

# Annual Report

2014

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**Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council**





## Mission of RTC

To encourage and promote the development of a balanced, efficient and affordable regional transportation system to meet the mobility and accessibility needs of people and goods, within and through this region, and minimize transportation-related air pollution.

## RTC Board of Directors

Clark County .....	3 Commissioners
Klickitat County .....	1 Elected Official
Skamania County .....	1 Elected Official
City of Vancouver .....	2 Council Members
Camas/Washougal .....	1 Council Member
Battle Ground/Ridgefield/La Center/Yacolt.....	1 Council Member
Ports of Vancouver/Ridgefield/Camas-Washougal .....	1 Port Commissioner
Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Area (C-TRAN) .....	Executive Director
Washington State Department of Transportation .....	Southwest Region Administrator
Oregon Department of Transportation .....	Regional Administrator
Metro.....	1 Council Member

### ***Ex-officio Members***

14 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members
17 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members
18 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members
20 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members
49 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District.....	3 Legislative Members

## Legislative Mandate

Federal and State laws mandate regional transportation planning and decision making as a pre-requisite for use of Federal and State transportation investment funds. The RTC acts as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) under Federal law ([Title 23, USC 450](#)) and the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) under State law ([RCW 47.80](#)). The RTC carries out the duties of an MPO and RTPO on an annual basis and ensures compliance with all applicable Federal and State regulations.

## Functions

The RTC's 1992 [Interlocal Agreement](#) establishes the organization's responsibilities and select functions are highlighted as follows:

- ◆ Maintain a process for developing plans and programs that consider all modes of transportation and is continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive.
- ◆ Ensure that interstate transportation issues are coordinated between Washington and Oregon. Develop and adopt a [Regional Transportation Plan](#) that is consistent with the comprehensive plans of the counties, cities, and towns within the region and the state transportation plans.
- ◆ Develop a [Transportation Improvement Program](#) for the area.
- ◆ Provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation departments, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity for comment on the long range plan.

Through 2014, RTC delivered a host of major regional plans and recommendations designed to advance smart investments in regional transportation systems over the coming decades.

## Regional Planning

One of RTC's most important roles is to develop a [Regional Transportation Plan](#) for Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties. The RTC updates these plans at least every four years to reflect changing populations, demographics, traffic conditions, economic forecasts, and other factors, such as new technologies, that affect the three county region's transportation investment needs.

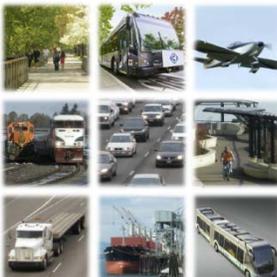
Regional Transportation Plans were developed and adopted by the [RTC Board of Directors](#) for both Skamania and Klickitat counties and a draft Plan was issued for Clark County and is expected to be adopted by year end or in early 2015.

