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**Association of Washington Cities (AWC)**  
***Final Report***  
**"Technical Assistance Grants to Communities"**  
**Funding Opportunity Number DTPH56-09-G-PHPT16**

**Background** - The Association of Washington Cities (AWC), a non-profit organization composed of all of Washington State's 281 cities and towns, was a grant to provide technical and other assistance to rapidly-growing communities in the state where hazardous liquid and natural gas transmission pipelines currently exist. These activities will enhance public safety and health in these areas by improving local government land use planning and permitting practices in the vicinity of transmission pipelines.

AWC's partners are the Pipeline Safety Trust (PST), the Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety (CCOPS), the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC), the Washington State Association of Counties, the Northwest Gas Association, and the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC).

**Project Goal and Objectives** - The goal of the project is to enhance public safety by improving local government land use planning and permitting practices in the vicinity of transmission pipelines. The objectives undertaken to help meet this goal were: (1) increasing local government and developer awareness of safety concerns as lands in the vicinity of transmission pipelines are developed; (2) providing direct technical assistance to local governments in implementing Recommended Practices as far in advance of these lands being developed as possible; and (3) establishing a structure that fosters long-term collaboration and cooperation between Washington's local governments, pipeline operators, developers, and other affected groups in promoting pipeline safety and resolving issues that may arise in the implementation of these Recommended Practices.

**Project Components**

*Direct Technical Assistance activities:* AWC and its partners have gone into communities to build awareness of the need for these Recommended Practices and the availability of hands-on technical assistance. Sessions were held on land use planning and pipeline safety at state-wide conferences of local government officials, planning organizations, and similar groups. These programs were open to everyone, although they were aimed primarily at developers, land use planners, and pipeline operators.

The following sessions were held (attendance in parenthesis):

- January 4, 2010 - Nooksack City Council presentation (11)
- January 20, 2010 - Northwest Regional Planners Forum presentation in Burlington (15)
- January 29, 2010 - Whatcom County Planning staff presentation (4)
- February 17, 2010 - Renton (24)
- May 3, 2010 - Bellevue meeting (40)

- May 5, 2010 – Eastern Washington Planning Directors Meeting presentation in Moses Lake (19)
- June 23, 2010 – AWC Annual Conference presentation in Vancouver (2)
- July 15, 2010 – Southwest Washington Planners Forum (13)
- July 22, 2010 – Snohomish County presentation (6)
- August 12, 2010 – Western Planners Forum (18)
- September 17, 2010 – Spokane area cities and county presentation (10)

These sessions were followed up with more in depth conversations with participants via phone and email.

All of these activities were supported and promoted by the additional project components below.

*Development of a comprehensive web site:* In order to increase awareness of these pipeline safety issues, the website was developed to provide an easy-to-locate and understandable reference for the Recommended Practices. Contents of the website, <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/pubsafe/transpipes.aspx>, include:

- Background information
- Planning Near Pipelines Presentation
- Stakeholders and Their Roles
- The Three Options Open to Local Governments
- PIPA Recommended Practices
- Sample Pipeline Land Use Ordinances
- Additional Information Resources
- Glossary and Acronyms

*Development of webinar:* [Planning Near Pipelines](#), is a two-part presentation presented by Carl Weimer, Pipeline Safety Trust, and Jim Doherty, Municipal Research & Services Center. The presentation discusses the risks posed by major energy pipelines and a range of planning options local governments can take to enhance the safety of those who live or work near those pipelines. Copies of the slides used in the presentations, without the audio, are also available on the website noted above.

*Establishment of a Listserv:* Provides a forum for obtaining and exchanging information about these Recommended Practices. To encourage dialogue among local governments that are addressing land use practices in the vicinity of transmission pipelines, we have established an [online discussion group](#) where questions can be posted and information shared.

*Implementation of Mini Grants:* AWC worked with the Pipeline Safety Trust, Municipal Research Services Center and the WUTC to develop an implementation plan for getting local governments to adopt PIPA recommendations. The plan called for significant outreach to local government planning staffs and elected officials. Presentations were made by MRSC and PST to a statewide group of planners, to the Washington Planning Directors conference, and to several individual local governments in Washington on the PIPA process and the benefits of local government adoption of an ordinance containing recommendations from the PIPA

report. The implementation group also used the results of a survey showing that local government finances were one of the biggest barriers to getting pipeline ordinances adopted as the basis for establishing a mini-grant program of \$3000 awards for local governments.

While very small, the intent was to offer technical assistance and advice to the cities, provide model and sample ordinances from other locations, and allow the grants funds to be used to offset the necessary staff time to draft and shepherd an ordinance through the legislative process. The mini-grants were advertised in announcements from the Pipeline Safety Trust, and in regular newsletters from the MRSC and AWC to cities and counties throughout the state. Several local governments contacted the PST, whose staff coordinated the mini-grant effort.

Ultimately, five mini-grants were awarded to the following cities:

1. Bellingham (pop. 81,070)
2. Gold Bar (pop. 2,060)
3. Kirkland (pop. 81,043)
4. Roy (pop. 795)
5. Sultan (pop. 4,655)

Staff of the MRSC gave a presentation to combined audiences from Sultan and Gold Bar, and the staff of the PST remains in contact with all of the planning staffs as they continue to develop and prepare their ordinances for legislative action.