



# **2020 OREGON TOURISM INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER SURVEY**

## **MT. HOOD/GORGE REGION**

This report summarizes findings from a 2020 survey of tourism industry stakeholders in Oregon. The survey sought feedback from stakeholders to provide guidance and perspective on priorities for future investments from Regional Destination Management Organizations. This report summarizes findings from respondents in Mt. Hood/Gorge Region with additional statewide results provided for context.

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## MT. HOOD/GORGE REGION

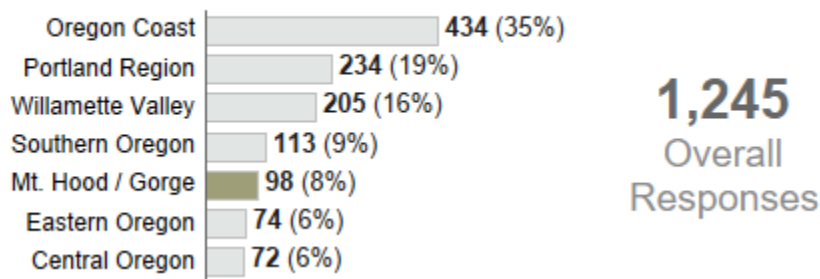
### SURVEY GOALS

The 2020 Oregon tourism engagement survey was designed to gather feedback from Oregon’s tourism industry professionals, employees, and stakeholders to provide feedback and direction for Travel Oregon and Regional Destination Management Organizations (RDMOs) in setting strategic directions and making funding and programmatic decision in marketing, grants, tourist-related infrastructure, visitor management, and more. The survey was built on a framework of past stakeholder surveys; however, unprecedented circumstances surrounding COVID-19, wildfires, and racial injustice necessitated survey changes. The survey was developed collaboratively by Driftline Consulting, Travel Oregon, and seven RDMOs.

### DATA COLLECTION

The survey was conducted online and distributed in both English and Spanish between October 5-30, 2020, by way of direct email communications, a press release, industry newsletters and industry partners' distribution channels to an open URL hosted on Travel Oregon's industry website. The survey resulted in a total of 98 responses from the Mt. Hood/Gorge region and 1,242 responses overall. Sample sizes for individual questions vary. Results presented in this report are segmented by the region in which the respondent indicated that they live or work. Figures show results from the Mt. Hood/Gorge region compared to the statewide survey results (referred to as the “overall” in figures).

*Number of Respondents*



The survey results should be viewed as an aggregation of relevant and thoughtful feedback from stakeholders. The applicability of findings to real life circumstances may depend on whether the feedback is from a broad enough (or representative) swath of stakeholders and whether individual RDMOs believe they have engaged with enough stakeholders to have a good gauge of the stakeholders’ priorities. An assessment of the industries represented, and the overall response numbers suggest that for all regions, a diverse and appropriately sized cross-section of stakeholders

responded, adding confidence to the applicability of results. Because the survey was not conducted from a random sample, it is not appropriate to perform statistical tests on the data.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

In addition to this report, results from the survey are accessible via an interactive online dashboard that enables further exploration of the data. Users of the online dashboard can segment questions by key variables to gain additional insight into segments of the Oregon tourism stakeholder population that were not addressed in this report.

The survey also resulted in an extensive number of open-ended responses. In several instances, selections of representative open-ended comments from Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents are presented within the report. These comments are presented in the respondents' own words, and they do not reflect the opinions of Travel Oregon. Representative selections of open-ended responses from Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents are provided as an appendix to this report. All comments are viewable in an online dashboard with accompanying word clouds and bar charts.

Access the online dashboards by going to: [https://rebrand.ly/TO\\_Stakeholder2020](https://rebrand.ly/TO_Stakeholder2020)

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## KEY FINDINGS

### BUSINESS HEALTH

- Forty-four percent of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents reported their business/organization has laid off, terminated, or otherwise let go of employees in 2020, with the most layoffs occurring 4-6 months ago. About 11% anticipate layoffs/terminations at their business/organization within the next six months, while 37% are unsure if layoffs will occur within the next 6 months.
- Over half (54%) of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents characterize the impacts of COVID-19 on their organization/business's revenue or funding as having a significant negative impact. By comparison, 15% describe the wildfires as having a significant negative impact.

