



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

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509-574-1550
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Welcome!

2007 YVCOG Executive Committee Members

J. Page Scott, Executive Director

On January 17, the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG) General Membership elected the following people to the YVCOG Executive Committee:



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

This is the first year of our new expanded seven-member Executive Committee approved by the YVCOG General Membership in October.

Madelyn Carlson joins MPO/RTPO Executive Committee

By J. Page Scott, Executive Director

Madelyn Carlson, CEO of People For People, has been appointed to the Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organization (MPO/RTPO) Executive Committee. Madelyn's appointment fills the vacancy left by former People For People CEO, Marylyn Mason-Plunkett, after Ms. Mason-Plunkett accepted a position with Hope Link in Redmond, WA last fall.

The Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Executive Committee is comprised of the YVCOG Executive Committee + 3 appointed members representing business and transportation interests. State legislators from the 13th, 14th, and 15th legislative districts are all ex-officio members of the MPO/RTPO Policy Board. The MPO/RTPO Executive Committee meets monthly to address any transportation program matters, and then the "regular" YVCOG Executive Committee meetings begin right after the MPO/RTPO meeting is completed.

Welcome, Madelyn!

YVCOG Adds Asbestos Clearances to Housing Services Offered

By Gene Weinmann, Housing Rehab Coordinator

The YVCOG entered the Asbestos Provider arena in 2006 by adding Asbestos Surveys and Reports to its list of available housing rehabilitation services. We've recently taken an additional step and have added Asbestos Clearances and Reports as well.



Changes to Washington State's asbestos training, certification and testing over the last several years significantly impacted housing rehabilitation costs, and were instrumental in driving YVCOG's decision to begin providing asbestos services. Offering Asbestos Surveys and Reports, beginning in 2006, allowed the YVCOG to improve cost efficiencies while obtaining rapid determinations of asbestos-related issues. Adding Asbestos Clearances and Reports to our list of services will allow the YVCOG to conduct independent Clearance testing to ensure that affected homes are safe for occupancy, while verifying the integrity of the respective asbestos abatement firm's self-conducted Clearance Report.

The asbestos inspection and abatement (removal) process as it relates to YVCOG's housing rehabilitation programs follows a specific procedure:

- Each rehabilitation project receives a preliminary asbestos review by a Certified Asbestos Inspector (performed by YVCOG housing rehabilitation staff).
- An Asbestos Survey, if needed, is performed by YVCOG's Certified Asbestos Inspector.
- Survey results, including laboratory testing results on collected material samples, are compiled in a Good Faith Asbestos Survey Report (created by YVCOG's Certified Asbestos Inspector).
- A certified asbestos abatement contractor abates (removes) the affected asbestos-containing materials. Materials are abated based on the findings of the Good Faith Asbestos Survey Report.
- Following the abatement, the asbestos abatement firm conducts an Asbestos Clearance and develops a Clearance Report (optional).
- YVCOG conducts an independent Asbestos Clearance and develops a Clearance Report.
- Project moves forward with non-asbestos related construction work.

For the present, asbestos services will remain available solely to YVCOG-administered housing rehabilitation programs. Asbestos abatement services will continue to be provided by local asbestos certified firms.

Specific information regarding YVCOG-administered housing rehabilitation programs or asbestos services may be obtained by contacting Gene Weinmann, YVCOG Housing Rehab Coordinator at (509) 574-1550.

New STP Distribution Process Nearly Complete

By Drew Miller, Planner

Members of the Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) tasked with changing the Surface Transportation Program (STP) fund distribution process held their final meeting on January 25. The Subcommittee finished work on a competitive application that will now be presented to the full TAC and the MPO/RTPO Executive Committee for final adoption.

YVCOG's process of distributing regional STP funds must change in response to actions by the Legislature and Governor last year. They directed RTPOs that receive federal STP funding to distribute funds based on a prioritized competitive basis rather than by formula. It requires RTPOs to prioritize projects based on regional priorities such as growth management, congestion relief, safety, or economic development. While the Legislature intended for the changes to take place immediately, the Governor gave RTPOs time to thoughtfully change their STP distribution process. YVCOG must distribute funds based on a prioritized competitive basis effective with the development of the 2008 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs).

The STP Subcommittee has worked on creating a new STP regional distribution process for the past 7 months. The new competitive application has flexible questions and point scales based on whether the proposed project will create a new roadway or is an improvement to an existing facility.

If you have any questions about this process or would like to view a draft version of the proposed STP distribution process, please contact Drew Miller at millerd@yvco.org.



FEBRUARY MEETINGS...

MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 8, 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
Wednesday, February 21, 2007 at 1:30 p.m.
311 North 4th Street, Suite 202
(The 300 Building)
Yakima, WA



Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

(from Mary Kay Bailey, U.S. EPA: Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation)

Toppenish Sewer Plant Upgrade

By Michael Buchanan, Senior Planner

The City of Toppenish received good news in January about its request for funding their waste water treatment plant upgrade. The City has been weighing its options over the past year in order to comply with the US EPA's 2008 requirement to reduce ammonia from waste water discharges. The estimated cost of upgrading the facility is nearly \$14,000,000; that doesn't increase the capacity, but responds to a new discharge permit requirement.

