



*Benton-Franklin Council of Governments  
Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Benton-Franklin Regional Transportation Planning Organization*

---

# *Benton-Franklin Council of Governments*



**Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**Benton-Franklin Regional Transportation Planning Organization**

# 2019 Public Participation Plan

**Adopted By BFCG Board on May 17, 2019**

*Benton-Franklin Council of Governments*  
<http://bfcog.us/transportation/>

*Benton-Franklin Council of Governments*  
P.O. Box 217  
Richland, WA 99352  
(509) 943-9185  
<http://bfcog.us/transportation/>



### **How to make a public comment:**

*Mail:*

Benton-Franklin Council of  
Governments  
PO Box 217 | Richland, WA 99352

*Email To:*

transportation@bfcog.us

Phone: (509) 943-9185

Fax: (509) 943-6756

*Visit Online*

[www.BFCOG.us](http://www.BFCOG.us)

## **Title VI Notice**

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form call (509) 943-9185 or online at <http://bfcog.us/>

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information**

Materials can be provided in alternate formats by contacting the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) at (509) 943- 9185 or <http://bfcog.us/transportation/>



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	i
Fixing America’s Surface Transportation ACT (FAST Act).....	i
Introduction.....	2
About BFCG .....	2
Organization Structure .....	2
Development of the Public Participation Plan .....	4
Regulations & Policies Relevant to BFCG's Public Participation Process .....	4
Public Participation Plan Principles.....	5
Guiding Assumptions.....	5
BFCG's Desired Outcomes for its Public Participation .....	5
Updating the Public Participation Plan .....	6
Evaluating the Public Participation Plan.....	6
Public Involvement & Comment Procedures .....	8
Public Meetings, Open Houses, & Special Workshops .....	8
Public Comment.....	8
Access and Outreach .....	8
Tribal Government Consultation.....	10
Public Notification Methods .....	11
BFCG's Website - <a href="http://www.BFCOG.us">www.BFCOG.us</a> .....	11
Public Comment Periods.....	11
Visualization Techniques .....	11
Media Outlets .....	11
Mailing Lists .....	11
BFCG Monthly Newsletter .....	12
Social Media.....	12
Environmental Justice and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act .....	12
BFCG’s Dedication to Outreach .....	12
Public Participation Techniques .....	13
Public Participation Methods for BFCG Work Products.....	15
Metropolitan Transportation Plan / Regional Transportation Plan (M/RTP) .....	15
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) .....	15
Document Review and Public Outreach Schedule.....	16
Appendix A   Federal Requirements .....	18
Appendix B   TAC & Board Meetings.....	20
Appendix C   Media Distribution .....	21



## Executive Summary

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) recognizes effective public participation process is a vital element in the development and implementation of transportation plans and programs. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) outlines methods and resources used by BFCG to effectively engage, notify and coordinate with the public, stakeholders, and partner agencies. BFCG is committed to providing public opportunities to engage, plan, develop, and implement phases of transportation projects.

Federal requirements for public involvement illustrates the important role community engagement plays in understanding, assessing and addressing effects of transportation decisions on individuals and communities. (Appendix A)

United States Code (USC) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) call for public participation (synonymous with community engagement) in numerous references including 23 USC, 49 USC, 23 CFR and 40 CFR. Additional requirements for involving the public are found in the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Environmental Policy Act, Executive Order 13166; Limited English Proficiency, and Executive Order 12898; Federal Actions to Address EJ in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations; and Executive Orders on Tribal Consultation. Specific details on federal requirements can be found in the legislation which is available online at [www.gpo.gov](http://www.gpo.gov). The objectives identified in federal requirements as applied to this Community Engagement Plan can be summarized as:

- Nondiscriminatory processes/activities
- Early and continuous public involvement
- Inclusionary practices in activities and notifications
- Consideration of the needs of the traditionally underserved
- Collaboration with other agencies, tribal and local governments, private sector representatives, and other officials
- Convenient and accessible meeting times and locations
- Reasonable access to information
- Timely notice of engagement activities, including review periods, and
- Acknowledgment and consideration of public comments

### Fixing America's Surface Transportation ACT (FAST Act)

The FAST Act was signed into law on December 4, 2015. The Act reauthorized the federal-aid highway program through fiscal year 2020, while consolidating the number of federal programs to focus resources on key national goals and reduce duplicative programs. The Act also emphasizes expedited project delivery.

