



**MEMBER JURISDICTIONS:**

Grandview  
Granger  
Harrah  
Mabton  
Moxee  
Naches  
Selah  
Sunnyside  
Tieton  
Toppenish  
Union Gap  
Wapato  
Yakima  
Yakima County  
Zillah

**YVCOG EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE:**

James A. Restucci, Chair  
*Mayor, City of Sunnyside*  
Mike Leita  
*Yakima County Commissioner*  
Micah Cawley  
*Mayor, City of Yakima*  
Area 1 — Dan Olson  
*Union Gap City Council*  
Area 2 — Loren Belton,  
*Mayor, City of Toppenish*  
Area 3 — Mario Martinez  
*Mayor, City of Mabton*  
Member At Large-  
John Hodgkinson, Jr., Vice Chair



311 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 204  
Yakima, WA 98901  
509-574-1550  
FAX 509-574-1551  
Website: [www.yvcog.org](http://www.yvcog.org)

**‘WhatsaCOGfer?’**

*By Larry Mattson, Executive Director*

“You’re going to work *where?*! What do they do?” That was the universal reaction that I heard from friends, family, and co-workers when I shared the news that I was headed to the YVCOG.

If you’re reading our newsletter, you probably have a basic understanding of what we do. You know that we prepare the regional transportation plan, and we assist you with comprehensive land use plans under the Growth Management Act. We’ve been known to help you land a grant or two, as well. At least, I hope you know these things about us.

My sense is that YVCOG functions in a sort of ‘middle space,’ between our member jurisdictions and state and federal agencies. This space doesn’t offer much in the way of direct contact with our region’s citizens. Citizen contact is important because that’s the primary channel through which you, as local elected officials, hear about local problems. That channel is also one that YVCOG can use to explain how we help local governments improve the quality of life for the residents of our region.

What’s a COG for? If I were to reduce our reason for existence to one phrase, I’d return to our founding legislation: We are a regional forum to solve problems. As I mentioned at a recent hearing, “We’re in the solution business.” You define those problems and bring them to us for resolution. We help identify problems too, by talking with your staff and attending council meetings. We also attend trainings and events in order to discover new tools, services, or programs that might be effective here in our region.

In 2015, expect to hear more from us about what we do and how we can help. We are here to serve; indeed, that’s why the YVCOG was created!

**Legislative Session**

*By Joseph Calhoun, Planner*

At over two weeks in, the 2015 Legislative Session is in full swing for our local lawmakers. There are several bills that have been introduced in both the House and the Senate that could have interesting implications for Yakima Valley jurisdictions. Did you know that there are 14 bills (10 in the House, 4 in the Senate) related to marijuana? Of course, there are other topics besides marijuana – there is a bill in the house (HB 1806) related to cost recovery for commercial public records requests. Another interesting bill from the house (HB 1123) would regulate the minimum dimensions for habitable spaces in single-family residential areas.

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To review the bills listed above, and others, you can visit <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/default.aspx>. Simply type the bill number in the search box to pull up the full text and history of any bill. The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) has compiled a list for bills that they are tracking, which is another good starting point: <http://www.awcnet.org/LegislativeAdvocacy/BillTracker.aspx>.

We will continue to track bills that could impact the Valley and provide additional updates throughout the legislative session.



## FEBRUARY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee**  
Thursday, February 12 at 10:00 a.m.

**MPO/RTPO Policy Board &  
YVCOG Executive Committee**  
Wednesday, February 18 at 1:30 p.m.

LOCATION: 311 North 4th Street, Yakima  
\* The 300 Building \* 2nd Floor \*  
For more info, call (509) 574-1550.

## Funders' Forum: Save the Date!!

*By Shawn Conrad, Senior Planner*

The Yakima Funders' Forum will be held **Friday, March 13, 2015**. Representatives of the following funding programs will be on site to talk with you about their programs and your projects:

- ⇒ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- ⇒ Public Works Board (PWB)
- ⇒ United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD)
- ⇒ Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)
- ⇒ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)
- ⇒ Water Quality Combined Funding Program
- ⇒ Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)
- ⇒ Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC)
- ⇒ Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
- ⇒ Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program
- ⇒ Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB)
- ⇒ Supporting Investments in Economic Development (SIED)



You'll hear from the agencies about their programs and requirements, get valuable tips on developing applications, and have the chance to meet one-on-one with funders to discuss your projects. This is a valuable opportunity to connect face-to-face with funders, learn which funding sources work best for your needs, and promote your projects.

**More details soon!** If you have any questions or comments, please contact Shawn Conrad at 759-7991 or [shawn.conrad@yvco.org](mailto:shawn.conrad@yvco.org).