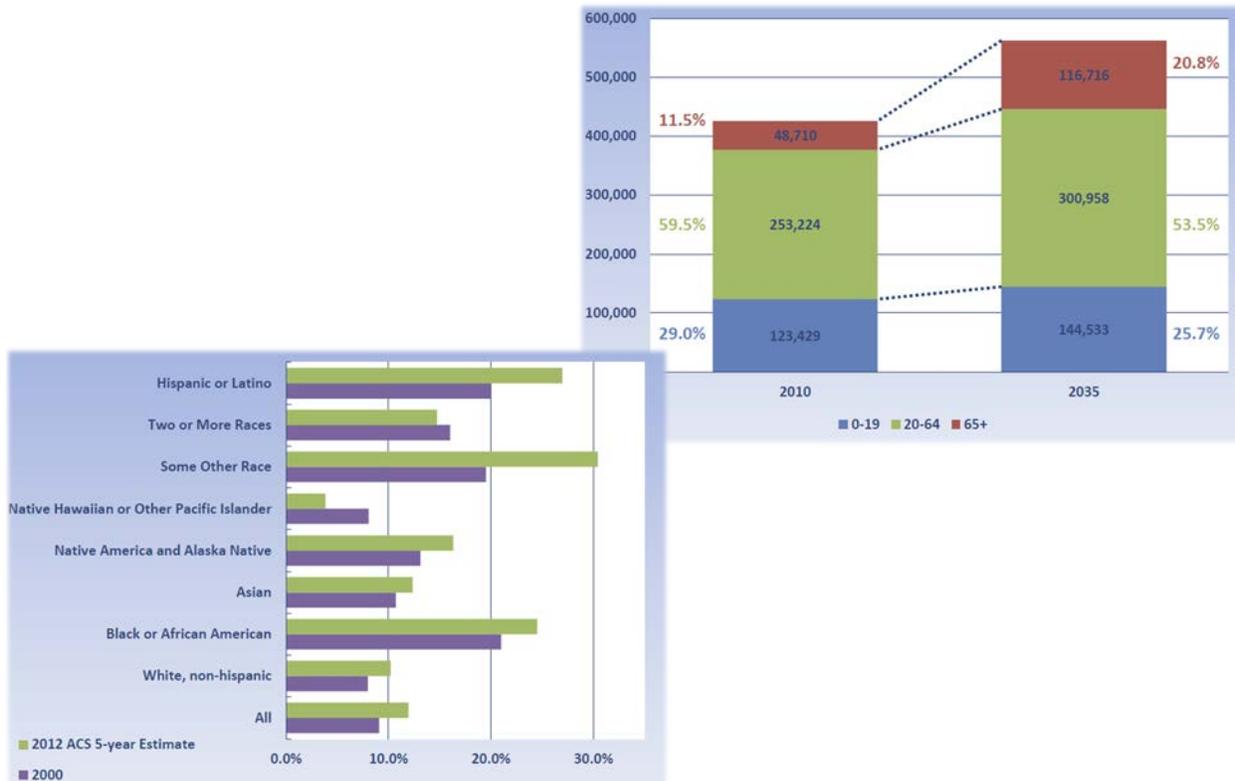
Since the most recent Regional Transportation Plan updates in 2011, the region has invested over \$324 million in transportation projects. As a result, the region is in a better position to handle past and forecast growth and to sustain a vibrant and resilient economy. The RTC region needs to invest at least an additional \$2 billion in strategic regional transportation investments (not including an upgraded bridge crossing) over the next 20-years in order to keep pace with growth and economic expansion planned within region.

## Changing Trends

RTC spent considerable effort in 2014 looking over the horizon and evaluating the future demographic and transportation trends that will affect our region over the next 20-years. Among the most notable trends are:

- ◆ Clark County's population is aging, with the 65 and older population expecting to more than double by 2035 and account for 1 of 5 persons in the county.
- ◆ Clark County's population is becoming more diverse, with the minority population increasing from just below 5% in 1980 to nearly 20% today. This trend will continue and likely accelerate over the coming decades.
- ◆ Demand for travel will increase along with population growth in the county, including travel to Oregon.
- ◆ Increasing travel demand will continue to outpace the expansion of the transportation system, increasing the amount of congestion experienced on Clark County roadways.





## 2014 Top Line Results

The remainder of the report highlights major 2014 Work Program accomplishments, each of which supports regional progress towards investing and building the systems and infrastructure needed to handle future population growth and to sustain a vibrant and resilient economy. The results are reported by line of business as follows:

1. Grant and Project Funding;
2. Regional Planning;
3. Technical Services;
4. Regional Partnerships and Collaboration; and
5. MPO Administration.

# Grant and Project Funding

## Grant Project Awards

The RTC administers the largest annual seed investment grant fund in Clark County. On average, the investment fund awards \$10 million in competitive grants for regional roadway improvements each year. In 2014, the [RTC Board of Directors](#) awarded 15 grant awards equaling \$9.7 million in investment.

Over the past 8-years, the RTC has awarded over \$86 million in grant awards. It is believed these seed investment dollars are further leveraged, creating a multiplier effect of hundreds of millions in regional street investments being catalyzed by the RTC investment fund over the past decade.

## 2014 Grant Awards

Program	#	Jurisdiction	Project Name/Description	Phase	Year	CMAQ	Total
CMAQ	1	WSDOT	Vancouver Urban ITS Device Infill <i>Installation cameras and detection devices</i>	PE	2017	\$65,600	\$80,000
				CN	2018	\$651,900	\$795,000
	1	WSDOT	SR-503, Fourth Plain to Main St. ITS Device Infill <i>ATIS device infill and communications</i>	PE	2017	\$32,800	\$40,000
				CN	2018	\$274,700	\$335,000
	1	Clark County	Signal, Timing, Evaluation, Verification and Enhancement <i>Install ITS devices, collect and analyze data, retime</i>	PE	2017	\$160,000	\$200,000
				CN	2018	\$760,000	\$950,000
	1	Washougal	32nd St. Active Traveler Information Feasibility <i>Evaluate 32nd St. traveler information sign on SR-14</i>	CN	2017	\$40,000	\$47,000
1	C-TRAN	Open Trip Planner and Alerts System <i>Implement a transit traveler information system</i>	PE	2017	\$128,000	\$160,000	
2	C-TRAN	4-5 Hybrid Buses <i>Diesel/electric hybrid upgrades of buses</i>	CN	2018	\$720,000	\$3,300,000	
<b>Total CMAQ</b>						<b>\$2,833,000</b>	<b>\$5,907,000</b>