The City of Toppenish, through its engineering firm, Gray & Osborne, researched funding options including the state revolving loan fund, Public Works Trust Fund, Ecology's Centennial Clean Water Fund, city bonding, and the Washington State Capital Budget. In addition, the YVCOG staff submitted an application for funding through the 2006 CDBG competitive grant process.

The City is beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel with the announcement that the Centennial Clean Water Fund is committed to over \$3,000,000 in grants and over \$8,000,000 in loans. The City expects to start construction soon and is grateful for any assistance it can secure in order to minimize sewer rate increases for its citizens.

Work Continues on Transportation Plan Update

By Drew Miller, Planner

The update of the Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan is halfway complete! A representative from The Transpo Group, YVCOG's consultant on updating the Plan, briefed the Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Executive Committee on January 17. Transpo has gathered existing baseline data, begun transportation modeling, held public workshops, sketched out some regional priorities and started defining potential strategies for the future.

The MPO/RTPO Executive Committee was informed that the highest priorities of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the general public were preserving existing roads, addressing congestion and safety, supporting economic development and providing mobility through transit. These regional priorities will be used to select potential strategies. The TAC will be working on recommendations to the MPO/RTPO Executive Committee to select a preferred strategy in March. It is anticipated that the final plan will be ready for adoption in June.

Free technical assistance available!

Are you trying to encourage specific smart growth techniques like transit-oriented development? Or direct your state department of transportation investments to better support smart growth? Are you looking to use smart growth to reach economic development goals? Do you need help ensuring that school investments help your state or community meet multiple goals? Do you need to retrofit a commercial corridor? Or coordinate your community's smart growth design with an active aging program?

The Development, Community, and Environment Division in U.S. EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation is responding to this need by issuing a request for applications for the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program. Through this program, a team of multidisciplinary experts will provide free technical assistance to communities, regions, or states that want to develop in ways that meet environmental and other local or regional goals.

Communities, regions, and states around the country are interested in building stronger neighborhoods, protecting their environmental resources, enhancing public health, and planning for development, but they may lack the tools, resources, or information to achieve these goals. EPA can help applicants overcome these roadblocks by providing evaluation tools and expert analysis.

EPA is soliciting applications from states or communities that want help with either policy analysis or public participatory processes. Selected communities will receive assistance in the form of a multi-day visit from a team of experts organized by EPA and other national partners to work with local leaders. Applications will be accepted until **March 8, 2007**.

For more information and application materials, please go to www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sgia.htm

Your YVCOG Staff:

- J. Page Scott, Executive Director
- Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator
- Michael Buchanan, Senior Planner
- Vacant, Senior Transportation Planner
- Drew Miller, 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

Careful What You Wish For...

by Brian Curtin, CTR Program Coordinator

"In 2006, the Washington State Legislature passed the Commute Trip Reduction Efficiency Act which requires local governments in those counties experiencing the greatest automobile-related air pollution and traffic congestion to develop and implement plans to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips. This regional plan has been prepared in accordance with RCW 70.94.527(6) ... in collaboration with all affected local jurisdictions, transit agencies, and other interested parties within the region. The Yakima Regional CTR plan supports the goals and policies of the regional transportation plan."

And so it begins. The paragraph above is the introduction to the Yakima Valley Regional CTR plan document currently being developed here at YVCOG. They say, "be careful of what you wish for, you might just get it!" Well, in this case we wished for a continuation of the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program here in the Yakima Valley and the Legislature granted our wish. The scope of the CTR program has been somewhat reduced in Yakima County. The original CTR legislation of 1991 affected large employers throughout the entire county. The 2006 CTR Efficiency Act requires that only large employers located within the urban growth area (UGA) encompassing the cities of Yakima, Selah and Union Gap are "affected employers." The three cities are designated as "affected jurisdictions" and are required to develop their own local CTR plans. Late last year, YVCOG contracted with the three affected jurisdictions through memorandums of agreement to prepare their individual CTR plans. Employers and jurisdictions that are currently CTR affected,

but are outside of the Yakima-Selah-Union Gap UGA have the opportunity to continue participation in the program on a voluntary basis.

These CTR plans, both local and regional, cannot be developed in a vacuum; therefore we will be reaching out to all interested parties including, but not limited to: affected jurisdictions, transit organizations (both public and private), chambers of commerce, planning commissions, and anyone else with a role providing commute options. The process of developing the local and regional plans is expected to take several months, culminating in delivery of the local plans to the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) in August 2007 for review. The plans will be reviewed by the RTPO and forwarded to the State CTR Board for final approval. The CTR Board will notify jurisdictions as to approval of their plans by February 1, 2008. Then the fun begins as jurisdictions will then begin the process of updating their CTR ordinances. As we move forward in the development of these plans, we will strive for community involvement in all aspects of the process. If you have suggestions, questions or concerns regarding this process, please do not hesitate to call Brian Curtin, CTR Program Coordinator at YVCOG at 509-574-1550 or email at curtinb@yvcog.org.

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.