



Fiscal Year 2009 Annual report

*Longview-Kelso-Rainier MPO
Southwest Washington Regional Transportation
Planning Organization*

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Lead Agency: Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments

1. MPO Activities

- **SR 432 Rail Feasibility Study:** CWCOG staff worked closely with the WSDOT Southwest region planning staff on the completion of the SR 432 Rail Feasibility Study. As lead agency, WSDOT partnered with CWCOG to hire David Evans and Associates (DEA) as the lead consultant for the study. DEA also brought on several sub-consultants knowledgeable in the different disciplines required by the study's scope of work. These disciplines included railroad operations (Mainline Management), Commodity Flow Analysis (BST) and traffic modeling (Transpo Group). The project management team, consisting of DEA, CWCOG and WSDOT met monthly, while the technical advisory committee, consisting of WSDOT, CWCOG, Longview, Cowlitz County, and Port of Longview met bi-monthly throughout FY 2008 and completed the study in early spring 2008.

The study determined the highway and rail improvements that will be necessary to accommodate the expected growth in both truck and rail movements in the corridor over the next 20-25 years. The highway costs are estimated at \$70-\$100 million and the rail costs are estimated at \$35-\$40 million. During FY 2009, CWCOG submitted a FY 2010 Congressional Appropriations request for \$2 million to complete the preliminary design, engineering and environmental analysis necessary for the ultimate modernization of the highway and rail network serving the SR 432/SR 433 corridors. Completion of the preliminary analysis will allow for the project to be turned over the WSDOT for final engineering, design, right of way and environmental documentation, all necessary to get the project into its phasing and construction. CWCOG Staff has continued working to develop the funding partnerships necessary to complete the project once the final work is completed and ready for construction.

- **STP Fund Allocation:** CWCOG staff worked closely with the MPO Area Technical Advisory Committee and the staffs from the non-MPO cities in Cowlitz County to determine how to spend the STP funds. Funds were spent on the Longview Oregon Way/Industrial Way intersection improvements in the urban area. Rural funds are yet to be distributed to a specific project. As the lead agency for the MPO, CWCOG is responsible for how the STP funds are allocated. Prior to the legislature changes in 2006, the CWCOG's role in the distribution of the funds was minimal, with the cities and county working through the distribution on a strict population split for the urban area and on an "as-needed" basis for the non-MPO areas. The legislature's direction to have these funds directed to regional projects inserted the CWCOG back into the process. The MPO TAC has chosen to fund projects based on consensus with the funds allocated to CWCOG. The split for the funds was determined as 63 percent for MPO area and 37 percent for non-MPO area.

- ***CUBS Strategic Plan:*** During Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008, CWCOG staff worked on a strategic plan for the CUBS transit system. The CUBS system serves the Longview-Kelso area as a Public Transit Benefit Area, limited to the urban area within the two cities' city limits. CWCOG staff hired Carol Landsman and Associates to complete the strategic plan which was completed during FY 2008. The result of the planning effort helped the CTA Board decide to go for a sales tax increase of 2/10 of 1% in the November 2008 election to fund expanded services within the current PTBA Boundary. Voters voted to increase the sales tax increment to support public transit service from 1/10th of one percent to 3/10th of one percent or from one cent to three cents on a \$10.00 purchase. The first tax increase in the 21 year of the agency will allow for the service to better meet the future needs of the public. The CTA Board has also amended its mission statement and has taken steps to further the strategic planning efforts by putting forth an RFP to hire a consultant to help them develop an improved system for the urban area. CWCOG staff will be assisting with the continued development of the plan and will combine the CUBS planning efforts with other transportation planning including the Transportation Systems Plan.

CWCOG staff has also worked closely with CUBS staff, and the board to work with our other transportation providers (Lower Columbia CAP, Cowlitz Tribe, Wahkiakum on the Move and Columbia County Rider) to develop a more coordinated and integrated service for our region. Part of this integrated service may include the creation of a regional transportation hub at the Kelso Depot, which CWCOG staff, local jurisdictions, Grayhound, and the CTA board have begun discussing.

