

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning



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Adopted
October 22, 2009

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning

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The preparation of this document was aided by the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Transportation in cooperation with the United States Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

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Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments

A Resolution Adopting)
the 2009 Cowlitz-Wahkiakum)
Council of Governments)
Public Participation Plan)
for Transportation Planning)


RESOLUTION NO. 09-17

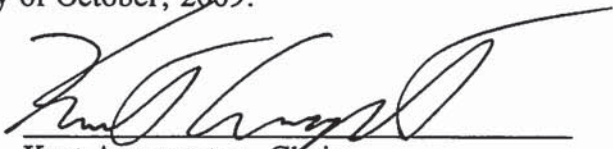
WHEREAS, the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, as the lead agency for the Longview-Kelso-Rainier Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO), is responsible for developing a Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning; and

WHEREAS, adoption of the *2009 Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning*, as the MPO and SWRTPO lead agency, meets the requirements of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments adopts the *2009 Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning* document for the MPO and SWRTPO.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 22nd day of October, 2009.


Stephen H. Harvey, Director


Kurt Anagnostou, Chair

2009 Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning

Executive Summary

What is the 2009 Public Participation Plan?

The Public Participation Plan is the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments official policy on involving the public in the transportation planning process. The Public Participation Plan provides an overview of the objectives for public involvement, and the activities of the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO) and the Longview/Kelso/Rainier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Plan outlines the transportation planning organization's adoption and amendment processes for transportation plans, projects, and tasks; comment periods; opportunities for public participation; noticing practices; and strategies for public participation.

Why Update Public Participation Plan?

The plan for public involvement was last updated in 1998. Although the 1998 plan met and exceeded all requirements, the rules have changed and an update of the plan was needed to meet the new requirements. The new regulations require: the use of visualization techniques, increased internet use for public participation, providing public review and comment of the public participation plan, providing reasonable opportunities for those residents with limited English proficiency to participate, and developing the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties.

What are the Objectives of Public Participation?

In addition to getting the public to participate in the transportation planning process, the Public Participation Plan identifies strategies to make information more easily accessible. The objectives of the plan are to:

- **Educate and inform** the public about transportation planning, projects, and issues within their communities and the region.
- **Involve the public** in the transportation planning process.
- Ensure that **information is easily accessible** to all interested parties in the community.
- **Improve the decision making process** to include the interest/needs of stakeholders through informed consent.
- **Continue to evaluate and improve** public participation strategies.

What are the Major Activities of the SWRTPO and MPO?

The Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments is the lead agency for the SWRTPO and the MPO. The SWRTPO and MPO directs transportation policy development, planning, and programming for a five county region in Southwest Washington, including Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, and

Wahkiakum Counties, as well as the urbanized area of the Longview and Kelso Washington, and Rainier Oregon. The SWRTPO and MPO are responsible for three major transportation planning programs, as well as the creation of the Public Participation Plan, and special transportation studies.

M/RTP– The Regional Transportation Plan is a 20-30 year look into the future that covers the five-county SWRTPO area. The MTP is a long range plan that covers the same planning period for the MPO urban area. The M/RTP is written as one document and seeks to envision long term transportation needs for the region.

RTIP – The Regional Transportation Improvement Program is a compilation of the first four years of the six-year Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP's) from local jurisdictions throughout our five-county region. This document includes a listing of all federally funded projects in the region, and planned projects whether federally funded or not.

UPWP – The Unified Planning Work Program is an annual listing of the MPO's planning work projects to be completed. The Draft UPWP is reviewed by the TAC and RPACT. Opportunities for public comment are provided at scheduled MPO TAC, LCTAC and RPACT meetings prior to endorsement. The endorsed UPWP is posted online at www.cwcog.org.

Public Participation Plan – The SWRTPO/MPO's Public Participation Plan outlines the methods for public participation and outreach strategies for transportation planning programs and activities.

Special Studies and Projects - As needed the SWRTPO and MPO conducts or sponsors planning studies to address a variety of transportation issues or concerns.

Why Get involved?

Public Involvement is an important part of the transportation planning process. When the SWRTPO and MPO has input from a wide-range of stakeholders and other residents, decisions are made that best serve the needs of the community. The transportation decision making process is improved when the community has an interest in what is going on.

How to Get Involved:

