

Volume 34...Issue 7
July 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:

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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



**HAPPY 4TH
OF JULY**

311 North 4th Street, Suite 202
Yakima, WA 98901
509-574-1550
FAX 509-574-1551

BIG Change Coming for YVCOG Newsletter!

Beginning with the August issue of the YVCOG's monthly newsletter, we will be sending it you by email in a PDF format. This change provides us the opportunity to offer you the most cost-efficient method possible to receive up-to-date information on YVCOG programs and activities, as well as other valuable information. A link to a **FREE** Adobe Acrobat website will be listed, if you are not able to open the PDF file.

There is an insert in this month's newsletter asking you to tell us how you would prefer to receive the YVCOG newsletter – by EMAIL or by MAIL. Please check the appropriate box and FAX it to Judy at (509) 574-1551.

Feel free to pass the newsletter along to others who may be interested. Thank you.

Community Development Block Grants

By Michael Buchanan, Senior Planner

It is time for Yakima cities that are eligible for the 2007 General Purpose Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to think about project selection. If you have questions about project eligibility or need assistance in putting a project together contact Michael Buchanan, YVCOG Senior Planner, at 509-574-1550 or by email at buchananm@yvcog.org.

What is the General Purpose grant?

General Purpose grants are made available annually through a competitive application process to assist Washington State small cities, towns and counties in carrying out significant community and economic development projects that principally benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

The grant provides funding for projects such as:

- Public facilities such as water, wastewater, storm sewer and streets;
- Community facilities, such as community centers, health care facilities and child care facilities;
- Housing Rehabilitation;
- Economic development, such as revolving loan funds, infrastructure and incubators;
- Comprehensive projects requiring a combination of eligible activities;
- Barrier removal for handicap accessibility.

Who is eligible?

Eligible applicants are non-entitlement cities and towns with less than 50,000 in population or counties with less than 200,000 in population. Non-eligible applicants include:

See **GRANTS**, continued on Page 2.....

GRANTS, *continued from Page 1.....*

- Non-profit organizations;
- Indian tribes;
- Special purpose organizations such as public housing authorities, port districts, community action agencies, and economic development councils.

However, eligible jurisdictions may choose to serve Indian tribes within their jurisdiction or involve other organizations in the operation of projects funded under the program.

Projects must principally benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Low- and moderate-income is defined as 80 percent of the county median income. Applicants may submit one request per fund each program year.

When is the actual application due?

The application due date for the 2007 General Purpose Grant will be in **mid-November 2007** for funding available in 2008.

Toppenish Completes 2005 Housing Rehabilitation Program, Begins New

By Gene Weinmann, Housing Coordinator

The 2005 City of Toppenish Housing Rehabilitation Program is nearing completion. The program targeted assisting 17 Toppenish families with housing rehabilitation, lead abatement and/or weatherization work. Actual accomplishments included completing 18 rehabilitation projects, 7 lead hazard projects and 9 weatherization projects, while successfully investing approximately \$538,000 in the City's low- to moderate-income housing stock.

The program was partially funded by a 2005 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED). The remainder of the funds were provided by the City and were maximized through program partnerships and by leveraging CTED funds.

The City's newly-funded 2007 housing program will target single-family, owner-occupied housing, and anticipates assisting 15-20 Toppenish families with housing rehabilitation, lead-abatement and weatherization activities. The program will substantially function as an extension to the 2005 program, thereby maintaining significant policy continuity while maximizing administrative efficiencies.

The YVCOG has been developing and administering housing rehabilitation and weatherization programs since 1984. YVCOG offers a variety of housing rehabilitation-related assistance to interested communities, ranging from identifying funding and developing grant applications to creating and administering customized low-income housing rehabilitation programs. The programs target health and safety problems, housing overcrowding, and structural and visual dilapidation of low-income, single-family homes. Typical program benefits include preservation of low-income housing stock, improved family health, reduced heating and cooling costs, neighborhood beautification and a strengthened tax base.

Additional information regarding YVCOG-administered housing rehabilitation programs may be obtained by contacting Gene Weinmann, YVCOG Housing Rehab Coordinator at (509) 574-1550 or email weinmann@yvco.org.

Executive Committee Finalizes Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan

By Drew Miller, Senior Transportation Planner



On June 18, 2007 the MPO/RTPO Executive Committee adopted the Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2007-2027. The Executive Committee acted upon a recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee and on input received from reviewing agencies and the

public. There was a 30-day comment period on the Draft Plan and comments received were addressed in the Final Plan.

The document is a long-range plan for both the Yakima Valley and the Yakima metropolitan area. An update to the Plan is required to maintain the region's eligibility to receive federal and state funding for transportation improvement projects. The Plan was last updated in 2003. The Final Plan includes an extensive list of fiscally constrained transportation improvements for the region. These include both improvements on state highways and regionally significant improvements that will be implemented by local jurisdictions.

Hard copies of the Final Plan are available upon request from YVCOG by calling (509) 574-1550 or by email at pricej@yvco.org. The Final Plan is also available on the project website at www.yvco.org/PlanUpdate.html.

YVCOG NEWSLETTER SURVEY

Tell us how you would like to receive your copy of the YVCOG Newsletter? Please fill in following information, check a box and Fax it to Judy at (509) 574-1551.
Thank you!

