



Tourism Development Council Meeting
Wednesday December 11, 2024 2:02 – 3:47pm

Minutes approved 2/12/25

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

Members Present: Luke Spencer, Brian Crow, Holly Pfortmiller, Katen Patel, Tessa Koch

Staff Present: Lizzie Keenan, Ithaca Janzen, Jim Austin, Janice Nilson, Aaron Liersemann

Others Present: Sherry DeLeon

2:02 – 2:05pm Welcome/Call to Order/Introductions & Declaration of Conflicts - Holly Pfortmiller, Vice-Chair

2:05 – 2:07pm Approval of Minutes for November 2024 – Ithaca Janzen, Tourism Senior Specialist
Katen motioned to approve minutes from November, seconded by Luke and approved by unanimous vote.

2:07 – 2:59pm Strategic Investment Program – Presentation of Funding Recommendations - Jim Austin, Tourism Development Lead & Sherry DeLeon, Rural Prosperity Partners

Action: Approve Strategic Investment Awards - Lizzie Keenan, Executive Director

Jim presented the Strategic Investment Program (SIP) background. The SIP was shared with partners via Mt. Hood Territory's website and newsletter, direct partner outreach, Clackamas County's website, and to community tourism leads to share. Three educational webinars were hosted to help applicants prepare. This year, the deadline was extended to allow for more applications.

Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory contracted with Rural Prosperity Partners to help administer the program. They provided a scoring rubric for the review panel to help ensure an equitable and transparent process. There were 16 total criteria for scoring. Special attention was paid to achievability (including timeline, budget and goals) and sustainability (the ability for the project to have lasting impact). This year, there was greater weight given to projects that would impact visitor experiences in Clackamas County. Five eligible applications were received with a total ask of \$430,896.

Sherry walked the board through the 5 eligible projects and their funding recommendations:

- The National Forest Foundation submitted an application to complete the Trillium Lake boardwalk. This was the highest scoring application with recommended full funding of \$132,250.
- Forest Forever, Inc. submitted an application to create a hiking guide/app for Hopkins Demonstration Forest. Recommended full funding of \$37,600.
- Trailkeepers of Oregon submitted an application for trail work and stewardship in identified areas of Mt. Hood National Forest and unincorporated Clackamas County. Recommended partial funding to cover materials but not staffing costs at \$55,807.20. It was noted that Trailkeepers of Oregon received funding last cycle with a similar ask that included staff support and is still being dispersed.
- The City of Sandy submitted an application to install live-streaming cameras at Jonsrud Viewpoint. Recommended full funding at \$66,979.75. Board members asked for clarification of how the City is involved, and it was noted that the City will maintain the camera once installed.
- Clackamas Heritage Partners submitted an application to install indoor and outdoor water stations at the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. Recommended partial funding to support indoor water stations only of \$15,569.90.

Discussion of applications: Board members inquired about past awards, and Jim clarified that the National Forest Foundation and Trailkeepers of Oregon were the only two projects that also received funding last cycle. After two awards back to back, organizations have a mandatory waiting period for the next cycle before they may apply again.

The board discussed the application process and it was noted that 8 total applications were received, but 3 were found to be ineligible so were not shared with the review committee. All applicants including those that were found ineligible will receive follow-up from Sherry for feedback. The board inquired about the total ask including ineligible projects and Jim stated he will follow up with that information.

2:42 – 2:59 Action: Opportunity to approve applications.

National Forest Foundation: Luke motioned to approve, seconded by Katen and passed by unanimous vote.

Forests Forever, Inc.: Katen motioned to approve, seconded by Luke and passed by unanimous vote.

City of Sandy: Luke motioned to approve, seconded by Katen and passed by unanimous vote.

Trailkeepers of Oregon: Holly motioned to approve, seconded by Luke. Voted four in favor, one opposed; passed.

Clackamas Heritage Partners: Katen motioned to approve, seconded by Holly and passed by unanimous vote.

The board provided feedback about the SIP process, including setting a hard deadline and not providing an extension for the next cycle. There is interest from the board and staff around attracting more and new/diverse applicants to the program, which may include some direct staff outreach prior to next cycle.

For next steps, Jim and Sherry will notify awardees and begin the County processes to provide funding. There will be an orientation meeting for awardees to explain the funding disbursement structure of 50% upfront, 25% midway through project, and 25% reimbursement upon completion. Staff will share a press release about projects selected for funding. The board expressed value around follow-up, providing accountability for awardees and for staff and providing multiple opportunities to demonstrate tourism's investment in our community to diverse stakeholders.

