

APPENDIX D

Environmental Justice

Who is this appendix for?

Appendix D provides AMATS staff with tools to identify and mitigate barriers to public participation when planning outreach.

What is included in this appendix?

The Barriers to Public Involvement table, and on-line links to source documents.

How should this appendix be used?

AMATS staff can use the strategies presented here to ensure fair and equal representation in transportation planning by all Anchorage citizens.

Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency

Federal regulations govern public involvement to ensure that all people have equal access to information and equal opportunities to participate in project planning, regardless of age, sex, race, income or English proficiency. Projects planned for areas with potentially disproportionate numbers of minority or low-income households, or that may cause adverse human health and environmental effects, are governed by additional regulations. Efforts to ensure fair and equal representation are often referred to as “environmental justice.”

Many of the guiding documents suggest that the first step in addressing environmental justice and limited-English proficiency issues in public involvement is a needs study. In addition to identifying potentially affected environmental justice and limited-English proficiency populations, the needs study also identifies potential barriers to participation. The table below offers ways to overcome common barriers to involvement in transportation planning.

Barriers to Public Involvement

Barriers	Strategies
Linguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Translate public meeting/hearing notices, project fact sheets, overview maps, and project contact information. ▪ Provide interpreters at public meetings and events if a need is identified, or upon request. ▪ Offer opportunities for public participation through means other than written communication, such as personal interviews; use of audio or video recording devices to capture oral comments; and use of photographs, 3D models and animations to describe a project and solicit input.
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To reach a broad cross-section of the community, make presentations at local events such as the Alaska State Fair and at Food Bank of Alaska distribution sites, churches, and community council meetings. ▪ Form alliances with existing healthcare, faith-based, and community-based organizations such as churches, neighborhood healthcare centers and social service providers such as Bean’s Café, Catholic Social Services and the United Way of Anchorage.

Barriers	Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up listening posts during high school parent/teacher nights or open houses, or develop a curriculum that encourages students to design a project survey or create a photo essay about their community to spur feedback from parents.
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold meetings in venues that are familiar and comfortable, such as schools, churches and local recreation centers, to help overcome patterns of behavior spurred by fear of government or deportation, or beliefs that their input does not matter. Hold smaller meetings and engage in informal conversations, as opposed to public hearings that require formal commenting. Follow up by demonstrating how input was used by the project team. A verbal response is preferred, as it allows a chance to assure people that their message was heard and explain how it affected the project.
Geographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up listening posts at Laundromats, grocery stores, shopping malls, and other gathering spots to engage the public on their turf, answer questions and solicit feedback. Provide a sign-up sheet to get on the mailing list, and hand out information about the project and comment sheets.
Time commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vary meeting times and schedule input opportunities, such as listening posts, at different times throughout the day. Provide food at meetings to encourage people to attend.

Internet Resources

Primary federal environmental justice source documents

- 1964 Civil Rights Act (<http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/vii.html>)
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12372.html> and <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/FHLaws/EXO12898.cfm>)
- Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/Pubs/eolep.php>)

Limited English Proficiency source documents

- *Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons*, U.S. Department of Transportation, 2005 (www.dotcr.ost.dot.gov/asp/policy.asp)
- *How to Engage Low-Literacy and Limited-English-Proficiency Populations in Transportation Decision-Making*, Federal Highway Administration, 2006 (www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/lowlim/)
- *Limited English Proficiency Plan*, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Civil Rights Office, 2008 (<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/>)