

## SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

### *Purpose of checklist:*

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

### *Instructions for applicants:*

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown. You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

### *Instructions for Lead Agencies:*

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

### *Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:*

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B plus the [SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS \(part D\)](#). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in Part B - Environmental Elements –that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

## **A. Background**

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable: [Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2014-2040](#)
2. Name of applicant: [Yakima Valley Conference of Governments \(YVCOG\)](#)
3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:  
[Lauris Mattson, Executive Director](#)  
[Yakima Valley Conference of Governments](#)  
[311 N 4<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 204](#)

Yakima, WA 98901  
509-574-1550

4. Date checklist prepared: January 25, 2016
5. Agency requesting checklist: YVCOG
6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable): The proposal is for adoption of a long-range transportation plan. Adoption is proposed to occur in March 2016.
7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain. Capital facilities planning and other planning and funding activities will be completed by YVCOG member agencies and WSDOT to further define the scope and timing of transportation improvement projects identified in the Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2014-2040 (M/RTP). Design and construction of transportation improvement projects that are identified in the M/RTP will occur in the future and project specific environmental review will be undertaken by the respective governmental agency. The timing of these projects will depend on a variety of factors and will be defined through the planning processes of the agencies involved.
8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal. An environmental analysis was prepared as part of the M/RTP Update: Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2014-2040, Environmental Constraint Analysis.
9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain. The proposal is a long-range plan and is not project-specific. No construction will occur as a direct result of adoption of the M/RTP. The M/RTP identifies a number of future road widening and extension projects. Specific locations and any pending permits or proposals affecting those locations will be identified with project-level design and permitting.
10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known. Adoption by the Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organization (MPO/RTPO). Review by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for compliance with federal metropolitan planning requirements.
11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.) Adoption of an update to the Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2014-2040 is proposed. The M/RTP is an integrated document containing a long-range regional transportation plan for the Yakima County region, and a long-range metropolitan transportation plan for the greater Yakima metropolitan area. The planning area is entirely within Yakima County and includes the urban areas of the Yakima Valley and the transportation corridors connecting these areas. The M/RTP includes a long-range forecast of population growth in the region, and provides direction for prioritizing regional and metropolitan-area transportation improvements. It also includes program-level identification of specific potential improvements, such as corridor widening and extension projects, public transit and non-motorized transportation improvements, and upgrades and maintenance to the existing transportation system. Transportation demand management measures such as commuter trip reduction are also a component of the M/RTP. An update to the M/RTP

is required by state and federal regulations and is needed to maintain the region's eligibility for federal funding. The M/RTP was last updated in 2012.

As part of the program-level list of future, potential improvements, the M/RTP identifies a number of regional projects on state-owned facilities, including widening of highways and arterials, construction of new corridors, and widening and constructing new freeway interchanges. In addition, the M/RTP includes maintenance, preservation, and operational improvement projects that are less likely to cause impacts. Regional projects of more local importance are summarized by seven subregions (Northwest, North, West Valley, Central, East Valley, South Central, and Southeast). For each subregion, a number of maintenance and improvement projects are identified that will not generally result in adverse impacts beyond typical short-term impacts associated with construction. In addition, several major corridors are identified for potential road widening and/or extension projects. Chapter 7 of the Draft M/RTP and the Environmental Constraints Analysis provides more detail on the potential impacts of future transportation improvement projects identified in the M/RTP. This checklist provides programmatic review of the M/RTP and its list of potential transportation improvements. Because most maintenance projects and projects that do not increase road surface area will not likely result in adverse environmental impacts, the checklist focuses on programmatic level review of the major regional projects and the corridors identified for road widening and/or extension.

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist. The planning area for the 2014-2040 M/RTP is entirely within Yakima County and includes the urban areas of the Yakima Valley and the transportation corridors connecting these areas. See the Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan Study Area and Subregion Map included with the Environmental Constraints Analysis.

**B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS**

**1. Earth**

a. General description of the site:

(circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other \_\_\_\_\_

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)? The planning area and corridors identified for road widening and/or extension include a variety of terrain types. Slopes associated with specific transportation improvement projects will be determined with project-level design and permitting.

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils. Yakima County contains all of the soils found in the Yakima County Soil Survey and includes prime farmland. Soil types associated with specific transportation improvement projects will be determined with project-level design and permitting.

- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe. [Soil stability associated with specific transportation improvement projects will be determined with project-level design and permitting.](#)
- e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill. [None as part of this non-project action. Grading and filling associated with specific transportation improvement projects will be determined with project-level design and permitting.](#)
- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe. [Not as part of this non-project action. The potential for erosion associated with specific transportation improvement projects will be determined with project-level design and permitting.](#)
- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)? [None as a result of this non-project action. Changes in the amount of impervious surface associated with specific transportation improvement projects will be determined with project-level design and permitting.](#)
- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any: [None as part of this non-project action. If needed, measures will be determined with project-level design and permitting of future transportation improvement projects.](#)

## 2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known. [None as a result of this non-project action. The potential for emissions associated with transportation improvement projects will be determined with project-level design and permitting.](#)

[An air conformity analysis was conducted for the proposed M/RTP, which reflects the list of future project within the metropolitan area in the draft M/RTP. The analysis was conducted for the years 2014 and 2040 based upon federal requirements. YVCOG is required to monitor and report Vehicle Miles Travelled \(VMT\) as a lesser step than calculating CO and PM<sub>10</sub> as permitted annually by WSDOT, FHWA, FTA and Department of Ecology during the Air Quality conformity review.](#)

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe. [Not as a result of this non-project action. The potential affect of any off-site sources of emission on transportation improvement projects will be determined with project-level design and permitting. Emissions from non-mobile sources \(agricultural burning, point sources of industry, etc.\) may degrade air quality in the Yakima Valley so as to result in violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards \(NAAQS\). If non-attainment status is designated, it can affect future transportation projects and funding.](#)
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any: [If needed, measures will be determined with project-level design and permitting of future transportation improvement projects. Transportation conformity determinations are made as part of each Yakima Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\). The TIP is updated annually.](#)

### 3. Water

#### a. Surface Water:

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into. The planning area and corridors identified for road widening and/or extension includes the Yakima and Naches rivers, and Cowiche and Ahtanum creeks, and numerous smaller creeks. All Yakima Valley rivers eventually flow into the Columbia River.
- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans. Not as part of this non-project action. A number of projects are in the vicinity of surface water bodies, and future projects in some of these corridors will likely be within 200 feet of a surface water body, including the Yakima and Naches rivers. Some road segments where widening or extension will occur will cross streams or rivers. The potential affect of future transportation improvement projects on surface water bodies will be determined with project-level design and permitting.
- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material. None as a result of this non-project action. If fill or dredge is required for future transportation improvement projects, they will be reviewed with project-level design and permitting.
- 4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known. Not as a result of this non-project action. If surface water withdrawals or diversions are required as part of future transportation improvement projects, they will be reviewed with project-level design and permitting.
- 5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan. Future roadway projects which may occur in or near the 100-year floodplain will undergo environmental review as necessary.
- 6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge. N/A

#### b. Ground Water:

- 1) Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known. N/A
- 2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals. . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve. N/A

#### c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe. [Future road projects will incorporate Stormwater retention facilities, as needed.](#)

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe. [N/A](#)

3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe. [N/A](#)

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any: [Measures to reduce water runoff will be addressed at the project level.](#)

#### 4. Plants

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:

deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other

evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other

shrubs

grass

pasture

crop or grain

Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops.

wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other

water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other

other types of vegetation

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered? [None as a result of this non-project action](#)

c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site. [None known](#)

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any: [None as a result of this non-project action. Future projects will address landscaping at the project level.](#)

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site. [Noxious weeds and invasive species will be addressed at the time of future project review.](#)

#### 5. Animals

a. List any birds and other animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.

Examples include:

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:

mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:

fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other \_\_\_\_\_

- b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site. [N/A](#)
- c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain. [N/A](#)
- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any: [Wildlife considerations will be part of future project review, as necessary.](#)
- e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site. [None known.](#)

## 6. Energy and Natural Resources

- a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc. [None as a result of this non-project action.](#)
- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe. [Future projects may incorporate solar energy](#)
- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any: [None as a result of this non-project action. Future projects may incorporate solar energy or other conservation features.](#)

## 7. Environmental Health

- a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe. [No](#)
  - 1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses. [N/A](#)
  - 2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity. [N/A](#)
  - 3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project. [N/A](#)
  - 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required. [N/A](#)
  - 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any: [N/A](#)
- b. Noise
  - 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)? [All types of noise exist within the county.](#)
  - 2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site. [None as a result of this non-project action. Future projects will have construction and project related noise.](#)

3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any: [None](#)

## 8. Land and Shoreline Use

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe. [Yakima County includes a variety of land uses, including, but not limited to, residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and recreational.](#)

b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use? [N/A](#)

1) Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how: [N/A](#)

c. Describe any structures on the site. [N/A](#)

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what? [Not as a result of this non-project review.](#)

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site? [N/A](#)

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site? [N/A](#)

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site? [N/A](#)

