Lane Area Commission on Transportation
Public Participation Plan
Adopted 8-10-2011

LaneACT meetings will comply with the requirements of the Oregon Public Meetings Law, ORS 192.610 to 192.690. "Meeting" means the convening of a governing body of a public body for which a quorum is required to make a decision or deliberate toward a decision on any matter." ORS 192.610(5). Meetings include information-gathering sessions, working lunches and electronic meetings. All LaneACT meetings will be open to public attendance and any member of the public may attend any meeting of the LaneACT. – ***OTC Policy on Formation and Operation of an ACT: Public Involvement***

INTRODUCTION

Meaningful citizen participation in transportation planning is challenging given the multiple layers of plans, complex financial systems, extensive procedures, and various time lines controlled by local, state, and federal agencies.

Public involvement incorporates public concerns, needs, and values into governmental decision making. Public involvement goes beyond just informing the public through one-way communication, but also provides two-way communication to solicit the public's ideas, issues, and concerns to assist in making better decisions that have public support.

The LaneACT has developed this Public Participation Plan (PPP) to enhance two-way communication with citizens, provide an open decision-making process, be responsive to citizen input, and ensure broad public participation during key LaneACT work tasks.

PURPOSE

Transportation systems do more than meet travel demand; they have a significant effect on the physical and socioeconomic characteristics of the areas they serve, including public health and safety. Transportation planning must be viewed in terms of regional and community goals and values such as protection of the environment, effect on the regional economy, and maintaining the quality of life that area residents enjoy.

The LaneACT is committed to an open, public involvement process, which allows all citizens and transportation stakeholders the opportunity to participate in transportation decision-making.

The LaneACT public involvement strategy has five goals:

- To involve stakeholders in developing the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP);
- To inform the public about the STIP process and how they can participate;
- To educate the public on regional and statewide transportation issues, projects, and funding procedures;
- Engage key stakeholders and the general public with a process consistent with state and federal laws, regulations and policies; and
- To provide a local forum for sharing information, understanding, coordinating, and gaining consensus around transportation plans, policies, projects and funding.

KEY TOPICS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The LaneACT has four key areas for stakeholder and public outreach:

STIP Development

A primary function of Area Commissions across the state is to provide for stakeholder and citizen input on the STIP. The OTC relies heavily on LaneACT to involve stakeholders through STIP development, and to provide a forum for public input and comment on projects proposed in the STIP.

What is LaneACT

Our ACT members also feel a responsibility to inform local governmental agencies, our stakeholders and the public about the ACT's purpose, our membership, and our structure and processes. It is important for all citizens to understand the ACT's key role in providing a forum for regional transportation decision-making.

Funding Opportunities

Funding for transportation improvements, at both the state and local level, is of significant concern for our members and stakeholders. In addition to proving a forum for regional discussion of funding programs and setting regional priorities for funding investments, the LaneACT works closely with ODOT to assist our local agencies in identifying and competing for grants.

Regional and Statewide Transportation Issues

The LaneACT serves as the central dissemination point for information on regional and statewide transportation issues. In addition, we provide a public forum where transportation issues are discussed and the diverse viewpoints of our constituents are heard. Based on the feedback and input received from stakeholders, the LaneACT advises the OTC on policies and programs affecting our areas.

