Mount Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan
Project Leadership Group
Meeting #2
July 19, 2013
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
ODOT R1 Headquarters - 123 NW Flanders St., Portland OR
Meeting Summary

Project Leadership Group (PLG) Attendees:

Jason Tell – Oregon Dept. of Transportation, Region 1 Manager
Karen Joplin – Hood River County Commissioner
Lisa Northrop – Mt. Hood National Forest Acting Supervisor
Jim Bernard – Clackamas County Commissioner

Project Management Team (PMT) Attendees:

George Fekaris – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Susan Law – FHWA
Rithy Bein – Mt Hood National Forest
Don Wiley – Hood River County
Karen Buehrig – Clackamas County
Kirsten Pennington – ODOT
Mike Mason – ODOT

Guests:

Sherrin Coleman – ODOT
John Erickson – The Resort at the Mountain
Marston Morgan – Mt. Hood National Forest
Dennis Chaney – Friends of Mt. Hood
Tom Keenan – Keenan & Partners
M. B. Drake – Mt. Hood Meadows
Steve Wise – Sandy River Basin Watershed Council
Danielle Cowan – Clackamas County, Tourism and Cultural Affairs
John Valley – Sen. Jeff Merkley Field Representative
Greg Leo – Mt. Hood Meadows
John Tullis – Timberline Lodge
Andi Howell – City of Sandy

Facilitator/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. Project status update
3. Public outreach summary
4. Review PMT-recommended list of projects in the MHMTP
5. Discuss next steps as the project moves toward a PLG decision on the project list and into the implementation phase
6. Public comment

1. Introductions – Elizabeth led introductions of the PLG, PMT and public in attendance.

2. Project Update – Elizabeth gave a project update. There were no questions from the PLG during this portion of the meeting.

- Phase I (Nov. 2012 to Sept. 2013) – alternatives are being narrowed and approved by the PLG
- Phase II (Sept. 2013 to winter 2013/2014) – create implementation plan for small set of projects
- Project Status – the Baseline Conditions report has been completed; project evaluation criteria and analysis has been done by the PMT; the PLG has met once prior to today's meeting; there have been three Technical Working Group meetings and four Project Management Meetings; public outreach has taken place

3. Public Outreach Summary – KC Cooper, DEA, provided the public outreach summary. There were no questions from the PLG during this portion of the meeting.

Outreach and Input Overview

- Core Values: improve safety for all users; expand travel options year-round to enhance mobility and access to recreation and rural communities; projects must be financially feasible and sustainable; projects must be implementable in next 15 years
- Secondary Values: promote environmental stewardship; meet the needs of multiple stakeholders; provide economic benefit or opportunity; strengthen relationships between stakeholders; provide a "bang for the buck" of investment

Public Survey – there were 851 respondents to the survey. Results are posted on the project website and were distributed prior to the PLG meeting

4. PMT-Recommended List of Projects – Elizabeth led this overview of the decision-making process. There were no questions or discussion during this portion of the meeting.

Decision-Making Process

The PMT started with more than 100 project possibilities. Project screening based on core values helped create a smaller list of projects. Then the Technical Working Group, PMT and consultants reviewed this smaller list of projects for implementation potential based on eight categories: funding potential, permitting/regulatory compliance, administrative/organizational needs, capital cost, ongoing costs, effective time-frame to implement, dependency on other projects, and leader/champion.

Project Recommendations

The process yielded a list of 40 projects that were categorized into four priority groups: A, B, C, Future Study. Group A projects: first priority for implementation in the MHMTP. Group B projects: second priority for implementation in the MHMTP. Group C projects: third priority for implementation in the MHMTP. Those projects in the Future Study group have high core values but require more information before they are put in group A, B or C. There are 18 projects in Group A, 14 projects in Group B, 2 projects in Group C and 6 projects in the Future Study group.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is an action plan that will have a subset of projects in the MHMTP that will be implemented first. These projects will have high core values, a lead agency/champion, identifiable funding (or an identified path to funding), programmatic and operations strategies and partner commitment. The Implementation Plan is a blueprint for implementing the projects in this category. Memorandums of Understanding or other agreements between project partners may be part of the Implementation Plan.

