

NWACT

Northwest Oregon Area Commission on Transportation

***Public
Involvement
Plan***

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NWACT Public Involvement Plan

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 The “WHAT”: Key Topics for Public Outreach.....	3
2.1 STIP Development	3
2.2 “Who/What is NWACT?”	3
2.3 Funding Opportunities	4
2.4 Regional and Statewide Transportation Issues	4
3.0 The “WHO”: Target Audiences.....	4
3.1 Relationship of NWACT to Other Organizations and Interests	4
3.2 Target Audiences and Level of Engagement	6
4.0 The “HOW”: Public Involvement Strategies.....	7
4.1 Public Involvement for the STIP	7
4.2 Public Involvement Activities Related to Funding Opportunities.....	9
4.3 Public Involvement Activities to Increase Awareness of the NWACT (Implementing the “Who is the ACT” Message).....	9
4.4 Public Involvement Activities related to Regional Transportation Issues..	10
4.5 Reaching Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Groups	10
4.6 Other Public Outreach Activities	10

1.0 Introduction

The Northwest Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (NWACT) is committed to an open, public involvement process, which allows all citizens and transportation stakeholders the opportunity to participate in transportation decision-making. Our public involvement strategy has four primary 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, and
- To provide a forum for receiving input and feedback from the public

In addressing each of these goals, our plan defines our key topics and messages (the “what”), identifies target audiences (the “who”), and establishes a process for soliciting and receiving input, and involving citizens in the ACT’s work (the “how”).

2.0 The “WHAT”: Key Topics for Public Outreach

The NWACT has four key areas where stakeholder and public outreach are needed:

2.1 STIP Development

A primary function of Area Commissions across the state is to provide for stakeholder and citizen input on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The Oregon Transportation Commission relies heavily on the NWACT to involve stakeholders through STIP development, and to provide a forum for public input and comment on projects proposed in the STIP.

2.2 “Who/What is NWACT?”

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.

2.3 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 providing a forum for regional discussion of funding programs and setting regional priorities for funding investments, the NWACT works closely with ODOT to assist our local agencies in identifying and competing for grants.

2.4 Regional and Statewide Transportation Issues

The NWACT 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 feedback and input received from stakeholders, the NWACT advises the Oregon Transportation Commission on policies and programs affecting our area.

3.0 The “WHO”: Target Audiences

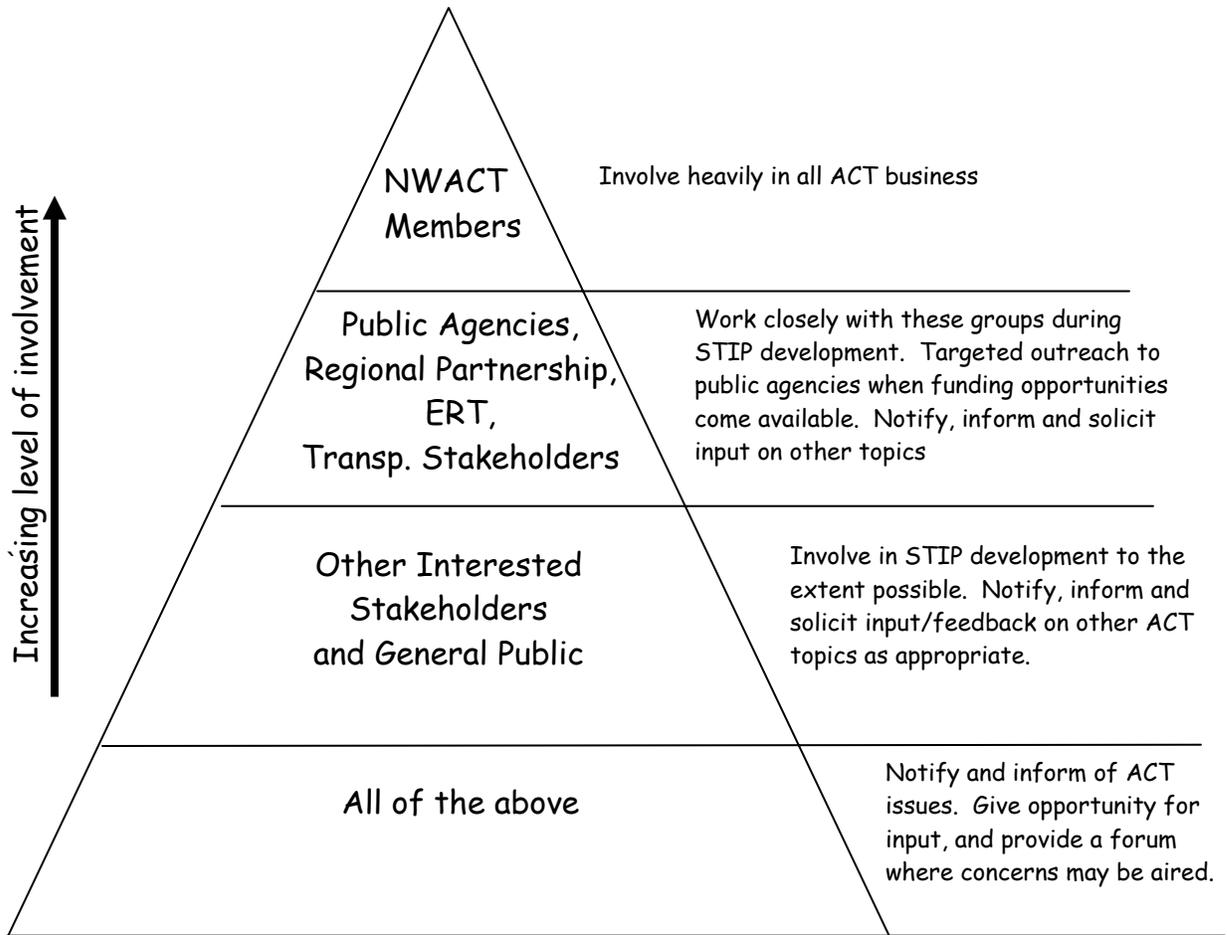
3.1 Relationship of NWACT to Other Organizations and Interests

