

Staff Report to MPO/RTPO Executive Committee

MTP/RTP Update

November 20, 2006

Agenda Item: Public Participation Plan

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Executive Committee adopt the draft Public Participation Plan for the MTP/RTP update with one recommended revision. The recommended revision is an addition of language related to continual evaluation of YVCOG's public participation methods. Adoption of the Public Participation Plan will meet SAFETEA-LU and other federal requirements for a public participation plan for the Yakima Valley Regional Transportation Plan update. The 48-day comment period on the draft Public Participation Plan met the requirement of a minimum 45-day comment period.

The Public Participation Plan as recommended for adoption is attached.

Background

Federal law requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) adopt a public participation plan for their regional transportation planning process. The following are key elements:

- A 45-day comment period on the draft Public Participation Plan is required prior to adoption.
- A public participation plan must be in place prior to MPO adoption of transportation plans addressing SAFETEA-LU provisions.
- SAFETEA-LU requires that the public participation plan be developed in consultation with all interested parties (defined as citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties).
- SAFETEA-LU requires the use of visualization techniques in the public participation process, to the maximum extent practicable.
- SAFETEA-LU requires that public information be made available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web,

The draft Public Participation Plan identifies outreach and involvement strategies, including the project website, news releases, and the schedule of project TAC, Executive Committee, and public meetings. The draft Public Participation Plan is designed to meet the requirements outlined above, as well as inform and invite comment from interested parties (as defined by SAFETEA-LU) and diverse populations.

The consultant team worked with YVCOG staff to develop the draft Public Participation Plan. The draft Plan was issued on September 29, 2006, and the comment period ended on November 17, 2006 (a total of 48 days). A press release sent to local media announced issuance of the draft Public Participation Plan; YVCOG also sent out public notice that the document was available for review. During the comment period, the draft Plan was available on the project website, at the Yakima Regional Library Downtown and Sunnyside branches, and at the YVCOG office. Comments on the draft Public Participation Plan were accepted via the project website, email, or writing to YVCOG.

Comments on the Draft Plan

Comments on the draft Public Participation Plan included:

- Comments from WSDOT regarding providing vital documents in Spanish.

- WSDOT also provided an example public participation plan and called attention to the section on evaluation.

Recommended Revision

The recommended revision to the draft Public Participation Plan is to add the following language after the last paragraph on page 6:

“YVCOG continually works to improve its public participation processes by identifying strengths and weaknesses in its methods, gauging the level of participation of stakeholders and interested parties, and modifying its methods accordingly.”

Addendum to the Staff Report to MPO/RTPO Executive Committee MTP/RTP Update

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Additional Comment on the Draft Plan

After meeting packets were mailed out and meeting materials posted on the web, two additional comments on the draft Public Participation Plan were received. The comments came from the same person, a member of the general public, and suggested two changes.

- The commenter suggested expanding the list of stakeholders to include the following groups:
 1. Chinook Cycling Club
 2. Mt. Adams Bicycle Club
 3. Yakima Greenway Foundation (al@yakimagreenway.org)
 4. Cowiche Canyon Conservancy (tecoleman@nwinfo.net)
 5. Yakima City Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (DHuycke@yvcc.cc.wa.us)
 6. Yakima Valley Bicycle-Pedestrian Network (YakimaBikePedNet@aol.com)
 7. Yakima Valley Trolleys (maryc@wolfenet.com)
 8. Yakima County Planning Division c/o Michael Kerins Long Range Planning Manager Yakima County Dept. of Public Services 4th floor County Courthouse Yakima, WA 98901 (michael.kerins@co.yakima.wa.us)

- The commenter suggested establishing an email listserv to which the public could subscribe.

Recommended Revision

No revisions to the Public Participation Plan are recommended. The Public Participation Plan gives definitions for stakeholders but does not include a list of specific parties or groups that are identified as stakeholders for the Yakima Valley Regional Transportation Plan. It is recommended that the parties identified above be added to the stakeholder list for the project.

Any party that wishes to may notify YVCOG via phone, email, or the project website comment form, and be included in the list of stakeholders who receive project information.