NAME: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

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PHONE: _____

FAX: _____

Please put an "X" in the appropriate box.



Google Earth Available for Free

By Rick Spada, GIS Analyst & Systems Administrator

Many people want the benefits that come with a geographic information system (GIS). However, most people do not find it feasible to purchase and install a GIS. This is mainly due to GIS software being expensive and requiring an expensive computer with fast processors and lots of memory. Due to the complexity of the software and the data behind it, GIS software also requires training and education. Thankfully, there is a geographical information program like Google Earth that is user friendly and needs little resources to operate. And it is **free!**

Google Earth combines the power of Google Search with satellite imagery, maps, terrain and 3D buildings to put the world's geographic information at your fingertips. The information is in 3D so you can zoom, tilt and rotate around the world. There is a "Fly To" capability where you can type in a specific address, the intersection of two streets, a city, a zip code, or a country and be sent there with a press of the search button.

Integrated within Google Earth is the feature Google Maps which allows the user to search for businesses in any area. The direction feature allows the user to find precise driving directions as well as a fly through of the route. There are various layers of mapping information available within Google Earth. With Google Earth, you can see 3D buildings from the ground up in many places around the world. Tilt the screen to see the buildings in 3D. Similarly, the terrain is also mapped in 3D, meaning you can see mountains, valleys and canyons in vivid detail.

There are other great features associated with Google Earth besides these. You will not be disappointed and it will feel like you have expensive GIS software installed on your home computer without spending a dime. Visit <http://earth.google.com>.

Your YVCOG Staff:

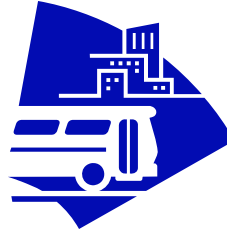
J. Page Scott, Executive Director
Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator
Michael Buchanan, Senior Planner
Drew Miller, Senior Transportation Planner
Vacant, Planner
Richard Spada, GIS Analyst/Systems Administrator
Gene E. Weinmann, Housing Rehab Coordinator
Jim Dixon, Housing Rehab Building Inspector
Tamara Hayward,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



You Can't Beat Free!...

By Brian Curtin, CTR Program Coordinator

Ahh, the thoughts that go through your mind when you're facing a newsletter deadline; it's a perfect 75 degrees outside and it's the first day of SUMMER! Today my thoughts are drifting towards all of the excuses I've heard for why folks don't ride the bus. Well, today I can counter all of those excuses with one simple answer, "Ride it because it's free!!!" At least for one week in July (July 2nd through July 7th, remember, no service on the 4th) and every Wednesday and Saturday throughout the summer. What better incentive to ride the bus could you ask for?



Your first step to freedom is acquisition of a Yakima Transit Bus Book (which is currently effective from July 2 through October 1 and available on all Yakima Transit busses, at the Transit Center on 4th Street between Walnut and Yakima Ave or call Yakima Transit at 575-6175 for a copy). Within the pages of this tome, you will find every bit of information required to make your transition from your SOV (single occupancy vehicle) to SMOV (Smart Multiple Occupancy Vehicle). You'll find that there are over 500 bus stops throughout the City of Yakima, Selah and Union Gap located about every two blocks along each bus route. One-way bus service is only half a buck, .35 cents if you're 6-17 years old and if you are a member of the 'Greatest Generation' (62 or older) or a person with disabilities or a Medicare card holder the fare is only a quarter. Little ones, 6 and under ride for free (be sure to bring an adult!) and transfers are also free. Monthly passes are even more economical, \$17 for adult, \$12 for Youths and \$5 for reduced fare. You can't fill your tank once for the price of a monthly pass! And the good folks of Selah and Union Gap can look forward to their new Commuter Routes being introduced in July. Visit the Yakima Transit website www.yakimatransit.org for additional information about these new service routes.

All of the routes are served by ADA accessible buses to accommodate passengers using mobility devices, such as wheelchairs. What more could you ask for? And if you want to ride your bike to the bus stop, all of the buses are equipped with bike racks. Your feet need never touch the ground (your bike, to bus, to work). For those with mobility impairments, Yakima Transit provides door-to-door transportation to pre-qualified riders. This program is called Dial-A-Ride and applications for the program can be acquired by calling 575-6054. For additional information about Yakima Transit call 575-6175, TTY 575-6008 or visit their website at www.yakimatransit.org.

Meeting Highlights....

June 18, 2007

MPO/RTPO Executive Committee

- *Approved FY2008 & 2009 WSDOT MPO/RTPO Agreement*
- *Approved WSDOT Commute Trip Reduction Agreement*
- *Adopted 2007-2027 Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Transportation Plan Approval*
- *Approved 2007 MTIP June Amendment*

YVCOG Executive Committee

- *Approved Monthly Budget Report*
- *Appointed 2007 Auditing & Investing Officer & Alternates by Resolution 2007-3*
- *Approved Comp Plan Contract Amendments for cities of Harrah, Mabton, Tieton, Toppenish & Wapato*
- *Approved Wapato CDBG Application Technical Assistance Contract*

YVCOG JUNE MEETINGS...

MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee

Thursday, July 12, 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, July 16, 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.