



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director  
**DATE:** October 29, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** **Proposed 2014 RTC Work Plan Emphasis Areas**

---

### *AT A GLANCE - DISCUSSION*

*The proposed areas of emphasis for RTC's 2014 Work Plan are for the Board's review and comment. The Board's comments will be incorporated into the final draft 2014 work plan and budget, which will be proposed for adoption at the December 3, 2013 meeting.*

### INTRODUCTION

The proposed 2014 Work Plan sets out the path for RTC's regional transportation planning, policy setting, and project programming activities for this next year that is responsive to the ever changing transportation issues facing our region. One of the Work Plan's principal activities is an update of the Regional Transportation Plan for Clark County. In addition, the Work Plan includes a host of other transportation planning project and program requirements. On the side of continuing to meet federal transportation requirements, it is important to note that 2014 is the year that the federal transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the Twenty First Century (MAP-21), will require MPO's to begin their transition to "performance-managed" transportation system investments. The Work Plan includes the needed elements for RTC to continue to revise its project programming process to include the performance measures required as a part of MAP-21. The Work Plan also provides the resources for a continuing and comprehensive public forum led by the RTC Board and supported by informed, accurate data/analysis that result in a collaborative transportation decision making process to address the region's transportation problems and solutions.

### 2014 RTC MAJOR PROJECT ACTIVITIES

#### Regional Transportation Plan Update

The 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the long-range transportation plan for Clark County that includes all surface modes of transportation. The RTP must be completed to fulfill both federal and state planning requirements and thereby ensure funding for transportation projects in Clark County.

The RTP Update will maintain consistency with the Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, and reflect changing regional transportation system needs that result from the following: a slower 2035 growth forecast, changing demographic and income levels, a shifting Clark County economy, more limited transportation revenues, and new emerging transportation policy trends. The update process will also provide for a systematic reevaluation of regional

transportation alternatives, update of the region's transportation safety assessment as well as strategic input from community, and freight/business leaders.

A comprehensive RTP scoping process would begin in January of 2014 to detail the update process, plan elements, decision-making, and schedule. While the detailed scoping is still to take place, the time line below provides an initial framework.

- January 2014 - RTP Update scope, vision/goals/desired outcomes, finalize growth projections, and set decision-making elements and process
- May 2014 - conduct a system-wide needs and alternatives analysis, identify projects, and develop revenue assumptions that define the finance plan
- September 2014 – system/project evaluation, draft recommendations, comprehensive public review process, and complete draft plan
- March 2015 – final plan adoption

#### MAP-21 Implementation

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, MAP-21, the current federal transportation bill changes the selection process for how federal transportation dollars are invested in our region's transportation system. MAP-21 transformed the previous two decades of a federal programmatic approach for revenue distribution into a performance-based approach. The intent is to have performance measures and a performance managed program result in a more efficient investment of federal transportation funds. The MAP-21 performance measure requirements will necessitate the establishment of a clear direction for the future of the region's transportation system, setting appropriate targets to work toward, and monitoring of transportation system performance.

The MAP-21 work element addresses how RTC's regional transportation planning process will implement the federally required performance-based approach to planning and programming surface transportation projects (both highway and transit). For example, the RTP and TIP will need to describe how the anticipated effect of their implementation will work toward achieving the region's performance targets. RTC will work with federal and state officials to develop the regional performance targets and performance managed process for the seven national transportation goals set in MAP-21. Throughout 2014, the performance targets and performance measures will be integrated into the long-range Regional Transportation Plan and the four-year Transportation Improvement Program. Over the course of the next several years, the evaluation of the condition and performance of the region's transportation system in comparison with the established targets will become the standard practice for the metropolitan transportation planning process.

#### I-205 Access and Operational Study

The last phase of the I-205 Access and Operational Study will be completed in early 2014. The previous phase of the I-205 Study identified a core set of capacity-related projects. This final phase will pair the capacity improvements to an interdependent set of cost saving operational improvements. The traffic-operations model developed to analyze the proposed operational improvements and strategies took longer than expected and resulted in delaying the project from being completed in 2013. The continuing operational analysis will further examine the

implications of reducing the level of capital project investment in the corridor. The operational analysis will also identify how different sets of operational improvement recommendations can address short term problems and limit the need for the longer term capital improvements beyond the set of core projects already identified.

RTC staff will develop the study recommendations by continuing the coordination process that has been used throughout the study process. The I-205 TAC will provide technical support for the analysis approach, RTAC will help formulate the technical recommendation, and advance recommendations to the RTC Board for their consideration and action. Because of the corridor's bi-state connection to the Portland region, RTC will meet with the Oregon Department of Transportation and Metro to ensure collaboration on strategies and projects that have bi-state implications.

