



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director   
**DATE:** August 30, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** **Federal Compliance Plan Updates: Public Participation Plan, Draft PPP Release for Public Comment Review; Title VI and LEP Plans**

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***AT A GLANCE – DISCUSSION AND ACTION***

*The RTC Board is asked to review RTC’s draft Public Participation Plan update (attached) and to approve its release for a mandatory 45-day public comment period prior to adoption. Final adoption of the Public Participation Plan update will be proposed to the Board at the November 1, 2016 meeting.*

**BACKGROUND**

Public participation is an important part of the regional transportation decision-making process carried out by RTC. Federal law requires that the MPO periodically evaluate the Public Participation Process and update the Public Participation Plan to reflect current practices. At the March 2016 meeting, staff informed the Board of the intent to review and update RTC’s Public Participation Plan in 2016. At the September meeting, staff will review the Plan’s draft update and provide the Board with the opportunity to offer comments prior to release of the draft for public review. The official public comment period will last 45 days and the RTC Board will be asked to take action to adopt RTC’s Public Participation Plan update at the November 1, 2016 meeting.

**RTC’S DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

A comprehensive update to RTC’s Public Participation Plan, compliant with federal and state requirements, was last adopted by RTC Board Resolution 01-14-01 on January 7, 2014. RTC is looking to make minor modifications to the Public Participation Plan in a 2016 update. The draft update to RTC’s Public Participation Plan (PPP) is attached with this Memo.

The PPP documents RTC’s commitment toward providing the opportunity for public participation and sets in place RTC Board policy to allow for public comment and input in the transportation planning process. The updated Public Participation Plan continues to address both federal and state requirements for public participation in RTC’s transportation planning activities; RTC serving as both the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Clark County region and as the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization for the Clark, Klickitat and Skamania County region.

The essentials for public outreach and participation, as required by federal and state transportation laws, are reflected in the updated Public Participation Plan. These essentials

include the need for RTC to ensure early and continued public awareness of and access to the transportation decision-making process in the region. Development of the Public Participation Plan must involve stakeholders and the public. There must be commitment to publish, or make available for public view, transportation plans and Transportation Improvement Programs and to hold public meetings at convenient and accessible times and locations, to employ visualization techniques and to allow a minimum 45-day public comment period before approval of the Public Participation Plan update. The Plan describes RTC's current practices for public involvement, consultation with interested parties, interagency consultation, and RTC's existing governance and operations.

Specific updates in the 2016 draft include references to: the current federal transportation act, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act - the FAST Act; electronic hyperlinks; and, a new section on page 42 addresses the linkage between RTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and C-TRAN's Program of Projects (POP) with C-TRAN's reliance on RTC's public participation process to satisfy the Federal Transit Administration's requirements.

While the Public Participation Plan requires a minimum 45-day public comment period prior to its adoption, the PPP also includes the commitment to have a minimum 30-day public review of key RTC documents including the long-range Regional Transportation Plan, major amendments, and the program of projects in the Transportation Improvement Program.

The attached draft Public Participation Plan update was reviewed by members of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee at the August 19 RTAC meeting.

## **RELATED PLANS**

The Public Participation Plan is one of several plans that help to document how the regional transportation planning process is carried out. In addition to updating the PPP, RTC has recently been working to review and make minor updates to plans associated with the Public Participation Plan. These include Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plans. A brief description of the Plans and their update is provided below.

### **Title VI Plan**

RTC operates its programs without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability in accordance with applicable laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and RCW 49.60. RTC's current [Title VI Plan](#) is available on RTC's website. The Plan includes a Title VI policy statement and program responsibilities for communications and public involvement, planning and programming, consultant contracting, and education and training. The Title VI Plan was last updated in May 2014. Since then, RTC has translated complaint forms in Spanish and Russian which are made available on RTC's website.

To support the Title VI Plan RTC relies on understanding the demographics of the region. RTC has a supplemental Environmental Justice (EJ) Demographic Profile with details of the relevant demographics such as minority populations, low-income populations and other Title VI protected

populations. At the September Board meeting, staff will review updated demographic data. The current EJ Demographic Profile relies on 2010 Census data as well as some of the 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) data. The updated data comes from the 2014 ACS.

### **Limited English Proficiency Plan**

RTC also has a [Limited English Proficiency Plan](#) available on RTC's website. Within the LEP Plan, RTC describes how the agency is committed to engaging and involving all residents of Southwest Washington, including those with LEP. The Plan outlines: how persons who may need language assistance are identified; the ways in which assistance is provided; staff training required; and how LEP persons are notified of available assistance. The current LEP Plan was adopted in May 2014. As noted in the Title VI Plan section above, Title VI forms are now available in Spanish and Russian. Telelanguage interpretive service is made available though no requests for interpretive services or translation services have yet been requested of RTC. Google translate is available for RTC website translation. About 6% of Clark County's population is of limited English proficiency; Spanish is the largest of the non-English language speakers at 2.1%, followed by Russian at 1.3% and Vietnamese at about .5%.

### **RTC BOARD ACTION REQUESTED**

At the September meeting, the RTC Board is asked to approve release of the Public Participation Plan for public comment. Following Board approval or public release, the draft Public Participation Plan will be posted to RTC's web-site, legal notices will be published notifying the public of its release and notifications circulated to interested parties and consultation agencies.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Following the 45-day public comment period, any public comments received will be documented and the RTC Board will be asked to formally adopt the Public Participation Plan at the November 1, 2016 RTC Board meeting.

**Attachment:** Draft Public Participation Plan, September 6, 2016