



Policy: Public Participation Program

Issuing Department: Executive/Transit Operations/Planning/Division of Strategic Planning

Effective Date: January 9, 2014

Approved By:



John M. Lewis, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all Officers, Employees, and Agents of LYNX.

DEFINITIONS

Agency: The Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority d.b.a. LYNX.

Custodian: The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designee. Designee for the purposes of this policy shall be the named interim or acting Chief Executive Officer in the event that the permanent CEO is not available for an extended period of time.

Coordinator: An employee of the Authority designated by the CEO, in coordination with the Strategic Planning Division and Government Affairs Department, whose responsibilities include maintaining a Public Participation Program that meets the Federal Transit Administration's requirements.

Public Participation: Activities and literature whose purpose is to convey agency ideas and projects in an effort to solicit public (governmental, private, individual, and special interest) input.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): A federally required planning body responsible for transportation planning and project selection in its region. METROPLAN ORLANDO serves as the MPO and is the transportation planning partner for Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties – LYNX' primary service area.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of LYNX to proactively inform and involve the Central Florida public in the planning and implementation of LYNX' new services, routing adjustments, passenger fare adjustments, new facility construction and other capital projects, and planning activities in accordance with Federal and State regulations.



Public participation activities shall take place with all customer groups in a number of forums, including the riding public, non-riding public, member jurisdictions (city and county government), private sector partners, and State and Federal agencies.

With its authority to serve the Central Florida region with a full array of mobility options, LYNX maintains a program to proactively inform the public and afford public participation in the early development and implementation stage of LYNX services. It is the intent of LYNX to ensure its actions are reasonable, non-capricious, and considerate of public comment in its mission to provide mobility services for the welfare and convenience of the residents and visitors in the LYNX service area.

LYNX implements its Public Participation Program by utilizing a continuous communication program and various outreach techniques appropriate to the proposed action to be taken and the public to be affected. The LYNX Chief Executive Office or designee has the responsibility to:

1. Maintain operating procedures that will be proactive and organize complete information for full public access to key decisions and opportunities for early and continuing participation.
2. Determine reasonable approaches and techniques to provide public information, input, and agency consideration in response to public concerns.
3. Administer a public notice and hearing process for a minimum of the following situations, but not limited to:
 - a. Any fare increase or modifications to LYNX fare structure for LYNX services and fare media.
 - b. Any service reduction impacting more than 25 percent of an individual route's total revenue hours or revenue miles and route eliminations. The exception of this reduction of service threshold will be routes that have existed less than two years or have been introduced as service development or experimental service.
 - c. Any proposed alternatives that are being considered that would in their implementation create a disparate impact or disproportionate burden of plus or minus ten (10) percent.
 - d. Any major capital or planning project, which requires Federal or State funding participation. Public notice and participation may be fulfilled through LYNX' Transit Development Plan (TDP) and/or Budget workshop via the regularly scheduled meeting of the LYNX Board of Directors. Additional involvement will be sought through coordination with the MPO, which conducts a public participation effort during the development of the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and through coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Work Program development.



Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority Policies and Procedures

Staff will summarize and package all public comments received for presentation to the LYNX Board of Directors prior to final action. The Board of Directors shall be allotted, at a minimum, one week to review public comments prior to taking action.

Public access to the LYNX Board of Directors is maintained by providing public notice of every regularly scheduled Board meeting as well as any special meeting at which Board action will take place. The Board affords public comment at all of its meetings and follows the protocol below:

1. Individuals, representatives, and/or groups may provide comments directly to the Board or request to be placed on the Board meeting agenda for presentation to the entire Board during the public comment section of the agenda.
2. Every Board meeting shall reserve a place on the agenda for public comment.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Chief Executive Officer shall utilize the Public Participation Administrative Operating Procedures and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved Title VI Program to implement this policy, which shall be followed under all conditions that pertain to the activities listed. Staff, under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer, is authorized to amend the administrative guidelines from time to time as deemed necessary to implement this policy with the exclusion of required Federal and State statutes and regulations.

Any amendments to the Public Participation Program Policy must be provided to the LYNX Board of Directors for their information at the Board meeting directly following any amendments.



Public Participation Program Operating Procedures

Issuing Department: Transit Operations/Planning/Division of Strategic Planning

Effective Date: January 9, 2014

PROCEDURES

In accordance with the LYNX Public Participation Program Policy, these Administrative Operating Procedures have been developed to ensure proper public input to the development and implementation of LYNX mobility services. There are two types of activities for which procedures are established:

1. Activities that require public participation based on Federal and/or State regulations; and
2. Activities that LYNX desires public participation as part of its overall strategy to provide market driven transportation services.

