

Operating Principles and Procedures of the Walla Walla Valley MPO/SRTPO

Section I. Introduction

1. The Walla Walla Valley MPO (“Agency”) was established by a signed interlocal cooperation agreement (“Interlocal Agreement”) among Walla Walla County, Umatilla County, City of College Place, City of Milton-Freewater, City of Walla Walla, Port of Walla Walla, Valley Transit, Oregon Department of Transportation, and the Washington State Department of Transportation. The Interlocal Agreement was finalized on March 25, 2013. Effective July 1, 2013, through the execution of an agreement with the Benton-Franklin Regional Transportation Planning Organization, the WWVMPO also became the Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization for Walla Walla County. Subsequently, the cities of Prescott and Waitsburg executed a joinder agreement on November 5, 2014, to become party to the Interlocal Agreement. Per amended bylaws, effective April 1, 2015, the Agency is now also known as the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization/Sub-Regional Transportation Organization (WWVMPO/SRTPO).
2. The administrative office of the Agency is located at:
107 S 3rd Avenue
Walla Walla WA, 99362

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section II. Agency Mission

1. The mission of the Agency is to coordinate with its member entities and provide metropolitan and regional transportation planning services that are in compliance with the applicable Federal surface transportation law, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations, and the Washington State Growth Management Act.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section III. Open Public Meetings

1. All meetings of the Agency are subject to and shall comply with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, RCW 42.30.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section IV. Open Public Records

1. Definitions
 - a. “Public record” includes any writing which contains information related to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function.
 - b. “Writing” means any form of recorded communication or representation, regardless of physical form or characteristic.
2. The Agency provides access to public records under the Washington State Public Records Act, RCW 42.56. All records maintained by the WWVMPO/SRTPO are available for public inspection unless specifically exempted by law. The Agency provides access to existing public records in its possession, but is not required to collect information or organize data to create a record not existing at the time of the request.

3. Requests for Public Records

- a. All requests shall be directed to the Agency's Planning Assistant, who is considered the Public Records Officer for the purpose of overseeing the Agency's compliance with public disclosure requirements. The request shall include the following information:
 - i. The name and contact information of the requester;
 - ii. The date of the request;
 - iii. The identifiable record(s) being requested;
 - iv. The action requested for receiving or viewing the records.

A request form is also available on the Agency's website:

- b. The Agency reserves the right to request additional information from the requester to clarify which records are being requested and to evaluate the propriety of any exemptions.

4. Time, Inspection and Copying of Public Records

- a. Public records are available for inspection and copying Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., excluding legal holidays and other office closures for official business.
- b. Agency Staff will respond within five business days of receipt of a request by either:
 - i. Providing an internet address and link on the Agency's website to the specific records requested;
 - ii. Providing the record(s) for inspection and/or copying of the record after payment of any applicable fees; or
 - iii. Acknowledging receipt of the request and providing a reasonable estimate of the time necessary to respond based on the need to:
 1. Request clarification of a request;
 2. Locate and assemble the records requested;
 3. Notify persons or agencies affected by the request; or
 4. Determine whether any of the records are exempt from disclosure; or
 - iv. Denying the request.

5. Denial

- a. The Agency reserves the right to deny a request or otherwise determine that a public record requested is exempt under RCW 42.56. If the Agency denies a public records request, in whole or in part, the Agency will provide a written statement of the specific reasons for the denial.

6. Review of Denial of Public Records Request

- a. The person who has been denied access to public records may submit a petition for reconsideration to the Agency Board Chair through the Agency's Director. The petition shall be reviewed promptly and the action of the Agency Planning Assistant shall be approved or disapproved. Action upon the petition shall constitute the Agency Board's final action for purposes of judicial review.

