

# Director's Note

Clark County continues to make strategic investments in transportation infrastructure. The county is focused on preserving the public's investment in its current road system while delivering quality projects that improve safety, ease congestion and support economic expansion.

These priorities are reflected in the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which outlines how an estimated \$194 million will be spent on design, right of way and construction during the next six years.

Significant projects in the 2015-2020 TIP include:

- **NE 119<sup>th</sup> Street** – In 2013, Clark County improved safety and reduced traffic delay at the NE 119<sup>th</sup> Street/NE 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection by installing a traffic signal and lowering the hill east of the intersection. Late last year, the county began construction on a three-year project to upgrade NE 119<sup>th</sup> Street, from NE 72<sup>nd</sup> to NE 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as a four-lane minor arterial with a center-turn lane, bicycle lanes and sidewalks. Future corridor improvements will complete NE 119<sup>th</sup> Street, from NE 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue to NE 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and farther east, from NE 87<sup>th</sup> to NE 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- **NE 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge and roadway improvements** – Clark County plans to widen and connect NE 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue along the west side of I-5, which will require building a bridge over Whipple Creek. The project will close a gap in the existing transportation grid system, upgrade a substandard roadway, improve access to recreational facilities, provide an alternate route for emergency responders, construct safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities, create another access to the Clark County Fairgrounds for disaster response and encourage economic growth in the Discovery Corridor.
- **NE 179<sup>th</sup> Street/I-5 area** – Clark County is in the early stages of developing projects to improve NE 179<sup>th</sup> Street near I-5 and extend NE 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue north and west to connect with NE 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. These long-discussed projects, which could include a partnership with the state and/or private developers, will help meet current and future needs, especially with intensive commercial development planned for the fairgrounds area. There is little capacity remaining in the NE 179<sup>th</sup> Street corridor near the freeway, and new job-creating projects could be delayed due to inadequate infrastructure.

Clark County is making other changes to bolster economic growth. Last year, the county launched an Urban Development Road Ongoing Program to directly support industrial and commercial development. This program will build projects that don't necessarily rank high in traditional categories for safety and mobility but are critical to stimulate business development in the urban unincorporated area of Clark County.

The 2015-2020 TIP allocates more than \$14 million over six years to projects supporting job creation in Salmon Creek, Fairgrounds, Barberton, Orchards and other urban areas outside the city of Vancouver, including improvements on NE 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue, from NE 68<sup>th</sup> Street to NE 78<sup>th</sup> Street, and to the intersection of NE 99<sup>th</sup> Street and SR 503.

Clark County's partnership with state and federal agencies will remain a critical part of building quality projects. The county is grateful for the grants it receives from the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) and the Washington State Department of Transportation's Regional Mobility Grant Program, as well as federal programs, such as the Surface Transportation Program.

In late November 2014, TIB approved the county's request for \$2.6 million to improve the NE 99<sup>th</sup> Street/SR 503 intersection. Over the past 30 years, TIB has allocated nearly \$100 million to complete transportation corridors, upgrade key intersections and build other needed transportation improvements.

Another important partnership is with the Washington Public Works Board, which manages the Public Works Trust Fund. The board has provided low-interest loans to support several projects, including building the Salmon Creek Interchange Project and upgrading NE 117<sup>th</sup>/119<sup>th</sup> Street and St. Johns Road. The county is seeking a \$7 million loan from the Public Works Board to help pay for the NE 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue road and bridge improvements.

As Clark County continues to build new road projects, it also has placed greater emphasis on preserving its 78 bridges and almost 2,700 lane miles of roads. The 2015-2020 TIP envisions spending slightly more than \$40 million on asphalt overlays, surface seals and other preservative measures during the next six years.

This emphasis is grounded in common sense. Surface seals add four to seven years to the life of a road, while an asphalt overlay can extend the road's life by 15 to 20 years. For every \$1 Clark County spends to preserve a road this year, it avoids spending 10 to 15 times that amount to rebuild the road in the future.

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