In executing this policy, LYNX will publish in a newspaper of general circulation in both English and Spanish, a notice of activities that impact LYNX' riding and non-riding customers. Notice will be published at least ten (10) days in advance of the time when the activity is to be implemented. The notice shall include:

1. The proposed activity(ies);
2. Address and business hours whereby information regarding the activity(ies) is available for public review;
3. Availability of opportunities to verbally comment regarding one or more of the activities during the scheduled Board Meeting and/or any special meeting;
4. A period of time in which the public may comment on the proposed activity(ies);
5. A contact address for the submission of written comments related to the activity(ies); and
6. Contact information to arrange special accommodations.

Where appropriate, LYNX will proactively solicit public participation on one or more than one activity so long as there is at least twenty-one (21) days before any one of the activities are to be implemented. Any public request for a hearing or comment on a particular activity will have no bearing on implementation of other activity(ies).

Public comments on LYNX activities will be considered in their entirety and will be packaged for the LYNX Board of Directors and presented by staff at a regularly scheduled LYNX Board of Directors meeting prior to implementation of any action.



Public Hearing Guidelines

Public Hearings to solicit public comment will be automatically held under the following circumstances:

1. When required by Federal or State regulations;
2. When any of the following conditions are met:
 - a. Any modification to fares for LYNX services and/or fare media.
 - b. Any service reduction impacting more than 25 percent of an individual route's total revenue hours or revenue miles and route eliminations. The exception of this reduction of service threshold will be routes that have existed less than two years or have been introduced as service development or experimental service.
 - c. Any proposed service modification that would impact minorities at a greater rate than non-minorities by plus or minus ten (10) percent, in accordance with the disparate and disproportionate impact as defined in the LYNX approved Title VI Program.
3. Once annually to review the Program of Projects.

Public hearings will be subject to the same notice provisions as indicated above. All public comments, written and oral, will be presented to the LYNX Board of Directors at a regularly scheduled meeting before final action on the activity(ies) is(are) taken. Below are specific activities that warrant public involvement for the two types of activities.

Fare Modification – Required Activities:

Fixed-route fare increases are increases in the base system, full adult fare. When the full fare is increased, discount fares, fare media, premium services, and paratransit fares may also be increased at the same time. LYNX staff will evaluate information such as revenue forecasts, expected shortfalls, and fare studies to determine if a fare increase is warranted. Once a fare modification process is initiated, LYNX shall proceed with public notification of the proposed fare change, following Title VI requirements. Once initiated, the following activities will be conducted to solicit input:

1. Prepare notices in the form of press releases in both English and Spanish, and on-board bus cards and flyers for paratransit vehicles in both English and Spanish.
2. Schedule a public hearing(s).
3. Notice of public hearing in accordance with Public Notices Procedures below.
4. Hold public hearing(s) to gain input.

Other Activities Related to Fare Modifications – Not Required:

When deemed appropriate and reasonable, LYNX may also conduct other activities to solicit public comment, including but not limited to:

1. Hold public workshops in communities affected by the fare increase.



2. Make presentations to elected officials and local jurisdictions.
3. Make presentations to business and community groups.
4. Publicize the fare increase through marketing promotions on radio and television stations in both English and Spanish.

Service Changes meeting the 25 percent change or ten (10) percent disparate impact threshold – Required Activities:

Service changes occur when LYNX does the following to an individual route or set of routes:

1. Reduce or increase revenue hours of service by more than 25 percent of an individual route's total revenue hours.
2. Reduces or increase revenue miles of service by more than 25 percent of an individual route's total revenue miles.
3. Modify routes in any way that impacts at least ten (10) percent of minority routes over or under the impact to non-minority routes.
4. Eliminate a route altogether, unless the route is a service development or experimental service or has not been in existence for more than two (2) years.

Public participation is required if any of the above activities impact more than 25 percent of an individual route's total revenue hours and/or total revenue miles, as determined by the Director of Planning in coordination with the Title VI Officer or when a disparate impact of ten (10) percent or more is created by the proposed change. When LYNX deems that one or all of the criteria have been met, the following activities shall occur.

1. Prepare notices in the form of press releases and via on-board bus cards in both English and Spanish.
2. Schedule a public hearing(s).
3. Notice of public hearing in accordance with the public notice procedures listed below.
4. Hold a public hearing(s) to gain input.

