



Why is the Yakima Valley Regional Transportation Plan being updated?



YVRTP Update
Project Fact Sheet
Fall 2006

Quick Facts

- The Yakima Valley Regional Transportation Plan addresses future transportation needs over the next 20 years, to ensure the timely and efficient movement of people and goods.
- Yakima County is Washington State's seventh most populous county, with a population of just over 230,000, and is expected to grow by between 50,000 and 100,000 residents over the next 20 years. The area is also a burgeoning commercial/industrial center and a regional tourist attraction.
- The Regional Transportation Plan includes a list of future transportation improvement projects in the valley. This list will be updated with input from the public.
- An approved Plan is required for compliance with new federal and state laws, and for the region to be eligible for federal and state funds for transportation improvements.
- Public participation is a key component of the update. The Draft Public Participation Plan for the update is available for comment at www.yvcog.org/PlanUpdate.html until November 17, 2006. Public review copies are also available at the Yakima Valley Library Downtown Branch, the Sunnyside Library, and the YVCOG office.

What is the Regional Transportation Plan?

- The Regional Transportation Plan is a planning document that addresses future transportation needs for the Yakima Valley over a 20-year planning period.
- The Plan looks at forecasted population, employment, and tourism growth, and identifies future improvements to achieve the timely and efficient movement of people—such as residents, employees, and tourists—and goods—such as agricultural products and other freight.
- In addition to roadway needs, the Plan addresses issues such as safety, security, programs to improve the operational efficiency of the transportation system, pedestrian and bicycle transportation, public transportation, the environment, and strategies to reduce the amount of travel throughout the region.
- An approved Regional Transportation Plan is needed so the region can remain eligible for state and federal transportation improvement funds. The Plan also addresses compliance with air quality regulations, which in turn affects funding eligibility.

- The full name of the Plan is the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Regional Transportation Plan, or MTP/RTP, but for the sake of simplicity it is referred to as the Regional Transportation Plan.

Why is an update needed?

- The current Plan was adopted in 2003. Federal and state laws require periodic updates to the Plan.
- In 2005, the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law. The Plan update must address new SAFETEA-LU requirements, including planning for individual security/safety and homeland security as related to the transportation system.
- The Plan update must also address state transportation planning requirements related to the Growth Management Act (GMA) and Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) laws.

Who is responsible for the planning effort?

- The Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG) is designated by both the federal and state governments as the responsible party for updating the Plan. Member jurisdictions of the YVCOG include Grandview, Granger, Harrah, Mabton, Moxee, Naches, Selah, Sunnyside, Tieton, Toppenish, Union Gap, Wapato, Yakima, Yakima County, and Zillah.

How does planning for future transportation facilities occur?

- The planning process will look at forecasts for future population and employment growth in the region, and where within the region new residents and businesses are likely to locate. These are known as land use forecasts.
- The regional travel forecasting model (a computerized model) will be updated to forecast future transportation demands in the region based on the land use forecasts.
- Several scenarios for transportation improvements will be developed. These scenarios will be evaluated and a preferred scenario for the region will be defined with public input.
- A list of future transportation improvement projects to serve the region will be generated based on the preferred scenario.

What is the timeline for the planning process?

- The planning process will be completed in June 2007, with land use modeling and the development of transportation improvement scenarios beginning in the fall of 2006.
- Transportation modeling of the scenarios, the definition of a preferred scenario, and drafting of the updated Plan will occur during this winter and spring 2007.
- The new Plan is to be adopted by July 2007 in order for YVCOG to comply with SAFETEA-LU legislation.

What opportunities are there for public involvement?

- The project website at www.yvcog.org/PlanUpdate.html includes an online comment form. Comments may also be sent to:

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- Public workshops will be held in December 2006, in both the upper and lower Yakima Valley. Meetings of the Yakima Valley MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Executive Committee are also open to the public. The project website will include notification of meeting dates.

How can I get more information?

Project website: www.yvcog.org/PlanUpdate.html

Phone: (509) 574-1550

Email: scottjp@yvcog.org

Information in Spanish is available by calling 509-574-1550 and asking for the Spanish extension

¿Cómo se puede obtener información en español?

Para obtener información en español sobre este proyecto de planificar para el transporte regional, llame al (509) 574-1550 y pida al extensión de teléfono de español.

If you need special accommodations to participate in a meeting or materials in an alternative format, please call YVCOG at (509) 574-1550 by 10:00 AM three days prior to the meeting. For TTY users, please use the State's toll-free relay service, 7-1-1, and ask the operator to dial (509) 574-1550.