

Public Participation Plan

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Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council

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I. Introduction

Public participation is a key element in the regional transportation decision-making process carried out by Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC). As mandated in the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and other supporting federal regulations, and continued with the current Federal Transportation Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), 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.

This Public Participation Plan document describes RTC's public participation process with policies and guidance for public outreach and participation outlined within the document. The Public Participation Plan establishes consistent procedures to ensure people have reasonable opportunities to be involved in the regional transportation planning process and provides examples of the types of tools and techniques RTC may use to communicate with the public, stakeholders, and planning partners.

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 long-range regional transportation plans (RTPs) for Clark, Klickitat and Skamania counties and Transportation Improvement Programs for the region.

ISTEA 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 2005 Federal Transportation Act, SAFETEA-LU, emphasized the need to have participation of citizens and interested parties in developing the Public Participation Plan and participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process. SAFETEA-LU also emphasized the use of “visualization techniques” as part of the public participation process, including making transportation plans and programs available on the internet and use of maps and pictures to help the public to understand the transportation plan and program.

These requirements continue under the BIL Act, the current Federal Transportation Act, and it also added a requirement that state highway safety programs result from meaningful public participation and engagement from affected communities, particularly those most significantly impacted by traffic crashes resulting in injuries and fatalities. The adopted Public Participation Plan also meets Washington State’s requirements regarding public involvement and outreach in conducting regional transportation planning by the Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

RTC as MPO/RTPO and TMA

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) serves as the [Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) (MPO) for the Clark County, Washington portion of the larger Portland (Oregon)/Vancouver (Washington) urbanized area. RTC is also the state-designated [Regional Transportation Planning Organization](#) (RTPO) for the three-county area of Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat (see Figures 1 and 2 for maps of the region). Having a population of over 200,000, the Clark County region is a federally designated Transportation Management Area (TMA). TMA status brings additional transportation planning requirements that the MPO must carry out. Responsibility for these functions was assumed by RTC on July 1, 1992.

What is the Metropolitan Planning Organization?

A Metropolitan Planning Organization is an organization of elected officials in urbanized regions with a population of 50,000 or over. The

MPO provides a forum for local decision-making on transportation issues of a regional nature.

As a condition for receipt of federal capital or operating assistance, MPOs must have a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. The MPOs are to cooperate with the State in developing transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas. This transportation planning process should result in plans and programs consistent with the urbanized area's comprehensive planned development. In addition, the plans are to provide for the development of transportation facilities including pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, and serve as an intermodal system for the state, metropolitan areas, and the nation.

The MPO's planning functions are carried out in cooperation with the state and local agencies. An MPO can contract staff from other agencies to perform specific elements in the planning process. This cooperative transportation decision-making process provides a forum for the member jurisdictions to discuss regional transportation issues and plan transportation improvements for the region. Currently 12 regional councils perform the MPO transportation planning functions in Washington, representing the urbanized areas of the state.

Regional Transportation Planning Organizations

RTPOs serve the same basic transportation planning functions as MPOs but were created by state legislation. An RTPO covers both urban and rural areas and receives state funding in support of its planning efforts. In 1990 the [Washington State Legislature](#) passed the Growth Management Act (ESHB 2929), authorizing the Regional Transportation Planning Program.

The primary functions of RTPOs are to develop regional plans and policies for transportation, growth management, environmental quality, and other topics determined by the RTPO; provide data and analysis to support local and regional decision-making; build community consensus on regional issues through information and citizen involvement; build intergovernmental consensus on regional plans, policies, and issues and

advocate local implementation; and provide planning and technical services on a contractual basis.

RTC provides the region with a valuable forum in which to consider the transportation issues, develop coordinated strategies, and recommend prudent investments in our system to solve the transportation challenges faced in this region.

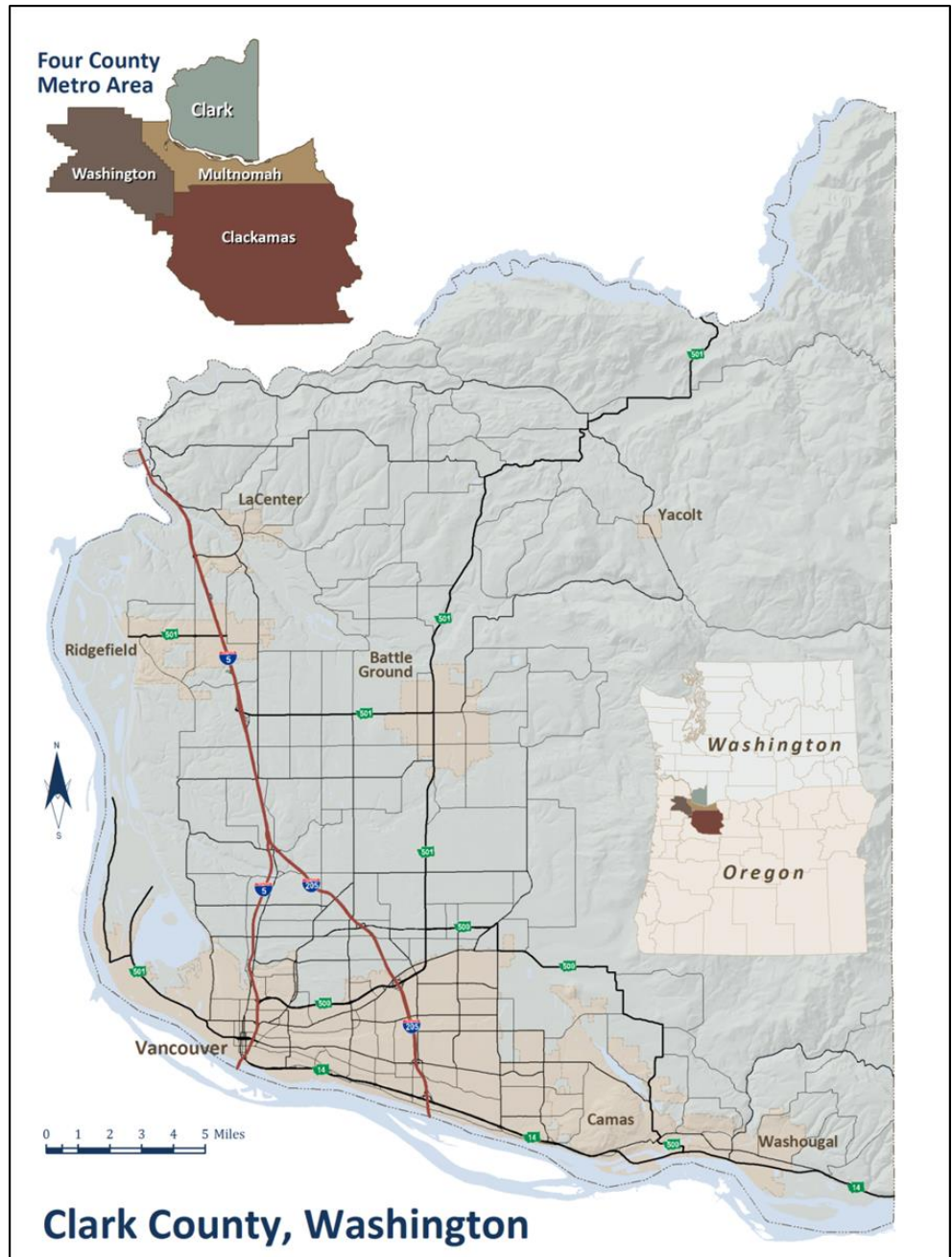


Figure 1: RTC, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Region.
The MPO covers the whole of Clark County, which is a part of the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro (OR-WA) metropolitan area.



Figure 2: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC):
Extent of Regional Transportation Planning Organization (Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties).

II. RTC's ORGANIZATION

As background information on the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, the second section of the Public Participation Plan describes the organization of RTC and its decision-making structure. RTC exists as a forum for regional transportation decision-making.

RTC Membership

RTC is a membership organization formed by interlocal agreement. RTC members are listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: RTC Membership

RTC Membership: Jurisdiction/Agency

Clark County
Skamania County
Klickitat County
City of Vancouver
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
C-TRAN
Washington State Department of Transportation
Port of Vancouver
Port of Camas/Washougal
Port of Ridgefield
Port of Skamania County
Port of Klickitat

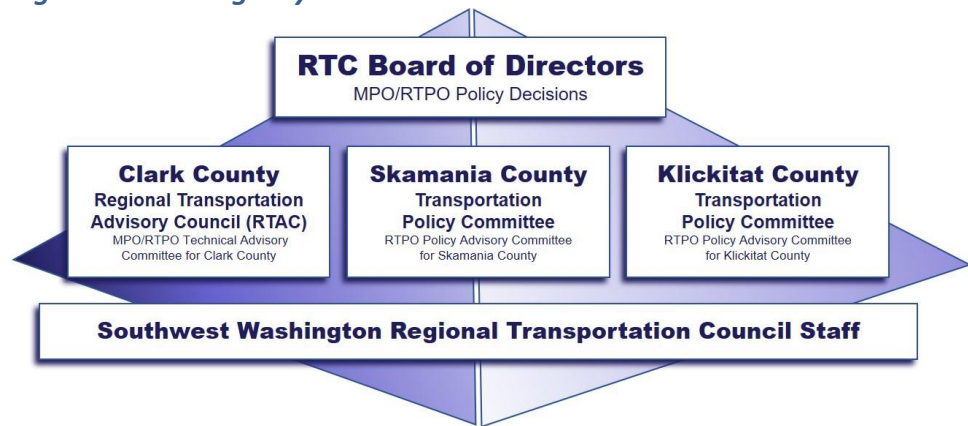
RTC Membership: Jurisdiction/Agency

Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Metro (Portland, OR)
Oregon Department of Transportation
Legislators from the following Washington State Districts:
14 th District
17 th District
18 th District
20 th District
49 th District

Governing Structure: Committees

RTC’s Agency Structure is illustrated in Figure 3 below, and descriptions of the decision-making committees follow.