The FAST Act continues the previous transportation act's commitment to public participation, directing Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to have a public participation plan that provides people, "affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan."



The FAST Act directs MPO public participation plans to “be developed in consultation with all interested parties,” and “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 the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information.”

The PPP aids the BFCG by providing a framework for information distribution, public notice and input on key transportation decisions. It is important to BFCG to ensure that local governments, state, federal partners, and our community are aware of BFCG’s planning activities. This plan provides an outline of those activities. BFCG's PPP identifies elements which apply to each transportation plan and our program areas.

Goals of the BFCG PPP include:

- Improve the decision making process to include the interests and needs of stakeholders.
- Educate and inform the public about the transportation planning process.
- Ensure that information is easily accessible to all interested parties in the community.

The PPP provides an overview of BFCG's public participation process with a specific focus on transportation that complies with federal requirements and is updated as needed and involves consultation with BFCG's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and, before recommendations for adoption by the BFCG Board.

The following issues are addressed in the Public Participation Plan:

- Development of the PPP
- Policies and Regulations for BFCG’s PPP
- Public Meetings and Public Comments
- Public Notification Methods
- Procedures for BFCG Work Products

For a complete copy of the Public Participation Plan, please visit [www.bfcog.us](http://www.bfcog.us) or contact the BFCG office at (509) 943-9185.



## Introduction

### About BFCG

BFCG is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and is structured under state law as a regional planning commission (RCW.36.70.060), a council of governments (RCW 36.64.080), a regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) (RCW 47.080.020), and a federally designated economic development district (13 CFR § 303.2).

The function of the BFCG is to facilitate ongoing comprehensive cooperation to regional problem solving by providing a forum for regional governmental cooperation. BFCG initiates programs of a regional nature and provides coordination and review of local applications for state and federal financial assistance. Federal law requires that any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000 must have an MPO to ensure that transportation expenditures are based on a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive planning process.

### Organization Structure

BFCG is governed by a Board and one standing advisory committee. The BFCG Board is comprised of local elected officials or appointed leaders who meet on a monthly basis. Additionally, BFCG utilizes a number of advisory committees to support decision making in regards to regional issues.

<b>Board of Directors – Benton-Franklin Council of Governments</b>	
<b>Delegate</b>	<b>Represented Member Agency</b>
Skip Novakovich, President	Port of Kennewick
Brad Peck, Vice President	Franklin County
Matt Boehnke, Secretary	City of Kennewick
Bob Koch, Former President	Ben Franklin Transit
James Beaver	Benton County
Todd Trepanier	Washington State Department of Transportation
Lori Sanders	Benton Public Utility District
Blanche Barajas	City of Pasco
Brad Anderson	City of Richland
Ken Stoker	City of West Richland
Vicky Gordon	Port of Pasco
Robert Larson	Port of Benton
Mary Ruth Edwards	City of Prosser
Lee Barrow	City of Connell
Linda Lehman	Benton City
Dave Wooten	City of Kahlotus
Pattie Bailiee	City of Mesa

