



**STAFF REPORT/RESOLUTION**

**TO:** Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Matt Ransom, Executive Director   
**DATE:** October 25, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** **Public Participation Plan, Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plan Updates, Resolution 11-16-28**

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**AT A GLANCE - ACTION**

*The RTC Board is asked to take action on Resolution 11-16-28 to adopt updates to RTC's Public Participation Plan, Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plans (see attached). The Draft Plan updates were reviewed by the Board at the September RTC Board meeting when the Public Participation Plan was released for a now-completed public comment period. Periodic review and update of the three Plans keeps RTC compliant with federal and state laws.*

**BACKGROUND: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

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 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 RTC Board policy to allow for public comment and input in the transportation planning process.

The essentials for public outreach and participation, as required by federal and state transportation laws, continue to be 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 Plan is drafted to reflect current practices for public involvement, consultation with interested parties, interagency consultation, and describes RTC's existing governance and operations.

Specific changes in the 2016 draft update include: reference to the current federal transportation act, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act - the FAST Act; updated electronic hyperlinks; and a new section on page 43 addresses the linkage between RTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and C-TRAN's Program of Projects (POP) with C-TRAN's reliance on RTC's public participation process to satisfy the Federal Transit Administration's requirements regarding the transit agency's POP.

The process to develop the 2016 Public Participation Plan update included a review of the regulatory basis for public involvement, review of RTC's public outreach and participation practices, review of other Public Participation Plans, review and input by RTAC and the RTC Board, and circulation to stakeholders, public and consultation agencies. Once the 2016 Public Participation Plan update was drafted, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee reviewed the draft update at the August 19 meeting. Subsequently, the RTC Board reviewed the draft PPP at its September 6 meeting and approved its release for public comment. Following the RTC Board meeting, the draft PPP was released on September 8 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, the Asian Reporter 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 its distribution included to planning and consultation partners at federal and state agencies.

## **RELATED PLANS**

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

### **Title VI Plan**

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

To support the Title VI Plan RTC relies on understanding the demographics of the region. In the 2016 update to the Title VI Plan, demographic data is updated and is sourced from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS).

### **Limited English Proficiency Plan**

RTC also has a Limited English Proficiency Plan available on RTC's website. Within the LEP Plan, RTC describes how the agency is committed to engaging and involving all residents of Southwest Washington, including those with LEP. The Plan outlines: how persons who may need language assistance are identified; the ways in which assistance is provided; staff training required; and how LEP persons are notified of available assistance. The LEP Plan was last adopted in May 2014. As noted in the Title VI Plan section above, Title VI forms are now available in Spanish and Russian. Telelanguage interpretive service is made available, though no requests for interpretive services or translation services have yet been requested of RTC. Google translate is available for RTC website translation. About 6% of Clark County's population is of limited English proficiency; Spanish is the largest of the non-English language speakers at 2.1%, followed by Russian at 1.46% and Vietnamese at about 0.5%.

### **POLICY IMPLICATION**

Periodic update of the Public Participation Plan is a requirement of the federal transportation act and Washington state laws. In summary, 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.

The updated *Title VI Plan* and *Limited English Proficiency Plan* represent RTC's commitment to nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities. These plans help to ensure that all persons have meaningful access to all of RTC's work and planning activities. Periodic update of the *Title VI Plan* is a requirement for all Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The updated *Title VI Plan* and *Limited English Proficiency Plan* cover both federal and state requirements for ensuring compliance with federal and state discrimination laws.

These Plan updates meets all minimum federal and state policy and procedural requirements.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATION**

None. Public participation, Title VI and LEP activities and ongoing administration 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 Public Participation Plan, Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plan Updates, Resolution 11-16-28.

ADOPTED this 1st day of November 2016,  
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  
Executive Director

Attachments: Public Participation Plan (October 25, 2016; draft)  
Title VI Plan (October 25, 2016; draft)  
Limited English Proficiency Plan (October 25, 2016; draft)