



# LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT COMMUNITY OUTREACH FRAMEWORK

**DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**  
**MARCH 26, 2024 – APRIL 9, 2025**

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# PURPOSE AND USE OF FRAMEWORK

## What is the framework?

This Community Outreach Framework (“Framework”) is a foundational guide for how LTD will conduct community engagement around its projects, policies, and programs. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to public involvement for LTD’s work, the Framework is envisioned to better standardize LTD practices and make its engagement efforts more effective. The Framework will be shared with staff, collaborating consultants and community partners as projects are kicked-off and specific engagement plans are developed, allowing a check on the completeness and integrity of future LTD engagement efforts. The framework is intended to build community trust and confidence in LTD’s efforts to serve the community, making LTD a more effective organization for the region.

The Framework is not intended to be rigid, stifling, or restrictive. It is a resource and a guide to improve interactions with communities in the region in pursuit of better regional transportation outcomes, and flexibility will be required by both LTD and its partners to make it work effectively. The Framework is also a living document and will need to be updated and amended regularly, with both community input and LTD’s own analysis of what works well and what does not, to foster continuous improvement.

The Framework was developed in large part through the work of the Community Steering Council (CSC), an ad-hoc committee created specifically for this purpose. LTD’s hope is that the CSC will remain active in shaping how LTD interacts with the community, and that this Framework will be a successful component in how LTD resets and reinvigorates its community relationships. Moreover, the challenges facing LTD with respect to community relationships are similar to those faced by public transit agencies around the country. If successful, LTD hopes that this groundbreaking model for Lane County could also prove to be a model for the nation and beyond.

## Why is this needed? Why now?

It is human nature to rely on what has worked well in the past when planning for the future. However, there comes a time when change catches up and what once worked well is no longer working. Any organization should periodically re-examine its policies and procedures, for community relations or any other service, to ensure that it is up to date and maximizes intended benefits.

However, LTD has multiple reasons to reconsider how it interacts with the community at this moment. These include the unique history of LTD with respect to delivering infrastructure, LTD's board structure, and how LTD is funded.

### Infrastructure History

As a pioneer in Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), LTD was hailed and recognized both locally and nationally as an industry leader. When BRT was first introduced as the Emerald Express (EmX) in 2007, the new service was a great success and seemed a harbinger of great things to come. More lines were planned, and it seemed like LTD could be an example of how a smaller city could boost transit ridership and customer satisfaction with cost-effective infrastructure investments.

But as often happens, things did not go exactly as planned. LTD has seen limited success with new BRT routes since that time. Planning times for new routes grew rapidly as LTD sought to expand the system to areas where support for new transit initiatives was more limited. Some members of the community began to feel that LTD was pushing BRT instead of delivering on what the community actually wanted. It also created the perception, deserved or not, that LTD felt they “knew best” with respect to what the community needed. This perception helped diminish overall support for LTD, which inhibited other improvements beyond BRT due to a lack of trust. This Framework is needed to help reset the relationship and re-establish this trust.

### Board Structure

LTD's Board is made up of individuals appointed by the governor, but who are not elected officials. This means that even as they are assigned to a district within the LTD region, Board members do not necessarily have direct accountability to any specific constituency. In theory if they are not serving the needs of their assigned area, or of the larger region, people can complain to the Governor who could remove and replace them. But in practice this rarely happens. This can enable perceptions in the community that the Board does not act in the community's best interest, whether intentionally or not. In fact, there is a perception that the Board has often served as a “rubber stamp” for decisions made by LTD staff. This has contributed to greater distrust of the organization.

Fortunately, this Framework can be part of the solution. The Board can help build community trust in part by playing a stronger role in major decisions for the agency, and demonstrating how those decisions directly relate to the needs of their constituents. This Framework presents an opportunity for the Board to play a larger role in community engagement, and to help LTD establish greater credibility as an organization.

