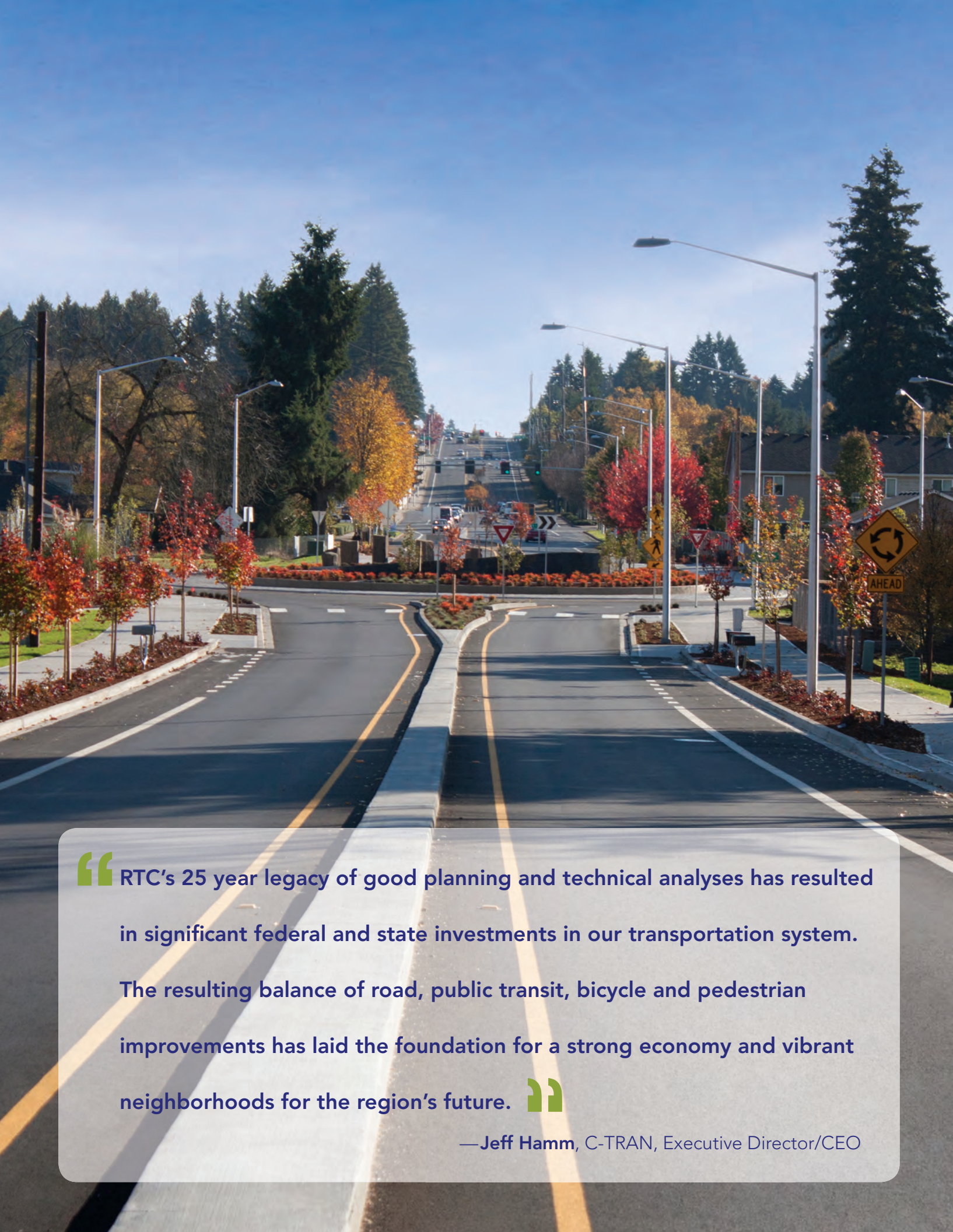


A RETROSPECTIVE: TRANSPORTATION COLLABORATION ACROSS CLARK, SKAMANIA AND KLICKITAT COUNTIES

Southwest Washington
Regional Transportation Council



"RTC's 25 year legacy of good planning and technical analyses has resulted in significant federal and state investments in our transportation system. The resulting balance of road, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements has laid the foundation for a strong economy and vibrant neighborhoods for the region's future."

—**Jeff Hamm**, C-TRAN, Executive Director/CEO

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

In 2017, RTC celebrates 25 years of regional transportation collaboration across Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties. This report is both a reflection on achievements and a recognition of the member agencies' partnership in planning and funding transportation projects.