Other Activities Related to Service Reductions – Not Required:

When deemed appropriate and reasonable, LYNX may also elect to conduct other activities to solicit public comment, including but not limited to:

1. Hold public workshops in communities affected by the service reduction.
2. Make presentations to elected officials and local jurisdictions.
3. Make presentations to business and community groups.
4. Publicize the service reduction through marketing promotions on radio and television stations in both English and Spanish.



LYNX Program of Projects (Capital Investments) – Required Activity:

Capital investment and/or improvement projects shall be programmed in the annual update of the LYNX Transit Development Plan (TDP), budget workshops, and the MetroPlan Orlando (the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The MPO provides a process for early consultation and public participation to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, private providers of transportation, and other interested parties and local jurisdictions. MetroPlan Orlando presents all key issues to its Transportation Technical Committee, which are comprised of jurisdictional staff, private citizens, and elected officials in the urban area. Public hearings are also held on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the TIP prior to adoption by the MPO. The MPO's public participation activities will be in compliance with MetroPlan Orlando's most current Public Involvement Program (PIP).

The LYNX public participation process in the form of public workshop(s) for capital investments / improvements will be as follows:

1. Once annually, LYNX will develop a Program of Projects (POP) also known as the TDP, proposed to be funded with Federal, State, and local funding.
2. LYNX will publish notice of the POP's availability in a newspaper of general circulation in both English and Spanish. The publication will also solicit public feedback on the POP.
3. The POP will be adopted by the LYNX Board of Directors as part of the TDP, which provides for additional public comment.
4. The POP/TDP shall then be submitted to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for incorporation into the Work Program and the MPO for incorporation into the TIP.
5. The MPO then completes a public involvement process that includes consulting with technical and citizen committees, holding a public hearing, and final adoption by the MPO Board.

Public comments received on the POP/TDP or TIP will be considered by LYNX throughout the adoption process and incorporated into final programs.

Public Notice

When formal public notice is warranted for public hearings, LYNX shall publish notice at least ten (10) days prior to the proposed action. Public notice will be published in newspapers of general circulation and shall be published in English and Spanish in compliance with Executive Order 13166 Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The notice will also be available on the LYNX website for translation into other languages. Translation will be completed as requested for vital documents and public notices. Based on data obtained from ridership surveys, notices will be developed and published in another language when that language is used by a minimum of twenty (20) percent of the riders. Upon request, accommodations will be made for information or notices to be provided in



additional languages other than English or Spanish, as well as other accessible formats in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and LEP provisions. The notice shall include:

1. Purpose of the public hearing.
2. The date, time, and location of the public hearing.
3. Address and business hours whereby information regarding the action can be available for public review.
4. Contact address and period of time which written public comments will be received, and;
 - a. Contact telephone number for the public to gain additional information.
 - b. Contact information for persons needing special accommodations.

Should the hearing be for the purpose of a route reduction, LYNX may opt to assign staff, where appropriate and available, to act as “living alerts” and notify the public of the hearing and to distribute comment cards. This action is optional and is not part of the overall policy and procedure.

After the public hearing(s) and at the conclusion of the public comment period, the CEO shall direct staff to summarize and package all public comments for presentation to the LYNX Board of Directors at least one week prior to the time action is to be taken.

Public hearings conducted by the LYNX Board of Directors shall be at regularly scheduled monthly meetings that are published each year for the following year. Public hearings by staff may be conducted at any time based on the impacts to a particular community or community base. Notice provisions for Public Hearings shall be the same as those above indicated.

Whenever applicable, all public comments received through any of the means listed above will be summarized and presented to the LYNX Board of Directors prior to adoption or implementation of the action taken.

Public Comments:

LYNX solicits public input regarding mobility services, amenities, routing, fare structure, and fare media. In order to maximize the public’s opportunity to comment and become part of the official public record, LYNX has implemented the following public comment procedure:

1. The public comment period will encompass the date of the initial advertisement and be open until 21 days after the date of the initial advertisement.
2. Comments will be afforded:
 - a. Via the LYNX website at www.golynx.com.
 - b. In person at workshop(s) or hearing(s).
 - c. Via comment cards available in both English and Spanish.



- d. To a Customer Service Representative by calling (407) 841-5969 during regular Customer Service business hours or TTY at (407) 423-0787 for our hearing impaired customers.
 - e. Via regular mail or delivery service.
 - f. Through electronic mail.
3. If part of an affected route or a particular service area is served by a population of 20 percent or more that speak a language other than English or Spanish, comment cards will be made available in that language.
4. LYNX staff, under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer, will compile and package all comments to be reviewed by the LYNX Board of Directors no later than one week prior to the LYNX Board of Directors meeting.
5. The public is also afforded the opportunity to comment on all proposed actions taken by the LYNX Board of Directors at their regularly scheduled meeting.