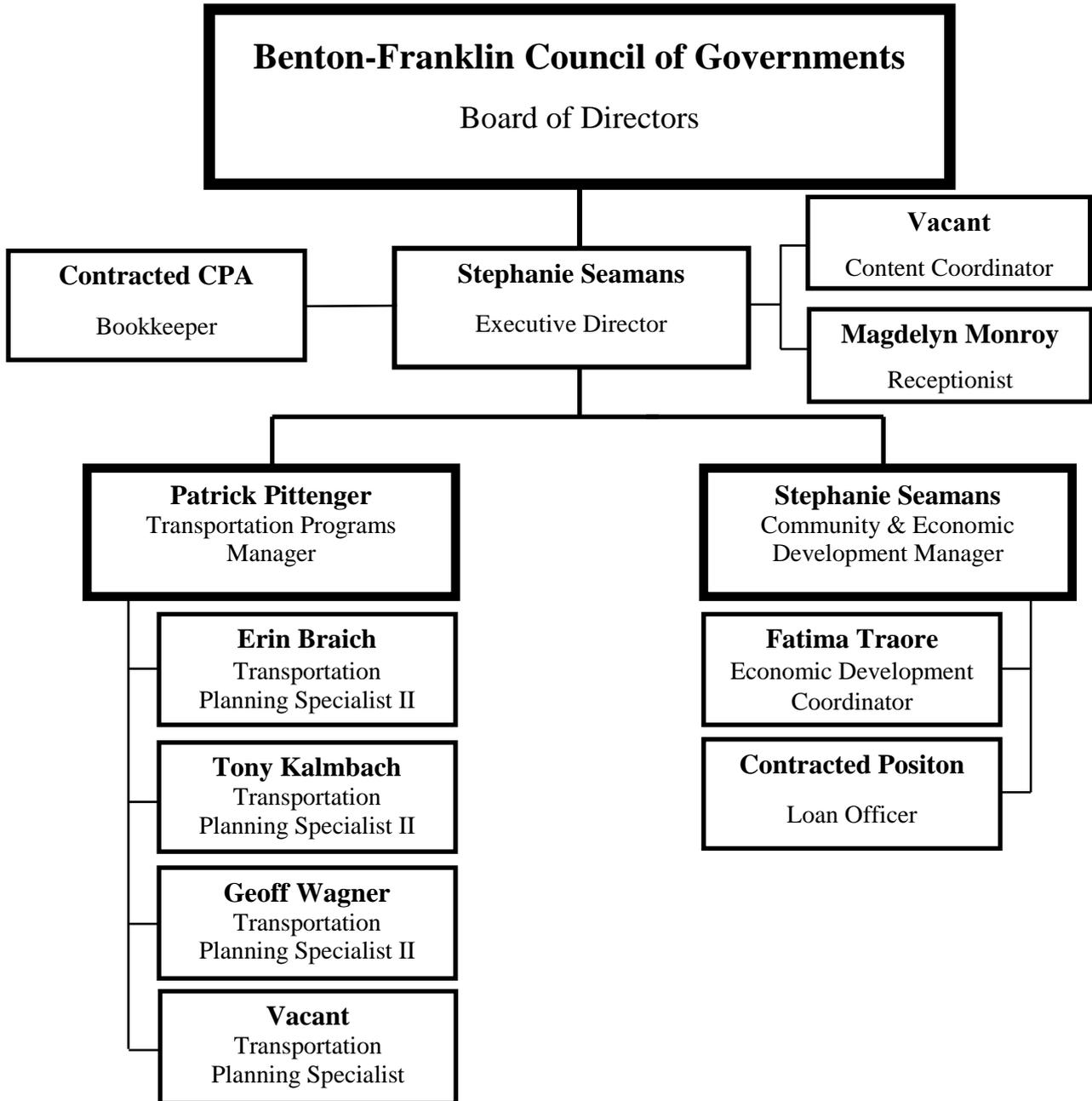
In addition to elected officials, BFCG utilizes the TAC for transportation and planning purposes. The TAC committee includes staff representatives from each of the represented jurisdictions, agencies, ports, transit and state. The TAC serves as an advisory committee, responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to the Board. Both the TAC and Board meet monthly or as needed. (Appendix B)



# Benton-Franklin Council of Governments



## 2018 Staff Organizational Chart





## Development of the Public Participation Plan

The PPP outlines methods and resources used by BFCG to effectively engage, notify and coordinate with the public, stakeholders, and partner agencies, as well as agency governance, which are all documented in one place for public reference.

BFCG adopted its first PPP in 1994. That plan was revised in 2002 and 2003 and re-adopted in January of 2008, updated and re-adopted in 2015. The plan was refined throughout the public processes by including outreach strategies and new federal and state guidelines. Developing an effective public involvement program is a strategic effort that requires assembling a selection of techniques to meet the needs of a given transportation plan, project or program.

Before adoption, the 2018 updated PPP will undergo the following process:

- 45 day public comment process when the draft is completed
- Notification to the general public, BFCG membership, interested parties, stakeholders, Tribes, community organizations representing Title VI and Environmental Justice groups.
- Access via the BFCG website and commenting via provided email addresses
- Release to local media outlets in Benton and Franklin counties, including news outlets that serve diverse and Limited English Proficient audiences.
- Notice in English and Spanish language newspapers/media
- PPP provided to BFCG boards and committees for review and comments.
- Opportunity to provide a public comment in person at BFCG board or committee meetings.

## Regulations & Policies Relevant to BFCG's Public Participation Process

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments operates under federal, state and local requirements. The text box below provides an overview of laws, regulations and policies BFCG operates within.

