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Appendix 4

Stakeholder Interview Summary

WALK & BIKE
THE VILLAGES AT MT. HOOD

The Villages at Mount Hood Pedestrian and Bikeway Implementation Plan

Stakeholder Interview Summary

December 4, 2015

ch2m

Stakeholder Input

To better understand stakeholders' desires for the study area and the project, the project team interviewed selected stakeholders. The project team selected stakeholders because they represent an agency or organization with a connection to the project area and/or project objectives. Stakeholder input has been used to develop the policy framework and evaluation criteria for this plan. In addition to stakeholder input, the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provide input, and their input is summarized in meeting minutes of the first meeting and field trip.

Stakeholders interviewed are listed below. Clackamas County Project Manager/Senior Planner, Lori Mastrantonio-Meuser and consultant Project Manager/Planner, Sumi Malik conducted all interviews either in person or by phone. This memorandum summarizes stakeholder input within commonly cited concerns and opportunities. In the case that an agency had input specific to their agency's authority, that input is attributed to a specific person.

Stakeholder Name	Agency or Organization Affiliation	Date and Form of Meeting
Jason Miller	Ski Bowl and Mt. Hood Adventures	Sept. 10, 2015 in person
Petre Kakes	Hurricane Racing	Sept. 10, 2015 in person
Coni Scott	Mt. Hood Chamber	Sept. 10, 2015 in person
George Wilson	Villages at Mt. Hood Board of Director Mt. Hood Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition	Sept. 10, 2015 in person
Nate Seifert	Resort at the Mountain	Sept. 10, 2015 in person
Teresa Christopherson	Mt. Hood Express	October 22, 2015 by phone
Jeff McCusker David Moore Dan Davis	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	September 16, 2015 by phone
Kristin Austin, PE Jen Wade Vicki Peterson Greg Warner	US Forest Service (USFS) Mt. Hood	September 14, 2015 by phone
Susan Corwin	Barlow Trail Association	September 14, 2015 by phone
Jana Jarvis	Oregon Trucking Association	September 18, 2015 by phone

Desired Outcomes

Stakeholder input is organized by their desired outcomes (numbered). Several major themes emerged as shared desired outcomes between stakeholders. This input becomes part of the basis for the policy framework and evaluation criteria (Tech. Memo #2 Policy Framework and Alternatives Evaluation and Prioritization Criteria), which will be used to develop and prioritize projects.

#1 Safe Pedestrian and Bicycle Access to Major Destinations including Schools and Transit

All stakeholders expressed interest in safer and more comfortable bicycle and pedestrian facilities on at least minor arterials and collectors within the project area. Several stakeholders emphasized proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities should take into consideration limitations of right-of-way, relative

bicycle and pedestrian demand, and the rural character of the area. Stakeholders also emphasized considering snow conditions when planning proposed improvements, which is important from a maintenance and operations point of view. Snow typically falls in areas east of Rhododendron, at higher elevations. Typically, snow fall in The Villages at Mt. Hood melts after a snow event and does not accumulate on shoulders over the course of the winter.

Stakeholders expressed that facilities or connections are critically needed on E. Welches Road, E. Salmon River Road, and E. Barlow Trail Road, and to access Mt. Hood Express transit stops, the Sandy Ridge Trail System, and the Wildwood Recreation Site. These major destinations and the transit service are described in more detail in Tech. Memo #1: Existing Conditions: Needs, Constraints, and Opportunities Memo.

E. Welches Road

E. Welches Road is a north-south collector in Welches that provides access to many area destinations. The Resort on the Mountain is bisected by E. Welches Road, with a golf course, spa and event facilities on one side and hotel rooms, residences, tennis courts and additional golf greens on the other. The Resort on the Mountain's representative stated that staff and visitors frequently cross E. Welches Road at to access resort facilities. Here, site distance northbound for cars is limited because of a large hill. The Resort, Chamber of Commerce, and the Mt. Hood Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition representatives stated that pedestrians, when looking to the south, have limited sight distance and often fail to see approaching vehicles that were exceeding the speed limit. The number of pedestrians crossing, the collector volumes on the roadway, and the limited site distance, all contribute to stakeholder's safety concerns for pedestrians in this area. A marked crosswalk exists within the area with advisory warning signs for pedestrians, which provides some minimal advance warning for drivers.

