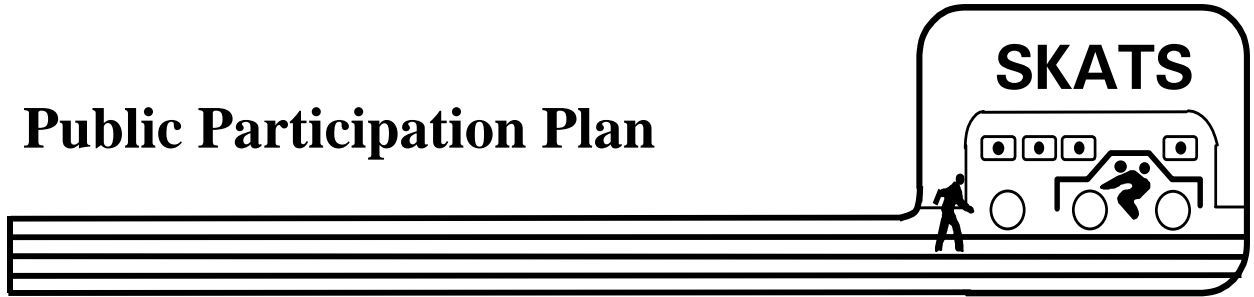


Public Participation Plan



For the Regional Transportation Planning Process
in the Salem-Keizer Urban Area

Adopted by the SKATS Policy Committee
September 26, 2006

prepared by:

Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study

administered by:

Mid-Willamette Valley
Council of Governments
105 High Street SE
Salem, Oregon 97301
(503) 588-6177

Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS)

The Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated by the Governor to develop and implement a coordinated, comprehensive and continuing planning process that addresses issues related to the transportation systems of regional significance in the urban area.

SKATS is governed by a policy committee made up of elected officials from the jurisdictions within our region (the cities of Salem, Turner and Keizer, and Marion and Polk counties) and representatives of agencies, such as the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD), which are responsible for building and operating our transportation infrastructure. The SKATS Policy Committee provides the region a valuable forum in which to consider the issues, develop coordinated strategies, and recommend prudent investments in our system to solve the transportation challenges we face in the region. Inasmuch as most of the significant improvements to our transportation system require a pooling of many types of federal, state, and local dollars, no single jurisdiction has either the authority or the financial resources to "go it alone." The SKATS Policy Committee provides the means for us to develop the "community of interest" that we must have to coordinate our transportation planning and investments to solve our current and expected problems, and to create a workable system for our future.

SKATS Policy Committee:

Lore Christopher	City of Keizer
Dan Clem	City of Salem
Carly Strauss	City of Turner
Sam Brentano.....	Marion County
Tom Ritchey.....	Polk County
Tim Potter	Oregon Department of Transportation
Lloyd Chapman.....	Salem Area Mass Transit District
Vacant	Salem-Keizer School District

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Acronyms Used in this Document

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AQCD	Air Quality Conformity Determination
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments
CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee
CIP	Capital Improvement Program
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
LTSP	Local Transportation Systems Plan
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
OTP	Oregon Transportation Plan
PC	Policy Committee
PPP	Public Participation Plan
RTSP	Regional Transportation Systems Plan
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SAMTD	Salem Area Mass Transit District
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SKATS	Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Area
TPR	Transportation Planning Rule

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The federal surface transportation acts (the latest being the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users – SAFETEA-LU) require urban areas, through a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), to develop and implement a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process. As the designated MPO for the our community, the Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS) is responsible for the planning of the transportation systems of regional significance, as well as ensuring that the plan conforms with federal requirements, including air quality conformity.

Every four years, SKATS revises the long-term (20-year) Regional Transportation Systems Plan. Every two years, SKATS updates its Transportation Improvement Program, which identifies and schedules the state and federal funding of transportation system improvement projects for the next four years in our area. In addition, along with the Oregon Department of Transportation, local cities and counties, and the Salem-Keizer Transit District, we develop transportation studies involving major issues of regional significance, such as congestion in the Highway 22 Corridor in the urban area and on the Willamette River bridge crossings.