- ***Urban Area Model Update:*** Updates to the urban area model were completed by the Transpo Group in early 2008. In early 2009, CWCOG expanded its transportation planning staff and brought the urban area model in house to be maintained and updated. Having the model in house will allow more efficient use of it as we complete a transportation systems plan, assist the City of Kelso with the West Main Realignment, and analyze the 2010 census data. CWCOG staff will also begin to catalog all MPO area traffic counts as they are conducted for input into the model.
- ***Kelso/Longview Airport Master Plan:*** During FY 2008, the consulting firm URS Corporation was chosen to begin work on the Kelso/Longview Airport Master Plan update. CWCOG Staff will be working closely with URS consultants, WSDOT, Kelso City Staff and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to complete the Airport Master Plan Update during FY 2009. With the state's long-range aviation plan calling for the airport to become the regional airport for Southwest Washington, the plan will be critical to the future funding, governance, layout and land use associated with the facility as a regional airport. The MPO Area TAC will serve as a sounding board for the planning effort and reports to RPACT will also be made as elements of the plan are developed. Over the next six months, the consultant will be gathering data on existing conditions, conducting interviews, and examining alternatives for the first public information meeting in January 2009. The final plan update is scheduled for completion in December 2009.

- ***Regional Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation:*** Staff conducted regular meetings of RPACT, which serves the MPO area, as well as Wahkiakum and Cowlitz counties. Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of every month.
- ***FY 2010-2011 Unified Planning Work Program:*** Staff completed the MPO elements of the two-year FY 2010-2011 UPWP, as required.
- ***MPO Area Regional Transportation Plan:*** CWCOG has hired consultants from the Transpo Group to assist staff in completing the Regional Transportation plan for the MPO and RTPO area. They have compiled financial information from our local agencies and completed a final draft funding assessment for both the MPO and RTPO. In addition to the financial plan, CWCOG Staff has worked closely with the local jurisdictions in developing a long range project list for the MPO and RTPO area. A draft of the plan will be presented at the September 2009 SWRTPO meeting in Kelso.
- ***MPO Area Transportation Improvement Program:*** Staff completed the 2009-2012 TIP, as required and continually works with local jurisdictions and WSDOT staff to amend the STIP.
- ***American Recover and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) program:*** CWCOG staff facilitated the organization and prioritization of local projects for submission to the WSDOT for consideration of federal stimulus dollars and continued support throughout the local TIP, RTIP, and STIP amendment processes.

2. Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization

- ***SWRTPO Board of Directors***
The Board of Directors has chosen to meet annually instead of quarterly. For the 2007-2009 term, Ted Shannon, a member of the City of Centralia Council, was chosen as the chair. The chair rotates every two years. A new chair will be chosen at the meeting in September 2009.
- ***Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council:*** CWCOG hired John White, of JD White and Associates to facilitate the development of the Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council (LCTSC). The group was formed in order to begin the process of coordinating and planning transportation projects throughout Lewis County, and to establish a platform for the jurisdictions in the county to use when developing transportation plans. The group has established and adopted bylaws, a charter and has appointed a chair, vice chair and governing board. The group meets monthly, with its technical advisory committee meeting every other month.
- ***Regional Plan Update:*** CWCOG staff hired consultants Transpo Group to assist in the completion of the Regional Plan Update. CWCOG staff has worked closely with area jurisdictions in the development of long-range project lists and the development of the financial element of the plan. A final draft of the plan is expected in August 2009 with adoption by the SWRTPO and CWCOG Boards in September 2009.
- ***Regional TIP:*** The Regional TIP for the SWRTPO was adopted in October 2008. CWCOG Staff continues to work closely with WSDOT staff in amending the RTIP and STIP.

- **2010-2011 UPWP:** CWCOG staff completed the two-year 2010-2011 Unified Planning Work Program, which was adopted by CWCOG Board during its May 2009 meeting.
- **Consolidated Transit Grant Process and update of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan:** CWCOG Staff convened transit organizations and non-profit transportation providers from within all five counties in the RTPO during November and December 2008 to establish transit project priorities and rank submitted transit grants. As a result, the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan was updated to reflect the ranked projects that were submitted to WSDOT Transit for consideration of funding.