The Resort, Chamber of Commerce, and the Mt. Hood Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition stakeholders said presently, pedestrians including children walk on E. Welches Road, using inconsistent shoulders. The roadway in the primary connection between the resort, residential neighborhoods, and the Hoodland Shopping Center, leading to large volumes of pedestrian traffic. As a consequence of inadequate shoulders, pedestrians cross E. Welches Road, sometimes mid-block, at various points on the roadway to reach the shoulder when one exists. For example, pedestrians cross an unmarked intersection at Fairway Road to use shoulder on the opposite side of the road, as it is not continuous along E. Welches Road. Shoulders on E. Welches Road do not adequately and safely accommodate pedestrians. This issue is further exacerbated in the event of snow. Snow can be plowed into the already narrow shoulders of E. Welches Road causing pedestrians to walk in travel lanes.

E. Salmon River Road

E. Salmon River Road is a collector. Welches Elementary and Middle Schools are located on E. Salmon River Road, near its intersection with US 26. E. Salmon River Road has a wide shoulder for pedestrian access on the west side of the roadway for only a very short section, approximately 100 feet along the frontage of Welches Middle School. The rest of the roadway has very narrow shoulders to accommodate pedestrians and travel lanes are used by bicycle riders. E. Salmon River Road has few commercial destinations, but does link to the popular Old Salmon River Trail, Green Canyon campground, and dispersed camping and hiking in the Mt. Hood National Forest. Fewer pedestrians are observed walking the road, in contrast to E. Welches Road. Stakeholders representing the Chamber of Commerce and Mt. Hood Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition expressed some concern for safety on this roadway, but less so than E. Welches Road.

E. Barlow Trail Road

E. Barlow Trail Road is a minor arterial. Stakeholders, particularly those representing the Mt. Hood Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition, state that E. Barlow Trail Road is an important pedestrian and bicycle connection that has neither pedestrian nor bicycle facilities. Pedestrians and bicycle riders from the

neighborhood, road cyclists traveling through The Villages at Mt. Hood, and mountain bikers who are accessing the Sandy Ridge Trail System (discussed in more detail below), all travel on E. Barlow Trail Road, and consequently walk or ride in the travel lane. As a result, car traffic can be slowed behind pedestrians and bicycle riders, and potential conflicts are greater.

Access to Transit

Mt. Hood Express serves commuters and recreational users. Operators of the Mt. Hood Express, state approximately 40 percent of riders use the service to access work and 40 percent of riders use the service for access to mountain biking trails or snow sports within the US 26 corridor. The remaining riders have a mix of travel purposes. The expanded service through The Villages at Mt. Hood to Government Camp is entering its second year of operation. The service is express, commuter service, meaning service must have a limited number of stops at locations with population centers and/or park-and-rides. Deviations are allowed within 3/4 mile of the mainline route. Current bus stops locations are permanent and were negotiated with ODOT. All stops are off of US 26, within a parking lot with one exception of the stops at SE Alder Creek Road and SE Kirkwood Drive, where the transit stops are highway pullouts. From the perspective of Mt. Hood Express operators, the transit stops are working well, with the exception of the two locations that use highway pull-outs and the need for bicycle and pedestrian access listed below. The two bus stop locations that use highway pull-outs are at SE Alder Creek Road and SE Kirkwood Drive. Mt. Hood Express has not identified alternative locations for bus stops to the highway pullouts at SE Alder Creek Road and SE Kirkwood Drive.

Mt. Hood Express is in the midst of a long-range planning project to evaluate the current governance structure of the transit, funding mechanisms, and to evaluate the feasibility of expanding service to Warm Springs Tribe and Hood River.

Within the two years of operation, Mt. Hood has had poor snow seasons; and therefore demand for ridership during the winter with good snow sport conditions is unknown. Technical Memo 1: Existing Conditions has a summary of ridership.