### RESILIENCY, RECOVERY AND REOPENING

- Forty percent of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents are not at all concerned about promoting their community and feel it would benefit from visitors (compared to 37% statewide), while 19% expressed some or significant concern (compared to 24% statewide). When it comes to welcoming visitor to their communities, they are most concerned with a lack of visitation due to decrease in travel demand.
- By a large margin, "help advocating for effective policies and funding to support tourism businesses/organizations" is the resource that will best support Mt. Hood/Gorge businesses/organizations recover. Support developing and bolstering visitor experiences that are COVID-appropriate and that enhance local livability will best support Mt. Hood/Gorge communities.

### PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

- From a list of ten actions that would aid in recovery from COVID-19, wildfires, and related economic conditions, Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents identified COVID-friendly visitor experience development as their top priority. Marketing and promotion should be a key focus area in the longer term (next two to five years).
- "Managing tourism impacts in order to preserve local assets and livability" is the top tactical planning and management strategy that will advance the economic impact of tourism and ensure its vitality and sustainability.

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- Fifty-three percent of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents think the tourism industry should play a role in advancing social and racial justice, a roughly equal share compared to the 54% of statewide respondents. Twenty-five percent do not think the industry should play a role, while 22% are unsure.
- Sixty-four percent of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents report having received training related to cultural awareness, anti-racism, implicit bias, or some other diversity, equity, and inclusivity related training. 47% would be interested in participating in diversity, equity, and/or inclusivity related training. Nine in ten Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents feel somewhat or very prepared to interact with visitors/clients/coworkers of diverse ethnic/racial/cultural backgrounds.

## RESPONDENT PROFILE

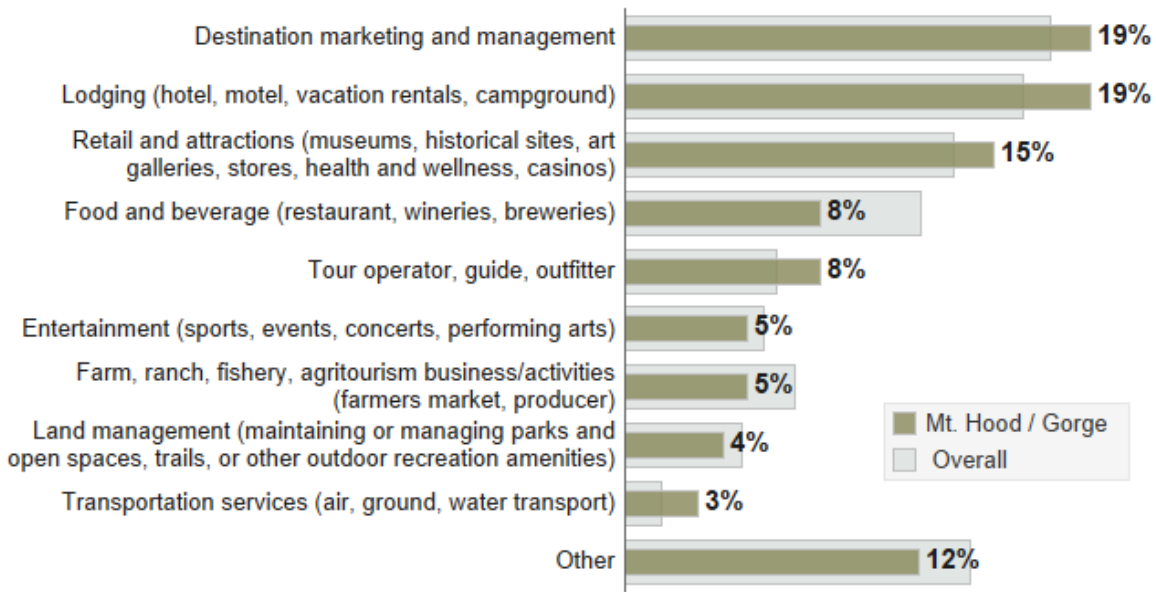
The survey received broad participation by tourism industry sector. Overall, the destination marketing and management sector accounted for 18% of respondents, followed by lodging (16%), retail and attractions (12%), and food and beverage (both 12%). “Other” write-in responses, comprising 14% of the overall responses, were diverse and reflect the broad reach of the survey. Relative to statewide overall results, respondents in Mt. Hood/Gorge region were more likely to work in the destination management or lodging sectors, and less likely to work in the food and beverage sector.

