YAKIMA VALLEY CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENTS

Regional Sidewalk Inventory
By Shawn Conrad, Senior Planner

YVCOG is preparing to conduct a regional sidewalk inventory to identify key sidewalk projects that can be prioritized for funding. The inventory will focus on smaller jurisdictions in Yakima County, cataloging the location and condition of sidewalks and identifying missing links. Once inventoried, sidewalk projects could be prioritized for targeted funding based on an agreed-upon set of criteria.

We are now in the early stages of creating a process to conduct the inventory using existing GIS resources and researching criteria for prioritizing projects to address deficiencies. We need your help! Local knowledge of walking routes, existing sidewalks, missing links and community needs are things that local residents will be the most knowledgeable about. Local officials know where they get complaints, and maintenance crews are the local experts regarding sidewalk conditions and factors that could play a role in prioritization.

Please keep an eye out for future buzz regarding the sidewalk inventory and ways that you can be involved.

Current & Upcoming Calls for Projects
By Deb LaCombe, Transportation Planner

2013 STP Call for Projects – Applications due February 1st. Prioritized list developed by TAC February 10th. MPO/RTPO Executive Committee consideration February 20th.

2013 CMAQ Call for Projects – Applications due April 5th. Prioritized list developed by TAC April 11th. MPO/RTPO Executive Committee consideration April 15th.

2013 TA Call for Projects – Subcommittee scheduled to convene in late February.

FEBRUARY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

LOCATION: 311 North 4th St—Yakima
* The 300 Bldg   *   2nd Flr *
MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee
Thursday, Feb. 14 at 10:00 a.m.

YVCOG MPO/RTPO Executive Committee & Policy Board & YVCOG Executive Committee
Wednesday, Feb. 20 at 1:30 p.m.
For more info, call (509) 574-1550.

YVCOG General Membership Meeting

WHERE: TBD in Grandview
WHEN: March 20, 2013
6:30-9:30 p.m.
DINNER: $18 at 7 p.m.

Reservations and cancellations for a voting quorum and the caterer are appreciated no later than **Friday, March 15, 2013 at noon.** Please RSVP to Sarah or Tami at (509) 574-1550 or email to haywardt@yvcog.org.

Don't Forget! Free Tech Teams

By Shawn Conrad, Senior Planner

Free Tech Teams composed of staff from funding agencies will be available on April 3 in Yakima, prior to the Washington Association of Water and Sewer Districts Spring Conference and Trade Show, to help you get your jurisdiction's water and sewer projects funded. Conference registration is not required. Requests for Tech Team meetings are available on a <u>first-come, first-served basis</u>.

If you are interested in setting up a Tech Team meeting, please contact Cathi Read **as soon as possible, but no later than March 8, 2013** at 360-725-3016 or cathi.read@commerce.wa.gov.

STP Funding Update:
Winter 2012-2013
By Deb LaCombe, Transportation Planner

Nine Cities and Yakima County Receive a Share of Over $20 Million Dollars
Congratulations to Yakima County, the Town of Naches, and the Cities of Zillah, Toppenish, Union Gap, Sunnyside, Selah, Grandview, Yakima, and Moxee for successfully securing additional Surface Transportation Programs (STP) funds. In December, the MPO/RTPO Executive Committee approved $20,175,990 of Regional STP funds to fully complete projects identified as regional priorities in 2010 and 2012.

Watch as Projects Progress
Every month, the successful project sponsors listed below will update the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on project progress. This process allows the jurisdictions to display a new level of transparency and accountability that will be shared not only locally, but with oversight agencies and the legislators.

December STP Regional Funding List

Project	Jurisdiction
Cheyne Road	Yakima County
Fort Road	Yakima County
South 64th Avenue	City of Yakima
Morrier/Duffield Road	City of Moxee
"L" Street	City of Toppenish
Jackson Street Extension	City of Toppenish
North 1st Street	City of Yakima
Bonnieview Road	City of Grandview
East Goodlander Road	City of Selah
Edison and 6th Street	City of Sunnyside
Main Street	City of Union Gap
2nd Street and Shafer Avenue	Town of Naches
Carlsonia Street	City of Zillah

New SEPA Rules Allow More Flexibility

By Shawn Conrad, Senior Planner

At the direction of the 2012 Legislature, the Department of Ecology has been updating State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) rules to streamline regulatory processes while maintaining environmental protection. The first round of rulemaking is complete with the new rules effective as of January 28, 2013.