Figure 3: RTC’s Agency Structure



RTC Board of Directors

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) **Board of Directors** is the policy decision-making body for RTC, both as MPO and RTPO. The Board meets monthly to make policy and project decisions and provides direction to RTC staff. The Board makes recommendations on key transportation issues. As determined by state and federal laws (RCW 47.80.060 and 23 USC 134(d)(2), respectively) and by RTC’s **Bylaws**, the RTC Board comprises 15 voting members composed of elected officials representing

the region's cities, counties, ports, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and as well as senior staff from state transportation agencies and the transit agency; and because the region is a bi-state region, the Oregon Department of Transportation and Metro are represented. The method of appointment is at the discretion of the appointing jurisdiction. The 15 state legislative members of the 14th, 17th, 18th, 20th, and 49th districts are ex-officio, nonvoting members of the Board. Nine RTC Board members are required to meet quorum. Valid votes require a majority of votes at meetings at which there is a quorum. Table 2 provides a summary of RTC Board representation and voting rights.

Table 2: RTC Board of Directors: Representation and Voting Rights

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 representing these four agencies	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 representing these four agencies	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
One representative of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe	Yes
The Portland Region One Manager of the Oregon Department of Transportation	Yes
One Councillor from Metro of Portland	Yes
Ex-Officio Representation:	

Three Clark County Commissioners	Yes
14th Legislative District: State Senator and Two State Representatives	No
17th Legislative District: State Senator and Two State Representatives	No
18th Legislative District: State Senator and Two State Representatives	No
20th Legislative District: State Senator and Two State Representatives	No
49th Legislative District: State Senator and Two State Representatives	No

All meetings of the RTC Board and RTC’s other committees are open to the public, with the exception of Board executive sessions. [RTC Board meeting agenda, minutes, and informational materials](#) are available on RTC’s website. All Board meetings include public comment opportunity as an agenda item.

Clark County

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

Within the Clark County MPO region, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) meets monthly to coordinate the regional transportation planning program and advise the RTC Board on technical transportation issues. RTAC comprises staff from local jurisdictions, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, WSDOT, C-TRAN as the region’s transit agency, and bi-state representation from ODOT and Metro. RTAC representation is listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Regional Transportation Advisory Committee: Representation

Clark County Public Works
Clark County Planning
City of Vancouver, Public Works
City of Vancouver, Planning
City of Battle Ground
Town of Yacolt

Clark County Public Works
City of Camas
City of Washougal
City of Ridgefield
City of La Center
C-TRAN
Washington State Department of Transportation
Port of Vancouver
Port of Camas-Washougal
Port of Ridgefield
Oregon Department of Transportation
Metro
Human Services Transportation Provider
Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Columbia River Economic Development Council

Skamania and Klickitat County Committees

Consistent with the 1990 State Growth Management Act, Transportation Policy Committees for Skamania and Klickitat counties provide policy and technical advice for the two rural counties to the RTC Board.

Skamania County Transportation Policy Committee

The Skamania County Transportation Policy Committee was established in 1990 to oversee and coordinate transportation planning activities in the Regional Transportation Planning Organization Skamania region. Skamania County Transportation Policy Committee representation is summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Skamania County Transportation Policy Committee: Representation

Skamania County
City of Stevenson
City of North Bonneville
Port of Skamania County

Skamania County	
WSDOT, SW Region	
Senior Services – transit provider	Non-Voting Member

Klickitat County Transportation Policy Committee

The Klickitat County Transportation Policy Committee was established in 1990 to oversee and coordinate transportation planning activities in the Regional Transportation Planning Organization Klickitat County region. Klickitat County Transportation Policy Committee representation is summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Klickitat County Transportation Policy Committee: Representation

Klickitat County	
City of White Salmon	
City of Bingen	
City of Goldendale	
Port of Klickitat	
WSDOT, SW Region	
Mt. Adams Transportation – transit provider	Non-Voting Member

Bi-state coordination

Both RTC—the MPO for the Clark County, Washington portion of the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region—and Metro—the MPO for the Oregon portion of the Portland-Vancouver region—recognize that bi-state travel is significant within the region. To address bi-state regional transportation system needs, RTC representatives participate on Metro’s Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC) and Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) committees. Metro is represented on RTC’s Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and RTC Board of Directors.

Bi-State Coordination Committee

The Bi-State Transportation Committee was established in 1999 to ensure that bi-state transportation issues are addressed. The committee was

reconstituted in 2004 to expand its scope to include both transportation and land use according to the Bi-State Coordination Charter. The committee is now known as the [Bi-State Coordination Committee](#). The committee's discussions and recommendations are advisory to the RTC, the [Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation \(JPACT\)](#), and Metro on issues of bi-state transportation significance. On issues of bi-state land use and economic significance, the committee advises the appropriate local and regional governments.

Other Committees and Transportation Stakeholders

RTC may form ad hoc committees to help with specific transportation planning tasks such as corridor studies and to assist in development of plans such as the Human Services Transportation Plan. The formation of these ad hoc committees and their meeting dates and times will be posted on to RTC's website. Stakeholders identified to serve on these committees may include elected officials, civic and community interest group representatives, and members of the general public with interest in the specific topic area.

RTC may also attend, participate in, and seek advice from other transportation planning committees and groups, such as the Clark Communities Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, the C-TRAN Citizens Advisory Committee, the Southwest Washington Freight & Commerce Task Force (SW FACT) operated through [Identity Clark County](#), and local transportation project committees to provide ideas on ways to address regional challenges, to research and resolve technical issues, and to review and recommend major transportation projects for funding.

III. Transportation Planning Public Involvement

Public involvement is a key component of the transportation planning and programming process. A proactive public involvement process is one that provides complete information, timely public notice, and full public access to major transportation decisions and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing transportation plans and programs.

In an attempt to ensure that our planning process is inclusive, RTC employs specific strategies for reaching out to persons who are traditionally underserved by transportation projects, such as low-income and minority households. In addition to ensuring that community members are involved, our transportation investments should not adversely impact these populations; and improvements are to be equitably distributed.

Guiding Principles and Goals

The purpose of the Public Participation Plan is to ensure that all of RTC's regional transportation plans, programs, and studies include adequate public involvement prior to action by the RTC Board. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), enacted in 1991, required that organizations like RTC utilize "proactive" public involvement procedures that go beyond merely providing notice of decisions. These requirements continue today under the current Federal Transportation Act, BIL Act, requiring us to provide opportunities for "early and continuing involvement throughout the transportation planning process." The Public Participation Plan explains and describes how the public can be involved in the transportation planning process.

Guiding Principles

RTC's public involvement process aims to provide members of the public with opportunities for early and continuing participation in transportation projects, programs, plans, and decisions and to provide public access to key decision-making processes. Engaging the public early

and often in the decision-making process is critical to the success of any transportation plan or program and is required by a number of state and federal laws.

RTC's public involvement procedures are built on the following guiding principles:

- ◆ RTC is committed to providing timely public notice and timely, relevant information.
- ◆ Public access to the transportation planning program is not biased by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, or economic level.
- ◆ No major public policy decision is reached or large project implemented without significantly affecting someone.
- ◆ Project and policy decisions should follow a decision-making process to make them acceptable.
- ◆ Effective public participation and education strategies must be tailored to fit the audience and issue.
- ◆ Collaboration provides for stronger solutions.
- ◆ Effective public notification and participation takes time and effort, yet is an essential component of sound decision-making.
- ◆ Early involvement of stakeholders improves information and direction for regional planning decisions.
- ◆ All relevant information necessary for an informed decision should be provided by project staff.
- ◆ Use of a variety of public outreach and public education techniques should be used to help involve a wider audience of interested parties and strengthen decisions for transportation policy and regional plans.
- ◆ Public participation is a dynamic activity that is best when planning partners work together to provide information to the public.
- ◆ There is often more than one solution to a problem.

- ◆ The decision-making process is strengthened with the inclusion of potentially underserved populations, sometimes through alternate means of communication.
- ◆ Citizens of all ethnicity, gender, and backgrounds need to be well informed, have the opportunity to voice their concerns, and have their concerns addressed.

Public Participation Goals

The primary goal of RTC's Public Participation Plan is to describe RTC's approach to public engagement. Other goals of the Public Participation Process are to:

- ◆ 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 all transportation system users, especially where they may be specifically affected by particular transportation plans, programs, and projects.
- ◆ Provide adequate public notice of public participation opportunities.
- ◆ Provide adequate time for public review and comment at key decision points in the 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.
- ◆ Utilize visualization techniques such as maps and graphics that can be used to simplify and make transportation plans and programs easier to understand.
- ◆ Hold public meetings at convenient times and locations.

