



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director
DATE: June 25, 2013
SUBJECT: **MTP Assessment/Amendment Process, Review Draft**

AT A GLANCE – DISCUSSION

The purpose of this memorandum is to present to the Board a draft concept for an annual assessment process that would provide the Board a regular opportunity to consider amendments to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

BACKGROUND

RTC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all of Clark County and represents the Washington proportion of the Portland-Vancouver Transportation Management Area. As the MPO, RTC must meet a number of federal transportation planning requirements in order for the region to be eligible for the receipt of federal transportation funds. One of the planning requirements is the adoption of a federally approved Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The federal transportation planning statutes and regulations call for the development of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The plan must be developed in cooperation with the State and the public transportation operator. In addition, the MTP must be updated every four years and must be in compliance with section 107(d) of the Clean Air Act (42 USC 7505a). The Clark County region's air quality status is "unclassifiable/attainment" for Ozone and "Maintenance Area" for Carbon Monoxide (CO).

RTC must also meet the state requirements of RCW 47.80 for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO). RTC is the designated RTPO for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties. RCW 47.80.030 provides the guidance for Regional Transportation Plan content, review and use. It requires that each Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) shall work cooperatively with the department of transportation, providers of public transportation and high capacity transportation, ports, and local governments within the region, to adopt, and periodically update a regional transportation plan.

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Clark County is the region's chief transportation planning document. The MTP establishes a comprehensive policy direction for the regional transportation system and recommends a balanced program of modal investments to implement that policy direction. The current [MTP](#) was adopted by the RTC Board, on December 6, 2011, Resolution 12-11-23. It represents a coordinated planning process between local and state jurisdictions to develop regional solutions to transportation needs. The 2011 update has 2035 as the Plan's horizon year and is compliant with the federal and state requirements for a long-range regional transportation plan.

The currently adopted MTP is the product of a continuing transportation planning process conducted by the RTC Board of Directors. RTC's first MTP was adopted in December 1994. Since that time, the plan has been subject to review to ensure consistency with local adopted Growth Management Comprehensive plans and their Transportation Capital Facilities element to ensure integration of land use and transportation. From 1994 up to today, the MTP has had six major updates and eight amendments. Appendix J of the current MTP provides a history of the updates and amendments.

The previous MTP plan updates and amendments have followed an established planning process that includes a data-driven needs analysis, formulation of policy goals, consideration of alternatives, evaluation of recommendations, consultation with resource agencies, stakeholder and public involvement, and final informed decision making by the RTC Board of Directors. The updates and amendments that have occurred to date vary in their complexity and magnitude of impact on the regional transportation system.

PROPOSED MTP ASSESSMENT/AMENDMENT PROCESS

The overarching intent of the MTP assessment/amendment process is to preserve the comprehensive, long range, and multimodal role of the MTP, while providing the Board with a regular opportunity to consider amendments to the transportation plan in between full plan updates.

The annual assessment process would begin in January of each year and conclude at the March RTC Board meeting with a list of findings, and a recommendation to pursue or not to pursue any amendments to the MTP. The assessment process could be initiated by the RTC Board and/or by the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) including all RTC member agencies. The first step in the annual assessment process would include the following.

- Data/information collection: Identify the need and purpose for the proposed amendment along with data to support the need for the proposed amendment.
- Assessment: An assessment of the proposed amendment would involve a review of the proposed amendment to include an assessment of consistency with the member agency's adopted plans, including the GMA Capital Facilities Plans, State Highway System Plan, Transit system plans, as well as other related bike/pedestrian or freight modal plans. The assessment would also analyze the data to determine system impacts.

The data and assessment findings would be presented to the RTC Board for a decision to move forward, modify or not to move forward with an amendment process.

Should the Board decide to move forward with a proposed amendment, the process would be scoped in terms of time, resources and the decision-making process. The amendment scoping along with an estimate of staff resources would be presented to the Board for their approval. While each amendment would have its specific issues, all amendments would involve the following steps.

- Data-Driven Technical MTP System Analysis – This step would revisit the technical information relating to the need and impact of the proposed amendment.
- Policy Direction - A determination of MTP policy impacts that could result from the proposed amendment would be made. This step would address consistency of the proposed amendment with other transportation plans at both the local and state levels. The policy impacts of the proposed amendment would also be evaluated in terms of the MTP's currently adopted goals, and performance measures.

- Evaluation - An evaluation of both system and policy impacts would be conducted. A list of findings would be reported to RTAC and the RTC Board for their recommendations.
- Board Action – Depending upon the amendment and its impact to other jurisdiction’s adopted plans, the RTC Board may need to coordinate with the jurisdiction prior to their taking action to adopt or reject a proposed amendment.