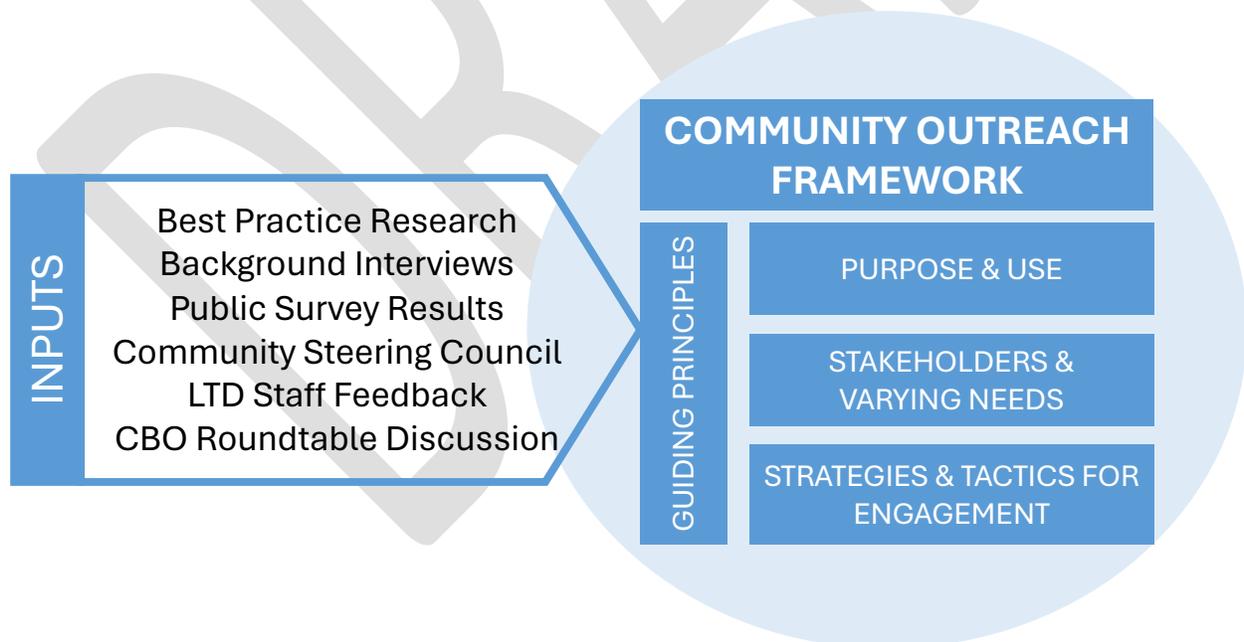
## Funding

LTD's funding relies heavily on local employer payroll taxes. This has created a recurring issue because the business community feels strongly that because they fund transit, they should have a bigger say in LTD decisions. They also want to clearly understand what economic/financial return they get in exchange for their contribution. The business community represents a potential stakeholder that could be mobilized in favor of LTD initiatives, but only if they are brought into decision-making in a more powerful way.

Similarly, LTD's current ridership is made up of a large portion of students (over 30 percent) and they are not necessarily a group that is hugely active in LTD's planning. The University of Oregon sees itself as a major client of LTD because of the student and employee passes that they purchase in bulk that are also a significant funding source for LTD operations. Given the size of its investment, the University wants more of a say in LTD activities, especially when it comes to service planning decisions.

Fortunately, the University and the Business Community each represent another potential stakeholder that could be mobilized in favor of LTD initiatives. This Framework has been designed in part to foster co-creation between LTD and its stakeholders.

## How did we develop this?



This Framework has been developed over the course of thirteen months, beginning in March 2023.

- The project team first conducted research and a literature review on best and emerging practices around public engagement, and reviewed public-facing LTD communication documents.
- The team then conducted confidential interviews with a select group of external stakeholders to get additional background information that could not necessarily be found in a review of documents.
- The team then worked to stand up a brand-new Community Steering Council, including what the purpose, structure, authority, and composition of the CSC should be. An emphasis was placed on ensuring the CSC was representative of both riders and non-riders, and that CSC members would get a stipend in exchange for their participation on the CSC. LTD put out a call for applicants using an extensive marketing campaign that was open for six weeks beginning in June of 2023 and received over 70 applications. 20 individuals were eventually selected, and the CSC convened six times for two hours each between September to December of 2023.
- LTD also deployed a Communication and Engagement survey to the general public between September and October 2023. The survey sought input from LTD riders of all services, as well as other LTD stakeholders. The purpose of the survey was to inform the development of the Framework and help LTD understand how its constituents and customers preferred to be engaged. The survey was available digitally and in print, and was offered in English and Spanish. LTD offered a raffle to win a \$100 gift card to those that completed surveys. LTD also conducted a robust marketing campaign to spread awareness about the survey, including e-blasts, newsletter posts, station signage, targeted postcards, UMO app notifications, distributing at transit centers and on board services, and organic social media posts. The results of the survey were discussed with the CSC and are also included in this Framework.
- LTD also convened a Roundtable Discussion with leaders of Community-Based-Organizations, in order to ensure that perspectives from low income, minority, and differently-abled populations were considered. LTD relied on CSC members for help connecting them to specific CBOs. A half day roundtable discussion was hosted in March.
- Finally, the project team met with LTD executives and the marketing team to discuss the draft Framework, and get staff input and perspectives on what implementation would look like.

## How should this be used?

The Framework is designed with three characteristics that are intended to make it an effective tool for many years to come and shape how it should be used. These are that the framework is a living document, community driven, and inherently flexible. These concepts are described in detail below.

## A Living Document

Until it is employed in real life, The Framework is a theoretical document. Undoubtedly experiences will provoke new ideas and potential changes. The Framework is not designed to be set in stone and instead should be considered a living document that is regularly updated based on those experiences. LTD will periodically make major changes to the Framework based on trial and error but will also make smaller changes on a regular basis as warranted.

## Community Driven

The Framework should be used as a community-driven document. It was intended from the beginning to be developed by the community and for the community. As the process described above shows, we used community input throughout the process, most intensely with the CSC. The community-driven nature of the document also means that community input into the Framework does not end with its publication. LTD will endeavor to consistently pursue feedback on community engagement to ensure that the community will continue to drive improvements in how engagement is conducted.

## Inherently Flexible

The Framework should be used in a flexible rather than rigid manner. It is not a strict set of rules, but rather a general set of guidelines intended to assist in community engagement. The community can and should hold LTD responsible for adhering to the principles in the Framework, however, LTD can and should have the flexibility to diverge from the framework as specific cases may warrant. It is LTD's responsibility to be transparent and communicate effectively about substantial deviations from the Framework. Transparency and effective communication about decisions is a foundational component of making this Framework a success.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles are the fundamental beliefs, guidelines, and standards that LTD commits to upholding throughout the engagement process. By establishing these values, LTD hopes to create common ground, clarify expectations, encourage participation, minimize conflict, promote accountability, foster inclusivity, and improve decision making.

