

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

December 6, 2024

Project# 27003.038

To: Sandra Hikari, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Doug Decker, Oregon Solutions

From: Nick Gross and Katie Popp, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

RE: Mt. Hood Rest Area Relocation Public Involvement Plan – FINAL

Introduction

The Mt. Hood Rest Area Relocation project (Project) is a comprehensive, multi-phase project to plan, design, and construct a new rest area facility serving the Mt. Hood area. This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) lays the groundwork for the project’s public engagement efforts, which are essential for ensuring public engagement processes reflect the project’s commitment to accessible and equitable community engagement.

The PIP outlines public involvement strategies, outreach, and communication approaches for the Project. The purpose of the PIP is to identify methods to allow Mt. Hood area residents, interested parties, and the general public the opportunity to

- Share their respective needs, perspectives, and uses of the existing rest area as part of the *Project Planning* phase; and
- Provide ideas and thoughts on the relocation of the Mt. Hood rest area and the needs of a future rest area facility.

This PIP is being developed as part of the *Project Planning* phase. The *Project Planning* phase will develop a project charter, perform public engagement, identify potential project sites for rest area relocation, and produce a Draft Purpose and Need statement that can be used in a subsequent environmental review process. The *Project Planning* phase will culminate with the recommendation of one or more alternative site locations and conceptual site layouts. Figure 1 shows the project phases.

Figure 1 Mt. Hood Rest Area Relocation Project - Phases



The activities and strategies described in this PIP serve as a high-level guide for planning and strategizing public involvement activities throughout each phase of the project. Detailed engagement activities and strategies for the *Project Planning* phase are also provided. As the project progresses, detailed action plans and strategies for each phase will be developed to ensure the public involvement methods

effectively meet the needs of the general public, surrounding communities, as well as agencies and businesses with a significant interest in a relocated rest area.

The PIP reflects commitments from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Oregon Travel Information Council (OTIC), US Forest Service (USFS), Western Federal Lands (WFL) Highway Division, and Oregon Solutions (OS) to carry out public involvement events to inform the development of the Project.

The organization of the PIP is:

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Project Information

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2021, Oregon Governor Kate Brown designated relocation of the Mt. Hood Rest Area as an Oregon Solutions project. Three designated project conveners – Congressman Earl Blumenauer, State Representative Anna Williams, and Tom Imeson – and the 22 members of the Oregon Solutions team developed an initial Declaration of Cooperation in 2022. The initial *Project Preparation* phase produced a project scope, timeline, and an [Assessment Report](#), laying the groundwork for successful advancement of the project.

DEVELOPING THE PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEEDS

The *Project Planning* phase will draft and refine a general purpose for the project and identify the project needs to identify potential project sites and develop a concept plan. The project's purpose and needs will be informed through coordination with partner agencies and public input. At the end of the *Project Planning* phase, the PMT will produce a draft Purpose and Need Statement that can be used in the NEPA process, which will occur in subsequent planning and design phases.

STUDY AREA

The study area for the *Project Planning* phase includes the US 26 corridor, extending approximately 15 miles in each direction from Government Camp, shown in Figure 2. This area is predominately made up of USFS Lands and includes nearby communities, recreation/day-use, ski resorts, and sno-parks.

Existing Rest Area

The existing rest area functions as a gateway for travelers accessing ski resorts and hiking trails, as well as those traveling between the Portland metro area and destinations east of the Cascades, including transit service.¹ The rest area shares a parking lot with the Summit Ski Area, which can have significant congestion during the peak winter season when the Ski Area parking lot fills up. Additionally, access to the rest area and the ski area is shared with the ingress and egress routes to the community of Government Camp. This shared access point facilitates movement between the three locations but also introduces challenges to traffic flow, contributing to safety concerns and limited parking availability for visitors.

Study Area Refinement

As the *Project Planning* phase and preliminary site screening advances, the study area will narrow to focus on sites that appear viable for rest area relocation.

¹ Transit service is provided by [Central Oregon Breeze](#).

Figure 2 Project Study Area



Social Equity

The [Oregon Social Equity Index Map](#) shows areas where social vulnerability factors overlap, indicating communities that are likely experiencing disparities. The map serves as a tool for integrating and prioritizing equity within the Project’s activities and decision-making.