# Dust Off Those Cobwebs ...

By Brian Curtin, CTR Program Coordinator



It won't be long before spring is in the air, and what a terrific time to dust off the cobwebs that have accumulated on that most efficient of all transportation modes, your bicycle. I'm often asked the question, "What I can do to become more involved in making this community more bicycle friendly?" Often times I don't have all the answers, but I sure know where to find them. I paid a visit to some valuable sources: the Bicycle Alliance of Washington's [www.bicyclealliance.org](http://www.bicyclealliance.org) and the League of American Bicyclists [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org) websites are treasure-troves of bicycle information.

Here are just 10 things you can do to make your community a better place for bicycling (and walking, for that matter):

1. **Contact your elected officials.** You can phone, write, e-mail or meet with them. Let them know that bicycling is important to you. Ask them to support a particular project, more funding for bicycle facilities, bicycle-friendly public policies, etc.
2. **Attend public hearings that impact bicycling.** Transportation projects, community plans, budgets, land use, regional transit ... these things can affect your ability to bicycle safely and easily.
3. **Join a bicycle organization that advocates for cyclists and encourage your cycling friends to do the same.** Groups like the Bicycle Alliance of Washington can keep you informed about bicycle issues and can help you take action on issues of interest to you. A great local resource is our own Chinook Cycling Club of Yakima ([www.chinookcycling.com](http://www.chinookcycling.com)). A relatively new member of the local bicycle advocacy family is *Yakima Bikes and Walks!* [www.facebook.com.Yakima Bikes](https://www.facebook.com.YakimaBikes) and <https://yakimabikesandwalks.org>
4. **Write a letter to the editor or opinion piece for your local paper.** Keep it brief and timely.
5. **Attend a "bicycle" event.** May is Bike-To-Work-Month and there are many bike-related events throughout the region. Visit the sites above for event information as well as the Yakima Greenway <http://yakimagreenway.org/q2q/> for information regarding "**Gap to Gap**" events.
6. **Familiarize yourself with your community's transportation plan.** These transportation plans must address non-motorized transportation such as bicycling. Use the elements that support bicycling to support your issue.
7. **Contact your local transportation and park officials.** Encourage them to stripe more bike lanes, install more bicycle parking, or fix specific safety hazards.
8. **Sit on your local bicycle/pedestrian advisory committee and attend their meetings.** While the City of Yakima Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee has been on hiatus for some time now, the group *Yakima Bikes and Walks!* has stepped in to advocate for those who rely primarily on walking and bicycling to get where they are going.
9. **Get involved in your neighborhood or city planning process.** The Growth Management Act requires comprehensive planning at the local, regional and state level — and they address bicycling.
10. **Be a bicycle ambassador.** Promote safe cycling by riding safely yourself. Encourage your workplace and the businesses that you patronize to support bicycling. Spread the word to your friends, family, colleagues and neighbors. Trails and bicycle-friendly streets aren't just a benefit to bicyclists; they are a community benefit as well.



# Good News From All Around the Valley!

By Shawn Conrad, Senior Planner

There has been a LOT of good news for YVCOG's member jurisdictions during the past six months! Here's a recap:

## Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Main Street Program Designations

- Yakima
- Selah

## Major Project Ground Breakings or Completions

- Sunnyside: Downtown Revitalization Project, completion
- Wapato: Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements, ground breaking

## Funding Awards/Prioritization

### WSDOT Safe Routes to School Prioritized Funding List

- Yakima/Adams Elementary School: Sidewalk Improvements, \$357,000
- Yakima/Garfield Elementary School: Safety Improvements, \$180,000
- Mabton/Mabton School District: Safe Routes to School, \$560,000
- Wapato/Wapato School District: 9<sup>th</sup> St. Sidewalk Improvements, \$402,850

### Transportation Improvement Board Awards

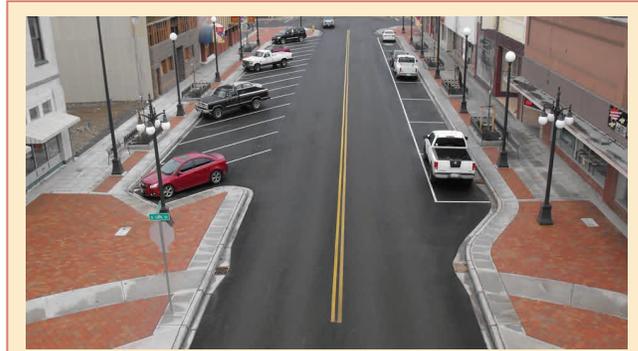
- Mabton: B St., \$1,311,750
- Tieton: Summitview Rd., \$770,310
- Toppenish: W. 1st Ave. Sidewalks, \$167,344
- Wapato: Trader St., \$450,000
- Zillah: 2nd Ave. & 5th St. Intersection, \$985,640

### Commerce Energy Efficiency and Solar Grant Program Awards

- Selah: LED lighting and WWTP efficiency improvements, \$407,050

### Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Proposed Loan List

- City of Mabton: reservoir improvements, \$1,533,180



Sunnyside's recently completed downtown revitalization project.