5. Next Steps – KC led the PLG through the Next Steps discussion

- The PMT will meet in early August to review and respond to comments from the PLG.
- PMT staff should meet with their respective PLG representatives to identify issues, potential changes or additions to project recommendations.

- PMT staff will devise an outreach strategy to get public feedback to the Review information compiled thus far and gather concerns, additions, so the PLG and PMT can work out details before the beginning of September. If you need more information to make a decision, let us know.

Following the Next Steps presentation, there were comments and questions from PLG members and the public:

Jason Tell recommended that the next step be another public outreach campaign. KC responded that the next step is to send out another public survey from the 1st-3rd week of August to get feedback regarding the list of projects. There will also be an online interactive map where people can zoom into the project sites. There will be outreach to stakeholder groups.

Jason Tell felt that it is worth repeating that the list of projects in the Mt Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan is not just a wish list, it's a list of projects that are implementable, have funding potential and have a sponsor to deliver the project. Many past plans just stated the needs of the future with a weak implementation component. For this project, if things change in 5 years -- such as funding or ease of project implementation -- then some projects may become a higher priority. The focus is to get things done and solve what we can now. We are not solving 30 years of problems in 5 years. Lisa Northrop suggested that it would be worth describing in the Plan the process for adding projects.

Elizabeth clarified that we are creating a rolling plan, which is typically created for transit agencies. The rolling plan is more of a short-term plan that lists projects we'd like to get done, but includes longer-term projects as well. The project partners would follow up with a check-in after three years to see if priorities and ability to get the projects done may have changed.

Karen Joplin mentioned that the Project Leadership Group spent a lot of time creating core values. But she is not seeing how the list of projects was scored based on the core values. Elizabeth clarified that the PMT did talk through each project of a longer list of projects and scored each based on the core values. The ones that ranked low are no longer on the list. KC shared that we were looking at the level of support by the PMT. This process was a device to get to a point where we identified those projects that did meet the core values. Staff can make the scoring available on request.

Lisa Northrop inquired whether the Group A projects had the highest core values. Elizabeth reviewed the 4 category description A, B, C, to describe how each one met the basic core values.

Karen said she was looking for another process that would include another strong, good or moderate evaluation against the core values. KC responded that the projects that meet core values were the first screen, next is determining funding, the lead agency and other requirements to make a project move forward.

Jim Bernard asked whether the team was going to look at traffic analysis. Do we know how much funding we have to implement projects?

Jason responded that yes, we know what we have. The projects that ODOT supports for the implementation plan will have funding. Other projects, in the future, may not have funding available, but if the projects have high core values, they will be revisited.

Jim said that there are also possible revenue possibilities that may come up in the future to help fund projects. (If the legislature, for example, makes a decision to fund some projects.)

Danielle Cowan, Clackamas County Director of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, said it sounds like the PLG has not been able to vote on the projects based on the core values and that the PMT is saying take our word for it. This may not be very satisfactory to those who were not there. It may be worthwhile for the PLG to walk through the projects. The PLG may want to rate them based on their knowledge and their constituents' desires.

Jason responded that the opportunity for comments will address this and the team will need to put together the methodology. The PLG will not be making a decision until the next meeting. In the meantime, this is a listening process and if there are any projects that you have, you should engage the team and offer comments. Jason said he feels comfortable with the current project list because ODOT staff have been in communication with him along the way. He noted that the list at this point is just in draft form and is a recommendation by the project team only. The PLG has not made any decisions.

KC shared that these projects were taken from other plans, partner representatives, using public process and these projects have been pared down. The PMT primarily drew project ideas from existing plans.

6. Public Comment

Steve Wise with the Sandy River Basin Watershed Council shared that environmental stewardship as a primary or secondary value is important, particularly projects that touch the Sandy River Basin and Hood River side. Core environmental stewardship values beyond views relate to habitat and water quality. The Sandy River is an anchor habitat for Lower Columbia salmon recovery. Any transportation or

infrastructure project to benefit water quality and salmon habitat would be a good opportunity. For example, during the planning stage for ODOT's I205 multi-use path improvements, stakeholders recognized that integrating tree planting and water quality measures would benefit the project and the community. Mr. Wise suggested allocating capital resources to improve habitat and water quality so that the (MHMTP) projects support environmental stewardship values.

