

Tourism Development Council Meeting
Wednesday September 10, 2025 2:04 – 4:01pm

Minutes approved 11/12/25

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

Members Present: Luke Spencer, Holly Pfortmiller, Mike Quinn, Brian Crow, Amy Barton, Tessa Koch, Katen Patel
Staff Present: Lizzie Keenan, Danae Burke Jones, Jim Austin, Janice Nilson, Annie Austin, Casey Knopik, Amber Johnson
Others Present: Sylecia Johnston, Molly Spector

2:04 – 2:08pm **Welcome/Call to Order/Introductions & Declaration of Conflicts** - Luke Spencer, Chair

2:08 – 2:10pm **Approval of Minutes for August 2025**- Danae Burke Jones, Administrative Specialist
Holly moved to approve the minutes from August with a correction made to the date in the header.
Seconded by Luke and approved with six yes and one abstention.

2:10 – 2:54pm **Revised Proposals for County Parks and Accessibility Investments, follow up on Fairgrounds Bleachers and Discussion and Approval of Revised Proposals** -- Lizzie Keenan, Executive Director and Luke Spencer, Chair

At last month's meeting the TDC approved funding for the fairgrounds bleacher project with contingencies awaiting answers to some questions that had been raised. Lizzie reviewed those questions and the subsequent answers provided by the fairgrounds. She noted that the project has not been fully approved by the city yet, but in the process of conversations with the city. A question was asked if the proposed ticket price increase will be across the board and Brian confirmed it would just affect the ticket prices to the rodeo. Brian also provided a timeline updated that they are currently working on the bid process and selecting a contractor and then they'll go to the city for permits. They have already been in communication with the city and are not expecting any hurdles. In response to a question regarding parking capacity and the impact of additional cars Brian responded that 780 vehicles are able to be parked at the schoolgrounds where they run their shuttle from and don't anticipate any issues with parking. Based on the responses to the contingency questions, staff suggestion is the TDC wait to give final approval once the final city approval is in place per the August minutes motion.

The original proposal for investments in Clackamas County Parks included nine prioritized projects. The TDC had asked to see more variety in county parks considered for funding and had also asked staff to connect with North Clackamas Parks and Recreation (NCPR) to see what their needs are. Lizzie had a conversation with NCPR and learned that they have organizational funding challenges right now and have recently laid some staff off and are not ready to take on more projects currently. They are still a few years off from being ready for funding new projects, but Lizzie was able to share about our grant program and talk with them about some of their future project ideas that could potentially tie into tourism goals.

To get a better understanding of who the Clackamas County Parks are serving, Lizzie reviewed visitor data to see who is using the parks on the original proposed funding list and how many visitors are local versus coming from more than 50 miles or more away. She then asked Clackamas County Parks for a few more project ideas at locations that are already pulling in visitors from outside the area, per the TDCs request, and came up with four additional projects for the TDC to consider funding. Those four projects include funding 8-10 new walk-in primitive campsites at Feyrer Park and 5 walk-in primitive campsites at Eagle Fern Park along with trail safety improvements and an ADA viewing platform along the creek at Eagle Fern Park. Discussion included whether the board would like to swap out some of the original projects for the newly proposed ones, or to approve the four new projects in addition to the original nine using some of the carryover balance.

Luke motioned to approve the revised proposal with all 13 County Parks projects, including the nine from last meeting and the additional four presented today for a total of \$959,500. Seconded by Amy and approved by unanimous vote.

Taking into consideration feedback from the TDC, staff reconfigured what is being proposed for the \$200,000 Accessibility Enhancement Program. All programs would be optional for partners and would require some buy-in from partners to access benefits. It is estimated that \$80,000 would be allocated to sponsoring trainings and assessments which would leave \$120,000 for enhancement matching that would be offered.

Sponsored tourism program options for partners would include things like participating in front-line staff training such as Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Project or Kulture City and have access to matched resources related to customer service experience enhancements. Alternatively, the partner could complete a Wheel the World assessment and then have access to matched opportunities for accessibility enhancement needs that are identified in the assessment.

A question was asked how we'll navigate the matching funds if a high number of partners want to participate and use the budget immediately? Lizzie responded that staff have talked about setting a max amount for the match and are still figuring out details. Discussion included if the remaining \$30,000 (approximate) of carryover funds be added into this? Multiple TDC members expressed interest in rolling this in as a line item.

Holly motioned to approve the Accessibility Enhancement Program with the additional carryover funds left over after all the other approvals have gone through. Seconded by Katen and approved by unanimous vote.

2:54 – 3:41pm **Marketing Program Updates**

Annie Austin, Tourism Coordinator | Casey Knopik, Senior Tourism Specialist | Amber Johnson, Senior Tourism Specialist

Annie shared an overview of marketing highlights and some current projects the team is working on including a focus on accessible travel, PR highlights, evolving digital marketing and how data is being used to influence marketing spends.

Accessible Travel is a relatively new initiative for Clackamas County's Office of Tourism that is built on authentic story telling from disabled travelers with lived experience with a goal that more people see themselves in Mt. Hood Territory and feel confident planning a trip and traveling in the region. Casey shared about attending and being inspired by the 2024 Travelability Conference but subsequently saddened that Mt Hood Territory had nothing specific relating to accessible travel. With that in mind he had a goal of getting twelve authentic stories of accessible travel to the region by Dec 25, 2025. Finding writers in this field was very difficult, but through persistence and research Casey was able to make a connection at the Oregon Spinal Injury Connection and ended up being able to meet individuals and invite them to come experience activities in the region and write articles with their experience. So far, we've hosted seven guest authors, most of them based here locally, and Casey highlighted a few of the connections and stories:

- Lilly Longshore from Vancouver is partially blind and uses an electric mobility device. She likes history and food, so we sent her to the Bigfoot Center and to do a few of nature walks. She then took her 'Women In Wheelchairs' group to the Happy Valley food carts and wrote a piece on the accessibility there.
- West Livaudais is the Executive Director of the Oregon Spinal Injury Connection and an avid adaptive mountain biker. We hired a photographer and videographer to capture some footage of him out on the trails in Molalla and captured some incredible footage of him riding his adaptive bike on the trails. He has written some articles on experiences he's had camping and exploring trails with his family.
- Casey met Houston and Katie Vandergriff of Downs & Towns at Travelability and brought them in from Tennessee for some articles. Houston is a photographer with Down Syndrome who travels internationally with his mom Katie who writes stories of their travels to go alongside his photographs.

