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COMPLETE

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Page 2: ACE Award Application

Q1

Name of Project:

Deschutes County 2040

Q2

Jurisdiction or Local Government:

Deschutes County

Q3

Applicant name:

Nicole Mardell, AICP, Senior Planner - Long Range

Q4

Contact email:

nicole.mardell@deschutes.org

Q5

Contact phone number:

5413173157

Q6

Name of organization or agency:

Deschutes County

Page 3: Project Team and Partners

Q7 Other (please specify):
50% consultant/ 50% county staff
Who led the community engagement effort for this project?

Q8
Project start date: Generalizations acceptable: e.g. "Spring 2021" or "2019"
May 2022

Q9
Target project completion date:
February 2024

Q10
What organizations participated in the project team and/or as project partners? If community-based or community-serving organizations were involved in community engagement efforts, please identify the community or communities they represent in your response.

- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Association - Hunting Community
 - Central Oregon Builders Association and Central Oregon Realtors Association - Realtor, Developer community
 - Central Oregon Land Watch - Environmental community
 - Central Oregon Veteran's Ranch - Veterans
 - Deschutes County Farm Bureau - Farming/Ranching community
 - Deschutes County Juvenile Services - Houseless/homeless community
 - Deschutes County Language Access - Latinx/spanish speaking community
 - Deschutes Land Trust - Environmental community
 - Deschutes Public Library Administrative Team - Youth, low income populations, Spanish speaking community
 - Deschutes River Conservancy - Environmental community
 - Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District - farmer/rancher community
 - Economic Development of Central Oregon - business community
 - Environmental Center - Environmental community
 - High Desert Education Service District - Youth, families, low income populations
 - High Desert Food and Farm Alliance - farmer/rancher community
 - NeighborImpact - low income populations, people of color, youth
 - Old Bend Neighborhood Association
 - Orchard District Neighborhood Association
 - Oregon Hunters Association - Deschutes Chapter - Hunting community
 - Oregon Natural Desert Association - Environmental community
 - Project Wildfire - Rural residents, natural hazard experts
 - Sunriver Area Homeowner's Association
 - Upper Deschutes Watershed Council Board - Environmental group
 - Preserve East Bend - Neighborhood group, low income populations, farming/ranching populations
 - Bend Rotary
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Q11

Were any of Oregon's nine federally recognized or other tribes invited to engage in this work?

Yes, the following tribes were engaged:
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

Q12

Was a compensation model used for participation? If so, briefly describe.

Yes, we used a compensation model that:
Yes, gift cards were provided at outreach events through raffle. This was a new pilot program for Deschutes County. County policy limits stipends or reimbursement for participation. Staff enacted a new department policy to allow distribution of 10-\$10 gift cards through a raffle process at County Fair pop up event. Separately, provided food, beverages, and prizes at engagement events to spur interest, particularly among youth and families.

Q13

Was this project supported through grant funding?

Yes, this project received grant funding from:
\$5,000 grant for digital engagement tools received through DLCD technical assistance fund

Page 4: Project Description

Q14

Please describe the area affected by this project.

Deschutes County is 3,054 square miles in size, with a 2022 population of 207,561. The County contains four incorporated cities: Bend, La Pine, Redmond, and Sisters which accounts for approximately 2% of the County's land area but approximately 70% of the population.

The Deschutes County 2040 project is an update to the County's Comprehensive Plan and sought two major outcomes to community engagement: (1) inform residents on the parameters of rural land use, planning, and key issues facing the County and (2) involved residents in crafting policies and goals that will address these issues and provide guidance for future growth and development in the rural County.

Throughout the process, staff sought to reach rural residents in the far reaches of Deschutes County where they were. On farms and ranches, in grocery store parking lots, in community halls, parks district offices, fire halls, libraries, in their homes, and online. Staff toured the County between October 2022 and May 2023, holding small scale "meetings-in-a-box" and larger scale open houses.

It became apparent during the process that city residents were seeking to be involved in this process for a more regional approach to planning. As such, staff also began holding meetings with city residents to gather their feedback.

Q15

43

Where is your project in the planning cycle?

