



MEMBER JURISDICTIONS:

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

YVCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

John P. Hodkinson, Jr., Chair
Regional Planning Commission
James A. Restucci, Vice Chair
Mayor Pro-Tem, Sunnyside
Mike Leita
Yakima County Commission
Rick Ensey
Yakima City Council
Dan Olson
Union Gap City Council
Loren Belton
Mayor, Toppenish
Velva Herrera
Mayor, Mabton



311 North 4th Street, Suite 202
Yakima, WA 98901
509-574-1550
FAX 509-574-1551
Website: www.yvcog.org



The City of Grandview's "Downtown Alive" project ranked high in "Tier 2"!

UPDATE: Local Transportation Projects for Federal Stimulus Funding Approved by Accountability Panel

By Page Scott, Executive Director



On March 5, YVCOG received notice that all eleven of the Yakima County region's local transportation projects identified for approximately \$5.6 million were accepted by the state's Local Oversight and Accountability Panel to receive federal ARRA funding. March 13, Governor Christine Gregoire issued a press release announcing the local project selections and the availability of project information on the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) website. A list of all local transportation projects selected for ARRA funding in Washington State is available at <http://wsdot.wa.gov/funding/stimulus>.

Other projects

One of the six other projects listed as next-in-line priorities for the region – beyond the initial \$5.6 million anticipated -- was identified by the Local Panel as a high priority "Tier 2" project. The Local Panel met in mid-March to identify the most promising Tier 2 projects in the event selected local projects surplus funds or are unable to meet the required schedule. Grandview's Downtown "Alive" revitalization project was selected as one of nine projects that could be ready to receive reallocated ARRA funds if available.

According to Kathleen Davis, WSDOT Local Programs, "We are hopeful that we won't need to reallocate funds, but the Panel decided to be ready with a short list in order to ensure maximum use of stimulus funds. We evaluated each region's Tier 2 priority array and selected projects that would sustain jobs and have a good chance to achieve construction





City of Tieton Submits Top-Ranked STP Rural Project

By Drew Miller, Senior Transportation Planner

Congratulations! On March 12, 2009 the Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee recommended that the City of Tieton–Summitview Road Improvement project be prioritized as the highest ranked STP Rural project. The City of Tieton requested \$400,000 in federal STP Rural funds for this project. YVCOG estimates that approximately \$496,703 in STP Rural funding will be available, but this amount is not yet secured and the actual amount available will not be known until YVCOG receives the Yakima Valley's annual 2009 STP Regional allocation, anticipated in April. The Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Executive Committee will allocate funding to projects once the funding picture becomes more clear. The City of Zillah submitted the second highest ranked project for their First Avenue Resurfacing & Safety Improvement project.

All local agencies in our Yakima County region eligible to receive STP Rural funding were notified when the call for projects was officially released in January. Applications were due to YVCOG by Friday, March 6, 2009.

The funds available are part of the annual STP Regional allocation to the Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO for regional prioritization and selection. STP Rural funds provide flexible funding that may be used by local agencies for transportation projects on any road classified as a rural major collector or higher classification. Generally the cities of Granger, Harrah, Mabton, Naches, Tieton, Wapato, Zillah and portions of Yakima County are eligible to receive STP Rural funding, but eligibility is determined by roadway functional classification and not city limit boundaries.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact YVCOG Senior Transportation Planner Drew Miller or YVCOG Executive Director Page Scott at 509-574-1550.

April Meetings

MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee
Thursday, April 9
10:00 a.m.
The 300 Building
311 North 4th St, Ste 202
Yakima, WA

YVCOG Executive Committee & MPO/RTPO Executive Committee & Policy Board
Monday, April 20
1:30 p.m.
The 300 Building
311 North 4th St, Ste 202
Yakima, WA

Great Meeting at Snipes Mountain Restaurant!