Jason said he appreciated Mr. Wise's input. He said that stakeholders should go through the project list and tell the project team if they see opportunities for environmental stewardship.

Steve Wise added that where there are instances where you have to knock over down large trees for infrastructure projects, the repurposing of trees can be helpful for stream restoration projects. Sandy Basin partners have a huge inventory of need for large trees, which is an expensive material for restoration projects. Jason shared that ODOT has worked with the Forest Service in the past to help with tree materials. He reiterated that a quick scan of the projects for this type of opportunity should be done so that the project team doesn't miss a chance to improve the Sandy Basin.

Dennis Chaney representing Friends of Mt. Hood said he wanted to comment on the list of core values. If he didn't know that the project name was Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan, somebody could tell him that the list was for Powell Blvd. and he would say great. He said he believed that there should be recognition that Mt. Hood is one of the most iconic natural resource areas in the state and that this would be addressed as a core value. He would think that there would be mention that this resource would be preserved, protected, conserved to every extent possible and recognized as such.

Jon Tullis from Timberline Lodge shared that regardless of the specific list, when this project is rolled out to the public, there may be more concern about the fundamental core values than the list. He thinks it is perhaps too prioritized towards safety initiatives, and while that may sound politically incorrect, he feels at this point it is important to point out from a standpoint of the initiatives that the plan will produce. He said he believes that the plan should be more site specific to Mt. Hood and that a lot of people's expectations for the plan are more than just rolling out previously unfunded initiatives – that this narrow view might be practical to a fault. He referenced the recent ODOT safety audit and resulting projects, and said he didn't believe the purpose of the (MHMTP) plan was just to roll out additional safety initiatives, but rather it was an opportunity to look at more innovative transportation needs and potential solutions particular to the mountain environment and conditions, and create an exciting long-term planning vision.

KC said that there is a place for comments online and that the project team is tracking all comments. People can go to the website and email project ideas and they will add it to our list for consideration.

Danielle Cowan from Clackamas County asked if there was an opportunity to change the core values to reflect sensitivity on the mountain? She wondered if there is another measure that could be put in to speak more specifically to Mt. Hood and environmental stewardship and sensitivity or is the plan more of an engineering solution to get things moving in 15 years or less? KC responded that the core values were taken directly from the project charge and were put together after a year of negotiating with all the project partners.

Jason added that it would be particularly helpful in this discussion if those raising the issues about the values look at the list of projects and see if the outcomes are the wrong outcomes or not. Then give us your comments about the specific projects because that's where we are in the process: identifying projects. If people think the projects are the wrong ones, then that is what we need to hear.

Lisa shared that what she is hearing is a question about the genesis of these projects. What was the mandate and how did it translate through the project charge into the core values? Telling that story as a preamble to this list would get at the issues raised and why it's focused in this general direction. The things that are brought up are good to highlight because maybe it shows that there is a need for the back story before it gets rolled out. Jason agreed that this back story has to be there during the public outreach. And if the outcomes are right, wrong, or missing anything, that this is what we need to know.

Danielle Cowan asked if the public would see the projects that were not included on the recommended list of projects or whether they would only see the final 40. KC said that the project team can post a link to the list on the website.

Jim shared that when he is considering the project list, he's not just looking at the project core values but including his core values too. If taking a curb out just gets people down the mountain faster, but doesn't save a life, then he probably isn't that interested in it. Or if it destroys the environment or something that everyone feels is important to protect, he would not support having that project on the list.

Karen said that some of the early discussion when the Project Leadership Group was just getting started and formulating the core values revolved around fatalities for people that were trying to visit Mt. Hood to recreate. There was a lot of discussion about keeping the (MHMTP) plan narrow and keeping the core values list small. Maybe some words are missing here or there, but the discussion was about safety, reducing fatalities, and creating some options to create better usage of the areas

and better availability of the recreation areas for those that might not be able to currently get there.

KC concluded by thanking everyone for being there and that the project team would continue to keep everyone informed and involved. She said that the next public meeting of the PLG would take place in late September. In the meantime, the project management team would gather public input on the draft list of recommended projects before the PLG approves them for the Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan.

Next Meeting
The next meeting of the PLG will be schedule for late September/early October.