



Council Handbook

This Council Handbook is designed to serve as a resource for members serving and/or interested in serving as volunteer leaders of an ACT council. The role of council leader is central to the success of the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT), and the ACT National Board of Directors extends its thanks and appreciation for your engagement and service. As a volunteer-run organization, your council plays an important role in providing opportunities for ACT members to get involved in the organization, meet and network with other members, grow professionally, and advance our shared goals of improving the quality of life of people, the livability of communities, and economic growth of businesses.

This handbook aims to provide you with a complete overview of the council's role, responsibilities of council leadership, and its relation to the national organization. This is meant to be a living document. If you have questions that are not answered or need additional information, please contact ACT National staff at info@actweb.org or 202-792-5801. We will continue to update this handbook as needed.

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ACT Mission, Vision, and Goals

Mission Statement

The Association for Commuter Transportation is the premier transportation demand management (TDM) organizations for professionals in the field and their employers. ACT strives to get the most out of our transportation system while improving the lives of commuters, increasing the livability of communities, and supporting the economic growth of businesses.

Vision

A Better Journey for Everyone

Goals

1. Create a Strong Community of TDM Professionals
2. Become a Center for Learning & Professional Development
3. Establish ACT as an Originator of Research and Compiler/Disseminator of Information
4. Advance TDM Policy and Support Member Advocacy
5. Develop a Vibrant & Growing Organization

Diversity Statement

As an organization, ACT celebrates our differences, seeks and continues to improve equity, and supports a culture of respect. ACT is committed to a better journey for everyone in our communities, as we strive to improve the quality of life for all people.

ACT Staff

For the most up-to-date list of ACT staff, please visit the [Staff page](#) on the ACT website.

Board of Directors

For the most up-to-date list of ACT's Board of Directors, please visit the [Board of Directors page](#) on the ACT website.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR COUNCILS

Function of the Council

1. Councils are formed to promote the sharing of information among groups of members and to address areas of concern or interest that represent specific disciplines or issues within the association and industry.
2. Councils provide opportunities for members of the association to gather and network.
3. Councils must function as an extension of the national organization and therefore are subject to many of the same guidelines for operating as ACT National.
4. The purpose of councils must be compatible with those of ACT. Any collaborations, joint webinars, events, or related activities with outside organizations must be approved by ACT and the Board of Directors.

Council Formation

1. The Board or the Executive Committee may establish councils to advance the mission of the Association.
2. The Board establishes new councils based on the needs of the organization.
3. A council may be established by a group of ten (10) or more members through a direct petition to the Board. The petition must include a proposed work plan, initial leadership, and the names of the ten members wishing to participate in the new council.
4. The complete petition will be voted on by the Board of Directors at its next scheduled meeting. The proposed chair may be invited to the meeting to speak toward the petition.

Council Operations

1. Council reports shall be required at all in-person Board of Directors Meetings and shall be submitted two weeks in advance of the meeting.
2. Meetings of councils shall be held each year at the International Conference, where a plan of action for the upcoming calendar year should be established. Other meetings may be held in person or by electronic means throughout the year at the discretion of the Council Chair.
3. An agenda for each meeting shall be prepared by the Council Chair prior to the meeting.
4. Minutes of the meeting shall be prepared and sent to ACT National for posting on the ACT website and in the council's *Connect* community.
5. Voting by councils and working groups may be in person, video conference, or electronic mail. All elections, and their results, shall be reported to the Executive Director and the Board.

6. Council Chairs will review their membership lists on a quarterly basis and provide recommended edits to ACT National.
7. Where action by a council represents a change in policy by the association, Executive Committee or Board approval is required.
8. Annual work plans for each council shall be submitted in November for approval at the December Board of Directors meeting.
9. Each council shall maintain on file at ACT a form that outlines the purpose of the council, the current work plan of the council, and the members responsible for implementing that work plan.

Council Leadership

1. Council Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Secretaries shall be elected by the Council membership, and approved by the Board of Directors.
2. The Association President, Secretary, and Executive Director are ex officio, non-voting members of all Councils.
3. Additional leadership positions may be established by the council to ensure completion of the council's work plan.

Council Membership

1. Membership in a council is open to all active members of the Association.
2. ACT staff will provide membership reports monthly or upon request to the Council Chair.

National Council Leadership Meetings

1. The Secretary of the Board of Directors will schedule and host regular Council Leadership Meetings.
2. Council Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Secretaries are asked to participate in all Council Leadership Meetings.
3. All Council members interested in serving in a leadership position are encouraged to participate in Council Leadership Calls.
4. An in-person Council Leadership Meeting is held during the International Conference; participation is encouraged and highly recommended.

ACT National Board of Directors Meetings

1. Council Chairs are invited to attend the in-person meetings of ACT's National Board. These meetings are typically held on the day before ACT's major conferences and events, including the International Conference, TDM Forum, and Spring event; along with a meeting held in January/February at a location to be determined.

