



STAFF REPORT/RESOLUTION

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director 
DATE: November 25, 2014
SUBJECT: **Regional Transportation Plan for Clark County, 2014 Update,
Resolution 12-14-24**

AT A GLANCE - ACTION

This resolution requests adoption of the Regional Transportation Plan, Resolution 12-14-24. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Clark County is the long-range, regional transportation plan. The RTP provides conformity with both federal and state transportation planning requirements and has year 2035 as its horizon. The RTP is based on the population and land-use forecasts of the Growth Management Comprehensive Plan for Clark County and is the collective regional strategy for developing a transportation system to provide mobility and accessibility for person trips as well as freight and goods movement.

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Clark County is the long-range, regional transportation plan. The Plan is required by the federal and state government as a pre-condition for receipt of federal and state transportation funding to this region. The RTP must be regularly updated, must address planning and project needs for multiple modes of travel, be fiscally constrained, and it must be consistent with federal, state and local plans and policies. The RTP is the result of a process that requires collaboration, coordination and consultation to make sure there is consistency between federal, state and local Plans.

At the November meeting, RTC Board members were provided with a draft RTP for review and discussion. Subsequently, Regional Transportation Advisory Committee members have reviewed the draft RTP and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the 2014 RTP. The draft RTP is made available with this month's meeting materials at <http://www.rtc.wa.gov/packets/board/2014/12/201412-07-B-RTPdocument.pdf>. A paper copy of the RTP will be available at the meeting.

The RTP must have at least a twenty-year planning horizon, therefore the 2014 RTP update plans for a 2035 regional transportation system. The RTP is a part of the required federal and state transportation planning process and represents the collective strategy among responsible transportation agencies for implementing a regional transportation system to provide mobility and accessibility for person trips as well as freight and goods movement. The transportation plan is based on the population and land-use forecasts of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan for Clark County and supports local land uses and the region's economic development. The RTP identifies future travel needs, recommends policies and transportation strategies, and

identifies implementation programs to meet future transportation needs. Federal and state law requires that the Plan undergo periodic review.

The RTC Board of Directors adopted the initial Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Clark County in December 1994, and the RTP has been subject to annual review. Since 1994, six major updates and eight RTP amendments have been adopted.

RTP UPDATE

Elements of the RTP update have been presented to the RTC Board for review and discussion during the course of the past year. The 2014 RTP update focuses on continuing compliance with the current federal transportation act, MAP-21. It also focuses on consistency between state, regional, and local plans with projects from state and local plans incorporated into the RTP.

Since the existing Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was adopted in December 2011, there have been a number of changes that need to be reflected in an updated RTP. These changes include passage of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and the move toward performance monitoring and targeted transportation investment to improve transportation system performance. As addressed in the RTP's chapter 2, the RTP update is based on Washington Office of Financial Management's (OFM's) mid-range population forecast for counties in Washington State as updated by OFM in August 2012 which forecasts a Clark County population of 562,207 in 2035 as well as related household and employment forecasts at the outset of Clark County's Comprehensive Plan update. Other changes reflected in the Plan update include: update to the National Highway System to include local principal arterials under MAP-21 and update to the transportation Urban Area Boundary (UAB) as addressed in the RTP's Chapter 3. In chapter 5, the new federal requirement to designate a federal primary freight network is described.

Key elements of the RTP that have been reviewed during 2014 are listed below:

- RTP Framework, Purpose and Goals (Chapter 1)
- 2035 Horizon Year and Demographic Forecast (Chapter 2)
- 2035 Travel Demand Forecast (Chapter 3)
- Designated Regional Transportation System (Chapter 3)
- Regional Transportation System Needs, Projects & Strategies (Chapters 3, 5 and Appendix B)
- Financial Plan (Chapter 4)
- Safety Assessment (Chapter 5)
- Modal Elements, including freight, transit, pedestrian and bicycle (Chapter 5)
- Determination of Conformity with Air Quality State Implementation Plan (SIP) (Appendix C)

The RTP is developed with technical review and input provided by the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and policy review provided by the RTC Board of Directors. The Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) reviewed the draft 2014 Regional Transportation Plan update at its November 21, 2014 meeting and has recommended adoption by the RTC Board of Directors. RTC Board action on this Resolution will complete the federally-required RTP update process for RTC. The adopted RTP will be forwarded to WSDOT, the Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Throughout 2014, there have been public outreach efforts to let the public know that the RTP is in the process of being updated and to solicit public input. The public has been encouraged to participate in the 2014 RTP update and to comment on transportation elements via e-mail, phone or mail. RTP information and RTC Board materials on the RTP have been made available through RTC's website, www.rtc.wa.gov. The draft 2014 RTP update was made available for a formal 30-day public comment period beginning on October 30, 2014. RTC received public comments through the electronic comment card available on RTC's website. Comments received from the public and RTC's responses are documented in Appendix M of the RTP.