The most significant changes relate to "flexible thresholds." SEPA sets a threshold for size of development, above which all projects are subject to SEPA, and below which projects are exempt. However, cities may raise this threshold by ordinance, up to a maximum established in the SEPA rules. A higher threshold means more projects are exempt. This is called a "flexible threshold" because cities have the flexibility in what threshold they want to adopt. The new rules raise the maximum thresholds up to: 30 units for single-family residential; 60 units for multifamily; 40,000 square feet for barns and farm equipment storage; 30,000 square feet and 90 parking spaces for office, school, commercial, recreational, and storage; and 1,000 cubic yards for landfill or excavation.

Cities and towns can adopt the new rules through their local code amendment process with some additional requirements included in the new SEPA rules. To see the new rules, visit http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sepa/rulemaking2012.html.

Parks and Economic Development Funding

By Shawn Conrad, Senior Planner

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grants are available for parks, trails, and recreational facilities biennially, and applications will be accepted approximately February to May, 2014. These grants require jurisdictions to adopt an RCO-approved parks and recreation plan by March 3, 2014 to apply for funds in the next call for projects. If your jurisdiction has a parks and recreation plan update or development in the cards, now is the time to move it forward if you would like to apply for RCO funds in 2014.

For more information about RCO grants and the planning requirement, visit http://www.rco.wa.gov/grants/ or contact Shawn Conrad at (509)574-1550.

U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Association Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs support development in economically distressed areas of the United States by fostering job creation and attracting private investment through construction, non-construction, and revolving loan fund investments. Applications are due March 8, June 7, and September 13, 2013. Short link to the full announcement: http://tinyurl.com/bmgauo2.

Guaranteed Ride Home to the Rescue!

By Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator

I hate to imagine how often this scenario takes place. The carpool/vanpool is loading up for the ride home and poor old Bob runs out and announces, "The boss just told me I have to work overtime; how will I get home?" Or Barbara, who religiously rides the bus to work, is informed that her daughter had to come home from school early because she is sick and mommy needs to be home with her. Unfortunately Barbara has no idea how she will get home.

The solution? The Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program. The GRH program ensures that employees affected by the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program that use an alternative to drive alone such as carpool/vanpool, public transit, walking or bicycling are covered in an emergency. The CTR program at YVCOG funds the GRH program.

Surveys indicate that employees rank GRH as the most important influencing factor in their choice to participate in using a commute alternative. Ironically, GRH is rarely, if ever used, yet it is considered an important safety net that allows a comfort zone for those participating in the CTR program. This is a reminder to all of our Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs): make your employees aware of this **opportunity** (gosh, I love that word). Posters, brochures, informational flyers, and ride vouchers for the program have been distributed to your worksites. If you are an ETC and you need more vouchers or additional information about GRH, call me, e-mail me, and hound me.

GRH encourages your employees to use commute alternatives at no cost. So the next time an employee says "Now, how am I going to get home?", you can respond, "Not to worry, Guaranteed Ride Home to the rescue."

Your YVCOG Staff:

J. Page Scott, Executive Director
Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator
Deb LaCombe, Senior Transportation Planner
Shawn Conrad, Senior Planner
John R. Rohrbaugh, GIS Analyst/Systems Administrator
Chris Wickenhagen, Administrative Finance Officer
Tamara Hayward, Office Specialist
Sarah A. Hyndman, Office Specialist

Travelers **Centers**

We are kicking off a

Regional ITS Architecture Development

YAKIMA VALLEY IS ABOUT TO EMBARK ON A REGIONAL EFFORT TO PLAN AN INTEGRATED, INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Technology holds the promise to revolutionize the surface transportation system in the next 20 years, if we can forge the new relationships and be prepared to integrate the diverse technologies that will be required. A Regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture is a cornerstone for planning for effective inter-agency integration and for deployment and operation of technology-based transportation projects. This cornerstone will be established for Yakima Valley in 2013.

Prepare for the future of
- Advanced Traffic Management
- Road Weather Information
- Advanced Transit Systems
- Traffic Incident Management
- Maintenance and Construction Operations
- Traveler Information
- Commercial Vehicle Operations
- Connected Vehicles
- *... and many more*

" *The architecture has been very beneficial in the implementation of our 511 system. It provided a sound foundation and building block for innovative and cost-effective concepts.* "

The Kick-Off Workshop will provide you the opportunity to help set the future direction for ITS in Yakima Valley. Nationally recognized experts in ITS Architecture will facilitate the workshop and work with you to begin to define the future surface transportation system. This one-day workshop is FREE to all attendees.

YVCOG

Please Join Us for the Kick-Off Workshop ▶▶▶

To save your spot, please RSVP to Deb LaCombe, 509-574-1550, lacombed@yvcog.org by February 25.

April 2, 2013 – 8:30am-4:30pm

WSDOT Region Office Board Room
2809 Rudkin Road
Union Gap, WA 98903

U.S. Department of Transportation