- ◆ Consider, document, and use public suggestions and recommendations received during the planning and development phases.
- ◆ Identify and address the transportation needs of the traditionally underserved, including low income, minority populations, and populations with special transportation needs (populations covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act), and identify the effects of transportation policies, plans, and projects on these populations.

Meeting these goals ensures early and continuous public notification and participation in major actions and decisions by RTC and that there will be meaningful public input to inform the decision-making process. Major actions are those pertaining to the core functions of RTC to develop and publish a Regional Transportation Plan, a Transportation Improvement Program, and Public Participation Plan.

Participation Plan Requirements

Federal and state requirements of the Public Participation Process are more fully addressed in Appendix A of this plan, though a summarized list of applicable federal, state, and local requirements follows:

Laws, Policies, and Regulations Guiding RTC's Public Involvement Process

RTC operates under a wide range of federal, state, and local laws and requirements including:

Federal:

- ◆ Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), Public Law 117-58 as passed by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden on November 15, 2021
- ◆ Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 USC 126 and 49 CFR 27.19

- ◆ Federal Clean Air Act of 1970, 42 USC 85 and 40 CFR Parts 50-99
- ◆ Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, 42 USC 38 and 13 CFR 305
- ◆ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 23 USC 140, 23 CFR 200, and 49 CFR 21
- ◆ Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, signed August 11, 2000, by President William J. Clinton
- ◆ Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, signed February 11, 1994, by President William J. Clinton.
- ◆ Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, signed July 14, 1982, by President Ronald Reagan.
- ◆ Federal regulatory guidance for public involvement is addressed primarily in 23 CFR 450, Subpart C, and in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circulars, especially those pertaining to Title VI (FTA Circular 4702.1B), Limited English Proficiency and Environmental Justice (FTA Circular 4703.1).

Washington State:

- ◆ State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), RCW 43.21C
- ◆ Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A
- ◆ Open Public Meetings Act, RCW 42.30
- ◆ Public Records Act, RCW 43.56
- ◆ Washington Clean Air Act, RCW 70.94

Other:

- ◆ RTC Interlocal Agreements, Bylaws, Memoranda of Agreement.

IV. Public Participation Plan Development

This Public Participation Plan is RTC’s documented “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” in accordance with the 23 CFR 450.316(a).

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is updated as needed through a process involving ongoing consultation and engagement with the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC); the RTC Board of Directors; and interested parties such as transportation providers, public agencies, the freight transportation community, representatives of seniors, young people, and those with disabilities, Native American Tribes in the region, and bicycle and pedestrian committees.

Federal law requires that the MPO periodically evaluate the Public Participation Process and update the Public Participation Plan to reflect current practices. RTC worked with planning partners, the Board, Committees, stakeholders, interested parties, the interagency consultation process, and the public to develop the Public Participation Plan and updates. The 2024 Public Participation Plan reflects RTC’s existing practices for public involvement, consultation with interested parties, interagency consultation, agency governance and operations all documented in one place for public reference.

V. TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Work Plan, Budget, and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Each year RTC drafts a calendar year Work Plan and Budget to maintain the regional transportation planning process, led by the RTC Board. The draft Work Plan and Budget is usually reviewed at the November RTC Board meeting and is proposed for adoption at the December RTC Board meeting. The Work Plan outlines a course for RTC's regional transportation planning, policy setting, and project programming activities.

Related to the Work Plan and Budget, the [Unified Planning Work Program](#) is a federally required document that describes coordinated metropolitan transportation planning activities anticipated for the region for the next one or two-year period. For UPWP purposes, the fiscal year begins July 1. The UPWP is expected to reflect federal, state, and local transportation planning emphasis areas. RTC, as Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region, is granted Federal Highway Administration PL (planning) dollars and Federal Transit Administration planning funds to carry out the required metropolitan transportation planning process. The UPWP outlines how these federal dollars, as well as state and local funds, will be used by RTC and planning partners. UPWP requirements are specified in 23.CFR.450.308.

The UPWP must be developed by RTC in cooperation with the state Department of Transportation and transit operators and bi-state transportation planning partners. Members of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee help RTC to develop a draft UPWP. Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration representatives usually review the draft UPWP in February, the RTC Board reviews the draft in April or May, and Board adoption is proposed

in the following month. During the course of the fiscal year, the work program is kept current through UPWP amendments.

RTC and Transportation Project Funding

Within the Metropolitan Planning Organization region, or Clark County, RTC selects projects to receive certain types of funding from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. By federal law these funds must be regionally selected and approved by RTC. The criteria used to select projects are based on regional transportation, economic, and land use policies adopted by the region's elected leadership. RTC regularly reviews and updates the project selection criteria to fit with the transportation policy framework. All public agencies, jurisdictions, and tribes are eligible to apply for funding. Projects selected to receive RTC funds undergo a public comment and review period prior to RTC Board approval, as part of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process (see below).

Regional Transportation Plans

RTC covers a three-county region, each county having a long-range, 20-year Regional Transportation Plan.

Regional Transportation Plan for Clark County

The [Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#), also known as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, is the long-range, 20-year, plan for the Clark County region's transportation system. The plan is required by the federal government as a condition for receipt of federal transportation funding to the Clark County region. The RTP must be updated at least every five years; must include multiple modes of travel; must be fiscally constrained; and must be consistent with federal, state, and local plans and policies. The RTP provides a vision for an efficient future transportation system and a guide for sound transportation investments to accommodate growing travel demand.

Regional Transportation Plans; Skamania and Klickitat Counties

In RTC's two rural counties, the [Regional Transportation Plan for Skamania County](#) and the [Regional Transportation Plan for Klickitat County](#) are the two principal transportation planning documents. The Regional Transportation Plans have a long-range, 20-year horizon. The plans are developed through a coordinated and cooperative process between local jurisdictions, RTC, and the Washington State Department of Transportation in order to develop regional transportation solutions.

Transportation Improvement Program

The [Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#) is a four-year program of regionally significant projects. Projects programmed in the TIP are drawn either directly from specific project recommendations made in the Regional Transportation Plan or are developed from a more general series of recommendations (for example, preservation, maintenance, safety). The TIP represents an agency's intent to implement a specific project and the anticipated flow of funds for that project. Regionally selected transportation projects are incorporated into the TIP, along with other regionally significant projects selected for funding at the state or federal level. The TIP is usually updated annually by RTC and undergoes a public review and comment period prior to RTC Board adoption.

The metropolitan TIP for Clark County is required under both federal and state legislation. Transportation projects programmed in the TIP must be consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan. Projects must also meet clean air standards and environmental justice requirements. The TIP is developed by RTC through a cooperative and coordinated process involving local jurisdictions, WSDOT, and C-TRAN. RTC selects and prioritizes projects programmed in the TIP.

The TIP development process has three steps: (1) project screening for eligibility, (2) project evaluation and ranking according to RTC Board adopted criteria, and (3) project selection and programming. Minor amendments to the TIP can be made on a monthly basis.

For more information see RTC's website at www.rtc.wa.gov/programs/tip.

RTP and TIP; Air Quality Conformity Determination

RTC's region is now in attainment status for both ozone and carbon monoxide (CO) and is no longer required to make a conformity determination for the RTP and TIP. This is subject to change.

Congestion Management Process

RTC is required to have a [Congestion Management Process \(CMP\)](#) for the Clark County region in order to meet federal requirements in 23 CFR 450.322. A CMP is a systematic process for managing congestion. The CMP provides information on multimodal transportation system performance and on alternative strategies to alleviate congestion and enhance the mobility of persons and goods. The Congestion Management Process focuses on transportation performance within corridors through monitoring of vehicular travel, auto occupancy, transit, travel demand management strategies, system management strategies, and traffic operations in an

effort to identify solutions to address congestion. Both existing and future traffic conditions are addressed. The CMP informs both the RTP and TIP. RTC reports on the CMP annually.

Human Services Transportation Plan

Special Needs Transportation

Initially a requirement of the Federal Transportation Act, SAFETEA-LU (2005), regular update of a [Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan \(HSTP\)](#) continues to be a federal requirement. The intent of the Human Services Transportation Plan is to identify transportation needs and solutions and thereby improve transportation services for people

with disabilities, seniors, and individuals with lower incomes, as well as those in rural locations who cannot provide transportation for themselves. An update to the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) is required by federal law at least every four years.

The Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties is used as the basis for selecting special needs transportation projects to compete for Washington State's Consolidated Public Transportation Grant Program. Development of the Human Services Transportation Plan brings together service providers, agencies that distribute funds, riders, and the community at large to improve special needs transportation throughout the region.

Vancouver Area Smart Trek: Transportation Management and Operations

The [Vancouver Area Smart Trek \(VAST\)](#) program has been managed by RTC since 2001 and is one of RTC's ongoing programs. VAST program activities include regional collaboration on transportation system management and operations (TSMO) and on intelligent transportation systems (ITS).

The focus of RTC's Transportation Systems Management and Operations program is on low-cost, quickly implemented transportation operational projects that aim to optimize the existing transportation network. TSMO strategies aim to better utilize existing transportation facilities without expanding roadway capacity. The operational projects cover a wide range of transportation solutions, such as traveler information, freeway management, arterial management, coordinated incident management, and transit signal priority. The availability of traveler information supports improved travel reliability, travel choices, and makes for informed commuters.