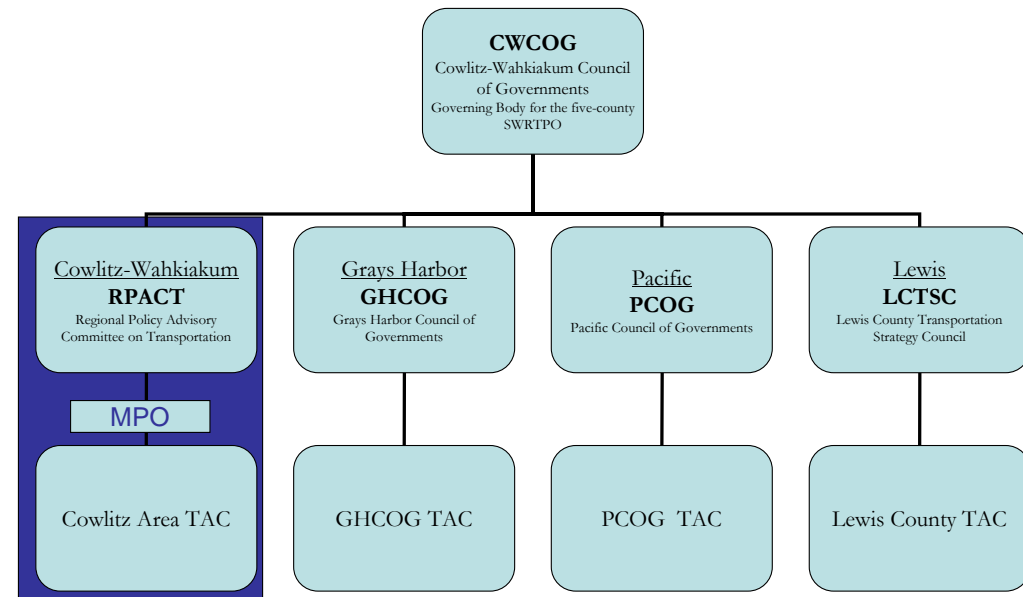
One of the easiest ways for the public to become involved in the transportation planning process is through attendance at SWRTPO, RPACT or CWCOC meetings. All meetings will be posted on the CWCOC website, beginning in October 2009. Anyone interested in receiving email notifications of SWRTPO, RPACT, or CWCOC and other project related meetings can contact the CWCOC office at cwcog@cwcog.org. Draft copies of the Public Participation Plan, UPWP, RTP, MTP and TIP will also be made available for public review. Copies will be available at the CWCOC office and online at www.cwcog.org. A project specific public involvement plan will be created for special studies, projects, and tasks and a project specific webpage will be developed where information and opportunities for public participation will be made available.

Foreword

The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) is a regional governing body comprised of local governmental jurisdictions and agencies within Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. Non-voting and ex-officio members from both the public and private sectors also actively participate in activities of the agency (for a full CWCOG organizational chart, see Appendix A). The CWCOG is the lead planning agency for both the bi-state Longview-Kelso-Rainier, Oregon Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO). The MPO is federally mandated and authorized to fulfill federal planning requirements for the Longview-Kelso-Rainier, OR urbanized area. The SWRTPO is voluntary, locally developed, and fulfills state planning requirements for the five-county region. It is comprised of 69 jurisdictions, agencies, tribes, and non-profits, which represent the region's 271,900 population (Washington State Office of Financial Management 2009 Population Estimate).

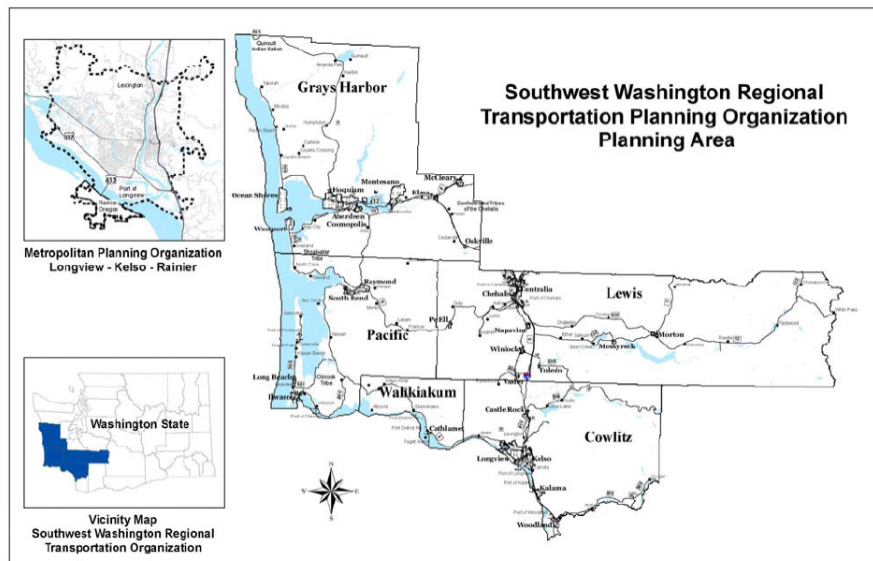
The CWCOG serves as the governing body for the MPO and the five-county SWRTPO. The CWCOG Board is advised by the Regional Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (RPACT) on policy initiatives and by the Cowlitz Area Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. Regional transportation decisions for the Grays Harbor County are carried out through the Grays Harbor Council of Governments (GHCOG) and related technical advisory committee. Lewis County regional transportation decisions are carried out by the Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council (LCTSC). Pacific Council of Governments (PCOG) and their respective technical advisory committee assess transportation decisions for Pacific County. For full details on MPO/SWRTPO membership and when these organizations meet, see Appendix B.

MPO and SWRTPO Organizational Chart



Introduction

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO), which includes the five-county area of Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, and Wahkiakum Counties, is staffed by the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG). CWCOG is also the lead agency for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Longview, Kelso, Washington and Rainier, Oregon urbanized area and is responsible for the transportation policy development, planning, and programming for the region.



The CWCOG's Public Participation Plan for the RTPO and MPO was last amended and approved in 1998. Although the plan met the requirements established under the federal transportation law, ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) and federal regulation 23 C.F.R. §450.212, there have been several changes in the law since then. Additional public participation requirements were introduced in 2005 under the new federal transportation law, SAFETEA-LU (Safe Accountable, Flexible and Efficient

Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) including the use of visualization techniques, posting of information on the world wide web, and developing the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties (for a listing of relevant federal regulations see Appendix C). This Public Participation Plan revises our existing public involvement procedures for transportation planning to address the additional requirements of SAFETEA-LU.