### **Federal Requirements**

- Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST Act), *Public Law as passed by Congress and signed by President Obama on December 4, 2015.*
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 YSC 126 and 49 CFR 27.19.
- Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, 42 USC 38 and 13 CFR 305.
- Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming 23 CFR 450 Subpart C
- 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.*
- This Executive Order is often referred to as the "Environmental Justice" Executive Order.
- Executive Order 12372 - Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. *Signed July 14, 1982 by President Ronald Reagan.*

### **Washington State Requirements**

- 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*



## Public Participation Plan Principles

BFCG's public involvement goals are to provide members of the public opportunities for participation in transportation projects, plans and programs. Engaging the public early and often in the decision-making process is key to the success of any transportation project, plan or program, but is required by various federal and state regulations and BFCG policy.

The primary goals for BFCG's PPP are to:

- Articulate how the agency approaches public engagement.
- Ensure early, continuous and broad public notification about and participation in major actions and decisions by BFCG.
- Receive meaningful public input to inform the decision-making process.

## Guiding Assumptions

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments public involvement procedures are built on the following assumptions:

- No major public policy decision is reached or large project implemented without significantly affecting someone.
- Strong solutions are developed through a collaborative effort
- Public education through the distribution of information using a variety of techniques can strengthen regional transportation policy and plans.
- Public input is greatest when citizens of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and gender are well informed and given the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns.
- Early involvement of stakeholders improves information and direction for regional planning decisions.
- Using a variety of public outreach techniques and providing information in multiple formats will help involve a wider audience of interested parties.
- Public participation is a dynamic activity that requires teamwork and commitment at all levels of the MPO structure, as well as relationship building and maintenance.
- Effective public participation strategies must be tailored to fit the audience and the issue.

## BFCG's Desired Outcomes for its Public Participation

- Receive public input on BFCG's activities and decisions.
- Share information with a broad cross-section of the public.
- Ensure notification and invite participation of all populations, including people of color, low-income and special needs groups.
- Increase overall awareness of regional planning activities.
- Community support for transportation plans and programs through early identification and resolution of issues.



## Updating the Public Participation Plan

BFCG’s PPP is a living document. In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316(a) (1) (x) of the Code of Federal Regulations, this plan will be reviewed periodically for its effectiveness of procedures and strategies contained within it to ensure a full and open participation process.

At a minimum of every two years, the procedures shall be reviewed for adequacy and reaffirmed beginning in 2017, in conjunction with recertification of the BFCG as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Tri-Cities metropolitan area.

Any major updates will include a review by BFCG advisory committees, a 45-day public comment period, notification to the public about the proposed changes, and adoption by the BFCG Board. BFCG welcomes public feedback on this plan, and any aspect of the agency's public involvement process.

Changes made on any of BFCG's policies will be available for public review and comment via the BFCG website. Printed and translated copies of all BFCG documents are available upon request. Public notice will be published in local newspapers in English and Spanish, distributed to BFCG members and partner jurisdictions for comment. (Appendix B)

The final draft of the Public Participation Plan will be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Additionally the final adopted version will be posted and accessible via the BFCG website at <http://bfcog.us/>.

## Evaluating the Public Participation Plan

As part of every public involvement period and public outreach effort, BFCG will continue to explore a variety of methods to reach out to the public, solicit comment, evaluate the effectiveness of each method, and respond in a timely manner in effort to reach our entire community equitably.

The matrix below shows types of notification and outreach our community can reasonably expect:

<b>Public Participation Plan Evaluation Matrix</b>		
<b>Involvement Tool</b>	<b>Monitored Using</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of site visits</li> <li>• Contact/Feedback option for visitors</li> <li>• Review of comments received</li> </ul>	This information is used to improve website organization for future plans of re-design. Committee meeting agendas, minutes and agency documents published on website.
BFCG Meetings: Board, Advisory Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance of members</li> <li>• Comments made</li> <li>• Results of discussion</li> </ul>	This information shows effectiveness of meeting notice techniques, level of interest of topics to be discussed, provides direction to plans or programs.
Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of recipients</li> <li>• Comments made/feedback</li> </ul>	This information is used to show the value and the audience of our newsletter



<b>Public Participation Plan Evaluation Matrix (Continued)</b>		
<b>Involvement Tool</b>	<b>Monitored Using</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Track number of connections/follows</li><li>• Comments, Replies to posts</li></ul>	This information is used to track the attention our social media accounts receive and show the value of social media for the agency.
All Public Comment Periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Track number of comments received</li><li>• Review all comments received</li><li>• Make adjustments to documents as necessary based upon public comment.</li></ul>	This information provides valuable feedback to enhance our plans and programs. Also serves as an indicator if our public participation plans were effective.
News Releases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• News articles and media releases in Spanish and English.</li><li>• Archive news articles and public announcements published or broadcasted</li></ul>	This information is used to increase public involvement and awareness of BFCG plans, programs and activities.