7. Maintenance of Indexes of Public Records.

- a. Pursuant to RCW 42.56.070(4), the Agency exempts itself from the indexing requirements of RCW 42.56.070(3), as such indexing would be unduly burdensome for the following reasons:
 - i. Public records, among other things, include e-mails, electronic data, memorandums, case files and correspondence.
 - ii. Such items are not routinely indexed.
 - iii. For the Agency to index such items would necessitate increased staff time and increased costs.

- iv. The Board does not find that this increased cost of indexing the items listed in RCW 42.56.070 would be of corresponding value to the public.
- v. To the extent that any index is maintained, all such indexes shall be available for inspection and copying.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section V. Records Retention

1. Classification of Public Records: For the purposes of this Section, public records (as defined in Section IV) shall be classified as follows:
 - a. "Official public record" includes agreements, contracts, and all original vouchers, receipts, and other documents necessary to prove the validity of every transaction related to the receipt, use, and disposition of all public property and public income from all sources.
 - b. "Office files and memoranda" include correspondence, exhibits, drawings, maps, completed forms, or documents not above defined and classified as official public records, including duplicate copies of official public records filed with a state or federal agency, as well as documents and reports made for the internal administration of the Agency, even if not required by law to be filed or kept.
2. Accountability for and the efficient management of local government records are in the public interest. Therefore, the Agency retains and disposes of records in compliance with the *Preservation and Destruction of Public Records* chapter, RCW 40.14.
3. Except as otherwise provided by law, no public records shall be destroyed until approved for destruction by the local records committee or as designated by an approved disposition schedule. In any case, official public records shall not be destroyed unless:
 - a. The records are six or more years old;
 - b. The Agency has made a satisfactory showing to the state records committee that the retention of the records for six years is both unnecessary and uneconomical, particularly where lesser federal retention periods for records have been established; or
 - c. The originals of official public records less than six years old have been copied or reproduced by any photographic, electronic, or other process approved by the state archivist, which accurately reproduces the original.
4. Paragraph 3 of this Section provides the general minimum time requirements applicable to the destruction of official public records but does not relieve the Agency of its duty to comply with any lengthier time period required for specific records (*e.g.*, personnel records) under state law.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section VI. Financial Policies

1. General Provisions
 - a. The WWVMPO/SRTPO Board is the governing body that formulates the financial policies for the Agency. The Board may choose to delegate some of the responsibility for administration of financial policies to the Board's appointed representative.
 - b. The Agency's fiscal year is January 1 to December 31. The Agency operates on the cash basis of accounting. Under the cash basis of accounting, revenues and expenses are accounted for at the time a revenue payment is received or a payment for expense is issued.

- c. Financial duties and responsibilities must be separated, so that no one employee or Agency Board member has sole control over cash receipt, disbursements, payrolls, reconciliation of bank accounts, etc.
- d. The Agency Director is empowered and entrusted to keep accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements, and is responsible to the Agency Board for managing staff and operations of specific projects within the budget parameters approved by the Agency Board.
- e. The Agency Board may elect to contract with a reputable accounting firm to provide the duties and responsibilities of a Fiscal Coordinator.
- f. The Fiscal Coordinator is responsible to the Agency Director and Agency Board for the financial and accounting operations. The Fiscal Coordinator will prepare monthly journal entries representing the financial transactions of the Agency that must be approved by the Agency Board.
- g. Any changes to the Financial Policies must be approved by the Agency Board.

2. Chart of Accounts

- a. The Agency's chart of accounts and procedures will conform to the Washington State Auditor's Office in full compliance with legal requirements, and will be maintained by the Fiscal Coordinator in accordance with contractual obligations. An account number is assigned to all account categories to provide a specific identification of all financial transactions.