In addition to addressing federal mandates, the SWRTPO will continue to update its policies, as it has done in the past, in order to conform to new regulations, utilize changing technology and trends, and maintain effective public participation practices.

Overview

The Public Participation Plan is the CWCOG's official policy on involving the public in the transportation planning process. It is organized into several topics: Objectives, Programs, Process, Opportunities, and Goals and Strategies.

- Objectives describe the CWCOG's efforts to engage the public.
- Programs clarify CWCOG's role in transportation planning.
- Process details the public involvement in each role.
- Opportunities expand on techniques to gain greater public involvement.
- Goals and Strategies allow CWCOG to evaluate our efforts with the greater goal.
- Appendices providing an outline of relevant federal regulations, a current list of SWRTPO, MPO, and CWCOG membership, media resources, and comments received during the public review are also included as part of the plan.

Objectives for Public Involvement

Federal regulations establish the following objectives for the public involvement process:

- Maintain a **proactive public involvement** process.
- Support **early and continuing** involvement of the public in developing plans.

- Provide **complete information, timely public notice, and full public access** to key decisions.
- Provide **timely information** about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects.
- Provide **reasonable public access** to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and open public meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered.
- Provide **adequate public notice** of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points.
- **Consider and respond** to public input received during the planning process.
- **Seek out and consider** the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households.
- Provide all **interested parties with reasonable opportunities to comment** on the contents of the transportation plan.

In addition to these regulations, the CWCOCG will seek to

- **Educate and inform** the public about transportation planning, projects, and issues within their communities and the region.
- **Improve the decision making process** to include the interest/needs of stakeholders through informed consent.
- **Continue to evaluate and improve** public participation strategies.

CWCOG Transportation Planning Programs

The SWRTPO and MPO are responsible for major transportation planning programs. These include: the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and amendments and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The SWRTPO/MPO is also responsible for the creation of the Public Participation Plan and regionally significant transportation studies throughout the region.

M/RTP– The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a 20-30 year look into the future that covers the five-county SWRTPO area. The MTP is a long range plan that covers the same planning period for the MPO urban area. The M/RTP is written as one document and seeks to envision long term transportation needs for the region.

RTIP – The Regional Transportation Improvement Program is a compilation of the first four years of the six-year Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP's) from local jurisdictions throughout our five-county region. This document includes a listing of all federally funded projects in the region, and planned projects whether federally funded or not.

UPWP – The Unified Planning Work Program is an annual listing of the MPO's planning work projects to be completed. The Draft UPWP is reviewed by the TAC and RPACT. Opportunities for public comment are provided at scheduled MPO TAC, LCTAC and RPACT meetings prior to endorsement. The endorsed UPWP is posted online at www.cwcog.org.

Public Participation Plan – The SWRTPO/MPO's Public Participation Plan outlines the methods for public participation and outreach strategies for transportation planning programs and activities.

The Public Involvement Process

M/RTP – The CWCOG is federally mandated to develop a transportation plan for the Longview/Kelso/Rainier MPO urban area

in the form of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The Regional Transportation Plan fulfills requirements set for the SWRTPO by Washington State regulations. The M/RTP is a combined document that provides a comprehensive look at the transportation planning process and establishes a long range vision for the region. In addition, the plan serves as the basis for transportation decisions and guides the expenditure of available federal transportation funds. There is opportunity for public input at several stages during the development of the M/RTP. The document's planning process includes the review and approval of selected regional projects for each county by their respective transportation agencies. These selections are made during open public meetings. An important element of the M/RTP includes a financial analysis and the establishment of goals and policies. These elements are reviewed at the local level, discussed and approved before being incorporated into a final draft plan. Advertisement of a draft plan is posted in local newspapers, in the CWCOG newsletter, at transportation committee meetings and Council Board meetings. A draft document is also posted on the CWCOG website with a public comment link for a period of 30 days. Comments received on the draft document are incorporated into the document and a final version is presented to the CWCOG Board for approval. All final documents will be available on the CWCOG website under "Publications".

RTIP - The first opportunity for public input and participation occurs at the local level through council or board meetings in the communities as they develop and approve their six-year Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP). CWCOG staff then compile the first four years of those plans to create a Regional Transportation Improvement Program for our SWRTPO and MPO areas. Availability of the draft document is announced in the CWCOG newsletter, which reaches our regional agencies, WSDOT, elected officials, special interest groups and general public that are interested in CWCOG activities. The draft document is also presented at transportation committee meetings (MPO TAC, LCTAC, and PCOG TAC) and at open public meetings which include LCTSC, PCOG, RPACT and the CWCOG Board Meeting. A draft document is then posted on the CWCOG website with a public comment link for a period of 30 days.

Comments received on the draft document are incorporated into the document and a final version is presented to the CWCOG Board for approval. All final documents will be available on the CWCOG website under Publications.