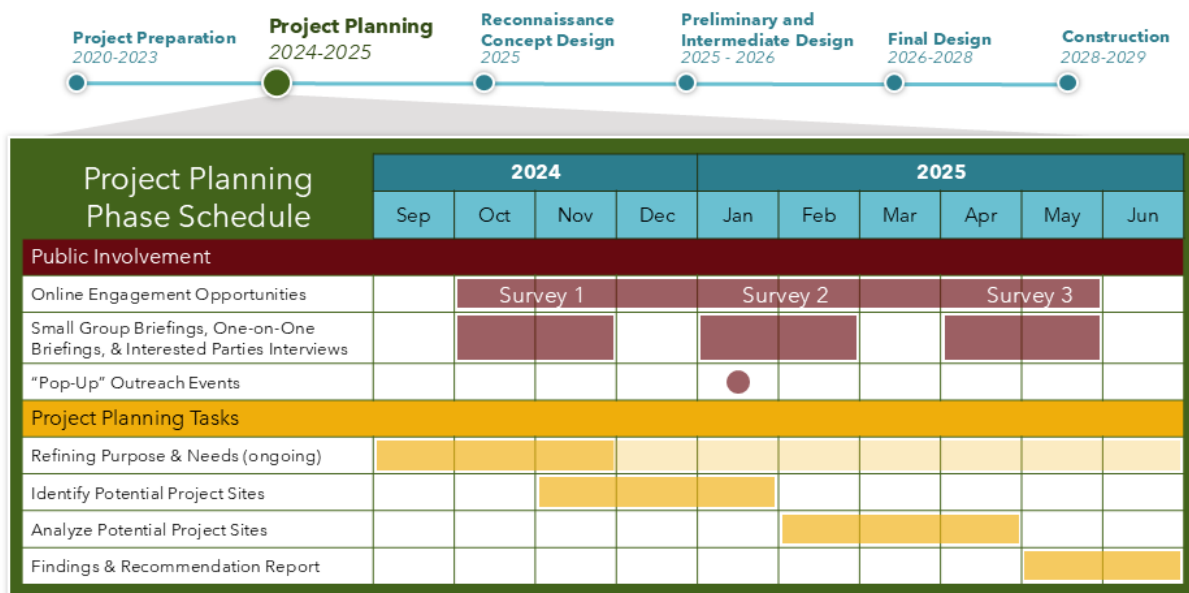
The social equity index assigns an equity disparity score to each census tract based on demographic data from the American Community Survey (ACS) at the block group level, with classifications ranging from Low disparity to High disparity. Census tracts along the US 26 corridor Rhododendron and OR 216 are primarily classified as Low-Medium disparity, while those south of OR 216 are categorized as Medium-High disparity. The segment of OR 35 within Clackamas County is classified as Low-Medium disparity, but east of the county line in Hood River County, it’s classified as High disparity.

The Public Engagement Strategies section of this document describes the toolbox of communication and engagement strategies that will be utilized in the *Project Planning* phase to inform and consult vulnerable populations within the project area.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Key public involvement opportunities aligning with *Project Planning* tasks are illustrated in Figure 3. The public involvement elements of the schedule are described in more detail in the *Public Engagement Activities* section.