3. Cash Receipts and Deposit Policy

- a. The Agency prefers to receive payments through electronic transfer. Payments received in the form of checks must be made payable to the WWVMPO/SRTPO.
- b. The Agency receives monthly checks as a normal course of business. All Agency employees and Agency Board members will adhere to the approved policies and procedures when handling these receipts.
 - i. When payments by check are received, the Fiscal Coordinator will record the payment. The payment receipt shall always include the project and/or account number to which it is credited and other information necessary for a basic audit.
 - ii. The Fiscal Coordinator shall fill out a bank deposit slip and deposit the proceeds in the Agency's bank within no more than one day. A copy of the bank receipt, copy of the payment receipt, and a photo copy of the check and deposit slip shall be maintained by the Fiscal Coordinator (consistent with the Agency's record retention policy).
- c. Records of accounts receivables shall be maintained by the Fiscal Coordinator.
- d. The Fiscal Coordinator shall verify the Bank Reconciliation of Deposits on a monthly basis.
- e. The Agency Board is responsible for performing random audits to insure that the receipt process is being followed and that calculations are accurate.

4. Purchasing Authorization, Disbursements, and Check Processing

- a. Purchasing Authorization
 - i. The intent of this policy is to ensure that monies are not spent without advanced approval or without appropriate justification. A budget approved by the Board at the time of entering into a grant, contract, or agreement constitutes approval to proceed according to that specific financial plan, and identifies allowable expenses, conditionally allowable expenses, and ineligible expenses.

- ii. An expenditure which does not change the approved total budget amount, but causes a reallocation of less than 10% between budget expense categories, only requires the approval of the Agency Director prior to spending.
- iii. Any budget amendment, or reallocation of funds among budget expense categories exceeding the 10% threshold, must come before the Agency Board for prior approval, and may also require a request for a project, contract, or grant amendment prior to approval.
- iv. Work-related travel expenses shall be administered according to the policy established in the Agency's Personnel Policies Manual.
- v. All expense claims presented against the Agency Board by persons furnishing materials, rendering services or performing labor, or for any other contractual or non-contractual purpose shall be certified by the Agency Director as being a just, due, and unpaid obligation of the Agency and will be approved by the Agency Board in a public meeting prior to issuance of checks to claimants. Record of the approval shall appear in the meeting minutes.
- vi. For the timely payment of recurring services and expenses, the Agency Board authorizes the issuance of checks prior to approval by the Agency Board, provided that the Agency maintains an official bond, has adopted effective internal control procedures, and approves the claims at the regularly scheduled public meeting within one month from issuance.
- vii. For the timely payment of monthly payroll, the Agency Board also authorizes the issuance to employees of payroll checks prior to approval by the Agency Board, provided that the Agency maintains an official bond, has adopted effective internal control procedures, and approves the payroll claims at the regularly scheduled public meeting within one month from issuance.

b. Disbursements and Check Processing

- i. When invoices or billing statements are received, the Agency Planning Assistant will date stamp the documents. The Fiscal Coordinator shall advise the Agency Director of any invoices or bills for which funds have not been budgeted. Claims may be paid monthly, bi-monthly or in any increment reasonable to the process of the Agency Board.
- ii. The Fiscal Coordinator shall post all checks in the disbursement record by payee's name, date, amount paid, and funding code or description.
- iii. With approval of the invoices or billing statements by the Agency Director, checks shall be signed with two signatures: that of the Agency Director; and that of an authorized Agency Board member, preferably the Agency Chair or Vice-Chair. The Agency Board may not delegate signature authority to any employee other than the Agency Director. The Agency Planning Assistant will mail the checks.
- iv. The original copy of all vouchers shall be filed in the administrative office of the Agency. Supporting documentation must be retained (consistent with the Agency's record retention policy) and attached to the vouchers and cancelled to prevent reuse.
- v. Cancelled checks shall be received and retained by the Fiscal Coordinator, either the original (actual) document or "read-only" (electronic format) document. The Fiscal Coordinator shall verify the disbursements, while reconciling the bank statements on a monthly basis.
- vi. The Agency Board is responsible for performing random audits to insure that disbursement process is being followed and that the vouchers and expense forms are accurate.