Most people never think about the cooperation required to manage transportation throughout a region. Who's responsible for which roads, which signals, even maintenance? Although member agencies each serve their own constituents, our partnerships are essential in providing a smart, sustainable transportation system for every person and every business in our region.

RTC's work and funding has benefited all three counties, each of which addressed many growth-related challenges over the years.

Going forward, our region will face many more needs and find many more opportunities. My hope is that, as a collection of agencies committed to community progress and investment, we continue to peer over the horizon to see what projects need to be done, then work collectively to put those ideas into action.

I look forward to that challenge.

Warmest regards,

Matt Ransom, AICP
Executive Director

RTC's Functions

PROJECT FUNDING

- Manage regional federal grant program
- Produce & administer Transportation Improvement Program
- Project development and grant writing

REGIONAL PLANNING

- Regional Transportation Plans
- Congestion Management Process
- Vancouver Area Smart Trek
- Skamania and Klickitat County RTPO
- Human Services Transportation Plans

TECHNICAL MODELING/DATA

- Traffic data collection & management
- Travel forecasting models & analysis
- Air quality conformity analysis
- Member agency & private technical services

HISTORY & FUNCTIONS OF RTC

As a member organization, RTC derives its strength from committed partners across 24 agencies. Together, our work includes thoughtful planning, evaluation, and debate, which produces regional consensus and allocates federal and state funding to essential transportation mobility projects.

RTC's Roots

Although our region had fostered decades of coordinated public-private partnerships and shared decision-making, RTC's first incarnation appeared in the 1960s.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 required a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) be created for urbanized areas of 50,000 or more residents. Made up of county government representatives, MPOs existed to sign-off on regional transportation plans, ensuring that federal dollars were spent wisely. Our community's first MPO was a bi-state coalition of the greater Portland-Vancouver areas.

By the 1970s, Clark County had formed its own MPO, and in 1990 the county joined with Klickitat and Skamania counties to form a Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), a new entity required by Washington State's Growth Management law.

Responding to a 1991 federal law, the organization already serving as both MPO and RTPO took on new responsibilities as a Transportation Management Area (TMA). The TMA was established by its member agencies on July 1, 1992. Named the Southwest Washington RTC, the TMA would address Clark County's growing transportation needs.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

Nearly $233 million in federal transportation dollars have helped build our community over these last 25 years. Take a look at where those dollars went.

Funding by Phase (1992-2017)

Although the vast majority of funds directly support construction, purchasing right-of-way and planning/engineering are significant.

Planning/Engineering	$37,995,900	16%
Right-of-Way Purchases	$24,366,100	11%
Construction	$170,590,205	73%
Total	**$232,952,205**	**100%**

Funding by Type of Project

Most funding goes to major asset projects. However, RTC funds a wide range of projects, including supporting important community assets, like the past Vancouver Amtrak station rehabilitation.

Roadway Improvements	$131,232,000	56%
Transit Improvements	$31,499,200	13%
Traffic Signals and Tech Upgrades	$29,695,200	13%
Bike/Pedestrian	$20,592,572	9%
Planning/Project Development	$9,766,000	4%
Pavement Preservation	$6,414,582	3%
Rail Upgrades	$2,500,000	1%
Enhancement Projects	$1,252,651	1%
Total	**$232,952,205**	**100%**

IN 25 YEARS

- RTC distributed **$232,952,205**
- Funded **326** distinct projects
- Across **452** individual grants

1992

- RTC created as Clark County's Metropolitan Planning Organization, as designated by Governor Booth Gardner

1993

- Performance monitoring begins with Congestion Management System
- Traffic Count Data collection program begins (Clark County)

1994

- First Regional Transportation Plan (Clark County)
- Agreement with Southwest Air Pollution Control Authority to establish improvement measures (Clark County)

1995

- First Regional Transportation Plan for Skamania County
- First Regional Transportation Plan for Klickitat County

1996

- I-205 & East-West Arterials Study recommends new interchanges on I-205

1997

- SR-14 Corridor Management Route Development Plan (created with WSDOT)

1998

- Regional High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Study

2000

- First annual multi-modal Congestion Management System Report

Major Studies, Plans and Projects | 25 Years of Milestones

1994 First Regional Transportation Plan (Clark County)

Abbreviated RTP, this plan satisfied new federal requirements, but also aligned RTC members' investment strategies to implement the region's Comprehensive Land-Use Plan, which was also created in 1994. Of the RTP's 72 priority projects in 1994, 61 of those (85%) have been completed. RTC has updated this Regional Transportation Plan eight times.