Figure 3 Project Schedule

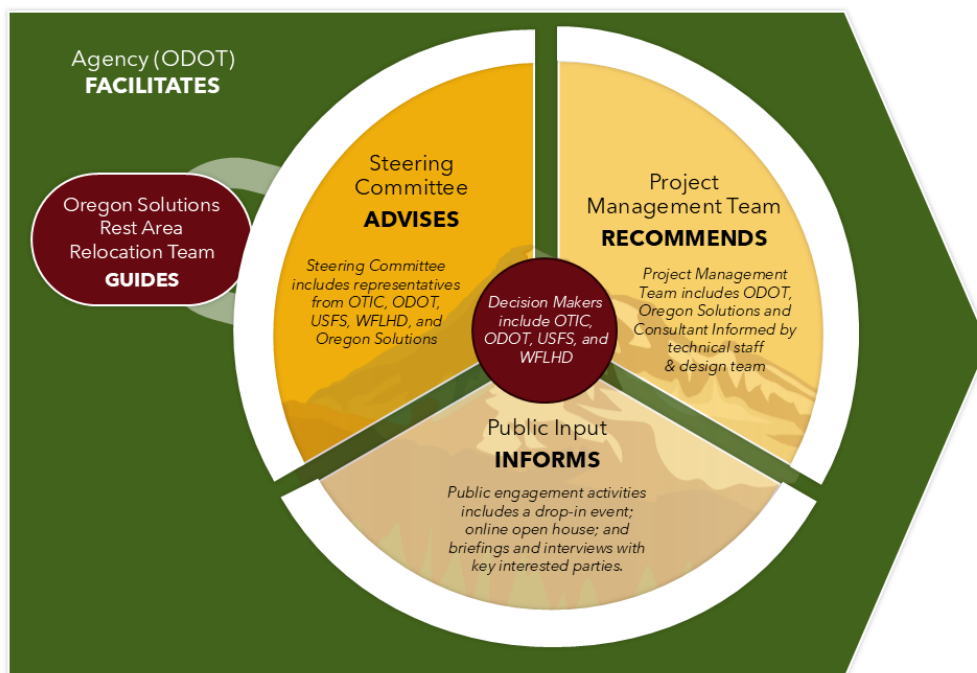


Project Decision-Making Roles

Project decision-making *for the Project Planning phase* is guided by three primary groups: the Project Management Team (PMT), which includes ODOT, Oregon Solutions, and the consultant team; the project Steering Committee, comprising representatives from ODOT, Oregon Solutions, USFS, OTIC, WFLHD, and Travel Oregon; and the general public.

Figure 4 illustrates the roles and responsibilities of each group. These roles are defined and described in the Project Charter.

Figure 4 Project Decision-Making Roles



Public Involvement Purpose and Desired Outcomes

The purpose of public involvement is to increase project awareness and gather input on the needs and concerns of interested parties, which will ensure a well-informed and equitable decision-making and planning process for the planning, design, and construction of a relocated rest area. Interested parties are categorized into three distinct groups:

1. **Local partners:** This group includes local business owners, residents, property owners, natural resource managers, and other public, private, and civic partners with a vested interest in the relocation of the rest area. This group's perspectives will primarily inform decision-making for where the rest area is relocated.

2. **Traveling public:** This group includes users of the rest area, including the traveling public, recreational visitors, and the freight community. This group's perspectives will provide insights into the primary needs that the relocated rest area should address.
3. **Tribal governments:** Consultation and coordination with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs will be facilitated through ODOT's Tribal Liaison to ensure Tribal perspectives are adequately and effectively incorporated in Project activities.

As public involvement strategies and activities are planned and developed through each phase, it is important for the PMT and Steering Committee to consider how to most effectively engage both groups, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations as identified in the Oregon Social Equity Index Map.

The desired outcomes of the project's public involvement efforts are to:

- Communicate complete, accurate, understandable, ADA accessible, and timely information to the public throughout the project.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for input from key interested parties, vulnerable populations, meeting attendees, and conveners to inform the needs of the project as it relates to developing a draft Purpose and Needs Statement.
- Actively seek public input throughout the project by engaging diverse perspectives through a variety of efforts, including a mix of in-person and online events, with a targeted focus on engaging vulnerable populations.
- Promote an equitable and collaborative approach to ensure project planning and decision-making reflects the needs and concerns of local partners and the traveling public.
- Seek participation of Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VI/Environmental Justice groups, including disabled, low-income, limited English proficiency, minority, or other underserved groups in the project area.
- Ensure that the public involvement process is consistent with applicable state and federal laws and requirements, and is sensitive to local policies, goals, and objectives.

Public Engagement Activities

Each project phase will implement a variety of public engagement activities tailored to the community's needs and the specific goals of that phase. This section outlines the public engagement activities for the *Project Planning* phase.

The *Project Planning* phase will include a pop-up outreach event hosted by members of the PMT, an online open house, as well as small group briefings and one-on-one interviews with key interested parties. The focus of these activities will be to:

- Inform the public about the project, including key milestones and the timeline of future phases;
- Gather input on potential locations for relocating the rest area; and
- Collect input from rest area users on the features they would like to see in a relocated rest area to best meet their needs.

Public input in this phase will inform the development of the Draft Purpose and Needs statement. /.

POP-UP OUTREACH EVENT

An in-person pop-up event will be held in January 2025, taking place at a minimum of two locations within the Government Camp area, including the existing rest area parking lot. The exact date, time, and additional pop-up locations will be determined. The purpose of the outreach event is to increase awareness about the project and gather input on the needs for the new rest area. The consultant will prepare a two-page memorandum summarizing collected input following the event.

The pop-up events will be advertised through agency and supporting partner websites and social media, flyers posted in the existing rest area, community bulletin boards in Government Camp, and via email to a targeted list of key interested parties.

The pop-ups will provide the following information to the public:

- Project background, schedule, and area map
- General purpose of the project and needs identified to-date
- Overview of site identification process, including the site selection criteria and preliminary findings.

Public participants will provide input through:

- Annotations on a large area base map
- One-on-one conversations with members of the PMT and Steering Committee
- Annotations on public comment boards with targeted questions about primary interests, needs, or goals related to a rest area within the Mt. Hood area
- Survey, available on paper or through an online platform

ONLINE OPEN HOUSE

The Online Open House will be hosted on ArcGIS Storymap and will be available to the public through the duration of the *Project Planning* phase, with three opportunities for input that align with key milestones in the *Planning Phase*:

- **Survey 1:** Gathering input on the public's primary interests, needs, or goals related to a rest area near Mt. Hood.
- **Survey 2:** Gathering input on a list of potential site locations for the relocated rest stop.
- **Survey 3:** Collecting input on the preferred site alternative.

