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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 13, 2013
TO: Project Management Team, Project Leadership Group
FROM: KC Cooper
SUBJECT: Project Selection Stakeholder Survey Summary
PROJECT: Mount Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan

INTRODUCTION

An online survey was created in August 2013 to gather stakeholder opinion on 40 projects selected for inclusion in the Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan (MHMTP). The purpose of the survey was to have each participant view a draft list of 40 projects proposed by project partner staff to be included in the MHMTP, and choose up to five projects that represent their priorities for initial implementation of the Plan.¹ Survey participants were provided a link to an interactive map to increase their familiarity with the locations and descriptions of each project before selecting their priorities. In addition to reviewing the 40 staff-recommended projects on the draft list, survey respondents were encouraged to provide additional specific project ideas that differed from those on the list.

This is not a scientific survey. However, the responses provide an indicator of the desires of engaged stakeholders and members of the public. Requests were made to the project partners and approximately 20 stakeholder organizations to: (1) post a link to the survey on their websites and (2) send emails their constituencies that included a link to the survey and interactive map. Those who provided email addresses when completing the Spring 2013 survey were also sent a notice to participate in this survey. The survey link was also sent to the extensive stakeholder list. A press release was issued on August 9 alerting the media to the survey.

The survey was active August 9-31, 2013, and had 2,220 respondents -- 585 respondents requested to receive project update emails and 465 provided comments (see Survey Comments Fall 2013).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The majority of respondents (83.5%) reside in the Portland Metropolitan Area (PMA); 11.5% live in the Villages; and 6% live in Hood River or the east side of Mt. Hood. Less than 1% reside south of Mt. Hood.

¹ Note: when the survey was initially posted there was an error in one project description. This affected 385 respondents, 20 of whom selected the erroneously described project (1% of respondents). The error was corrected and those that had responded were notified and allowed to re-enter the survey to change their answer if they chose.

The vast majority (93.5%) use autos to travel to and cross the mountain. Two percent of the respondents travel by bike to or across the mountain.

Respondents were asked their reasons for traveling to Mt. Hood. More than one choice was accepted. **Table 1** shows the reason for travel percentages, broken down by where respondents reside. Golfing, boating, going to work or home, and moving freight were mentioned less than 10% of the time. The exception is responses from mountain village residents; 40+% said they travel to work or home, and the group had higher levels of boating and camping than other respondents.

Winter sports were by and large the most popular activity for all respondents, regardless of residence, followed by hiking and walking. Village residents have the highest percentage of cycling, but the numbers between all respondents were fairly consistent.

Travel over Mt. Hood, to points on either side of the mountain, also ranked high among all respondent groups.

Table 1: Reasons for travel (top selections)

Survey Respondent Demographics	All Respondents (2046)	PMA (1699)	Village Residents (233)	Hood River Area Residents (126)
Ski/Snowboard	89%	91%	82%	88%
Hiking/walking	68%	68%	75%	69%
Cross Mt. Hood to other destinations	44%	44%	53%	37%
Viewing nature	40%	38%	51%	34%
Staying at resorts/vacation homes	36%	38%	40%	13%
Camping/RVing	33%	34%	29%	38%
Cycling	27%	26%	36%	33%
Mountain Climbing	16%	16%	19%	23%

Respondents were then asked to choose five projects, from a list of forty, that they would like to see implemented first. **Table 2** contains the highest ranked projects for implementation. Projects that were selected by less than 10% of all respondents are not included in the table.

Some key observations:

1. More than 39% of Hood River residents selected expanding transit service to the ski resorts from Mt. Hood (PubT-1). Hood River residents chose mass transit (PubT-3), traveler webpage (ITS-4) and expanded park and rides (PubT- 4) more than respondents from other locations.
2. All public transit options received moderately high support by all respondents with the highest interest in a transfer hub with shuttle service and the development of mass transit (PubT-3).
3. All respondents supported increased cell phone coverage at a high rate (ITS-4).
4. Shoulder improvements for bikes were supported evenly through all respondent groups.
5. An Aerial Tram (PriT-2) was highly rated by several respondent groups.