The Intelligent Transportation System element of the VAST program provides coordination and management for the deployment of ITS projects, infrastructure, and equipment to ensure integration and interoperability of operational projects. ITS technology is automating the collection of data. In addition, the Region has initiated a transportation

data archive system called [PORTAL](#) to enhance data availability, ease its retrieval, and assist with the analysis of transportation data to support performance monitoring.

Transportation Data and Analysis (Household Travel Survey, Travel Forecast Modeling)

RTC develops, maintains, and manages a regional transportation database and regional travel forecast model to support the regional transportation planning program.

Transportation Data

RTC provides coordinated transportation data collection, compilation, and analysis within the region. The database is used to assess transportation system performance, evaluate level-of-service standards, to calibrate the regional travel forecasting model, and support transportation and engineering work of RTC's transportation partners. [Traffic count data](#) is available on RTC's website.

Household Travel Survey

RTC conducts household travel surveys periodically to collect and document statistically valid demographic, travel, and activity behavior characteristics of Clark County households. The Clark County Household Travel Survey collects information about where people go, how people get there, and what they do there. The data is used to inform transportation planning and policy analysis and forms the foundation for updating and calibrating the regional travel model.

Travel Forecast Modeling

RTC develops and maintains a [regional travel forecast model](#). The forecast model improves our ability to identify future transportation needs and guides investment of public funds for transportation solutions to help maintain Clark County's quality of life.

Other Transportation Planning Activities

Other RTC transportation planning activities include assessment of the safety of the transportation system, planning for freight transportation, and working with local planning partners on comprehensive land use planning and planning for pedestrian and bicycle transportation modes. RTC also works with planning partners on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs, which focus on reducing travel demand, particularly at peak commute hours, through techniques such as Commute Trip Reduction (CTR). TDM strategies can make more efficient use of the current roadway system and can reduce vehicle trips.

VI. PARTICIPATION, INVOLVEMENT, CONSULTATION, AND COMMENT PROCEDURES

Key Public Participation Elements

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 menu in Section V). 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.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are the forum for RTC's decision-making, with the RTC Board of Directors being the body that adopts regional transportation plans and programs. Table 6 summarizes how RTC's materials and meeting notices can be accessed.

Table 6: How to Access RTC's Materials and Notices

Materials	What is Available Online?	When is Information Posted?
Meeting agendas and packets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RTC Board agenda and meeting packets •Advisory committee information 	One week prior to the meeting

Materials	What is Available Online?	When is Information Posted?
Meeting Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and advisory committee meeting dates and times 	Meeting information pages are updated monthly. Online calendar is posted and updated continuously throughout year, along with Board web pages
Web and Audio Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTC Board meetings 	Listen or watch RTC Board meetings live on CVTV or in searchable archive available 24 hours after event. RTC Board meeting videos are also available on RTC's website .
News Releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News releases. News and media items, published or broadcast 	All news releases are available on RTC's website. Timing of the news release varies depending on the news item or event being publicized.

Access for All

Consistent with federal requirements associated with the transportation planning process, RTC is committed to nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities. RTC strives to ensure fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all of the region's residents, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, and income. Efforts will be made to seek out and consider the needs and interests of traditionally underserved populations. RTC will maintain a contact list of representatives of underserved populations and will communicate with representative groups and committees of the underserved populations to ensure access to RTC's transportation planning process.

Environmental Justice and Title VI

RTC maintains a Title VI Plan, available on RTC's website, to ensure that no person in the region shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or

be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which RTC receives federal financial assistance. RTC's Title VI Plan is updated approximately every three years. RTC also submits annual reports on its Title VI program to the Washington State Department of Transportation to ensure all federal regulations are being met.

RTC seeks out and considers the needs of people traditionally underserved by transportation systems (for example, low-income and minority households). To interact with these communities, RTC will participate in community meetings and will continue to nurture relationships with underserved community representatives at meetings such as the Accessible Transportation Coalition, C-TRAN's Citizens Advisory Committee, and Clark County's Commission on Aging.

To help in identifying the underserved populations, RTC publishes an Environmental Justice (EJ) Demographic Profile using U.S. Census and American Community Survey data to identify and locate minority, low-income, elderly, and limited English proficient populations in the region. A demographic profile identifies the location of EJ populations in Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania counties to help determine the type of public outreach and whether the effects of agency actions will disproportionately impact or benefit these populations (Ref. FTA EJ Circular, Chap. II and III). RTC uses the profile data as the basis for providing an Environmental Justice analysis of the impacts of key decisions on traditionally underserved populations as part of the planning process. The profile contains data that allows for the continual updating of information to track the performance of the regional transportation system and implemented strategies.

The demographic profile provides information to help further RTC's goal of applying a wholistic equity lens to its planning practices to address existing inequities and prevent the creation of new inequities. In support of this work, RTC's equity lens is based on the identification of Equity Focus Areas (EFA) for underserved populations. The equity focus areas were developed as part of the 2024 RTP 20-year project list evaluation process to ensure there were no disproportionate impacts or no clear pattern of denying benefits of transportation planning, programming and projects to underserved populations.

The equity focus area analysis tools is also being integrated into other planning projects and programs to ensure undeserved populations are being identified and considered throughout RTC's projects and programs. This includes using the equity focus areas in the TIP project evaluation process that awards additional points for projects that occur in equity focus areas and for evaluating potential projects in the development of a regional safety action plans.

Equity Focus Areas are identified as census block groups or tracts with higher than the Clark County average concentrations and double the density for the following populations: of people of color (block group), people with lower incomes (block group) and people with limited English proficiency (tract). Most of these areas also include higher than regional average concentrations of other marginalized communities, including youth, older adults and people living with disabilities. The threshold rates for each population are identified in the following table.

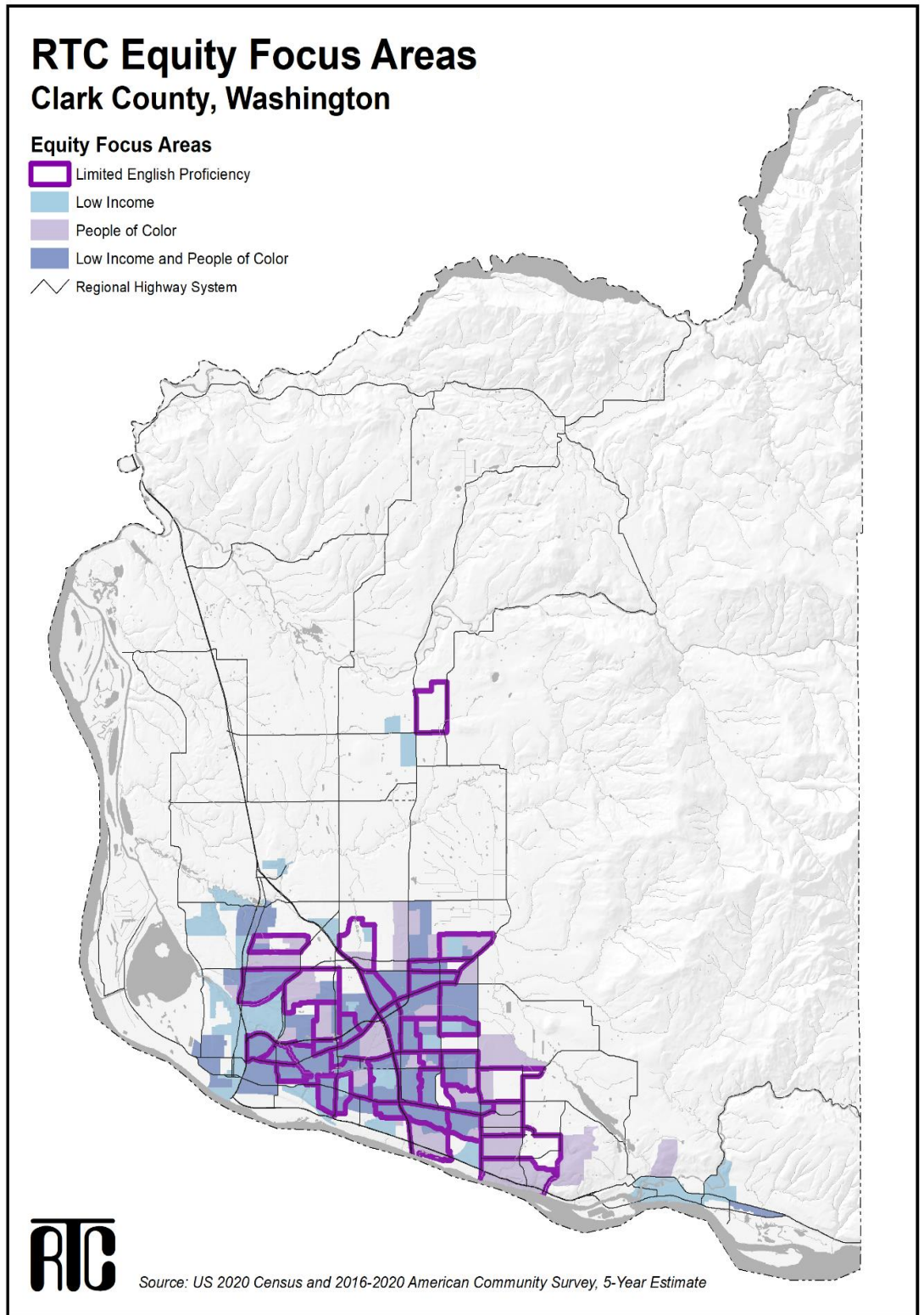
Table 7: Equity Focus Area Thresholds

Community	Definition	Geographic Threshold	Data Source
People of Color	Persons who identify as Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or Some Other Race.	The census block groups that are above the Clark County rate (27.1%) for people of color AND the census tract has twice (2x) the population density of the county (1.25 persons per acre)	2020 U.S. Census
People with Lower Incomes	Persons with incomes less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.	The census block groups that are above the Clark County rate (22.9%) for people with lower incomes AND the census tract has twice (2x) the	American Community Survey, 2016-2020

