



# Yakima Valley Conference of Governments

## *Regional Solutions Newsletter*

www.yvcog.org

509-574-1550

Convener, Catalyst and Resource

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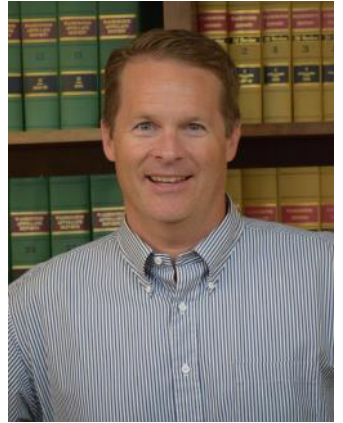
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## Projects and People... Building Healthy Cities and a Healthy Valley

### Projects

Whether they be road, water, or sewer projects, it's where the rubber meets the road. At YVCOG, we don't build the projects in your jurisdictions; we help connect you to the funding sources to build those projects. Building those projects is getting more expensive. We know that it's hard for you to approve tax or utility rate increases to fund critical infrastructure, when many of your residents are already cost-burdened.



### People

In 2014, nearly half of the households in Yakima County were either in poverty or were "Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, and Employed ("ALICE"). Per the United Way, ALICE households earn more than the federal poverty level but less than the cost of living (United Way ALICE Report, 2016 Update for the Pacific Northwest). 'ALICE' households have no money for savings, leaving them vulnerable to unexpected expenses.

### Solutions

This summer you'll begin hearing more from us about our "Healthy Cities, Healthy Valley" campaign. This campaign is about health in the physical, social and mental sense; it's also about the fiscal health of your city. We'll be working locally with your staff to suggest how re-thinking your capital project can enhance other priorities within your community. These priorities could include access to broadband, trails and sidewalks to enhance walkability, and other features to strengthen your downtown economy.

Every community in the valley deserves a lively, walkable downtown. And every city budget should accommodate your city's basic needs while also providing some funds for quality-of-life projects. **YVCOG will help you get there**, with a clear-eyed focus on **MAXIMIZING** your limited dollars and **STRETCHING** them further where it makes sense.

Give me a call or send an email to find out more. 509-574-1550 or [info@yvcog.org](mailto:info@yvcog.org)



P.S. - Inspiration for Healthy Cities, Healthy Valley drawn from [strongtowns.org](http://strongtowns.org). Check them out!





Dr. Yami Lancaster and Kate Gottlieb share the vision of making the Yakima Valley a healthier place by bringing wellbeing leaders together for one common goal, **“Make Yakima the Healthiest County in the Nation!”**

The Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings data shows that Yakima County is ranked 38 of 39 for poorest health factors in Washington State. The **Yakima Health and Wellbeing Coalition** wants to improve that ranking, and why not a Blue Zone in Yakima to achieve that?

**A Blue Zones Project® is a community-led well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to a community’s environment, policy, and social networks.** Established in 2010, Blue Zones Project is inspired by Dan Buettner, a National Geographic Fellow and New York Times best-selling author who identified five regions of the world—or Blue Zones®—with the highest concentration of people living to 100 years or older. Blue Zones Project incorporates Buettner’s findings and works with cities to implement policies and programs that will move a community toward optimal health and well-being. Currently, 42 communities in nine states have joined Blue Zones Project.

**Yakima is preparing for the Blue Zones Project team to visit April 30 – May 2, 2018** for a Site Visit to assess the motivation, leadership and readiness of our community to take on this transformational effort. The visit will include a presentation from Blue Zones on the morning of May 1st that we encourage anyone to attend. In addition, there will be sector-specific focus groups, and a Wine at 5 social event. The goal of the visit is for the Blue Zones Project team to get to know our community and assess our ability to become a Blue Zones Project community and for our leadership to determine if the program is right for us.

**Anyone who wishes to become involved in this transformative project can join** through the chamber website. We are very excited about this amazing project and what it could do for our city!

