



Tourism Development Council Meeting
Wednesday, November 12, 2025 2:03 – 3:42pm

Minutes Approved 12/10/25

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

Members Present:

Luke Spencer, Holly Pfortmiller, Mike Quinn, Tessa Koch, Patrick Dawsey, Amy Barton

Staff Present: Lizzie Keenan, Aaron Liersemann, Casey Knopik, Danae Burke Jones

2:03 - 2:05pm Welcome/Call to Order/Introductions & Declaration of Conflicts – Luke Spencer, Chair

2:05 - 2:07pm Approval of Minutes for September 2025 - Danae Burke Jones, Admin Specialist

Holly motioned to approve minutes from September, seconded by Mike and approved unanimously

2:07 - 2:23pm Update on Carry-Over Fund Projects - Lizzie Keenan, Executive Director

Lizzie updated that the marketing team has put together a RFP for the marketing campaign which has been submitted to the county and recently assigned to a staff person. Expecting the RFP will be posted in a few weeks and typically RFPs are open for a month so looking at late winter for a signed contract.

The two grant programs with the Economic Development Department will launch in early 2026 and staff are working on timeline and promotion plan this month. Lizzie asked for two TDC members to volunteer to be on the review committee for this program and expects it will likely a 10-20 hour commitment. Amy and Holly volunteered.

Clackamas County Fairgrounds is still working on the city approval process for their new bleachers. They need to have their plans and bids in place prior to getting final approval, so Brian reached out to Lizzie and asked for a draft letter of commitment which Lizzie provided to help move things along with the process. They are looking at new layouts to add even more seating than originally proposed.

Staff are working on a draft agreement with the Clackamas County Parks Department for the County Parks projects. The Parks Department anticipates it will likely take 3.5 years to complete all 13 projects and that timeline will be shared with the TDC once it is finalized. A member expressed concern that potential budget cuts to the county general fund might cause delays to this process and questioned if the money allocated will go towards the programs approved by the TDC rather than carry over being returned to the general fund since the projects will roll over multiple years. Lizzie answered that no concerns were indicated by the parks department and the funds given will be earmarked for the specific programs.

The Accessibility Enhancement Program will continue to move forward when new staff is hired.

2:23 - 2:38pm Legislative Update - Lizzie Keenan, Executive Director and Luke Spencer, Chair

There will be a legislative Short Session from February 2 - March 9, 2026. The short session is for priority items to move through the State Legislature quickly. Legislators are limited in the number of draft bills they can introduce, so they tend to only introduce bills they feel confident can move forward.

Topics related to the Tourism are likely to come up in the short session including Recreational Immunity which affects many of our recreational partners. The hope is that it does come up in the short session and TDC members are encouraged to submit testimony on this issue if it does, as it would be beneficial to our partners. Local and state lodging tax is also expected to come up in the short session and Jim will keep the

TDC updated and in the loop on all tourism related draft bills as they come up. Holly reminded the board that the tourism tax bill could potentially take up to 60% of tourism dollars and redirect them elsewhere and Luke said to get in touch with him if folks would like to participate and are interested in potentially carpooling down to Salem to testify on any of the tourism related topics during the short session.

2:38 - 2:45pm Partner Engagement Updates - Lizzie Keenan, Executive Director and Danae Burke Jones, Administrative Specialist

A TDC member had recently suggested it would be helpful to have 'TDC member business cards' to hand out when networking with other area businesses. Lizzie made some generic Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory business cards with a QR code that directs to the partner's page of mthoodterritory.com. The partner's page contains information about Mt. Hood Territory programs and offerings along with ways for potential new business partners to engage with staff and programs. These cards will be shared with TDC members to use when engaging in the community.

Danae shared physical new-partner packets that are being mailed out to area businesses that have signed up to have a free listing on mthoodterritory.com. These packets include a welcome letter from Lizzie with reminders of ways to engage with tourism, a copy of the travel planner, emergency preparedness brochures, alternative float guide, car-free travel information, things-to-do map and stickers.

Because much of the work the marketing team is doing is often only seen by visitors that are at least 50 miles away, many of our partners don't experience the marketing materials in the same way and the packets are an effort to connect the dots between the partner and visitor experiences.

2:45 - 3:29pm Industry and Program Updates - Staff

Lizzie shared the most recent TLT reports which show collections remaining down in September and asked for feedback on what TDC members are noticing with the last few weeks with government shutdown.

Holly shared that while September was soft, October was the closest they've come from meeting YOY numbers since April. November nose-dived and is awful so far.

Luke said their retail sales were down in October after being up a bit over the summer.

Mike mentioned that September & October is normally slow for them, however Summer was strong though wedding bookings were down over the summer. Sales are up about 10% heading into the winter.