By Sarah Hyndman, Office Specialist



If you missed our March 18th General Membership Meeting in Sunnyside, you missed out on quite a treat! We introduced our new Land Use and Transportation Planner, Shawn Conrad, which allowed the Members to finally put her face to the voice on the phone. Marjorie Dahlstrom from Yakima County provided an update of the HOME Consortium proposed at the January 21st General Membership Meeting in Wapato. Later, a Question and Answer session resolved some underlying questions.

Snipes's customized gourmet chicken and pork tenderloin dinner complimented our meeting wonderfully. The nice meal and hospitality from the management and staff were excellent! To Jim and DeLessa Restucci, thank you for your assistance in making this meeting happen!

For more information on the proposed HOME Consortium, please contact Marjorie Dahlstrom at (509) 574-1524.

Our next General Membership Meeting is May 20th. Please get your reservations in early as seats fill up fast. You really won't want to miss this one! To make your reservations for the next meeting, please contact Sarah Hyndman at (509) 574-1550 or by email at hyndmans@yvco.org.

Time Flies...Let's Survey!

by Brian Curtin, CTR Program Coordinator



"Time flies when you're having fun," or so the saying goes. It's hard to believe, but we are quickly approaching our biennial Employer Survey of Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) affected employers.

This year's survey is scheduled to be conducted the week of April 20th through April 24th. This survey will be of particular importance, in that it will be our first since establishing our "baseline survey" in 2007 upon which our new goals and targets were determined. The 2006 CTR Efficiency Act established a target of 10% reduction in the Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) and a 13% reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) rates by 2011 within a CTR affected jurisdiction. The significant change in the CTR law narrowed the scope and affected area of the CTR program here in Yakima. Prior to the law change, all large employers (100+ employees) of Yakima County were CTR affected. With the change, only large employers within the boundaries of the urban growth areas of Yakima, Selah, Moxee and Union Gap are affected. This change took place in early 2008, so all employers who are currently CTR affected are still required to survey. To better prepare employers for the upcoming survey, a **mandatory** training session for all CTR affected employer's Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETC) was held on March 26, 2009.

For additional information regarding the CTR Survey process and CTR Program, please contact Brian Curtin at 509-574-1550 or curtinb@yvco.org.

Get Paid to Ride Your Bike to Work

Excerpted from Bicycle Alliance website



After 7 long years of work by Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) the Bicycle Commuter Tax Provision finally passed by being attached as an amendment to HR1425, now Public Law 110-343: The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (The Bush Administration's Sept 08 Stimulus bill). It went into effect January 1, 2009.

This provision allows employers to offer a transportation benefit package of \$20 a month to bicycle commuters. (The original bill called for \$80 and Blumenauer promises to try to increase the limit to \$80 in the future.)

A cyclist may receive \$20 for every month in which a bicycle is used for "the substantial portion of the travel" between their residence and place of employment. It is a substitute for any transit or parking benefits and may not be combined with them. If you have a multi-modal commute (bus/bike or train/bike) you currently have to choose which benefit to receive transit or bicycle. Representatives Blumenauer with encouragement from the League of American Bicyclists is also hoping to change that in the future.

The \$240 annual benefit may ONLY be used for

- the purchase of a bicycle
- bicycle improvements,
- bicycle repair or
- bicycle storage.

This Benefit may be offered by an employer as either a pre-tax exclusion, or as a subsidy.

- If it is offered as a subsidy, the employer pays the full cost.
- If it is offered as an exclusion, the employee pays the full cost, but the employer deducts it from the employee's gross pay before taxes are taken out, thus saving both the employee and the employer the income tax, SSI and FICA taxes on the exclusion.

All offices from single person offices to multinational corporations are eligible. Self employed workers are not eligible.



The League of American Bicyclists advocated for this provision, is advocating for improving it and is tracking the current status of the law. Keep an eye on www.bicyclealliance.org for more information on how this

new law can benefit you.

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.