**Find out more at [go.bluezonesproject.com/Yakima](http://go.bluezonesproject.com/Yakima)**



- **What are Blue Zones?** [CLICK HERE](#) to watch the video.
- **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings.** [CLICK HERE.](#)
- **Washington State 2018 Health Assessment.** [CLICK HERE.](#)





## A 21st Century Partnership

We invite cities to join Next Century Cities and strengthen the ability of communities nationwide to prosper and compete in the 21st century. Next Century Cities supports mayors and community leaders across the country as they seek to ensure that everyone has fast, affordable, and reliable internet access.

**Elevating the Conversation:** we work with leaders and their communities to share stories. Cities that have or would like to develop truly next-generation networks are visionary cities, and their leaders recognize what it takes to be competitive in the 21st century. Next Century Cities works with these leaders and their cities to make the case nationally and within communities that next-generation internet is an essential infrastructure that can deliver transformative benefits to communities today.

**Supporting Cities:** communities stepping into the 21st century through next-generation networks face myriad challenges. It is essential to provide crucial support to facilitate these innovative projects. Next Century Cities and our members work to overcome obstacles to success.

**Providing Tools for Success:** developing a next-generation network is a daunting task for a city of any size. It is important that communities have access to resources, advice, and tools to develop effective broadband internet networks. We are committed to developing and aggregating resources to guide new projects, as well as tools to help those already equipped with this infrastructure better leverage their networks to yield community benefits.

We are excited to continue working with diverse towns and cities across the country to lead a new conversation on what it will take to compete and thrive in the 21st century.

## Next Century Cities: Connecting Communities

Next Century Cities supports mayors and community leaders across the country as they seek to ensure that everyone has fast, affordable, and reliable internet access.

Across the country, innovative municipalities are recognizing the importance of leveraging gigabit level internet to attract new businesses and create jobs, improve health care and education, ensure civic participation, and connect residents to new opportunities. Next Century Cities is committed to celebrating these successes, demonstrating their value, and helping other cities to realize the full power of truly high-speed, affordable, and accessible broadband.

## Our Principles

Next Century Cities believes that there is no single pathway to a smart, effective approach to next-generation broadband. What matters is meaningful choice, dedicated leadership, and smart collaboration. Our members are committed to the following principles:

**High-Speed Internet Is Necessary Infrastructure:** fast, reliable, and affordable internet – at globally competitive speeds – is no longer optional. Residents, schools, libraries, and businesses require next-generation connectivity to succeed.

**The Internet Is Nonpartisan:** because the internet is an essential resource for residents and businesses in all communities, the provision of fast, reliable, and affordable internet transcends partisanship. This collaboration welcomes leaders of all affiliations and beliefs who believe fast, reliable, and affordable high-speed internet access is essential to secure America's internet future.

**Communities Must Enjoy Self-Determination:** broadband solutions must align with community needs—there is no perfect model that is universally appropriate. Towns and cities should have the right to consider all options - whether public, nonprofit, corporate, or some other hybrid - free from interference.

Next Century Cities  
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YVCOG PRESENTS

# Building Blocks for Successful Grants



## WORKSHOP

**TUESDAY, APRIL 17th, 2018**

**2:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the Yakima Arboretum**

1401 Arboretum Drive Yakima, WA 98901

### TOPICS:

- **Strategic planning for Capital Facilities Projects**
- **Ideas you can use to develop winning projects and access various Washington State funding programs for local infrastructure projects**
- **Information targeted specifically for elected officials and public works staff**

### WORKSHOP BY:

#### **Stevan Gorcester**

Steve Gorcester previously served as Director of the WA State Transportation Improvement Board for 15 years. His programs invested more than \$1.5 billion in street and sidewalk repairs across Washington. After years of risky over-programming, Steve established long-term financial security and introduced strong incentives for sustainable design. Steve now works as consultant and teaches a popular course on Lean government.