1995 First Regional Transportation Plan (Skamania County, Klickitat County)

Addressing the Gorge's population and significant economic changes, these two plans (RTPs) offered strategies to improve conditions along SR-14. Notable improvement projects included SR-14 streetscapes in downtown Stevenson and Bingen. RTC led creation of both this initial plan—to meet a new state mandate—and five updates since.

2001 RTC publishes VAST Report

VAST brought together Clark County transportation agencies to improve transportation system performance, collaborating on projects including signal systems, freeway and arterial management, traveler information, and transit signal priority. These projects share a need for smart technology and the supporting system infrastructure, which will serve connected and autonomous vehicles.

2001

- RTC publishes the vision for Intelligent Transportation System Initiatives Report for in Clark County known as the VAST Program, Vancouver Area Smart Trek, Final Report

2004

- SR-35 Columbia River Crossing Feasibility Study Final Report

2007

- First Human Services Transportation Plan adopted

2008

- Transportation Corridor Visioning Study
- Clark County High Capacity Transit System Study

2009

- Comprehensive update to the Clark county-wide household/activity travel behavior survey. First surveyed in 1994.

2010

- Clark County Freight Mobility Study

2014

- I-205 Access & Operations Study

2016

- Vancouver Air Quality Maintenance Area attains federal requirements for both air quality and reducing mobile emissions of carbon monoxide

2017

- As of mid-2017, 4 projects and studies are in progress

2017

2004 SR-35 Columbia River Crossing Feasibility Study Report

RTC led this multi-year, multi-agency, bi-state feasibility review of replacement options for the Hood River Bridge across the Columbia River. The report included a recommended bridge replacement strategy. Partners continue to exchange technical information and advice as the project proceeds.

2007 First Human Services Transportation Plan

Covering RTC's 3-county region, the HSTP identifies needs and solutions to improve transportation services for people with disabilities, lower incomes, seniors, youths and those in rural areas. From the identified needs, human services transportation providers develop project applications for WSDOT's Consolidated Public Transportation Grant program. The HSTP is updated every four years.

2008 High-Capacity Transit System Study (Clark County)

RTC determined the most applicable high-capacity transit services for Clark County were bus rapid-transit, increased commuter services, and bus-on-shoulder during peak hours. C-TRAN later implemented their first bus rapid-transit project, called the Vine, which opened in 2017 along the Fourth Plain corridor.

Salmon Creek Interchange

A COMMUNITY TRANSFORMED | 1992-2017

Remember the world of 1992? We bought music on CDs, Johnny Carson ruled late night, and almost no one knew about Y2K. Twenty-five years seems like both a long time and no time at all. Our own community experienced tremendous growth, much of which was supported by the work of RTC and its member agencies.

Clark County

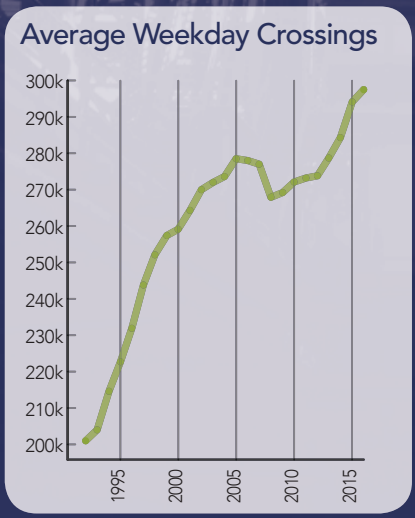
Since 1992, both population and jobs have nearly doubled across the community, hastening a transition from bedroom community to bustling, urban county. Congestion has increased faster than our ability to add transportation systems' capacity.

Klickitat and Skamania counties

These communities have grown modestly by comparison. The beauty of the Gorge attracts ever more visitors, offering new opportunities for community improvement and growth. Service sector growth has led the way, though changes to national forestry policy, Gorge Scenic Area management, and the regional economy have also brought significant changes. Regional corridors are under strain, requiring a careful balance between recreational and industry mobility.

Bridge Crossing Growth

Columbia River crossings have increased steadily overall, and are up 48% since 1992. Over that same time period, annual decreases only occurred during three years of economic recession.