Bike Access to/from Pioneer Bridle Trail

Stakeholders representing the mountain biking community/Hurricane Racing and Mt. Hood Express service, stated that mountain bikers board the Mt. Hood Express bus at the stop in Rhododendron and alight in Government Camp. They ride their bikes down Pioneer Bridle Trail, which ends in the vicinity of Rhododendron. To connect back to the bus stop, mountain bike riders ride their bikes along US 26 on the narrow shoulder to the eastbound bus stop in Rhododendron. Clackamas County Transit and mountain biking businesses report that mountain bikers will often purchase a day pass, and ride down the Pioneer Bridle Trail multiple times during the day, using Mt. Hood Express transit service to go back up to Government Camp. Mountain bikers would like to see a safer bicycle and pedestrian connection between the Pioneer Bridle Trail head and the Mt. Hood Express eastbound transit stop in Rhododendron. The stop is located in the parking lot of Mt. Hood Adventures.

E. Salmon River Road and US 26 Crossing

A ladder-marked crosswalk exists on US 26 at E. Salmon River Road. Advance warning signs on US 26 help alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians crossing, but no other protection for pedestrians is provided. The crosswalk is in the vicinity of the Welches Elementary and Middle Schools. The school district does not allow school children to cross US 26 to get to school, but nonetheless, the schools are major destinations for the entire community. Mt. Hood Express has a bus stops at the intersection of US 26 and E. Salmon River Road. Representatives of Mt. Hood Express have received reports that riders often must cross US 26 to get to the bus stop. Traffic often does not slow or stop for pedestrians at the crosswalk, and the crosswalk offers no refuge for pedestrians and minimal visibility to drivers. Mt. Hood Express operators would like to see better protection for pedestrians here.

Sandy Ridge Trail System

The Sandy Ridge Trail System, a mountain bike trail system, is within the study area and attracts approximately 120,000 visitors, predominantly mountain bikers a year. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives report that demand has skyrocketed in recent years. The trail system attracts bicycle riders, mountain bike manufactures (doing bike demonstrations), and mountain bike promoters (various events) from around the state and beyond. The trail system also attracts touring road bicycle riders who know of it as a bike-friendly place they can stop to use the restroom. BLM representatives state the trail system is a year-round destination because it is designed for maximum trail drainage and the low enough elevation does not typically experience snow. Hurricane Racing/mountain biking representative states the "fat bike" trend also makes trail riding a year-round activity, even in snow.

The trail system is owned and maintained by the BLM. Mountain biking and Mt. Hood Pedestrian and Bicycle Coalition representatives report that Travel Oregon has promoted the area as a summer destination site as far as Germany, tying into flights between Germany and Portland International Airport.

BLM will be undertaking a planning effort for the trail system, exploring expansion of the parking area. Parking demand exceeds the supply during weekends and other popular summer days. Based on parking counts, most use is during the mornings. Increasingly, people gather in the parking lot where events or demonstrations are held. For this reason, BLM will include a gathering place in the parking lot. BLM is also willing to consider park-and-rides by shuttle or bicycle connection to the Sandy Ridge Trail system. The trail system head could be a good place for a bicycle hub as well.

BLM also plans to expand the trail system by adding three more trails in the coming years. A larger expansion will take place in 3-4 years.

Sandy Ridge Trail System is accessible by Barlow Trail Road and Sleepy Hallow Road. Currently, Barlow Trail Road is part of Clackamas County's Active Transportation Plan's Principal Active Transportation Route. Clackamas County Tourism promotes Barlow Trail Road as a roadway for bicycle riding, both for access by mountain bikers and a route for touring riders who wish to avoid US 26. Barlow Trail Road is narrow, with many curves, and one travel lane in each direction. Drivers can become caught behind a bicycle rider, and bicycle riders can feel pressure from drivers. Both road and mountain bicycle riders use Barlow Trail Road. BLM and other stakeholders representing bicycle riding would like to see some provision for bicycle riders on Barlow Trail Road.

A quarry off of Barlow Trail Road generates truck traffic that can conflict with pedestrians and bicycle riders.