Complete Streets Workshop



## Public Involvement & Comment Procedures

BFCG will use standardized procedures to ensure public access to regional transportation planning information and activities. This includes taking into consideration regional characteristics utilizing census demographic data in effort to achieve equitable inclusion.

BFCG will adhere to the following public involvement procedures:

- Prior to review and action by the BFCG Board, regional plans and Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs) (including major amendments) are subject to review and comment by the BFCG's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), before recommendations are made to the BFCG Board for further discussion and possible action.
- All BFCG committee meetings are open to the public.
- Scheduled meeting dates of the BFCG Board are published on the agency website. Various agencies, organizations and individuals will be notified of these meetings via the BFCG monthly newsletter.
- All public comments will be reviewed by BFCG staff. A summary and report of the comments will be part of the final document for all plans, studies and policies.
- The BFCG public process will be coordinated with ongoing local, regional and statewide public involvement processes when possible in order to enhance public involvement.

### Public Meetings, Open Houses, & Special Workshops

BFCG has established special committees to ensure coordination of regional transportation planning and programming activities. Committees meet on a monthly basis or as needed. Committee meetings consist of discussions in regards to regional transportation planning, programs, projects and activities. After TAC reviews regional materials, recommendations are made to the BFCG Board. All committee meetings are open to the public.

Agendas, along with the time and location are published on the BFCG website along with an opportunity for the public to make comment. Meetings are always conducted in facilities accessible to persons with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### Public Comment

Public comments will be solicited on all regional plans, TIPs, or amendments. Public comment is solicited at each meeting by the TAC and BFCG Board. Comments are encouraged via personal delivery, fax, and e-mail at <http://bfcog.us/contactus/> or U.S. mail. Public comments will be handled in the following ways:

- Public comments will be reviewed by staff to potentially revise plans, programs or projects.
- Public comments will be summarized within the documents.
- Members of the public who attend public meetings or comment on documents can be notified via email about the adopted version of the document upon request.

### Access and Outreach

BFCG is committed to equality in all of its programs, plans and activities and strives for meaningful dialogue regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, disability or income consistency with federal requirements to maximize the needs and interests of traditionally underserved populations.



Using BFCG's geographic information systems (GIS), the agency can prepare and maintain data and thematic maps creating a community profile of population and demographic characteristics. Information is derived from the U.S. Census. This information can help BFCG in developing strategies and public outreach activities for project planning and development for the communities it serves. This also helps to ensure that the planning decisions and investments are equitable for all communities.

Efforts will be made to consider the interests and needs of traditionally underserved populations through:

- Translated materials when appropriate or requested at BFCG public meetings
- Visual aids to help with understanding of projects and relation to regional goals
- Contact with media when appropriate to increase public awareness of BFCG's programs, plans and projects.
- Public Meetings and open houses will have translation services upon request.
- Extending an invitation to include individuals from underserved populations on BFCG committees.



Regional Transportation Fair



## Tribal Government Consultation

Washington State agencies are required to have effective procedures to engage Native American tribes. WSDOT's Centennial Accord Plan implements consultation policy to provide consistent and equitable standards for working with the tribes. The goal is to create durable intergovernmental relationships that promote coordinated transportation partnerships in services to all citizens. Consultation means respectful, effective communication in a cooperative process that works towards a consensus before a decision is made or action is taken.

The Umatilla Confederated Tribes' (Umatilla, Cayuse, and Walla Walla) reservation is in Oregon. The Yakama Nation's Reservation is in Yakima County. While there is no current land or deeds to land owned in the BFCG two-county area, both tribal nations have traditional homelands in the area. In the spirit of the Centennial Accord, BFCG will consult with the tribes as appropriate.



Tribal Lands of Washington State (Source: Washington State Department of Transportation)



## Public Notification Methods

The following is a list of communication tools BFCG utilizes to notify the public about hearings, plans, programs and activities. The public can expect to see the following communication tools.