5. Internal Check Control

- a. All blank checks will be secured in the locking file of the Fiscal Coordinator

- b. Two signatures are required for each check. No signature stamp may be used.
 - c. Voided checks will be marked VOID and filed.
 - d. No checks will be made payable to “cash” or “bearer.”
 - e. Blank checks will not be pre-signed.
 - f. All checks must have written authorization. The appropriate voucher must be attached to the authorization.
6. Bank Reconciliation
- a. Bank statements will be received directly by the Agency and will be shared with the Fiscal Coordinator.
 - b. The Fiscal Coordinator verifies that all electronic deposits made to the Agency’s account are checked against the accounts receivable records.
 - c. Each month the Fiscal Coordinator will reconcile the bank statement with the check receipt records, disbursements records, and the bank account activity. Any errors or omissions will be noted and corrective action taken with notification to the Agency Director and the Agency Board.
 - d. Bank charges, interest, and adjustments will be made by the Fiscal Coordinator as journal entries and approved by the Agency Board.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section VII. Purchasing Goods, Services and Equipment

1. The purchase of goods, services and equipment shall be administered according to the policies established in the Agency’s Procurement and Purchase Procedures, approved September 4, 2013, and amendments thereto. The following additional provisions shall also apply.
2. Emergency Contracts
 - a. "Emergency," as that phrase is used in this Section, and within the Agency’s Procurement and Purchase Procedures (*see e.g.*, page 3, Step 1, paragraph D), means a set of unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the Agency that either:
 - i. Present a real, immediate threat to the proper performance of essential functions; or
 - ii. May result in material loss or damage to property, bodily injury, or loss of life if immediate action is not taken.
 - b. When contracting under an emergency basis, the competitive selection process is not used; however, emergency circumstance justification shall be documented prior to contracting.
3. Contract Amendments
 - a. The Agency Board will approve contract amendments that change the scope, budget, and/or schedule. The Agency Director shall approve no-cost time extensions.
4. Supplies
 - a. “Supplies” are items with an acquisition cost of less than \$500 and/or a useful life of less than one year.
 - b. In purchasing supplies, costs associated with the products quality, maintenance, reliability should be considered, as well as order and delivery processing. The entire cost of acquiring supplies means considering the entire life cycle of an item, as well as key limiting factors such as shelf life, inventory turnover and value added purchasing.

5. Equipment
 - a. "Equipment" means an article of non-expendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$500 or more.
 - b. The capital expenditure for equipment includes the net invoice price of the equipment, the cost to put it in place, as well as the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired.
6. Capital Assets
 - a. "Capital asset" means building, land, and improvements to buildings or land that materially increase their value or useful life. Furthermore, equipment with a value in excess of the capitalization threshold is also considered a capital asset.
 - b. "Capitalization threshold" is set at \$3,000.
7. Purchased Services
 - a. Purchased services are services provided by a vendor to accomplish routine, continuing and necessary functions. This term includes, but is not limited to, services acquired for facilities and equipment leases, maintenance and repair; computer hardware and software maintenance; data entry; word processing; and computer time-sharing, contract programming, and analysis.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section VIII. Capital Asset Management

1. Capital equipment shall be defined as all items with a unit cost of \$3,000 or more, or as defined by the funding source.
2. The Agency Director will, at the time capital equipment is acquired, ensure an inventory number is issued, along with a label for the item and add it to the capital equipment inventory list. This list will include the item description, vendor, equipment inventory number, date of acquisition, and location.
3. The Agency Planning Assistant is responsible for placing inventory numbers, as assigned by the Agency Director, on newly acquired capital equipment.
4. All capital equipment purchases must be pre-approved by the Agency Director, and must be necessary for the program for which it is purchased and allowable by the funding source.
5. Employees will immediately notify the Agency Director to inform the Agency Board of all cases of loss, damage, or destruction of equipment or other property.
6. Small and attractive assets, i.e. digital cameras, projectors, laptops, digital recorders, etc. are generally considered supplies or non-capital equipment, as they do not exceed the \$3,000 threshold. However, as these small and attractive assets might increasingly be the target of loss, damage, or destruction, they should be included in the capital equipment inventory.
7. All assets should be inventoried at least every two years. Annual inventoring of small and attractive assets will help to prevent loss or misappropriation.
8. Capital equipment and special attractive assets should be inspected and maintained regularly, consistent with any schedules suggested by the manufacturer. Agency employees must use due care to prevent and avoid damage to agency property.
9. Upon completion of a project, the Agency Director will inventory any remaining supplies and the Agency Board will decide how to dispose of any remaining inventory or property, in accordance with the funding source.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section IX. Agreements, Grants, and Contracts

