PIPELINE SAFETY TRUST: CONSULTATION ZONE SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

This survey project follows interviews with the four planning directors in Benton County, Kennewick, WA, Ida County, ID, and Boise, ID, and an elected official from each Benton County and Kennewick. In those interviews objections to and interest in Consultation Zones (CZs) were explored in an open-ended format. This survey will use those findings to reach a statistically significant sample of Planning Directors in cities and counties throughout Washington State. It will identify how prevalent their objections and interests are and what kinds of support would best facilitate CZ adoption.

A database of contacts is being developed with the help of the Pipeline Safety Trust. The survey will be programmed for web-based, online administration, with email notifications and reminders. The findings will be analyzed to identify patterns and trends in the data and any variation by community or respondent characteristics.

Research on the best practices in survey research showed that many contacts are essential in reaching a diverse and representative audience. This project will include at least four contacts to complete a survey: a pre-notification letter, followed by a survey invitation and link, followed by a reminder/thank you email, and a final reminder. Invitations will be personalized and include a unique password so that reminders are only sent to those who have not completed the survey. The invitations will come from a recognized leader with an appropriate role in the research - either the Executive Director of the Pipeline Safety Trust, or a well-known planner or elected official in Washington State.
PRE-NOTIFICATION LETTER

The following content will be sent from the Pipeline Safety Trust or other well-known planner or elected official in Washington State.

Subject line: Pipeline Safety study underway

Dear recipient’s name,

To better meet the needs of communities in Washington State, the Pipeline Safety Trust is conducting a study, funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation, to learn what support planners would need if they wanted to propose adoption of Consultation Zones near transmission pipelines to increase community safety. Consultation Zones are an approach currently being piloted in several communities around the U.S. to increase communication about the potential impact of a pipeline failure during local planning and to prevent damage to pipelines that could result in injury or property damage.

The study is designed to identify your interest in and objections to adopting Consultation Zones, as well as to identify potential resources that might help overcome any objections.

Next week, I’ll be sending you an email with a link to an online survey about this topic. You do not need to have any prior knowledge about the topic to participate and should only take about 10 minutes for you to complete.

I hope when that email comes, you’ll respond promptly. If there is another member of your department who you would prefer we email the survey to, please let us know.

The Pipeline Safety Trust promotes pipeline safety through education and advocacy, by increasing access to information, and by building partnerships with residents, safety advocates, government, and industry, that result in safer communities and a healthier environment.

Sincerely,

Carl Weimer, Executive Director
(360) 53-5686
FIRST SURVEY INVITATION
The following content will be sent to each potential respondent one week after the pre-notification letter.

Subject Line: Please participate in the Pipeline Safety Study

Dear recipient’s name,

Last week you should have received my email describing a study underway by the Pipeline Safety Trust. The study is designed to identify your interest in and objections to adopting Consultation Zones near transmission pipelines in your community, as well as identifying potential resources that might help overcome any objections. Consultation Zones are designed to increase communication about the potential impact of a pipeline failure during local planning and prevent damage to pipelines that could result in injury or property damage.

This survey was drafted after speaking directly with planners and elected officials around the region. It should take only 10 minutes of your time. Your answers will help shape the program design and implementation as well as determine what resources are available for your use if we move ahead.

The findings will be available on the Pipeline Safety Trust’s website (pstrust.org) or we can email them to you directly if you would like.

To participate in the survey please go to website URL
You may login with your unique, case sensitive password: password

If the link does not work, please copy and paste the URL into your browser’s address bar.

If there is another member of your department who you would prefer we email the survey to, please let us know.

If you have any questions about the survey, please don’t hesitate to call. If you have any trouble logging into the website, please contact Dr. Pamela Jull at Applied Research Northwest (phone 360-647-6067 for assistance).

Thank you for your time,

Carl Weimer, Executive Director
(360) 534-5686
REMINDER NOTIFICATIONS

The following content will be sent to non-responding email addresses one week after the initial survey invitations.

Subject line: Reminder: Please participate in the Pipeline Safety Study

Dear recipient's name,

Last week you should have received an email from me asking for a little of your time to help with a study relating to the adoption of Consultation Zones near transmission pipelines in communities like yours around Washington State. If you've already responded, Thank you!

If you've not yet responded, Please go to website URL as soon as possible and complete the survey.
Your unique, case-sensitive login is: password

This research will help shape what resources are available to communities that are interested in Consultation Zones, as well as telling us how much interest there is in the state.

If the link does not work, please copy and paste the URL into your browser’s address bar.

If you have any questions about the survey, please don’t hesitate to call. If you have any trouble logging into the website, please contact Applied Research Northwest at 360-647-6067 for assistance.