Wildwood Recreational Site

BLM representatives state the Wildwood Recreation Site was used in the past for outdoor education programs, but since school funding has been cut, these programs have shrunk and the site is underutilized. Currently the site is for seasonal, day-use only, though community members note that is a popular walking destination even when closed in the off-season. The site has extensive amenities, such as trails, gathering places, an underwater viewing window, a boardwalk along wetlands, and a heated pavilion. The area has extensive, underutilized parking and could serve as a park and ride site for other places.

Recreations in the area, including Sandy Ridge Trail users, would like to use the site for overnight camping. BLM would like Mt. Hood Express to consider a stop there.

#2 Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity on US 26

Presently, US 26 provides pedestrian and bicycle access through the corridor. Stakeholders representing the Mt. Hood Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition and the Chamber of Commerce state that pedestrians and

bicycle riders have safety concerns using highway shoulders on US 26 for access. The present shoulders on US 26 provide minimal separation between pedestrians/bicycle riders and high-speed, high-volume traffic. As a result, pedestrians have worn demand paths that indicate pedestrians' desire lines for access. During Project Advisory Committee Meeting #2, the project management team will ask the committee to mark maps with the extents of demand paths along US 26. In some areas, such as Welches, these demand paths are easier to see; however, in some areas, such as Rhododendron, the demand paths are difficult to find, set off the highway in tree cover, and are best known by locals. Stakeholders report property owners help clear brush and maintain the paths along their property. Stakeholders speculated that property owners may have some liability for the demand paths, but did not know for certain. Demand paths are most continuous along the south side of US 26. Highway shoulders serve as a bicycle facility for the length of US 26.

Existing Bicycle Underpass of US 26

One stakeholder pointed out the existence of a relatively unknown and unmaintained undercrossing of US 26, along the Salmon River off of Country Club Loop. Subsequent to the stakeholder interview, the team met with the stakeholder who showed them the path from the north leading to the undercrossing. The facility is relatively unmarked. The undercrossing itself is well-lit with a wide asphalt path that runs along the river. The path is a scenic connection and suffers from buckling in the asphalt due to root growth. South of US 26, the undercrossing does not connect to a through street and only connects to local roads that dead-end, but a connection back up to the eastbound bike lane on US 26 can be made. At the south end of the underpass, a bike route sign does exist. The ownership of the route will need to be investigated, but is thought to be Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

Rhododendron

Either side of US 26 has commercial destinations, such as a supermarket, restaurants (Dairy Queen, Still Creek Inn), Mt. Hood Adventures, a recreational outfitter that offers tours and rentals, and transit stops. Stakeholders and the project team have observed residents and visitors cross US 26 to get to destinations on the other side. Stakeholders would like to see a safe crossing accommodated here and are skeptical of the safety of simply a laddered crosswalk. Presently, advisory signs on US 26 in both directions warn drivers of the presence of pedestrians.

#3 Maintain Mobility of US 26 for Through Traffic

A representative of the freight community stated that truck drivers would feel safer if pedestrians and especially bicycle riders had a separated facility instead of bike lanes or a shoulder on US 26.

Preserving the function of US 26 as a national freight route, over-dimensional route, and serving high-volume, high-speed through traffic is important. The need for through movement needs to be balanced carefully with the need for crossing US 26.

If crossings are added to US 26, they should be for the most key locations with demonstrated demand, and it would be helpful if the crossing can be timed to the existing signal to limit stop-and-go travel and travel time delays. If an on-demand crossing is provided, be sure to provide a provision for traffic to get through in the event of heavy pedestrian crossings.

#4 Bicycle Route through The Villages at Mt. Hood

Petr Kakes of Hurricane Racing, based on his years of biking, hiking, and walking in the area, has identified a bicycle route through the area. The walking and bike route would provide a potentially paved, parallel route to US 26 for pedestrians and road and mountain bike riders between Zig Zag and Government Camp/Timberline Lodge. The route follows existing, paved forest service roads; gravel, forest service roads; existing roadways; and connects them with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) corridors that have no existing path connection. The route parallels US 26, and could serve both daily

transportation needs, such as getting to/from origins and destinations within The Villages at Mt. Hood, and recreational needs, such as road cycling through the area to Government Camp. A topographic map marked with the bicycle route is in Appendix A. The bicycle route is partially contained within the study area, starting at Lolo Pass Road.

