



***Southwest Washington
Regional Transportation Council***

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

August 7, 2007

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Public Participation Plan: Foreword

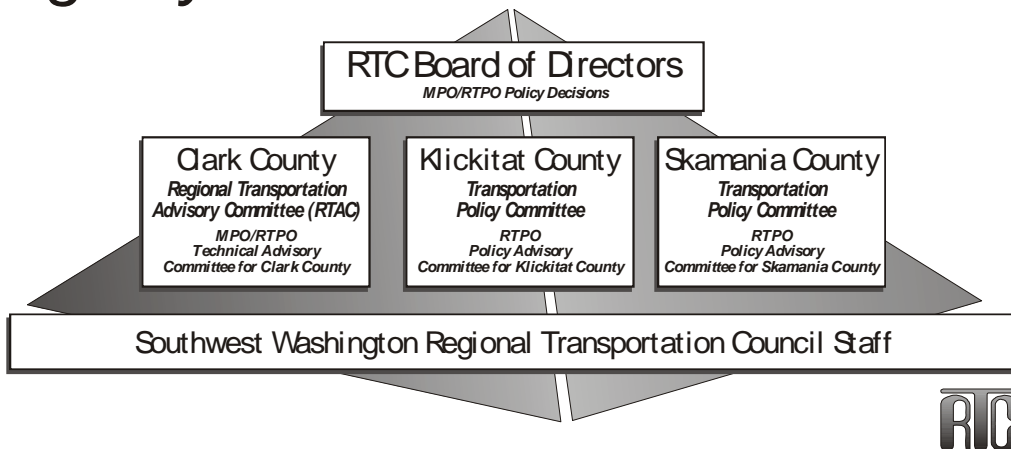
Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Clark County, Washington and as Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for Clark, Klickitat and Skamania Counties in Washington State.

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council: Membership

- C-TRAN
 - Clark County
 - Skamania County
 - Klickitat County
 - City of Vancouver
 - City of Washougal
 - City of Camas
 - City of Battle Ground
 - City of Ridgefield
 - City of La Center
 - Town of Yacolt
 - City of Stevenson
 - City of North Bonneville
 - City of White Salmon
 - City of Bingen
 - City of Goldendale
 - Washington State Department of Transportation
 - Port of Vancouver
 - Port of Camas/Washougal
 - Port of Ridgefield
 - Port of Skamania County
 - Port of Klickitat
 - Portland Metro
 - Oregon Department of Transportation
- Washington State Legislators from the following Districts:*
- 15th District
 - 17th District
 - 18th District
 - 49th District

RTC: Agency Structure

Agency Structure



RTC Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is RTC's policy and decision-making body. The Board is comprised of fourteen voting members. The twelve state legislative members of the 15th, 17th, 18th, and 49th districts are ex-officio non-voting members of the Board. Nine RTC Board members are required to meet quorum. Valid votes require at least eight voting members plus one member who can be either a voting or non-voting member.

RTC Board of Directors: Representation	Voting Member
• Three Clark County Commissioners	Yes
• Two representatives from the City of Vancouver	Yes
• One elected official from the City of Camas or the City of Washougal representing Camas and Washougal	Yes
• One elected official from the City of Battle Ground, the City of Ridgefield, the City of La Center, or the Town of Yacolt representing these four cities	Yes
• One elected official from Skamania County, the City of Stevenson, the City of North Bonneville, or the Port of Skamania County	Yes
• One elected official from Klickitat County, the City of White Salmon, the City of Bingen, the City of Goldendale, or the Port of Klickitat	Yes
• The Executive Director/CEO of C-TRAN	Yes
• The Southwest Regional Administrator of the Washington State Department of Transportation	Yes
• One Port Commissioner from the Port of Vancouver, Port of Ridgefield, or the Port of Camas/Washougal representing these three ports	Yes
• The Portland Region One Manager of the Oregon Department of Transportation	Yes
• One Councilor from Metro of Portland	Yes
• <i>Ex-Officio Representation:</i>	
• 15 th Legislative District: State Senator and Two State Representatives	No
• 17 th Legislative District: State Senator and Two State Representatives	No
• 18 th Legislative District: State Senator and Two State Representatives	No
• 49 th Legislative District: State Senator and Two State Representatives	No

Clark County

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

The Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) coordinates and guides the regional transportation planning program within the Clark County region in accordance with the policy of Regional Transportation Council (RTC) Board of Directors.