Significant amendments to the RTIP for federally funded and regionally significant projects within the MPO urbanized area are required to go before the CWCOG Board for approval. Any amendments should be sent to CWCOG staff no later than 7 days prior to the monthly CWCOG Board meeting to allow for adequate noticing. Once approved by the CWCOG Board, staff will then forward the request to WSDOT for inclusion in the State TIP according to their published amendment schedule. That schedule can be found on their website at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/ProgramMgmt/STIP.htm>

UPWP – The Unified Planning Work Program is an annual listing of the MPO and SWRTPO's planning work projects to be completed in the upcoming fiscal year. CWCOG Staff work to compile a draft work program to present to the MPO TAC and RPACT, where comments from the public are welcome. Representatives from the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, and occasionally county staff from the SWRTPO counties meet with CWCOG staff to review and discuss the work program. Notification of a final UPWP draft is announced in the CWCOG newsletter directing interested parties to the CWCOG website or office for a copy of the plan and providing directions for public input. A final draft of the UPWP is presented to the transportation committees and the CWCOG Board for final approval after being posted on the CWCOG website for review and comment for a 30 day period.

Amendments to the UPWP are required when there is a change to either the work program, an addition to the work program and a budget revision resulting from changes in the work program. All amendments requiring a program change must be approved by the CWCOG MPO/RTPO Board and processed through the WSDOT's

Policy Development and Regional Coordination Branch. Amendments involving federal funds may need to be reviewed and approved by FHWA and FTA.

Public Participation Plan - The SWRTPO/MPO's Public Participation Plan outlines opportunities for public participation and future strategies for including the public in the transportation planning process. CWCOC originally drafted a Public Participation Plan in 1998 and is updating it in response to additional regulations introduced in SAFETEA-LU. A draft of the plan was posted on the CWCOC website for public comment and review on August 24th, beginning a 45 (+) day comment period. If there are no significant changes to the document, a final draft will be presented at the October 22nd CWCOC Board meeting for final approval. During that period, there will be several opportunities for public input at each of the five counties in the SWRTPO and the MPO through the regional transportation planning committees and technical advisory committee meetings, as well as at the SWRTPO Board meetings and Council of Government meetings. All comments received will be included in the final draft of the plan.

Special Studies and Projects - As needed the SWRTPO/MPO conducts or sponsors planning studies to address a variety of transportation issues or concerns. For studies, projects, and certain tasks conducted under the metropolitan transportation planning program, public participation opportunities may include:

- The **need and scope for public involvement** will be determined for each project, study and UPWP tasks prior to initiation.
- When necessary a public involvement task will be included as part of the scope of work and a **Public Participation Plan** will be created.
- A **summary of public involvement** will also be prepared as part of the final report.

- A **webpage** on the CWCOC website will be developed and will provide information on the project, including scope, schedule, project manager, how to get involved, how to provide comments, and links to resources related to the project.
- **Media releases** will be issued on the project as needed to keep the public informed of study activities and opportunities for involvement and comment.
- A transportation related **interested parties list** will be established to identify persons and organizations interested in being informed of project activities.
- Study **progress reports and presentations** will be given at RPACT and MPO TAC meetings.
- Methods for **public comment** on draft final documents will be provided and will be tailored to meet the needs and objectives for specific studies.
- **Visual presentations** (i.e. Power Point) will be prepared for key study deliverables and presentations will be posted on the study web site.

In an effort to keep our region involved in the State's broader transportation activities, the CWCOC will also coordinate with the WSDOT in public participation activities relating to the planning activities such as the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), the Highway Systems Plan (HSP) and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Comment Periods

Drafts of all major transportation programs, studies, and tasks will be made available for public comment and review. Comments can be sent by mail to:

CWCOC
Administration Annex
207 N. 4th Ave
Kelso, WA 98626

Comments can also be sent electronically to the identified CWCOG staff person, or submitted via the public comment box on the CWCOG website next to the draft document being reviewed.

All comments received will be documented and be handled according to SWRTPO/MPO policy. The public review and comment period is typically:

30 days for the RTIP

30 days for the M/RTP

45 days for the Public Participation Plan

Opportunities for Public Participation

Meetings

One of the easiest ways for the public to become involved in the transportation planning process is through attendance at local transportation committee meetings, including LCTSC, PCOG TAC, Cowlitz MPO TAC, or RPACT. Beginning October 2009, all MPO, SWRTPO and specific project information will be available on CWCOG's website, where users will also be able to subscribe to project specific email lists. In addition, transportation related meeting schedules and their agendas will be posted on the CWCOG website at www.cwcog.org. A project specific Public Participation Plan will be developed for special studies conducted by the SWRTPO/MPO, which will identify means of public participation. The SWRTPO/MPO and COG meetings are held in ADA compliant buildings.

Noticing

The annual CWCOG meeting schedules are published in the CWCOG newsletter and are sent to the local news media at beginning of each year with the dates of scheduled meetings. The local news media are also faxed the date, time, and location of CWCOG meetings every month 7 days prior to the meeting. News media and CWCOG newsletter recipients are also notified of additional meetings or schedule changes that may occur during the year. The CWCOG newsletter reaches over 1,100 reader's local elected officials, city councils, planning commissions, department heads, State government employees, non-profit organizations, and interested citizens. A standard

format will be developed and used to advise the media, and the public, of MPO and SWRTPO transportation planning activities. Notices will continue to be posted on CWCOG's website (www.cwcog.org).

SWRTPO/MPO will also explore other methods of outreach, such as the use of public access community calendars and new noticing formats and venues. For a full listing of media contacts, see Appendix D.

In addition to the CWCOG's noticing efforts, any project that directly involves work with the Washington State Department of Transportation may include a media release from their communications department.

