



# Oregon Travel Information Council

1500 Liberty Street SE, Suite 150  
Salem, Oregon 97302

Minutes – Rest Area Committee  
OTA Offices, Portland  
Thursday, September 1, 2016

**Members Participating:**

Mike Marsh, Ed Washington                      Kathy Watson, Bob Russell (by phone)

**Members Excused:**

Ryan Snyder

**OTE Staff Participating:**

Nancy DeSouza, Executive Director; Tim Pickett, Operations Director; Jason Nash, Rest Area Division Administrator; Heather Swanson, Rest Area Operations Manager; Jessica Carbone, Office Assistant

At the Chair’s request, the meeting of the Travel Information Council Rest Area Committee was called to order by DeSouza at 10:05 a.m.

**Minutes Approval:** Russell proposed a change to the August 4, 2016 minutes: moving the fifth paragraph starting “Watson said opportunities...” up to before the Government Camp Update. Marsh moved to approve the minutes with proposed change. Washington seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Regulatory Compliance Update:** DeSouza updated the committee that the DEQ has transferred the E. coli testing issue to the compliance officer. Staff has fully cooperated and is ensuring that systems are in place to ensure systemwide full compliance with all requirements.

Nash reported that all of Baker Valley’s required reports have been filed. Marsh asked if the agency was unaware of the need for the report. Nash said that staff were unaware of the need to turn in reports associated with the permit, but that has been resolved.

DeSouza noted the difficulty in getting copies of all relevant DEQ permits for OTE’s central file. We have been unable to receive copies from local DEQ offices. Heather Swanson was advised by DEQ to submit a public records request to get copies. Nash said the agency has tried other avenues to acquire the permits, but was informed that a public records request was the most efficient way to get the information.

Weatherby and Memaloose currently do not require permits, but future repairs or upgrades to the sewage systems might trigger the requirement. Russell asked if those permits should be applied for before repairs are needed to demonstrate that we did all we could do to ensure the systems are safe. Pickett said that that may be a viable option, but would need to be coordinated with ODOT, since permits follow the ownership of the property. DeSouza said DEQ has been given a list of what we have and that we have

requested copies of anything we may be lacking. Marsh asked if we have the request in writing and DeSouza confirmed that we do. Washington asked if ownership of the property transferred from ODOT to us the permits would be put in OTE's name. Pickett said that the only place is Government Camp, and that is on a municipal sewer system and doesn't require a permit.

## **Capital Projects:**

**Oak Grove Capacity Expansion/2016-17 Project Options:** DeSouza reported staff is working on advancing remaining biennial capital projects. She apprised the committee of Governor Brown's visit to the Oak Grove rest area and the Governor's comments about its condition and waiting lines. DeSouza thanked Russell and Craig Campbell for assistance in crafting a timely response explaining the need for expanding capacity at Oak Grove and the challenges of not having stable systemwide rest area funding. The Governor's brief reply was supportive and encouraged continued work with Policy Advisor Karmen Fore.

Pickett reported the agency has retained approximately \$1.5 million in funds available for one-time capital expenditures. The Finance Committee recommended targeted spending of the bulk of these funds in the remainder of the biennium. Because of the immediate capacity needs and the seismic instability of the Oak Grove restroom buildings, staff presented three options for consideration at Oak Grove:

- Expansion could be tabled and overflow handled with portable restrooms.
- Replace both sides of the rest area and spend down reserves by up to \$1 million for this project.
- Replace one side of the rest area for approximately \$500,000, retaining funds for the Boardman truck parking improvements and allocating the remainder to smaller projects or retain for unforeseen contingencies.

Staff recommends the third option, replacing one side of the rest area and making the Boardman truck parking improvements.

Russell asked if the other identified capital projects would go forward along with the improvements done to Oak Grove. Pickett confirmed that going forward with one side should leave adequate funds to complete all other listed projects. Marsh asked about the current status of the Government Camp parking lots, and DeSouza said that ODOT reported the Summit Sno-Park area will be able to be snow-plowed this winter without further repairs to the Summit Ski Area lot.

Russell asked how ADA requirements and lead testing results could affect future costs. Swanson reported that all of the rest areas have been tested for lead and we have received the results from 11 of the 17 locations so far. In those locations there was no lead found or only trace amounts well below action levels; staff do not expect any significant expense. Watson suggested a press release once all the findings are completed.

Watson recommended moving forward with the projects as planned. Russell agreed, but asked how possible future ADA requirements might affect the current cost estimates.