6. There was high interest in improving the access to Mirror Lake (PB-3) by all respondent groups with the exception of Hood River area residents.
7. Village residents had the highest support for a highway overcrossing at Government Camp (PB-4), and the Mirror Lake Project (PB-3).
8. Village residents were the most supportive of transit options with PubTr-1, PubTr-3, and PubTr-3b being prioritized over 20 percent of the time.

Table 2: Top Five Priority Projects (listed by project category and respondent’s geographic location)

Prioritized Projects	Percent of Respondents that Selected a Project as a Top 5 Priority			
	All Respondents (1,862)	PMA (1,434)	Village Residents (200)	Hood River Area/East of Mountain Residents (112)
PriT-1: Intra-forest transit service	16%	16%	19%	16%
PriT-2: Aerial Tram	48%	50%	58%	20%
ITS-1: Traveler webpage	16%	16%	11%	28%
ITS-4: Increased cell phone coverage	43%	41%	47%	45%
PB-1: Bike/Ped intersection improvements	14%	15%	17%	4%
PB-3: Mirror Lake Project	25%	25%	33%	8%
PB-4: Government Camp Pedestrian overcrossing	21%	21%	33%	5%
PB-5: Widen shoulders for bikes	18%	18%	15%	20%
PubT-1: expanded transit from Hood River	6%	4%	2%	39%
PubT-2: Mt. Express from Sandy to ski areas	19%	18%	28%	13%
PubT-3: Transfer hub down the mountain, shuttle service, establish mass transit	26%	27%	22%	31%
PubT-3b: Government Camp transit hub	19%	19%	27%	9%
PubT-4: Expand park and rides	14%	12%	15%	30%
Safe-9: Timberline intersection improvements	20%	22%	17%	10%
Safe-10: Government Camp Loop road west Improvement	18%	20%	16%	6%
Safe-11: : Government Camp Loop road east Improvement	15%	16%	14%	8%
Safe 12: Ski bowl west intersection improvements	13%	14%	7%	7%
Safe-13: Ski bowl east intersection improvements	15%	15%	22%	5%

Note: Highlighting indicates the top five projects selected for each geographic category.

RESPONDENT COMMENTS

There were some repeated themes from the 465 comments submitted by respondents:

1. Safety continues to be a high priority in most comments from respondents.
2. Many stated concerns about bike safety and lack of facilities. In particular, the narrowing of lanes which forces cyclists to be closer to auto traffic. Many of those who supported bike projects would like to see a separated bike lane away from traffic.
3. Many comments encouraged widening highways to four lanes or adding left turn lanes into resorts/local streets.
4. Multiple comments concerning inexperienced and dangerous drivers—more enforcement desired.
5. Respondents supporting ITS projects encouraged the inclusion of a smart-phone app.
6. Public transportation comments showed support but some respondents mentioned lack of frequency, hours, too many stops, and cost as factors in their willingness to use buses and shuttles. It was mentioned that transit to the mountain would be more successful if boarding sites were farther down the mountain. Repeated comments were made about how transit could increase safety by reducing congestion and providing alternatives to those travelers that are inexperienced driving in snowy conditions.
7. It was noted several times that rumble strips are dangerous for cyclists and virtually useless when covered with heavy snow.
8. Safety suggestions include installing barriers (concrete, rock or cable) to prevent people from performing dangerous passing maneuvers, especially in snowy or low visibility conditions.
9. An aerial tram was thought to potentially reduce congestion, especially if it went all the way to Meadows, and as a strategy for economic development strategy and tourism. There were a few comments opposed to the gondola, citing impacts on the environment and overcrowding on the mountain as a result.
10. Better access to and from Government Camp was a repeated request.