SKATS is governed by a policy committee made up of elected officials from the jurisdictions within our region (the cities of Salem, Turner, and Keizer and Marion and Polk counties) and representatives of agencies (the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Salem-Keizer Transit District) that are responsible for building and operating our transportation infrastructure. The Policy Committee considers recommendations from the SKATS Technical Advisory Committee, made up of jurisdictional staff, agency representatives, and other interested parties.

Purpose of the Public Participation Program

There is an extensive public involvement process associated with each of the major planning, programming, and project decisions made by the SKATS Policy Committee. This **Public Participation Plan** serves as a guide for that process to ensure the ongoing opportunity for broad-based public participation in the development and review of regional transportation plans, programs, and projects. More specifically, we are committed to:

- 1) Informing the community about a range of transportation system and transportation-related urban design issues;
- 2) Identifying and addressing community concerns about transportation and transportation-related issues;
- 3) Providing opportunities for the greater Salem-Keizer community to identify priorities and determine the relative importance of various alternative transportation system improvements and transportation-related land use actions, as well as the relative merits of community travel behavior choices; and
- 4) Meaningfully involving citizens, affected agencies, and other interested parties in planning their regional transportation system.

Consistency with Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)

SAFETEA-LU requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations to develop a Public Participation Plan in consultation with interested parties. To seek public participation about the draft SKATS Public Participation Plan, SKATS mailed a brochure, "*Getting You From Here to There*," to a list of over 200 individuals and groups representing the following parties:

- Businesses
- Elected officials
- Freight shippers
- Government and public agencies, including transportation providers and employees of transportation services
- Individuals: citizens on our "transportation interested" mailing list
- Local media
- Neighborhood association chairs
- Service groups: Latino organization, clubs, service organizations for senior and disabled citizens
- Other groups: Chambers of commerce, land use advocacy groups, bicycle groups, etc.

The brochure contained a description of the regional planning process in context with state and local transportation planning and an invitation to the public to provide comments on the draft Public Participation Plan by mail, phone, or e-mail. Website information was provided so that interested parties could view the plan online. The responses to the mailing were from people who asked to be kept informed about the regional plan or to be kept on the mailing list, or who requested a speaker presentation.

The "*Getting You From Here to There*" brochure and draft Public Participation Plan were posted on the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments website in June 2006. The draft Public Participation Plan was available for public review and comment during a 45-day period from July 31 to September 15, 2006. A public notice of the review and comment period was published in the local newspaper (Statesman Journal), and copies of the draft plan were distributed to libraries, posted on the MWVCOG website, and available at the MWVCOG office.

Both before and during the public review period, SKATS staff discussed the participation plan at meetings of neighborhood associations, the local bicycle transportation alliance, and a local Latino organization (Hispanic Human Services Council). Staff conducted comprehensive phone interviews to solicit opinions on how to best communicate with the public and how to effectively involve the public in the current and future planning process. Staff interviewed a representative of the Oregon freight hauling industry, the director of school transportation, members of environmental organizations, transit union members, and representatives of cycling organizations and disabled citizens' service providers. The information provided through these interviews is incorporated into our Public Participation Plan and will be used to guide our continued outreach efforts during the preparation of the transportation plan.

VISION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

VISION - An environment in which citizens and their representative agencies, organizations, and other interested parties in the Salem-Keizer Transportation Study Area are provided opportunities and encouraged to be active participants in meaningfully shaping plans for their regional transportation system.

GOAL ONE: An open and ongoing public involvement process that ensures full citizen, agency, and interested party participation in, and input into, regional transportation planning.

Objective 1: SKATS planning staff will identify organizations and individuals representing a broad spectrum of community interests and actively seek their participation in transportation planning processes.

Policy 1: SKATS will seek participation and comment from all segments of the public. In accordance with the federal transportation act (the latest being SAFETEA-LU), SKATS will “provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan.”

Policy 2: SKATS will work to identify new stakeholders interested in or affected by the transportation process.

Policy 3: SKATS will work to identify traditionally under-involved populations within the region, including minority, low income, and senior citizen populations.

Policy 4: SKATS shall seek review and recommendations from local governments.