2:59 – 3:07 TDC Recruitment – Lizzie Keenan, Executive Director

There are currently three open positions on the Tourism Development Council that are being recruiting for. Applications closed Monday, with eight applications received. The board had expressed interest in being involved in the recruitment process at prior meetings, so Lizzie will send consolidated applicant information to TDC members. Lizzie requested that TDC provide any questions they'd like her to ask potential board members. Suggested questions included asking about their vision for tourism as a whole county and testing their understanding of what the TDC is.

The board shared their experiences with onboarding as new members, and suggested a formalized packet be created with foundational documents, past meeting minutes, destination reports and marketing materials including the website. An onboarding luncheon with new and continuing members was suggested.

3:07 – 3:15 Travel Oregon Commissioners Meeting – Luke Spencer, Chair

Luke shared that the Oregon Tourism Commission meeting on Mt. Hood went well, stating that both the meeting and the dinner were informative and good networking opportunities with Commissioners seeming genuinely interested in the work we are doing in the area.

The Mt. Hood/Gorge Region worked with Travel Oregon to plan the meeting and experiences, including a dinner at AntFarm. The Region worked to showcase the story of impact to our natural lands from recent disasters as well as work that's happening on Mt. Hood including the new gondola project at Timberline. The Commissioners expressed

appreciation for the work of Mt. Hood Territory and the Mt. Hood/Gorge Region, especially how we incorporate data. There was interest from Commissioners and Travel Oregon staff around the idea of “drive-through” communities raised during discussions of mid-mountain work, with potential for a state-wide interest group meeting of similar destinations organized by Travel Oregon in the future.

3:15 – 3:30pm Updates on Staff, Council, and Board Changes – Space for Discussion - Luke, All

Luke acknowledged that with upcoming changes to the Board of County Commissioners, new Tourism Development Council members and changes to Mt. Hood Territory staff, we have a value around preserving a good relationship between the BCC and TDC. Luke shared concern about County Administrator Gary Schmidt potentially losing his position with new incoming Commissioners. [NOTE: Luke sent an email to staff and TDC later that day to rescind his comments and clarify that he was mistaken with his understanding of the situation.] The board indicated that they would like the opportunity to speak with County Commissioners, which staff informed them usually happens during an annual joint meeting, sometimes as part of TDC Retreat. Luke will also be meeting with new BCC members.

Lizzie brought forward alternative plans for TDC Retreat this year. Instead of having the retreat in January/February as usual, she recommended sharing the budget in January via email, reviewing the budget at a regular February meeting, and having the TDC Retreat later in the spring. The budget provided would include the County’s budgeting system as well as a version of the budget that is more reflective of Tourism’s work programming than the broad County budget categories. The board agreed and requested April for the TDC Retreat.

3:30 – 3:47 Program Updates – Staff; TDC Updates – TDC Members

Aaron shared about recent conferences he’s attended. Three Mt. Hood Territory staff attended the Travelability Summit in San Francisco, focused on improving accessibility in destinations. There were actionable takeaways at different levels of investment, including Mobi-mats and the AdvenChair that Mt. Hood Territory is exploring. Aaron reported that he sees value in having different members of staff attend each year. Next year’s conference is in Central Oregon, so it would be a good opportunity to provide scholarships for more partners to attend as well.

Aaron and Luke attended the Oregon Outdoor Adventure Summit along with two partner businesses: Wander Free & Queer and Mt. Hood Outfitters (on scholarship from Mt. Hood Territory). The US Forest Service/National Forest Foundation presented a very popular session about partnerships that referenced the Rainbow Campground project and called out our investment and good partnership. Aaron reported that the USFS seemed eager to have stronger partnerships and stakeholder engagement. Aaron pointed out that the conference is not specifically for DMOs but is a good opportunity for us to connect with land managers and outfitters that we might not often interface with.

Lizzie shared that Travel Oregon’s grant program is currently open, with a focus on increasing access and inclusion across the state. Partners are encouraged to apply.

TDC Updates

Brian – Winter Fair and Holiday Market is going strong. He’s been attending lots of event conferences.

Tessa – Santa Cow is at TMK and retail is going strong.

Luke - Attending the recreation summit was of value both from a TDC member and a guide stand point. Congratulations to Lizzie. Thanks to Holly for filling in running the meeting.

Katen – Slow season for hotels.

Holly – Slow season for hotels.

3:47 pm Adjourn Public Meeting

*Note: Due to technical difficulties the zoom recording ends just prior to the meeting being adjourned