



Tourism Development Council Meeting
Wednesday November 13, 2024 2:03 – 3:49pm

Minutes approved 12/11/24

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

Members Present: Luke Spencer, Mike Quinn, Brian Crow, Holly Pfortmiller, Katen Patel
Staff Present: Sarah Eckman, Ithaca Janzen, Danae Burke Jones, Jim Austin, Amber Johnson
Others Present: Doug Decker, Laura Edmonds, Corinne Lowenthal

2:03 – 2:06pm Welcome/Call to Order/Introductions & Declaration of Conflicts - Luke Spencer, Chair

2:05 – 2:09pm Approval of Minutes for September and October 2024 - Danae Burke Jones, Administrative Specialist
Holly motioned to approve minutes from September seconded by Katen and approved by unanimous vote.
Katen motioned to approve minutes from October, seconded by Holly and approved by unanimous vote.

2:09 – 2:41pm Update: Mt. Hood Rest Area Relocation - Doug Decker, Project Manager - Oregon Solutions
Oregon Solutions is an organization that helps communities get problems and projects up off the ground and started. They were brought in to help with the Mt. Hood Rest Area Relocation Project because there are so many stakeholders and jurisdictions at play. All parties agree that the current rest area is not meeting the needs of users in its present location for multiple reasons, including: the fact that it only has 12 parking spaces, it is the only public restroom for Government Camp, the intersection to enter and exit has frequent accidents, and is not accessible to commercial truckers. The rest area is less than an acre in size and sees 600,000 visitors a year.

In answer to a question regarding Government Camp's lack of public restroom Doug clarified that Government Camp will be looking at installing a public restroom separate from the rest area that would be for the public use in town and will be in place prior to the rest area moving.

The project was able to secure a Federal Access Grant which will fund the project through the planning stages. The team has developed a shared understandings on the issues, defined the project purpose, identified the project needs and developed the "Project Plan" which will get the project completed in every stage. Project was first stated in 2020 and now has a timeline with an expected completion date of 2029. The plan is to relocate the rest area, but they don't know where the new location will be, or if there will be more than one in the general area. Next year they will move on to reconnaissance concept design where they will be looking at potential sites and how to acquire a location. In 2025 and 2026 they will move on to preliminary and intermediate design where they will be putting blueprints and construction plans together. Final design is planned for 2026-2029 with project completion planned for 2029. They be doing some outreach events including briefings with small groups and interviews with interested parties as well as and hosting online surveys where the public can share thoughts and needs.

Timberline is planning to open a gondola that will use the rest area's current location as their lower loading zone and have used this project timeline to help them plan their gondola construction to open soon after the rest area moves.

A question was asked if there's any push back from any agencies? Doug responded that there has been no pushback, everyone is on board that things have to change. There is a clear agreement that the current site is not working.

A question was asked regarding how the project will be funded and Doug responded that his hunch is that it will largely be a publicly funded project with the majority coming from the Federal Department of Transportation along with State funds and some private dollars.

2:42 – 3:13pm Quarterly Report – Q1 24/25 - Ithaca Janzen, Programs Senior Specialist

Ithaca ran through the executive note and highlights from the Q1 report and invited feedback from TDC members before it is posted on the partner page of the OMHT website. Ithaca reviewed the quarters' TRT and occupancy reports and was asked if there was any data on the Average Daily Rate (ADR) because it seems that generally occupancy is up, but ADR is down. Ithaca responded that the report has not shown ADR in the past, but we do receive ADR info for the County as a whole, so that data could be added.

Visitor trends showed that visitation peaked in July with main activities including parks and recreation land, main streets and other top sights. Visitor numbers held strong in August with popular activities remaining the same as July. September saw a shift to fall related activities with more shopping and dining and a significant rise in agritourism as harvest season began.

The marketing team did a video campaign with KOIN6 in the Tri-Cities and Spokane area. Data shows that 122 people who saw the targeted ads came to Clackamas County and this group actually stayed slightly longer in destination and spent significantly more than average. Amber reviewed visitor numbers directly attributed to some marketing campaigns and shared that Datafy is one of the few advertising mechanisms where we can get attribution and see how many people that viewed a specific ad came to destination.

The colorblind sunglasses program at Swan Island Dahlia Festival had overwhelmingly positive feedback overall from users with 158 visitors checking out the glasses and the KPTV segment saw 3.7million views.

Clackamas River Outdoor map came out this quarter, and the very popular Things To Do Map has been redesigned and is currently in production. Staff worked with a local illustrator & cartographer to design the map and QR links are trackable to see how many map users visits the articles.

