

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In Clark County, the future is now.

We are refocusing our transportation program to better meet the needs and visions of our residents and the users of our transportation infrastructure.

In 2000, Washington was the first state in the nation to set a unique goal: to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on Washington's roadways to zero by the year 2030. This vision is called "Target Zero." More information about this important initiative can be found here:

<http://www.targetzero.com/PDF2/targetzero.pdf>

Clark County will improve transportation infrastructure and public safety by building more roundabouts. Roundabouts significantly improve safety by virtually eliminating head-on and T-bone crashes. These two crash types often cause severe injuries and fatalities. By building roundabouts, these crash types are reduced by approximately 90%. Roundabouts also improve mobility and lessen congestion at intersections and along roadway corridors. During the past 50 years, there have been substantial decreases in traffic injuries and fatalities based on vehicle miles traveled. Historically, Washington State's fatality rate has been lower than the national fatality rate. These declines have been due to numerous factors, including safer vehicles, mandatory seat belt legislation, stronger driving under the influence laws and enforcement, and continuous improvement to clear zone and roadway standards.

Clark County strives to improve safety by reviewing crash data, assessing road corridors for safety deficiencies, constructing more sidewalks and pedestrian facilities, and incorporating additional safety improvements in projects. There is no such thing as an acceptable level of traffic injuries or fatalities. Every life matters! Our transportation program supports our state's "Target Zero" vision of continually reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries to zero by the year 2030.

Transportation dollars are becoming scarcer each year, but our responsibilities continue to expand as the population grows. Clark County is striving to meet the safety, capacity and mobility needs that growth has created through increased revenue streams, private/public partnerships, asset management, innovation, and cost-saving strategies.

As in past years, state and federal grants account for approximately 30% of our transportation budget. These grants stretch our local transportation dollars, by helping us build projects that improve safety, ease congestion, enhance multi-modal mobility, and support economic development.

Last year, construction to complete the final phase of the 119th Street Corridor (Northeast 50th Avenue to State Route 503) began. These improvements upgraded the Northeast 119th Street corridor, from Northeast 87th Avenue to Northeast 112th Avenue and construction has been completed. When this project is done, Clark County will have invested \$54 million to improve this major east-west corridor. The changes have taken it from a rural two-lane roadway with narrow lanes, no bicycle or pedestrian facilities to a four-lane arterial with 12-foot lanes, bicycle lanes and pedestrian sidewalks.

Another large project is the Northeast 10th Avenue Bridge over Whipple Creek. This provides a much needed connection between the Salmon Creek and Fairgrounds areas along the west side of Interstate 5. The connection provides alternate north/south routes to I-5 and Northeast 15th Avenue and enhances mobility and economic development. The bridge is a beautiful design and was constructed with no impacts to Whipple Creek.

You can expect additional roadway improvements and construction in this area in future years. In 2020, Clark County intends to complete the southern segment of the 10th Avenue Corridor by reconstructing Northeast 10th Avenue from the new bridge on Northeast 154th Street to Northeast 149th Street. The improved Northeast 10th Avenue corridor will tie into the Salmon Creek Interchange Project to the south, a Clark County and Washington State Department of Transportation partnership that was completed in 2014.

In this same area, Clark County is working with WSDOT on another partnership to improve the Northeast 179th Street interchange at I-5 and the surrounding roads that funnel traffic to the interchange. My staff and I worked endless hours to develop a comprehensive transportation funding package for the local road system in the I-5/Northeast 179th Street area. After several public meetings and a public hearing, the Clark County Council approved Resolution 2019-08-05 on Aug. 20, 2019, selecting a public financing package in consultation with local developers to build road infrastructure in the vicinity of Northeast 179th Street and I-5. However, several County Council decisions are necessary to implement the public financing package. Those include: approving the proposed funding package for the future budgets, amending the 20-Year Capital Facilities Plan, increasing traffic impact fees, and declaring the critical links and intersection improvements necessary to remove urban holding are "reasonably funded."

The financial package to fund the county's portion of Northeast 179th Street in the vicinity of I-5 is estimated to be \$67 million. The funding sources include:

Approximately \$40 million in local funds:

- County Road Funds
- Real Estate Excise Tax 2
- State and Federal Grants

Approximately \$27 million in private funds:

- Development Agreements
- Traffic Impact Fees

The funding will allow the county to build the following projects:

- Northeast 179th Street (Northeast Delfel Road to Northeast 15th Avenue) and the relocation of Northeast Delfel Road
- Northeast 15th Avenue (Northeast 179th Street to Northeast 10th Avenue)
- Northeast 10th Avenue (Northeast 149th Street to Northeast 154th Street)
- Northeast 179th Street at Northeast 29th Avenue
- Northeast 179th Street at Northeast 50th Avenue

Funding from this unique package will build needed infrastructure, allowing the area to reach its potential growth and development as urban holding lifted.

The Washington State Legislature has provided \$50 million for this effort, but most of that money will not be available until the 2023-2025 biennium. We intend to work with the Legislature this year to try to make some of that money available earlier. This will allow the county and WSDOT to continue working on design, engineering, project phasing and environmental issues so we are fully ready to proceed in four years.

I look forward to serving our community and the Clark County Council, and leading Clark County Public Works toward a new and exciting 2020!

Ahmad Qayoumi, P.E.
Public Works Director/County Engineer
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