



MEMORANDUM

Date: Wednesday, July 12, 2023

To: Chris Doty, Cody Smith, and Peter Russell, Deschutes County

From: Matt Kittelson and Julia Kuhn, Kittelson & Associates

Subject: Deschutes County Transportation System Plan

INTRODUCTION

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) will guide stakeholder and public engagement throughout the Deschutes County Transportation System Plan (TSP) update. The PIP reflects a commitment from Deschutes County to coordinate and carry out meaningful outreach activities and to actively engage with interested stakeholders throughout the project.

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND STUDY AREA

The Deschutes County TSP is the transportation element of the Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan. Last updated in 2012, the TSP sets a vision for the transportation system by providing goals, policies, and projects that address existing needs and support anticipated economic development and growth over the next 20 years.

The Deschutes County TSP addresses the needs of people walking, riding bikes, taking transit, and driving in the areas outside the incorporated cities of Bend, Redmond, Sisters, and La Pine. Each of the cities have a TSP that is coordinated with the County, including how streets and pathways interface at the edge of the Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB) for each. In addition, the Deschutes County TSP Update will include coordination with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to help define the needs of the state highway facilities over the next 20 years, including US 97, US 20, OR 31, OR 242, and OR 126.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PURPOSE AND GOALS

The TSP public involvement program will provide guidance on how the County will share information and gather input on the needs and possible ideas for facilities that help people walk, ride bikes, take transit, drive, and transport goods and services. This program will rely on active engagement and a robust outreach effort to a wide variety of stakeholders and interested parties.

To achieve these objectives, the County intends to:

- Communicate complete, accurate, understandable, and timely information to the public throughout the project.

- Actively engage residents, businesses, and organizations throughout the County to gain feedback on existing conditions, needs, deficiencies, and potential solutions.
- Collaborate with interagency partners.
- Comply with Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VI requirements and ensuring that the public involvement process is consistent with applicable state and federal laws and requirements, and is sensitive to local policies, goals and objectives.

INITIAL KEY MESSAGES

Key messages will continue to be refined and expanded as the TSP progresses, more information is known, and the need for more detailed public information grows. Initially, the County will inform stakeholders that:

- The TSP is being updated to address existing needs and support growth consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan over the next 20 years.
- The TSP will include collaboration with all of the partner agencies, including ODOT, Bend, Redmond, Sisters, La Pine, Cascades East Transit, and other local, state, and federal entities to identify policies, projects, and programs to improve the transportation system within the county.
- The TSP will be guided by an advisory committee composed of people who live and work in the county and by a technical a committee staffed by agency partners.
- The TSP will address the needs of people driving, walking, riding bikes, and moving goods and services for the areas outside the UGBs of Bend, Redmond, Sisters, and La Pine.
- The TSP website can be used to sign up for project updates: www.deschutescountytsp.com. The website is also where you can get the latest information and provide input.

AUDIENCES

The County will engage a variety of potentially affected and/or interested individuals, residents, businesses and organizations, such as:

- Deschutes County staff and elected officials
- ODOT staff
- City of Bend
- City of Redmond
- City of Sisters
- City of La Pine
- Deschutes County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Forest Service
- Local businesses and business organizations
- Area residents
- Bike and pedestrian interests
- Freight interests
- CET
- Tourism and recreation interests, including the High Desert Museum
- Local state parks
- Bend – La Pine School District
- Redmond School District
- Accessibility groups

- Emergency services providers
- Local media

PROJECT DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

The decision-making structure for the TSP establishes a broad-based support for the planning process. All of the activities, engagement and technical work will be guided by a Project Management Team (PMT) composed of County staff. The PMT believes the best way to build support is to have an open, inclusive process. The PMT will compile all of the recommendations from the public, agency stakeholders and technical work and advise the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners (Board of Commissioners), which is the project’s final decision maker.

To support development of a credible decision-making process, the Advisory Committee (AC) and Agency Partner Coordination Committee (APCC) will be appointed by the Board of Commissioners to provide community and technically based recommendations and guidance. The AC and APCC will develop recommendations to the PMT. If an AC or APCC recommendation is not followed, the PMT will specifically note it. All AC and APCC meetings will be open to the public and include a public comment period. Exhibit 1 reflects the advisory and decision making process that will guide the TSP.