RTC staff has sent out updates on the RTP's progress to Clark County and Vancouver neighborhood coordinators and has kept small cities informed through Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) representatives. RTC hosted a round table discussion on regional transportation issues in collaboration with the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) as part of the Washington Transportation Plan and Regional Transportation Plan update processes. A September 8 Open House held at the Downtown Vancouver Public Library also was also jointly hosted by the WSTC and RTC. An additional RTC open house was held at the Downtown Vancouver Public Library on Wednesday, November 19, to allow public comment on the draft RTP 2014 update document. The open house was attended by over 30 members of public.

Involvement of the public in regional transportation planning builds from local efforts with public meetings held by WSDOT, C-TRAN and local jurisdictions to support development of local transportation plans and projects. Monthly RTAC briefings allowed for review and inclusion of local agency participation and comments in the RTP planning process. Formal consultation with stakeholder agencies and persons through the State Environmental Policy Act procedures was completed.

Monthly meetings of the RTC Board of Directors allow the public to comment on regional transportation issues in a formal setting. All comments at these meetings become part of the meeting record. The RTP update has been a regular agenda item at many of the RTC Board meetings during 2014.

POLICY IMPLICATION

The RTP represents the framework plan and policies for development of the regional transportation system. Projects must first be identified in the RTP before they can be programmed for federal funding in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Given the Clark County region's air quality status, the region no longer has to carry out regional air quality conformity analysis but the RTP does need to include a determination of conformity with the State Implementation Plan. The Determination of Conformity with the Air Quality State Implementation Plan is included in the RTP's Appendix C. The region's air quality status is also described in Chapter 5. In summary, the region, under the 8-hour federal standard, is now in attainment for Ozone and no longer needs to demonstrate conformity. In addition, the region is currently a CO maintenance area under a Limited Maintenance Plan (LMP) published by Southwest Clean Air Agency in 2007 and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and is re-designated back to "attainment" status for CO. Transportation projects are still subject to air quality conformity analysis to ensure they do not cause or contribute to any new localized carbon monoxide violations.

On November 4, 2014, staff from the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Administration, and State Departments of Ecology and Transportation consulted with RTC on the air quality conformity determination for the 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program and a further consultation meeting is anticipated for the 2014 RTP update. The region's TIP must be based on a conforming RTP.

RTC works in coordination with WSDOT, C-TRAN, and local jurisdictions as state and transit plans are developed and as the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans are updated. This close coordination helps to ensure consistency between state, regional, and local plans. RTC, as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), must certify that there is consistency between the RTP and the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans required under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and that the transportation elements conform with the GMA's requirements.

Regular update and amendment of the adopted RTP is a requirement for the receipt of federal and state transportation funds. Current regulations require that the RTP contain a financial plan that demonstrates consistency between proposed transportation investments and available and projected revenues. One of the key federal requirements of an RTP is that it be "fiscally constrained" meaning there should be a reasonable application of assumptions and expectation that revenues will be available to provide for the list of projects and transportation strategies contained in the RTP and to support the operations and maintenance of a safe, multimodal, transportation system. The RTP's financial plan is in Chapter 4. Year of expenditure is addressed in Appendix E. The RTP finance assumptions and plan have been reviewed by stakeholder agencies, and during a roundtable briefing of all local agency public works directors and/or finance managers. Based on analysis of forecast revenues and cost estimates for

operations, maintenance, projects, and strategies, the 2014 RTP update meets the federal requirement for “fiscal constraint”.

A Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) for the RTP 2014 update was issued on November 14 after review of a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist prepared for the Plan. The SEPA notice was made available on the Washington State Department of Ecology’s SEPA website. The SEPA checklist and links to the draft RTP available on RTC’s website was distributed to over 100 interested parties.

RTP development is anticipated in 2015 with focus on further implementation Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), transportation system performance and Plan monitoring, review of the region’s 10-year transportation system priorities and on modal elements of the RTP.

BUDGET IMPLICATION

No direct budget impact. Ongoing federal and state planning, monitoring, and compliance requirements associated with the Regional Transportation Plan are funded by the RTC through contributions of federal, state and local agency revenues. Adoption of the RTP and fulfillment of mandatory compliance and monitoring activities can be funded through available and anticipated RTC operating revenues.

ACTION REQUESTED

Adoption of Resolution 12-14-24, “Regional Transportation Plan for Clark County, 2014 Update.”

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____ 2014,
by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

ATTEST:

Jack Burkman
Chair of the Board

Matt Ransom
Executive Director

Attachment