

Yakima Valley Regional Transportation Plan Update Summary of March 19, 2007 MPO/RTPO Executive Committee Meeting

At the March 19, 2007 MPO/RTPO Executive Committee meeting, The Transpo Group presented the process for defining and selecting a recommended transportation strategy for the Metropolitan/Regional Transportation Plan (M/RTP or Plan). The presentation incorporated comments and direction from the March 8 TAC meeting.

A recommended strategy for the regional transportation plan is needed since funding will not likely be available for all of the identified improvements within the next 20 years. The development of a recommended strategy and plan builds on the previous priorities established by the TAC and Executive Committee based on public input and agency goals and objectives. At the meeting, the list of key committed improvements that are underway or have previously been established as having a strong regional commitment was summarized. Optional strategies to address existing and forecast deficiencies also were reviewed. The results from the technical evaluation of travel forecasts for the metropolitan area were presented to the Executive Committee. This included summaries of forecast roadway and intersection operational deficiencies under the various alternatives for 2027. Summaries of key performance measures, such as the total amount of travel and the overall level of travel delays, also were provided for the metropolitan area. Outside of the metropolitan area, the analysis was more qualitative, since the traffic volumes are lower and congestion problems are more localized.

The preliminary recommended transportation strategy was summarized to include the following:

- ❖ Maintain and preserve prior investments in the regional transportation system
- ❖ Complete transportation projects that are underway or have previously been established as having a strong regional commitment
- ❖ Focus on spot or corridor improvements that resolve operational and safety issues
- ❖ Invest in selected widening or construction of new corridors to accommodate forecast travel demands, shift traffic from existing congestion locations, and to support better access to the major regional highway system
- ❖ Enhance transit and transportation demand management programs to better serve the local community needs and to reduce overall traffic volumes

- ❖ Improve special needs transportation services, especially outside the metropolitan area
- ❖ Construct high priority components and missing links of the regional non-motorized transportation system, that are not addressed by other transportation improvements
- ❖ Reference other regionally significant projects that could be funded at a later date
- ❖ Support local agency projects to improve the overall mobility for the communities and reduce the local traffic demands on the regional system

The Executive Committee asked questions and discussed the recommended strategy. The next steps in developing the Plan were presented, including completing the list of higher priority projects, conducting a planning level environmental review, air quality analyses, and preparing a regional fiscal analysis. The draft Plan is scheduled for completion and presentation to the TAC and Executive Committees at their May 2007 meetings.