The project team shared the bicycle route map with the Mt. Hood Forest Service. They agreed to evaluate the potential for the route with the following thoughts.

- Trails on federal lands trigger the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which requires public scoping and an environmental assessment, which is usually a two year process and would cost the agency approximately $100,000.
- In the past, the agency has had limited success coordinating with BPA. BPA would have to be a partner.
- Federal restrictions exist on land and what can be built alongside streams and riparian areas. The corridor does follow a stream for sections.
- The forest service promised to look at the map and ask their staff to do a very high-level, red-flag environmental scan for any fatal flaws.

#5 Support the Development of Tourism including Bicycle Tourism

The Chamber of Commerce reports that 2015 has been the largest year for tourism thus far, using tax revenue generated from area businesses as a measure. The Chamber has partnered with a local television station, KATU, to develop a commercial promoting recreation and tourism of the Mt. Hood area, including The Villages at Mt. Hood. Visitors to the area would like better pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the study area so they may go car-free to a restaurant, on a run, or on a bike ride. Several visitors come to the area car-free, and are surprised at the lack of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Visitors also use the Mt. Hood Express service and desire better access to transit stops.

Several tourism organizations, including Clackamas County Tourism, would like to see an eventual connection between the Springwater Corridor trail, which is ridable by road bike and terminates in Boring, through Sandy and The Villages at Mt. Hood and to Government Camp. On the north side of Mt. Hood, communities have supported the development of the Columbia Historic Highway State Trail, another trail accessible by road bike. State and local level travel boards see cycling tourism as having great potential for economic development in scenic areas such as The Villages at Mt. Hood. The fat bike trend enables trail riding even in snow conditions.

Travel Oregon has a campaign around cycling tourism, and promotes Marmot Road, Barlow Trail Road, and Lolo Pass Road through The Villages at Mt. Hood as a way to ride road bikes through the US 26 corridor. Stakeholders interested promoting cycling tourism for the area would like to see businesses within The Villages at Mt. Hood that are friendly to bicycle riders and provide adequate bicycle parking. Parking could be in the form of bicycle hubs that have other amenities for bicycle riders, such as wayfinding and maintenance tools (bicycle pump, Alan keys, etc.). Stakeholders would like to see cost-effective solutions to bike hubs and ways to capture bicycle riders recreating in the area.

Stakeholders would like to see area businesses participate in Travel Oregon's Bike Friendly Business Program, which provides tips and tools on how businesses can be bike friendly, and highlight businesses who commit to enhancing the Oregon biking experience for visitors and Oregonians.

To promote walking and biking in the area by visitors, wayfinding and branding of routes is important. Facilities must be well-marked and safe, considering visitors who are new to the area will be unfamiliar with the facilities.

#6 Develop Cost-effective Solutions that Keep with the Character of The Villages at Mt. Hood

Both government stakeholders and residents emphasize developing solutions that are appropriate for the level of existing and future pedestrian and bicycle demand, which is much lower than the level of demand in urban areas. This means facilities may be adequate now or solutions need to be cost-effective and scaled to the area and level of need, such as wide outside shoulders instead of curbs and sidewalks. The project management team can respond to this desire by using lower-cost solutions, such as permeable pavement and the use of swales, or solutions that require low maintenance, such as crushed rock trails.

Many people move to the area to "get away," and some do not agree with economic development goals for the area that would bring more people.

#7 Coordinate Effectively with Concurrent Planning Efforts

Representatives of Mt. Hood Express and Bureau of Land Management expressed a desire for this project to coordinate with their planning efforts. Mt. Hood Express is evaluating the potential to expand service beyond Government Camp and evaluating their governance structure to better sustain funding for service in the future. The Bureau of Land Management will be undertaking a planning effort to develop a new vision for the Wildwood Recreation site, and is developing a parking and expansion plan for Sandy Ridge Trail System.

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