

# 2014 OREGON ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT

## DEVELOPING REGIONAL TRAILS WORKSHOP NOTES

April 21, 2014

### 1. BIG IDEAS SHARED AT CLOSE OF SESSION

*Highlights from breakout groups in response to the question, “What, if anything, would you like to see done differently in the future to help alleviate some of these challenges?”:*

- Create some kind of platform or structure at the state level that would provide more weight to what the volunteer groups are doing
- Oregon Solutions could be one structure to look at as it brings together stakeholders, formalizes a structure and adds credibility - something like this could be useful
- Create formal partnerships between public/private/community groups - put it in writing so that when there's turnover there's something there that has solidified the partnership, so momentum isn't lost
- Communities not seeing themselves as hosts yet or seeing the value to the local community
- Two solutions: a Rural Tourism Studio program and the Bike Friendly Business program (two existing programs through Travel Oregon – work on broader deployment of these programs)
- Identify incentives: how do you get these groups together and incentivize them to help you? Why should the USFS want to help? Spend time working with these groups to understand what an enticing incentive would be.
- Keep abreast of different transportation projects happening in the region
- A couple of our major challenges are permitting and landowner agreement. Often we see an emotional response from landowners. How can we get to the bottom of this emotional response? How do we work with them to see the benefit? Could be a great graduate study to track the before/after of property values.
  - Public outreach is incredibly important to get to everybody and to communicate with landowners and bring them on board
- Community engagement: make sure its collaborative, engaging and information put forth is accurate. Engage chambers, news, venues, blogs, websites - anyone committed to creating this culture.
- Tell a really good story

## 2. SMALL GROUP BREAK OUT NOTES

### 1. In your work with trail development, what have you found to be the key ingredients to the successes you've had?

- Redoing mountain bike trails
  - 2-3 orgs involved, but make sure to get all the right people involved, really do your homework to see who make have a stake, give them credit, use their logos cross promote/market them
- Sandy Ridge Trail System
  - Clackamas County Tourism's partnership with BLM – they're on the ground, connected to other volunteers, funds, IMBA, so open to ideas
  - If you can, find a clinch-pin partner such as BLM
- Linking Banks to Vernonia to link with Crown Zellerbach – upper section
  - Got some signage already, but no idea who did, really hard to find
- Having a good grant writer/ good grant researcher
- Acknowledging different user groups and intended use of trail
- Getting out ahead of opposition → coming up with a unified front
  - Salmonberry corridor ran into unexpected issues with specific user groups, having the foresight to anticipate this would have been crucial
- Getting neighbors on board and flipping them to advocates instead of opposition
- Helping navigate federal funding requirements.
- Developing access in a sustainable way
- Advocating through local newspaper
- Grass roots efforts owned by community
- Local agencies working together
- Group of dedicated people working together
- Using better materials for construction → adaptive reuse later
- Understanding grant realities and where federal dollars are
- Laying the ground work for the plans within the community to strengthen grant application
- Having champions for a cause that won't take "no" for an answer
- Making sure your ideas for trails get into a written plan
- Working with transportation agencies to tag onto their projects
- ISTEA – Transportation Enhancement Program
- Map 21 – Transportation alternatives
- GRGNSA act (?) - \$ Portland
- Senator Hatfield
- Earmarks
- Gorge Recreation Coalition
- Having an advocacy group

- Reaching out to disadvantaged communities
- Community centers
- Trails in the regional plan
- Dedicated people
- Piggy backing on existing transportation projects
- Citizen advocacy group
- Stakeholder
- Geographic challenges
- Land ownership
- Social marketing
- Developing a strategy for motivating opposition
- Getting county commissioners on board (or at least neutralize their opposition)
- Building infrastructure in stages so the trail becomes visible
- Getting an advocate at the local newspaper to write stories showing the positive aspects of the trail
- Anticipating other users
- Anticipating other funding

**2. Again, drawing from your own work, what have been the stumbling blocks or challenges that you've run up against? Think of challenges that have stood in the way of efficient and timely progress.**