3. County Updates _____

Cowlitz County

- **Kelso to Martin's Bluff Rail Project:** BNSF has completed their modeling exercise for the Kalama Grain Elevator Runaround track proposal. The project will keep the main line clear for through-trains by allowing local freight trains to operate off the main line. It will also improve reliability and reduce travel times for passenger trains, and allow for more frequent Amtrak Cascades service. CWCOG continues to work with our federal congressional delegation on rail funding issues through the National Association of Regional Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The project will be impacted by the ARRA High Speed Rail Program, most likely expediting its construction along with other segments of the KMB project.
- **Woodland Area Transportation Strategic Plan:** CWCOG staff, working in partnership with WSDOT SW Region, City of Woodland, the Port of Woodland and Cowlitz County hired Parametrix consultants to complete the transportation strategic plan for the Woodland area. The plan was completed in late 2008. The scope of work and initial meetings of the project management team and citizens advisory committee took place during FY 2007. The purpose of the plan is to complete a reconnaissance of the two I-5 interchanges in Woodland, determine an improvement plan for SR 503 and to develop a circulation/ transportation network for the city to accommodate both residential and industrial growth. The plan is funded by SAFETEA-LU high priority project funds and funds from the state legislature. During 2009, CWCOG requested a federal appropriation totaling \$2 million to complete the preliminary analysis for the recommendations from the strategic plan.
- **Cowlitz County Regional Trails:** CWCOG staff finished the Regional Trails Plan, working closely with the Cowlitz on the Move (COTM)/Healthy Lifestyles coalition. The plan has been adopted by all jurisdictions in Cowlitz County. The trails plan was used by the Cowlitz on the Move group to secure a technical assistance planning grant from the National Parks Service for the North County Loop Trail. CWCOG staff has been actively participating in the development of the trail planning and providing the mapping for the effort. Building upon the successes of the Regional Trails Plan and the North County Loop Trail planning process, the City of Longview also received a grant from the NPS to beginning planning the next piece – the South Cowlitz

County Loop Trail. CWCOCG staff also worked with local jurisdictions and the COTM to develop a regional trails map/brochure showcasing local trails.

Grays Harbor Council of Governments

(Submitted by Vicki Cummings, Executive Director)

Oversight and Administration: Administration of the Grays Harbor region portion of the SWRTPO includes the preparation and administration of budgets, contracts, quarterly and annual reports. GHCOG staff has worked with the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments to administer RTPO programs, prepare annual budgets, submit quarterly/annual reports and develop the Grays Harbor County region section of the Unified Planning Work Program containing RTPO elements.

Staff has:

- Attended MPO/RTPO/WSDOT coordinating meetings and workshops.
- Convened SWRTPO meetings to address Grays Harbor County regional, state and federal transportation issues as needed.
- Provided a forum for public involvement in the regional transportation process through open workshops and meetings, as well as conduct public outreach and education regarding the goals and objectives of the regional transportation planning process.
- Been active in tracking and troubleshooting local project.
- Served as liaison between local entities, SWRTPO and WSDOT.
- Completed the Grays Harbor elements of the FY 2010-2011 UPWP.
- Staff maintains ongoing involvement in the development of the Washington Transportation Plan, ensuring that the needs of the rural community are reflected in the plan.

Regional TIP: Staff provided assistance in preparing and collecting the Grays Harbor County Region Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), compiling them into a regional TIP and forwarding them to WSDOT for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

- Staff maintains Regional TIP/STIP database and processes all amendments.
- Staff provided one-on-one assistance to members in downloading and using the STIP software.

SAFETEA-LU/STP: Council of Governments staff provides the coordination and administration of the SAFETEA-LU, STP and Enhancement process for the Grays Harbor County region.

- Provided individual assistance STP funded project management.
- Began planning sessions for the next round of funding, following re-authorization. (Addressing regional priorities, criteria, process.)
- STP High Priority Projects - Drafted and submitted 4 applications for STP High Priority Project funding: City of Cosmopolis, City of Ocean Shores, Port of Grays Harbor, Grays Harbor Transit. Met with Senator Murray's staff to discuss STP High Priority Projects and ask for funding assistance for local projects.

Economic Stimulus – American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA): Staff led the ARRA process for the disbursement of transportation related funds. Several meetings were held to determine the requirements for funding and examine projects that met the restrictive timeline. Staff assisted in

project development and submission, responded to questions from WSDOT and facilitated information requests, and performed all related TIP amendments, developed a database of projects and background worksheets, and tracked bill progress on the federal and state level. Staff continues to watch over projects in Grays Harbor to ensure compliance.

Coordinated Transit Grant Process: Staff participated in regional meetings to determine eligibility, reviewed all SWRTPO applications and participated in ranking process.