### BFCG's Website - [www.BFCOG.us](http://www.BFCOG.us)

BFCG maintains an informative website that includes committee meetings, activities and links to all BFCG departments. Electronic copies of program plans, newsletter, meeting agendas and supporting documents are published and available to our community through the BFCG website. Additionally, BFCG maintains an updated list of all member jurisdictions and contact information for staff.

### Public Comment Periods

Public comment is encouraged on any topic. When seeking public comment on a particular action, BFCG may offer a specific public comment period (for example: at least 20 days) and use the variety of notification methods discussed previously in this plan. Federal, state and other requirements are also taken into consideration when determining the length of public comment periods.

If, and when public comments are received, BFCG staff will prepare a summary of the comments and present the summary to the appropriate decision making committee. During public meetings on the Transportation Improvement Program or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, public comments are responded to directly or redirected to a specific jurisdictions to supply subject matter expertise. Written and oral comments are noted in the final version of the document, as well as the response detailing the disposition of the comment.

### Visualization Techniques

Visualization techniques, such as maps, charts, graphs, PowerPoint presentations and print communication are often used to provide explanation of concepts behind actions and decision making. BFCG may also provide posters or handouts to display visual information. A monthly newsletter is used to encourage interest in transportation planning and policy, along with other activities at the BFCG.

### Media Outlets

BFCG will occasionally issue news releases about studies, projects, events and actions of interest to the media. News releases include announcements of public meetings, workshops, public comment periods and hearings in Spanish and English. The degree of investment in media campaigns is specific to project budgets, complexity and scope of the information to be distributed and the extent of the target audience or area. BFCG maintains a list of media outlets including newspapers, television and radio station in our region. (Appendix C)

### Mailing Lists

BFCG updates its mailing list and database continuously to initiate and maintain contact with interested parties.

To be added to, or request a detailed mailing list, please contact the BFCG office at (509) 943-9185.



## BFCG Monthly Newsletter

BFCG publishes a general newsletter about its programs and activities on a monthly basis. The newsletter uses visualization techniques and text to provide information about upcoming BFCG activities, possible decisions, actions and meetings. BFCG's address and contact information is also provided. The newsletter is emailed to a lengthy list that includes community organizations, businesses, membership, tribes, local governments and staff, Environmental Justice groups and interested parties or individuals.

The newsletter is posted online at the BFCG website: [www.bfcog.us](http://www.bfcog.us). Anyone interested in receiving a copy or link to the BFCG Monthly Newsletter may contact the office at (509) 943-9185 or [transportation@bfcog.us](mailto:transportation@bfcog.us).

## Social Media

BFCG began operating and using social media in the fall of 2014 by creating an official page on Facebook. By using Facebook, BFCG is hoping to establish a larger social media presence by reaching out to those who may not respond to traditional media. Information regarding events, public meetings, opportunities or relevant activities of other local agencies is posted on the on the page.

## Environmental Justice and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act

BFCG maintains a Title VI Plan as required by federal law. Title VI states that “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The Title VI Plan is updated and submitted annually to the WSDOT to ensure all federal regulations are being met.

Environmental Justice at the BFCG acknowledges that the quality of our environment affects the quality of our lives, and negative environmental impacts should not disproportionately burden low-income or minority communities.

The BFCG Language Assistance Plan for People with Limited English Proficiency (LEP Plan) assists the agency by providing an assessment of the region needs via the U.S. Department of Transportations (USDOT) Four-Factor Analysis to the need for language assistance measures.

BFCG takes reasonable steps to ensure that all people have meaningful access to its programs, services and information via our mailing and distribution lists. On all major publications, news releases, and website, BFCG publishes its Title VI Notice to the Public. The most recently adopted Title VI Plan can be accessed on the BFCG website at [www.bfcog.us](http://www.bfcog.us).

## BFCG’s Dedication to Outreach

BFCG's staff is committed to public participation and involving the public in our work. BFCG staff will make a reasonable effort to have a presence at meetings, events and public forums that have a connection to transportation to provide the BFCG staff with an opportunity to connect and engage with the public about our activities.