Program	#	Jurisdiction	Project Name/Description	Phase	Year	STP	Total
STP TMA	1	Vancouver	NE 18th Street, Four Seasons to 136th Av. <i>Widen to 5 lanes with bicycle lanes and sidewalks</i>	CN	2018	\$1,000,000	\$11,000,000
	2	Clark County	NE 94th Av., Padden to 99th St. <i>Intersection and road improvements (3 lane arterial)</i>	CN	2018	\$1,600,000	\$6,641,000
	3	Camas	Brady Rd. NW 16th Av. to 25th Av. <i>Widen to 3 lanes with bicycle lanes, sidewalks, etc.</i>	PE	2016	\$339,000	\$600,000
	4	Clark County	NE 119th Street, 50th Av. to 72nd Av. <i>Widen to 3 lanes with bicycle lanes, sidewalks, etc.</i>	PE	2017	\$675,000	\$820,000
				CN	2018	\$500,000	\$6,500,000
	5	Battle Ground	SR-502/SR-503 Intersection <i>Improve intersection</i>	PE	2016	\$143,900	\$166,400
				RW	2017	\$108,100	\$125,000
	6	RTC	VAST Coordination and Management <i>ITS coordination</i>	PE	2018	\$205,000	\$237,000
6	RTC	UPWP and Congestion Management <i>Support work elements of the UPWP and CMP</i>	PE	2018	\$300,000	\$346,821	
STP Rural	1	Clark County	Carty Road Reconstruction <i>Replace culvert, improve sight distance, and add guardrail</i>	PE	2015	\$30,000	\$406,700
				CN	2016	\$1,270,000	\$1,766,300
1	La Center	4th Street and Pacific Highway Roundabout <i>Intersection Improvements</i>	CN	2016	\$692,000	\$800,000	
<b>Total STP</b>						<b>\$6,863,000</b>	<b>\$29,409,221</b>

PE = Preliminary Engineering or Design

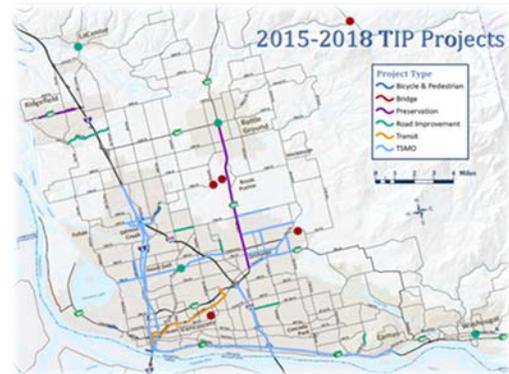
RW = Right of Way

CN = Construction

## Regional Projects Moving Forward

Through FFY 2014, local agencies obligated \$11.8 million in regional federal funds. This obligation level allowed the region to exceed the required statewide obligation target.

RTC staff also administered [18 amendments](#) to the 2014-2017 TIP to ensure regional projects had timely access to awarded grant funds.



## 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program

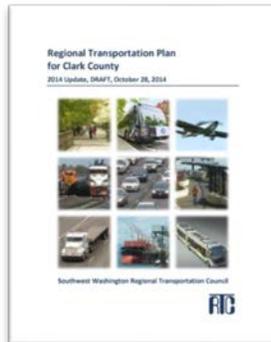
The [RTC Board of Directors](#) adopted the 2015-2018 [Transportation Improvement Program](#) in October 2014 and programmed \$142 million in funds for regional transportation investment over the next four years.

## Major Freeway Investments Nearing Completion

WSDOT completed a major project and also moved two regionally significant highway improvements towards construction in 2014. Final completion and opening of the [Salmon Creek / NE 139<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange](#) project culminated years of WSDOT and Clark County partnership to build over \$136 million in regional transportation investment which alleviates congestion and opens the regional center for further growth and development. WSDOT also initiated construction for both the [SR-502 Widening](#) and [I-205/18<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange](#) projects. Over \$90 million in state funds will be used for these regionally significant highway improvements, and are the last [Nickel](#) and [Partnership](#) projects within the region.