Council Activities

At a minimum, each Council is responsible for the following:

1. Developing and submitting to ACT National an annual workplan, including specific activities, timelines, and parties responsible for completing the plan, to be approved by the Board of Directors.
2. Conduct meetings of the Council at least four times annually, with one of the meetings occurring at the International Conference.
3. Submit a quarterly report of council activities to the Board of Directors.
4. Submit member updates, Council news, or other items for ACT publications.
5. Develop and submit by the announced deadline, two sessions focusing on the issues of the Council for the International Conference.
6. Submit issues for action on legislative or regulatory issues to the Public Policy Committee.

SECTION II: COUNCIL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The following information provides you with a brief overview of each of the required leadership positions for ACT's councils, including key responsibilities; and aims to smooth the transition between leaders to help ensure a head start to success. Please note that ACT National staff is available to assist you at any time to answer questions or provide additional guidance and can be reached at info@actweb.org or 202-792-5801.

Council Chair

The Chair shall be the principal executive officer of the chapter and, subject to the authority of the Board, shall supervise and control all the business and affairs of the chapter. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the members and of the Board. The Chair shall abide by and follow the responsibilities of the position outlined within the chapter's bylaws. Council chairs can expect to volunteer approximately 4-6 hours per month, or more if planning events, reports, or other activities that require more time.

Key Responsibilities

1. Lead all meetings of the council, including the meeting at the International Conference.
2. Submit or cause to submit the annual work plan for the council to ACT National no later than the deadline established by the National Board.
3. Set the meeting dates for all council meetings.
4. Serve as the primary liaison between the council and ACT National.
5. Ensure all quarterly reports are submitted by the council to ACT National no later than the deadline established by the National Board.
6. Ensuring that two sessions are developed and hosted at the International Conference.

Passing the Torch

To ensure a smooth transition for the council and the incoming Chair, please consider the following actions.

1. The outgoing Chair should meet with the incoming chair to share information on the responsibilities of the position, status of current work plan and/or the development of new work plan.
2. Ensure all reports due to ACT National have been submitted.

3. Gather all council records and make accessible to the incoming Chair.

Vice Chair

The Vice Chair shall, in the absence of the Chair, fulfill the role and tasks of the Chair. The Vice Chair has the opportunity to lead council activities including event planning, research, member recruitment, and organizing conference sessions. The Vice Chair can expect to volunteer approximately 4-6 hours per month, or more if planning events, reports, or other activities that require more time.

Key Responsibilities

1. Fulfill the key responsibilities of the Chair in their absence.
2. Assist the Chair in agreed upon activities, such as overseeing subcommittees, event planning, and member management.

Passing the Torch

To ensure a smooth transition for the council and the incoming Vice Chair, please consider the following actions.

1. The outgoing vice chair should meet with the incoming vice chair to share information on the responsibilities of the position.
2. Meet with outgoing/incoming chair to ensure a smooth transition.

Secretary

The role of Secretary is essential for good governance and management of the council. The Secretary can expect to volunteer approximately 4-6 hours per month, or more if planning events, reports, or other activities that require more time.

Key Responsibilities

1. Attend and take minutes at all meetings of the council.
2. Making available meeting minutes to all council members and ACT National.
3. Assist Chair with the development of meeting agendas to ensure any items discussed in previous meetings requiring further action are included.
4. Keep and maintain records of the council.

Passing the Torch

To ensure a smooth transition for the council and the incoming Secretary, please consider the following actions.

1. The outgoing secretary should meet with the incoming secretary to share information on the responsibilities of the position.
2. Gather and provide copies of all records and back-up documentation

SECTION III: COMMON COUNCIL COMMITTEES

A council may wish to establish committees to assist with implementation of the council's work plan. Committees are also a great way of providing leadership opportunities for members, increasing the number of individuals invested in the success of the council. The number and type of committees may vary from council to council, but typical committees may include:

Session Development Committee: Leads the efforts of the council in developing and submitting sessions for ACT's conferences and events at the national and local levels.

Membership Committee: Coordinates membership recruitment efforts to increase participation in the council and to ensure the council is reflective of the overall membership.

Nominations Committee: Oversees the nomination process for the recruitment of potential members for council leadership. The committee will gather nominations and either form a complete slate for council approval or develop a ballot for council members to vote and select leaders.

Research Committee: Identifies, develops, and oversees research and data gathering activities of the council.

SECTION IV: COUNCIL WORK PLANS

Annual work plans allow councils to review past successes, develop a shared set of values as a group, plan activities for the upcoming year, and discuss ways to improve any challenges the council may be facing. Achieving goals, planning events and recruiting members to volunteer will be easier if you take some time to outline your expectations and objectives in advance, and establish a plan to accomplish them. A little planning can go a long way to help your chapter stay strong and be successful!