## Public Participation Techniques

BFCG will continue to evaluate current methods and research alternative techniques on how to develop, implement and execute public participation programs to inform the public of its major decisions. This might include working with community based organizations and relevant agencies to co-sponsor meetings, news releases, surveys, workshops or discussions.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES**

#### **Public Meetings & Workshops**

- Attend and/or present at meetings of other organizations/groups/agencies when applicable.
- Co-host workshops with community groups, business associations when applicable.
- Open houses and roundtable discussions with interests groups and representatives for input on key documents and decisions.
- Sponsor a forum or summit with partner agencies, or other community organizations.
- Translation services when appropriate.

#### **Visualization Techniques**

- Maps
- Charts, illustrations and photographs
- PowerPoint presentations
- Artist renderings, animation or videos.

#### **Printed Materials**

- User-friendly documents including Spanish translations
- Post cards
- Maps, charts, illustrations and use of photographs as means of displaying information
- Monthly Newsletters
- Handouts

#### **Local Media**

- News releases
- Opinion pieces and editorial letters
- Invitations to media reporters to events
- Visit minority media outlets to encourage participation in BFCG activities
- Radio and television public services announcements when appropriate
- Social media tools (Facebook)

#### **Internet & Electronic Access to Information**

- BFCG website with regularly updated content (Committee Meetings, Agendas & Minutes)
- Draft versions of BFCG documents
- Use of social media to reach broader audience
- Ability for public to submit comments via e-mail
- Access to planning data (maps, transportation model, studies, U.S. Census data)



### **Public Notification Techniques**

- Email distribution lists
- Announcements disseminated to member and partner agencies
- Monthly Newsletters
- Website and social media postings/updates
- Local media
- Advertising and printed materials

### **Other Outreach Techniques**

- Information/comments tables or booths at community events or gathering places
- Commenting opportunities via Email or Social Media
- Participation in member jurisdictions, Tribal governments or statewide planning processes when appropriate

### **Techniques for Involving Low Income Populations and Communities of Color**

- Include information with meeting notices on how to request translation assistance
- Translate materials; have translators present at meetings as requested
- Using the "Visualization Techniques" including: maps or graphics
- Use of community and minority media outlets to announce participation opportunities
- Press releases distributed to local media outlets to inform the public of meetings, open houses or relevant BFCG activities.

### **Techniques to Involve Limited-English Proficient Populations**

- Translate outreach materials and have translators available at meetings as requested
- Include with meeting notices and on the website on how to request translation assistance.
- During the next iteration of the BFCG website, a translation tool will be enabled to translate website content in various languages.
- Use "Visualization Techniques" including: maps or graphics

### **Techniques for Reporting on Public Comments**

- Staff will provide feedback from all public comments to the Board and committees for potential document revisions.



## Public Participation Methods for BFCG Work Products

Federal mandate requires BFCG to involve the public early and often for two specific programs within its Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). That is the inclusion of the public on the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan / Regional Transportation Plan (MPT/RTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). BFCG also works to include the public on many of its other plans or programs included within the UPWP.

### Metropolitan Transportation Plan / Regional Transportation Plan (M/RTP)

Federal Law mandates that BFCG develop a transportation plan for the Tri-Cities metropolitan area. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan / Regional Transportation Plan (M/RTP) is an integral part of the work program and a comprehensive blueprint for regional transportation. The plan will undergo a review and approval by local elected officials, agency staff members and the public. The M/RTP serves as the basis for transportation planning decisions and guides the expenditure of available federal transportation funds.

BFCG is responsible for ensuring that the plan is consistent with countywide planning policies as required by Washington State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A).

The M/RTP must be reviewed and updated every five years, and/or amended to maintain uniformity with issues and policies affecting regional planning. BFCG encourages agency and citizen participation during the development of the M/RTP update.

The intents of this long-range transportation plan are to establish the vision for the region and provide the means to attain that vision. It identifies the issues and concerns associated with the regional transportation system as well as the policies and specific programs intended to address those concerns.

### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a program that is the result of various transportation planning activities undertaken by BFCG as well as individual jurisdictions in the region. The TIP consists of transportation-related projects including transit, highway, street, bicycle and pedestrian investments that are planned for each year.

Washington State Law requires that a regional TIP be updated at least every two years and include a program of projects for at least six years (RCW 47.80.023(5)). Currently, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and most Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) prepare an annual TIP / STIP. During TIP development, BFCG consults with local and state officials, regional and local transit operators (public/private carriers), recipients of FTA funding assistance and other agencies which may affect transportation activities.