Online

In order to increase accessibility to information, the SWRTPO/MPO will continue to make information available online. Notices, documents (including this Public Participation Plan) and other information will be available at www.cwcog.org. Additionally, interested parties will have the option to join the SWRTPO/MPO contact list and receive meeting and project information via e-mail or through updates in the CWCOG newsletter.

As projects and other resources are completed they will be made available online and may include: a glossary of common transportation terms, a list of commonly used acronyms, a basic guide to metropolitan planning organizations, and a description of SWRTPO wide transportation planning meetings.

Visualization Techniques

The transportation planning documents developed by the CWCOG have been created using user-friendly formats to ease comprehension. Additionally, the SWRTPO/MPO will seek to enhance visualization at meetings through various methods, such as maps, charts, graphs, electronic presentations (such as Microsoft Power Point or Community Viz) and simulations.

Plan Evaluation

In an effort to ensure the Public Participation Plan is effective, and compliant with federal and state regulations, the plan will be evaluated biennially. Amendments to the plan will be made as necessary, to ensure the strategies for public involvement remain effective and to capture new legislative requirements. In addition, reports on all public participation activities conducted will also be included in transportation planning quarterly and annual reports. The reports will include the status of strategies recommended in the Public Participation Plan, and project specific Public Participation Plans that have been developed. The reports will help to evaluate progress towards meeting the objectives of the plan and engaging the public in the transportation decision making process.

Goals and Strategies for Public Participation

A variety of goals and strategies have been identified to encourage and facilitate public involvement in the transportation planning process.

Goals

- Encourage the use of visualization techniques, including maps, graphics and computer modeling technologies where appropriate.
- Engage all members of the community and provide timely information about transportation issues and processes by continuing to evaluate and improve participation methods.
- Offer a guide to metropolitan transportation planning organizations and a guide to public participation.
- Increase effectiveness by expanding and updating notice practices.
- Encourage participation by the Spanish speaking community by offering Spanish notifications of upcoming regional projects and plans.
- Facilitate the distribution of project information by updating CWCOC Transportation website to include meeting information of all SWRTPO wide activities, meetings, and agendas.
- Encourage participation by providing adequate public notice of public participation.
- Biennial evaluation and update of the Public Participation Plan.

Strategies

- Website Development: The CWCOG has maintained a website for several years that has held information regarding the SWRTPO and MPO agency roles and responsibilities. The website was updated recently to provide a new look and it has been evolving to allow greater information dissemination to the public. CWCOG has been posting project specific information, document drafts and final comments on the website since 2006, and recently added a public comment option tied to each draft document. Beginning October 2009, the website will be expanded to include all transportation related meeting agenda's, minutes (where applicable), and schedules. When applicable, the website will also provide maps, graphics, and other visualization techniques to convey transportation programs and projects to the general public. The website will also provide a list of acronyms and glossary of transportation terms.
- Create project specific newsletters when needed to keep the public informed and engaged.
- Continually update interested parties contact list and media contacts.
- Host open houses for specific projects when appropriate to engage citizens and facilitate early dialog.
- Explore the use of new technologies to survey community members.
- Explore the use of local agencies and volunteer community members in translating meeting notices for projects in Spanish.

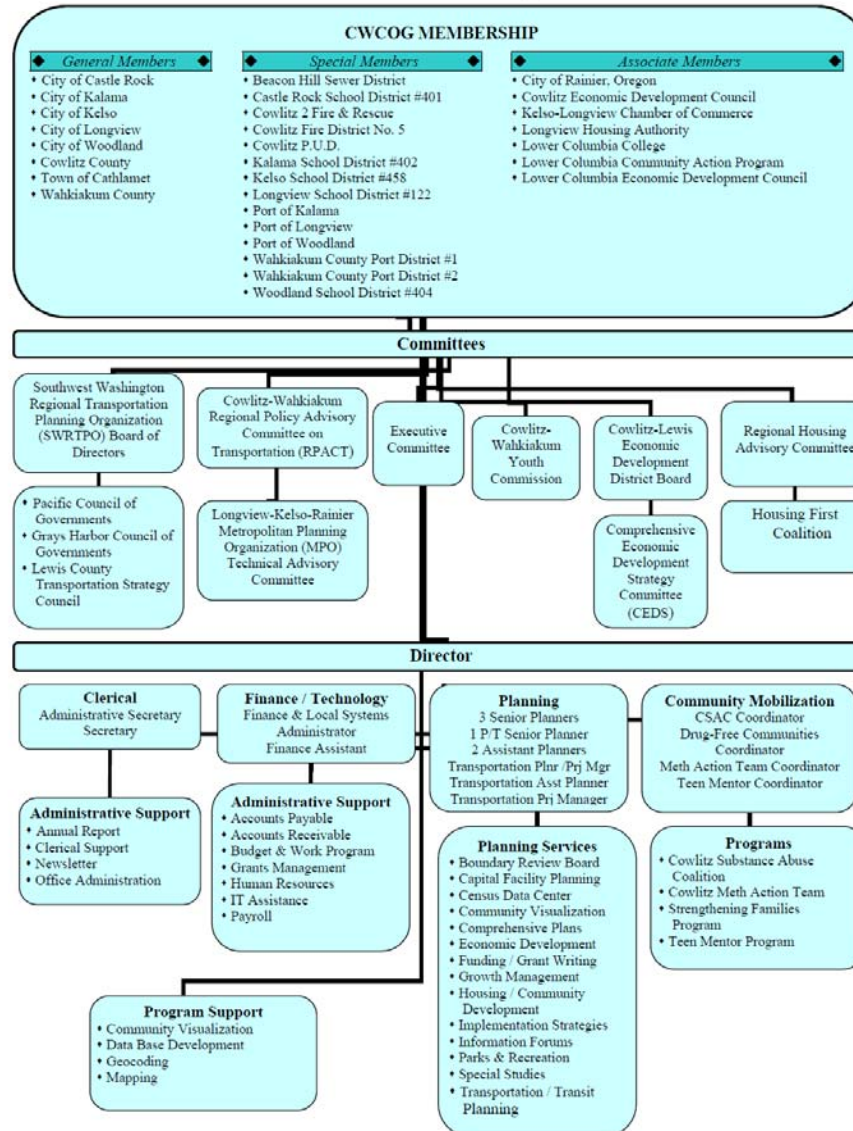
Acronyms:

