

Work Shop Series #1 – Additional Comments

Comment Cards

- In regards to the highway being visually subordinate/not evident, I think it's also important to look at how the highway affects the visibility and "experience-ability" of the river's shoreline. Currently the highway & the railroad cut off most access to the shoreline. The shoreline, contiguously, should be visually dominant, evident to both people & animals. Need way more animal crossings.
- Exit 64:
 - View sheds
 - Interchange maintenance
 - Cascade Locks exits and signage
 - Access to shoreline
- Guardrails should not be visually dominant
- We need more rest areas and safety stops
- Retaining walls should be unobtrusive
- Information kiosks at Troutdale and The Dalles
- Safety systems to control ice in key areas
- Rail and water connections, more access to river
- Casino yes! Casino interchange yes!
- All lighting should be shielded so that it does not broadcast up or out; focuses on the subject ROW.
- Trees on river edge block view of river etc. Roads have need of trash, grass, weeds, etc. to be cleaned up for fire safety, mainly, and just general cleanliness. This is what I see now but, after world trip and return I'll still see the above mess not a more beautiful I-84.
- No casino interchange at Cascade Locks!!
- Build the casino; approve the exit ramp at the Cascade Locks industrial park; tourist info kiosks at Cascade Locks
- Keep it safe by making more "ice free"; make safety rails less visible
- Encourage commuter rail service in the Gorge
- Encourage river access for boats & marinas
- Better commuter information/better signage for scenic area & historic highway
- Couple of items – have corridor strategy include:
 - Underground overhead power lines where possible
 - Vegetation management along corridor – reduce fuel loading along I-84 – significant ignition source for wildfires!
- The alder trees have grown up until for miles the river, cliffs and mountains are obscured. By marking windows and removing the trees, the view would be much more beautiful. If the areas to be cut could be indicated, there are woodcutters who could be bonded and cut the trees and remove the debris with very little cost. Also more places to pull off to take pictures, etc.
- I would like to see more places where we can pull off the highway to take photographs. The trees are too thick in many places and keep us from seeing the Gorge. I would like to see them thinned in many places along the freeway.

- I understand that waste management and others go thru a competitive bid process (maybe bid thru Metro) to haul refuse to Arlington. Why can't ODOT justify helping pay for a rail option by demonstrating less wear and tear on I-84 (money saved).
- Want to see the one-way loop for businesses west of Sandy River replaced with two-way traffic from I-84, both sides.
- Concerned about de-icing efforts impacting the watershed and salmon. ODOT says their chemicals are better than sanding. Let's continue to always have the environment in mind when addressing safety issues. Quality of life for all residents (human and otherwise) in the Gorge.
- A multi-purpose highway that honors the landscape, accommodates traffic/transportation needs, supports multiple tourism activities (e.g. hiking, biking, fishing, site seeing, artists) and focuses economic activities in existing cities thru effective info signage and ease of access.
- Have an agreement with the railroad to load truck trailers on flat cars from Troutdale to Hermiston to decrease truck traffic on highway.
- Complete the bicycle use path that has been started to by-pass those passages where cyclists must travel on I-84
- Make the interstate a tool for access to the river and other highlights of the Gorge – particularly from the point of view of active use and recreation – fishing, hiking, cycling, sailing, windsurfing, swimming, birding.
- Too many scrub trees (Alders and Maples) are blocking views to the highway from the river.
- For the red and green dot exercise lighting examples day & night would be useful.
- I think that the before and after photos are great to help greatly with selling the concept to the public. I thought Ralph's presentation was good but thought some of the examples were forced (about how certain forms complimented the scenery), almost as you needed extra examples.
- We really appreciate the ODOT emergency truck that helped us in August of '04 when we experienced a tire blowout on our truck and camper pulling a three-horse trailer. This occurred on I-84 near Troutdale. It was difficult getting off the road.
- Oregon Equestrian trails has a membership of over 1,500 people dedicated to volunteer for public agencies to develop campgrounds, trails and promote Leave No Trace actions.
- Representing horse users I am concerned about pull off places to accommodate trucks with trailers to accommodate trucks with trailers and horse trails. We need more horse trails.
- Need access and parking to horse trails, and water needs to be available for cooling horses in hot weather (Herman Creek horse camp, Deschutes State Park)
- We really appreciate sanitary dump stations. It is necessary to have water available in hot weather so horses can be cooled without horse leaving the trailer.
- Please add emergency phone boxes (for obvious reasons). My cell phone doesn't work for most of the distance from Troutdale to my home in Hood River.
- Provide a current & detailed road conditions report both on the internet and on the phone line. The existing information is neither timely nor helpful due to vague descriptions which are not even current. An accurate report would be very helpful. In fact, a road sign at the beginning of the drive (Troutdale) would warn travelers prior to them entering the Gorge (in case they didn't have a chance, or the knowledge of the existence) to check your road reports. Thanks for listening.
- All power lines should be undergrounded or blended into the hillsides. This includes BPA trans. lines, UPRR poles & wires and the City of Cascade Locks overhead power lines that are all visible from I-84.
- Natural resources must be protected and enhanced (no wetlands loss, as opposed to no net wetlands loss) (create wildlife corridor)
- Construction staging areas should be topographically screened from key viewing areas or locked inside urban areas
- All mining of rock and disposal of spoils must take place in urban areas or outside national scenic area.