If you recently elected new council leadership, this is also a good time to discuss everyone's interests in serving the council. Here are some questions to help guide your discussion and the development of your work plan.

- Why did you become a council leader?
- What are the focus areas outlined in the council's charter?
- What have been the council's biggest successes? What are the biggest challenges?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the topic of this council? What are some recent successes?
- What could be done to improve the council and overcome these challenges?
- For each project or activity, what is the purpose of the activity? How does it related to the focus areas spelled out in the council's charter? What resources (time/money/people) will the activity require?
- How can the council ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are considered in its work, meetings, membership, and end products?

ACT National provides a template for all councils to use in the development of their annual work plan. This ensures that all councils are working to advance the shared objectives of the association, as well as providing opportunities for each council to develop programming unique to their charter goals and focus areas. Councils should develop their work plans using the council's charter as the guiding, overarching document.

The work plan outlines four primary goals for work plan tasks to fall under. Several tasks are required for all councils to include in their work plan. The outline below lays out potential tasks for your work plan. Required items are marked with an asterisk (*). This list is just a sample of ideas and is not exhaustive of the possibilities for your chapter.

1. Increase Member Value in ACT through Council Activities

- a. Host (XX number) council meetings*
- b. Develop (2 or 3) breakout sessions for the International Conference
- c. Partner with (XXXX) to advance (XXXX)
- d. Develop a pre-conference workshop for the International Conference
- e. Develop and propose a breakout session for the TDM Forum
- f. Identify a facilitated table discussion topic for the Emerging Mobility Summit
- g. Write informational pieces or briefs for inclusion on ACT website
- h. Ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are considered.

2. Support ACT National Activities, Programs, and Advocacy

- a. Develop and host in-person meeting at the International Conference*
- b. Develop a list of prospective members for ACT and conduct outreach to prospects*
- c. Coordinate and host a meeting with employers in (XXXXXXX) to inform them of the benefits of supporting commuter benefits programs
- d. Develop a proposed policy on (XXXX) for the Public Policy Committee
- e. Write an op/ed or letter to the editor regarding council issues

3. Raise Awareness of Council Issues Internally and Externally

- a. Identify and collect data and information to be compiled by the council*
- b. Write (XX) articles for inclusion in Connections Newsletter*
- c. Work with ACT staff to write social media posts for promoting council issues and ideas
- d. Develop a Friday Fact related to the Council

4. Create a Healthy & Robust Chapter

- a. Host (XX) council leadership meetings*
- b. Submit quarterly reports to ACT National*
- c. Develop annual work plan*
- d. Conduct council nominations when required*
- e. Engage council members in the council's community on *Connect*, ACT's online community platform

SECTION V: COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

A primary role for the council is to provide opportunities for member engagement with the Association, especially for members that are unable to travel to ACT's national conferences and meetings. Councils are encouraged to host virtual events, as council membership spans the full geography of the Association. Virtual events, such as webinars and meetings, can provide opportunities to expand knowledge of the council topic, grow membership and engagement in the council, and add value to ACT membership.

Councils should develop content based on the councils' charters, with possible topics including continuing education; conference sessions and workshops; webinars in partnership with ACT National; and public policy review and development (developed policies are to be submitted to the Public Policy Committee for review).

Submit any and all events to ACT National using the [Council Meeting and Webinar Form](#). ACT staff will set up registration, post it on the council's webpage, and offer suggestions on promoting the event. Councils are responsible for encouraging council members to RSVP for the events through the website.

Tips & Advice

- The type and number of events will vary from council to council depending on the size of the council and the interest of members. Survey your members to find out what types of events appeal to them. Feel free to ask ACT staff for assistance with creating and running a survey.
- Select event dates well in advance and start promoting the event early and often.
- Include networking and ensure events provide plenty of opportunity for council members to interact and get to know each other. Use events to strengthen relationships between members; this will pay dividends when looking for new volunteers.
- Councils can work together to provide a broader topic that makes sense to each council.
- When appropriate, a council may find it beneficial to partner with a like-minded organization to co-host an event. When doing so, be sure to take an active role in planning the event to ensure the council and ACT are visible.

Council Activity and Meeting Ideas

- **Expanded ACT Webinars:** ACT hosts monthly webinars, often more. Councils can schedule a virtual meeting after a webinar to bring members together afterwards to discuss thoughts on the topic.
- **Lunch & Learns:** Councils can host 30-45 minute virtual trainings or presentations led by 1-2 people on a specific topic. Short, midday meetings are an easy way to engage members more frequently than through more formal settings or in between quarterly meetings.

Policy Review and Development

- Councils can develop and propose policies related to their specific topic, using their collective expertise on a subject.
- Councils should review policies related to their specific topics and make suggestions.
- Any policy related actions should be submitted to the Public Policy Committee for review, approval, and subsequent action.