The NWACT has many community allies in the form of other established organizations and civic groups. Effective communication between the NWACT 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. The following chart depicts the NWACT's relationship to several key organizations, however it should be noted that many other organizations exist which will require periodic outreach.

3.2 Target Audiences and Level of Engagement

Our target audiences, and their level of interest and involvement can be defined by a pyramid. At the top are those most vested in regional transportation issues and decisions, such as our own NWACT members. Near the base of the pyramid are those who are peripherally 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 Involvement



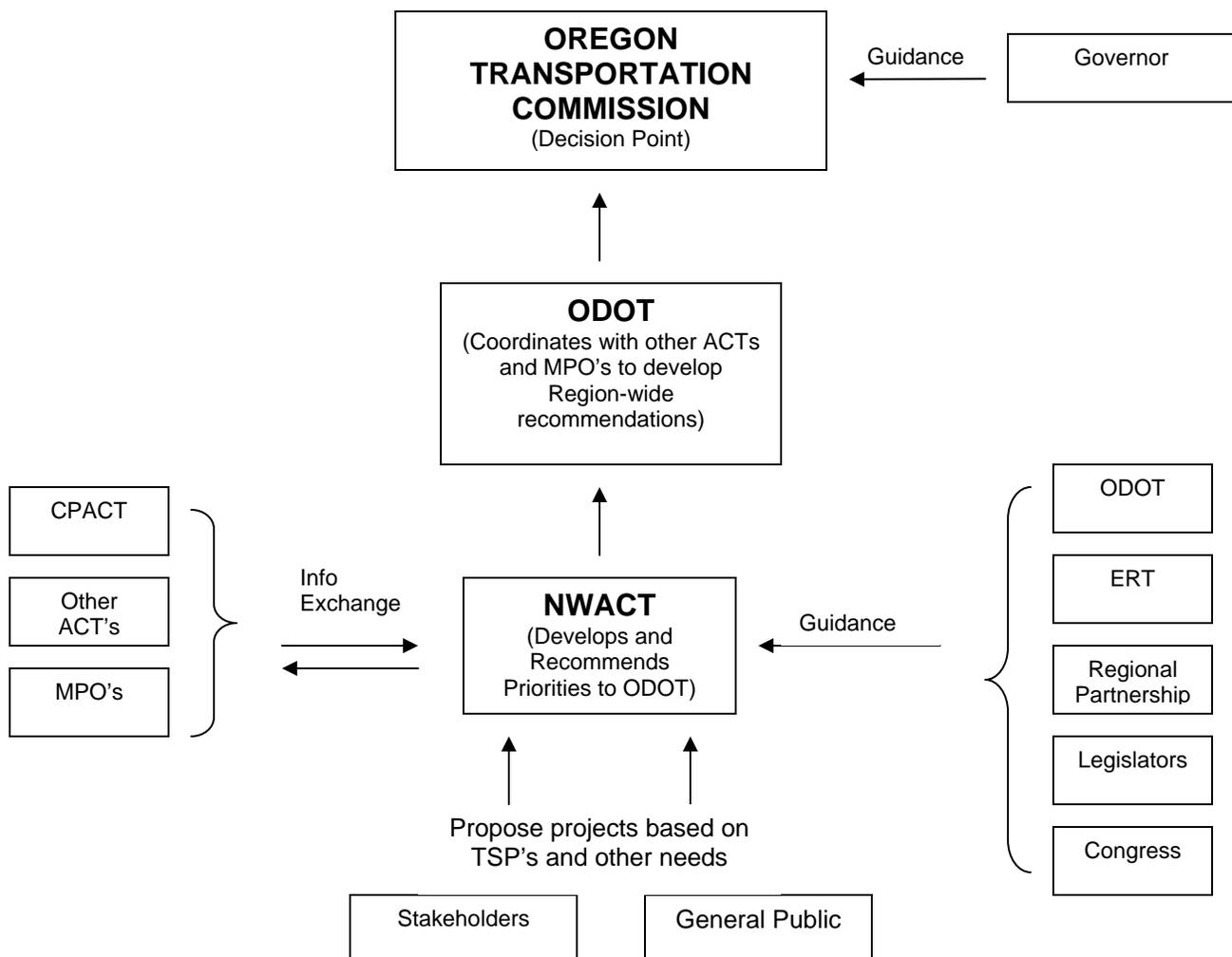
4.0 The “HOW”: Public Involvement Strategies