- Do not plan individual bridges until corridor plan is finalized.
- If Tunnel Point is removed, a new recreational viewpoint or stopping area should be added in the western Gorge.
- Weathering steel should be prescribed for any metal needs.
- I-84 should not include commercial signs (food, gas, lodging) except in urban areas and outside national scenic area. For example, while driving west leaving the Gorge, the blue commercial signs should be located outside of national scenic area boundary.
- Also, the national scenic area boundary sign (“leaving the CRGNSA”) needs to be moved further to the west, sited closer to the actual boundary.
- Please add to all considerations, needs for and access for wildlife to cross over and under the highway and to have safety from the highway. Wildlife tunnels, bridges, fences should be made in consultation with wildlife biologists. Also please leave spaces for native plants. Do not vegetate with foreign/invasive species.
- Please put in some nice bike lanes so that they will use them instead of the Columbia River Highway! The highway was built for autos not bikes! They are a hazard and a menace! Thank you!
- Bike lane or bike route all the way from Portland to The Dalles.
- Bury standard power lines, camouflage high voltage lines.
- Add full exit for Cascade Locks industrial park without closing their other exits.
- Improve safety at exit 64 and Button Junction.
- Open view sheds to see the river.
- A parking lot at Dodson and another at Lewis & Clark Park at Troutdale. Shuttle buses only on Scenic Highway – residents would have passes as would business people.
- Barrier wall on I-84 to cut out noise & possibly odor from traffic.
- Plant between the exit and the freeway, and the entrance and the freeway with native plants.
- Remove trees at Multnomah Falls burned in early 1990s – helicopter?
- Viewpoint above Bonneville Dam Locks.
- Kill vines in trees west of Bridal Veil.
- Garbage dumpsters at future truck/car rest areas.
- I really like the process of the public involvement – pictures, flipcharts, schedules, etc. have done a good job of getting people involved; makes ODOT look good.
- The plan makes many references to “recreation” and that is one thing I-84 has increasingly harmed, that is by cutting off recreation access. Specifically, the Reed Point pull-out and the Corbett boat landing. Both could provide good access points. Instead one has been closed, and the other recently threatened. Corbett Landing and boat launch were promised as access to local citizens when I-84 was built. It needs to be restored.

Email Comments

- I was sorry not to be able to attend any of the public meetings regarding planning for the Gorge, but wanted to send you my thoughts. My primary concern with planning for the Gorge is as a bicyclist - I live in Portland and absolutely love riding there. In the summer and fall, I ride on the historic highway twice a month. And I love it - it's so close to a large metropolitan area, yet so beautiful and inspiring. I'm sure you agree that for those reasons it's a very unique resource that ought to be given stringent protections from development and automobile traffic. Additionally, I hope ODOT considers making bicycle travel safer and more accessible in the Gorge. I'm particularly interested in bike lanes on the historic highway, and in accelerated progress on the plan to link the entire historic highway from Troutdale to Hood River (and beyond). I've ridden on a number of different sections, but you can't ride from Troutdale to Hood River without risking your life on I-84. I urge ODOT to complete reconstruction of the highway to enable access for bikes.