AUDIENCE

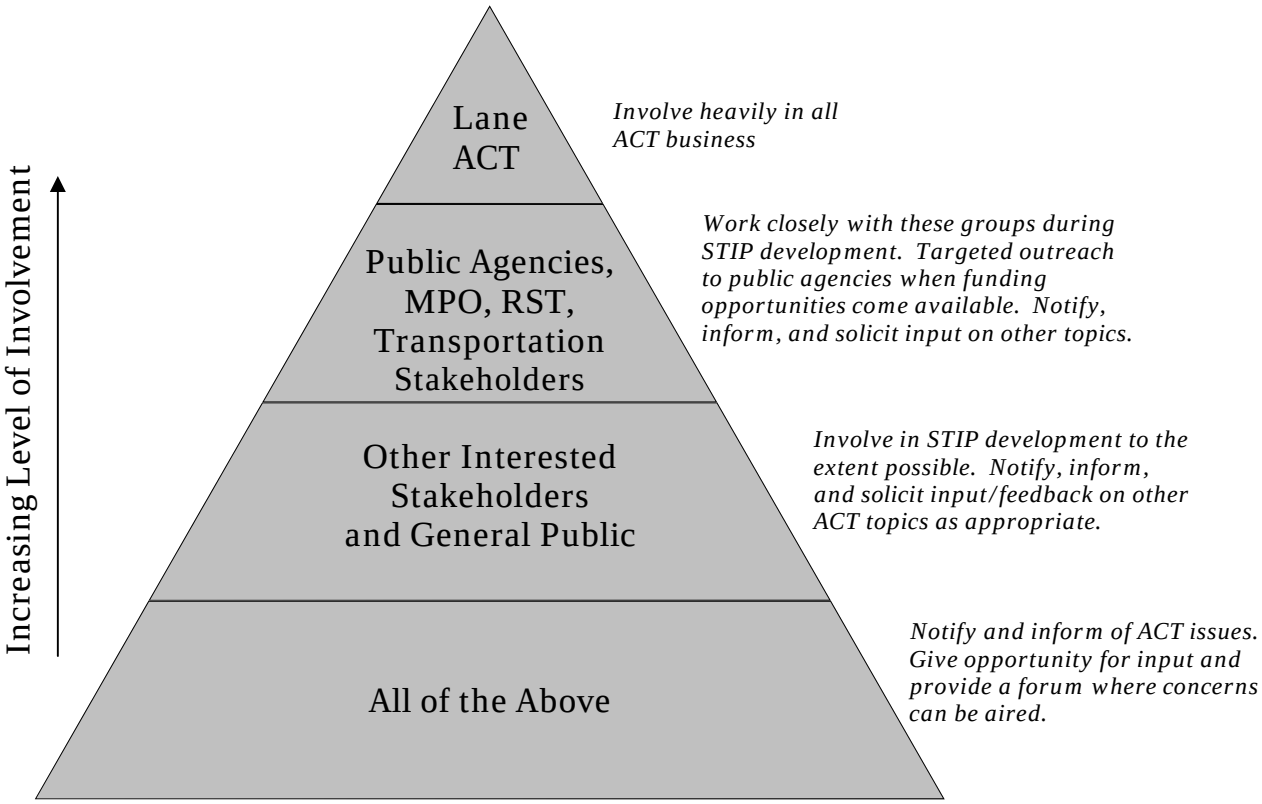
Relationship of LaneACT to Other Organizations and Interests

The LaneACT has many community allies in the form of other established organizations and civic groups. Effective communication between the LaneACT and these interests is essential to ensure regional transportation decisions and investment priorities match other regional decision making processes for community services and economic development.

Target Audiences and Level of Engagement

Our target audiences and their levels of interest and involvement can be defined by the following graph. At the top are those most vested in regional transportation issues and decisions, such as our LaneACT members. Near the base of the graph are those who are affected by transportation issues and investment decisions, but who may not have the time or inclination to participate in day to day decision making. Our public involvement strategy acknowledges that different levels of outreach and stakeholder engagement are needed, depending on the topic and interest levels of various audiences.

Finding the Right Level of Public Involvement



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The LaneACT Bylaws state:

> *"To comply with federal environmental justice requirements, the public involvement process will include a strategy for engaging minority and low-income populations in transportation decision-making."*

The purpose of considering environmental justice in the transportation planning and decision-making process is to:

1. Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations.

2. Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the planning and decision-making process.

3. Prevent the denial of, reduction in or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Strategy

- LaneACT members and staff shall network through key groups representing minority and low-income populations.

- Encourage participation for groups representing populations of transportation disadvantaged in relation to public health.

- Offer materials in languages other than English, when applicable.

- Provide advertisement (i.e., Stakeholder Recruitment) displays in publications that serve minority and low-income populations.

- Provide verbal messaging (i.e., Stakeholder Recruitment) to media outlets that serve minority and low-income populations.

- Post LaneACT notices at community gathering places for minority and low-income populations.

STAKEHOLDER RECRUITMENT

As part of LaneACT public participation responsibilities, the LaneACT Bylaws require at least four (4) Designated Stakeholder members to represent Trucking, Rail, Bicyclists and Pedestrians, and Environmental Land Use. In addition, LaneACT shall appoint between four (4) and six (6) Other Stakeholder members to represent other interests. This section outlines the process for stakeholder recruitment.

Strategy

- Develop application for stakeholder recruitment.

- Advertise LaneACT recruitment through the following sources:
  - Email announcements
  - Website posting
  - Display ads in media publications
  - Metro TV calendar
  - Press releases
  - Bus advertisements
  - Flyers

- Follow strategy outlined in Environmental Justice section to ensure recruitment opportunity extends to minority and low-income populations.

