

YAKIMA VALLEY MPO/RTPO  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Minutes of January 7, 2016

*Present:* Gary Ekstedt, Chair, Yakima County; Santos Trevino, Vice Chairman, City of Grandview; Cus Arteaga, City of Grandview; Mike Meskimen, G&O; Mike Battle, HLA; Joe Henne, City of Selah; Dennis Henne, City of Union Gap; Menglou Wang, City of Wapato; Paul Gonseth, WSDOT SCR; Alan Adolf, Yakima County; Brett Sheffield, City of Yakima; Ardele Steele, City of Zillah; Annie Eagle-claw, Yakama Nation Pahto; Karen Cunningham, Yakama Nation; YVCOG Staff: Larry Mattson, Executive Director; Deb LaCombe, MPO/RTPO Manager; Brian Curtin, CTR Program Coordinator; and Tami Hayward, Office Specialist.

*Call to Order and Introductions* Chairman Gary Ekstedt called the January 7, 2016, MPO/RTPO TAC meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. at the Grandview Community Center, 812 Wallace Way, Grandview, WA.

*Approval of Minutes* Mr. Trevino moved to approve the updated minutes of the December 10, 2015 meeting. Ms. Steele seconded. The motion passed.

*Director's Update – Larry Mattson* YVCOG Activities – Will be taking nominees for new Executive Committee members at the January General Membership meeting. Loren Belton will be retiring from the Committee, and will, most likely, be replaced by Janice Gonzales.

In March or April, the new Executive Committee will be having a retreat to focus on creation of a Strategic Plan.

Working on an inter-local agreement, and Bylaws, for the MPO/RTPO Policy Board.

Mr. Mattson will be leaving Saturday to attend the TRB meetings in Washington DC next week.

VERG – Union Gap is in the process of working with them on a Beltway project. First deliverable due in late January. Mr. Mattson inquired as to whether there were any lower valley cities who would be interested in having a mock-up visualization done in the near future – doesn't have to be a transportation project. Mr. Stiles, from VERG, will be making a presentation to the General Membership in March. Please contact Mr. Mattson, if interested.

The VERG master agreement with WSDOT is very close to being signed. This will enable our cities to do task orders through COG for VERG's assistance.

Mr. Mattson and Ms. LaCombe met with People for People and DOT's Public Transportation Division to talk about the Human Services Transportation Plan. We will be bringing it back in-house. There will be a Call for Projects this year, as part of the update. If anyone is interested in being the champion of a regional Transit Feasibility study, contact Mr. Mattson and he will try to get it on the project list.

*February M/RTIP Amendment* Mr. Curtin announced that there will be a February TIP Amendment, and the due date for amendments to be included will be January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

*Long-Range Plan Update* Ms. LaCombe – January 15<sup>th</sup> is due date for getting the update on the web page. The main part was the work done by the TAC to put together the project list – the rest of it has truly been 'updates' to the plan. All of the heavy lifting has been done. She will send an email with the web link when the plan goes live. It will be separate sections on the web page, and she will the begin formatting process during the public comment period. The public comment period lasts over 45 days.

It will come through the TAC for final approval in March. Will then go before the Policy Board for adoption and on to WSDOT/FHWA/FTA for approval – it will then be done for the next 4 years.

*UPWP Unfunded Needs – Proposed Projects* Ms. LaCombe reviewed the UPWP Unfunded Needs list. This is a list of unfunded needs, those without an identified specific transportation funding source, and is placed in the back of the UPWP each year. CTR planning is always one of those needs. This year Ms. LaCombe added a regional origins and destinations study to the list because of interest from some members.

There is no priority to the list.

Having your projects on this list benefits you. When applying for other funding, you are able to point to this list stating that you have regional concurrence to your project.

Review of UPWP will begin in February. The UPWP is the MPO/RTPO work program for the upcoming State Fiscal Year that goes from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

Paul Gonseth moved that the TAC recommend the UPWP Unfunded Needs – Proposed Projects list to the MPO/RTPO Policy Board for approval. Joe Henne seconded. The motion carried.

*Highlight - Yakama Nation – Discretionary Award*

Karen Cunningham, of the Yakama Nation, spoke on the Pahto Public Passage funding. Pahto Public Passage was implemented in 2007 when the Nation was successful in a competitive grant. In 2011-2012, the funding ran out, but when FTA moved to formula funding in 2014 Pahto Public Passage secured a steady funding source. Although tribal transit was initially contracted out, Pahto Public Passage is now operated in-house. Mr. Mattson and Ms. LaCombe have assisted the Nation in putting together a Discretionary Grant scope with Yakama Nation. Notification came out just days ago that shows Yakama Nation will receive their full ask. YVCOG may be able to help out with some major pieces of the plan.

Pahto Public Passage is public transportation – anyone can get on the bus. No fare is charged. When they restarted service they began with 2 routes and are now running 6 routes. They are ready to expand and are planning to purchase a 30-passenger shuttle bus within the next year. The main routes run between White Swan and Toppenish and between Wapato and Satus Cafe. Pahto Public Passage has identified the need to establish connections with Union Gap and Yakima. Another exploration that may be answered by the transit grant is whether or not a transit center is needed in the Lower Valley and whether Pahto should be part of that.