- My sincere thanks for your work on this project. The Gorge is such a special place. I know you will be balancing numerous interests in ODOT's planning, and I ask you to consider bicycle safety and access as paramount among them.
- Cycling in the Gorge is a major draw to both local enthusiasts and cyclists worldwide—the natural splendor here has been featured in many international cycling publications, and at any time of the year one can find people from all over the world riding their bikes on extended tours through the gorge (and, of course, dropping dollars into the local economies as they go). Unfortunately, the available bicycle routes through the Gorge are not all ideal—particularly the stretches where cyclists have no other option than to bike along the shoulders of I-84. This is a dangerous situation for both cyclists and motorists, and providing an alternate route for cyclists should be an immediate priority.
- Historically, I'm sure you know that bicycle enthusiasts played a major role in getting the first paved roads built in the Columbia gorge, and I feel strongly that that vision & heritage should be honored. Thank you for your consideration of these points.
- The following suggestions IMO must be taken into consideration and handled in as high a priority as any other.
 - Safe, easy bicycle travel must be a priority
 - This corridor is a highly-used recreational area for bicycles
 - There are limited alternative routes for bicycles in the corridor
 - The Historic Columbia River Highway is one of the premier bicycling routes in the state, but reaching it now requires riding on I-84; that should be improved and separate bicycle lanes, apart from autos need to be set up.
- Bicyclists pay as much tax as others and their interests are just as equal as others. Corporations are NOT natural persons and corporate interest should not have as high a priority as a natural person's interest.
- I am writing to support including strong language in your planning study in support of cycling in the Columbia River gorge. Even on I-84! It is a unique link in the regional network. and it enables access to other key routes as well. However, our vision ought to include a bicycle alternative that does not require travel on Interstate facilities. toward this end I urge consideration of a separate bike path that would fill in the gaps left by the demolition of the old Columbia river highway.
- I am an avid cyclist and live in Troutdale. I would love to see additional improvements and expanded access to Gorge sites via bicycle. I am amazed at the number of people I see out there on bikes now. It would be great to increase the number and their safety, too.
- I journeyed across the country last year Bikingtherivers.com and found the area difficult at best to traverse. We followed the path of Meriwether Lewis and parts of the ride along the gorge rivaled the Pittsburgh area for hazards to cyclists. Please note that the Oregon side of the Columbia River Gorge is the route recommended by cycling organizations as the most scenic and safe. Surely we as a state can do better than Pennsylvania. Cycling brings many dollars to the state in tourist revenues.
- This area is the most beautiful corridor in the State of Oregon. There are hundreds of fantastic recreational spots along the route. However for those who choose to travel by bicycle in the area, the routes are limited and dangerous. On many instances when I am forced to take a less safe route, I maintain my safety by utilizing the entire vehicle lane. This is a disruption of traffic. In other areas such as the Cascade Locks, bicyclists are required to travel on I-84. This is a potentially disastrous situation. Given that ODOT's primary responsibility is to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow, it is in our combined best interest to ensure that intelligent bicycle options are provided.
- I would love more routes to ride within the corridor of the Gorge and to ride between the Gorge and Portland. The number of bicyclists in the region is steadily rising as people turn their focus on health and quality-of-life issues. Bicycle tourism is bound to increase, especially if we improve facilities for bicycling. ODOT should lead the effort to make safe and convenient bicycle travel a priority for the region, and especially in the Gorge.
- It is my opinion that the gorge area should be as accessible as possible to make it easy for bike riders to enjoy. Many people ride there from the Portland and Gresham area, and could get many more. Cars have an easy way with I-84, and bikes should likewise be accommodated. This may turn the area into a destination type of place for bike riders, and allow more families to ride there safely.