Over half of all statewide respondents represent for profit businesses (56%), while 27% represent non-profit organizations. The Mt. Hood/Gorge region had a slightly greater share of for-profit businesses (61%).

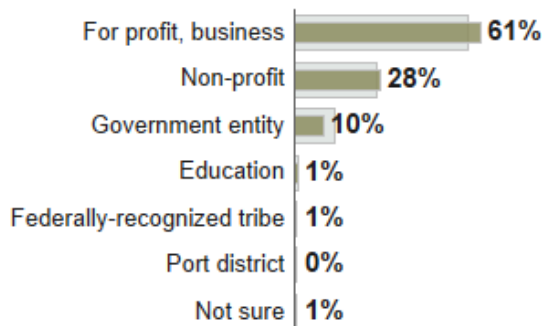
Sixty-two percent of all respondents are employed full-time in the tourism industry, 18% are employed part-time, and the remaining 10% are retired, not currently employed, or prefer not to say. The distribution of results by employment status in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region generally align with the statewide overall results.

### Industry Sector, Entity Type and Employment Status

Q: In what sector of the tourism industry do you primarily work? Choose one:



Q: Which entity type best describes your business/organization?



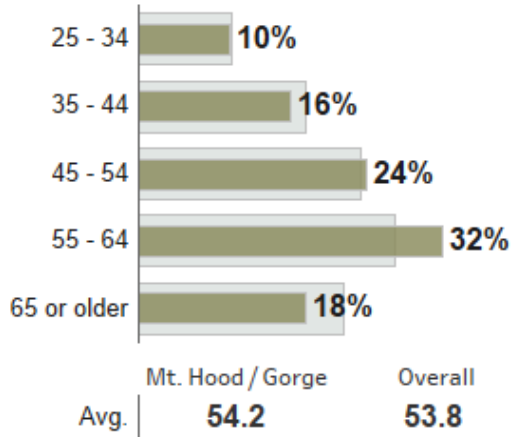
Q: Which of the following best describes your current employment status in the tourism industry?



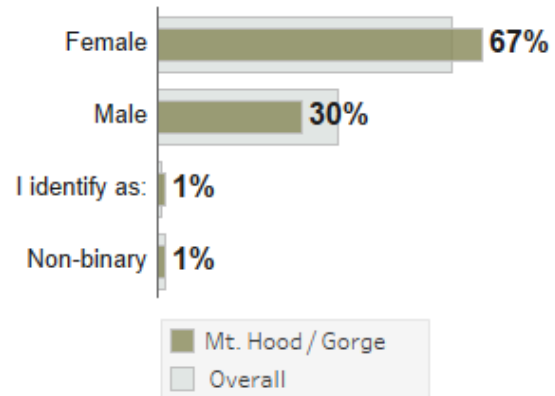
The average age of respondents, both statewide and in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region, is 54 years, with roughly half of respondents aged 55 or older, and half 55 or younger. Overall, 61% of respondents identify as female and 37% identify as male. Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents skewed slightly more female (67% vs. 61% statewide).

## Age and Gender

Q: Respondent age:



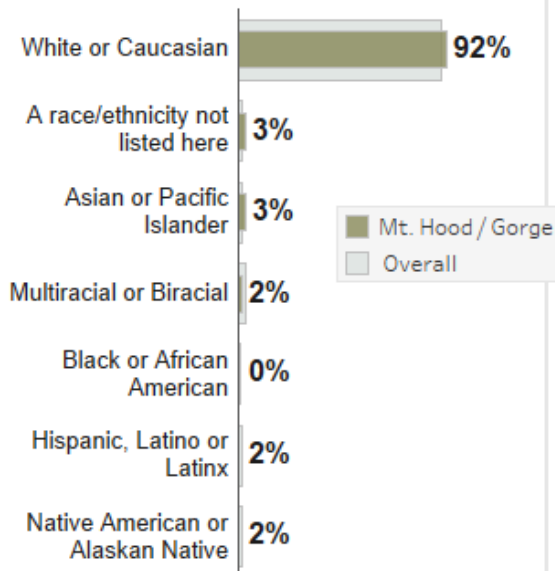
Q: What is your gender?