Exhibit 1. Decision-Making Structure



Project Team Member Roles and Responsibilities for Public Involvement

The following are the key project members and their roles in implementing and overseeing the public involvement program:

Deschutes County

- **Chris Doty, Road Department Director.** Chris serves as the project manager for the TSP, providing key oversight and strategic visioning.
- **Cody Smith, County Engineer.** Cody oversees engineering projects within the County and provides an important link between the long-range planning of the TSP and near-term work the engineering department is engaged with.
- **Peter Russell, Senior Transportation Planner.** Peter is the key transportation planning expert for the County and provides technical review, policy guidance, and key input on transportation needs and solutions within the County.
- **Whitney Hale, Communications Director.** Whitney is the main point of contact for the County and provides guidance and direction on public engagement activities.

Kittelson & Associates

- **Matt Kittelson, Consultant Team Project Manager.** Matt is leading the consultant team and providing oversight on the project’s outreach strategy.
- **Julia Kuhn, Consultant Team Project Principal.** Julia provides key strategic input and oversight for the project.
- **Carrie Theus, Consultant Team Lead Analyst.** Carrie will lead operational and safety analysis for the project.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES AND SCHEDULE

Table 1 summarizes the engagement and informational tools and activities that will be used throughout the project to engage and inform potentially affected interests, stakeholders and the broader public.

Table 1. Public Engagement Tools

Tool/Activity	Description	Lead	Anticipated Schedule
Stakeholder Database	A database that will include potentially affected interests in the County, stakeholders, interested parties, and meeting attendees. The database will be updated after public events and will track those individuals and groups who express interest in the project. The database will be used for notification of the online open houses, project news and outreach materials.	Deschutes County	Ongoing

Tool/Activity	Description	Lead	Anticipated Schedule
Project Website	The project website, www.deschutescountytsp.com is the primary portal for public information and is an important tool to collect public input. The site will include a project description, an interactive comment mapping tool, project documents (maps, reports, graphics), and all public meeting information and materials.	Kittelton	Available throughout the TSP update process
Social Media	Project information and updates will be shared in a timely fashion on the County's social media channels.	County	Ongoing
Public Comment Log	Public comments (and responses) collected at public events and online will be logged.	Kittelton	Ongoing
Newsletters	Two newsletters will be created to introduce and inform the public outreach activities. Newsletters will be emailed to individuals on the stakeholder database.	Kittelton & County	Prior to each public meeting
Stakeholder Emails	In addition to emailed newsletters, the project team will send up to two additional emails to the project mailing list to provide project updates.	Kittelton	As determined by Deschutes County
Advisory Committee	The Advisory Committee will meet up to three times to provide community and technical review and to provide guidance on the Project. Members of the committee will be recruited from interested parties and participants in Public Meeting #1.	Kittelton	Meeting 1: August 2021 Meeting 2: December 2021
Agency Partner Coordination Committee	The Agency Advisory Committee will meet up to four times to provide technical review and regional input and coordination to provide guidance on the Project.	Kittelton	Meeting 1: January 21, 2021 Meeting 2: April 2021 Meeting 3: August 2021 Meeting 4: December 2021

Tool/Activity	Description	Lead	Anticipated Schedule
Public Meetings	<p>The project will host public meetings at two key points in the process:</p> <p>Meeting 1 will introduce the project and solicit public input on existing conditions, needs, and opportunities.</p> <p>Meeting 2 will provide information and solicit feedback on possible solutions, projects, and programs.</p> <p>A detailed meeting plan and promotional fliers will be developed for each public meeting.</p>	Kittelson	<p>Meeting 1: April 2021</p> <p>Meeting 2: August 2021</p>
Media Outreach	Press releases will be distributed at key points in the project to local media sources	Deschutes County	Ongoing

MEASURING AND MONITORING OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The PMT will evaluate the public involvement process on an ongoing basis to determine the effectiveness of the outreach effort.

At key milestones, the PMT will assess how well the program is effectively engaging the public. As part of this review, the team will also consider the following measurable objectives:

- Number and diversity of participants attending meetings or events.
- Number of website hits or downloads occurring during a specific time period.
- Number of social media engagements.
- Number of people who have signed up for the project mailing list.
- Number of project comments received (phone, email, comment cards, online).
- Whether the comments are relevant to the project (indicates project understanding).
- How project decisions have been modified because of public input.

NEXT STEPS

The PMT will review the public engagement plan with the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners prior to finalizing for use in the TSP. This plan will be shared with the Agency Partner Coordination Committee in January 2021.