The following guiding principles were developed by the CSC and are amended only based on other input from stakeholders and the general public. The principles are divided into the following engagement categories:

- Style, defined as the approaches LTD uses to engage with the public
- Content, defined as the type of information provided to the public
- Process, defined as the methodology used in public engagement

- Intent, defined as the goals of public engagement

## Style

### Two-Way Dialogue

LTD will foster engagements and commit to communications where both parties, such as LTD and stakeholders, actively participate in a conversation. It involves listening and responding to each other's perspectives and ideas, fostering open and constructive communication. This type of dialogue is more likely to result in outcomes where all parties feel they have been heard and contributed, which is critical for success in the LTD service area.

### Accessible

LTD will make information and meetings easy to understand and attend, especially for people with different abilities or language proficiency. LTD will use plain language and host meetings that are physically and technologically accessible to ensure that everyone can participate. This will ensure that people feel on equal footing with LTD staff.

### Respectful

LTD and the community will be sure to treat one another with courtesy, dignity, and consideration, value and consider diverse perspectives, and maintain a respectful tone during interactions. LTD will also ensure they are making the most of public interactions and demonstrate that they value others' time by scheduling discussions when attendance is likely to be higher and using that time efficiently. Finally, LTD will be culturally sensitive and consider the diverse needs of multiple groups with respect to interactions.

### Active Listening

LTD and the community will both employ active listening, a communication skill where one focuses on understanding and empathizing with the speaker. Active listening means giving full attention, asking clarifying questions, and providing feedback to demonstrate that you genuinely care about what the other person is saying.

## Content

### Data-Driven

LTD and the community will strive to be data-driven in engagement by using timely data and evidence to inform decisions and discussions, and analyzing and sharing that data collectively, enabling both LTD and the community to operate with the same level of information. This can include research on best practices and other helpful context.

## Clarity of Purpose

LTD will maintain a clear and well-defined reason or objective for engaging with stakeholders. This will ensure that the goals of engagement are understood and communicated and align with desired mobility outcomes.

## Fiscally Transparent

LTD and the community will be open and transparent with one another about the financial implications of decisions and choices. This will involve sharing information about budgets, expenses, and costs related to decisions, but also framing choices in terms of their financial tradeoffs.

## Outcome Oriented

LTD engagement will focus on achieving specific results or goals, rather than simply checking a box by completing the task. This orientation emphasizes the importance of measurable outcomes and impacts and enables greater clarity of thinking. It is also intended to move us beyond the idea of completing “projects” and towards the idea of fostering better outcomes continuously.

# Process

## Feedback Loop

LTD will provide a feedback loop as a method of effective engagement with consistent two-way engagement. This means instituting a mechanism for collecting, analyzing, and acting upon feedback from stakeholders, and then sharing how their input was considered and what changes or improvements were made in response.

## Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement

LTD will embrace the concept of continuous improvement, which means an ongoing effort to enhance the quality and effectiveness of engagement practices over time. LTD and the community will learn from past experiences and adjust to improve outcomes over time. This includes using benchmarks and metrics to show progress.

## Adaptable

LTD will work towards adaptable and timely engagement, meaning they will adjust strategies and approaches based on changing circumstances, feedback, or evolving community needs. LTD will endeavor to engage with stakeholders at the right moment, and as soon as feasible/prudent, ensuring that their input can influence decisions and actions when it matters most. LTD will also employ multi-pronged engagement by using

a variety of methods, tools, and channels to reach and involve different segments of the community effectively.

## Intent

### Meaningful

LTD will approach engagement with the aim of creating a genuine and significant benefit for the community and/or project involved. Meaningful engagement goes beyond token involvement and seeks to produce tangible results. Meaningful engagement requires honesty and transparency, being forthright, candid, and open in communication, providing accurate and timely information, and avoiding deception or confusion, all in the service of building trust.

### Community-First Mentality

A community-first mentality prioritizes the needs and interests of the community above other considerations. It places the well-being of the community at the center of engagement efforts. LTD will prioritize grassroots engagement, meaning they will focus on involving and empowering individuals, such as members of local community groups, to foster bottom-up participation and decision-making. LTD will ensure engagement is inclusive and diverse so that a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences are represented and valued, including those that have been or continue to be challenging to reach, promoting equity and fairness in the process.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT			
STYLE: The approaches LTD uses to engage with the public	CONTENT: The type of information provided to the public	PROCESS: The methodology used in public engagement	INTENT: The goals of public engagement
Two-Way Dialogue	Data-Driven	Feedback Loop	Meaningful
Accessible	Clarity of Purpose	Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement	Community-First Mentality
Respectful	Fiscal Transparency	Adaptable	
Active Listening	Outcome-Oriented		

# LTD'S STAKEHOLDERS

## Who are Lane Transit District's Stakeholders?

When we talk about engaging the public in decision-making, whom do we mean? The public includes anyone who resides, works, visits, has an interest in, or does business in an area potentially affected by LTD's transportation decisions. The public can be made up of individuals, groups, organizations, and partners. At a minimum, understanding the demographics of both Lane County and LTD riders is critical to ensuring that transportation systems (and their related engagement plans) reflect community needs. Information such as age, income, languages spoken at home, disability, and other key demographics can help identify not only who is present but who is missing.