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee: Membership

Clark County Public Works
Clark County Planning
City of Vancouver, Transportation
City of Vancouver, Planning
C-TRAN
WSDOT
City of Camas
City of Washougal/Port of Camas-
Washougal
City of Battle Ground/Town of Yacolt
City of Ridgefield/City of La Center/Port of
Ridgefield
Port of Vancouver
Human Services Transportation
ODOT
Metro

Skamania County

The Skamania County Transportation Policy Committee was established in 1990 to oversee and coordinate transportation planning activities in the RTPO Skamania region.

Skamania County Transportation Policy Committee Representation

Skamania County
City of Stevenson
City of North Bonneville
WSDOT, Southwest Region
Port of Skamania County

Klickitat County

The Klickitat County Transportation Policy Committee was established in 1990 to oversee and coordinate transportation planning activities in the RTPO Klickitat region.

Klickitat County Transportation Policy Committee

Klickitat County
City of White Salmon
City of Bingen
City of Goldendale
WSDOT, Southwest Region
Port of Klickitat

RTC



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I. PREFACE

Public participation is a key element in the regional transportation decision-making process. As mandated in the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and other supporting Federal regulations, and continued with the 2005 Federal Transportation Act, SAFETEA-LU (the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must establish and periodically review and update public participation processes in a public participation plan. These processes should assure early and continued public awareness of, access to and opportunity to participate in the transportation decision-making process. The following pages describe Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council's (RTC's) public participation process:

II. INTRODUCTION:

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Clark County, Washington and as Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for Clark, Klickitat and Skamania Counties in Washington State. The participation of the public in regional transportation planning and programming has been part of RTC's work program since the Council was established in July of 1992. RTC's work includes development of regional transportation plans such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for Clark County, Regional Transportation Plans for both Klickitat and Skamania counties and Transportation Improvement Programs for the region.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 required that MPO's adopt a formal public involvement process relating to regional transportation planning and programming of transportation projects in the MPO region. The original Public Involvement Plan was adopted by the RTC Board of Directors in July, 1994 and was updated in October 2001. The federal transportation act, SAFETEA-LU (2005), emphasizes the need to have participation of citizens and interested parties in developing the Public Participation Plan and participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process¹. SAFETEA-LU also emphasizes the use of "visualization techniques" as part of the public participation process; this includes making transportation plans and programs available on the internet and use of maps and pictures where they can help the public understand the transportation plan and program. The adopted Public

¹ Appendix A contains relevant sections relating to public participation within the metropolitan region from the *Federal Register, Statewide Planning; Metropolitan Planning; Final Rule*. (February 14, 2007). For non-MPO regions, it is the State's responsibility to establish a public involvement process. In Washington State, the RTPO's coordinate closely with the State in implementing public involvement procedures for the non-MPO regions.



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Participation Plan also meets Washington State’s requirements regarding public involvement and outreach in conducting regional transportation planning by the Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

**III.
PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION
GOALS:**

Establish consistent public participation procedures to accomplish the following:

- Maintain a proactive public participation process.
- Support early and continuous participation of the public in developing Regional Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs.
- Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties especially where they may be affected by particular transportation plans, programs and projects.
- Provide adequate public notice of public participation.
- Provide adequate time for public review and comment at key decision points in development and approval of plans and programs.
- Provide reasonable public access to information about transportation issues and processes including issues relating to development of transportation plans and programs.
- Make information on the transportation planning process, including plan and program development and meeting information, available on the World Wide Web.
- Use visualization techniques such as maps and graphics to simplify and enhance description of transportation plans and programs.
- Hold public meetings at convenient times and locations.
- Consider, document and respond to public suggestions and recommendations received during the planning and development processes.



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- Identify and address the transportation needs of the traditionally underserved, including low income and minority populations and effects of transportation policies, plans and projects on these populations².