Projects

- ***Grays Harbor Transit Authority*** - Staff assisted the Transportation Authority with:
 - The annual update of the Transit Development Plan
 - Coordinated Transit Grant application development (3 projects)
 - Appropriations request to fund the purchase of busses and vans
 - The development of the STP HPP application for replacement vehicles
 - The Quinault Park and Ride project (GH Transit park and ride siting study). Participated in consultant interview prep/selection process and in ongoing project team meetings.
- ***Port Industrial Road Upgrade:*** Drafted and submitted a federal appropriation that resulted in securing \$3.8 million for the upgrade to the Port of Grays Harbor Port Industrial Road. Staff participated in project team meetings and consultant interview prep/selection process, contracting, and trouble shooting as needed. Also assisted Port of Grays Harbor to complete necessary documentation to release construction funds for the project.
- ***Multi-Modal Planning:*** Staff continues to analyze freight rail expansion in order to enhance economic development and to review the potential for passenger service to the Washington coast. Staff is also actively promoting freight rail needs within the county and working to identify bottlenecks and chokepoints in surrounding counties that affect rail movement. Staff is also exploring aviation-related elements of transportation planning and their associated funding cycles.
- ***SR 109 Corridor Management Plan:***
 - Staff participates in ongoing focus groups and stakeholders meetings, presentations to community groups, civic organizations and Tribal EDC and Planning Departments
 - Received \$6,000 to develop branding/logo work for SR 109 Scenic Byway project. Worked with consultant team to complete project.
 - Worked on and completed DUNS/CCR/Grants.gov process for Historic Moclips Rail Depot restoration grant (National Scenic Byways).
- ***US 101 Regional Circulation Project:*** GHCOG staff and the Olympic Region WSDOT partnered to work with the community to identify safety and congestion issues along the U1 101 corridor in Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Cosmopolis. The study has concluded and resulted in a prioritized list of recommendations to improve congestion. The plan is being used to seek funding.
- ***Grays Harbor Vision 2020:*** Staff participated in the county-wide visioning process representing governance and infrastructure issues. Staff continues to facilitate the infrastructure committee on the identification and resolution of transportation related infrastructure issues.

- **Complete Streets:** Staff assisted in the development and submittal of 8 projects in response to the Complete Streets ARRA preliminary call for projects.
- **CADD/GIS:** Mapping assistance continues to be a large part of our transportation planning assistance. Examples of mapping assistance include: SR109 Scenic Byway stakeholder & focus group meetings, City surface streets, Port of Grays Harbor 28th Street area and Westport Boat Basin area, parking maps, emergency access maps, trail maps, and project specific maps.

Lewis County

(Submitted by Mike Kroll on behalf of the Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council)

Oversight and Administration: Administration of the Lewis County region of the SWRTPO includes the preparation and administration of budgets, contracts, quarterly and annual reports. Lewis County staff has worked with the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments to administer RTPO programs, prepare annual budgets and contracts, submit quarterly and annual reports, and develop the Lewis County region section of the Unified Planning Work Program containing RTPO elements.

Staff has:

- Attended Lewis County Technical Advisory Committee (LCTAC)/Lewis County Transportation Strategy Council (LCTSC)/RTPO/WSDOT coordinating meetings and workshops.
- Convened LCTAC/LCTSC meetings to address Lewis County regional, state, and federal transportation issues as needed.
- LCTSC meetings provided a forum for public involvement in the regional transportation process.
- Coordinated the prioritization of projects for ARRA funding for submission to WSDOT.
- Served as liaison between local entities, SWRTPO and WSDOT.
- Completed the Lewis County elements of the FY 2010-2011 UPWP.
- Completed the Lewis County segments of the Regional Transportation Plan.
- Established a Transportation Planner position within Lewis County Public Works.

Regional TIP: Developed and prepared the Lewis County Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and amendments, and forwarded them to WSDOT and SWRTPO for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

- Maintain Lewis County TIP database and process all amendments.
- Provide assistance to LCTSC members in downloading and using the STIP software as needed.
- Provide assistance to LCTSC members with TIP development and preparation as needed.

SAFETEA-LU/STP: LCTSC, along with county staff, provided the coordination, prioritization, and administration of the SAFETEA-LU, STP and Enhancement process for the Lewis County region.

- Established and adopted regional transportation priorities of: Preservation, Safety, Mobility, and Multimodal.
- Established and adopted regional project prioritization guidelines and project level scoring tool based on adopted transportation priorities.
- Established process for small city use of allocated STP funds through the use of reimbursable inter-local agreements with Lewis County.
- Allocated \$2.7 million in STP funds

White Pass Scenic Byway: CWCOG staff continues to assist the White Pass Scenic Byway efforts by working as a liaison with WSDOT and representing the byway group. Two scenic byway grants were submitted for funding during the 2006 call for projects: a proposal for marketing the byway and a proposal to build restrooms and acquire property for parking and other uses for the Morton Depot. The Byway also received over \$240,000 in 2007 Enhancement dollars to fund gateway and wayfinding signage. In 2007, the group established a website for promoting the byway and activities along the route. The White Pass Scenic Byway group is currently exploring seeking National Scenic Byway status. The gateway and community signing program will be implemented during 2010, using scenic byway funds secured by the byway committee.