### About Lane County and Lane County Trends

Lane County is located in Oregon's Willamette Valley. The largest cities in the County are Eugene (County Seat), Springfield, Cottage Grove, and Florence. The local economy has shifted from timber and agriculture towards service-oriented industries, including healthcare and social assistance, retail, and educational services. The University of Oregon is a key economic player and growth driver and contributes to a large student population with the county. Both Eugene and Springfield expect their economic bases to grow as the University of Oregon is ramping up as a science business incubator.

As of July 2022, Lane County had a population just under 383,000 and is forecasted to have an average annual growth rate (AAGR) under one percent over the next 50 years, reaching 490,958 in 2070.<sup>1</sup> While Eugene is expected to have an AAGR of .8 percent, smaller cities like Coburg, Creswell, Lowell, Veneta, and Junction City are projected to have AAGRs of over 1 percent.<sup>2</sup> As of 2021, there were over 10,000 employer establishments and a total annual payroll of just over \$6 billion in Lane County.

### About Lane Transit District

Lane Transit District was founded in 1970 under the laws of the State of Oregon that allowed the formation of transit districts as special taxing entities. LTD was empowered by state statute to impose an excise tax on employers to fund local transit, and so payroll-type taxes make up the single greatest source of revenue for LTD. The agency is governed by a seven-member volunteer board of directors, who are appointed by the Governor of Oregon.

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.pdx.edu/population-research/sites/populationresearch.web.wdt.pdx.edu/files/2021-08/Final\\_Report\\_Lane\\_Corrected.pdf](https://www.pdx.edu/population-research/sites/populationresearch.web.wdt.pdx.edu/files/2021-08/Final_Report_Lane_Corrected.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

While the boundaries of LTD fall entirely within Lane County, LTD serves the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area, the incorporated cities of Coburg, Creswell, Cottage Grove, Lowell, Veneta, and Junction City, and the unincorporated area along Highway 126 between Springfield and the McKenzie Bridge Ranger Station.

LTD operates traditional fixed route bus, EmX bus rapid transit, RideSource, and Emergency Ride Home services. LTD also has a role in funding, coordinating, and/or partnering on on-demand, ADA paratransit, non-emergency Medicaid, Pearl Buck Preschool, Shopper Shuttle, Veterans' trips, CarShare, and vanpool services.

## About LTD's Riders

As of 2023, the proportion of LTD's riders on their fixed route service between the ages of 15 and 44 is greater than the general population. The percentage of fixed route riders over the age of 44 is smaller than among the general population. 71 percent of RideSource customers are over 65 years old.

The household income of fixed route riders is below the general Lane County population, with more riders in the lower income categories and fewer riders in the higher income categories. Individuals with annual household incomes less than \$10,000 comprise 28 percent of fixed route riders but are only 6 percent of the Lane County population. 50 percent of RideSource customers' annual household income is \$15,000 or less. When controlling for whether an individual is a student, the proportion of fixed route riders with an income less than \$10,000 is still significantly higher compared to the general population. Over a third of fixed route riders in 2023 are students. About half of the student riders are University of Oregon students. Males make up the largest share of fixed route riders overall but are only 26 percent of RideSource users.

While Lane County is 89 percent Caucasian/white, 60 percent of fixed route riders identify as Caucasian/white. RideSource riders are 89 percent Caucasian/white. 16 percent of fixed route riders claimed Hispanic or Latino descent, whereas they make up only 10 percent of Lane County and only 1.5 percent of RideSource users. Riders identifying as two or more races represent the third largest group of fixed route riders (12 percent), while are only 5 percent at the county level, and 3 percent of RideSource customers.

98 percent of fixed route riders speak English well or very well. Only 39 percent of fixed route riders have a valid driver's license. 42 percent of fixed route riders have a zero-vehicle household. While 91 percent of households in Lane County have a broadband Internet subscription, and 96 percent have a computer, only 78 percent of fixed route riders carry a smartphone with internet access.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 2019 Origin and Destination Study

Over half of RideSource customers use the service weekly. 90 percent never use LTD's fixed-route bus system. 44 percent of RideSource customers require a vehicle with a ramp or lift. 10 percent of fixed-route riders need assistance to use LTD. Of that 10 percent, 35 percent rely on stop announcements, and 27 percent require a lift/ramp. 12 percent of fixed route riders pay their fare using cash. Most riders use a pass of some kind for fare payment.

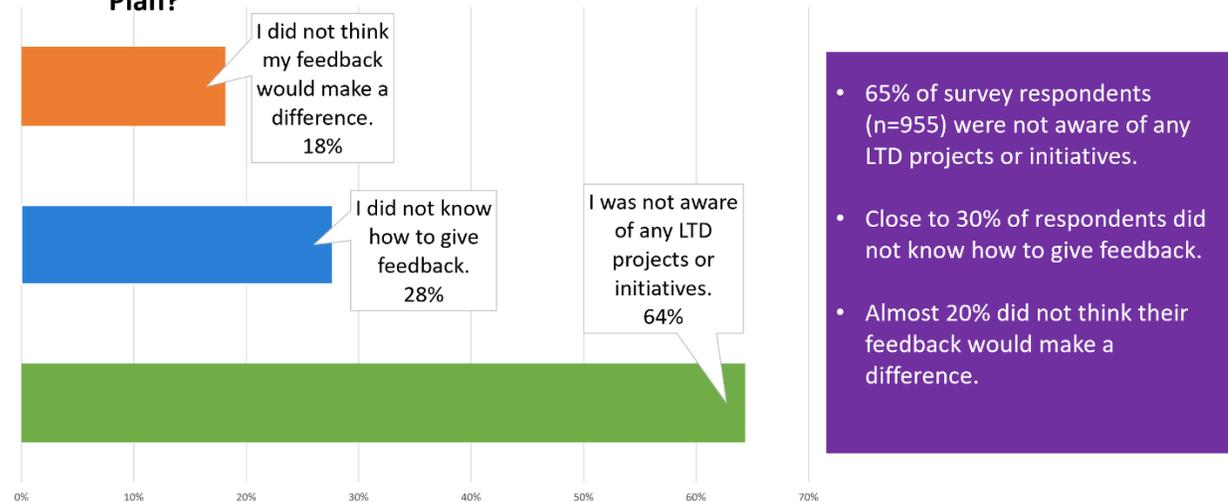
## Communication and Engagement Survey Findings