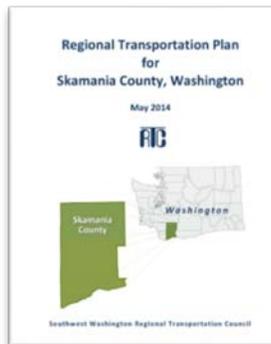
# Regional Planning



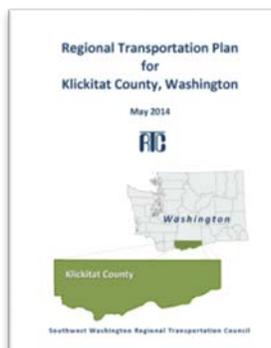
Regional transportation planning is a primary responsibility of the RTC. Multiple long-range plans were developed within the RTC region through 2014 and are highlighted as follows. Each plan is designed to identify needs and smart investments to keep the region's regional transportation systems safe, accessible to all populations, and moving to support economic growth.

## Regional Transportation Plans

The entire 3-county RTC region was involved in major [Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#) updates in 2014. RTP's were adopted by the [RTC Board of Directors](#) for both Skamania and Klickitat Counties. The Gorge region is facing needs for continued safety and major intersection access enhancements along SR-14 in each community, as well as strategic improvements to gain more efficient access to primary industrial and economic development lands. Continued monitoring of cross-river bridge and maintenance investment needs is a critical focus and need moving forward. Future needs for multi-modal improvements are projected at \$112 million in Skamania County and \$411 million in Klickitat County.

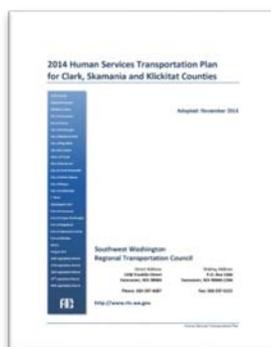


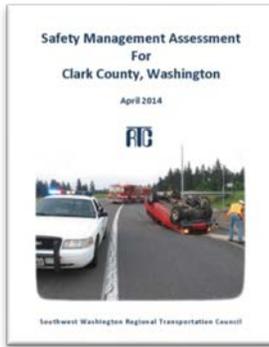
The RTP for Clark County was developed and a draft was issued for public comment in October 2014. The strategies identified as needed in the next 20-years include a range of services and investments, equaling over \$1.7 billion in need (not including an updated I-5 bridge crossing). The multi-modal plan will serve as the blue-print for public and private investment in regional freeways and major roadways, transit systems, and technology solutions.



## Human Services Transportation Plans

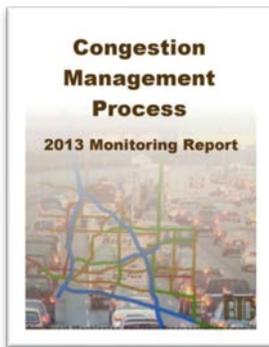
Identifying strategies to address elderly, low-income, and social service transportation needs was advanced in 2014. A [Human Services Transportation Plan](#) was completed for the RTC's three-county region, which included recommendations for how best to serve the target customers in the coming years. RTC staff also helped facilitate a regional evaluation and ranking of thirteen [Consolidated Public Transportation Grant](#) applications for public and private agency services providers to provide targeted services identified in the plan. The grant ranking recommendations were forwarded to the State for final grant awards; expected early 2015.





## Safety Management Assessment

Traffic Safety on regional roadways was evaluated as part of the bi-annual comprehensive [Safety Management Assessment for Clark County](#). In support of Target Zero safety goals, the RTC facilitated a series of targeted safety workshops to identify low-cost fixes to improve safety and major collision locations. RTC will continue to work with member agencies on grant opportunities to timely address the project priorities of the Plan.



## Congestion Management Process

Annual evaluation of [traffic and congestion conditions](#) within Clark County was completed in July 2014. Overall, regional congestion levels appear to be stable, but increasing congestion on several major arteries (e.g., SR-14 east of I-205) is surfacing. Continued multi-modal investments are needed to address long-term mobility on these important regional corridors.