Q16

What is the desired outcome of this planning process? What will this land use planning effort accomplish?

The Deschutes County 2040 project seeks to collect community feedback and provide up-to-date and proactive goals and policies to guide growth and development in Deschutes County for the next 20 years. As part of these, staff also seeks to build relationships with community members, engage subject matter experts to inform our existing conditions and future trends, and amend planning documents to be accessible, aesthetically pleasing, and user-friendly.

Page 5: Community Engagement

Q17

What are the community engagement objectives for this plan or project?

Staff and the consultant team drafting a community engagement plan for this project, found here:

<https://weblink.deschutes.org/CDD/DocView.aspx?id=1152201&dbid=0&repo=LCDD&cr=1>

Engagement Goals

- The Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan Update project will reach across the county and engage a broad spectrum of community members, including those who have not been a part of past comprehensive plan projects. This will include multiple, targeted methods to hear the perspectives of:
 - o All parts of Deschutes County (geographic coverage)
 - o Residents that the Community Development Department doesn't typically hear from (demographic diversity, less-vocal communities, younger residents under 25)
 - o Residents and stakeholders who are disproportionately impacted by planning decisions (people of color, low-income residents, veterans, those with disabilities, linguistically isolated communities)
 - o Recent and long-time residents (length of residency)

 - Individual activities will be designed to not only collect input from large numbers of participants, but also allow for disaggregation of results to explore differences in opinion.

 - We aim to hear directly from the individuals of Deschutes County; we will also reach out to community organizations and advocates representing the perspectives described above.

 - We will facilitate meetings to maximize the diversity of voices heard and avoid having the conversation dominated by individual perspectives.

 - We will explore meeting venue options that are familiar and comfortable for community members, including the potential for outdoor meeting spaces.

 - At key points in the process, we will pause to reflect on the results to-date as well as engagement with social and web content. We will conduct a detailed Engagement Audit during the project to evaluate how well the County's goals are being met and make changes to tools and outreach methods as needed.

 - We will continue the commitment of Deschutes County to remove barriers to participating in community discussions. This will include access to the physical, technological, cultural, and language spaces that are a part of the process.

 - We will make it clear to community members how feedback will be used and the limitations at this level of planning and jurisdiction.
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Q18

How did decision-makers use or consider this information in the decision-making process? (if applicable)

The Deschutes County Planning Commission is overseeing the project and serving as the project advisory body. The PC reviewed the community engagement plan and provided input to staff on additional techniques to reach community members at the initiation of this project.

During the first round of engagement (Oct-January 2022) staff was collecting feedback on key issues, opportunities and challenges the County would face over the next 20 years. That information was consolidated into three separate reports:

-Meeting-in-a-box Summary Rd 1: <https://weblink.deschutes.org/CDD/DocView.aspx?id=1152018&dbid=0&repo=LCFDD&cr=1>

-Open House Summary Rd 1: <https://weblink.deschutes.org/CDD/DocView.aspx?id=1152021&dbid=0&repo=LCFDD>

-Deschutes 2040 Engagement Audit 1: <https://weblink.deschutes.org/CDD/DocView.aspx?id=1152017&dbid=0&repo=LCFDD>

This information was presented to the Planning Commission during their initial review of draft goals and policies for the updated plan. Commissioners could read detailed community perspectives on key issues, which, in many cases, informed their decisions for comments/edits to the policies proposed by staff.

This information was also provided to the Board of County Commissioners during a project check-in on March 6, 2023. Staff and the Commissioners discussed community perspectives at length during this meeting.

Q19

What tools did you use for communication and community engagement? Refer to Putting the People in Planning for descriptions of the tools below.

Project website,
Email updates,
Newsletter or newsletter articles,
Translation Services,
Advisory Committee or Group,
Traditional Open Houses,
Online Open Houses,
Fact Sheets, Brochures or Flyers,
Online survey,
Online survey (translated),
Other,
FAQs,
Infographics,
TV, Radio or Newspaper Interviews,
Editorial Board,
In person presentations,
Stakeholder Interviews,
Neighborhood Association meetings,
Social Media

Q20

If you answered "other" to the previous question, please describe what additional communication and community engagement tools were or are used.