*Special thanks and acknowledgement to the U.S. Economic Development Association (EDA) for project funding.*

**RSVP: Call 509-574-1550 or email [info@yvcog.org](mailto:info@yvcog.org)**

**Cost is \$30.00 per person. Reservation Deadline: April 10, 2018.**

**YVCOG can invoice attendees. First-come, first-served as space is very limited.**



Grant readiness is more than needing and wanting money for your important project. Most grants are competitive. Positioning your jurisdiction to win is crucial.

Experienced grant writers agree these two basic questions are key:

- Is your jurisdiction ready to apply for grants?
- Is your jurisdiction or partners ready to manage a grant if it receives one?

If your answer to both isn't "yes" then you're not quite ready to compete, especially for government grants. But don't worry....**YVCOG can help get you GRANT READY!**



### Considerations

- What is your motivation for pursuing the grant?
- Does the grant fit with your mission statement and Comprehensive Plan goals?
- Do you have qualified, experienced staff or partners to deliver the grant activities?
- How will you involve key stakeholders?
- Can you or your partners accurately track the grant funds?
- How will you measure success at the end of the grant?
- How will you sustain the program or project after the grant ends?

### Be Proactive!

Don't chase the money, pursue your jurisdiction's goals instead. Funders see their grant as an investment and they won't invest in a project that doesn't look well planned. The more your mission, vision, and verifiable needs match the purpose of the grant, the more competitive your proposal will be.

According to the Puget Sound Grantwriters Association (PSGA), a staff grantwriter's "success rate" depends on both the grantwriter's professional skills and the organization's readiness to submit the proposals in the first place.



**Factors that influence the success rate of proposals funded include the following:**

***Has the organization set realistic targets for achievement?***

***Does the organization have strong programs that meet a clear community need?*** Grant proposals have a much greater chance of being funded if they can offer a compelling solution to a well-documented community problem.

***Sustainability: Does the organization have a plan in place to maintain the program or project after the grant?***

***Is the organization structurally and fiscally sound?*** Sometimes the best-written grant proposal can be rejected because the funder has serious questions about the organization's capacity to carry out the scope of work described in the proposal.

***Has the grantwriter been involved in the budget-making process?*** Too often, grantwriters are asked to bring in a certain amount of revenue based on the needs of the organization's budget, rather than on what is reasonable and possible.

YVCOG can help you assess your grant readiness and prepare for success! Contact us to explore this in more depth.

**509.574.1550**





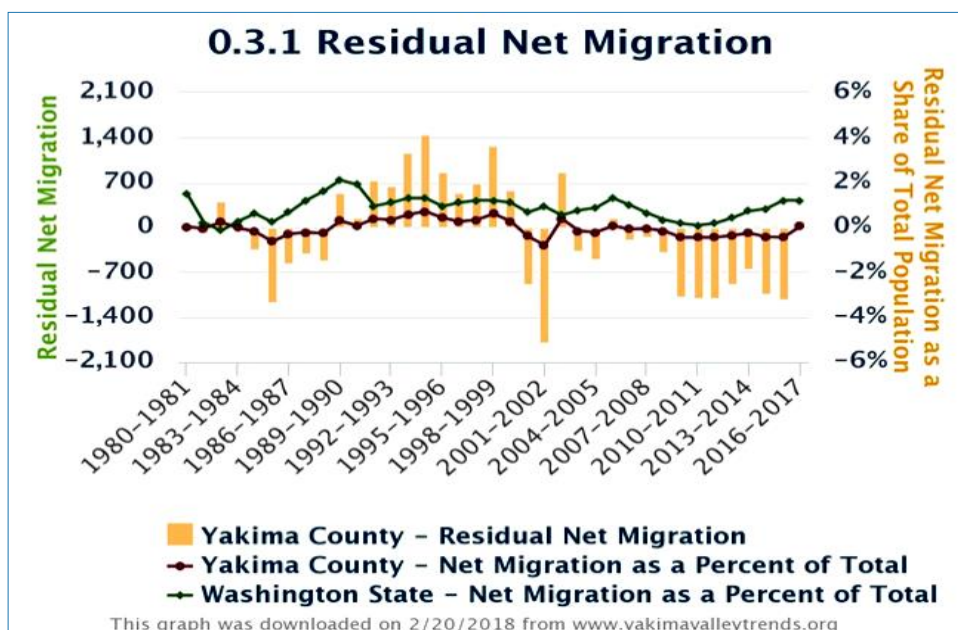
# Population Trends and Planning for Change

Understanding communities starts with understanding their essential demographics: How large are the populations? How fast are they growing? What, and how large, are the various parts of the population, such as age, gender, marital status, and race? This section offers that introduction to Yakima County via data that largely comes from annual surveys.