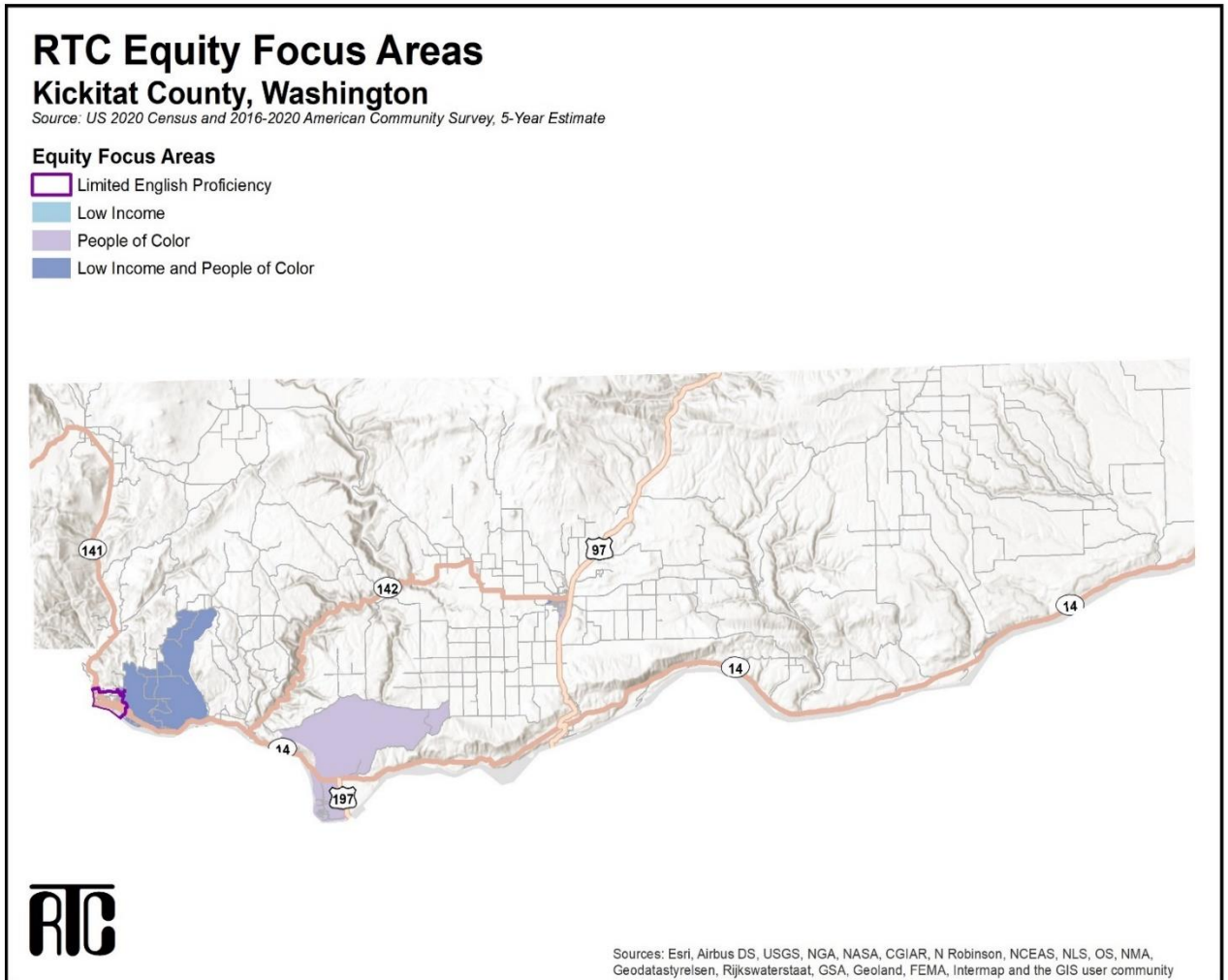
		population density of the county (1.19 persons per acre)	
People with limited English proficiency	Persons 5 years and older who identify as unable “to speak English very well.”	The census tracts that are above the Clark County rate (5.89%) for people with limited English proficiency (all languages combined) AND the census tract has twice (2x) the population density of the county average (1.12 person per acre)	American Community Survey, 2016-2020

Maps 1,2, and 3 illustrate the spatial distribution of equity focus areas for the Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania County regions.

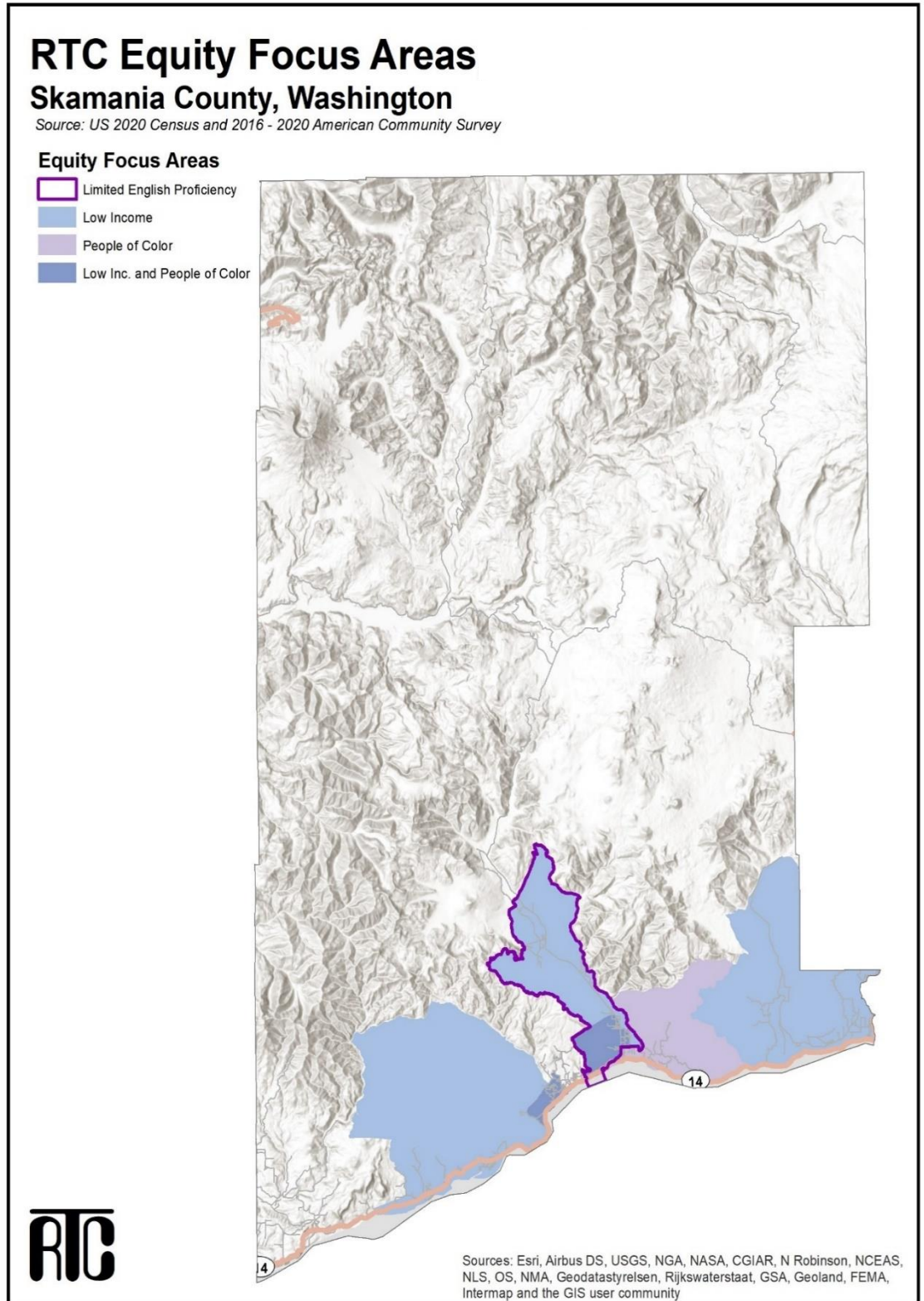
Map 1: Equity Focus Areas Clark County



Map 2: Equity Focus Areas, Klickitat County



Map 3: Equity Focus Areas, Skamania County



Limited English Proficiency and Alternative Formats

RTC is committed to engaging and involving all residents of Southwest Washington, including those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), in its activities. Therefore, in accordance with the best practice standards for public involvement, together with assistance from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and other federal agencies, RTC has developed a Language Assistance Plan (LAP). The LAP Plan outlines: how persons who may need language assistance are identified; the ways in which assistance is provided; and how LEP persons are notified assistance is available.