BY THE NUMBERS

Clark, Skamania & Klickitat Counties

OVER 25 YEARS

POPULATION AND GROWTH

71% Population INCREASE

98% INCREASE in Clark County alone

77,500 Additional households

JOBS & WORKTRIPS

69,800 NEW JOBS

service economy jobs ↑ 142%

manufacturing jobs ↓ 18%

80K more people (and worktrips) in the workforce

WA WA WA OR

ONLY 1/4 of the additional workforce commuted to Oregon

DIVERSITY

A SILVER TSUNAMI

Senior population[1] up by **150%** WHILE Non-senior population grew by only **62%**

MINORITY POPULATION

1990 = 8%

2017 = 20%

TRAVEL BEHAVIORS

48% More bridge traffic over Columbia River[2]

VMT Vehicle Miles Traveled

OVERALL VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT)

VMT ↑ 1.1 BILLION MILES

1992 = 2.3 billion VMT 2017 = 3.4 billion VMT

HOWEVER, PEOPLE ARE DRIVING LESS (PER-CAPITA)

[more options for mobility & access]

46% more total miles

19% fewer miles per person

Data reflects total of 3 counties, 1990-2015 (the latest available 25-year span), unless otherwise noted. Some data has been rounded.

[1] Ages 65 and above [2] 1992-2017

LOOKING TO THE NEXT 25 YEARS

Nearly $233 million in federal transportation dollars have helped build our community over these last 25 years. The next 25 will bring us new challenges, new technologies and new ideas as we continue to collaborate in serving our community. Here are a few projects we're working on now.

BUS ON SHOULDER FEASIBILITY STUDY & PILOT

RTC's rapid evaluation determined buses can drive safely on freeway shoulders during peak congestion—yielding reduced operations costs and increased public transit reliability. This study facilitated a joint C-TRAN/WSDOT pilot on SR-14, beginning Fall 2017.

BINGEN / WHITE SALMON CIRCULATION STUDY

RTC is managing a study of these cities' current and long-term circulation needs. The evolving Gorge economy sees increased pressures from recreational tourism and high-tech employment. Study recommendations should help shape SR-14 and nearby street networks.

FREEWAY OPERATIONS REVIEW

Launching in 2019, this study will identify the most effective, low-cost management strategies to increase freeway efficiency. The end goal is to help manage flow and optimize performance during peak congestion periods.

2018 Regional Transportation Plan update

RTC and member agencies have entered their latest phase in updating the long-range Regional Transportation Plan. The 2018 update will identify the investments most critical in preparing this region to remain economically competitive—without sacrificing quality of life for businesses and residents—over the next 20 years.

Pressing issues include:

- Rapidly evolving transportation services, like connected and autonomous vehicle systems
- Need to accelerate decision making and funding for key regional investments, like the I-5 bridge replacement and corridor enhancements
- Growing urbanization of Clark County in the context of a rapidly growing Portland/Vancouver bi-state metropolitan area

> **"Transportation systems by their nature are regional in scope. For 25 years, RTC's Board of Directors has guided the development of a great transportation network to support SW Washington's fast paced needs. For the future, regional partners will need continued cooperation, matched by an equal force of innovation."**
>
> —Dean Lookingbill, RTC Director (1992-2013)

RTC MEMBER AGENCIES

We thank you—member agencies, legislative representatives, directors and more—for your partnership over these last 25 years. Here's to continuing success.

Clark County, Washington
Skamania County, Washington
Klickitat County, Established 1859
City of Vancouver, Washington
City of Camas, Washington
City of Washougal
The City of Battle Ground
City of Ridgefield, Washington
City of La Center
Town of Yacolt, Established 1908
Stevenson, Washington
City of White Salmon
City of Bingen
C-TRAN
WSDOT
Port of Vancouver USA
The Port, Camas-Washougal
Port of Ridgefield, Washington
Port of Skamania County
Port of Klickitat
Metro

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Tom Lannen, Skamania County Commissioner

Klickitat County
James Herman, Port of Klickitat Commissioner

City of Vancouver
Jack Burkman, Vancouver City Councilmember
Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Vancouver City Councilmember

Camas/Washougal
Paul Greenlee, Washougal City Councilmember

Battle Ground/Ridgefield/ La Center/Yacolt
RTC VICE CHAIR: Ron Onslow, Ridgefield City Mayor

Ports of Vancouver/ Ridgefield/Camas-Washougal
Jerry Oliver, Port of Vancouver Commissioner

C-TRAN
Jeff Hamm, Executive Director/CEO

Washington State DOT
Kris Strickler, Southwest Regional Administrator

Oregon DOT
Rian Windsheimer, Region One Manager

Metro
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RTC
P.O. Box 1366 Vancouver, Washington 98666-1366
360-397-6067 | www.rtc.wa.gov