

Volume 34...Issue 8
August 2007



YAKIMA VALLEY CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENTS

MEMBER JURISDICTIONS:

Grandview
Granger
Harrah
Mabton
Moxee
Naches
Selah
Sunnyside
Tieton
Toppenish
Union Gap
Wapato
Yakima
Yakima County
Zillah

YVCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Al Hubert, Chair
Toppenish City Council
Susan Whitman, Vice Chair
Yakima City Council
Mike Leita
Yakima County Commission
Jim Restucci
Sunnyside City Council
Dan Olson
Union Gap City Council
Velva Herrera
Mayor, City of Mabton
John P. Hodkinson
Regional Planning Commission



*Enjoy Our Hot
August Nights!*

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Enhancement Projects Selected

Drew Miller, Sr. Transportation Planner

Acting upon a recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), on July 16 the Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Executive Committee selected and prioritized three STP Enhancement projects that will be submitted to WSDOT for possible additional funding. The projects selected in prioritized order are:

1. City of Yakima – William O. Douglas Trail Enhancement: 6th Ave. Pathway/Greenway Interconnect
2. Town of Naches – Naches Depot and Trail Project
3. City of Toppenish – Toppenish Welcome Center

Additional funding for these projects is not guaranteed. While there is \$14.8 million available statewide, there is no target amount set for the Yakima Valley region, so it is possible that none of the projects listed above will be selected for additional funding. The projects will compete against other projects submitted by RTPOs statewide. Each RTPO was directed to submit three prioritized projects to WSDOT for consideration. The state Enhancement Advisory Committee will select projects in November for additional funding based on equity and diversity of projects.

New Planner on the Block! Welcome Saadia!

The newest addition among the YVCOG staff members is Saadia Hassan, who joined our team as a planner on the 16th of July, 2007. She will be assisting with both the Land Use/Community Planning and Transportation Planning programs of our organization.



Saadia is starting her career at YVCOG with an impressive background in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Community Planning and GIS applications. Until recently she has worked with the GIS department of Capital Planning and Development at Washington State University. She mainly worked with Pullman and urban campus master plan updating and facility planning as well as managing the state-wide land inventory of the university. She has also worked with the City of Sandpoint and Bonner County Planning Department for her Master's thesis based on Community Planning. She started her professional life as an architect in an international company that dealt with both commercial and residential projects as well as commercial interior designing.

She describes the design discipline as her lifelong passion and counts herself extremely lucky to be able to work in diverse sectors of the field but states that after having experience with all of them she found her calling in the planning profession. Saadia received her Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and her Master of Science degree in Landscape Architecture from Washington State University.

Among other things, she is interested in history, art and poetry. She is fluent in three languages and loves to paint, mainly watercolor, in her spare time.

Just Get Involved! *By Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator*



Summer is here and what better time to dust off the cobwebs that have accumulated on that most efficient of all transportation modes, your bicycle. I'm often asked the question, "I was just wondering, CTR Guy, what I can do to become more involved in making this community more bicycle and pedestrian friendly?" Sometimes CTR Guy doesn't have all the answers, but he sure knows where to find them. I paid a visit to the "source". The Bicycle Alliance of Washington's www.bicyclealliance.org and the League of American Bicyclists www.bikeleague.org websites are a treasure-trove of bicycle information.

Here are just ten things you can do to make your community a better place for bicycling and walking as well.

- **Contact your elected officials.** You can phone, write, e-mail or meet with them. Let them know that biking is important to you. Ask them to support a particular project, more funding for bicycle facilities, bicycle-friendly public policies, etc.
- **Attend public hearings that impact bicycling.** Transportation project, community plans, budgets, land use, regional transit...these things can impact your ability to bicycle safely and easily.
- **Join a bicycle organization that advocates for cyclists and encourage your cycling friends to do the same.** Groups like the Bicycle Alliance of Washington can keep you informed about bicycle issues and can help you take action on issues of interest to you. A great local resource is our own Chinook Cycling Club of Yakima, their website is www.chinookcycling.com.
- **Write a letter to the editor or opinion piece for local paper.** Keep it brief and timely.
- **Attend a "bicycle" event.** Look for events in your area such as Yakima's annual Gap-to-Gap race (for more information about Gap-to-Gap visit the Greenway website <http://yakimagreenway.org/g2g/>).
- **Familiarize yourself with your community's transportation plan.** These transportation plans must address nonmotorized issues such as bicycling. Use the elements that support bicycling to support your issue.
- **Contact your local transportation and park officials.** Encourage them to stripe more bike lanes, install more bicycle parking, or fix specific safety hazards.
- **Sit on your local bicycle/pedestrian advisory committee and attend their meetings.** The Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee provides input to the City of Yakima's transportation department and helps to guide the bicycle agenda. Yakima's committee typically meets the second Thursday of every month at 4:00 pm in the City of Yakima Council Chambers.
- **Get involved in your neighborhood or city planning process.** The Growth Management Act requires comprehensive planning at the local, regional and state levels-and they address bicycling.
- **Be a bicycle ambassador.** Promote safe cycling by riding safely yourself. Encourage your workplace and businesses that you patronize to support bicycling. Spread the word to your friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors. Trails and bicycle-friendly streets aren't just a benefit to bicyclists; they are a community benefit as well.