#### Human Services Transportation Plan

The Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) was last updated in 2010 and federal requirements call for an update at least every four years. Hence, the HSTP is targeted for update and adoption by September of 2014. The RTC Plan must include and be coordinated across Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties. The intent of the Human Services Transportation Plan is to identify transportation needs and solutions and thereby improve transportation services for people with disabilities, seniors, and individuals with lower incomes as well as those in rural locations who cannot provide transportation for themselves.

From the needs identified in the HSTP, human services transportation providers can then develop projects to submit to WSDOT for funding consideration through the Consolidated Public Transportation Grant Program. Development of an HSTP is a condition for our region receiving Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program funds. Furthermore, within Washington state the Consolidated Grant Program combines applications for FTA 5310 funds as well as FTA Section 5311, Rural Area Apportionments and Rural Transit Assistance Program, and state transit funds for paratransit and special needs and rural mobility competitive programs. Projects funded under this program must be derived from the locally developed public transit-human services transportation plan.

The completed HSTP will help to enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and encourage the most cost-effective transportation possible. Development of the Plan brings together service providers, agencies that distribute funds, riders, and the community at-large to improve special needs transportation throughout the region. The Plan includes the following elements:

- Stakeholder collaboration
- Data and information on common trip origins and destination, and existing transportation services. This may require collaboration and an agreement with County GIS department for Plan update mapping.
- Identification of unmet transportation needs including technology.

- Development of prioritized solutions to meet public transportation needs including unmet needs. This should include coordination, community priorities and performance measures set to determine if priorities are met.

## **CONTINUING TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAM COORDINATION**

The 2014 RTC Work Plan tasks listed above address major project activities. The programmatic Work Plan elements listed below are necessary to support RTC's continued and comprehensive set of regional transportation planning program activities. This program of activities is listed below and establishes the framework for RTC to meet the federal and state mandated continuing regional transportation planning, programming, and prioritization requirements needed to maintain the region's eligibility for the receipt of state and federal transportation funds.

Vancouver Area Smart Trek Program The VAST Program has been managed by RTC and is one of RTC's ongoing programs. VAST program activities include regional collaboration on transportation system management and operations (TSMO) and on intelligent transportation systems (ITS). The VAST Program was established in 2001 and is a coalition of state, regional and local agencies who have been working actively together for over 12 years to implement ITS and operations solutions that address the region's transportation needs. The VAST Program has been a successful and beneficial collaboration for the VAST partner agencies. RTC implements the program in coordination with the: City of Vancouver, WSDOT, Clark County, C-TRAN, and City of Camas. The partnership has been an effective way for the agencies to coordinate project delivery, joint project funding, monitoring project development, and project integration to improve transportation operations.

The adopted TSMO plan presents a ten-year vision and strategy to implement system operations projects as a part of low capital-cost approach to meeting the region's transportation needs. The 2014 TSMO work elements include the following: 1) the continued implementation of the TSMO Plan, 2) completion of the evaluation phase of the Andresen/Mill Plain Corridor Pilot Project, 3) ensuring ITS and TSMO project consistency with the regional Intelligent Transportation System Architecture, and 4) enhancement and utilization of the Portal data element.

Continued implementation of the TSMO Plan will involve several elements. TSMO corridors will be monitored and updated as needed to reflect changing conditions. The 10-year TSMO Implementation Strategy will be used to carry out operational improvements in the region. RTC will continue to coordinate with TSMO partners to monitor TSMO corridor performance, to develop guidelines, and to develop protocols for regional operations. Performance measures will be further developed for assessing operations and identifying the effectiveness of TSMO strategies. RTC will also continue management of the consultant and TSMO stakeholders including the TSMO Steering Committee for TSMO Plan implementation.

Phase one of the TSMO Pilot Project has been completed. The completed project improves upon the current advanced traffic management system on Andresen Road and Mill Plain Boulevard by installing devices to monitor arterial performance via travel times, vehicle origin-destinations, and vehicle volumes. The pilot project provides 24/7 corridor performance data that will be used by Clark County and Vancouver to adjust traffic signal timings and improve corridor traffic flow.

Phase two of the project will be completed in 2014. This last phase includes both evaluation of the initial project as well as adding new operational enhancements based on what has been learned. The operational element upgrades central signal system software to track and log vehicle platoon arrivals at intersections. This data will be used to improve signal timings. The before and after analysis will evaluate the phase one technology as well as system operation and performance to determine whether enhanced data collection should be expanded to other TSMO corridors. In 2014, RTC will manage phase two and coordinate with Clark County, Vancouver, and WSDOT to conduct ongoing meetings to complete phase two.