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify. [N/A](#)

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project? [The current population of Yakima County is 249,970 \(2015 OFM Estimate\).](#)

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace? [N/A](#)

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any: [N/A](#)

L. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any: [N/A](#)

m. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with nearby agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any: [N/A](#)

## 9. Housing

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing. [N/A](#)

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing. [N/A](#)

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any: [None as a result of this non-project action.](#)

#### 10. Aesthetics

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed? [N/A](#)
- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed? [N/A](#)
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any: [N/A](#)

#### 11. Light and Glare

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur? [None as a result of this non-project action. Future projects may incorporate street or other lighting.](#)
- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views? [N/A](#)
- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal? [N/A](#)
- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any: [N/A](#)

#### 12. Recreation

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity? [There are several designated and informal recreational opportunities in Yakima County.](#)
- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe. [N/A](#)
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any: [None as a result of this non-project action.](#)

#### 13. Historic and cultural preservation

- a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers located on or near the site? If so, specifically describe. [There are designated buildings, structures, and sites on or eligible for listing in national, state, or local registers throughout Yakima County.](#)
- b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources. [There are several landmarks and features throughout the County, including on the Reservation of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.](#)
- c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and

historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc. [None as a result of this non-project action. Future projects will incorporate appropriate measures, as necessary.](#)

- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required. [N/A](#)

#### 14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any. [This plan identifies secured and planned projects. See Appendix F for a list of projects by sub-region.](#)
- b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop? [There are areas within Yakima County that are served by public transit.](#)
- c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate? [N/A](#)
- d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private). [There are several new projects proposed. See Appendix F.](#)
- e. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe. [Potential sources would be rail or air transportation.](#)
- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates? [Not known at this time. When future projects are completed, they will be included into the County-wide model.](#)
- g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe. [No](#)
- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any: [None as a result of this non-project plan. Future projects will be designed to minimize transportation impacts to the landscape.](#)

#### 15. Public Services

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe. [Not as a result of this non-project plan.](#)
- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any. [N/A](#)

#### 16. Utilities

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: [N/A](#)  
electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system,  
other \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed. N/A

**C. Signature**

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of signee Deborah LaCombe

Position and Agency/Organization MPO/RTPO Manager

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. supplemental sheet for nonproject actions**

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

The proposed M/RTP includes a list of potential, future transportation improvements over a 25-year planning period through 2040. Improvements that add impervious surface area, such as road widening and/or extension projects, will result in increased stormwater runoff. However, stormwater management features will be determined with project-level design and permitting.

Construction and operation of transportation improvements will include increases in noise and emissions to air. Construction-related increases will be short-term. Any improvement projects that add capacity will result in longer-term increases in noise and emissions associated with vehicle trips. However, operational improvement projects are intended to reduce vehicle idling, noise, and emissions to air.

Construction of transportation improvements may involve the temporary use of hazardous substances typical of road construction and maintenance (e.g., asphalt paving). It is also probable that vehicles carrying hazardous substances will use future roadways.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

If needed, measures will be determined with project-level design and permitting of future transportation improvement projects. By identifying these potential impacts in the plan, we are alerting project designers of the need to address these impacts as part of project development.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

The M/RTP identifies a number of future roadway extension and widening projects that, if constructed, will have some potential to affect plants, wildlife, and aquatic habitat. Projects with the greatest potential for effects are those crossing priority habitat areas or rivers and streams containing priority aquatic habitat. See the accompanying Environmental Constraints Memo for a programmatic-level summary of potential impacts of major projects on priority habitat areas.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

By identifying where the potential impacts are at the planning level, we are alerting project designers of the need to address these early in project development.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

Construction of future transportation improvement projects may result in increased vehicle travel, which is associated with the use of energy and natural resources. Vehicles using future transportation improvement projects are expected to operate primarily on gasoline and diesel, but may also operate on bio-diesel, ethanol, electricity, or a combination of these renewable energy sources. However, the proposed M/RTP includes strategies for transportation demand management/commute trip reduction measures, non-motorized transportation facilities, and public transportation, all of which have the potential to conserve energy.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

The proposed M/RTP includes strategies for transportation demand management/commute trip reduction measures, non-motorized transportation facilities, and public transportation, all of which have the potential to conserve energy.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

The M/RTP identifies a number of future roadway extension and widening projects that, if constructed, will have some potential to affect sensitive or protected areas. See the accompanying Environmental Constraints Memo for a summary of potential transportation improvement projects with the potential to affect priority habitat areas, parks, historic sites, wetlands, and floodplains.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