YVCOG'S Housing Rehabilitation Programs Advance

By Gene Weinmann, Housing Rehab Coordinator



YVCOG's Housing Rehabilitation programs remain extremely active, currently conducting Housing Rehabilitation Programs in the cities of Toppenish, Union Gap and Wapato, Washington.

The City of Toppenish's 2007 Program is beginning its formal application phase. The YVCOG staff is currently conducting property inspections and performing formal application in-take and verification activities. Housing staff anticipates that the 2007 Housing Rehabilitation Policy Plan will be completed in August and ready for City Council review by mid-September.

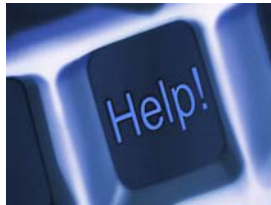
Union Gap has completed state and local contract activities for its 2007 Program and is currently appointing members to the Policy and Grievance Committee. The Committee will initially be tasked with creating the 2007 Union Gap Housing Rehabilitation Program (UGHRP) Policy Plan. The plan will govern the operation of the program and will incorporate applicant and contractor qualification requirements, loan provisions, and program policies and procedures. It is currently anticipated that the plan should be ready for final review and City Council consideration no later than late-October, 2007.

Wapato's 2006 Program is approaching 65% completion, having approved a total of 30 projects, awarded 25 projects to contractors, and completed 19 construction projects to date. Current staff focus includes preparing new projects for loan approval, placing projects to bid and conducting construction inspections on current under-construction projects. The Program anticipates placing its last projects to bid by mid-December to ensure meeting its contract requirements of completing all project activities by March 31, 2008.

The Toppenish, Union Gap and Wapato programs are substantially funded by Community Development Block Grants from the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, with the remaining funding provided by the respective cities. Additional information regarding YVCOG-administered Housing Rehabilitation Programs may be obtained by contacting Gene Weinmann, YVCOG Housing Rehab Coordinator at (509) 574-1550.

Optimize Your Computer for Peak Performance

By Rick Spada,
GIS Analyst/System Administrator



Keeping your computer running smoothly is important and can add years to it. These recommendations are for a computer running a Microsoft Operating system such as Microsoft XP. First is a brief description followed by instructions.

1.) Clean up disk errors once a week. Whenever a program crashes, or you experience a power outage, your computer may create errors on your computer's hard disk. Over time, the errors can slow your computer. Luckily, the Windows operating system includes a Disk Check program to check and clean any errors on your computer and keep it running smoothly.

In the Start menu, click My Computer. In the My Computer dialog box, right-click on the drive you wish to check for errors (for most of us, this will be the C: drive, unless you have multiple drives on your computer), and click Properties. In the Properties dialog box, click the Tools tab. In the Error-Checking section, press the Check Now... button. A Check Disk dialog box displays, as shown below. In the Check Disk dialog box, check all the check boxes. Click Start. You will see a message box that says you can schedule the disk check to start the next time you restart your computer. Click Yes. The next time you restart your computer, it will automatically run through a disk check before displaying your login screen. After the disk check finishes, Windows will automatically bring you to your login screen.

2.) Remove temporary files once a week. Your computer can pick up and store temporary files when you are looking at Web pages and even when you are working on files in programs, such as Microsoft Word. Over time, these files will slow your computer's performance. You can use the Windows Disk Cleanup screen to rid your computer of these dead-beat files.

In the Start menu, click My Computer. In the My Computer dialog box, right-click on the drive you wish to check for errors (for most of us, this will be the C: drive, unless you have multiple drives on your computer), and click Properties. In the Properties dialog box, click Disk Cleanup. Disk Cleanup will calculate how much space you can free up on your hard drive. After its scan, the Disk Cleanup dialog box reports a list of files you can remove from your computer, as pictured below. This scan can take a while depending on how many files you have on your computer. After the scan is complete, in the Disk Cleanup dialog box, click View Files to see what Disk Cleanup will throw out once you give it

the go-ahead. You can check and uncheck boxes to define what you wish to keep or discard. When ready, click OK. You can also select the More Options tab within the Disk Cleanup screen to look for software programs you do not use anymore. You then have the choice to remove these unused programs.

3.) Rearrange your data once a month. Your computer often breaks files side by side to increase the speed of access and retrieval. However, as files are updated, your computer saves these updates on the largest space available on the hard drive, often found far away from the other adjacent sectors of the file.

In your Start menu, click My Computer. In the My Computer dialog box, right-click on the drive you wish to check for errors (for most of us, this will be the C: drive, unless you have multiple drives on your computer), and click Properties. In the Properties dialog box, click the Tools tab, and then in the Defragmentation section, click Defragment Now.... In the Disk Defragmenter dialog box, select the Volume (most likely your Local Disk C:) at the top of the screen, and then click Analyze. After analyzing your computer, the Disk Defragmenter displays a message stating whether you should defragment your computer. Press Defragment to clean up your computer if necessary. The Disk Defragmenter will reorganize files by placing together and organizing them by program and size, as shown in Figure 5.