The regional architecture component of the VAST program is a federally required element for all ITS project implementation. ITS and operational projects must be consistent with the adopted regional architecture. The architecture defines the technical interfaces between the ITS systems and devices to ensure they are interoperable and integrated. It benefits agencies in the region by ensuring better collaboration and by supporting activities and sharing of information among regional transportation systems. In 2014, RTC will coordinate with partner agencies to assure the regional architecture is addressed during project development and to maintain and update the architecture. An architecture compliance checklist will also be developed.

A redesign of the existing RTC/VAST website was completed in 2013 with a focus on the TSMO Plan and initiatives and as a repository for TSMO-related resources, links, and contact information. An interactive regional web based turbo architecture database is also available on the updated webpage. The web based architecture program will provide direct support for agencies to check the architecture consistency of their projects.

The Portal data archive includes freeway, arterial, and transit transportation data. RTC will coordinate with partner agencies as they begin to utilize the data archive. Improvements to the Portal interface will continue in 2014 to refine its usability, expand system coverage, and automate sending data from the agencies. The data archive will support performance measurement, monitoring of system operations, and analysis of improvement strategies. It will also supplement data needed for the federally required Congestion Monitoring Report and other transportation planning purposes.

The ITS element of the VAST program provides coordination and management for the deployment of ITS projects, infrastructure, and equipment to ensure integration and interoperability of operational projects. In 2014 RTC will continue to manage the VAST Steering Committee (SC) and Communications Infrastructure Committee (CIC). The VAST SC members work together on: project delivery, monitoring project development, project integration, the communications system, and the efficient sharing of resources. The VAST CIC addresses the sharing, maintenance, and standards for ITS communications infrastructure and equipment. RTC staff will coordinate with the CIC for the ongoing development of communications sharing and execution of permits between the VAST agency partners and will be the lead agency for the maintenance and expansion of the multi-agency shared asset management database and mapping system. In 2014, RTC will manage a significant expansion of the database to add new projects and develop an agreement for the long term maintenance and sustainability of the database. RTC will also lead an effort to update the regional communications plan to bring the existing and

planned communications corridors for Clark County, Vancouver and WSDOT ITS and traffic networks and devices into a cohesive regional strategy.

#### Bi-State Coordination Committee

The Bi-State Coordination Committee is charged with addressing transportation issues of bi-state significance as well as transportation related land use issues of bi-state significance that impact economic development, environmental, and environmental justice issues. The Committee has an advisory role to RTC, and Metro's Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT), and Metro on issues of bi-state transportation significance. The Committee is being restarted in 2013. A work program for the Bi-State Committee is being developed and will be presented to the committee at their January meeting. The committee's decisions surrounding the work plan will set in place how it operates in the rest of 2014.

#### Skamania and Klickitat Counties Regional Transportation Programs

RTC is the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the three-county area of Clark, Skamania and Klickitat. As such, RTC staff will continue to support the Skamania and Klickitat Counties' Transportation Policy Committees. Key issues will include updates to both the Skamania and Klickitat County Regional Transportation Plans, continuing the discussion of regional transportation priority projects, transportation data collection, transportation funding, and the Gorge TransLink (transit) coordination.

#### FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

RTC staff will complete the federally required FY 2015 UPWP that will include relevant MAP-21 requirements as well as the identification of the key policy issues, provide the framework for RTC's planning, programming, and coordinating activities, and help to ensure the eligibility for the receipt of federal and state transportation funds.

#### Congestion Management Process

The Congestion Management Process is a federal transportation planning requirement. The intent of the Congestion Management Process is to apply strategies that can improve transportation system performance and reliability by reducing congestion. In 2014, the CMP will continue to be integrated with the Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, and Transportation System Management and Operations process. At a minimum, the CMP will contain the set of activities that include collecting up-to-date traffic mobility information, conducting a performance analysis, and the identification of system performance needs.

#### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Project Grant Request Coordination

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a four-year program of regionally significant transportation projects. The TIP represents an agency's intent to implement a project and the anticipated flow of funding. The RTC Board is responsible for selecting projects through a regional competitive process for three federal programs (STP, CMAQ, and TAP). The regional project selection is incorporated into the TIP along with other regional significant projects selected at the state or federal level.

The 2014-2017 TIP will be implemented in January 2014 and be amended throughout the year as needed to reflect changes requested by member agencies in the programming of regionally significant projects. In October 2014, a new 2015-2018 will be adopted, which will include the selection and programming of 2018 regional selected projects.

