

Linn County Special/Rural Transportation Program

Public Participation Plan

Public Involvement Framework

Public involvement provides the important opportunity to enhance the quality of transportation planning, programming and project implementation.

Consistent with federal rules and policies, the Oregon Transportation Plan includes the important policy “to involve Oregonians to the fullest practical extent in transportation planning and implementation in order to deliver a transportation system that meets the diverse needs of the state”.

Goal

The public involvement goal of the Linn County Special/Rural Transportation Program, consistent with the Bylaws of the Linn County Transportation Advisory Committee approved by the Linn County Board of Commissioners, is to promote public awareness, information and education regarding transportation needs of Linn County residents and the services available to address them; and to increase public involvement by all resident of Linn County in planning, development and funding decisions related to public transportation.

This goal was included in the Linn County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, noting the strong local commitment to support and encourage public participation beyond state and federal planning requirements.

Objectives

Consistent with, and in support of, the Public Involvement and Consultation Policy of the Oregon Transportation Plan:

- In all phases of decision-making, provide residents early, open, continuous and meaningful opportunity to influence decisions about proposed transportation activities.
- Consult with state and federal agencies, Area Commissions on Transportation, elected officials, local advisory commissions and committees and other stakeholder groups.
- Seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected including traditionally underserved populations.
- Provide on-going communication to state and federal agencies, local governments and the public regarding local, state and federal goals, policies and the implementation of plans.
- Provide all residents, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, income or limited English proficiency equal access to transportation planning and decision-making.

Specific Strategies

To achieve the goals and address the objectives, different strategies and approaches will be used depending on the nature of the planning, development and funding activity. The strategies listed below will evolve over time, be amended and added to; and are not meant to limit the development of creative and timely strategies in the coming years.

- The active involvement of the Linn County Transportation Advisory Committee is a critical element of an effective public involvement effort. As indicated in the Bylaws, the Board of Commissioners has charged members with the responsibility to ensure an informed lay and professional citizen perspective of transportation program administration, quality of service and prioritization of service delivery and service needs. All meetings, of course, are open to the public with times and agendas posted in local newspapers. Public notices are published regarding grant opportunities and allocations.
- Elected officials, and their appointed advisory committee members, from cities in Linn County play a very important role in assessing needs, recommending programs and projects to address the needs, developing and funding local transportation programs and helping coordinate services with other jurisdictions and volunteer-based programs. They are often the first contact point for local residents and play an important role in gathering and sharing information. Specific methods to more directly include these partners, and better coordinate public information and involvement, continue to be developed.
- Regional partners also play an important role in public involvement. This includes the Cascades West Disability Services Advisory Council, the Cascades West Senior Services Advisory Council, the Cascades West RideLine Brokerage Advisory Committee, the Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation, the Linn-Benton Loop Governing Board, the Linn County Department of Health Services, the Linn-Benton Hispanic Advisory Committee and the Linn-Benton Health Equity Alliance. Outreach efforts are also important with the Special Transportation Programs in Benton County and Lincoln County. In addition to meetings, these partners can use their newsletters, mailing lists and websites to share information, to seek information and promote involvement on a variety of transportation topics.
- The senior centers in local communities have direct and very specific daily contact with a large number of people with transportation and human services needs, as well as volunteers who can help address these needs. Printed information can easily be shared at these facilities. Meetings regarding specific topics can be held at the senior centers.
- It is particularly important to reach out to low-income individuals and households and to people who represent them. The assistance of Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments is a particularly good partner in this strategy.

- Volunteer-based groups play a particularly important role in representing and involving traditionally underrepresented populations. This includes the Volunteer Caregivers program.
- The publication of notices in the local newspaper will continue to be an important opportunity to inform residents about grant opportunities, proposed allocation of grant funds and updates to planning documents.