1. Original copies of all grants, contracts, and agreements will be maintained by the Agency Director, including modifications and amendments thereof.
2. The Agency Director will review each contract, grant or agreement, and/or amendment to ensure compliance with fiscal and legal provisions.
3. All contracts, grants, agreements and amendments will be signed by the Chairman of the Agency Board or the Agency Director, as delegated by the Agency Board.
4. The Agency Director will assign account numbers to each new grant and will provide relevant budget information, as well as terms and conditions, to the Fiscal Coordinator for administration of the revenues and expenses.
5. The Agency Director and Fiscal Coordinator will prepare and submit reimbursement requests to grant funding sources as required.
6. Monthly financial reports by revenue and expense category for each grant will be prepared by the Fiscal Coordinator, reviewed by the Agency Director, and presented to the Agency Board.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section X. Operating Budget

1. The proposed operating budget shall be prepared by the Agency Director in collaboration with the Fiscal Coordinator, subject to approval of the Agency Board.
2. The operating budget is subject to the review and approval by the Agency Board. All deadlines and procedures contained in the Interlocal Agreement shall be adhered to. The Agency Board shall review expenditures based on monthly and annual financial reports provided at the monthly and annual meetings.
3. Subsequent grant amendments and awards will become part of the budget based upon Agency Board approval. The operating budget will be reviewed at least quarterly for changes.
4. The Agency Director in collaboration with the Fiscal Coordinator shall monitor program expenses for conformity with the budget. The budget may be reviewed and revised via amendment on an as needed basis with Agency Board approval; provided, however that no amendment may increase the financial responsibility of anyone of the Interlocal Agreement parties without express consent of that party.
5. The Agency Board may solicit and accept grants, loans, and donations, and may adopt fees for services it provides.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section XI. Audits and Records

1. The receipts and disbursements of the Agency Board shall be subject to the audit and accounting procedures established by the Washington State Auditor's Office.
2. The accounts of the Agency Board shall be open at reasonable times for inspection. The Agency records shall be located at the administrative offices of the Agency as designated by the Agency Board.
3. It is the policy of the Agency to immediately investigate and report suspected incidents, events, or activities where loss of public funds, assets, or other illegal activity is suspected to have occurred. RCW 43.09.185 requires that a local government immediately notify the Washington State Auditor's Office in the event of suspected loss of public funds or assets or other illegal activity. In the event the Agency suspects a loss of or illegal activity associated with Washington funds, the Agency will immediately notify the Washington State Auditor's Office. In the event the Agency suspects a loss of or illegal activity associated with Oregon local or state funds, the Agency will immediately notify the Oregon Secretary of State Audits Division.

[Org. 10/07/15]

Section XII. Insurance

1. The Agency will indemnify and hold harmless the Agency Board, its members, and Agency staff regarding any cause of action or claim for damages arising from negligent acts or omissions occurring while Agency staff were engaged in duties and activities in their official capacity, except to the extent the cause of action or damages arose from the gross negligence or willful misconduct of the Agency staff.
2. The Agency Board will maintain a liability insurance policy that addresses the Agency's property, office space, automobile, and other assets, and that includes an official bond covering Agency Board members and employees. The insurance policy will be maintained by the Agency Director.

[Org. 10/07/15]