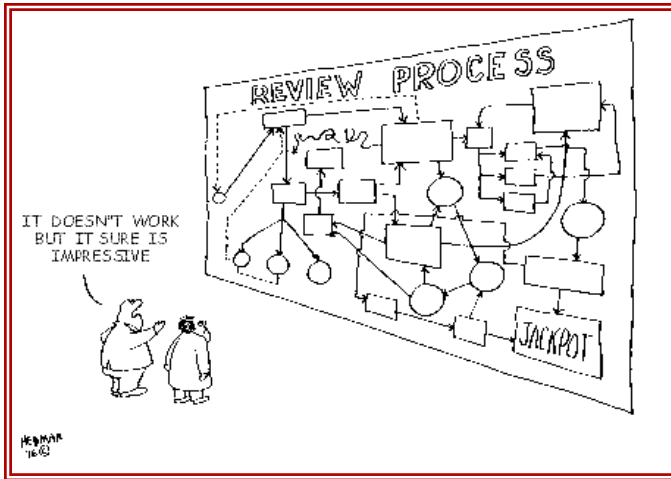
4.) Make Internet Explorer run faster by reducing the size of your web page history and do not save encrypted web pages.

In Internet Explorer, on the Tools menu, click Internet Options. In the Internet Options dialog box, in the History section, find the Days to keep pages in history: box. Type "1" in this box, as pictured in the image below. Click OK. In the Internet Options dialog box, click the Advanced tab. In the Settings section, scroll down to the Security section. Check the "Do not save encrypted pages to disk" option, as shown in the figure below. Click OK.

5.) Automate Microsoft Updates.

In your Start menu, click Control Panel. In the Automatic Updates dialog box, check the Automatic (Recommended) check box. You can define the time of day when your computer checks for updates. If the computer finds any updates, it will download and install them automatically for you. Click OK.

Finally, install antivirus and antispyware software. This will be a topic for a coming newsletter article.



Planning Grants Available

By Michael Buchanan, Senior Planner

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development – Growth Management Services announced competitive GMA planning grants for the 2007– 2009 biennium. The application deadline is Monday, September 17, 2007. There is a list of qualified planning subjects in the booklet titled **Competitive GMA Planning Grants for 2007– 2009 Biennium** that can be funded after the jurisdiction meets minimum requirements.

Emerging issues that impact all of Yakima County are the defining of criteria for Urban Growth Area (UGA) expansion and policies that govern the development of UGAs before they annex into their respective cities. A proposal was discussed with the Director of Growth Management Services, Leonard Bauer, to apply for funds for a facilitated meeting of the County-wide Planning Policy Committee. It was suggested that the meeting be sponsored by the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments but with a contracted facilitator to help the communities find solutions to these sometimes contentious issues.

If there are other issues that may be resolved in this type of forum please contact Michael Buchanan, Senior Planner at 509-574-1550 or by email at buchananm@yvcog.org.

Your YVCOG Staff:

J. Page Scott, Executive Director
 Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator
 Michael Buchanan, Senior Planner
 Drew Miller, Senior Transportation Planner
 Saadia Hassan, Planner
 Richard Spada, GIS Analyst/Systems Administrator
 Gene E. Weinmann, Housing Rehab Coordinator
 Jim Dixon, Housing Rehab Building Inspector
 Tamara Hayward, Housing Rehab Office Specialist
 Nancy Soules, Administrative Finance Officer
 Judy Price, Office Specialist



Meeting Highlights....

July 16, 2007

MPO/RTPO Executive Committee

- Approved Allan Road Comp Master Plan agreement between the Town of Naches, Yakima County, WSDOT and YVCOG.
- Announced Saadia Hassan, Planner began work on July 16.
- Approved contribution to TRANS-Action information booth at Central WA State Fair.
- Approved 2007 Enhancement Projects to submit to Enhancement Advisory Committee for funding, including William O. Douglas Trail, Naches Depot and Trail, and Toppenish Welcome Center.

YVCOG Executive Committee

- Approved new YVCOG Pay Plan, effective July 1, 2007.
- Approved June 2007 Budget Report.
- Approved draft 2008 Budget and Election Schedule.
- Approval to hire temporary employee to assist Administrative Finance Officer.
- Approved vouchers JUL-07-001 through JUL-07-021 for \$93,587.33.

YVCOG JUNE MEETINGS...

MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee

Thursday, August 9, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.
 311 North 4th Street, Suite 202
 (The 300 Building)
 Yakima, WA

YVCOG Executive Committee & MPO/RTPO Executive Committee & Policy Board

Monday, August 20, 2007 - 1:30 p.m.
 311 North 4th Street, Suite 202
 (The 300 Building)
 Yakima, WA

TITLE VI Notice to the Public
 YVCOG fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, see <http://www.yvcog.org/title6.pdf> or call (509) 574-1550.