



**Tourism Development Council Meeting
Wednesday June 11th, 2025 2:00 - 4:00pm**

Minutes approved 8/13/25

In person and virtual via Zoom - [Recording Link](#)

Members Present: Luke Spencer, Holly Pfortmiller, Mike Quinn, Brian Crow, Katen Patel, Amy Barton, Ryan Tigner, Tessa Koch
Staff Present: Lizzie Keenan, Jim Austin, Annie Bailey Austin, Janice Nilson, Danae Burke Jones
Others Present: Commissioner Martha Schrader

2:16 - 2:18pm **Welcome/Call to Order/Introductions & Declaration of Conflicts** - Luke Spencer, Chair

2:18 - 2:20pm **Approval of Minutes for May 2025** - Danae Burke Jones, Administrative Specialist
Holly motioned to approve minutes from May, seconded by Katen and approved by unanimous vote.

2:20 - 2:45pm **Recap on Staff Planning Day & Update on Organizational Structure Work** - Lizzie Keenan, Executive Director

Lizzie provided an update on organizational structure work and strategic planning. The team has been working with a consultant (Whereabout) to refine roles and responsibilities, including filling vacant positions. Staff held a strategic planning day to develop action plans for the coming year and discuss allocating the four million in carryover funds. The team prioritized three of our five strategic priorities for this funding: thriving economy, environment, and accessibility/inclusivity. Lizzie plans to present detailed project ideas for the four million to the TDC in August so we can begin executing them.

A member asked how detailed do the allocations for the carryover funds need to be? Lizzie clarified that the general allocations have already been approved by the TDC board and the intent in August will be to share project ideas for those funds for and will mostly be looking for the green light to move forward.

Staff also created focused action plans for twelve strategies from across the TDC's 5-year strategic priorities to guide work for the next year. Once Lizzie has the set action plan for next year she will share with TDC and will present and talk through at a future meeting.

A member asked if spending would look similar to last year or will there be a different game plan for marketing spending based on current climate and drop in Canadian visitation. Lizzie responded that the marketing team is on top of it and are addressing the changing market in their campaigns and spending. Annie shared that marketing is on pause in Canada until we see it from a consumer standpoint as a place receptive to the marketing. Marketing's advertising budget is super nimble and able to move around as needed, which has set us up well for things like what is currently happening in the Canadian market.

Luke shared that the Disc Golf World Championships are coming to Estacada in 2027 and asked if anything is being done with that? Jim responded that he has been in touch and the organization had reached out for support while working on their bid and staff responded with a letter of support and non-specified commitment of marketing and promotion. Annie mentioned that this could be a great flow opportunity to encourage visitors from that event into Downtown Estacada and surrounding areas and there may be an opportunity for reaching potential visitors through the events' dedicated newsletters to help with travel preplanning.

A member asked if there is a timeline for getting the new jobs posted? Lizzie responded that the organizational structure work with the consultant should be done by the end of this month. Job descriptions will then be developed and then the county hiring process will begin. Her optimistic hope is that the positions are open by the end of July, and new staff are onboard by the end of September.

Follow-up questions were asked about job roles for the new positions, and if the TDC will be able to see the job descriptions once they are laid out. Lizzie shared that filling these roles is needed as the team is feeling over-capacity across the board. One of the new positions is to fill the vacancy of Ithaca's old position now that she has taken over Lizzie's previous role.



The other job opening would be a non-represented manager-level position which would be directly under the Executive Director and will help with managing staff, signing and approving invoices, creating and guiding strategy for the full team and likely provide research support. The positions will be posted as soon as they are ready, likely at the same time as there are some efficiencies with onboarding two people simultaneously. There were many great candidates for the regional position and Lizzie expects we'll end up with a good pool on these openings as well.

2:45 - 2:54pm Upcoming TDC Schedule + Joint Meeting - Lizzie Keenan, Executive Director

The joint meeting will take place July 23rd and the normal July TDC meeting date will be canceled. The new County Commissioner is now on The Board and this July date is the only date the whole BCC could meet. TDC will potentially hold a 1-hour focused meeting in August to talk about the organizational plan and activation of carryover funds as we need TDC approval to activate the spending as soon as possible because the procurement process for spending funds takes a while. Lizzie will make sure everyone is able to see the materials in advance. The September TDC meeting plan is to do a marketing update to show changes to the website including the new accessibility page and do a deep dive into Datafy advertising.

2:54 - 2:23pm Quarterly Report – Q3 2024/2025 - Lizzie Keenan, Executive Director

The Q3 report covers January through March 2025 and much of what TDC members were sharing last meeting is proving true on the latest reports. April TRT collections data was just sent out and remained down. The average trip duration was 2.4 days with no change over last year at the same time and a slight decline from the previous quarter. Tax collections by area show Mt. Hood was strong over the past fiscal year and only showed a dip in March. This trend is likely from the additional tax that was recently applied to rentals in the unincorporated areas of the county and used for maintaining the STR program. Hotel competitive performance region comparison shows the Mt. Hood region also had increased occupancy and ADR all three months of the quarter year over year.

Visitor trend data shows cluster visitation and changes in what folks are doing when they visit the region. January and February had higher parks and recreation land visitation as this is the cluster winter sports falls into and then March shows a shift to Main Street visitation and a spike in Agritourism which is mainly attributed to Wooden Shoe Tulip Festival attendance. Visitor Spending shows that credit card spending is down 3.2% compared to the same quarter last year. There is more drilling down to find how the lodging numbers apply when visitors are paying at booking verses in person with their card.