## Vancouver Area Smart Trek (VAST)

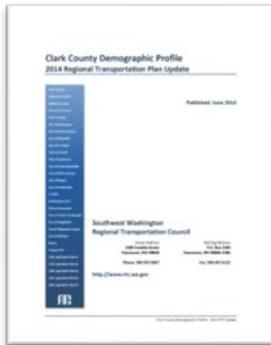
RTC worked closely with the [VAST](#) agency partners to identify projects and develop funding applications for the partner agencies. \$2.1 million in federal funds were programmed in 2014 through the VAST process including projects for roadway and transit traveler information and signal optimization projects. Clark County Public Works Department was the 2014 recipient of a [Washington State Target Zero Safety Award](#) for County traffic signal optimization projects, funded by federal grants distributed through the VAST program. Sharing of available transportation fiber among the VAST agencies has continued with a total of twenty nine sharing permits affecting 101 miles of fiber which has saved from \$15.2 to \$18.8 million compared to the VAST agencies building these projects separately



## I-205 Corridor Study

Completion of the I-205 Corridor Study culminated in the adoption of recommendations for managing traffic and transit operations in the corridor. The recommendations highlight a need for continued investment in major freeway access and merging location improvements (identified as I-205 Core projects), and those projects in addition to low cost striping and ramp meter projects are included in the RTP (2014 Draft). The study recommends WSDOT develop plans for near-term and low-cost operational improvements (e.g., striping and ramp meters). Further, to enhance transit service and reliability, the study recommends initiation of a study to assess technical, policy engineering opportunities and constraints of bus on shoulder operations in the I-205 corridor. The [RTC Board of Directors](#) also adopted policies for evaluation and implementation of freeway ramp meters.

# Technical Services



## Growth and Demographic Forecasting

RTC staff provided technical services and analysis to member agencies in conjunction with the [Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update](#) process. A detailed travel forecast was produced for Clark County and became the basis for all transportation project development in the region with the adoption of the RTP Update. The new forecast is based on draft population and employment forecasts developed for the Clark County 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update and the most up-to-date state agency and local jurisdiction transportation plans.

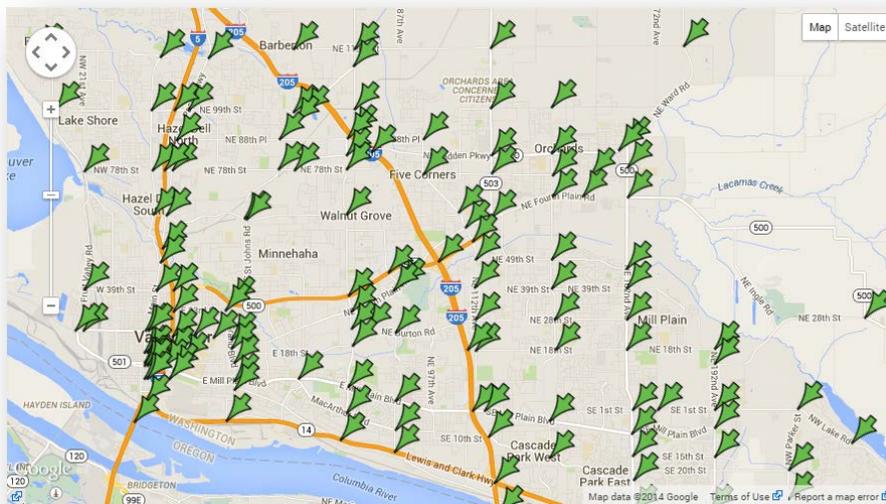
## Demographic and Trend Analysis

RTC produced two demographic analysis reports which highlight the historic and future trends in population, transportation use trends, and other factors which relate to population preferences and multi-modal transportation uses now and into the future. Detailed forecasts were produced for the [Regional Transportation Plans](#) for each county in the RTC region.

## Traffic Counting and Data

Traffic and collision count data collections efforts were completed in 2014. The RTC collects, stores, and makes available to all member agencies and the public [historical traffic count records](#). The count database was expanded in 2014 to 645 data locations, and an additional 90 new traffic counts were collected and added to the database. Through the [VAST](#) partnership efforts, additional software enhancements

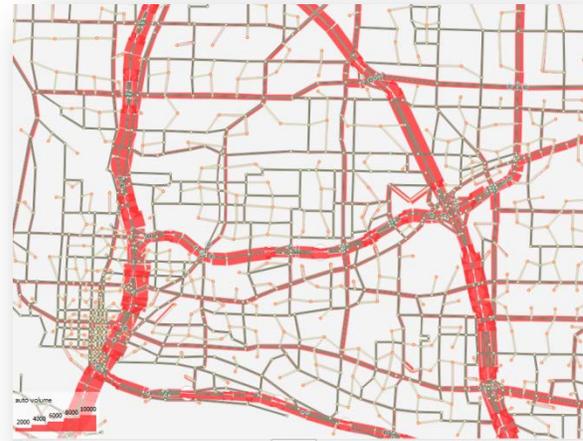
are now underway which will result in live traffic count feeds into the database structure.