LTD deployed a Communication and Engagement survey in September 2023. 913 surveys were completed in English and 43 surveys were completed in Spanish.

### Past Experience Giving Feedback

- Close to 60 percent of survey respondents have never given feedback or input on any recent LTD project, such as TransitTomorrow, MovingAhead, or the Strategic Business Plan. A quarter of respondents were not sure or did not know if they have.
- When cross-tabulated based on frequency of ridership, those who rarely ride or never ride were more likely to have given feedback compared to frequent riders.
- When asked what has prevented them from engaging more, 64 percent of survey respondents were not aware of any LTD projects or initiatives. Close to 30 percent did not know how to give feedback, and close to 20 percent did not think their feedback would make a difference.
- When cross-tabulated based on frequency of ridership, those who rarely ride or never ride were more likely to think their feedback would not make a difference, compared to frequent riders.
- Spanish-survey respondents were more likely to believe their feedback would not make a difference (over 20 percent) compared to English-survey respondents (over 10 percent), and they were more likely to not know how to give feedback.

**What has prevented you from engaging more on recent LTD projects or initiatives, such as TransitTomorrow, MovingAhead, or the Strategic Business Plan?**



### Staying Up to Date on LTD Projects or Initiatives

- When asked about what might best help them stay up-to-date on LTD projects or initiatives, survey respondents most preferred reading social media posts, receiving quarterly e-mail newsletters, seeing UMO App push notifications, and informal messaging at stations and on vehicles.
- When looking at Spanish-survey respondents only, while they preferred reading social media posts and receiving quarterly e-mail newsletters, they also preferred receiving text message/SMS notifications compared to English-survey takers.
- When looking at preferences of frequent riders only, frequent riders most prefer seeing UMO Mobility App push notifications, followed by social media posts and quarterly email newsletters.
- Non-riders most prefer quarterly email newsletters, social media posts, and flyers/postcards.

### Preferences Around Engagement Activities

- When asked about which specific engagement activities, respondents most preferred 1) short, easy surveys that ask preferences on desired outcomes, 2) virtual online meeting formats with the ability to provide feedback and interact with staff, 3) flyers or mailers that give critical information; and 4) in-person open house with ability to review information, speak to staff, and provide input.

- When looking at only Spanish-survey respondents, they most preferred receiving flyers or mailers (20 percent), followed by short, easy surveys (17 percent), and in-person open houses (17 percent).

### Staying Involved Through the Duration of an LTD Project or Initiative

- When asked about what would help stay involved through the duration of a project or initiative, survey respondents overwhelmingly selected receiving frequent and consistent updates on progress and why decisions were made. This was the most preferred option across all types of riders.
- However, when looking only at Spanish-survey respondents, respondents most preferred having a knowledgeable and responsive LTD staff member who they can contact if they have a question or comment.

### Improving Convenience

- When asked how LTD can make participating in events and activities more convenient, survey respondents preferred more virtual and online engagement opportunities, followed by hosting meetings and events on weekends.
- When asked what time of day was most preferred for activities, late afternoon was most preferred by both English and Spanish survey respondents, as well as across all rider types.

### Stakeholders & Their Varying Needs

The practice of stakeholder mapping is another important tool that should be conducted prior to beginning any project. Stakeholder mapping is a process used to identify, analyze, and categorize the individuals, groups, organizations that have an interest in or will be affected by a particular project, initiative, or decision. The purpose of stakeholder mapping is to think through how the interests, influence, and needs of various stakeholders may differ and require tailored engagement strategies and tools. Using a stakeholder mapping exercise and then developing an engagement plan in response to the findings can be helpful in building support and collaboration, managing risks and challenges, and enhancing accountability and transparency.

Over the course of several meetings, the Community Steering Council conducted an exercise in stakeholder mapping and identified a list of groups that can be found in the Appendix at A. While it will not be possible for LTD to engage every single group on this list for every single project, plan, or normal course of business, this list serves as a reference for LTD staff (and their consultant teams) to think through the various individuals and groups that make up the fabric of Lane County and should be referred to at the start of any plan or project.

Understanding demographics and conducting stakeholder mapping should be followed by considering the varying needs of those stakeholders. The following step entails considering what targeted outreach or strategy may be needed based on differing needs. In order to tailor outreach strategies to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders, critical questions for staff to consider are:

### PURPOSE

What are we trying to do?

What is the issue, policy, or process being examined?

### ASSUMPTIONS

What assumptions are we bringing into the issue?

### INCLUSION

Who will be impacted and are they being included?