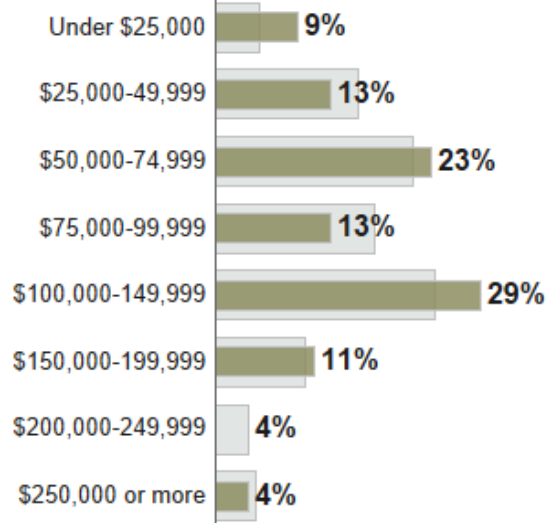
Both statewide, and in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region, roughly nine in ten respondents describe themselves as white or Caucasian. In the Mt. Hood/Gorge region, non-white/Caucasian races account for less than 8% of respondents. Forty-one percent of all tourism industry stakeholders in Oregon have annual household incomes of less than \$75,000.

## Race and Household Income

Q: Which of the following best describes you? (Please select one answer)



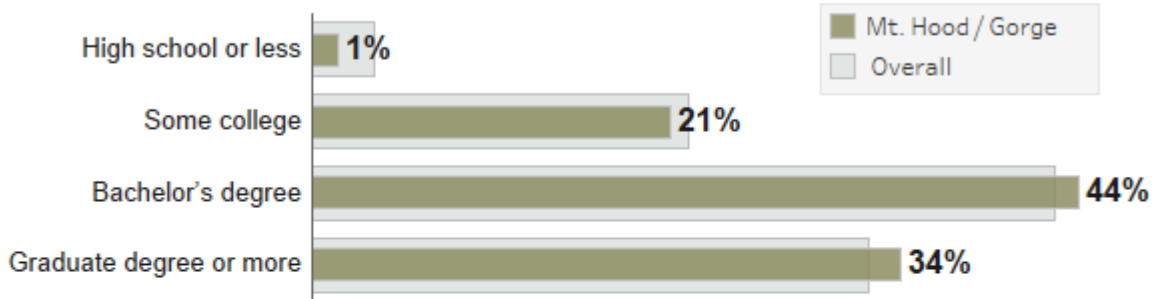
Q: Which of these categories best describes the total gross annual income of your household (before taxes)?



Statewide, three quarters of respondents have a Bachelor's degree or higher level of education, while a quarter did not attain their Bachelor's degree. Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents indicated slightly higher levels of education. Six percent of statewide respondents report a disability, with "walking" most frequently identified.

## Education Level and Presence of Disabilities

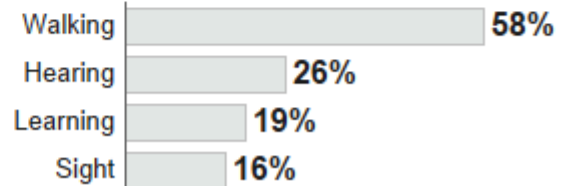
Q: What is your highest level of education?



Q: Do you have a disability?



Q: What are these disabilities? (Check all that apply)



\*Overall only due to insufficient regional sample size.

## BUSINESS HEALTH AND FUNDING SOURCES

Due to recent upheavals of the travel and tourism industry and prolonged economic uncertainty, a series of questions aimed to better understand the financial impacts of COVID-19 and wildfires on Oregon tourism businesses and organizations.

Forty-six percent of all respondents (vs. 44% in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region) work for organizations or businesses that have laid off, terminated, or otherwise let go of employees in 2020. Statewide, the lodging and food and beverage sectors were most likely to report layoffs (63% and 61% reporting layoffs, respectively), while the farm/ranch/fishery/agritourism and land management sectors were the least likely (8% and 37%, respectively). Of those that reported layoffs within their organization, the median number of employees let go was 5.0 (vs. 5.5 in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region), which represented a median of 50% of employees within the organization (vs. 60% in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region).

