

Mount Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan

Project Leadership Group

Meeting #3

September 27, 2013

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

ODOT R1 Headquarters - 123 NW Flanders St., Portland OR

Meeting Summary

Project Leadership Group (PLG) Attendees:

Jason Tell – Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) R1 Manager

Karen Joplin – Hood River County Commissioner

Lisa Northrop – Mt. Hood National Forest (MHNF) Acting Supervisor

Jim Bernard – Clackamas County Commissioner

Project Management Team (PMT) Attendees:

George Fekaris – Federal Highway Administration – Western Federal Lands Highway Division

Susan Law – Federal Highway Administration – Western Federal Lands Highway Division

Rithy Bein – MHNF

Karen Buehrig – Clackamas County

Kirsten Pennington – ODOT

Mike Mason – ODOT

Guests

Sherrin Coleman – ODOT

Tom Keenan – Keenan & Partners/Ski Bowl

Danielle Cowan, Clackamas County – Tourism and Cultural Affairs

Greg Leo – The Leo Company LLC/Mt. Hood Meadows

John Tullis – Timberline Lodge

Nick Rinard – Government Camp Community Planning Organization

Facilitating/Consulting Team: Elizabeth Mros-O’Hara, KC Cooper and Adam Argo from David Evans & Associates (DEA)

Meeting Notes: Sandra Koike – ODOT

Meeting Purpose (Elizabeth Mros-O’Hara, DEA):

1. Introductions
2. Overview of Process/Activities to date, Summary of Public Outreach, Review of PMT Project Review Process, Recommended Project List
3. Public Comment Period
4. PLG Discussion and Approval of Two Project
5. Next Steps

1. Introductions – (KC Cooper). Introductions of the PLG, PMT, staff and public in attendance.

2. Overview of Process/Activities to date (KC Cooper)

- The Project Management Team discussed and ranked numerous projects after looking through several plans. We are now in the process of getting ready to draft the Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan (MHMTP) and hope to be finished by the end of the year.
- Why this matters: Mt. Hood Area is an iconic area that has access to natural, cultural and historic resources. It sits within two counties, has state highways running through it, and is part of the National Forest system.
- Traffic demand is outpacing capacity. Often and especially during peak ski season, highways become very congested with less than safe driving conditions in some areas. People who wish to travel to and from the mountain have very few options other than to drive a personal vehicle.
- MHMTP took form because of the 2009 Wilderness Bill and interest from the Oregon Transportation Commission to address multi-modal transportation needs on Mt. Hood.
- Clackamas County, Hood River County, Forest Service, and ODOT have transportation and land use authority in the Mt. Hood area.

- Additionally, there are major stakeholders – specifically, the ski areas and cities of Sandy & Hood River, the villages, business and user interest groups among others who will benefit or be affected by the decisions within the MHMTP.
- The Project Leadership Group, Project Management Team and Technical Working Group have guided the process during the past 11 months.
- FHWA Western Federal Lands Highway Division has provided technical support, guidance and information along the way.
- Project charge: Develop a transportation Plan for the Mt. Hood Highway (US 26-OR 35) corridor to and through the north portion of the Mt. Hood National Forest.
- This planning effort has strived for affordable and achievable solutions by focusing on:
 - o Improving highway safety for all users and;
 - o Expanding travel options year round to enhance mobility and access recreation and rural communities.
- Project Core Values:
 - o Improve highway safety for all users
 - o Expand travel options year-round to enhance mobility and access to recreation and rural communities
 - o Financially feasible and sustainable
 - o Can be implemented within 15 years
- Decision Making Process:
 - o Decide which projects should be further analyzed
 - o Adopt the list of projects to go into the Plan
 - o Select a subset of projects for immediate action that will be the Implementation Component of the Plan.
 - o Adopt the MHMTP – a “Rolling Plan”
- Project Outreach: Mike Mason, ODOT, spoke with many interest groups. A second online survey with an interactive map was conducted. It was not a scientific survey, but the information was helpful in determining the list of projects that was created. The Fall 2013 survey showed that safety was the #1 concern.
- The PMT recommended 38 projects for the MHMTP for PLG consideration:
 - o Highway System Management and ITS
 - o Public Transit
 - o Private Transit
 - o Parking
 - o Organizations, Programs and Legislation
 - o Pedestrian and Bicycle
 - o Safety and Road Improvement

3. Public Comment Period

- Nick Rinard, chair of the Government Camp Community Planning Organization (CPO), said he represented the local community. Community members have been particularly involved over the past 10 years in two project ideas that are related to this survey and the resultant plan: the aerial tram and the eastbound turn-off from US 26 to E. Multorpor Road. Both of these projects were thoroughly discussed as part of previous area tax (TIF) committees. Approximately 8 years ago, there was a push to investigate one leg of the tram from Government Camp across Highway 26 to Ski Bowl East. It was dropped by the TIF

committee. There was only limited support for that project. (Disclaimer: Mr. Rinard noted that his residence was in the alignment, and he therefore opposed it, but that the majority of community members also opposed this project.) The majority of the community is not necessarily opposed to the entire tram network, but only this alignment was discussed by the TIF committee. People are very concerned about the alignment of the tram, parking options, and how the alignment would affect privacy, access and traffic flow. The Ski Bowl East turnoff to Multorpor Road was discussed and it raised issues. An off-ramp to Multorpor Road would lead to many problems. It would lead to a dead end side of the community without an easy exit – and there is no practical way to construct one. This off-ramp would bring a lot of parking and traffic to an area that isn't supported right now. Even with the new overpass, which has helped a lot, vehicles with 2-wheel drive and without chains have a difficult time getting up and over the overpass and back to the core, which is the only way out and cannot handle a high volume of traffic -- nor is it desirable to route traffic through the core. Mr. Rinard said a better solution has been discussed and has been outlined in an MOU between the ski areas. This solution would provide a cloverleaf overpass to get eastbound highway 26 into Government Camp and a remote parking area that would not crowd the core.