Objective 2: SKATS will seek to improve its public participation program by regularly reviewing this plan and our outreach activities, and by seeking guidance from citizens.

Policy 1: SKATS will regularly query the public and interested parties on the best ways to provide information, increase engagement, and make best use of public input, and will incorporate their recommendations into this participation plan.

Policy 2: SKATS will periodically update this Public Participation Plan. Citizens and other interested parties will have 45 days to review and comment on proposed updates

and significant amendments before these updates and amendments are considered by the Policy Committee for adoption.

Policy 3: If that public review results in major proposed changes, the public will again have 45 days to review and comment on the latest version before it is sent to the Policy Committee for adoption.

GOAL TWO: Full public access and information to key decisions in the regional transportation planning process.

Objective 1: Use the public involvement process to improve transportation plans.

Policy 1: SKATS will encourage citizens to provide new information and articulate priorities.

Policy 2: SKATS will help citizens understand tradeoffs so that they may debate the merits of alternatives.

Policy 3: SKATS will seek public guidance when developing policies, identifying issues and gathering ideas, developing alternatives, setting evaluation criteria, and selecting the best alternative.

Objective 2: For all major transportation planning activities, make clear for the public the process through which decisions are made and the best times to be involved.

Policy 1: SKATS will identify for the public the key decision makers and their process for reaching decisions.

Policy 2: SKATS will promote more justifiable and sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs (regulatory, timing, budget, public input) of all participants, including decision makers.

Policy 3: SKATS will provide information on the funding sources and constraints that influence and determine many transportation decisions.

Policy 4: Early in the planning process, SKATS will provide an estimated timeline of key decision points and maintain an easily accessed planning calendar throughout the planning process.

Policy 5: SKATS will provide a minimum of 30 days for review of and comment on draft planning documents (RTSP and amendments, TIP and major amendments, and recommendations associated with any major regional transportation investment study) prior to their consideration by the Policy Committee for final adoption.

GOAL THREE: Widely disseminated, clear, and timely information distributed to the citizens, affected agencies, and interested parties.

Objective 1: Information will be disseminated and gathered through a variety of media.

Policy 1: Methods and media for exchanging information with citizens should be selected based on ease of access, quality of information conveyance, and citizen convenience.

Policy 2: SKATS will develop and use visualization techniques to assist in communicating to the public.

Policy 3: SKATS shall use the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments web page, and specialized web pages as necessary, to publish and make available its plans and studies and to inform the public of opportunities to participate.

Policy 4: SKATS will encourage interested citizens and groups to use their own media outlets for further public outreach.

Objective 2: Transportation planning information will be conveyed in language and in a context that is understandable to the lay citizen.

Policy 1: Acronyms and abbreviations, while convenient shorthand for planners, will be kept to a minimum in information prepared for the public.

Policy 2: SKATS will provide understandable background information to help citizens understand the tiers of transportation planning, including links to resources for further inquiry.

Policy 3: SKATS will define the role of regional planning in identifying regional priorities, obtaining federal funding, and facilitating project sharing between jurisdictions.

Objective 3: Public outreach activities that support the planning process will be scheduled to provide reasonable time for the public to assimilate complex information, thoughtfully respond, and influence the outcome.

Policy 1: SKATS will make accommodations to schedules and processes as needed and practicable to encourage public participation.

Policy 2: SKATS will broadly publicize opportunities for public participation.

GOAL FOUR: Timely and gracious acknowledgement and response to issues, concerns, and comments raised by the public regarding the development and implementation of regional transportation plans, programs, and projects.

Objective 1: Ensure that the comments from citizens, affected agencies, and other interested parties are considered and incorporated into the deliberations regarding proposed plans and programs.

Policy 1: SKATS will maintain a readily available record of comments received and responses made.

Policy 2: SKATS will provide updated summaries of comments from citizens, agencies, and interested parties to SKATS committees at key decision points in the transportation planning process.

Policy 3: SKATS will provide additional opportunities for review and comment by citizens, agencies and interested parties if there are significant differences between the draft and final plans.

GOAL FIVE: Fully integrate public participation with the regional transportation planning process and coordinate with the other public involvement programs undertaken in the region.