The NWACT has defined several public involvement strategies, based on the key information to be conveyed and our target audiences as described above.

4.1 Public Involvement for the STIP

Outreach through the development of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) is a primary role of the NWACT. Our public outreach activities parallel ODOT’s schedule for STIP development, which spans a two-year development and approval process. The chart below defines the NWACT’s role in developing recommended project priorities.

NWACT Project Prioritization Process



The following table shows a schedule of NWACT's activities for the FY08 to FY11 STIP.

NWACT FY08-11 STIP Process	
<i>Timeline</i>	<i>NWACT STIP Activities</i>
Spring 2005	Receive and review program goals and anticipated funding levels from OTC
Summer 2005	NWACT returns comments to OTC on program goals NWACT sets Mod criteria NWACT establishes project prioritization committees – needs public notification NWACT sends letters to public agencies and stakeholders describing project prioritization process and requesting participation on subcommittees
Summer/Fall 2005	Subcommittees meet and recommend project priorities to NWACT Priorities published for public review 45 day public comment period NWACT adopts project list. Public hearing to be held at meeting prior to adoption
Winter 2005/2006	ODOT Scoping Process. NWACT assigns members or other representatives to participate on scoping teams
Spring 2006	NWACT sends delegation to All-Area meeting in Region 2 to negotiate funding for modernization projects on the ACT's prioritized list
Summer/Fall 2006	Draft STIP is published by ODOT and reviewed by NWACT members 45 day public comment period NWACT schedules public open houses in Columbia, Washington, Clatsop and Tillamook Counties

NWACT FY08-11 STIP Process	
<i>Timeline</i>	<i>NWACT STIP Activities</i>
Fall 2006	Members present STIP to their own boards/councils NWACT open houses are held, and public comments are collected NWACT holds a public hearing at their regular meeting in late Fall at the close of the 45 day comment period.
Fall/Winter 2006/2007	NWACT reviews public comments, then forwards comments and recommendations for program changes (if any) to OTC
Spring/Summer 2007	NWACT members review the final STIP
Fall/Winter 2007/2008	ACT members notify their boards/councils when final STIP adopted by OTC.

4.2 Public Involvement Activities Related to Funding Opportunities

Because funding opportunities are of significant interest to ACT members and other local agencies, the NWACT serves as a clearinghouse for information on funding programs. Additionally, we sponsor funding workshops which correspond with ODOT’s Transportation Enhancement, Bike/Ped and Scenic Byways solicitation processes.

As part of our work plan, NWACT will be developing a list of potential transportation funding sources and opportunities which are available to local communities.

4.3 Public Involvement Activities to Increase Awareness of the NWACT (Implementing the “Who is the ACT” Message)

To get the word out about NWACT, our mission, members, structure and activities, our work plan includes a task for preparing and distributing a handout describing our organization. We will also develop a “canned” presentation to be made available to members who may wish to make presentations about the ACT to civic groups and local agencies.

4.4 Public Involvement Activities related to Regional Transportation Issues

The NWACT's regular monthly meeting provides an open public forum for discussion of regional transportation issues. In addition, we coordinate with the Northwest Oregon Regional Partnership, Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association, the Governor's Economic Revitalization Team and other organizations to provide regional forums on transportation concerns

4.5 Reaching Minority and Economically Disadvantaged Groups

An ex-officio seat is provided on the NWACT's membership for the Clatsop-Nehalem Tribe.

In addition to assist in targeting low-income populations within our area, we have placed DHS and Senior Centers on our mailing list. As our meeting locations rotate through our four-county area, we seek opportunities to hold our meetings at senior centers, community centers, and other locations which are both centrally located and accessible to all citizens.

To broaden and diversify our target audience, the following organizations have been added to our mailing list:

- CARE (Tillamook Co.)
- Lower Columbia Hispanic Council
- Centro Culturale (Wash. Co.)
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Tillamook (large Hispanic membership)
- Commission on Children and Families
- Hispanic Advisory Council
- Station KTIL Radio (evening program broadcast in Spanish)

4.6 Other Public Outreach Activities

For general public outreach, NWACT maintains a website and publishes a newsletter quarterly.