Partner engagement included marketing and coop opportunities, gathering information on EV charging stations, reaching out to new registered short-term rental properties and updating several partner categories on the website. A request was made for more info on the EV specific partner reach out and what that entailed. Danae answered that marketing is working on creating articles highlighting places to charge and what to do while your vehicle is charging. Staff have also engaged with lodging partners to identify and promote properties that offer EV charging for guests.

Marketing would like to reach more Gen Z women so recently worked with an Instagram influencer who targets those demographics. Amber said that Outdoor Brooke recently visited the area and jointly shared social media posts about their destination experience. After that campaign the website saw a 92% increase to the "places to stay" page, but this type of marketing is harder to directly track direct attributes from than others. A question was asked about what it costs to work with influencers, Amber shared the rough budget for this campaign which included paying the influencer along with hosting their stay and activities. A follow up question was asked about ROI for spend on an influencer campaigns compared to other marketing spends. Amber answered that was a lower spend compared to other programs and it is hard to know the ROI right away from campaigns like this. A board member asked if Mt Hood Territory uses TikTok? Amber answered that because of the privacy and security issues that have been raised about TikTok we don't use it as a government agency, however partnered influencers like Outdoor Brook can share our messaging there.

3:13 -3:26 pm TDC Recruitment - Sarah Eckman, Interim Executive Director

The TDC board currently has three vacancies to fill and is currently in recruitment for those positions. Two vacancies need to be filled by lodging partners and the other by a partner who represents one of the pillars of tourism. Historically it's just been the Executive Director that's talked with potential new members but because of board interest Sarah suggested considering a joint interview process between the TDC and the Executive Director and asked board members for feedback on how they would like that to look. It was suggested having a less structured TDC meeting where potential new members could visit with current members during the meeting time to get to know each other and ask any questions they may have. A suggestion was made to reach out to restaurants as a potential way to diversify the council. A clarifying question was asked about why 4 out of the 9 TDC positions need to be lodging related. Jim answered that it is because our funding comes from TRT revenue. Sarah said the board would receive a list of applicants and their affiliations and suggested that once the recruitment closes a decision could be made on how to meet with the candidates and plan scheduling for TDC retreat.

3:26 – 3:31pm Tourism Executive Director Recruitment Update - Sarah Eckman, Interim Executive Director

First round of 8 applicants were interviewed last Monday, that pool was narrowed down to 4 applicants who will have a second round of interviews next Monday. Sarah anticipates that after next week's interview the pool will be narrowed down to 2-3 candidates who meet with TDC and Commissioner Schrader, then with the staff team and then complete a final interview with Board Chair Luke and County Administrator Gary Schmidt. Official start date is yet to be determined and will likely depend on the selected candidate but will likely be January.

3:15 – 3:36pm Program Updates - Staff

Jim – Aaron, Casey and Lizzie are at Travelability Conference this week and will be checking out some adaptive wheelchairs for a possible future project. Currently reviewing Strategic Investment Program applications, 5 qualified grant applications came in.

3:36 – 3:48pm TDC Updates - TDC Members

Mike - Tubing will be open the day after Thanksgiving, they have been making snow since September using their all-weather snow making machine. Currently have more snow on the ground for the tubing hill than they ever had at this point in the season. Ski Bowl is hoping to also open soon, likely early December. Snow is hovering around 4,000 feet and they like it to get down to 2,000 feet before they open.

Brian – In the throes of the Country Christmas Bizarre that will be this weekend in the main pavilion and then gearing up to go into Winter Fair & Holiday Market that opens the day after Thanksgiving and runs through December.

Katen – No updates, looking forward to the holidays, It's been a crazy summer with a remodel project.

Holly – Thankful that they're slowing down a bit, she's been swamped. Is on the destination management organization team to create bylaws for the DMO for the City of Oregon City so busy with that too. Life is good.

Luke – Working with Economic Development Committee in Estacada, Jim or Casey will be coming to talk to the group soon. Applied for a scholarship & received one from Travel Oregon for the Outdoor Rec Summit. Looking forward to going to that.

Corrine - 90% conversion rate of people that come into the visitor center that buy tickets to the End of Oregon Trail Museum. June 17th, 2025 is the museums 30th anniversary and the following weekend they'll have a Blessings and Reconciliations Ceremony and salmon bake with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

Laura Edmonds – Currently in application review for a Business Development Grant for businesses looking to do capital improvement or workforce development projects. They received 17 applications and have \$600,000 to grant this cycle. Should have their recommendations by November 20th.

3:49 pm Adjourn Public Meeting