Staff and the consultant team created a "meeting-in-a-box" that was used extensively throughout the process. This included a brief presentation, worksheets, demographics surveys, and prizes. Staff used this kit for meetings in the field throughout the County

Page 6: Active Outreach and Engagement

Q21

No

Did you consult a local or agency Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan or committee in developing a community engagement plan?

Q22

What process did you use to identify priority populations/underserved communities affected by this work?

Consultant conducted analysis of priority populations using census data to identify priority populations. Additionally, discussions with PC informed additional underserved communities to be reached during process.

Q23

What intentional efforts did you make to include priority populations/underserved communities?

We coordinated closely with Deschutes County Language Access to distribute materials to our latinx/spanish speaking populations via a known contact. We translated our website and online open house, including FAQs and project information.

We reached out directly to service providers, in particular for low income, homeless, and veterans communities, to involve those providers in our plan. They felt most comfortable in this role as they have already received quite a bit of information from these communities, and have established relationships.

We sought diverse geographic representation by holding meetings in many areas throughout the County, reaching residents who may not have internet or reliable cell service through mailings, flyers, word-of-mouth, and articles in community group newsletters.

We sought to build relationships with groups representing people of color, although learned very quickly that these groups are often overwhelmed by requests to participate in government processes. We instead sought to gather feedback more casually and continue to nurture those relationships.

We sought to engage youth by providing prizes at events, including pop up events at the County fair and grocery stores.

Q24

What assessments/evaluations have you conducted of the community engagement work to date?

Tracking public meeting attendance,
Tracking website traffic,
Tracking social media impressions,
Tracking newsletter or email engagement,
Project team debrief after events,
Updating or changing plans based on evaluation,
Multiple opportunities for communities, individuals, or organization to express concerns about engagement
,
Open log of public comments available to the public,
Synthesis of public comments and feedback,
Other (please specify):
Please see fall engagement summaries and initial engagement audit on project website. Second set of engagement summaries will be available on the website www.deschutes.org/2040 June 1.

Q25

If the project is ongoing, describe assessments or evaluations planned as the project moves forward.

A second evaluation is being finalized for the spring 2023 round of engagement. The third engagement audit will be conducted prior to plan adoption.

Page 8: Lessons Learned

Q26

What did you learn through the assessment and evaluation of the community engagement process?

By far the most effective tool to reach rural residents is by holding smaller, in person meetings-in-a-box at locations convenient to them, whether it be a parks and rec district office or a neighbor's barn. We received the most participation through this method and reached the most priority populations through this method.

The new project website tool (Esri) and online engagement tool (Consider.it) produced more interest from community members compared to our standard county webpages and online surveys. The feedback received regarding the online engagement tool was particularly positive, as residents felt it was more of an interactive, civic discourse, rather than sending comments "into the ether".

Our tracking of demographics was continuously challenging, as many rural residents were resistant to providing demographic information, due to general discomfort releasing that information. This made it difficult to track project metrics related to goals.

We continue to hear from primarily white residents. County planning will need to continuously build and nurture relationships with community groups who are the conduit to many of our spanish speaking populations and people of color.

Q27

Do any lessons learned have the potential to inform other, future phases, or new community engagement efforts? If so, please explain.

County staff was implementing many new tools as part of this engagement process (use of gift cards, providing prizes, using more staff time to travel throughout the County, a new website using Esri, a new online forum using Consider.it). We have been very pleased with the success of these new resources and plan to incorporate these into other planning processes moving forward.

Not yet mentioned was a social media campaign created by County planning staff. The Communications department at the County is very small and did not have capacity for creation of specialty graphics. Two staff members coordinated on strategy and interesting graphics to spur engagement via all social channels. See example https://www.instagram.com/deschutes_county/?hl=en

Q28

How does the community engagement for this project align with overall community engagement efforts for this organization?

Community engagement has always been a priority for Deschutes County. In recent years, it has become apparent that new methods are needed to reach County residents who might not engage with local government. The use of innovative and interesting engagement activities is in line with the efforts throughout the organization, in particular the great work the County Health Department has done to engage rural residents on health related issues.