- *TIP Amendment* requests can be made throughout the calendar year by submitting a written request to BFCG staff. Amendments could include adding a new project, deleting a project, adding a new phase, increasing federal funds, changing the funding source or a major scope change.
- *TIP Administrative Modifications* are not considered amendments and typically include only minor changes to a project. Administrative modifications are not required to move through the MPO committee and board process.



## Document Review and Public Outreach Schedule

The following table outlines major documents, planned updates, and coordination that BFCG follows to garner public comments and involvement.

<p><b>Metropolitan/Regional Transportation Plan (M/RTP) &amp; Amendments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated every five years</li> <li>• 30 day public comment period</li> <li>• Notification of the public comment period located on BFCG’s website, newsletter, and through legal advertisements</li> <li>• Draft document to TAC and BFCG Board for review and comments</li> <li>• Draft posted on BFCG Website</li> <li>• Open House hosted for public comment and review</li> <li>• TAC, WSDOT, FHWA, FTA and other comments due to BFCG for update and review</li> <li>• Presentation to BFCG Board</li> <li>• Approval by BFCG Board</li> <li>• Adopted document placed on BFCG website</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated annually</li> <li>• 30 day public comment period</li> <li>• Notification of the public comment period located on BFCG’s website, newsletter, and through legal advertisements</li> <li>• Draft document provided to TAC and BFCG Board for review and comments</li> <li>• Draft posted on BFCG Website</li> <li>• Open House hosted for public comment and review</li> <li>• TAC, WSDOT, FHWA, FTA and other comments due to BFCG for update and review</li> <li>• Presentation to BFCG Board</li> <li>• Approval by BFCG Board</li> <li>• Adopted document placed on BFCG website</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed by TAC committee</li> <li>• Legal advertisement of public meetings</li> <li>• Notice of amendment on BFCG website</li> <li>• BFCG Board approval of amendment</li> <li>• Posted on BFCG website</li> </ul>
<p><b>Annual Listing of Federal Obligation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TAC and Board review before March 30<sup>th</sup> of each year</li> <li>• Posted on BFCG website no later than March 30 each year</li> </ul>



<p><b>Title VI Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated as needed</li> <li>• Board, Transportation Technical Committee and Transportation Advisory Committee review</li> <li>• Legal advertisement published including notice of public meeting</li> <li>• Public comment period notice sent to all media</li> <li>• Draft document posted for review and comment on BFCG website</li> <li>• Provide draft to Federal, State and member agencies for review and comments</li> <li>• TAC approval and Board approval</li> <li>• Final adopted copies distributed to partner, Federal and State agencies</li> <li>• Post adopted document on the BFCG website</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public Participation Plan (PPP)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review document as needed every two years at a minimum with identified updates</li> <li>• 45 day public comment period prior to adoption</li> <li>• Notification of the public comment period located on BFCG's website, newsletter, and through legal advertisements</li> <li>• Draft document provided to TAC and BFCG Board for review and comments Draft posted on BFCG Website</li> <li>• Open House hosted for public comment and review</li> <li>• TAC, WSDOT, FHWA, FTA and other comments due to BFCG for update and review</li> <li>• Presentation to BFCG Board</li> <li>• Approval by BFCG Board</li> <li>• Adopted document placed on BFCG website</li> </ul>

BFCG also solicits and invites public participation on various other documents, plans and programs within the agency Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). These also undergo an official review by the TAC and adoption by the BFCG Board.



## Appendix A | Federal Requirements

### **§450.316 interested parties, participation, and consultation**

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.



(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Appendix B | TAC & Board Meetings

BFCG's TAC and Board are scheduled to meet monthly at the following time, date and location. Both committees can meet additionally as needed.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Regular Meeting Location</b>
TAC	First Thursday of every month	11:00 am	*Ben Franklin Transit Board Room
Board	Third Friday of every month	10:00 am	*Ben Franklin Transit Board Room

\*Location can vary depending on site availability.



## Appendix C | Media Distribution

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments distributes news releases, notices and other materials to the following:

- Tri-City Herald
- Tri-City Herald Classified
- Tu' Decides
- Tri-Cities Journal of Business
- Spokesman Review
- Pudget Sound Business Journal
- KEPR TV
- KNDU NEWS
- Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- West Richland Chamber of Commerce
- Tri-Cities Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Pasco Chamber of Commerce