SR 505 Limited Route Development Plan: Lewis County is responsible for the development of a limited route development plan for the SR 505 Corridor, Exit 63/Winlock/Toledo area. Members of the Project Working Team include Lewis County, cities of Winlock and Toledo, CWCOG staff and WSDOT. CWCOG assisted the county's consultant for the project in the development of the work program and request for proposal to complete the limited route development plan. This work is continuing in conjunction with the Subarea Comprehensive Plan for South Lewis County.

Pacific County

- **US 101 Project Prioritization:** CWCOG staff assisted the Pacific Council of Governments in developing a list of priority projects for the US 101 corridor throughout the county. These projects were submitted to elected officials at both the state and federal levels for consideration. One of the projects, \$375,000 for completion of the Discovery Trail between Beards Hollow and Ilwaco, has made it through the appropriations process in the House of Representatives. Other projects include slope stabilization/realignment feasibility analysis for US 101 corridor north of Raymond to Grays Harbor County line, alleviation of flooding at intersection of US 101 and Heath Street in Raymond, preliminary design and engineering for Discovery Trail segment, Chinook to Station Camp, and safety projects for spot improvements along the corridor, including wider shoulders and guardrail.
- **Beards Hollow Overlook:** CWCOG staff has been working closely with the City of Ilwaco, WSDOT and State Parks to develop the proposed overlook along SR 100 Loop at Beards Hollow. This overlook will offer the visitor a magnificent view of the Pacific Ocean. This location is one of the few in the state that is close enough for the visitor to actually see the ocean. The overlook borders Cape Disappointment State Park.
- **Discovery Trail, Phase II:** With the completion of the first phase of the trail in sight, Beards Hollow to Ilwaco, the second phase of the long-term project to implement a 35-mile linear trail from the Long Beach Peninsula to Knappton Cove is getting underway. CWCOG staff has met with Washington State Historical Society staff and Pacific County staff to determine how to implement the trail between Ilwaco and Station Camp. This segment of the trail will be located on the state and county right of way already in place on shoulders along US Highway 101 and county roads in the area. As the National Park Service continues to work to get the Station Camp unit on line in the future, the planning for the Discovery Trail will continue. It is anticipated that a trail segment from Chinook to Station Camp will run through Ft. Columbia. The segment of the

trail between Ilwaco and Chinook will be located on existing county roads and US 101. During FY 2008, an alignment through Ft. Columbia to Station Camp will be recorded using GPS technology to begin the creation of a GIS analysis of the trail.

- **Scenic Byway Program:** SWRTPO staff worked closely with the Pacific Council of Governments to help secure Scenic Byway Program funding for the Quarantine Station's new driveway and approach. The Quarantine Station is on the National Register of Historic Places and was operated by the US Department of Public Health for 30 years. The station was a hospital/infirmery used by immigrants coming into Astoria who were deemed not healthy enough to come into the country.
- **American Recover and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) program:** CWCOG staff facilitated the organization and prioritization of local projects for submission to the WSDOT for consideration of federal stimulus dollars and continued support throughout the local TIP, RTIP, and STIP amendment processes.

Wahkiakum County

- CWCOG staff worked closely with Wahkiakum County officials to develop a funding strategy for replacing the Ferry Wahkiakum. The county as received \$171,000 in Ferry Boat Discretionary dollars.
- CWCOG continues to work with the state's Scenic Byway Coordinator to explore the formation of a scenic byway group for SR 4 through Wahkiakum County.
- CWCOG staff continues to support Wahkiakum County by providing technical assistance for TIP submissions, keeping local official informed of funding opportunities, and serving as a liaison with WSDOT.

Meetings and Conferences: CWCOG staff attended the following conferences and workshops during FY 2009:

- Washington State Public Transportation Conference and Expo, September 2008
- Transportation Research Board 11th National Conference on Transportation planning for small and medium sized communities, September 17-19 2009.
- 2008 Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations Annual Conference, October 2008
- Transportation and Land Use Course, October 2008
- Women in Transportation Annual Conference, May 2009
- Coordinated Mobility course presented by National Transit Institute, May 2009