Thank you for your time,
Carl Weimer, Executive Director
(360)-543-5686
A FINAL NOTIFICATION WILL BE SENT ONE WEEK LATER:

Level of attention: Important
Subject Line: The Pipeline Safety Study still needs your input

Dear recipient’s name,

I realize how many requests for help may come across your desk in a day. I hope you’ll prioritize this one before we have to close the study. The Pipeline Safety Study is still available for your response at study URL. Your unique login is: password.

The survey should take only 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is essential to be sure that as many perspectives as possible are represented in the findings.

Please take a moment to complete the survey today. And thank you for your cooperation!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Carl Weimer, Executive Director
(360) 534-5686
SURVEY CONTENT

Thank you for your participation in this important study. All your answers are confidential. The results will be available date and place to be made available.

If you have any questions about the intent of the survey please contact Carl Weimer at 360-543-5686. If you have any problems with survey functions, please contact Applied Research Northwest at 360-647-6067 for assistance.

For the purposes of this survey, the pipelines we're referring to are those large transmission pipelines that move fuels across the country and deliver it to communities and distribution points. They are generally underground and carry natural gas, gasoline, crude oil or other fuels. We are not talking about the smaller pipelines that bring natural gas to our homes or individual businesses.

1. As far as you know, are there any such transmission pipelines operating through or immediately adjacent to your jurisdiction?
   - □ Definitely
   - □ Probably
   - □ Probably not
   - □ Definitely not
   - □ Don’t know

   If “definitely not,” Thank You - you’re done! Otherwise please continue

2. Are there currently accurate, up-to-date maps available to your planning department that show where the pipelines are in your community?
   - □ Yes, definitely
   - □ Yes, probably
   - □ No, probably not
   - □ No, definitely not
   - □ Don’t know

3. How well are transmission pipelines in your community marked, so developers and property owners know where they are?
   - □ Very well marked
   - □ Somewhat well marked
   - □ Not very well marked
   - □ Don’t know
4. In your day to day work, how often do you encounter issues relating to transmission pipelines or pipeline safety?

☐ Never or Rarely
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ Don’t know

5. Have there been any problems or issues relating to transmission pipelines or pipeline safety in your community in the past few years?

☐ Yes => How long ago? ____ years
☐ No
☐ Don’t know

Please let us know your opinions of the following:

6. How often has the growth of your community brought roadways, housing, business and industry within close proximity to pipelines in your community?

☐ Very often
☐ Somewhat often
☐ Very little
☐ Not at all
☐ Don’t know

6. How effective has “Call Before You Dig” been in preventing damage to underground utilities in your community?

☐ Very effective
☐ Somewhat effective
☐ Not very effective
☐ Don’t know how effective
☐ Not familiar enough with Call Before You Dig to have an opinion

7. Besides “Call Before You Dig”, do you currently have any protocols or systems in place that are used in the event that developers, builders or property owners submit plans for permitting that are near pipelines?

☐ Yes => Please describe what you do______________________
☐ No
☐ Don’t know
8. How would you describe the planning department’s relationship with Pipeline Operators in your area?

- □ Excellent
- □ Very Good
- □ Good
- □ Fair
- □ Poor
- □ Don’t know

The Pipeline Safety Trust is wondering if communities like yours might adopt Consultation Zones. Consultation Zones are pre-defined areas of 660’ on each side of a pipeline.

If excavation or new development is proposed within these zones, planning offices would instruct the permit seeker to provide the development proposal to the pipeline operator for consultation on any pipeline safety concerns. There is no requirement for the content of the consultation or for any specific outcome, just that both parties have knowledge of the proposed development and its relationship to the pipeline. Proof of the consultation between the developer and the pipeline operator would be required before any permits were issued.

The purpose of the Consultation Zone is to prevent damage to pipelines that could lead to injury or property damage, and to ensure that developers are aware of the type and risk of pipelines near their proposals.

9. Do you think Consultation Zones would be any more effective than what your community currently does to take pipeline safety into consideration?

- □ Yes, much more effective
- □ Yes, somewhat more effective
- □ No, no more effective
- □ Don’t know

10. Whether or not you think they would be more effective, how willing would you be to propose adoption of Consultation Zones for your community within the next two years?

- □ Very willing
The 660’ measure is a national average of the potential impact area should a pipeline rupture. This average number was chosen by a national group of pipeline experts to make implementation of such zones easy for communities, but it is also possible to calculate the actual impact areas for each specific pipeline based on the size, fuel transported and pressure.