Public Outreach Activities:

LYNX uses various forms of public involvement to tailor the outreach to the specific activity involved. Public outreach activities are designed to increase awareness of LYNX, determine public attitudes regarding the Authority's progress, and to gain public consensus and support for the importance of public transportation to the quality of life in the region. LYNX will seek to maintain a comprehensive and continuous public participation outreach effort to include, but not limited to:

1. Annual Transit Development Plan – Public workshops will be held in all three service counties and held prior to the TDP finalization for major update years to seek public input on the projects proposed for funding. Minor update years shall solicit public input through a newspaper advertisement and at the LYNX Board meetings.
2. Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan – The plan was available for review and comment on the LYNX Customer Service webpage. The public could post comments by clicking the "How can we help you?" field.
3. MPO Coordination – This includes participation by the MPO committees, MPO Board Meetings, and presentations when appropriate to Citizens Advisory Committee. Below is a list of coordination that will occur with the MPO. The list is not exhaustive as additional coordination will occur as needed for other projects, including Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities subrecipient selection.)
 - a. TIP - Annual coordination with MPO.
 - b. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Annual submission of the proposed planning projects to be funded in the UPWP.
 - c. LRTP – Participation and input in to the development of a multi-modal transportation system.



- d. Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) – As the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), LYNX participate in the TDLCB meeting. The TDLCB evaluates the service levels, safety, and other issues of transit operations provided by ACCESS LYNX serving the elderly, people with disabilities, or otherwise disadvantaged citizens in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties. The public is given an opportunity to comment to the TDLCB about public transportation during the meetings.
4. Speaker's Bureau – LYNX key staff members may present to community groups, chambers of commerce, business organizations, elected officials, and neighborhood/community associations. Speakers Bureau presentations may also be requested at large.
5. Information Awareness Program – This includes marketing promotions targeted toward promoting the LYNX image throughout the community to both riding and non-riding customers.
6. Internet/Web Access – The LYNX website is currently accessible providing information on LYNX services, policies, projects, upcoming modifications, job opportunities, and more. The LYNX website includes a Title VI statement and overview, procedures for filing a complaint, and the Title VI complaint form. LYNX staff also responds to all email inquiries.
7. LYNX Committees – The committees established by LYNX assist with obtaining governmental and citizen input on the business of LYNX. Outreach activities through committees are listed below and may also cease when committees are no longer in existence.
 - a. Transit Advisory Committee – Committee comprised of disabled users and their advocates to represent the views of persons with disabilities.
 - b. Regional Working Group – Planning members from funding partners review technical data and provide input to LYNX on transit related issues such as service development and growth management. It also serves as a forum for LYNX staff to become more active with the local transportation development process.
8. Annual Budget – Public workshops in the form of presentations to the LYNX funding partners and the LYNX Board of Directors engage citizens in an interactive process of balancing service needs with budget constraints. The workshops will provide a forum for the public to voice their needs and concerns and gather a better understanding of the LYNX budgeting process. LYNX will publish in a newspaper of general circulation, the regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting at which time the proposed budget will be presented. The public will be given the opportunity at the Board of Directors meeting to comment on the proposed budget.
9. Press Releases – LYNX posts press releases on its website to announce service modifications and upcoming events and outreach activities.
10. Social Media – LYNX uses social media feeds to make announcements regarding service delays, service proposals, and upcoming events and outreach activities.

Public workshops are held in the communities affected by the service modifications that exceed the established threshold and/or fare changes; therefore, if changes affect a minority community notice of the public meeting will be posted on the buses and the meeting should be in close proximity to the



community providing an opportunity for all interested parties to attend. LYNX may also present to community groups in affected areas to reach a greater audience of participants. For all LYNX public meetings relating to service changes that exceed the threshold and fare modifications, public notices are developed in both English and Spanish and posted on all LYNX bus routes, the terminal, and on the website to reach all groups, including minority populations. LYNX conducts public meetings in all three counties in the service area, when feasible. The meetings are geographically located on fixed bus routes, when possible. LYNX also provides transportation to and from the meeting at no charge for any person who would like to attend, but is unable to access the fixed-route bus.

Security:

LYNX takes the safety and security of the public and its employees very seriously. In an effort to circumvent any disruptive or potentially harmful situations, LYNX will procure the services of an off-duty law enforcement officer or have a LYNX safety officer at all public hearings. Law enforcement officers will be uniformed and will be from the law enforcement agency of the jurisdiction in which the hearing(s) is being held. LYNX safety officers will have badges identifying their role and may attend any LYNX hosted meeting throughout the tri-county area.