For example, net migration can be a measurement of the popularity and livability of an area. The elements of a community that make it “livable” include availability and types of jobs offered; food and dining; recreation and leisure activities; housing affordability; public school systems, among others. These elements make a place desirable for those already living there, and entice people from other parts of the country to consider moving into the area.

For public entities, scrutinizing this indicator can provide insight into demands for services, for school seats, for housing – rental or owner-occupied, for roads and other forms of transportation, and for electric utilities. In the private sector, changes in the population will change the demand for goods and services. For local governments, population change impacts tax revenues. While we typically think of change and increases as synonymous, population can decrease, resulting in fewer public demands, as well as a decrease in tax revenues.

Since the year 2000, there has consistently been negative net migration from one year to the next. Attracting and retaining talented professionals has been a challenge during the past decade but we are starting to see that change,” said Jonathan Smith, Executive Director of the Yakima County Development Association. There has been a lot of focus in the community on investing in and developing major quality of life projects,” said Smith. “I think we are starting to see that influence people’s decision to make the Yakima Valley their home.”



## Union Gap, WSDOT host Open House for S.U.G. Interchange / Regional Beltway Projects

By Alan Adolf, YVCOG Transportation Program Manager & Dennis Henne, Union Gap Public Works Director

The City of Union Gap and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) hosted a combined public open house style meeting to provide information, and receive comments, on the City's Regional Beltway Connector Project and WSDOT's South Union Gap Interchange Project.

Over 30 people attending the meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup> at Union Gap's Ahtanum Park's Facility Building to discuss current planning and funding activities for the two projects that will transform the southern lands of Union Gap and improve access to Interstate 82, State Route 97 and lands west along Ahtanum road.

The proposed Regional Beltway will provide an alternative north-south, limited access connection on the west side of Union Gap through currently undeveloped commercial and industrial property. The new road will connect Main Street, near the I-82 and US 97 Interchange (South Union Gap Interchange), northwesterly to Ahtanum Road.

The primary purpose of the beltway is to efficiently move traffic and freight between the South Union Gap Interchange and the business and industrial areas off of Ahtanum Road, thereby improving travel to and from the western areas of Union Gap and the Upper Yakima Valley.

Currently, vehicles use the heavily traveled Main Street and Valley Mall Boulevard arterials, passing directly through the city's active commercial districts and school zones.

The City has hired J-U-B ENGINEERS, Inc. of Kennewick to provide engineering service. The Langdon Group, a division of J-U-B, is managing the public engagement efforts.

[https://uniongapwa.gov/public-works/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/COUG\\_Beltway\\_OpenHouse\\_Handout.pdf](https://uniongapwa.gov/public-works/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/COUG_Beltway_OpenHouse_Handout.pdf)

Among the topics of discussion were the presentation of four alternative connections of "Phase 2" (Union Gap's Beltway) and Phase 3 (WSDOT's Interchange) that heads west to the primary northwesterly alignment that will eventually connect to "Phase 1" improvements completed last year in the vicinity of Longfiber Road. The public attendees were asked to comment on their preferred alignment. This information will be shared with WSDOT & Union Gap policy makers to finalize alignments and project scopes.

The City of Union Gap has been tentatively awarded over \$1.9 Million from the Washington State Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) to complete preliminary engineering and right of way activities. City officials are still seeking over \$15 million in construction funds to complete the project. WSDOT's South Union Gap Interchange Project was fully funded under the 2015 Connecting Washington State Transportation Bill and will begin construction in 2019.



### Main Street connection evaluated alternatives

