



## STAFF REPORT/RESOLUTION

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director  
**DATE:** December 27, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** **Public Participation Plan, Resolution 01-14-01**

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### AT A GLANCE - ACTION

*The RTC Board is asked to take action to adopt the updated Public Participation Plan required by federal and state laws. The Draft Plan update was reviewed at the October and November RTC Board meetings and was released for a now-completed public comment period. The updated Public Participation Plan is a requirement of the federal metropolitan planning process. The plan addresses both federal and state requirements for public participation as part of RTC's transportation activities.*

### INTRODUCTION

Public participation is an important part of the regional transportation decision-making process carried out by RTC and is required by both federal and state laws. Policies and guidance for public outreach and participation are outlined in RTC's Public Participation Plan. Periodic review and update of RTC's Public Participation Plan is a requirement of the federal metropolitan transportation planning process.

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

The key 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. 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. Plans and programs should be understandable with visualization techniques used to simplify concepts where possible. The public and stakeholders should be involved in development of the Public Participation Plan and there must be a minimum 45-day public comment period before adoption of the Public Participation Plan or any updates. The updated Plan better reflects current practices for public involvement, consultation with interested parties, interagency consultation, and better describes RTC's existing governance and operations.

RTC's initial Public Involvement Plan was adopted in July 1994 and updated as the Public Participation Plan in October 2001 and August 2007. The process to develop the 2013/14 update included a review of the regulatory basis for public involvement, review of RTC's public outreach and participation practices, review of other MPO's Public Participation Plans, review and input by RTAC and the RTC Board, and circulation to stakeholders, public and consultation agencies. Once the Public Participation Plan was drafted, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee reviewed the draft at the October 18 RTAC meeting. Subsequently, the RTC Board reviewed the draft PPP at its November 5 meeting, made some suggestions to improve on the draft and approved its release for public comment.

The draft Public Participation Plan was released on November 14 for a required 45-day public comment period. A media release was issued and notices of its release for public comment were published in local newspapers including the Columbian, the Battle Ground Reflector, the Camas Post Record, the El Hispanic News and the Skanner. Public comments were also solicited through the Clark County and City of Vancouver network of neighborhoods. The draft Public Participation Plan was made available at branches of the Fort Vancouver library system and at Camas library. The draft PPP was posted on RTC's website and comments were acknowledged and acted upon as warranted.

### **POLICY IMPLICATION**

Periodic update of the Public Participation Plan is a requirement of the federal transportation act and Washington state laws. This Public Participation Plan provides information on RTC's organization, on RTC's transportation planning program, addresses how RTC will conduct public outreach, involvement and participation and how the Plan will be periodically evaluated. RTC continues its commitment to publish, or make available for public view, transportation plans, and transportation improvement programs (TIPs), and to hold public meetings at convenient and accessible times and locations. The Public Participation Plan covers both federal and state requirements for public participation in transportation planning activities of RTC as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Clark County region and as state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization for the Clark, Klickitat and Skamania County region. The public participation process must be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure early and continued public awareness of, and access to, the transportation decision-making process. The law requires a 45-day public comment period prior to adoption of the Public Participation Plan and prior to adoption of any updates to the Plan.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATION**

Public participation activities are programmed within the Regional Transportation Program Coordination and Management element of RTC's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Revenue sources for this element are a combination of Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration planning funds together with local matching funds and state Regional Transportation Planning Organization funds.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Adoption of Resolution 01-14-01, "Public Participation Plan".

ADOPTED this 7th day of January 2014,  
by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON  
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

ATTEST:



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Jack Burkman  
Chair of the Board



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Matt Ransom  
RTC Executive Director

Attachment