- ADA** – American's with Disabilities Act
- CWCOG** – Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
- GHCOC** – Grays Harbor Council of Governments
- HSP** – Highway Systems Plan
- LCTSC** – Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council

MTP – Metropolitan Transportation Plan
M/RTP – The combined Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plans
MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization (Longview/Kelso/Rainier)
PCOG – Pacific Council of Governments
PIP – Public Participation Plan
RPACT – Regional Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation
RTP – Regional Transportation Plan
RTIP – Regional Transportation Improvement Program
STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program
SWRTPO– Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization
TAC –Technical Advisory Committee
UPWP – Unified Planning Work Program.
WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation
WTP – Washington Transportation Plan

Appendix A

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments Organizational Chart - 2009



Appendix B

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments RTPO & MPO Organizational Chart

Grays Harbor Council of Governments	
Cities of Grays Harbor County Grays Harbor County Grays Harbor EDC Grays Harbor PUD Port of Grays Harbor Grays Harbor Transit Quinault Indian Nation Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis WSDOT – Olympic Region Timberland Regional Library	

Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council	
Cities of Lewis County Lewis County Cowlitz Tribe Port of Chehalis Port of Centralia Twin Transit	

Pacific Council of Governments	
Cities of Pacific County Pacific County Port of Ilwaco Port of Willapa Harbor Pacific County PUD Pacific Transit Shoalwater Tribe WSDOT – SW Region	
Port of Peninsula Port of Chinook Pacific County EDC	

Regional Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (MPO Area)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longview – Kelso – Rainier MPO • Cowlitz County – Non-MPO • Wahkiakum County 	
City of Longview City of Kelso Cowlitz County Port of Longview Cowlitz Transit Authority City of Rainier, Oregon Columbia County, Oregon Port of St. Helens WSDOT – SW Region ODOT – Region 1 Cowlitz Tribe Cowlitz EDC Rainier Economic Development Council Kelso-Longview Chamber of Commerce City of Castle Rock City of Kalama City of Woodland Port of Kalama Port of Woodland Wahkiakum County Town of Cathlamet Wahkiakum Port District No. 1 Wahkiakum Port District No. 2	

Jurisdictions Represented in the SWRTPO - FY 2010

Regional Planning Agencies

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG)
Grays Harbor Council of Governments (GHCOG)
Pacific Council of Governments (PCOG)
Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council

State Departments of Transportation

SW Region, Vancouver, Washington State Department of Transportation
Olympic Region, Tumwater, Washington State Department of Transportation
Region 1, Portland, Oregon Department of Transportation

Federal Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Counties

Cowlitz County
Grays Harbor County
Lewis County
Pacific County
Wahkiakum County

Port Districts

Port of Centralia
Port of Chehalis
Port of Chinook
Port of Grays Harbor
Port of Ilwaco
Port of Kalama
Port of Longview
Port of Peninsula
Port of Willapa Harbor
Port of Woodland
Wahkiakum Port District No. 1
Wahkiakum Port District No. 2

Economic Development Councils

Cowlitz Economic Development Council
Grays Harbor Economic Development Council
Lewis County Economic Development Council
Lower Columbia Economic Development Council
Pacific County Economic Development Council
Columbia Pacific Resource Conservation & Economic Development District

Transit Authorities

Cowlitz Transit Authority
Grays Harbor Transit Authority
Twin Transit Authority
Pacific Transit System
Columbia County Transit

Tribal Governments

Cowlitz Tribe
Quinault Indian Nation
Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis
Shoalwater Bay Tribe

Cities

Castle Rock	Elma	Longview	Oakville	Toledo
Cathlamet	Hoquiam	McCleary	Ocean Shores	Vader
Centralia	Ilwaco	Montesano	Pe Ell	Westport
Chehalis	Kalama	Morton	Rainier, OR	Winlock
Cosmopolis	Kelso	Mossyrock	Raymond	Woodland
Long Beach	Napavine	South Bend		

(Non-Profit/Non-Traditional Transit Providers)

LEWIS Mountain Transit
Lower Columbia Community Action Program
Coastal Counties Community Action Council
Wahkiakum County
Cowlitz Tribe

Meeting Information

- **CWCOG Board:** Meets 4th Thursday of every month
- **Regional Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (RPACT):** Meets 3rd Wednesday of every month
- **MPO Technical Advisory Committee:** Meets 4th Thursday of every month
- **Grays Harbor Council of Governments (GHCOG):** Monthly
- **Pacific County Council of Governments (PCOG):** Meets 4th Wednesday of every month
- **Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council (LCTC):** Meets 3rd Monday of every month
- **Lewis County Technical Advisory Committee:** Meets 2nd Wednesday of every month

Appendix C

Excerpts of relevant regulations regarding public participation. For full text, see the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations here:

<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=ecfr&sid=7f5985b5d2fe301f3fd5a6f537e6bfb8&rgn=div5&view=text&node=23:1.0.1.5.11&idno=23#23:1.0.1.5.11.3.1.4>

Subpart B—Statewide Transportation Planning and Programming

§ 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.