- Not knowing who owns what land
- 50-mile main street, no incorporated towns, all volunteer run progress on gravel or mtn biking, or road riding, so it takes a really long time to get organized and get stuff done.
- Having multitude of land agencies to work with – land for example that go through 5 different National Forestlands
- Working with Siuslaw NF – tons of turnover and have given YES to project plans, agreements, money, etc., but then it gets lost
- Change in the political landscape
- Navigating multiple systems – try to add the people (city, county, federal, state, but then orgs, stakeholders) there's 5 year plan, then 10 year and then you need permits here, but not there – but how do you navigate all the areas/language
- Grants that have more than %5 for paying for staff
- Get some media – get an article written – people will pay attention
- Have a petition and build a list of supporters, businesses, orgs, etc. etc.
- Tell the story!!!
- Environmental ethics not merging with mountain biking
- Coordination between jurisdictions can be daunting
- Lack of commitment from agencies to enforce intended use

- Signage
- Bureaucracy
- Permitting
- Land owners easements – identify land they can't develop anyway
- Getting to the bottom of the emotional response of land owners
- Design for minimal impact
- Temporary routes to go around
- Start early on the permits
- Design
- Engineering
- Graduate study for before and after impacts on property values next to trails
- Get members of similar group i.e. Kiwanis
- Funding and lack of staffing for physical trail/upgrades and maintenance
- Oregon gas tax
- Perception of use (communities not seeing themselves as hosts – not seen as a value to local community. Rural Tourism Studio, Cycle Oregon and Bike Friendly Business Program way to solve this.
- Negative perception of trail
  - Security issues
  - Increased foot traffic
- Zoning
- Connecting emotional response to proposed trail
- Misinformation
- Cost
- Lack of community champion
- Lack of enforcement
- One bad user experience = lots of bad word of mouth publicity
- Continuity with Government groups
- Funding
- Land owner easements – they length of time they take to respond and how they don't want to

**3. What are some existing solutions or resources that you could tap into to help address those challenges now?**

- Start a working group or a coalition and have monthly meetings and way to for people to engage
- Build a marketing plan/outreach – have a cohesive language, logo, write media, have a website, Facebook page,
- Tap into your existing communities – Universities, conservation groups
- Tap into the users riding the existing routes – such as RidewithGps or other GPS Tracking

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software to use that data

- Crowdsourcing to fundraise
- Use google docs or online platforms to communicate between your group to keep it going and keeping track
- Installing gates to mitigate improper use
- Enforce the public's rights to land.
- Creating barriers for non-intended users
- Using gravel as opposed to paving – thinking about other cost savings techniques
- Utilizing volunteers effectively
- Correctly coordinating with your initial public outreach
- Working with existing nonprofits to get them on your side... more interests moving in the same direction
  - Create a common vision and move together
- Bring everyone in first-hand and share common problems and go about it together
- Volunteers for physical work, grant writing, marketing, social media, website development
- Boy and Girl Scouts to do projects and engage parents
- Chamber of Commerce
- Grass roots organization
- Good press
- Agency collaboration
- Graduate studies of economic issues
- Needs to be some kind of a framework to go beyond all of these fragmented jurisdictions
  - Problem is you're always starting from scratch with new staff who come in and out of our positions
- Volunteer coalitions – are they too informal? For example, Corvallis to Sea trail could be more of a formal organization with key stakeholder representatives
- Have more official organization from the government entities
- Oregon Solutions – a framework that has the stamp of the Governor. A way to convene across jurisdictions. A way to formalize and convene these groups. Ends with a formal declaration of cooperations.
  - Used for development of Gateway Green
  - A framework *like* this could work
  - Problem is that there are only a few that get the official
- Increase use of social media –
  - Tori Bortman sees an opportunity for getting more people in the urban areas to care about these rural projects
  - Connecting through the internet is one way
- Crowdfunding – more trail projects could use this
- Involve younger people, the next generation – they want to be involved, but we need to reach out to them