Who is missing? What can LTD do differently to ensure inclusion?

How are we intentionally engaging multiple perspectives?

How will barriers to participation be addressed?<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> These questions are part of Lane County's Equity Lens Toolkit

# STRATEGIES & TACTICS

There are many different potential methods of engaging with LTD stakeholders, each appropriate in various situations depending on the group involved, the number of people involved, and the timeline for any given effort. However, LTD does not have unlimited time or resources and this section is not intended to include every strategy for every situation, nor require that all included strategies be used for every engagement. Instead, this framework offers a discussion of various engagement methods and how and when they should be used and prioritized.

For the purposes of this Framework, we are defining strategies as the high-level overarching approach to any given engagement. The strategies below reflect the work of the CSC, as well as input from numerous stakeholders and survey data. For each strategy, we have identified several potential tactics that could be helpful components of that strategy. We define tactics as the specific actions taken to support and operationalize a strategy. These specific tactics derive largely from conversations with the CSC.

## Work to Build Trust

The most consistent theme that emerged from all efforts related to this work over the last several months has been the need for LTD to do the work to build trust within the community. This sentiment was echoed by almost everyone involved in this work, but it was not necessarily because everyone felt a lack of trust was predominant (though some certainly did). The need to build trust was emphasized largely because people across the region recognize that the most powerful and effective engagement is based on trust between two parties. The greater the reservoir of trust between LTD and the community, the more effective everyone will be in achieving their goals.

## Trust Tactics

- Be there when there is no project or issue. Communities will appreciate consistent communication irrespective of any specific issue, as it indicates the relationships are not transactional. This early engagement will be helpful to learn about community priorities and prepare neighborhoods for future engagement.
- Assign an ambassador. One specific idea is for LTD to assign an ambassador, perhaps geographically for easy access. This person can attend regular neighborhood meetings and create a presence within the community in case people have questions or need information.
- Listen and co-create. The purpose of community engagement is not to just inform communities about projects, but to have a productive two-way dialogue. LTD should show up with the intention of working together to create an outcome and should consistently show how community feedback was incorporated.
- Build on existing relationships. This can mean leaning on the LTD Board and Leadership to show up to address specific concerns, but also partnering with local

organizations to build trust and relationships and pursuing opportunities to be more integrated with communities where possible.

- Meet people where they are. LTD will need to go to where the people, riders, neighbors, employees are for meeting locations. If possible, offer amenities and foster a service-oriented culture during community interactions to encourage sustained engagement. Use a cultural lens for communication to ensure you are literally and figuratively speaking the language of those you wish to engage.

## Engage in Collaborative, Honest, and Transparent Conversations

To be successful in working with the community, LTD will need to enter any community engagement with an orientation towards meaningful conversations. Community engagement can sometimes devolve into a box-checking exercise, where an agency officially meets with everyone they are supposed to meet with to demonstrate engagement, but those meetings are not meaningful. LTD will focus on creating engagements where they promote transparency and collaboration.

### Transparency and Collaboration Tactics

- Don't shy away from challenging conversations or sharing data or sensitive information and address them directly. LTD will not hide information, no matter how much they perceive it might damage their reputation, from the community. Hiding information is a short-term gain for long-term pain. Being transparent maintains trust and helps lead to collaborative solutions.
- Be clear about parameters for input. In any given engagement, LTD should set clear boundaries for the purpose of that effort to focus the conversation. This does not mean LTD should ignore feedback on issues outside the scope of that particular engagement, but rather that they should note them and return back to the issue at hand.
- Be honest and transparent about what is realistic. Allowing a community to brainstorm solutions can be effective, but it is also important to set expectations about what can be accomplished. This helps focus on realistic solutions and builds trust.
- Focus on community collaboration that builds a sense of pride in outcomes. Sustained collaboration can lead to a sense of ownership in whatever results from that effort. LTD will employ this tactic by being open to new ideas and true collaboration.
- Anticipate who may oppose or be critical and include them in early discussions. This can often include those who do not ride the system and may never envision themselves doing so, but their role is still critical. LTD will need to make an extra effort to engage this group early.
- Engage city and government partners to help come up with solutions. Other government partners can be powerful allies and should be part of the engagement process. This can help mobilize communities and strengthen any proposed solution.

## Focus on Riders

LTD must focus on its core mission when it conducts outreach. The goals of what LTD aims to do – such as reducing emissions and congestion - are broad and can affect the larger community. But the core service LTD provides is primarily intended to benefit its riders. The rest of the community must also be included (see above) but present and future riders should be the focus.

### Rider Engagement Tactics

- Use the UMO app as an engagement tool. The UMO app that LTD currently uses has features for community engagement including surveys, polling, and route-based messaging. LTD will use these tools as a strategic method of engaging existing riders.
- Go to the riders (and future riders). It is critical for LTD to meet their riders and potential riders where they are. Some tactics for doing to include intercept surveys, where LTD can go to a pre-existing community meeting, and on-board surveys, where LTD can meet people on the system and record their perspectives.
- Ride the system. LTD should incentivize and encourage all its employees to ride their own system as a method of getting the word out about future initiatives. Even informal interactions can be highly beneficial in engaging riders and fostering greater communication.
- Train front line workers on engagement. Front-line LTD staff, including bus operators, are natural ambassadors to the community. The more they can be trained to engage sensitively and respectfully with riders, the more of an asset they will become for LTD and the community.