The RTC region consists of Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties. To understand the profile of persons that may participate in RTC activities, the most recent United States Census data was used. For the purposes of this LEP Plan, persons who identified themselves as speaking English less than “very well” are considered LEP persons. Tables 1 through 3, below, summarize the relevant information derived from the United States Census Bureau 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates – Table C16001: Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years of Age and Over.

Table 8: LEP Populations Clark County

Language Spoken at Home Clark County, WA	Total Persons	% of Total Population
Spanish or Spanish Creole	11,537	2.4%
Russian, Polish, or Other Slavic	7,510	1.6%
Vietnamese	1,929	0.4%
Chinese	1,863	0.4%
Other non-English	4,812	1.0%
Total LEP Population	28,821	6.1%
Total Population (Speak English Very Well)	446,327	93.9%

Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates – Table C16001

In Clark County (Table 8), Spanish or Spanish Creole is the most common non-English language spoken at home, accounting for almost half of the estimated 28,821 persons that speak English less than “very well.” The estimated total LEP population of 28,821 represents about 6.1% of total 446,327 residents in Clark County.

Table 9: LEP Populations Klickitat County

Language Spoken at Home Klickitat County, WA	Total Persons	% of Total Population
Spanish or Spanish Creole	1,028	4.7%
German or other West Germanic language	17	0.1%
Other LEP Population	36	0.2%
Total LEP Population	1,064	4.9%
Total Population (Speak English Very Well)	20,681	95.1%

Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates – Table C16001

Spanish or Spanish Creole is also the most common non-English language spoken at home in Klickitat County (Table 2). The estimated 1,028 Spanish speakers who speak English less than “very well” represent over 97% of the 1,064 Klickitat residents who speak English less than “very well.” Over all about 4.9% of Klickitat County’s 20,681 persons are LEP persons.

Table 10: LEP Populations Skamania County

Language Spoken at Home Skamania County, WA	Total Persons	% of Total Population
Spanish or Spanish Creole	98	0.8%
Other Asian and Pacific Island Languages	13	0.1%
Total LEP Population	111	1.0%
Total Population (Speak English Very Well)	11,502	99.0%

Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates – Table C16001

In Skamania County (Table 3), Spanish or Spanish Creole is the most common non-English language spoken at home, accounting for almost all of the estimated 158 persons that speak English less than “very well.” The estimated LEP population of 111 represents about 1.0% of total 11,502 persons that reside in Skamania County.

At every RTC public meeting, RTC provides Title VI self-disclosure forms and a Title VI notice published in Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chinese. On RTC’s home webpage there are four links in Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chinese to information about Title VI and interpretation and translation services. RTC’s vital documents are also provided on the web site in Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chinese. A Title VI

statement in Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chinese is included in all print materials.

If a participant does not speak Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, or Chinese, / *Speak Cards* are used to identify a person's primary language. The cards were developed by the United States Census Bureau, and bear the phrase "Mark this box if you read or speak [name of language]" translated into 38 different languages. The LEP person can then denote the language, and staff can respond as appropriate to provide or obtain assistance.

Consultation

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), known as the BIL Act, continued the previous Federal Transportation Act's (FAST) commitment to public participation. Metropolitan transportation agencies like RTC are directed to consult with officials responsible for other planning activities affected by transportation in the area. The goal of the consultation is to ensure a coordinated and open exchange of information, ideas, and concerns between RTC and stakeholders about the planning process, potential impacts, and appropriate mitigation.

The most effective time to involve the public, local governments, Tribes, and agencies in the planning and programming process is as early as possible.

RTC considers the agency consultation process as a continuum, starting with development of the regional transportation plan. The development of the regional transportation plan, with its long-range time frame, is the earliest opportunity for consultation and is a key decision point for the interagency consultation process. It is at the long-range planning stage when policy direction is formulated, funding priorities and major projects' planning level concepts are introduced, prioritized, and considered for implementation. Because the RTP governs the selection and programming of projects in the TIP, the RTP is the key decision point for policy decisions regarding project and program priorities that address mobility, congestion, air quality, and other planning factors.

The Transportation Improvement Program is a short-term programming document detailing the funding for those projects and investments first identified as needed in an adopted Regional Transportation Plan.

RTC uses the following approaches to coordinate and consult with affected agencies in the development of the RTP and the TIP. Throughout the process, consultation is based on the agency's needs and interests. At a minimum, all agencies will be provided an opportunity to comment on the RTP and TIP updates. RTC uses Washington's State Environmental Policy Act as a guide to initiating public involvement and agency consultation and will issue a scoping notice at the beginning of the planning process in order to begin the interagency consultation process.

Tribal Government Consultation

The RTC region is home to Tribal governments, including the Cowlitz Indian Tribe and Yakama Nation. Tribes within the region are encouraged and welcomed to participate in RTC's transportation planning processes. RTC encourages full involvement of Tribes in all of its activities, including the development of the Regional Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Human Services Transportation Plan. RTC notifies Tribes of opportunities to participate through a number of methods, including direct outreach to Tribal Leaders and staff at Tribal offices, invitation letters, electronic communication, and agenda packets. RTC may also coordinate with the statewide Tribal Transportation Planning Organization ([TTPO](#)), which usually convenes quarterly. The TTPO is a statewide planning forum providing opportunity for the Tribes to gain information and provide feedback on Tribal and general transportation issues. In all of its work, RTC works to understand the diverse needs of each Tribe and adapts communication efforts accordingly. Following passage of EHB 1584 in 2019, codified as [RCW 47.80.050](#), the Cowlitz Indian Tribe opted to become a full member of RTC, with representation on the RTC Board of Directors and the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee. The Yakama Nation opted to participate in the Klickitat County Transportation Policy Committee.

Other Consultation/Partnerships

Resource Agencies: Air Quality, Land Management

RTC works in consultation with resource agencies with interest in RTC's transportation planning and programming activities. These include air quality, land management, historical, and wildlife resource agencies. In determining air quality conformity, air quality consultation partner agencies include the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, the Washington State Department of Transportation, Health and Ecology, and Southwest Clean Air Agency. RTC communicates and consults with partner resource agencies to review the methodology and assumptions to be used prior to each major transportation planning effort, especially Regional Transportation Plan development.

Public Comment and Review Periods

Public comment on any transportation topic is always encouraged. When the agency is seeking public comment on a particular action, RTC may offer a specific public comment and review period and use the variety of notification methods discussed in this plan to let the public know how to comment. Federal and SEPA requirements are also taken into consideration when determining the length and number of public comment and review periods. The Transportation Improvement Program and Regional Transportation Plan public comment periods will be for a minimum of 30 days. The Public Participation Plan public comment period will be at least 45 days.

How Public Comments Are Addressed

RTC welcomes and responds to public comments. Public comments are reviewed and analyzed by staff and are used as input for potential revisions to operations, plans, and programs. Prior to Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program publication, public comments are documented and are incorporated into the decision-making where appropriate; and their disposition is recorded.

When written and oral comments on drafts of the 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 the TIP. Within the MPO region, whenever air quality conformity analysis is required, 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. Currently RTC is an air quality attainment area for ozone and carbon monoxide; so, no air quality conformity determination is required.

If the final transportation plan or the TIP differs significantly from the one made available for public comment and raises new material issues that 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.

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The methods and public participation techniques used by RTC will be tailored to best suit each particular planning effort as it gets underway. At the outset of each planning process—such as Regional Transportation Plan development, corridor studies, and regional transportation studies—RTC will review the menu of participation methods and techniques and use the best mix of public participation methods. The following section documents a menu of public outreach methods, tools, and techniques that RTC may use to gain public participation and involvement in the development of RTC’s plans, programs, and activities.

Menu of Public Participation Tools, Methods, and Techniques

The following is a range of public participation techniques and strategies that RTC may use to support and enhance 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.

RTC’s Website — rtc.wa.gov

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has maintained a [website](http://rtc.wa.gov) since 1996. The website has information about RTC and its activities, regional programs, planning studies, data resources, final reports, and upcoming meetings. The website includes a meeting calendar and electronic copies of agendas, public comment periods, comments received, data products, publications, and other relevant information. The website also provides an opportunity for the public, on an ongoing basis, to provide input and formal comments to RTC using a [feedback form](#). Title VI and Americans with Disabilities Act statements are included, as well as language translation services. The website offers links to archives of [CVTV broadcasts](#) of [RTC Board meetings](#).

Public Notification (Agendas, Etc.)

The public is notified of RTC meetings and events primarily through RTC's website and e-mail communication, as well as U.S. mail service. RTC Board packets of informational materials is also made available on RTC's website.

Meetings Held at Convenient Times, Locations, and Accessibility

RTC commits to hold meetings at convenient times and at locations that are accessible to persons with disabilities and, wherever possible, to people who rely on public transit.

RTC Board meetings are typically held at 4:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month in the Public Service Center at 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, WA. The public can confirm the meeting dates, times, and location on [RTC's online calendar](#).

Meetings Available Online

RTC Board meetings are recorded by CVTV. Meetings are broadcast live on the day of the meeting and are archived for future playback. Archived broadcasts of RTC Board meetings are available on RTC's website at RTC.wa.gov.