- Create more of a rural-urban connection
- Is one of the biggest issues the land?
  - Landowner agreements are one key to addressing continuity across all the different landowners
- Some kind of designation at the state level that could carry weight
- Get involved with Statewide Trails Plan that is under development in 2015
- Difficulty for every start-up 501© 3 group – resources/bandwidth is thin and there is a lot
- Would be great to have an umbrella organization to help provide support and bandwidth
- What makes a trail a trail? Everyone’s definition is different. Suburban trails are a different beast, but they’re still a trail
- And what kind of funding is available? Can all of this information be one place
  - What funding is eligible for a paved trail and what funding is eligible for grave?

**4. What, if anything, would you like to see done differently in the future to help alleviate some of these challenges?**

- Platform or structure at the state level to provide a resource and a method (Oregon Solutions – Governor’s Office identifies a few conveners for a particular project and come away with a non-binding but formal agreement to work together) – This adds credibility
- Create agreements – if you have something really important and it's going to take a long time, and have turnover, you have a plan, have it in writing
- Have a big enough coalition, group so that if have turnover, etc., that you have some continuity and the project doesn’t die with them
- Help have the community see themselves as the host, and what the value is for them – the Rural Tourism Studio and Bike Friendly Business Program can help with this
- Incentive for the right people at the table and statewide incentive for USFS to have to play with you
- Graduate student thesis could be to do a case study and track before and after property values
- Community engagement – making sure it’s collaborative and engage chambers, media, and anyone that that can share the story and tell it accurately – this is also a way to combat opposition – tell a really good story
- A way to understand and navigate the waters and the way to do this – where do you get the knowledge to build the foundation
- Transportation /Trail Book for Dummies – constantly being updated
- Easy to understand where to go to get permits, what needed for and how to get them
- Having incentives for Forest Service so that they care
- Having incentives for businesses to want to get involved or to find the time
- Resources and money are the common stumbling block having a large pot of money to draw from consistently would alleviate development issues

- Having a common front and supportive local host community
- Federal grants could be rewritten to include maintenance
- Hold Land owners accountable for trail misuse
- State fosters a vibrant discussion and legislates accordingly
- Liability laws need to permit land owners to feel enabled.
- Public outreach is key
- Identify big picture connections: Local, state, regional and national trail connections.
- Put up signs
- Neighborhood association
- Facebook – social media
- Web based look at the regional interstate network
- KMZ files to Google earth
- Economic studies – get numbers
- Keep momentum going – outreach
- Advocacy group
- Signage (advertising)
- Make trail files accessible
- Incentives that capture multiple groups and potential users
- Capture different stakeholders
- Better budget for community engagement process
- Dedicated federal funding for trails
- OPRD to focus on developing/maintaining current facilities instead of going out to develop new ones
- OPRD to play “hard ball” with local land owners and make trail preservation a focus, enforcing existing rule. This makes the trail safe and attractive for all legitimate users.
- Money only for new construction/not maintenance. Sustainability a real issue – not a cultural priority

### 3. TRAILS PRESENTATIONS (3)

#### GARY CHAPMAN – Corvallis to Sea Trail

- Covers 400 sq. miles
- Mostly boots + fat tire people
- Two routes envisioned – one for cycling, one for hiking
- First route proposed in 1991 (paved and gravel)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> route is 65 miles for biking/hiking
- USFS decision reversed in 2013 – no longer volunteers, have to create a non

#### Ingredients to Success

- Found supporters in the community, in government among land owners and got a critical mass
- Picked the low hanging fruit while working to build relationship ladders to get the hard to reach fruit
- Be cooperative and patient
- Remain flexible and be
- Seeking perfection can lead to failure (Voltaire et moi)
- Developed a complex system of relationship links of landowners to create the regional

#### Challenges

- Federal patchwork of land management
- USFS oversees about ½ of all the trails needed to complete (about 22 miles)