Ecuadorian woman near crater Lake Quitola

Drew Is No Longer In Peru

YVCOG Senior Planner, Drew Miller, has safely returned to work after taking the entire month of February off to visit Peru and Ecuador. The highlights of his trip were visiting the beaches of Peru and Ecuador, trekking six days to reach Machu Picchu and summiting the 19,347 foot volcano Cotopaxi in Ecuador.

Drew is now available to assist you with any land-use or transportation issues that may arise, just give him a few minutes in case he forgets what a Comprehensive Plan is or what CMAQ stands for....it was a long trip.



Left: Original Inca wall with seismic features



Above Right: Transportation infrastructure in Guayagil, Ecuador

MAY 20:

General Membership Meeting

Location & Program: TBD

****Please make your RSVP early.**



Streamlining Mixed-Use Infill Development

By Shawn Conrad, Land Use and Transportation Planner

During the last decade, there has been a growing trend of suburban dwellers moving to newly revitalized downtowns. One of the main tools that planners and developers have been using countrywide to revitalize downtowns has been mixed-use infill development.

Mixed-use infill development combines two or more land uses into one development project, often in one building, and is located in underutilized land in existing downtown areas. Projects combining residential and commercial (retail or office) uses are the most common. Done properly, mixed-use development can contribute to a more vibrant downtown that is less dependent on auto use.

Mixed-use development can be challenging both for cities and developers. Streamlining development review processes can go a long way toward making mixed use more feasible. In that spirit, the Washington State legislature amended the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) in 2003 to add a section (RCW 43.21C.229) designed to encourage mixed-use infill development in areas where cities and counties are struggling to meet planned development densities and intensities.

To take advantage of this rule, cities and towns can propose a categorical exemption for future mixed-use infill projects. The city would then complete a SEPA environmental review for the proposed categorical exemption. Once approved, the categorical exemption would allow future mixed-use infill pro-



Continued Next Column...

Streamlining Mixed-Use Continued...

jects to bypass SEPA environmental review requirements. This results in a faster and more affordable development review process for mixed-use infill, and can encourage these types of projects within the municipality.

For more information about categorical exemptions for mixed-use infill development, consult Section 2.4.3.4 of the SEPA Handbook, available at www.ecy.wa.gov, or contact Shawn Conrad at conrads@yvco.org.

Local Projects Approved from Page 1

within the year. The Panel agreed to make every effort to keep any large surplus funds within the region, but will make decisions based on ready projects and job creation."

The Local Panel's Tier 2 listing included Grandview's "Downtown Alive" project among 9 projects totaling \$8 M in no particular order. Other projects from a region's prioritized list may be considered for additional ARRA funds depending upon readiness. Again, Ms. Davis wrote on behalf of the Local Panel, "*It is not our intent to allocate small amounts of funding immediately upon release from, for example, a lower than expected bid. The panel plans to meet the first week of May and will be evaluating the progress of the ARRA projects to evaluate progress and available funds.*"

For more information, please contact J. Page Scott, YVCOG Executive Director, at (509) 574-1550 or email scott@yvco.org. The list of projects submitted to WSDOT is available on the YVCOG website at www.yvco.org.



Washington Trivia Corner!!!

These are just some quirky fun facts about Sunnyside, Washington.

The summer of 1859, Ben Snipes drove his cattle into the Lower Valley. He built a modest log cabin managing his growing empire of over 35,000 cattle. Known as Snipes Mountain, travelers and fellow ranchers found his cabin a haven from the elements and good meal.

As a monument to our Northwest Cattle King, his cabin rests in Sunnyside City Park. For more information, see Sunnyside's website at <http://www.ci.sunnyside.wa.us/>.

Your YVCOG Staff:

J. Page Scott, Executive Director
Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator
Vacant, Senior Planner
Drew Miller, Senior Transportation Planner
Shawn Conrad, Land Use/Transportation Planner
Vacant, GIS Analyst/Systems Administrator
Gene E. Weinmann, Housing Rehab Coordinator
Jim Dixon, Housing Rehab Building Inspector
Tamara Hayward, Housing Rehab Office Specialist
Nancy Soules, Senior Accountant