### Yakima County's Supporting Investments in Economic Development Award

- Wapato: Valicoff Fruit expansion project, \$309,200 grant/\$309,200 loan

### WSDOT Local Bridge Program Award

- Yakima County: Fort Road Bridge replacement, \$1,257,360

### Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Award

- Central Washington Railroad, Grandview vicinity: railroad crossing safety upgrades, \$14,290

### Community Development Block Grant—General Purpose Grant Awards

- Grandview: street improvement project, \$750,000
- Mabton: new water reservoir, \$1,000,000
- Toppenish: street and water system improvements, \$399,247
- Yakima County: new fire station, \$1,000,000

Assuming those projects on prioritized lists are approved by the Legislature, this will mean **\$11,807,421** coming to the Valley. **GREAT JOB** everyone!

We do our best to keep up on all the good news in the Valley, but if you know of other good news we've missed, please send it our way so we can make sure it's celebrated.

## JANUARY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### MPO/RTPO TAC — January 8

- Title VI Plan
- Unified Planning Work Program

### MPO/RTPO Policy Board — Cancelled

### YVCOG Executive Committee — January 21

- Approval of Grandview Professional Services Agreement (GMA updates)

### YVCOG General Membership — January 21

- Presentation by Bill Clemens, Regional Community Manager for Pacific Power

## YVCOG General Membership Meeting



**WHERE:** Union Gap

**WHEN:** March 18, 2015 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**DINNER:** \$20 at 7 p.m.

Reservations and cancellations for a voting quorum and the caterer are appreciated no later than **Friday, March 13, 2015 at noon**. Please RSVP to Tami at (509) 574-1550 or email to [haywardt@yvcog.org](mailto:haywardt@yvcog.org).

## YVCOG 4TH QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS

We at YVCOG have been busy on behalf of our member jurisdictions! Here are some highlights from 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2014:

### Transportation & MPO/RTPO Activities

- Participated in MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee, DRYVE, TRANS-Action, and Special Needs Transportation Coalition meetings
- Developed/approved 2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendments schedule
- Finalized/approved 2015-2018 Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (M/RTIP) Document
- Drafting 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Interagency Air Quality Conformity review/approval of M/RTIP
- October TIP amendment
- Approval of MPO/RTPO Self-Certification
- Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Employer Annual Reports
- CTR Wheel Options Campaign/Contest
- Windshield Surveys for CTR Pilot Project
- Tracked federal and state legislation development and funding activities and informed members on developments

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## Community Planning

- Grandview: Finished 2015-2020 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. Completed updates to Zoning and Future Land Use maps.
- Harrah: Updating Comprehensive Plan
- Tieton and Granger: processed Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezone applications
- Other technical assistance on land use/current planning for Cities of Tieton, Wapato, Grandview, and Granger

## Regional Projects

- HOME Consortium: assisted with Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments updates. Processed NEPA environmental reviews for housing rehab projects.
- Technical Assistance: Hosted two Capital Facilities Planning webinars. Began development of Funders' Forum. Explored grant opportunities for regional TA
- Safe Routes to School: developed walk/bike tips sheets and redesigned school walk route maps. Began activities to establish walking school buses at schools.
- Yakima County Urban Growth Areas update: Tracked developments and informed members
- Growth Management Act: informed members about upcoming GMA Periodic Update cycle.

## Community Connect Grant Program Open

USDA-RD's annual Community Connect Grant Program helps fund broadband development in rural communities where it is not currently economically viable for the private sector to provide service. Local governments and tribes are eligible. Funds may be used for the construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities, land or buildings to establish broadband service for residential and business customers, and critical community facilities. Up to 10% of the grant may be used for construction of improvement of a community center that provides online access to the public.

Applications are due **February 17, 2015**. For more information, see <http://tinyurl.com/broad-grant>.



### Your YVCOG Staff:

Larry Mattson, Executive Director  
Chris Wickenhagen, Deputy Director  
Deborah LaCombe, MPO/RTPO Manager  
Brian Curtin, CTR Coordinator  
Shawn Conrad, Senior Planner  
Joseph Calhoun, Planner  
John R. Rohrbaugh, GIS Analyst/Systems Administrator  
Tamara Hayward, Office Specialist



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