#### *Loss of continuity of relationships:*

- Forest Service staff turnover: retirement and transfers
- Elected officials who have supported trails retire or get
- Poor health or death of key volunteers and cooperators
- Retirement of

#### Potential Solutions

- Newsletters
- Annual show and tell day hikes to keep people connected to the trail concept
- Annual trail maintenance workshop
- Adopt-a-Trail Segment program
- 501©3 status to help us w
- Monthly public meetings
- Downtown window displays
- Presentations before user

- Flyers in hiker/biker stores
- Meetings with legislative staffers
- The rare
- Occasional presentations to ORTAC – keep this project in their eyes because one of these
- Trail maintenance on USFS land – for brownie points and to keep volunteers trained
- Holiday greeting cards!

## **RALPH SWINEHART – Elgin to Wallowa Lake Trail**

### **About the Trail**

- Proposed trail, just starting feasibility study
- Follows the Grande Ronde River, then the Wallowa River to the Wallowa Mountains – one of Oregon’s 7 wonders
- Once completed it will connect to the Nez Perce Trail that runs through Idaho and Montana.
- It will also cross the Idaho Centennial Trail (goes south to North across Idaho)
- Recently signed a MOU with the railroad authority (insert name \_\_\_\_\_), EOU and State Parks
  - Will use students from EOU to get involved with the work
- About to embark on a 2-year planning cycle – students will get out to assist with the feasibility study
- WURA has mandated that the rails must stay intact and they have final authority on whether the trail gets built
- Someone has developed a four-wheeled cart that runs on railways
- Next step includes getting input from local residents

### **Ingredients to Success**

### **Challenges**

- Getting insurance for the 4-wheeled rail cart
- Most of otrail is through canyons with steep rock, bluffs with river close by on the other side – little physical room to build the trail
- Through Wallowa Valley has the full right of way, but has the largest base of private landowners – may experience
- Funding needed to construct the trail
- WURA has clearly
- No easy way to enforce rules of conduct
- Will be issues to content with maintenance equipment on rail

### **Positive**

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- Will be easy to maintain infrastructure using the rail infrastructure
- It's a slow moving railway – easy to see users

Elgin Excursion Train – for more information check out [www.EagleCapTrainRides.com](http://www.EagleCapTrainRides.com)

## **KATHLEEN WALKER – Mt. Hood to Rose City Trail**

### **About the Trail**

- From Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood to City of Portland
- Includes the Springwater Trail
- Have some areas developed, other areas not developed! – What should we do?
- *See presentation slides*

### **Ingredients of Success**

- Know a realistic timeline (decade +)
- I used to say before I retired, now I say before I die hopefully!
- Get key stakeholders involved early and often (turnover) for buy-in
- Get it on Regional Plan documents
- Eat the elephant a bite at a time – low hanging fruit first
  - Did try for a \$39 million grant and didn't get – just weren't
- Get it started – as segments of the trail necklace are build and admired, there is more synergy to link segments to make an entire necklace
- Consider master plans a segment at a time
- Consider trying to pool funds from partners to cover master planning costs (pyramid)
- Perseverance, persistence and polite pressure
- Partner, collaborate, schmooze, sell it at all levels from neighbors, users, to Congress and Senators
- Anticipate and be ready for grant opportunities

### **Challenges**

- Multiple jurisdictions, partners and landowners – not everyone
- May not be the priority for some lead agencies
- Easements !?! – are there alternative routes or temporary segments available?
- Permits !?!
- Know your zoning

### **Potential Solutions**

- Build trail for \$45,000-\$100,000/mile
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- Consider cheaper and alternative ways to design and construct trails – they are just too expensive.
- Consider time + equipment contracts combined with youth corps non-profits or hire a qualified trail contractor to work with less skilled labor groups
- Consider compacted gravel with binders
- Cheaper, permeable, barrier free, maintainable with volunteers, hand tools and wheelbarrows
- Can be paved in the future if desired or when \$\$ allows