Objective 1: Coordinate the SKATS public involvement activities with other similar programs in the community to make best use of staff and resources while minimizing public confusion and time demands.

Policy 1: SKATS will coordinate and, where possible, collaborate with public involvement efforts of other jurisdictions and agencies, particularly those focused on transportation.

Policy 2: SKATS shall acknowledge the public participation work obtained through local transportation planning processes conducted by other jurisdictions and agencies.

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

The specific components identified below are required to be included in the public participation programs for the specified regional transportation planning activities listed. These components were selected from the wide range of possible public participation opportunity options based on the following criteria: 1) the degree to which the public indicated they would be useful; 2) the degree to which a given activity achieved the objectives defined for the Public Participation Plan; and 3) the ability and commitment of the region to carry out the particular component given available and expected resources

If additional activities beyond those specifically required in this Plan are found to be appropriate and affordable during the conduct of a particular public process, they will be integrated into the Public Participation Plan for that planning activity. Consideration will be given to additional techniques and processes to increase and broaden public participation, especially participation by populations that have traditionally been more difficult to reach (such as those with limited English proficiency, low income communities, etc.)

- 1. SKATS Regional Transportation Planning Public Participation Plan (PPP) and Major Amendments; and SKATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), TIP Major Amendments, and TIP Air Quality Conformity Determinations.**
 - a. Review by SKATS Policy Committee (PC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
 - b. Media placements using one or more of the following methods: existing newsletters, press releases, web page, other opportunities.
 - c. Publication notice in appropriate locations of the availability of proposed plans for public review and comment. The minimum review period for the Public Participation Plan and its amendments shall be 45 days. The minimum review period for the Transportation Improvement Program and Major Amendments (i.e., excluding TIP Adjustments and TIP Administrative Amendments), and TIP Air Quality Conformity Determinations shall be 30 days. Copies will be available at SKATS offices, distributed to libraries, and posted on the web.
 - d. Written summary of public comment and staff responses available to Policy Committee for consideration at time of adoption.

- 2. SKATS Regional Transportation Systems Plan (RTSP), Major Updates, and RTSP Air Quality Conformity Determination; and Major Regional Transportation Studies, Refinement Plans, "Deferred" or "Outstanding" Issue Studies and Related Air Quality Conformity Determinations**
 - a. Review by Policy Committee (PC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
 - b. The Policy Committee will select one or more of the following methods of encouraging and soliciting public involvement:

- Establishment of a formal Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) or Citizens Task Force.
 - One or more “open houses.”
 - A series of focused workshops.
 - Focus groups.
 - Public hearing.
- c. Media placements using one or more of the following methods: existing newsletters; press releases; web page; other opportunities.
- d. Informational briefings and written meeting summaries: councils, commissions, chambers, neighborhood groups, etc.
- e. Informational packets/fact sheets; representation at appropriate "events": materials distributed to general public by request, to other agencies for their distribution, posted on the web, and available at scheduled "events."
- f. For those planning issues to be "deferred" and specifically identified as "Outstanding Issues" in the proposed RTSP, the proposed RTSP will include a description of the issue and the reasons for its deferral.
- g. Publication notice in appropriate locations of availability of proposed document for a minimum of 30 days for public review and comment; copies available at SKATS offices, distributed to libraries, and posted on the web.
- h. Written summary of public comment and staff responses available to Policy Committee for consideration at time of adoption.

Resolution 06-7

**Resolution Adopting the Public Participation Plan
for the Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study**

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee of the Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study has been designated by the State of Oregon as the official Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Salem Urban area; and

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee of the Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study is authorized by the Cooperative Agreement dated April 6, 1987, and reaffirmed with the adoption of the SKATS Planning Work Program annually, to act on all administrative matters relating to transportation projects; and

WHEREAS, the development of a Public Participation Plan is required by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU);

WHEREAS, the Public Participation Plan has completed the required 45-day public review and comment period;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE POLICY COMMITTEE
OF THE SALEM-KEIZER AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY:**

THAT the Policy Committee hereby adopts the Public Participation Plan for the Regional Transportation Planning Process.

ADOPTED by the Policy Committee of the Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study on the 26th day September 2006.