- If there were better cycling opportunities in the Columbia Gorge, I would spend much more time out there doing so. That is a beautiful part of our state, and we should do all that we can to make that more possible. As I am sure that you know, cycling is a great life-long sport, and the number of cyclists out riding today is very significant. And growing. Improving the Gorge would certainly help the tourist industry as well!
- Please consider including a bike route that does not require people on bikes to ride on I-84. The Gorge has the beginnings of a world-class bicycle route; please plan to complete it.
- Seek additional funding for the expansion of separate bike/pedestrian trails in the Gorge, either as renovations of the Historic Highway or any other opportunities that may exist. Manage & make improvements to the “active” portions of the Historic Highway (those portions open to motor vehicles) in such a way as to provide a reasonable level of safety & comfort for walkers and cyclists.
- We feel a potential world class bicycling corridor is a serious compromise to rider safety and have completely rerouted our Gorge trip to go off the Columbia River Gorge as much as possible.
- I think a complete bike route or path through the gorge would be awesome.
- Bicycling in the Columbia River Gorge at present is dangerous and extremely challenging. Though there are isolated segments with good off-road multiuse trails, and sections where there is an acceptable, safe, lower-traffic route (such as some parts of the Historic Columbia River Highway), bicyclists trying to get through the Gorge are stranded at key points and forced to ride on the shoulder of I-84. I-84 has very heavy, fast-moving traffic; narrow, debris-filled shoulders; and is both unpleasant and dangerous for cyclists.
- Please consider a more usable bike route from Portland to Hood River, preferably beyond. Any such trip currently requires a considerable trip on I 84, with at least 5 miles on rumble strip.
- I would love to see a bike route through the gorge that would be complete and not require travel on I-84. My family and I regularly ride in The Gorge and it is a shame that the existing sections of the Old Highway are so disconnected and that bike travel is so dangerous on I 84 and on sections of the Old Highway.
- Improving bicycle access within the Gorge will be a huge win/win for everyone! The Gorge communities will definitely benefit from the increase in visitors from Portland and afar who will be attracted to the area because of the increased recreational opportunities. I hope that there is serious interest at the state level for finding funding for the project (bicycle lane or trail connecting Hood River to Troutdale). I would also suggest trying to promote community volunteer days to accomplish as much work as is possible. I’m a member of the Columbia Gorge Windsurfing Association and the use of volunteer work days has been very effective in maintaining and improving beach access throughout the Gorge.
- The worst part of the route is riding the shoulder of I-84. Even with a wide shoulder, it seems dangerous and can be unnerving at times especially when large trucks pass at high speed. The shoulder often contains a lot of debris (gravel and broken glass) that causes flat bicycle tires. If an alternate route can be designed for the future, it would really add a lot to the safety and esthetic appeal of cycling in the Gorge.
- Please make the needs and safety of cyclists part of your planning for the ongoing strategy for modifications and improvements to I-84. The freeway and the trains have long been an obstacle to the enjoyment of the Gorge - a big part of the planning for the I-84 corridor should turn on making those former obstacles into aids for the accessibility of the Gorge’s beauty and recreation. One really great thing would be a safe bicycle passage from Portland to Hood River.
- Please consider a bike path through the gorge that does not require travel on the I-84 freeway.
- I urge you to consider studying a complete bike route from Portland to Cascade Locks that doesn’t involve riding on I-84. The Gorge is perhaps that most magnificent setting for riding in the Portland area, but the few miles on I-84 are a significant downside.
- Please take into consideration cyclists’ safety when designing the improvements for the I-84 corridor through the gorge. Having a safe place to ride in the gorge would encourage more cyclists to ride in the area. The reason why I don’t ride in the area is the risk of being hit by a car or truck while riding on I-84.

- I would be most interested in a bicycle route through the gorge that would not require travel on I-84. Many times a year cyclists take this route for its beauty and distance and they have to ride on I-84 to complete the route. This is very dangerous for both bicyclists and motorists alike.
- I would strongly urge your group to develop a dedicated pathway for cyclists (runners, walkers, etc) that provides a safe and enjoyable route through the Gorge. Nothing ruins a ride more than fearing for your life as cars whiz by you at high speeds, and drivers equally fear the potential of hitting an unsuspecting rider.

Comments from Letters

Comment on Overall Project

- I applaud ODOT for leading this very important project.
- The meeting today was excellent. I'm very impressed by the quality of people you are bringing into this project. The examples of highways in Colorado are very impressive. We need results rather than just another study.
- Our Oregon Legislators will be interested in your work. The Gorge is a very political place and all should be kept up to date.

Improvements to I-84

- Need better access and parking for Sandy Delta
- Need to repair and reopen Corbett Boat Ramp
- The Multnomah Falls left turn parking lot needs to be addressed with additional safety and additional parking. Redesigning the parking lot is a critical safety issue. I believe it should be the I-84 Corridor Strategy #1 project. *(Note: This participant included a drawing of a proposed redeveloped parking lot and boat dock. Two drawings are included in the Appendix of this report).*
- Improvements needed to the Bonneville Locks overlook.
- Improvements to Mitchell Point overlook needed.
- ODOT should provide facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians along the complete length of the Corridor in this study. Rumble strips are an impediment to bicyclists safety.

Specific Design Comments

- Create a design theme that recognizes the special scenic, natural, and historical character and context of the Scenic Area. Toothrock Tunnel can be used to help direct design.
- Create an interdisciplinary and interagency review process on all new or reconstruction projects. Include opportunity for public comment.
- Create a built environment that is earth friendly by using materials that are sustainable, use least amounts of energy in their manufacture and use recycled materials, as concrete or asphalt.
- Restore the shoreline to useful riparian habitat and wildlife underpasses should be required as a normal part of new construction and reconstruction.
- Opportunities for walking along the shoreline are needed.
- Embankments should be restored. Vegetation management and clearing methods should be not impact shoreline vegetation or wildlife habitat. Unnatural topping of trees should be avoided.
- Make all existing culverts fish and wildlife passage friendly.
- Signs should comply with National Scenic Area guidelines.
- It may be practical to investigate European signage and other bicycle facilities and adapt their practices that apply here in the Columbia Gorge.
- Provide public access to launch small water craft and to camp every 20 to 30 miles along the river.
- Add scenic or historic viewpoints were appropriate at locations in the Corridor with interpretive information regarding the original Native American cultures.