11. How likely are you to consider adopting Consultation Zones using this recommended average 660’ area?
- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not very likely
- Don’t know

How much more likely would you be to consider adopting Consultation Zones if:
12. Each pipeline in your jurisdiction could have a custom-sized zone accurately calculated on its size, the fuel transported, and pressure of the pipeline.
- Much more likely
- Somewhat more likely
- No more likely
- Don’t know

13. The size of the zones was reduced to something more in keeping with standard planning buffers (e.g. 50’-200’)
- Much more likely
- Somewhat more likely
- No more likely
- Don’t know

14. The size of zones was a single fixed, reasonable average based on the size, pressure and fuel transported in the existing pipelines in your jurisdiction.
- Much more likely
In order to adopt Consultation Zones, you would most likely need to visit the Municipal Research and Services Center Website for information about Planning Near Pipelines. You would also need to go through your standard public process to get the zones adopted.

15. Thinking about your department, its staffing, funding and your community, how long do you think it would take to adopt Consultation Zones if you decided to do so?

_______ months

16. Have you ever visited the Municipal Research and Services Center website before?

□ Yes
□ No
□ Don’t know

How likely is each of the following to happen if you decided to adopt Consultation Zones in your community?

17. Property-rights advocates may see it as a threat.

□ Very likely
□ Somewhat likely
□ Not very likely
□ Don’t know

18. Consultation Zones may not be a priority for the decision makers or supervisors that direct work efforts.

□ Very likely
□ Somewhat likely
□ Not very likely
□ Don’t know

19. Staff may not have time to do the work to adopt Consultation Zones

□ Very likely
20. Developers and property owners may be concerned that Consultation Zones will slow the permitting process.

- [ ] Very likely
- [ ] Somewhat likely
- [ ] Not very likely
- [ ] Don’t know

21. Developers and property owners may be concerned that Consultation Zones will increase the cost of the permitting process.

- [ ] Very likely
- [ ] Somewhat likely
- [ ] Not very likely
- [ ] Don’t know

22. Is there anything else that might prevent you from trying to adopt Consultation Zones in your jurisdiction?

- [ ] Yes => please describe ____________________________
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don’t know

**Assistance for communities looking into Consultation Zone adoption may be available. Please tell us how valuable these resources might be for you.**

23. Free technical assistance from people with planning and pipeline safety expertise to assist you, or provide background information/presentations to elected officials, planning commissioners, and others.

- [ ] Very valuable
- [ ] Somewhat valuable
- [ ] Not very valuable
- [ ] Don’t know

24. Sample ordinances that can be customized for each community

- [ ] Very valuable
Somewhat valuable
Not very valuable
Don’t know

25. Grant funding to support the development of Consultation Zone ordinances

Very valuable
Somewhat valuable
Not very valuable
Don’t know

How important is each of the following when you consider Consultation Zone adoption for your community?

26. Consultation Zones would identify potential problems or conflicts early in the permitting process.

Extremely important
Very important
Somewhat important
Not very important
Not at all important
Don’t know

27. Consultation Zones do not require that specific standards are met, only that communication occurs to help ensure better public safety.

Extremely important
Very important
Somewhat important
Not very important
Not at all important
Don’t know

28. Consultation Zones are a proactive approach fundamentally about public safety.

Extremely important
Very important
Somewhat important
29. That a clear explanation of the risk these pipelines pose compared to the cost of implementing Consultation Zones is provided.

- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Don’t know

30. The size of Consultation Zones (e.g. 660’ or some other buffer size) must be explained and be seen as reasonable.

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Don’t know

31. The Consultation Zone adoption process needs to be community focused and customized to attempt to meet the needs of developers, local government and pipeline operators.

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Don’t know

32. Consultation Zones do not impact the authority of the planning staff in the approval process of a project.

- Extremely important
□ Very important
□ Somewhat important
□ Not very important
□ Not at all important
□ Don’t know

**Miscellaneous Questions**

33. Who would you trust most to provide helpful and accurate information about implementing Consultation Zones as part of your planning/permitting process?

□ Pipeline operators
□ Pipeline Safety Trust (non-profit focused on pipeline safety)
□ Association of Washington Cities or the Washington State Assoc. of Counties
□ America Planning Association
□ Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (state pipeline regulator)
□ Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (federal pipeline regulator)
□ Other ________________________________

34. Who would you trust most to provide accurate information about the risk of pipelines in your community?

□ Pipeline operators
□ Pipeline Safety Trust (non-profit focused on pipeline safety)
□ Association of Washington Cities or the Washington State Assoc. of Counties
□ Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (pipeline regulator)
□ Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (federal pipeline regulator)
□ Washington State Fire Marshal
□ Other ________________________________

35. How do you usually hear about initiatives around zoning and public safety?

□ Professional planning association (please tell us which one____________)  
□ Other planners
□ Conferences (please tell us which conferences________)
□ Professional periodicals/journals (please tell us which ones_______)  
□ Regular news media
□ Other ________________________________
That’s all of our questions. Thank you for your time and assistance. If you have any questions about the survey please contact Carl Weimer at 360-543-5686.