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). Open houses and meetings may be held virtually.

Workshops and Forums

Information workshops may be 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.

Citizen Advisory Committees

Citizen Advisory Committees are advisory committees to RTC that may be established to provide broad regional community input during certain planning processes, such as corridor studies. Citizen Advisory Committees are usually composed of individuals representing a cross-section of the region's populations, including those with environmental, business, civic organization, neighborhood, and other interests.

E-Mail Distribution Lists and Databases

RTC maintains and continuously updates its mailing lists and databases so RTC can initiate contact with interested parties, targeting those traditionally underserved and/or gaps in existing databases. RTC's mailing lists include Tribes, community groups, Title VI relevant populations, businesses, resource agencies, membership, and local governments.

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 included in public outreach activities.

Social Media

To reach a broader audience, CVTV broadcasts of the monthly RTC Board meetings are provided on CVTV's website and on RTC's website using Vimeo. RTC has an established Facebook page for sharing information and continues to research opportunities for the use of other social media platforms. RTC provides information on metropolitan transportation planning to planning partners and stakeholders and encourages

dissemination of the information through social media means such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X.

Media Releases

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

Presentations

RTC can provide presentations on metropolitan transportation planning activities. One of the most effective outreach tools is to present at meetings where people routinely gather, such as community groups, chambers of commerce, councils, or classes. When RTC is engaged in a major planning activity, such as development of the Regional Transportation Plan, staff actively seek out interested groups to present to.

Visualization Techniques

Wherever possible, RTC will use visualization techniques such as maps, photos, graphics, flow charts, and PowerPoint presentations to help explain transportation plans and programs.

Newsletters

Project newsletters to keep the public apprised of specific projects are published on an as-needed basis. Newsletters may include information about a project written in language understood by the general public. Newsletters are distributed to identified stakeholders and interested parties. In areas with identified Limited English Proficiency populations, newsletters can be made available in other languages.

Other Technologies

RTC is committed to researching and reviewing new technologies and use of innovative techniques that can be used, as appropriate, to increase transparency, access, and understanding of regional planning efforts.

Surveys

Surveys are used on an as-needed basis as a tool to gather information on people's perceptions, preferences, and practices. Surveys can range from being informal to a more scientific approach. The information being sought and the use of that information in the regional transportation planning process will vary. Based on the needs of the project/program process, surveys are translated for RTC's identified LEP populations.

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.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RTC'S REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: A GUIDE TO PROCEDURES

There are two core duties performed by RTC as part of the federal metropolitan transportation planning process that are particularly called out in federal law as needing early and continuing opportunities for public participation. These two core duties are development of a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Clark County and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Clark County.

Because the Regional Transportation Plan, also known as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, includes a comprehensive, long-term vision for the future transportation system, RTP's development process provides the earliest and best opportunity for interested persons and public agencies to influence RTC's transportation policies and investment priorities. It is at this earlier RTP stage where investment priorities and major planning-level project design concepts are established and where broad, regional impacts of transportation on the environment are addressed.

Regional Transportation Plan for Clark County

As described in Section III of the Public Participation Plan, the [Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#), also known as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, is the long-range, 20-year plan for the Clark County region's transportation system to guide the area's transportation development in the next 20 years. The RTP is the comprehensive blueprint for transportation investment (transit, highway, local roads, bicycle, and pedestrian projects) and establishes the financial foundation for how the Region invests in its surface transportation system. Crucial decisions about whether or not to support or fund a transportation

program or project in the region first occur in the development of the long-range transportation plan.

Federal requirements pertaining to the Regional Transportation Plan addressed in CFR 450.324 are as follows:

- ◆ A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with federal, state, and tribal (sic) land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies.
- ◆ Consult, as appropriate, with state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the RTP. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate (1) comparison of RTPs with state conservation plans or maps, if available, or (2) comparison of RTPs with inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.

The RTP is required to be updated at least every five years to reflect new planning priorities and changing projections of growth and travel demand. Changes to the RTP may be required and can be made through Plan amendments.

RTP updates include extensive public consultation by RTC and participation involving public agency officials, and stakeholder groups over many months. In addition, RTC works in partnership with local jurisdictions and agencies involved in transportation in their Comprehensive Planning and Capital Facilities Planning processes for identifying projects for inclusion in the RTP. Local agencies document public comments that help inform their project recommendations for RTP inclusion.

Transportation Improvement Program

As described in Section III of the Public Participation Plan, the [Transportation Improvement Program](#) for Clark County (TIP) is a four-year priority list of transportation projects within Clark County. The TIP translates recommendations from the long-range RTP into a short-term program of improvements. The TIP defines project budgets, schedules, and phasing for those programs and projects that are already part of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Federal requirements pertaining to the Transportation Improvement Program are addressed in CFR 450.326:

- ◆ All interested parties shall have a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP as required by 450.316(a). In addition, in nonattainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process; the circumstances of the public meeting should be addressed through the participation plan described in 450.316(a).

The TIP is required to be updated every two years, but it can be done more often if needed. RTC routinely adopts a TIP annually. Occasionally changes need to be made to the TIP following its adoption. These changes will be handled as updates, administrative modifications, and amendments. Updates do not substantially change a project and can be handled administratively by RTC staff. Administrative modifications are minor changes that require approval from the RTC's Executive Director. Amendments are substantial changes to projects that require action from the RTC Board of Directors. Proposed TIP amendment and modification actions are documented in Regional Transportation Advisory Committee and RTC Board packet materials which are made available online or by mail for public review, input, and comment.

Federal Transit Administration Program of Projects: Public Participation Requirements

A Program of Projects (POP) is a list of projects proposed to be funded by the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Section 5307 funding

program apportioned to the region. C-TRAN is the recipient of FTA Section 5307 funds within the region.

RTC has responsibility for developing the region's Transportation Improvement Program. Federal transit law and joint Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning regulations governing the metropolitan planning process require that a region includes the public and solicits their comments when its metropolitan long-range transportation plan and its metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program are developed.

C-TRAN relies on RTC's Public Participation Process to satisfy federal requirements related to public participation in developing, publicizing, and soliciting comments on C-TRAN's Program of Projects (POP). RTC acknowledges this reliance in media releases prominently displayed on RTC's website, as well as in advertised public notices for RTC's Transportation Improvement Program. This RTC Public Participation Plan and RTC's TIP development process follow the procedures for public involvement associated with TIP development and therefore satisfies public participation requirements for the POP (FTA Circular 9030.1e, Chapter V, 6 c.). All public notices of public involvement activities and times established for public review and comment on the TIP state that they satisfy the POP requirements of the Section 5307 Program.

RTC Document Review and Advertising Schedule for Clark County MPO Region

Table 7 (overleaf) outlines the Document Review and Advertising Schedule for RTC's core documents, the Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program for Clark County. These documents that RTC develops are required by the federal government or the state to go through a public involvement process; and there is an established timeline involved in reviewing, adopting, and updating them.

Table 11: RTC Document Review and Advertising Schedule

Document	Process
Regional Transportation Plan for Clark County <i>(also known as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan)</i>	Reviewed annually and updated, at a minimum, every five years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTC Board and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee review • Interagency Coordination, Consultation, and Collaboration review • Draft RTP document posted on RTC’s website • News release published, notifying public of comment and review period before RTP adoption; includes public meeting notice • Comment period of at least 45 days prior to adoption • Legal notice published, including notice of public meeting • Notice of public comment period sent to e-mail distribution list • Public meeting may be hosted during 45-day comment period to solicit input • Draft document posted for review and comment on RTC website • Provide draft to federal, state, and member agencies for review and comment • Document approved or accepted by RTC Board • Distribute final adopted copies to federal, state, and partner agencies • Post adopted document on the RTC website

Document	Process
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Clark County	Updated at a minimum every two years but RTC routinely updates annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed in accordance with RTC TIP Guidebook • Reviewed by RTC Board and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee • Comment period of at least 30 days prior to adoption of new TIP • Draft TIP posted on RTC’s website • News release published notifying public of comment and review period before TIP adoption; includes public meeting notice • Notice of public comment period sent to email distribution list • Public meeting may be hosted during 30-day comment period to solicit input on new TIP • Provide new TIP to federal, state, and member agencies for review • Document approved or accepted by RTC Board • Distribute final adopted copies to federal, state, and partner agencies • Post adopted document on the RTC website
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed by Regional Transportation Advisory Committee • Notice of proposed TIP amendment sent to RTC Board email distribution list • Notice of amendment posted for review and comment on RTC website as part of RTC Board meeting agenda • Amendment approved or accepted by RTC Board • Amendments posted on RTC website
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Evaluation Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated at a minimum every two years • Reviewed by Regional Transportation Advisory Committee and RTC Board (usually in May/June of each year) • Approved by RTC Board • Updated criteria posted on the RTC website and sent to member agencies

Document	Process
Annual Listing of Federal Obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Transportation Advisory Committee and RTC Board review no later than March 30 of each year• Posted on RTC website no later than March 30 of each year

IX. EVALUATION AND UPDATE OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Public Participation Outcomes

At the initial start of a planning project, RTC develops a scope, timeline, milestones, and goals for community engagement. The goals and process for community engagement will be continuously monitored and can be changed at different points along the project timeline. For all planning processes, RTC identifies the following high-level outcomes for public outreach. More refined outcomes are developed for each project and its identified needs.