- Tom Keenan, representing Ski Bowl, said that the projects Mr. Rinard mentioned were adopted in the 2006 MOU in conjunction with community input. The 2010 version updates the original 2006 framework, and those items are still in there. Ski Bowl plans to address both projects moving forward.

This completed the public comment section of the meeting.

4. Discussion and Decision on PMT Project Recommendations (Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara)

- PLG comments regarding the PMT-recommended Project List:
 - o Jason Tell, ODOT, said that the list has been jelling for some time. He was ready to adopt the list today and get going on identifying projects to implement in the short-term. He noted that the MHMTP process has taken a different approach than typical planning. In the past, planning efforts have tended to include all possible projects in the plan. Due to financial constraints, the MHMTP has instead focused on the implementation of projects. Mr. Tell said that having an implementation project list makes a compelling case for seeking funding. Mr. Tell said he felt comfortable moving forward with the recommended list of projects.
 - o Karen Joplin, Hood River County, wanted to discuss the preliminary recommendations for the "Future Study" category. She noted that some project shifting had taken place and asked for clarification.
 - o Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, DEA, shared that two of the projects previously being considered for Future Study had been joined with two other existing projects that describe Road Safety Audits. The reason for this move was due to overlap amongst the four projects. Ms. Mros-O'Hara noted that no project had been removed from the list. Other project movements included shifting the Snow Park Permit Legislation project from Group A to Group B because there wasn't a champion to lead this project at this time.
 - o Ms. Joplin, Hood River County, asked if there was discussion at the Project Management Team level of how to implement projects that may have several components -- some elements easier to fund than others. For example, Ms. Joplin

noted that the description for project Safe-6 – one aspect is costly; the other is less costly and involves marking lanes and new signs. She asked how the MHMTP would address opportunities to take a project with many elements and do some of the simpler elements while not losing track of the overall project goals?

- Mr. Tell, ODOT, said that some projects could be defined in more detail as the process moved forward. He said that putting together the Implementation Plan could allow for an exercise to flag which projects – or project elements within a broader project -- have immediate funding, a champion, or possible funding sources. He asked ODOT staff to work with MHMTP partners and stakeholders to identify opportunities to complete simpler project components ahead of more complicated or costly ones.
- Ms. Joplin, Hood River County, said that overall she was comfortable with the list. Hood River is mostly concerned with safety. And on the other side of the hill there is more need for transit. She said that the MHMTP included enough safety projects to satisfy needs on her side of the hill and that several of the projects are small and doable.
- Lisa Northrop, Forest Service, agreed with Ms. Joplin. She said she, too, would like to see the easier projects teased out and implemented.
- Jim Bernard, Clackamas County, also liked the list. Safety is number one and transit is an important part of what Clackamas County needs to accomplish on their side of the mountain. Mr. Bernard said that he has experience with TMAs. He said that it will be important to identify continued funding for the TMA. Mr. Bernard added that while the small projects on the list will get done, it's important to keep the bigger projects in the MHMTP.

DECISION - Project List Approval by the PLG

- **Mr. Bernard, Clackamas County, moved that the PLG support the project list as recommended – Mount Hood National Forest, Hood River County, and ODOT supported this decision.**

KC Cooper, DEA, said that the MHMTP would be a rolling plan in that project partners would check in with one another and with stakeholders to assess project position in the MHMTP.

Further Study Projects

- Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, DEA, discussed the two projects that were recommended for further study (called "Immediate Study" projects):
 - She said that the PMT did not have enough information about the TMA and Park-and-Ride projects to identify where they should be in the MHMTP. Therefore, the PMT recommended that:
 - 1) A cursory park and ride analysis be done to see if there are underutilized areas that could become park-and-ride areas. A more comprehensive analysis would need to happen in the future to make sure changes to transit service is taken into consideration.
 - 2) An investigation into whether a Transportation Management Association – an organization that can help with parking management, funding improvements, transit service funding, and/or other functions that require private/public partnerships – makes sense for the Mt. Hood area be

undertaken. At this point, Ms. Mros-O'Hara said it is not clear if there is a champion to make a TMA successful.

DECISION – PLG Approves Immediate Study Project Research

- Ms. Northrop, Forest Service, **moved that the PLG offer support for Immediate Study of these two projects – Org-1 and PubT-4. Mr. Bernard, Ms. Joplin and Mr. Tell voiced support.**

Additional discussion took place regarding the TMA and park-and-ride projects:

- PLG members noted that leadership, support, funding and structure issues for the TMA were critical ones
- At this point, the TMA is a concept that needs to be defined.
- The Mt. Hood Alliance could provide the basis for the TMA
- Mr. Rinard, Government Camp CPO, said that he believed Government Camp residents would offer their assistance with the park-and-ride facility investigation.

5. Next Steps (Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, DEA)

- Identify Implementation Plan projects from the MHMTP project list
- Bring a TMA consultant on-board the MHMTP team for further study
- Set up Project Management Team meetings
- Set up a final PLG meeting in December to confirm the Implementation Plan projects

END