

Follow Up Questions and Answers
from the October 8th Meeting
of the JTC Columbia River Crossing Oversight Subcommittee
October 22, 2013

- 1) Re: Dan Mathis’ presentation. Members want to know the status of federal funds obligated and expended on the project, what may need repayment and what may not; what the various repayment or nonrepayment options are, and the differing requirements of the various sources of funding.**

Through June 2013 WSDOT has obligated \$78,999,717 of federal funds administered by Washington State on the CRC project. With the 13—15 funding for the project being vetoed through the biennial budget development approval process, WSDOT is de-obligating all the non-expended portion of the federal funding obligated through June with the exception of the portion of the \$2.9 million estimated closeout costs that will be supported with federal funds. Of the \$2.9 million, \$2.725 million is federal and \$175,000 is state. The department estimates that at project closure a total of \$56.94 million of federal funds will have been expended on the project by WSDOT.

If federal funds are required to be repaid, the total of repayment would be the funds expended which are estimated at \$56.94 million. FHWA has indicated that all of the expended funds are subject to repayment if the project does not move to construction. Of these funds:

- *\$12.167 million are high priority/demo funds earmarked for the CRC project and can only be used on a CRC project. These funds do not expire unless rescinded by Congress or USDOT;*
- *\$20.278 million are discretionary funds earmarked for the CRC project and can only be used on a CRC project. If not used on a CRC project within the federal fiscal year they are repaid, these funds will lapse;*
- *\$24.497 million are formula federal funds and can be used on any eligible project. If not used within the federal fiscal year they are repaid, these funds will lapse.*

- 2) Re: Dan Mathis’ presentation. Rhonda Boni Burden requested a copy of the federal aid agreement.**

Attached are the four federal-aid agreements for the project. For mega-projects it is not unusual to have more than one agreement. Prior to 2009, FHWA required any project receiving “demonstration” funds (i.e. a federal earmark or competitive grant) to have a separate agreement for each type of demonstration funding. That is why there are four project agreements, which were established prior to 2009.

- 3) Secretary Peterson promised to provide SR 520 diversion numbers, including both projections and actuals, for diversion to I-90 and SR 522.**

During the first year of tolling on the SR 520 bridge, both revenue and changes in SR 520 traffic volumes met projections. An average of 68,000 weekday trips crossed the SR 520 bridge, down from 103,000 in 2011. This 34 percent decrease in traffic is less than the 48 percent drop in SR 520 traffic volumes that was forecasted for the first year of tolling.

Peak-hour, peak-direction diversion rates on SR 522 and I-90 met, or were lower than projected. The majority of diversion is occurring during off-peak times when SR 522 and I-90 have extra capacity to absorb more traffic volumes.

The I-90 bridge carried 153,000 vehicles during average weekday traffic volume in 2012, 11 percent higher than a typical weekday in 2011. This growth in vehicle volume tends to occur during the off-peak periods, when additional roadway capacity exists. SR 522 carried 44,500 vehicles during average weekday traffic volume in 2012, nine percent higher than a typical weekday in 2011. This growth in vehicle volume is spread fairly evenly throughout the day.

SR 520 traffic and revenue continue to meet projections and are on track to providing more than \$1 billion in funding to help pay for the construction of a new bridge. Approximately 20 million trips were taken during tolling hours (5 a.m. to 11 p.m.), generating approximately \$55 million in expected gross toll revenue.

Attached you will find more details in the “SR 520: Toll Operations and Traffic Performance Summary Report – 2012”. The report can also be found online at: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/7FC29FC9-8576-4197-BF45-4B22ABD390C4/0/SR520_TollOperationsandTrafficPerformanceSummaryReport_2012.pdf.

- 4) Kris Strickler’s presentation. Senator King made a statement that Kris didn’t respond to, but which I think a response would be helpful. Senator King said that if light rail ridership is too low, the toll may need to be raised to cover the shortfall. Please clarify.**

Under the Oregon State constitution highway tolls cannot be used to pay for light rail transit (LRT) construction, operations or maintenance. Any deficit in operations and maintenance funding due to a shortfall in ridership would need to come from C-TRAN and TriMet, the two transit agencies that are jointly responsible for operating and maintaining the LRT line.

- 5) Rep. Orcutt specifically asked how much of the work done to-date could be used going forward should funding be made available in Washington.**

If Washington made funds available in the near future all of the work done to date would be used. However, the longer the wait, work would need to be redone or updated, for instance some environmental work and permitting would need to be updated.