REQUIREMENTS FOR REGULAR MEETINGS

The public involvement process must be proactive and provide complete information, timely notice, full public access to key decisions, and the opportunity for early and continuing involvement.

LaneACT will conduct all meetings in accordance with the following minimum requirements:

Public Comment

The public shall be provided opportunities to speak to the merits of proposals before the ACT and to forward their own proposals. Public comment may be taken at any time during the ACT meeting. Copies of all correspondence received prior to the meeting should be available for ACT members and the public at the meeting. The ACT public involvement process shall demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input during the planning and program development process.

Anticipated public comment opportunities may include:

- Access to LaneACT members.
- Public comment period at every LaneACT meeting.
- Public hearings held for special topics, such as the STIP, grant opportunities, and planning efforts.

Meeting Notice

- Advance notice to interested persons and stakeholder groups on ACT mailing list and to news media which have requested notice.
- Notices must include time, place, agenda (principal subjects) and name of person and telephone number (including TTY number) at the public body to contact to make a request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other communication aids.
- Provide an interpreter for hearing-impaired persons with a recommended 48 hour advance notice. If notice is provided less than 48 hours, a good faith effort must be made to obtain interpreter. ORS 192.630(5).
- One week advance notice.
- Notices posted at local public institutions (city hall, library, community center, etc.), when applicable.
- Notice posted on ACT website, along with links to meeting agendas, past meeting minutes, technical materials, and documentation.

Meeting Materials

- For decision items, distribute information to everyone in attendance at the meeting.
- Provide time on the agenda for general public comment.
- Provide an advance agenda one week prior to the meeting, either on the ACT website or through the mail.
- For decision items, provide technical materials and supporting documentation one week prior to the ACT meeting. Materials can be distributed through the ACT website and/or through the mail.
- When applicable, provide copies of all correspondence received prior to the meeting to ACT members and the public attending the meeting.

- Provide materials in alternate format(s) for visually impaired upon request.

Meeting Schedule

- Maintain a regular schedule.

- If regularly scheduled meetings are not possible, the minimum standard is to provide extra public notification by following the preferred method of meeting notification.

Meeting Location

- Meets accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- No meeting may be held in buildings where discrimination (race, sex, age, national origin, color, creed, disability) is practiced. ORS 192.630(3).

- Generally held within the geographic boundaries of the ACT's jurisdiction. Training sessions may be held anywhere.

- Contains adequate seating and facilities to encourage attendance by the general public.

- Easily accessible by public transportation.

Meeting Minutes

- Minutes shall be prepared for all ACT meetings. Minutes must include at least:
  - Members present
  - All motions, proposals, and resolutions proposed and their disposition
  - Results of all votes/decisions. Secret ballots prohibited
  - Substance of all discussion
  - Reference to all documents discussed (confidentiality of records exempt from disclosure may be protected)

- After each ACT meeting the ACT shall prepare and distribute the minutes prior to the next ACT meeting.

- As appropriate to the Area, meeting minutes should be provided in languages other than English.

- Minutes must be preserved for a reasonable time.

- Post minutes from the meeting on the ACT website.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

The responsibilities of the ACT do not include work permitted in an executive session (ORS 192.660).

CONTROL OF MEETINGS

- The presiding officer has inherent authority to keep order at meetings—can "reasonably" regulate the use of cameras and tape recorders.

- No smoking is permitted at any meeting of the ACT.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, and PPP UPDATE

The LaneACT Bylaws state:

> *"LACT will develop a Public Participation Plan. At least once every two years as part of its regular Report, LACT shall review the effectiveness of its public participation efforts.*
>
> *In order to fulfill its advisory role in prioritizing transportation problems and solutions and recommending projects, LACT will involve the public and stakeholders in its decision-making process, as prescribed in its Public Involvement Plan. As LACT considers local, regional and statewide transportation issues, it will provide public information and involves the public in its deliberations. To comply with federal environmental justice requirements, the public involvement process will include a strategy for engaging minority and low-income populations in transportation decision-making.*
>
> *LACT will look for opportunities to engage representatives of key interests as voting members, non-voting members, or invited guests, as appropriate."*

Roles and responsibilities of parties engaged in public involvement activities on behalf of ACT are designated in a joint agreement between ODOT and LCOG.