IV. PROCEDURES:

RTC will utilize a broad range of public information and participation opportunities in planning for regional transportation needs and programming of regional transportation projects (see Appendix B). RTC also recognizes the importance of public participation at the local level and will acknowledge and consider public input resulting from transportation planning and project programming at the local jurisdictional level as well as through public participation conducted by transportation agencies such as the public transit provider, C-TRAN, and Washington State Department of Transportation. RTC's public participation procedures are described below.

a. Meetings

- RTC has established committees to ensure coordination of the regional transportation planning and programming process (described in the foreword to this Public Participation Plan).
- RTC Board meetings are held once a month and are open to the public. Time is allocated at each meeting for citizen communication. The RTC Board is the formal decision-making body for matters relating to regional transportation planning activities. The Board has the authority to adopt regional transportation plans and programs. Meeting agenda are published on RTC's website in advance of each monthly meeting.
- Meetings of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee, Regional Transportation Policy Committee for Klickitat County and Regional Transportation Policy Committee for Skamania County are also open to the public. These committee meetings are held once a month and are the forum for discussion and development of regional transportation planning and programming of transportation projects.
- Key components and stages in the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) will be discussed by the committees described above. During the MTP's development at least one public meeting will be held to solicit public suggestions and recommendations on the draft Plan. The MTP is to be updated periodically³ but at least one public meeting will be held annually to inform the public of the Plan's status and allow for public input.

² See Appendix section on Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice).

³ For RTC, the federal transportation act, SAFETEA-LU (2005), requires update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan at least every four years.



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- Development of the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) will also be discussed by the RTC committees noted above. RTC staff will participate in and support efforts of the local agencies in developing their local improvement programs. In selecting projects to be included in the MTIP, RTC will consider the input of the public. Public comment on the draft regional MTIP will be sought at a public meeting which may be held in conjunction with the public meeting relating to the MTP, as described above.
- RTC representatives and staff will support public participation activities of local and state jurisdictions. RTC will be represented at relevant local, regional and state public meetings on matters relating to transportation.
- RTC will coordinate closely with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in public participation relating to the State's transportation planning and programming activities. Where opportunities arise, public meetings relating to the MTP and MTIP will be combined with public meetings relating to the State's transportation plans, such as the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) and High System Plan (HSP) and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

b. Information

- Notice of the RTC Board, MTP and MTIP public meetings outlined above will be published in local newspapers within the region and on RTC's web site.
- Any regional transportation planning reports and documents of interest to the public will be available to the public for reference at RTC and on the RTC web site to allow for public access to the information. Free public access to the Worldwide Web is available at the public libraries within the region.
- In addition, the following tools are used to enhance public involvement: Stakeholder Outreach, Web Site information including visualization techniques, Media Contact, Newsletters, Public Meetings, Open Houses, Citizen Advisory Committees, Surveys, Speaker Bureaus, Regional Coordination, and Workshops. Appendix B explains in greater detail the strategies and techniques listed above.

c. Public Input

- When significant written and oral comments on drafts of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are received from the public, a summary, analysis and report on the comments will be made a part of the final Plan and TIP. Within the MPO region,



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whenever air quality conformity analysis is required, significant comments resulting from the interagency consultation process required under the United States Environmental Protection Agency's air quality conformity regulations will also be included in the final Plan and TIP.

- If the final transportation Plan or TIP differs significantly from the one made available for public comment and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised Plan or TIP will be made available.

d. Effectiveness

- RTC will periodically review public participation processes to assess their effectiveness in assuring that the public has full and open access to RTC's decision-making.

**V.
AMENDMENT TO
ADOPTED
PROCEDURES:**

- Proposed amendments to adopted public participation procedures will be placed on the RTC Board's agenda for the Board's consideration prior to the required public comment period.
- There will be a minimum forty-five (45) day public comment period before any amendment to the public participation plan is adopted by the RTC Board. ,

**VI.
ADOPTION
PROCESS**

- The public involvement process and procedures were originally adopted by the RTC Board of Directors on July 5th, 1994. An updated version of the public involvement process was adopted at the October 2, 2001 RTC Board meeting and the 2007 update, the Public Participation Plan, adopted at the August 7, 2007 RTC Board meeting following a public comment period of more than 45 days.
- The Public Participation Plan will be reviewed periodically and if updates are necessary, the public will be consulted on its update, the draft update will be made available for public comment for a period of at least 45 days and the RTC Board of Directors will be responsible for Plan adoption. Legal notices will be provided in local newspapers informing the public of the comment period and the draft Public Participation Plan will be made available at local libraries and on RTC's website.