(1) The State's public involvement process at a minimum shall:

(i) Establish early and continuous public involvement opportunities that provide timely information about transportation issues and decision making processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties;

(ii) Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP;

(iii) Provide adequate public notice of public involvement 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 long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP;

(iv) To the maximum extent practicable, ensure that public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(v) To the maximum extent practicable, use visualization techniques to describe the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan and supporting studies;

(vi) To the maximum extent practicable, make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information;

(vii) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input during the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP;

(viii) Include a process for 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; and

(ix) Provide for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate.

(2) The State shall provide for public comment on existing and proposed processes for public involvement in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. At a minimum, the State shall allow 45 calendar days for public review and written comment before the procedures and any major revisions to existing procedures are adopted. The State shall provide copies of the approved public involvement process document(s) to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes.

(b) The State shall provide for non-metropolitan local official participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. The State shall have a documented process(es) for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials representing units of general purpose local government and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation that is separate and discrete from the public involvement process and provides an opportunity for their participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. Although the FHWA and the FTA shall not review or approve this consultation process(es), copies of the process document(s) shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes.

(1) At least once every five years (as of February 24, 2006), the State shall review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan local officials and other interested parties for a period of not less than 60 calendar days regarding the effectiveness of the consultation process and any proposed changes. A specific request for comments shall be directed to the State association of counties, State municipal league, regional planning agencies, or directly to non-metropolitan local officials.

(2) The State, at its discretion, shall be responsible for determining whether to adopt any proposed changes. If a proposed change is not adopted, the State shall make publicly available its reasons for not accepting the proposed change, including notification to non-metropolitan local officials or their associations.

(c) For each area of the State under the jurisdiction of an Indian Tribal government, the State shall develop the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP in consultation with the Tribal government and the Secretary of Interior. States shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with Indian Tribal governments and Federal land management agencies in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP.

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

activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;

(2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(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.

(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.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.

§ 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).

Appendix D

SWRTPO Regional Media Contacts

Cowlitz County

- ◆ The Daily News (360) 2500 frontdoor@tdn.com
- ◆ The Valley Bugler (888) 746-8644 vbugler@qwest.com (*Candy*)

Lewis County

- ◆ East County Journal (360) 496-5993 ecjeditor@devaulpublishing.com
- ◆ The Chronicle (360) 736-3311 eolson@chronline.com
- ◆ The Lewis County News (360) 785-3151 bonitam@flannerypubs.com

Grays Harbor

- ◆ The Daily World (360) 532-4000 press_releases@thedailyworld.com
- ◆ The Montesano Vidette (360) 249-3311 editor@thevidette.com

Pacific County

- ◆ Chinook Observer (360) 642-8181 editor@chinookobserver.com
- ◆ The Pacific County Press (360) 875-6805 news@pacificcountypress.com
- ◆ Willapa Harbor Herald (360) 942-3466 theherald@flannerypubs.com

Wahkiakum County

- ◆ Wahkiakum County Eagle (360) 975-3391 ernelson@teleport.com

Appendix E

Public Notices and Comments

Published in CWCOCG Communique, August 2009

Transportation Public Involvement Plan update

The Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO) and the Longview, Kelso, and Rainier, OR Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), are currently updating their Public Involvement Plan for transportation planning projects. The plan is the SWRTPO's and MPO's official policy on involving the public in the transportation planning process. It provides an overview of the objectives for public involvement and activities of the SWRTPO and MPO. The plan outlines the adoption and amendment processes for transportation plans, projects, and tasks; comment periods and opportunities for public participation; noticing practices; and strategies for public participation. The plan will be available for review and comment on the CWCOCG website at www.cwcog.org beginning August 24th.

Notices sent to local news media

From: Harris, Nancy

Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 4:57 PM

To: Daily New, The; Myre, Oscar & Michelle; ecjeditor@devaulpublishing.com; eolson@chronline.com; towncrier@toledotel.com; press_releases@thedailyworld.com; editor@thevidette.com; editor@chinookobserver.com; news@pacificcountypress.com; theherald@flannerypubs.com; Nelson, Rick

Cc: Asher, Amy; Kelley, Bonnie; Siipola, Rosemary

Subject: Press Release

The post the attached Press Release. If you have any questions, please call Amy Asher or Rosemary Siipola at 360-577-3041 or aasher@cwcoq.org or rsiipola@cwcoq.org.

Thanks!