By identifying potential impacts early in the planning process, we are alerting project designers of the need to address these impacts as part of project development.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

The M/RTP identifies future transportation improvement projects that respond to projected growth based on adopted land use plans. However, the M/RTP identifies a number of extension and widening projects that, if constructed, have some potential to affect existing sensitive land uses. See the accompanying Environmental Constraints Memo for a summary of projects with potential to affect future land and shoreline use.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

By identifying potential impacts early in the planning process, we are alerting project designers of the need to address these impacts as part of project development.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

The M/RTP is intended to address future transportation needs. It identifies future transportation improvement projects that respond to projected growth based on future land use plans. Improvements identified in the M/RTP include improvements to public transportation facilities and services. The M/RTP is not expected to increase demands on public services, except to the extent that emergency services would serve new roads. However, demand for emergency services is generally forecast based on population growth. The M/RTP is not expected to result in population growth.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

Potential transportation improvements identified in the M/RTP would likely improve access for emergency services in portions of the planning area.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

The M/RTP is not expected to conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Projects identified in the M/RTP will be reviewed for compliance with environmental regulations with project-level design and permitting.

**YAKIMA VALLEY CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENTS  
NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

**DATE:** February 12, 2016  
**TO:** SEPA Reviewing Agencies  
**FROM:** Lauris C. Mattson, SEPA Responsible Official  
**SUBJECT:** Notice of Environmental Review for Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2014-2040

**Project Description**

The Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG) is updating the Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan (M/RTP). An update to the M/RTP is required to maintain the region's eligibility to receive federal and state funding for transportation improvement projects. The M/RTP was last updated in 2012.

The document is a 25-year long-range plan for both the Yakima Valley and the Yakima metropolitan area. The Draft M/RTP includes an extensive list of potential future transportation improvements in the region. These include state highway improvement projects and regional improvements to be implemented by Yakima County or the cities and towns within the County.

The update includes an Environmental Constraints Analysis, which supplements the SEPA checklist by identifying more specifically where transportation improvements listed in the Draft M/RTP may have the potential for direct impacts to geologic hazard areas; water resources and wetlands; endangered, threatened, sensitive, candidate and priority plant and animal habitat areas; air quality; land use and housing; noise; aesthetics/light and glare; environmental justice; recreation; and historic/cultural resources. The Analysis focuses on projects that would add to the roadway surface area because those projects would have the most potential for impacts or constraints. Projects to be implemented by Yakima County or one of the local cities or towns are summarized in seven subareas. The Analysis also more generally discusses potential impacts of project types that would not add to the roadway surface area, as well as area-wide improvement programs.

No development projects are associated with this non-project action.

**Notice of Environmental Review**

This is to notify all public and private agencies with jurisdiction and environmental expertise that YVCOG has been established as the lead agency, pursuant to the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) for the above stated project.

Your agency is requested to review the Draft M/RTP update and programmatic Environmental Constraints Analysis, and provide any comments to YVCOG within the 14-day comment period ending on **Friday February 26, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.** This comment period falls within the public review comment period for the Draft M/RTP. The SEPA checklist is enclosed. The checklist, Draft M/RTP, and Environmental Constraints Analysis are available to agencies and the public upon request, and are also posted online at <http://www.yvcog.org/lrtp16/planupdate16.html> Copies of the documents are also available at the downtown Yakima and Sunnyside branches of the Yakima Regional Library, and the YVCOG office. If you would like a hard copy of the proposal mailed to you, please contact Deb LaCombe, MPO/RTPO Manager, at (509) 574-1550 or [deborah.lacombe@yvcog.org](mailto:deborah.lacombe@yvcog.org).

YVCOG expects to issue a Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) for this project. The optional process authorized by WAC 197-11-355 is being used. **This may be your only opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed plan.**

**Request for Written Comment**

Your views on the proposal are welcome. All written comments received by **February 26, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.** will be considered prior to drafting a threshold determination. Please mail your comments to Yakima Valley Conference of Governments, 311 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 204, Yakima, WA 98901 or email to Deb LaCombe at [deborah.lacombe@yvcog.org](mailto:deborah.lacombe@yvcog.org). Please reference "M/RTP Update" in your correspondence.

**Notice of Decision**

After the 14-day comment period, a threshold environmental determination will be issued without another comment period. A copy of the threshold determination will be provided to parties of record and may be obtained upon request from YVCOG. If you have any questions on this proposal, please call Deb LaCombe, Deb LaCombe, MPO/RTPO Manager, at (509) 574-1550 or [deborah.lacombe@yvcog.org](mailto:deborah.lacombe@yvcog.org).

Encl.: SEPA Environmental Checklist