The Storymap features an overview of the project and schedule, project updates and documents, and opportunities for input at key project milestones. The Online Open House will be advertised on ODOT's website.² At the end of each survey, the consultant will summarize input and key findings to share with the PMT and Steering Committee.

² ODOT Website Link: <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/projects/pages/project-details.aspx?project=23624>

SMALL GROUP BRIEFING, ONE-ON-ONE BRIEFINGS, AND INTERESTED PARTIES INTERVIEW PLAN

PMT members will conduct up to six (6) one-hour phone or virtual interviews with public, private, and civic groups in the form of one-on-one briefings or small group briefings. Interviews will be conducted at key milestones throughout the *Project Planning* phase, with focused discussions that aim to gather diverse perspectives that will inform the selection of a potential relocation site. The consultant will lead the outreach, scheduling, and developing the agenda for the interviews.

Table 1 provides an initial list of individuals, groups, and organizations for targeted outreach as part of the small group briefings, one-on-one briefings, and interested parties' interviews. *Note: Tribal Consultation will be facilitated through ODOT's Tribal Liaison.*

Approach to Interviews and Briefings

The consultant will organize small group briefings with parties who share overlapping perspectives or have interdependent interests. An emphasis will be placed on engaging transportation disadvantaged populations (TDP) who live, work, and recreate within the study area, including but not limited to Elderly populations (65 and older), Youth populations (under 18), Non-white and Hispanic populations, Limited English proficiency populations, Low-income populations, Households without access to a vehicle, People with a disability (severe or non-severe disability), and Crowded households.

In advance of each small group or one-on-one briefing, the consultant will provide a Project Fact Sheet that describes the project background and needs, timeline, and public involvement opportunities for the *Project Planning* phase. Following the completion of the interviews or one-on-one briefing, the consultant will provide a memorandum to the PMT and Steering Committee summarizing themes, and input received. Interview input will be discussed amongst the PMT and incorporated into the site criteria and preliminary screening to inform the scoring opportunity site alternatives.

INTERVIEW AND ONE-ON-ONE BRIEFING QUESTIONS

The draft Small Group Briefing and One-on-One Briefing Questions shown in Table 2 have been developed to solicit a range of input on various interests and regarding the relocation of the Mt. Hood rest area. Key focus areas for discussion include but are not limited to the location, function, and public services provided by a new rest area, as well as safety, access, economic opportunities, and natural resources. The draft interview and one-on-one briefing questions will serve as an interview framework to guide the briefings while allowing flexibility to adapt or ask new questions based on real-time discussions.

Table 1 Potential Interviewees

Group	Representative	Point of Contact
Agency	Travel Oregon	Scott Bricker
	Oregon Trucking Association	Mike Card
	Columbia Area Transit	Patti Fink, Executive Director
Government	Clackamas County, Social Services	Teresa Christopherson
	Clackamas County, Commissioner	Paul Savas
	Rhododendron Community Planning Organization (CPO)	Steve Graeper
	Government Camp Community Planning Organization (CPO)	Nick Rinard
	City of Sandy & Oregon Transit Association	Andi Howell
	Clackamas County, Human Services Supervisor (Mt. Hood Express)	Kristina Babcock
	Clackamas County, Tourism & Cultural Affairs, Mt. Hood Territory	Sarah Eckman
	Clackamas County, Pedestrian and Bikeway Advisory Committee, Chair	David Weber
	Clackamas County, Long Range Planning Manager	Karen Beurhing
	Clackamas County, Transportation Safety Program Manager	Joe Marek
	Governor’s Office, Regional Strategies	Raihana Ansary and Nate Stice, Regional Coordinators
	Hood River County, Forestry Director	Doug Thiesies
	Hood River County, Community Development	Eric Walker
Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD)	Kathy Fitzpatrick	
Businesses & Property Owners	SkiBowl Group of Companies	Brett Fisher, Mike Quinn
	Timberline Lodge	Jeff Kohnstamm
	Mt. Hood Meadows	Matthew Drake
	Mt. Hood Museum, Government Camp	Lloyd Musser
	Lodges at Salmon River, Owners	Lynne and Mike Annett
	Chevron Government Camp (near the Lodges at Salmon River)	[Contact Needed]
	Summit Chevron at Government Camp	[Contact Needed]
Residents	Mt. Hood Forest Homeowners Association, President	Paula Hoiland
Emergency Services	Hoodland Fire District/ Hoodland Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)	Nora Gambee, President