Nancy L. Harris, Adm. Secretary
Cowlitz-Wahkiakum
Council of Governments
207 4th Avenue North, Adm. Annex
Kelso, WA 98626

Lead Agency: Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
207 4th Avenue North, Adm. Annex, Kelso, WA 98626
Ph: 360-577-3041
FAX: 360-425-7760
Staff Contract: Amy Asher
Assistant Transportation Planner
Email: aasher@cworg.org

Draft Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan Available for Public Comment

The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) will be releasing the 2008-2028 Draft Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan for public comment and review beginning October 15, 2009. As the lead agency for both the Longview-Kelso-Rainier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO), the CWCOG is responsible for long-range transportation planning activities for Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Pacific, Grays Harbor and Lewis counties. This federally-required 20-year planning document details the multitude of transportation issues that are vital for continued economic development, transit, future land use and energy policies for our five-county region. The document highlights regional goals, objectives, and long-term transportation projects while addressing regional, state and federal planning requirements. The completion of this document will allow for transportation planning activities to continue to be compliant with required state and federal programs.

The adoption of this plan allows the region to continue to receive federal funds for transportation projects. The draft plan will be available at the CWCOG office and on our website at www.cwcog.org. All public comments are due by Friday, November 13 at 5:00 pm. The plan will be reviewed by the Regional Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (RPACT) for Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties during their October 21st and November 18th 2009 meetings. As SWRTPO partners, the Pacific Council of Governments, the Grays Harbor Council of Governments and the Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council will be also reviewing the document for comments during the same timeframe at their regular monthly meetings. Once

these reviews are finished, the document will be presented to the CWCOC Board for a final decision to adopt on November 19, 2009. For more information, contact Rosemary Siipola or Amy Asher at 360- 577-3041.

Notices sent via e-mail to transportation planning organizations in SWRTPO and MPO

From: Siipola, Rosemary

Sent: Friday, August 28, 2009 3:31 PM

To: Amy Asher (aasher@cwco.org); Bob Jungar (mayorraymond@willapabay.org); caruss@pacifiedc.org; Deborah Dunithan; 'Denys Tak (takd@wsdot.wa.gov)'; Don Larsen (dlarsen@co.pacific.wa.us); doug@pacificpud.org; EDCPCOG; Fred Marshall (fmarshall@acm.org); Gene Miles; Jim Neva (jneva@portofilwaco.org); Karyn Anderson (andersonk@wsdot.wa.gov); Kaye Simonson; Ken Hash; klocek@wsdot.wa.gov; knoren@co.pacific.wa.us; Mary DeLong (portpen@willapabay.org); mdesimone@co.pacific.wa.us; newellc@wsdot.wa.gov; pactran@willapabay.org; portofwh@willapabay.org; rsiipola@cwco.org; sbcity@techline.com; Sharon Zimmerman (zimmesh@wsdot.wa.gov)

Subject: FW: DRAFT CWCOC Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning

[Attached, please find our latest and greatest public involvement program. Please send any comments back to Amy Asher.](#)

[Thanks. Have a great weekend. Out to buoy 10 madness tomorrow to swap out Kaisa for Olivia.](#)

[Rosemary](#)

Rosemary Brinson Siipola
Transportation Planner/Manager
Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Govts.
Southwest Washington RTPO
207 4th Ave. North - Annex
Kelso, WA 98626
360.577.3041 office
360.425.7760 fax
360.431.1363 cell
rsiipola@cwco.org

From: Asher, Amy

Sent: Friday, August 28, 2009 3:29 PM

To: !Cowlitz Area TAC; !RPACT; !SWRTPO; !COG Board Mailing; (kevin.merry@ci.longview.wa.us); Amy Hamlin (ahamlin@cwco.org); chartod@wsdot.wa.gov; Colleen Kuhn (colleenk@hsc-wa.org); Debbie Campbell; doughayden@lewiscounty.com; Janet Wright; Karen Parkhurst (parkhuk@trpc.org); Kelly Wagoner (kellyw@lowercolumbiacap.org); Kerby, Iona; Kim Stube (kstube@cowlitz.org); mgr.twintrn@localaccess.com; pactran@willapabay.org; rsiipola@cwco.org; rwstillings@yahoo.com; Ryan Warner; silinse@wsdot.wa.gov; vcummings@techline.com

Cc: Harris, Nancy; Kelley, Bonnie

Subject: DRAFT CWCOG Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning

Good Afternoon,

The Transportation Planning Staff at the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) invites public review and comments on a draft of its proposed public participation plan, ***Public Participation Plan for Transportation Planning***. Public involvement throughout the transportation planning process leads to a transportation system that reflects the needs, values and desires of the community. This draft plan provides information on ways to stay informed and get involved in transportation planning activities the CWCOG performs as lead agency of the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO) and the Longview/Kelso/Rainier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The document is an update to the CWCOG's 1998 Public Involvement Plan and was prepared in part to address federal regulations dealing with public involvement in transportation planning.

The draft plan is available for download from the CWCOG website, www.cwco.org, or it can be viewed at the CWCOG office located in the Administration Annex at 207 N. 4th Avenue in Kelso, WA. An executive summary has been included as an attachment in this e-mail.

A copy is also available upon request by contacting:

Amy Asher
Associate Transportation Planner
Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments
207 North 4th Avenue
Kelso, WA 98626-4195

Comments must be submitted in writing or by email to Amy Asher at the address above or by fax at 360-425-7760. **Comments must be postmarked or transmitted by the close of business on Monday, October 12, 2009.** Substantive comments will be considered and responses will be summarized in the final version.

Thank you for your time,

Amy

Amy Asher
Associate Transportation Planner
Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments
207 North 4th Avenue
Kelso, WA 98626-4195
www.cwcog.org
Ph: 360-577-3041

No comments were received during the 45 day public comment period.