- ◆ Share transportation planning and programming information with a broad cross-section of the public.
- ◆ Ensure notification and participation of all populations, including people of color, low-income, and those with disabilities.
- ◆ Increase overall awareness of regional planning activities.
- ◆ Ensure that planning decisions incorporate the concerns, needs, and visions of the region and that any comments received are addressed.

Public Participation Evaluation of Effectiveness

RTC's Public Participation Plan is not a static document but an ongoing strategy that is annually reviewed for effectiveness and updated based on experiences and the changing circumstances of RTC, the region, evolving technology, and changing public preferences regarding outreach techniques. In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316(a) (1)(x) of the Code of Federal Regulations, this Public Participation Plan will periodically be reviewed for effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in it to ensure a full and open participation process. After Public

Participation Plan evaluation, RTC may choose to update the plan. The PPP may also be subject to minor corrections.

As part of every public involvement period and public outreach effort for studies, plans, documents, and other activities, RTC uses a variety of methods to reach the public, solicit comment, and evaluate how effective each method was. The following matrix (Table 12) shows the type of evaluation the public can reasonably expect RTC to conduct on an annual basis in evaluating the effectiveness of the Public Participation Process. These evaluation tools will also be used to help aid in identifying whether an outreach process was successful at attaining the desired public outreach outcomes.

Table 12: RTC's Public Participation Plan: Evaluation Matrix

Involvement Tool	Information Monitored	Evaluation
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of site visits tracked • Website analytics • Search terms • Comments from users • Website updated at least monthly 	Used to better organize website information, improve the website's interactivity, post information that people are searching for, and determine what is prompting people to visit RTC's website
Board, Committee & Public Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Comments made at and after meetings • Results of discussion used to improve future meetings 	Shows the effectiveness of meeting notice techniques, the level of interest in topics discussed at meetings, and provides essential direction to plans and programs
Television Broadcast and Web Streaming of RTC Board Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people accessing the web stream • Comments made by viewers/listeners 	Used to demonstrate the value of the broadcast and streaming service

Involvement Tool	Information Monitored	Evaluation
News and Media Releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of news articles/media pieces published • Number of people accessing the news release on website • Web usage on day after media coverage • News coverage monitored by staff 	Used to improve news releases to enhance media relations and communications and to determine the level of interest in agency activities
Public Comment Periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of comments received • Substance of comments received • Summary of comments provided at the end of the comment period 	For developing quality plans and programs and whether the overall public participation plan and tools were effective
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of comments or replies • Number of visitors to sites • RTC allows for greater access to broadcast RTC Board meetings by providing video links to the recording of each RTC Board meeting on RTC's website • Number of 'likes' or 'followers' 	Demonstrates the value of using social media sites and would help to determine what information the public responds to

Public Participation Plan Updates

RTC strives to enhance public participation in the agency's work while putting limited funds to best use. As such, if update of the Public Participation Plan is warranted, RTC will take steps to update the Public Participation Plan.

A dated copy of this plan will always be available directly from RTC or on RTC's website. Any major updates will include a process that includes review by RTC's Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC); a public comment period of at least 45 days; with wide release and public notification about the proposed changes; and approval by the RTC Board. RTC will extend the public comment period by an additional 45 days in instances where major revisions are proposed in response to comments received.

RTC welcomes public feedback on this Plan, the public outreach and participation techniques described within it, and on any aspect of the agency's public involvement program.

Amendments 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 public comment period of at least forty-five (45) days before any amendment to the public participation plan is adopted by the RTC Board.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REQUIREMENTS FOR RTC'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

RTC operates under the jurisdiction of several federal laws, the basics of which are highlighted below.

Federal Requirements for RTC's Public Participation Process

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), enacted as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The BIL authorizes \$567.5 billion in funding over a five-year period and focuses on highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation improvements, bridge investments, carbon reduction, climate change resiliency, electric vehicle infrastructure, rail investments, and research and technology programs. In addition, the BIL emphasizes expanding access and undoing past harms for historically marginalized communities.

BIL built on the changes made by MAP-21 and the FAST Act and sets the course for transportation investment to improve mobility, create jobs, support economic development, accelerate project delivery and promote innovation. BIL also added a requirement that State highway safety programs result from meaningful public participation and engagement from affected communities, particularly those most significantly impacted by traffic crashes resulting in injuries and fatalities.

Federal transportation laws direct MPO public participation plans be developed in consultation with all interested parties and to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan. It further directs MPOs, to the maximum extent practicable, to hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, to employ visualization techniques to

describe plans, and to make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as an agency's website, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Title VI of the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) requires that transportation planning and programming be nondiscriminatory on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The federal statute was further clarified and supplemented by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and a series of federal statutes enacted in the 1990s relating to the concept of environmental justice. The fundamental principles of environmental justice include:

- ◆ Avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.
- ◆ Ensuring full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- ◆ Preventing the denial, reduction, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income communities.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The [ADA](#) requires that all federally funded activities be nondiscriminatory on the basis of physical or mental disabilities. The fundamental principles of complying with ADA include:

- ◆ Ensuring full access to information related to agency activities, including an accessible website, accessible offices and meeting spaces, and availability of alternative formats including a TTY Relay access.

Executive Orders

An Executive Order is an order given by the President to federal agencies. As a recipient of federal revenues, RTC assists federal transportation agencies in complying with these orders.

1. [Executive Order 12898](#): Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations: In February 1994, President William Clinton signed Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice for Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, which mandates that federal agencies make achieving environmental justice part of their missions.

2. [Executive Order 13166](#): Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency: Executive Order 13166 states that people who speak limited English should have meaningful access to federally conducted and federally funded programs and activities. It requires that all federal agencies identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency and develop and implement a system to provide those services so all persons can have meaningful access to services.

3. [Executive Order 12372](#): Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs: Executive Order 12372 calls for intergovernmental review of projects to ensure that federally funded or assisted projects do not inadvertently interfere with state and local plans and priorities. The Executive Order does not replace public participation, comment, or review requirements of other federal laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), but gives the states an additional mechanism to ensure federal agency responsiveness to state and local concerns.

Federal Clean Air Act

Under federal regulations, RTC is required to demonstrate that the long-range Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for Air Quality. Required under the federal [Clean Air Act](#) the SIP provides a blueprint of how maintenance and nonattainment areas, such as the Clark County region, will meet or maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Positive conformity determinations that the Regional

Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program do not contribute to violations of ozone or carbon emission standards allow the region to proceed with implementation of transportation projects in a timely manner.

Federal Regulatory Guidance

Federal regulatory guidance for public involvement is addressed primarily in 23 CFR 450 Subpart C and in [Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\) Circulars](#), especially those pertaining to Title VI (FTA Circular 4702.1B, Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients), Limited English Proficiency and Environmental Justice (FTA Circular 4703.1, Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients). Washington State Laws

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), RCW 43.21C

RTC can use [SEPA](#) to guide its environmental review for key decision-making.

State Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A and RCW 47.80.030

Clark County develops county wide planning policies under the [GMA](#) pursuant to GMA procedures [RCW 36.70A.210 (2)(e)] with appropriate public notification and participation.

Washington State Open Public Meetings Act, [RCW 42.30](#)

All RTC Board meetings are open to the public, and public comment periods are provided during each regular meeting. Board chairs may limit comment periods as needed. Monthly meetings of the RTC Board are broadcast on CTV and archived.

Public Records Act, [RCW 42.56](#)

RTC conducts its business in an open and transparent manner, but people may want to request specific information under the State Public Records Act. Anyone may request to view RTC records for any reason although Washington State places some limits on how certain records may be

used, including but not limited to prohibiting using lists of individuals for commercial purposes [RCW 42.56.070 (9)] and prohibiting using lists of persons to promote election of persons or for promotion or opposition of ballot measures [RCW42.17.130]. [Public records requests](#) are addressed on RTC's website (rtc.wa.gov), phone 564-397-6067, or email info@rtc.wa.gov. RTC will respond to public records requests within five business days of request receipt.

Washington Clean Air Act, [RCW 70.94](#)

The Washington State Legislature adopted the Clean Air Act in 1967. Under state regulations, RTC is required to demonstrate that the long-range Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for Air Quality.

Allocation of regional transportation planning funds— Eligibility—Federally recognized tribes, voting membership, [RCW 47.80.050](#)

As of August 1, 2019, a regional transportation planning organization must provide a reasonable opportunity for voting membership to federally recognized Tribes that hold reservation or trust lands within the planning area of the regional transportation planning organization. Any federally recognized tribe that holds reservation or trust land within the planning area of a regional transportation planning organization and does not have voting membership in the regional transportation planning organization must be offered voting membership in the regional transportation planning organization every two years or when the composition of the board of the regional transportation planning organization is modified in an interlocal agreement.

Other Requirements

RTC has its own bylaws and interlocal agreements amongst its members and may take on additional responsibilities through grant opportunities or by the request of its membership.

Bylaws and Interlocal Agreement

RTC is a membership organization formed by interlocal agreement. As such, RTC members established [Bylaws](#) for governing the agency. The bylaws outline expectations for the governing structure, duties of officers, meetings of the RTC Board and operating procedures. These documents determine the allocation of voting seats on the Board. [RTC Bylaws](#) are available on RTC's website.