OTHER PROJECTS SUGGESTED BY RESPONDENTS

There were not many new project suggestions but a few were raised. Some projects mentioned were previously screened for viability using project criteria and values and not included in the proposed project list. The following table summarizes the project suggestions:

Table 3: Projects Suggested by Survey Respondents

New Projects that PMT had Not Screened from Consideration (prior to the survey)
Put a rest stop on the opposite side of the Summit rest stop to reduce the cross traffic turns into the existing one.
Repurpose Still Creek Road as paved multi-use path between Rd 32 and Trillium Lake
Build a small airstrip just outside Government Camp
Barlow Trail Road needs sidewalks
Extend light rail up the mountain
Projects Previously Screened and Eliminated
New off-ramp from US 26 Eastbound onto Multorpor Drive
A dedicated bike path from Brightwood to Rhododendron with increased pedestrian/bike crossing areas (US 26 at Rhododendron) - needs two west bound lanes between town and mountain curves
Reopen the east end of Faubion to assist school buses, fire vehicles, etc. as well as provide safety for community residents (Forwarded this recommendation on to ODOT Safety Division for review and there were safety issues with moving this forward.)
Proposed Projects Already Included in PMT Recommendations
Consider closing the second lane for the downhill portion of the road just below the Mirror Lake trailhead. Here a jockeying for position occurs and therefore smooth flow is not established until after a second merge occurs. (Part of PB-3)
Straighten out the curve at Meadows – bad sight lines and sudden braking makes cars slide there (will be studied as part of Safe-5)
More ped/bike access at Laurel Hill (Part of PB-1 and PB-5)
Add merging lanes on highway from Timberline (Part of Safe-17)
Consider using Wildwood BLM Site as a Park and Ride site (Part of PubT-4)
Improve Government Camp loop exits to US 26 (Part of Safe-10 and Safe-11)
Overcrossing at Government Camp for pedestrians (Part of PB-4)
Need bike lanes in the Hoodland area (Part of PB-5)
Metered ramps from resorts to hwy. to space traffic out more during peak periods (Part of ITS /Intersection Improvements projects)
Put “NO PASSING” signs on the opposite (on-coming) sides of the road—more visible to drivers and indicates where passing lanes end. (Colorado has done this) (Part of ITS-2, Concept of Operations)
Center median needed between Sandy and Alder Creek for exits from/entrances to highway (Part of RSA projects)
Embed reflectors in the center lanes especially in areas of darkness (Part of Safe-4 and Safe-5)
Post more speed limit signs (Part of ITS-2, Concept of Operations)

Cut trees back at edges of road to allow sun to melt ice (Forwarded to ODOT Maintenance Dept. for review.)
Proposed Projects Already Included in PMT Recommendations (continued)
Add more "traction devices required" signs (Part of ITS-3, Chain-up Area Education and Management)
Create an "all-3 Resort Pass" (Part of Org-1, Transportation Management Association to coordinate TDM)
A park-and-ride should be in Sandy. Almost no additional traffic joins Hwy 26 east of Sandy, so to maximize trip reduction; the park-and-ride(s) should be east of, but as close as possible, to the intersection of Hwy 26 and Hwy 212. (Part of PubT-4)
Turn block long public parking lot on Pioneer Blvd. near Otto's Ski Shop in Sandy into a park and ride (Part of PubT-4)
More signage to let drivers know when there are two lanes and when there is only one (Part of ITS-2)
Central Valley - your realignment has caused the crashes - paint STOP AHEAD on east bound section - stop sign is too far right for non- locals (Part of ITS-2 and/or RSAs)

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

There is a great deal of interest in transportation improvements on the mountain by the community based on the number and thoughtfulness of responses to two online surveys. To make sure the project was not missing any key projects, the Project Management Team (Project Partner staff) reviewed the survey respondents' project suggestions to determine if any new projects should be added to the list of projects recommended to move forward in the MHMTP. None of the newly identified projects were deemed to meet the project core values necessary to be added. Consequently, the five new projects were not recommended for consideration by the Project Leadership Group (PLG) for inclusion in the plan.

The Project Leadership Group (PLG) will make the final selection of the projects to move forward, and determine which projects will be implemented first. The PLG will consider public input and project criteria to determine which projects will be in the implementation plan. The MHMTP is a rolling plan that will be reviewed every 3-5 years to determine which of the project in the full list will move forward into implementation.