SECTION VI: MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

- Produce a council newsletter or periodic e-update to promote council issues, highlight members, and programs.
- Be responsive to council members and seek opportunities to reach out and establish relationships with members. The stronger the relationship the greater the chance individuals will be willing to get involved.
- Welcome all new members with a quick email introduction and let them know about any upcoming meetings.
- Make full use of the council's *Connect* community as a way to communicate with members as well as develop a library of council documents (such as meeting minutes) and topical resources.

Top reasons to become involved in a council:

- Expand your professional network
- Expand your awareness and knowledge of specific TDM issues
- Develop leadership skills outside your regular job
- An opportunity to give back to your industry and pass on knowledge to new professionals

Sample Welcome Note to New Council Members

Welcome to the Association for Commuter Transportation! You and your organization are now members of the premier association for transportation demand management.

You have selected to be a part of the XXXXXXXXXXXX Council. During the year, we focus our efforts on building a strong community of TDM professionals, hosting meetings and opportunities to share best practices.

Our next meeting is scheduled for (XXXXXXXX). I hope you will be able to join us. Information on the meeting can be found on the ACT website.

In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to me at XXXXXXXXXXXX@XXX.XXX or give me a call at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

SECTION IX: COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Conducting Council Elections

1. Council elections are held during even numbered years for two-year terms.
2. Council leaders should proactively encourage members to run for positions on the council to bring in new ideas and increase opportunities for involvement.
3. At the International Conference, councils should form nominating committees of 2-3 members.
4. Leadership nomination forms should be sent to all council members by mid-September and nominations should close no later than September 30.
5. Ballots can be created by ACT staff for electronic distribution to council members.
6. Elections should open by mid-October and close by October 31.
7. Notification of election results should be completed within 14 days of the end of elections. Results will be submitted to the Board of Directors for review and final approval.

Election Management

- Web Ballot: A ballot is created using a web-based form (ie. SurveyMonkey or ElectionsOnline) and an email is sent out to all members eligible to vote with instructions on how to vote online. ACT National has accounts with both SurveyMonkey and ElectionsOnline and can use these systems to support councils. ElectionsOnline would require a fee for the council to use the system based on the number of eligible voters.
- Nominee statements of interest can be made available to council members ahead of the ballot distribution.
- Councils are encouraged to hold elections regardless of the number of candidates per position.

Sample Nomination Form

Are you interested in helping advance the XXXX Council while connecting with other colleagues from across the country? Do you want to take on a position of leadership within TDM? If so, we hope you will consider nominating yourself to serve as a leader of the XXXX Council. Each position serves a two-year term, starting January 1, 20XX through December 31, 20XX.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Years involved in Council: _____

Position seeking:

_____ Chair

_____ Vice Chair

_____ Secretary

Sample Ballot for Voting on Individual Positions

The following individuals have submitted nominations to serve as leaders of the XXXX Council. Please take a moment to review the candidates and submit your ballot.

Chair

_____ Candidate #1 Name, Title, Organization

_____ Candidate #2 Name, Title, Organization

Vice Chair

_____ Candidate #1 Name, Title, Organization

_____ Candidate #2 Name, Title, Organization

Secretary

_____ Candidate #1 Name, Title, Organization

_____ Candidate #2 Name, Title, Organization

Video Meetings

Councils should utilize ACT National’s Zoom video platform for a meeting or event in order to show slides and or individuals presenting. Use of this system is managed by ACT National for all chapters, councils, and committees, and is available upon request and schedule permitting. To request use of this system, please submit your meeting or event information on the [Council Meeting/Events Form](#) in the [Council Leaders Resources](#) page. ACT staff will then set up the meeting or webinar and provide you links to share with the council. Council leaders are welcome to use the ACT National Zoom account for Council Leadership meetings as well. Email edenton@actweb.org for more information.

Council Webpages

ACT National maintains a page for each council on the <https://www.actweb.org> website. To ensure the look and feel of each council page is similar, ACT National maintains these pages and has established the following structure for all council pages and the information that they contain. In addition, be sure to utilize your council’s *Connect* community for conversations and to collect documents for the community library.

Council Leadership

Council Charter

Meeting Schedule (Specific dates if known. If not, please note if the council meets monthly, quarterly, etc.)

Special Events (Information regarding special events or activities that the council is hosting.)

Council Resources (These are stored on the council’s *Connect* community page, and may include: annual work plan, reports, fact sheets, etc.)

ACT National Calendar Event/Meeting Listing

The events calendar on the ACT website is one of the most used resources by site visitors. Please provide information to ACT staff using the [Council Meeting/Events](#) online form as soon as available to ensure it is added to the calendar in a timely fashion. Please remember to inform ACT staff if an event has been cancelled or rescheduled.