Seventeen accessible trip ideas have been published so far, with more in the works, which has blown the original goal of twelve out of the water and Casey is now working to update the accessible travel page into categories for easier viewing.

Casey provided an update on the contract with Lawrence PR and shared that the marketing team provides strategy and Lawrence PR executes it. We focus on specific areas and dial in our PR for those areas and it is proving to be a good partnership. A few examples are:

- For the EnChroma glasses at Wooden Shoe Tulip Festival Lawrence PR worked with us to get 17 features across TV and print, featured in all Clackamas County newspapers. The highlight was also picked up by MSN and Newsbreak which resulted in a total of 174,947,234 impressions.
- Lawrence PR helped us push the Sasquatch Festival at Mt. Hood Oregon Resort in April of this year and were able to get us 18 features across TV, radio and print including features before and during the event. Two KOIN features were picked up by Yahoo and ended with 437,564,916 impressions. The event had over 800 people show up which was great for an inaugural shoulder season event.
- There was a large feature about the Oregon wine scene in the 1859 Magazine which just came out and we had three wine partners included.

After the media comes out staff follow up with partners to show them and close that loop. Partners who take advantage of the PR program see good value.

Amber shared about the work that is being done with advertising through our contract with Datafy which uses mobile data to build highly targeted audience segments then delivers them as digital ads. This gives us the ability to connect our digital advertising efforts to end results. With this data we can anonymously track mobile phone users back to the original ad they saw and track attributions.

Amber shared some types of digital ads that Clackamas County's Office of Tourism is currently running and shared how strategy has evolved. Previously we had a broad approach to targeting all of California, Oregon and Washington and starting in 2024, and moving forward, we've switched to a more granular approach focusing on high-value designated marketing areas and tailoring messages to specific markets and audiences.

2024-2025 campaign performance showed our ads are driving new visitors and ad-targeted audiences were 5.68 times more likely to come to destination than those that didn't view any ads which is a very high number. Data also showed a 7% year-over-year increase in total trips and 3% year-over-year increase in visitor days in destination.

For this current year 25/26 we are doubling down on what works by leveraging successes with more targeted, market-specific approach including reinforcing focus on high-potential drive and short-haul fly markets in the current economic climate and consolidating secondary and core drive markets to streamline effort and allocate resources more efficiently. Amber shared the key drive and fly markets that we are trying to market to and why they were selected. Advertising strategy is data driven and agile.

Digital advertising is also used to support responsible tourism and visitor flow, and we have been using geo-fenced ads to target people in identified areas with timely information such as crowd control and safety information.

Molly Spector from Datafy introduced herself and opened to questions. Members asked some clarifying questions about the increases the data was showing in travelers and Annie clarified that the numbers presented showing the increases directly attributed to advertising efforts rather than total visitation. Lodging property members had visitation related questions which Molly and staff answered and offered to set up a time with Molly and Datafy to review general dashboard data rather than just the focused advertising data.

3:41– 3:56pm **Industry and Program Updates – Staff**

Lizzie shared that July numbers came in and were down 5.5% compared to July last year with the biggest hit being the Mt Hood area. Reached out to research partner Symphony to see if they are able dig into that further to see what else they can find and compare it with national data.

October meeting will be canceled as Lizzie will be on vacation and there's nothing urgent to be addressed.

Lizzie shared that Casey won an award for his work in accessibility earlier this year, and Clackamas County just selected him for an annual overall Spirit award and he will be recognized at the BCC meeting tomorrow.

Lizzie, Jim, Sylecia, Katen and Holly attended the Oregon City Business Alliance meeting with Representative Drazen and Representative Meek. Someone asked a question about recreational liability and Representative Meek shared that there is only one insurance provider in Oregon that is offering insurance, and the policy is one million dollars per year with a one-million-dollar deductible. Both representatives said it will be a priority for them in the 2026 short session.

The 3rd Annual Harvest Trail kicks off on October 1st and will be marketed to visitors and locals.

Aaron along with Tom Riggs from County Parks and Emily Iverson from Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm are presenting on a panel for Collaborative Approaches and Creative Solutions to Complicated Problems at the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Summit in Sunriver in November.

3:56 – 4:01pm **TDC Updates -TDC Members**

Holly – Good season, winding down.

Amy – Clackamas River Clean up went awesome with 220 registrants who came out and helped. Don't have numbers on how much trash was collected yet, but it was a safe and fun event.

Tessa – Things are good!

Mike – Just concluded the full-time operations. Currently running weekends through September and starting to switch to winter season.

Katen – Things are great

Luke – Winding down summer season, just doing weekends at the lake. It was a nightmare this summer having access shut down at Timber Park. Hoping to have better access soon and they're getting complaints to their business about the lack of access.

Brian – FOBtoberfest is September 20th & 21st. Adult Prom is 3rd weekend in October and the winter fair this November.

4:01 p.m. **Adjourn Public Meeting**