### Communicate Clearly What People Need to Hear

It can be tempting to believe that communication has occurred even when it has not. LTD will endeavor to communicate consistently and clearly but will also need to focus on telling people what they need to hear. This means more than just basic information about an initiative but also explaining why things are being done, dealing with misinformation, and educating people about everything LTD does.

### Strategic Communications Tactics

- Offer opportunities to educate constituents on the planning and budget processes. Most people do not understand these processes and then enter into discussions without critical information. Offering quick tutorials on these processes can help create allies who understand the parameters in any given engagement.
- Regularly communicate finances. LTD will make it part of their practice to communicate financial information and budget performance. This will help with transparency but also give people better information with which to engage LTD.

- Talk about why. It is easy for the “why” to get lost in community engagement. All initiatives have a larger purpose, and this should be reiterated and reinforced with every touch point. This helps to keep everyone focused on solutions rather than obstacles.
- Address misinformation quickly. There will always be a tendency for misinformation to permeate engagements. LTD will try to stay ahead of this issue by consistently presenting facts and keeping them simple and straightforward.

## Strategy/Tactic Prioritization

This Framework is intended to be more than a list of great ideas for better community engagement. LTD has limited resources and cannot do everything or be everywhere all at once. Therefore, they will need to prioritize their strategies and tactics to maximize their effectiveness. This prioritization is meant to be suggestive rather than prescriptive, as any given initiative is likely to require different priorities for engagement. However, below is a general recommendation for how to prioritize these efforts.

### *Priority 1 – Engage Government Stakeholders*

The CSC and other stakeholders consistently expressed the view that engaging early and often with other government agencies, especially cities, could drive more positive outcomes for overall LTD engagement. There is a feeling of untapped potential for LTD if they take a more active role in cultivating these relationships, especially when there is no specific project or initiative at stake, so that people in decision-making and leadership roles in their communities can become familiar with the workings of LTD. For many transit agencies, this kind of engagement occurs naturally because local officials are on the board of the agency. As LTD’s board is appointed by the governor, and board members are not necessarily directly responsible to constituents in their communities, LTD staff needs to make an extra effort to foster this critical kind of engagement.

### *Priority 2 – Get Out Ahead of the Story*

The first time that the public or the media hear about an LTD project or initiative should ideally be a positive story. This is inherently challenging given that negative stories are often more compelling. But LTD can counteract this issue by getting information out regularly that helps get ahead of any given issue. For example, putting out specific information and data about budgeting and the budget process, ridership and other performance data, and upcoming initiatives can be a way to reduce surprises, increase transparency, and make it more challenging for people to claim that they had no way of knowing what LTD has been doing. LTD should diligently pursue earned media and push their message in the community long before a project begins.

### *Priority 3 – Be Present with Riders*

One of the best engagement tools can be as simple as riding the system, talking to people, and getting regular feedback. LTD can find ways to incentivize office-based staff and the LTD Board to use the system regularly and standardize how they report back on potential improvements. In addition, LTD should conduct regular rider and employee surveys (employees are great sources of feedback because they are on the system regularly). These surveys should result in specific action items and follow-up that is publicized and demonstrates commitment to rider and employee needs. Finally, LTD can conduct intercept surveys and attend community meetings to reach non-riders and better understand their needs. All these efforts will bring LTD top of mind in the community and demonstrate their commitment to the public.

### *Priority 4 – Engage Potential Opposition*

There is always likely to be opposition to any major initiative in public transit because transit operates in a public sphere and inherently creates change. But opposition can be effectively managed by building and maintaining relationships and trust among those who might be most likely to oppose any given project or initiative. Some of this can be done even before launching a project, as the opposition can be predicted. Giving people advance notice, asking for their genuine feedback and what it would take to get them to support the project, and keeping them in the loop throughout the process can go a long way towards minimizing these challenges

## **MAINTAINING SUPPORT OVER TIME**

This framework presents what we hope is a cohesive set of ideas intended to improve community engagement. However, history demonstrates that even projects with full-throated community support can run up against roadblocks as time passes. Some projects and initiatives can take a long time, and communities, circumstances, or finances can change dramatically during that time. Therefore, it may not be sufficient for LTD to do everything in this framework unless they also take steps to sustain support over time. Suggestions for ways to maintain support are listed below.

### **Establish benchmarks of success and report out regularly.**

When a project or initiative begins, it is critical to establish some consensus around goals upfront. This ensures that success is defined and builds support. LTD will need to build in milestones and benchmarks for any given project or initiative and ensure clarity on them so that the community can follow along. The benchmarks and milestones can change over time if the change and reason for it is also transparent. But having these

benchmarks in place and tied to a specific timeline will help retain the community's confidence of the outcomes and the project's trajectory.

### Foster continuous communication of information that is not necessarily project specific.

This idea is similar to the strategy outlined above of building trust in the community, but in this case it pertains to ensuring support over time. LTD should go to the community and listen and get feedback regularly at intercept style events where transit may not even be on the agenda. This can provide an opportunity to keep people informed and ensure that new community members can learn about ongoing LTD efforts.

### Establish transparency in budgets and financial performance.

Lack of clearness in finances can often undermine trust, while transparency will do the opposite. Even when financial performance is worse than expected, communities will react better when they are fully informed about these challenges and see themselves as partners in understanding how any changes will impact a project and how to adapt if necessary. Support for a project or initiative can be sustained through this golden rule of transparency if it is in place from the very beginning.