The Nation doesn't want to overextend themselves, and they want to be effective and efficient. They are tracking their information in a more 'legible' way. Looking for the most bang for their buck, while building a more robust public transportation system.

*HSTP and Traffic Count Programs*

Ms. LaCombe announced that YVCOG is bringing the HSTP and traffic count programs back in-house.

YVCOG will be purchasing new traffic counters that will differentiate between different types of traffic. The County purchased brand-new counters, and YVCOG may purchase their old ones. They are still in good shape and reliable. Staff will be researching the best way to proceed.

Joseph and Deb will be working on the traffic count program, and possibly training a third staff person.

The MPO is the entity actually responsible for the HSTP (special needs transportation). It will be more cost-effective to bring the program back to YVCOG. The HSTP coalition will not be associated with the TAC, but members of each may attend TAC or HSTP meetings.

*RTPO Funding Formula Subcommittee*

Ms. LaCombe explained that three entities have left their RTPOs. She is fighting to hold on to our RTPO money, instead of it being divvied up to accommodate those two entities that do not meet the requirements set under state legislation to be eligible for RTPO funding. The RTPO funding bucket has been static since the early 1990s.

Yakima Valley RTPO receives \$97,000.00 annually for RTPO work and all of that is used for the work.

There will be a teleconference on January 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss WSDOT's interpretation. We will be talking to them again in February at the MPO/RTPO committee meeting and should get specific from WSDOT the pathway they will have determined to go with continuing transportation planning with Island and Okanogan counties.

*TC/AWC Road-Rail  
Conflict Study and  
Request to  
MPOs/RTPOs*

The Joint Transportation Committee has begun a study on road-rail conflict and is asking the MPOs/RTPOs for assistance in identifying where our jurisdictions may have projects that will impact those road-rail conflicts. Mr. Curtin handed out spreadsheets identifying Yakima County road-rail crossings and asked members to review and identify any crossings that may be involved in close association to those projects.

*WSDOT Non-  
Metropolitan-Tribal-  
FLMA*

Ms. LaCombe introduced the draft document. WSDOT is requesting comments.

This is a WSDOT request to provide public comment. Specifically talks about RTPO folks that are not associated with an MPO. This is how WSDOT will cooperate and coordinate with federal lands, non-metropolitan RTPOs, and tribes. She wanted to provide members an opportunity to comment should they choose to.

*Intro Title VI Annual  
Report*

That time of year again. Last year we updated our Title VI Plan. A component of that Plan is a complaint process – Larry is the one who can accept Title VI complaints. Additionally, we provide an annual Title VI report which is mostly an internal document. If anyone wanted to review the report we would make it available. The Policy Board will need to take action on the annual report in February.

*STP Project Progress  
Update*

Mr. Curtin reported that there were not many changes to the STP Project Progress report. Sunnyside and Harrah entries will be altered next month, due to receipt of TIB money. Letters to Sunnyside and Harrah were sent out today, acknowledging the fact that their STP awards will be reduced by the same amount as their TIB awards. Before receiving the TIB funds, their projects were scheduled in 2024 and 2025. TIB does not require matching funds, but STP funding does and so removing the STP funding assists the jurisdictions with reduced local match requirements and helps those with projects further down the priority list move up. Removing the amount of TIB funding would move our last identified STP project from receiving STP funding in 2027 to receiving STP funding in 2026.

The TAC concurred that the STP Project Progress report is a good representation of where the projects are at this time. No action was taken at this time to inform the Policy Board of the project statuses.

Chairman Ekstedt stated that he is uncomfortable with staff making the determination regarding reducing funding. He feels that the TAC should first hear a response from the agency whose funding may be reduced.

Mr. Mattson suggested that we pull this item from the January Policy Board agenda. We will wait until the February meeting to hear responses from Sunnyside and Harrah. Mr. Mattson also recommended amending the TAC process and making the policy formal.

*WSDOT State and  
Regional Update*

Mr. Gonseth reported on activities on US 12. You can get from Yakima to I-5, but you have a couple of areas with one-lane traffic. Trucks are restricted. Main fixes will be made in the spring.

Still searching for a replacement for Mr. Trepanier's current position on Big Bertha so Mr. Trepanier can assume the Regional Administrator (RA) position at South Central Region. No one applied internally for the Big Bertha job so the recruitment will need to be advertised nationally. No firm date on when Mr. Trepanier will assume the RA position for now.

*Member Jurisdiction  
Updates*

Jurisdictions provided updates on their various projects.

*February 11, 2016  
TAC Meeting Location*

YVCOG Offices – 311 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Yakima, Washington.

*Adjourn*

Chairman Ekstedt adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Ekstedt, Chairman

Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deborah LaCombe, MPO/RTPO Manager

Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_