RTC staff will also coordinate with member agencies on federal and state transportation grant requests, to leverage additional transportation funds for regional priority projects.

#### Regional Travel Demand Model, Data, and GIS

RTC maintains a long-standing regional travel demand model that provides a centralized system analysis for all transportation project, corridor, subarea and region-wide analysis. RTC's transportation data program includes transportation related data, demographic data, geographical systems data, and mapping. The agency's GIS applications provide the visual application and analysis for both the travel demand modeling and data components. The 2014 work elements for each of these are described below.

*Travel Demand Modeling* - RTC's transportation modeling program is the foundational element of nearly all of RTC's planning activities and programs. The travel modeling process provides the methodologies to analyze and evaluate current and changing future conditions. The information produced helps to establish project or program priorities based on transportation system needs. In early 2014, one of the specific model applications will be to the continued support corridor-level operational modeling for the I-205 Access and Operations Study as it enters its final phase. A major focus in 2014 will be to provide the travel modeling and analysis for the RTP Update. This includes the development of new model inputs, particularly land use and demographic data, and updating transit and highway networks. RTC's travel model will be used to evaluate system-wide need and analyze plan alternatives.

In 2014, specific improvements to the regional model will include finalizing the transition of modeling software from EMME2 to EMME4. Another major model enhancement will be the development and application of a peak 2-hour traffic assignment process to begin looking at congestion duration and support changes to Clark County's concurrency processes. RTC staff will continue to research emerging modeling methods to better evaluate low-cost operational improvements and transportation management strategies. New modeling tools, including mesoscopic modeling and dynamic traffic assignment are maturing and may be well suited to address the changing transportation system analysis needs of the region. RTC will also continue overall model coordination with Metro to ensure a common bi-state modeling system and the development of new tour-based modeling tools.

*Data, GIS and Mapping* – RTC will continue to collect, process, and disseminate transportation and other related data in support of RTC's transportation program and planning efforts. As more locations and data are added to the Portal regional transportation data archive in 2014, RTC will begin the process of automating data retrieval and processing of Portal data to provide performance measures to supplement the current Congestion Management Process (CMP). As the Portal data archive grows, it will reduce the need for other data collection efforts and provide a rich and robust data set that will improve the ability to calibrate and validate regional travel modeling tools and provide support for transportation and planning studies. RTC will continue to

identify regional data needs for performance monitoring of the transportation system and for calibrating and validating models that will begin to look beyond a single PM peak hour.

RTC's data program will continue to leverage the region's investment in GIS to provide mapping and visualization for RTC plans and programs. Additionally, staff will provide administrative and technical support in the acquisition, installation, update, and management of RTC's computer hardware and software resources. This will include the acquisition and deployment of new web development tools to support the redesign of RTC's website; TSMO efforts; model development and utilization; and other transportation planning activities.

*RTC Website Redesign* –The RTC website went online in 1995, providing its members and the community information about RTC's programs and planning activities. Since that time, the site has evolved, adding new pieces and functionality over time using a range of information technologies. As the use of the internet has dramatically increased and the web has become completely integrated with our everyday lives; website design has matured and website navigation has become more critical to providing accessible, information to the public.

By the end of 2013, RTC staff implemented a full redesign of RTC's website, creating a modern user-friendly digital information center with a consistent look and navigation scheme. The home page along with the full web site was updated to provide quick and focused access to the most frequently requested information; including calendar, meeting information and materials, and current planning activities. Functionality was enhanced with site-wide search capability and language translation available from any page. The redesigned website provides RTC with a valuable tool for both disseminating information and for receiving feedback from the public at large as well as the RTC Board and its member jurisdictions.

Over the course of 2014, RTC's website will continue to grow, as content accumulated over the last twenty years is more fully incorporated into the new design. Great attention was given during the redesign to supporting data-driven information delivery. The goal will be to provide a more interactive experience for site users, as they access RTC's data stores. Examples would include historical rendering of CMP performance data, easier location and viewing of historical traffic count data, as well as more complete archiving and retrieval of past meeting materials.

#### RTC Transportation Program and Planning Coordination

This work element includes staff resources for RTC's overall planning and program support activities including the RTC Board and RTAC as well as RTC's partner agency transportation programs. It provides the resource for staff participation in a host of project development, coordination, and management roles across the region. RTC staff will continue to provide support to and participation in the following key boards/committees: C-TRAN Board, Bi-State Coordination Committee, JPACT and TPAC, and continue to coordinate and develop mutually supportive working relationships with Metro, ODOT, and other Oregon jurisdictions' elected officials and staff.