**ADA Upgrading/Triggers:** Staff met with ODOT and discussed possible required future ADA upgrades. ODOT reported that some local counties may have more stringent requirements, but most improvements to a parking lot greater than a chip or slurry seal will require ADA compliance for at least some ramps up to the sidewalk. Any changes or improvements to a restroom building that require a building permit of \$150,000 or more can trigger ADA upgrades of 25% of the value of that project. This gives clarity in determining project and overall budgets.

Russell asked if staff anticipated any ADA improvements after ODOT does its inspections. DeSouza responded we may find some places where work already done has triggered ADA requirements we don't know about yet, but those will likely be minimal. Nash estimates he will have his own ADA inspections done in the next couple of months. ODOT will provide a schedule of when their staff will also inspect, with their plan to have evaluations of all OTE rest areas done by the end of October. Russell asked if deferring any of the parking lot work would cause greater cost later. Nash said that Boardman will need to have some repair to the subsurface. After some discussion of a viable timetable to get the work done, it is unlikely the repaving could be scheduled before running into weather problems, and the project should be planned for spring.

Russell made a motion to proceed with the list of Capital projects dated 7/20/16, except for the Oak Grove rebuild. Watson seconded. Marsh clarified that the unassigned projects were not being moved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Russell made a second motion to recommend to Council to approve going forward with replacing the main restroom structure on one side of Oak Gove. Washington seconded. Marsh asked for verification that there were no other known health and safety or regulatory compliance needs that should take precedence, and DeSouza said there is nothing of which we are aware. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **Performance Measures:**

**Rest Area Inspections:** Nash has completed all baseline inspections and will begin the next round of inspections this month. Compliance measures have been added for permit requirements and Nash will conduct the ADA inspections at the same time. DeSouza noted that ADA inspections will provide a list of ADA upgrades that may not be mandatory but which are desirable and that staff can accomplish over time. The inspections did identify the need for emergency lighting inside and outside of the buildings.

**Other Measure Updates:** Swanson reported that the comment cards' first month of including a "safety" measurement look positive. The lowest score was 3.7 out of 5 at Oak Grove. Government Camp rated a 4.9 out of 5, with 78 cards submitted.

**Reporting External Measures:** Staff has begun meeting to develop external measure reporting to the public on the website. DeSouza provided an example of how ODOT reports its measures. Staff will have information for the committee's review in advance of the first report prior to the February legislative session. Because of the way information has been tracked, reports will be based on calendar years.

**Developing Additional Measures:** Oregon State Police Lt. Steve Duvall is actively training troopers on the exclusion program over coming weeks and reports things are going well. Troopers are excited about how well the process is working. Marsh asked about getting trooper feedback on improving the safety of our rest areas and DeSouza responded that Lt. Duvall is supportive, but did not want to tackle both that and exclusion training at the same time. Conversations continue with Travel Oregon's Todd Davidson and Scott West on marketing guidance that also may lead to economic impact measurements. Diane Cheyne is working with the Sign Program metrics and customer satisfaction measures, and Annie von Domitz is working on potential measures with the Heritage programs. Watson recommended connecting with Duncan Wyse from the Oregon Business Council as resource on potential economic development measures.

## **Other Business:**

- **Sponsorships:** DeSouza reported that von Domitz is working closely with Grove partners including Friends of Trees and the Oregon Associations of Nurseries for Grove of the States' sponsorships. Staff have begun discussions of developing options for individual and systemwide rest area sponsorships and whether to look to outside contractors for assistance and at what cost.
- **Anti-Sex Trafficking Bill:** ODOT submitted recommended changes on the draft legislative concept that would require anti-trafficking posters or stickers in all rest area stalls statewide to ensure there is no unfunded mandate. Bill sponsors are aware that rest area staff cannot work on installing or maintaining these postings because of restrictions on the use of highway funds that pay the staff wages. The concept seeks outside funding sources. DeSouza invited Nita Belles from "In Our Back Yard" to provide awareness and anti-trafficking training to central office and rest area staff at upcoming meetings.
- ODOT awaits the Court of Appeals response to the DMV convenience fee lawsuit.
- TIC's legislative concept was approved and filed, and now awaits the Governor's final approval.
- Marsh asked the status of OTE's proposed rebranding discussions with Travel Oregon, and DeSouza said that conversations continue, and she expects it will be a key discussion point in the joint meeting between the Tourism Commission and the TIC on December 6. She said we look forward to Travel Oregon's expertise, guidance and partnership on a plan for 2017.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

**Next meeting:** October 6, 2016, 10:00 a.m. at the OTA Offices, Portland.

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