## Regional Traffic Modeling

A complete update to the [regional travel demand traffic model](#) was coded and deployed in 2014 in conjunction with the [Clark County Regional Transportation Plan](#) update. The updated model was calibrated to a forecast year 2035. A new traffic modeling software package was deployed ([Emme4](#)) and staff training and development for use of the new system was a priority throughout the year.

In addition to project related modeling, RTC staff were participants in statewide expert panels in the areas of regional modeling, cost/benefit analysis systems, and statewide traffic modeling. Due to RTC's expertise in this area, staff are regular participants in these regional and multi-state initiatives.



## Project Traffic Modeling

RTC provided travel model forecasts for internal and external transportation studies and projects, including support for the following studies:

- ◆ RTC – I-205 corridor study
- ◆ City of Vancouver – SE 1<sup>st</sup> St. project
- ◆ Clark County – NE 179<sup>th</sup> St. Interchange area
- ◆ City of Vancouver – NE 137<sup>th</sup> Ave. project
- ◆ Clark County – NE 159<sup>th</sup> St. extension

## Fee-for-Service

RTC provides technical data and modeling services to private business on a pay-for-service basis. During 2014, the RTC processed 20 data requests and billed private vendors for direct hours of service, creating a net revenue stream to the RTC.

# Regional Partnerships and Collaboration

## Agency Outreach

Opportunities for strengthening and building new partnerships with member agencies, affiliated agencies, and stakeholders were advanced in 2014. Significant efforts were put into information sharing of regional project priorities in concert with the Washington State legislative sessions. The RTC partnered with the Clark County Transportation Alliance and participated in numerous meetings and forums in pursuit of securing additional state and federal transportation funding for regional projects, including providing testimony at State legislative hearings and meetings. Outreach to other affiliated agencies and organizations such as the CREDC, ICC, MCEDD, local Chambers of Commerce, and related stakeholders within Clark County and the Columbia Gorge region continued to be emphasis area through 2014, with the goal of leveraging regional resources and information.

## Regional Transportation Data Archive

RTC continues to strengthen its existing partnership with Portland State University and the [Portal regional traffic data warehouse](#) that is jointly sponsored by RTC and other regional transportation agencies. The Portal database is becoming a significant asset for regional traffic data service and analysis. The key improvements to Portal in 2014 included the infill of missing speed and traffic data on the WSDOT freeway system and the addition of new Clark County traffic count data from their detection stations to publish the first arterial data in the Portal system.



## Bi-State Collaboration

The RTC jointly hosted three [Bi-State Coordination Committee](#) meetings with Metro-JPACT. A range of topics were explored including: regional commute patterns, regional economic development initiatives, and regional community values. The findings of these meeting reports and discussions indicate that the Portland/Vancouver region is inextricably tied together economically, freight transportation wise, and that our values are mostly the same. Continued collaboration among agencies assigned to the Bi-State Committee is expected in 2015.

# MPO Program Administration

## Public Communications

RTC made a significant leap forward in early 2014 with a major overhaul to the [agency website](#) and public communication strategy. The website has now become the portal for nearly all communications with the agency and allows for easy access and retrieval of all RTC materials and public meeting information in an easily accessible web format.



## Federal and State Program Compliance

The RTC became fully compliant with federal laws governing MPO business through adoption of multiple agreements and plans through 2014. A [Limited English Proficiency Plan](#) was developed and adopted, in addition to major updates to the [Public Participation Plan](#) and [Title VI Plan](#). Additionally, the RTC developed and entered into a three-party intergovernmental agreement for the delivery of the MPO program in partnership with WSDOT and C-TRAN.

## General Administration

The RTC continues to achieve high marks from the Washington State Auditor for financial accounting and reporting. Operations and fiscal management remain stable, and an attorney was hired to provide general counsel services to the RTC and Board of Directors. Transition of a new Executive Director into the organization was seamless.