Patrick said the market is soft. July & August were about on par with last year. September was down a bit, but not much. October was down and saw strong declines across the board. Corporate travel is way down. Because they're an extended stay property, about 50% of their occupancy is from business travelers and local state government travel is currently down.

Amy mentioned they are noticing the government shutdown as well, mostly related to funding and extensions on report due dates because no one is there to receive them. They are participating in the Willamette Week Give Guide and it seems that private giving is still strong.

Tessa shared that they didn't notice a real impact through the first week of October because they had contracted tours through then. Their annual Halloween party was not as busy as previous years, but hard to compare an exact YOY as they've adjusted their retail hours this year.

Lizzie shared that work is being completed on the organizational structure and plans are being shared with staff over the next week. After staff have been updated Lizzie will send out an email to the TDC with more details on the new structure and new jobs being added. Hoping to start hiring for new positions in the next few weeks. The first position to be filled will be the roll that Ithaca vacated when she moved to her new role, followed by hiring for manager position.

Lizzie also updated that the Mt. Hood Territory Strategic Investment Grant Program is open now and closes on December 4th. Jim and Rural Prosperity Partners, who help run the program with us, ran two webinars and had 46 partners signed up and 30 attendees and are hopeful for a robust applicant pool. Jim, Aaron and Lizzie worked together to refresh the program and do some expanded and direct outreach to let folks know about the program. Still looking for a second person to do grant reviews along with Holly. Holly mentioned that the review process has improved and is less time-consuming than in the past and that volunteers can expect a 10-15-hour commitment between training, reviewing and scoring.

Aaron shared that he, along with Tom Riggs from County Parks, attended the Outdoor Recreation Summit in Pendleton as presenters on the Alternative Floats program. 30 people attended their breakout session which saw lots of engagement including lots of questions and much follow up from folks afterwards with additional questions. There were about 125 attendees total at the conference which is mainly geared towards outdoor recreation partners. Oregon State Marine Board came up and thanked Aaron for all the images and videos in our marketing showing folks using PFDs.

Year three of the Harvest Trail wrapped up at the end of October. Numbers were significantly down this year across all 8 participating farms, which is mainly attributed to the weather being great during the week but terrible over the weekends. In the past we had around 125 redemptions and this year saw 85 passports redeemed. Hoping to possibly expand the program next year as one more farm has reached out wanting to join, and Aaron has a few in mind that he wants to reach out to as well.

Casey shared that he attended Travelability conference in Sunriver along with two partners that Mt. Hood Territory provided conference scholarships for. Casey had a goal for having 12 accessible travel stories on the Mt. Hood Territory website in 2025 and currently has surpassed that goal with 29 articles live on the website so far. It was exciting to compare the work Mt Hood Territory is doing beside other DMOs that are doing a good job of accessible content and see that our content is as good, or better, than many others. Influencers and those that live in the accessible travel world were blown away by what Mt. Hood Territory is producing and noted that one thing that sets our stories apart is that they are firsthand experiences written by actual travelers within the accessibility world.

Casey shared that one thing missing from our content is more videos of people in the accessible travel field, so staff is in the process of hiring a photographer and videographer to help create a full accessible travel video next year.

Lizzie shared that she would like to take the TDC meetings on the road and has a few locations in mind and will let people know if/when that happens. Also mentioned that staff recently held an in-person meeting at Hilton Garden Clackamas great to be on location and learn about things there.

3:29 - 3:42pm TDC Updates - TDC Members

Tessa – Santa Cow starts the Saturday after Thanksgiving and will be going every Saturday until Christmas. Families can come take photos with a Cow dressed up like Santa. This year there will also be a baby miniature Highland cow.

Amy – Upper Clackamas clean-up had 40 volunteers who picked up about 1000lbs of trash from dispersed campsites. Clean-up went well and they're going to make it an annual event.

They also just completed their BB Island side channel reconnection project on the Clackamas River where they excavated out a ½ mile channel for salmon habitat there. Some native turtles were spotted in nearby ponds so some nesting grounds were built for them and they are hoping to create a trail that goes around the lake and a bird blind so folks can see the turtles closely as it's rare to see them in Oregon.

Mike – Awaiting snow to arrive, yet to be seen if they'll make their target opening date on November 28th. Been making snow with the all-weather snow making machine since September and will open as soon as they can.

Patrick – Preparing for the holiday season, running some fun promos.

Holly – Attended the Best Western convention in Seattle where they described the market as “flat” which she found concerning as the messaging is typically very positive and upbeat. Hotel remodel is on the final stages and wrapping up soon. Full linen shift of the entire hotel was just completed and all linens are now brand new.

Luke – Attended the State of the County dinner and found it good to hear their strategies and plans. Shared some talking points from the dinner with the group.

3:42 pm Adjourn Public Meeting