### Layoffs and Terminations

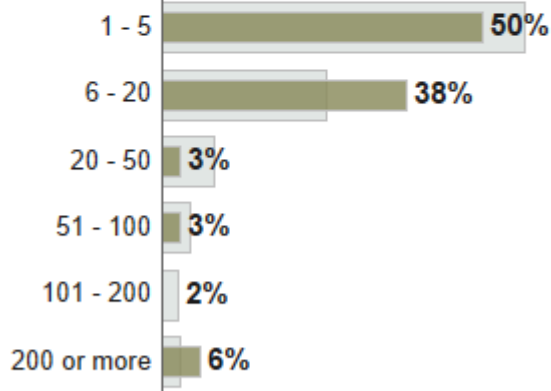
■ Mt. Hood / Gorge    □ Overall

Q: In 2020, has your organization/business laid off, terminated, or otherwise let go of employees?

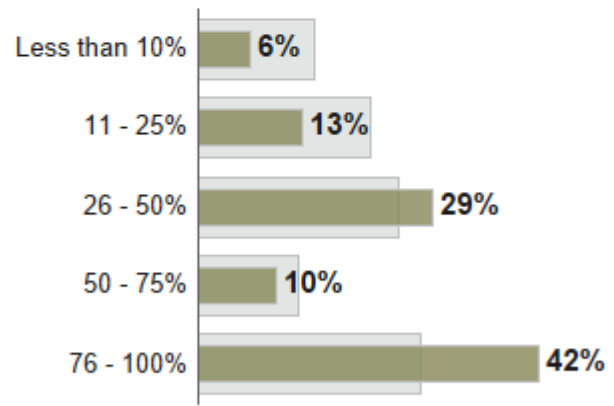


Q: [IF YES] Including both full-time and part-time employees...

roughly how many were laid off, terminated, or otherwise let go:



roughly what percent were laid off, terminated, or otherwise let go:



	Mt. Hood / Gorge	Overall
Average	44.1	30.4
Median	5.5	5.0

	Mt. Hood / Gorge	Overall
Average	60.0%	49.7%
Median	60.0%	50.0%

The survey asked about anticipated future layoffs, and the timing of layoffs both past and future. Statewide, 14% of respondents anticipate layoffs within their business/organization within the next six months, 54% do not anticipate layoffs, and a third (33%) are unsure. Respondents in Mt. Hood/Gorge region are slightly less likely to anticipate layoffs (11%). The greatest share of layoffs occurred early



during the pandemic, four or more months ago. Relative to the statewide results, respondents in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region were more likely to indicate layoffs within the next two months.

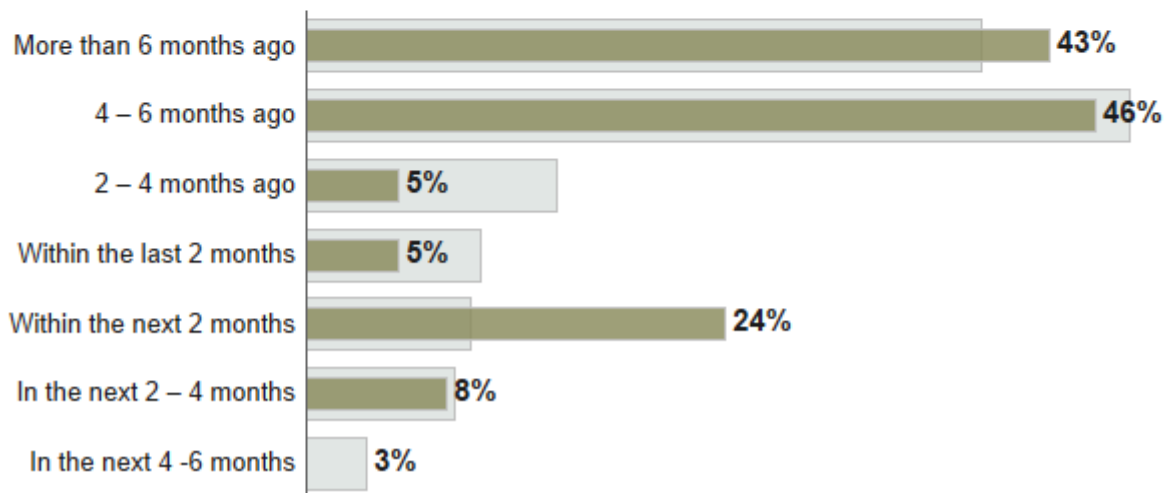
## Layoffs and Terminations

■ Mt. Hood / Gorge    □ Overall

Q: Within the next 6 months, do you anticipate laying off, terminating, or otherwise letting go of employees?