Table 2 Draft Small Group and One-on-One Briefings Questions

	Question
1	What are your primary interests, needs, or goals regarding the relocation of the existing Mt. Hood rest area?
2	Have you been involved in any previous effort to discuss and/ or improve the parking/ rest area at Government Camp? If so, please elaborate.
3	What are the most important priorities and/ or project goals for identifying a new site for the relocated rest area?
4	What are the challenges or barriers that need to be addressed to successfully meet the needs of rest area users, surrounding communities, including businesses, employers, and residents?
5	Do you have any ideas or locations where the future rest area could be located? If yes, what are the potential opportunities and challenges with the future site?
6	Would you like to participate in upcoming engagement opportunities as the team develops site alternatives?
7	What features would you like to see in the new rest area?
8	Do you have any suggestions on who else should be involved in the site selection/ alternatives development process?
9	Do you have any questions for us? Is there anything else you want to address that wasn't addressed already?

Public Involvement Strategies

In addition to the public engagement activities described in the previous section, the PMT and Steering Committee will utilize a variety of engagement strategies and communications tools to increase awareness about the project and share information about project milestones and upcoming public engagement opportunities. These strategies are described in Table 3.

Table 3 Engagement Strategies

What	Who	When	Notes
Interested Parties Email List	Consultant will develop and maintain the list. Consultant will communicate with Interested Parties at key project milestones to provide updates and the project and share opportunities for providing input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Key Project Milestones ■ Public Outreach Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The email list will be used to inform interested persons and organizations of the Project’s progress. ■ The list will be developed and updated throughout project development. ■ Members of the general public can sign up for email updates via the Online Open House (StoryMap).
Social Media Outreach	Agency will be responsible for social media outreach via email and social media. Consultant will provide agencies with text and graphics to use for social media outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Key Project Milestones ■ Public Outreach Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consultant or Agency can provide social media materials to other project partners to share on their respective social media platforms, if requested.
Canvassing	Consultant will conduct one round of canvassing. Consultant will develop materials for canvassing activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pop-Up Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consultant will canvas local businesses and property owners within the project study area to distribute the Project Fact Sheet and gather input on needs.
Project Website	Agency will develop and maintain a project website through the duration of the <i>Project Planning phase</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ October 2024 to June 2025 (Duration of the <i>Project Planning phase</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project website will include project overview and purpose, updates on key project milestones, information about public events, and a link to the online open house. ■ Website link: https://www.oregon.gov/odot/projects/pages/project-details.aspx?project=23624
Communication Graphics	Consultant will develop Consultant and Agency will use graphics to support project communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ October 2024 to June 2025 (Duration of the <i>Project Planning phase</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communication graphics will be provided and displayed at public events, small group briefings, one-on-one briefings, and project area canvassing. Communication graphics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Fact Sheet - Outreach Schedule Graphic - Project Decision-Making Graphic - Project Area Map.

Evaluation

At key project milestones, the PMT will meet to discuss and assess how well the public involvement activities and strategies are meeting the desired outcomes listed in the PIP. While evaluation of these goals is necessarily subjective, the PMT and Steering Committee will also consider the following more measurable objectives as the team assesses program effectiveness:

- Number of participants attending meetings or events.
- Number of Online Open House visits occurring during a specific time period.
- Number of survey respondents on the Online Open House.
- Number of people who have signed up for the project email list.
- Number of project comments received (phone, email, online).
- Whether the comments are relevant to the project (indicates project understanding).
- Assessing the diversity of perspectives in the input and comment process to ensure a range of public, private, and civic interests are represented in public involvement process.
- How project decisions have been modified as a result of public input.
- Comments from vulnerable populations who typically experience disparities, such as barriers to transportation access, will be elevated to the Steering Committee and PMT.

Title VI Report

At the conclusion of the Project and for the purposes of documenting the Project process and outreach activities, the consultant will prepare a Title VI Report. The Title VI Report will describe the process and outreach efforts for engaging Title VI populations within the study area, including low-income, race, gender, and age groups as well as other transportation disadvantaged populations. The report will summarize outreach and public involvement efforts and present key statistics for these efforts, including number of events held, people engaged, and active hours spent on public engagement activities.

Next Steps

This Public Involvement Plan will be used to guide ongoing public involvement activities in the *Project Planning* phase. Submittal dates for each version of this document are listed below.

- Draft Public Involvement Plan – Submitted 10/31/24
- Final Public Involvement Plan – Submitted 12/5/2024