Project highlights from Q3 included a project with the development and marketing teams to have a campaign on Travel Zoo that focused on winter visitation. This campaign did really well, and we got great data from it including that viewers were most interested in dining, indoor activities and family fun. The best markets converted were our drive markets and some closer fly markets. The team also leveraging relationships with the Willamette Valley Visitors Association to include a highlight in their newsletter about the Tulip Festival, the colorblind glasses programs, and all the activities to do surrounding the festival. Metric highlights show a very large number of digital impressions and engagement this quarter that can be attributed to our work with our PR Agency.

TDC members made some suggestions for engaging directly with partners including TDC members having business cards with information on Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory and links to the partner's page on the website. These could be handed out when they are in conversation with area businesses who could benefit from tourism services. A suggestion was also made to possibly have a meet and greet day or networking event for new businesses to introduce Clackamas County Tourism as a place to go for promotion.

3:23 - 3:57pm Industry and Program Updates - Staff

Lizzie shared an industry update that Todd Davidson, CEO of Travel Oregon for over 30 years, is retiring at the end of the month but will stay on for up to a year while a search for a new CEO is conducted. Their board is currently working on job description and salary comparison research across the country and are looking to contract a hiring agency to execute the process. This will be an exciting opportunity and a large change for Oregon.



Questions were asked about how closely Mt. Hood Territory works with Travel Oregon and if we see our region marketed on the same scale as other areas such as Bend. Lizzie responded that the closest work we do with them is through the RDMOs. Ithaca runs the regional program and is in touch regularly with their staff and departments. Aaron does some work with their Development Services team and has bought-in to some of their opportunities and co-op programs. Travel Oregon as a full agency has not provided a lot of direct opportunities for DMOs but they are working on opening more of them up in the future. Annie mentioned that through our marketing co-op program our partners and our team are always in the Travel Oregon visitor guide, Things to Do brochure, expanded lodging listings in the state visitor guide and articles and advertising opportunities. Opportunities have also included working with blog writers and journalists that have been sent by Travel Oregon.

Jim shared a legislative update of bills that staff and TDC have been tracking and noted that most bills are dead and didn't make it out of committees.

- HB2171 was referred to Revenue and Jim is anticipating this one will proceed forward.
- HB2977 adds an additional 1% to the State's TLT collections for wildlife. TDC submitted testimony for this bill which has been referred to revenue and Jim is unsure if this will move forward.
- HB3556 is a bill that Luke had provided testimony on. It is currently in Revenue but will likely die there.
- HB3962 was a study bill that took off, which would change the definitions of allowed uses of the tourism portion of local TLT revenues and changes current distribution of TLT funds. This would not directly affect us because we are grandfathered in but are opposed.
- HB2574 refers to the Willamette Falls Locks and is before Ways and Means looking for \$11.4mil to help pay for restoration and reopening the locks. Clackamas County Tourism has made past investments in this project.

Other bills we were tracking (sports, lodging, recreation and agritourism bills) are mostly dead though there may be some new traction on HB 3140 which relates to releasing operators from claims of ordinary negligence from a person participating in recreational activities. Sine die for is expected June 18th.

Lizzie shared that May was National Travel & Tourism week, and the Mt. Hood Region delivered 2500 cookies to 300 tourism businesses in the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region as a thank you to hospitality and front-line staff. Travel Oregon commissioners joined staff in distributing the cookies.

On June 10th Ithaca ran a Tourism 101 program at Alpine Events and provided an overview of what the tourism industry looks like and shared resources available to businesses. Businesses were also able to participate in social media training from Fish Marketing. The event was a half-day training with lunch with ten businesses in attendance and staff are hoping to offer more of these trainings in the future.

Ithaca is also running two in-person training FAMs that take place on the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region's Infinity Loop. The East Loop FAM took place a few weeks ago and the West Loop FAM will cover the Mt. Hood area on June 12th. Both of trainings filled up with 30+ attending people each.

The Mt. Hood Gorge Regional program, along with Eastern Oregon, with support from all the other five Oregon regions advocated to Travel Oregon to increase the funding floor for the regional program. There are inherent built-in limitations for how the region can grow for lodging, but the visitation demand keeps growing. The current floor was \$400,000 year; the region collects around \$330,000 and Travel Oregon makes up the rest of the budget. The proposal asked for \$600,000 as the new floor and Travel Oregon agreed to raise the floor to \$500,000.



3:57 - 4:05pm **TDC Updates** - TDC Members

Luke – This is the first spring they've seen a rise in gross sales since the covid bubble. Not in line with a lot of the industry but will take it.

Holly – Market is down. Abernethy bridge contraction and their own construction is killing them. Down probably 20% year over year. ADR has increased some month and decreased other. Zero walk in bookings.

Katen – Similar sentiments as Holly.

Ryan – Short term rentals are struggling, bookings down, more last-minute bookings. 85-90% of their guests are Oregon residents. Things started tanking April 1st.

Brian – Hopefully the lodging partners are seeing lots of people staying that have been at the Renaissance Fair. Sold out last weekend and likely the upcoming weekend.

Amy – Thinks they have found a funding source for the September 28th Upper Clackamas River clean up where they'll tidy up all the dispersed camp sites at the end of the recreation season. Then on September 7th they'll host a river-float to clean the river at the end of the season. Got the last bit of funding for Stash the Trash program from Metro. Hoping to buy Stash the Trash bags to have at parks all along the river.

Mike – The park will be opening for the summer season on June 14th. Hosted three successful graduation parties. Good summer kick off. Started seeing softening in March, and off from normal pace, but hopeful summer will be nice and people will get outside.

Tessa – In full swing with motorcoach tours ever week. American Farm Bureau is holding a conference in Portland next March and TMK will be hosting them for a tour in mid-March.

Commissioner Schrader – Appreciates the data and information. She is running for National Association of Counties' Second Vice President seat this coming year. Happy to pass along any tourism talking points to the National Association.

4:05pm **Adjourn Public Meeting**