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COMMENTS

Comments on RTC's Public Participation Plan should be sent to:

Mailing Address:

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PO Box 1366
Vancouver, WA 98666-1366
Phone 360-397-6067

Location Address:

RTC
1300 Franklin Street
Vancouver, WA 98660
Fax 360-397-6132

E-mail address: info@rtc.wa.gov

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APPENDIX A

Excerpts pertaining to public involvement and participation from Federal Register, Statewide Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning; Final Rule. February 14, 2007

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING, SUB-PART C

§ 450.316, Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for::

- (i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
- (ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
- (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;;
- (iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
- (v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- (vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
- (vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
- (viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
- (ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
- (x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

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(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

§ 450.322, Development and Content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan

- (i) The MPO shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan using the participation plan developed under § 450.316(a).
- (j) The metropolitan transportation plan shall be published or otherwise made readily available by the MPO for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web.

§ 450.324, Development and Content of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- (b) The MPO shall provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP as required by § 450.316(a). In addition, in nonattainment area TMAs, the MPO shall provide at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process, which should be addressed through the participation plan described in § 450.316(a). In addition, the TIP shall be published or otherwise made readily available by the MPO for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web, as described in § 450.316(a).

STATEWIDE PLANNING, SUB-PART B

§ 450.210, Interested Parties, Public Involvement and Consultation

- (a) In carrying out the statewide transportation planning process, including development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP, the State shall develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points.

Executive Order 12898 (Augments Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)

Each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. In response, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration have renewed their commitments to assure that environmental justice is carried out in the activities of metropolitan planning organizations.

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS

APPENDIX B

The following is a range of public participation techniques and strategies that RTC may use to enhance and support public participation. These techniques and strategies are what the public can typically expect RTC to use in the regional transportation planning and decision-making process though their use will be customized for each individual plan or program.

A. Stakeholder Outreach

A stakeholder is defined as any person or group that is affected by a transportation plan, program, or project, including those who may not be aware they are affected. Stakeholders include the general public; environmental, health, neighborhood, citizen, and civic organizations; traditionally underserved populations such as people with disabilities, low-income, and racial and ethnic minorities, and affected public agencies. Stakeholders are identified and are included in public outreach activities.

B. Web Site

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has maintained a web site since 1996. The web site has information about RTC and its activities; regional programs, planning studies, data resources, final reports, and upcoming meetings. Wherever possible, RTC will use visualization techniques, maps and graphics, to help explain transportation plans and programs. The web site also provides an opportunity for the public to provide input and formal comments on an ongoing basis through e-mail links. RTC's web site address is: <http://www.rtc.wa.gov>

C. Media Contact

Key media shall be provided with periodic updates of RTC activities and projects. News releases shall be disseminated to announce public review and comment periods for RTC's plans, programs, and other activities. RTC maintains a list of media outlets such as television, radio, and newspapers.

D. Newsletters

Project newsletters to keep the public apprised of specific projects are published as needed. These newsletters include information about a project written in language understood by the general public. Newsletters are distributed to identified stakeholders and interested parties.

E. Public Meetings/Open Houses

Public meetings and open houses provide a setting for the public to access information on RTC's planning activities. Information is made available either through presentations by technical staff (public meeting) or through display exhibits (open house).

F. Citizen Advisory Committees

Citizen Advisory Committees are advisory committees to RTC established to provide broad regional community input during the planning process. Citizen Advisory Committees are comprised of individuals representing a cross-section of the region's populations including those with environmental, business, civic organization, neighborhood and other interests.

G. Surveys

Surveys are a tool to gather information on peoples' perceptions, preferences, and practices. Surveys can range from being informal and inexpensive to scientific and costly. The information being sought and the use of that information in the regional transportation planning process will also vary.

H. Speakers' Bureaus

Speakers' Bureaus shall consist of RTC staff and citizen volunteers who can speak to civic groups, professional organizations, neighborhood associations, and other groups about the regional transportation planning process and activities.

I. Coordinated Public Outreach Activities/Events

RTC staff will coordinate with member jurisdictions and agencies to help outreach to a larger number of people. Combining resources to publicize activities and events will help RTC to reach a broader audience and will help to promote best practices both for public outreach and for transportation planning and project implementation. Examples of this coordination include combined presentations with other local, regional and state transportation jurisdictions and agencies at regional malls and County Fairs.

J. Workshops

Information workshops are held on topics associated with the regional transportation planning process. Such workshops are designed to educate participants on specific topics such as regional transportation modeling, intelligent transportation systems, etc. Information workshops are conducted on an as-needed basis.