



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director   
**DATE:** September 29, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** **Public Participation Plan Update**

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### ***AT A GLANCE***

*The Public Participation Plan is part of RTC's Public Participation Process. An update to the Plan is now proposed and a draft update is attached for the Board's review prior to release for public comment.*

### **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 October 2020 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 a minimum of 45 days and the RTC Board will be asked to take action to adopt RTC's Public Participation Plan update at the December 1, 2020 meeting.

Several RTC plans help to document how the regional transportation planning process is carried out. These include the Public Participation Plan, Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plans. A brief description of the Plans is provided below.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

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 Plan describes RTC's current practices for public involvement, consultation with interested parties, interagency consultation, and RTC's existing governance and operations. The essentials for public outreach and participation, as required by federal and state transportation laws, continue to be reflected in the proposed Public Participation Plan update. 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, Regional Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs and to hold public meetings at convenient and accessible times and locations, to employ visualization techniques, such as maps, charts, graphics and website information in order to help explain the metropolitan transportation planning process and to make this information available to the public.

RTC's Public Participation Plan outlines a broad range of opportunities allowing the public and stakeholders to participate in the region's transportation planning process. The latest update to RTC's Public Participation Plan was adopted by RTC Board Resolution 11-16-28 on November 1, 2016. RTC is looking to make minor modifications to the Public Participation Plan in a 2020 update. Several issues are the focus of the proposed Public Participation Plan update. They are:

- Procedures for processing public comments on the RTP and TIP.
- Updated description of tribal consultation following EHB 1584.
- Outreach to under-served communities.
- Virtual meeting access and participation.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the adopted Public Participation Plan.

Before adoption of any updates to the Public Participation Plan, there must be a minimum 45-day public comment period. 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 (RTP), major amendments to the RTP, 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 September 18 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. 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 conducts 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 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 November 2016 and is reviewed periodically to ensure its currency.

### **Limited English Proficiency**

RTC also has a Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) 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 November 2016 and is also periodically reviewed for currency.

### **Environmental Justice Demographic Profile**

To support its Public Participation Process, RTC has an Environmental Justice Demographic Profile available on RTC's website.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Following review and comment by the RTC Board at the October 6 meeting, there will be release of the proposed Public Participation Plan update for the required minimum 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 update at the December 1, 2020 RTC Board meeting.

**Attachment:** Draft Public Participation Plan, September 29, 2020