### Communicate early and often about the “why” of a project.

Too often in the public sphere, a project drags on and people forget why it was even being pursued in the first place. Keeping the agreed-upon goals front and center in a project can be a useful way to maintain support. However, this also means being flexible about changing the goals as the project evolves, and being transparent about why and how that might be happening.

### Lean on the LTD Board and executive leadership.

The LTD Board can be an excellent resource for maintaining community support, as can the CEO and other executives. Even just making an appearance to address specific concerns, especially when the concerns come from a place of fear and misinformation, can make a big difference in terms of outcomes.

### Update this framework regularly.

This framework must be a living document that changes as LTD employs it throughout Lane County. There will be progress and setbacks, wins and lessons learned, and all of this new data and information should be used to make ongoing changes to this framework. This will ensure that LTD maintains support by continuing to adjust its approach as circumstances and people change.

# APPENDIX

## Stakeholder Mapping Exercise

The public includes anyone who resides, works, visits, has an interest in, or does business in an area potentially affected by LTD's transportation decisions. The public can be made up of individuals, groups, organizations, and partners. This stakeholder mapping exercise includes a general overview of the types of stakeholders LTD works with on projects, programs, and initiatives.

### **Those Directly Impacted by Projects and Plans**

#### **Education-Related:**

Connected Lane County  
Child-Care Providers  
School Districts (Staff and Students) of All Levels  
Early education and After School Programs  
Higher Education (University of Oregon, Lane Community College, others)

#### **Residents by Location:**

Rural Residents  
Suburban Residents  
Urban Residents

#### **Tourism & Economic Development:**

Eugene Airport  
Amtrak  
Shopping Centers (Oakway Shopping Center, Eugene Mall, Shoppes at Gateway, Valley River Center)  
Tourism Industry & Advocacy Groups  
Tourists  
Employers/Businesses (As Financial Stakeholders)  
Employers/Businesses (Linking Employees to Transit)  
Rural Business Owners  
Employees as Users of Transit  
Chambers of Commerce (Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce, Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Creswell,

Cottage Grove, Tri-County Chamber (Junction City))  
Labor Unions  
Lane Workforce Partnership  
Travel Lane County

#### **Popular Destinations**

Venues  
City Club

#### **Public Sector Partners:**

Cities and Counties (City of Eugene, City of Springfield, etc.)  
Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)  
Oregon Transportation Commission  
Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Lane Council of Government (LCOG)  
Safety/Law Enforcement Agencies  
Resiliency/Emergency Management Agencies  
Eugene Youth Advisory Council

#### **Housing & Development:**

Home Builders/Construction  
Different housing tenure (homeowners, short-term, housing insecure, homeless)  
Developers (Market rate, affordable, transit-oriented development)  
Large Property Managers

Cornerstone Community Housing  
**Healthcare and Social Service Providers:**

Healthcare providers and large employers

Healthcare users  
Youth organizations and centers  
Older adult care providers  
Assisted Living Community Associations  
Veterans' Services  
PeaceHealth  
McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center  
Trillium Community Health Plan  
Pearl Buck Center  
ARC of Lane County  
Lane Independent Living Alliance  
AARP  
ShelterCare  
Lane County Housing Collaboration  
Live Health LANE

**Transportation Users & Advocacy:**

Transit riders (Commuters, Daily Riders, Trip-Chainers, Intentional Users, Those Who Can't Drive)  
Drivers  
Those Who Have Never Used Transit  
Those Who No Longer Use Transit  
Environmentalists  
LTD Operators & Staff  
Pedestrian and Active Transportation Groups  
Trade and Professional Groups related to Planning, Engineering, Building, Architecture  
Better Housing Together

Better Eugene Springfield  
Transportation (BEST)

**Diverse and Minority Groups:**

Limited English Proficiency and/or Non-English Monolingual Groups  
Limited Literacy  
Differently-abled  
Tribal Community (Coquille Indian Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians)  
At-Risk Groups (15<sup>th</sup> Night, Looking Glass, United Way of Lane County, 410 Garfield Safe Sleep)  
Immigrants  
Minority Ethnic Groups (Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad, Eugene Springfield NAACP, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon)  
Women and Families

**Community Groups:**

Faith Leaders and Religious Groups  
Neighborhood Organizations (23 Neighborhood Associations of Eugene)  
Park & Recreation Districts and Centers (River Road Park, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, Eugene Rec)

## Community Steering Council Membership

Amber Kelel\*  
Courtney Griesel  
Daniel Padilla\*  
David Hill  
DJ Andrews  
Jon Belcher  
Jordan Ackemann  
Kaarin Knudson  
Linda Duggan  
\*denotes co-chair

Cami Thompson  
Melinda Preciado  
Michelle Hanks  
Phil Farrington  
Robert Canaga  
Seth Sadofsky  
Shaamahummed Shaik  
Susan Blane  
Tab Davis

## Background Interviewees

Carl Yeh  
Crystal Polling  
Deleesa Meashintubby  
Greg Evants  
Jenny Ulum  
Marc Schlossberg  
Matt Roberts  
Mike Eyster  
Rob Zako

## Community-Based Organization Roundtable Discussion

15<sup>th</sup> Night  
AARP  
ARC of Lane County  
Equity and Community Consortium for Eugene  
Eugene Springfield NAACP  
Lane County Equity Program  
Lane Independent Living Alliance (LILA)  
Pearl Buck Center  
United Way of Lane County