Q: When did layoffs or terminations occur and/or when do you anticipate them occurring? (Check all that apply)

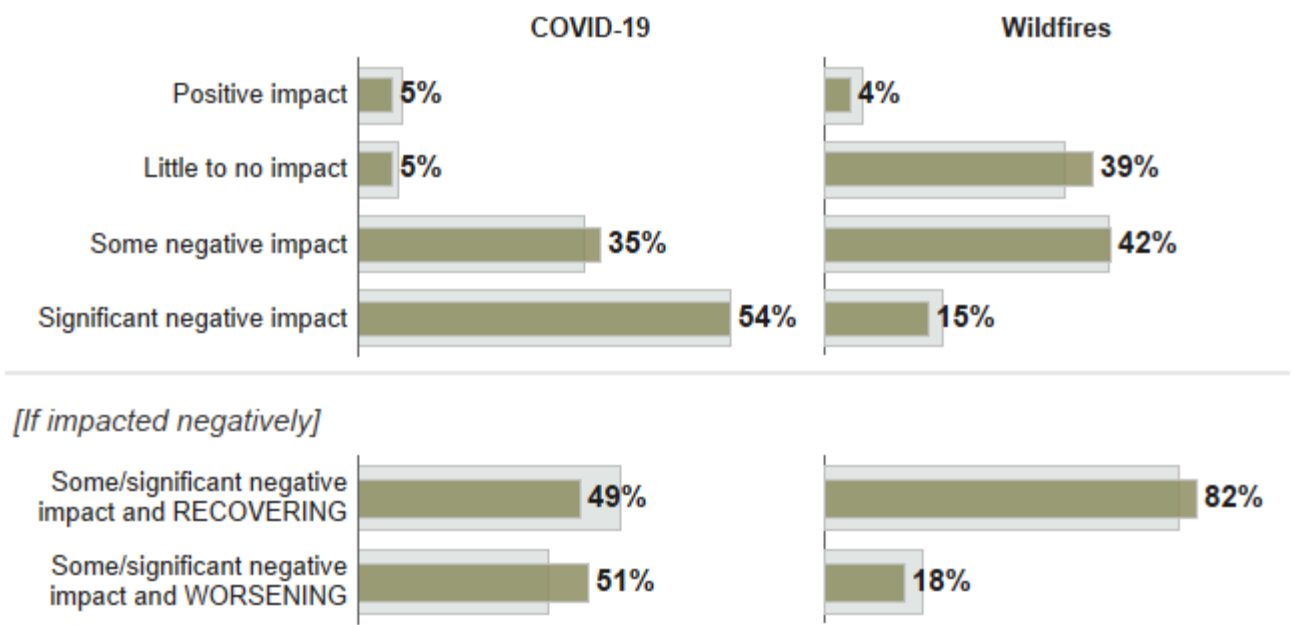


Statewide, 12% of respondents reported that COVID-19 has had little to no impact or a positive impact on their business or organization’s revenue or funding. A large majority (88%) reported some or significant negative impact. Of those that experienced a negative impact, 42% are experiencing worsening impacts, while 58% are in recovery. By comparison, wildfires negatively impacted a smaller share of overall respondents (59%). A smaller share reported significant negative impacts, and, of those negatively impacted, a greater share reports their business/organization is recovering from wildfires (79%) than from COVID-19 (58%). Relative to the statewide overall, Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents report levels of impact roughly equal to the statewide overall; however, they have a greater share of respondents that report the negative impacts of COVID-19 are worsening. Roughly half of respondents report impacts of COVID-19 are worsening, and roughly half report that are improving.

## COVID-19 and Wildfire Impacts

■ Mt. Hood / Gorge    □ Overall

Q: How would you characterize the impacts of the following on your organization/business's revenue or funding:

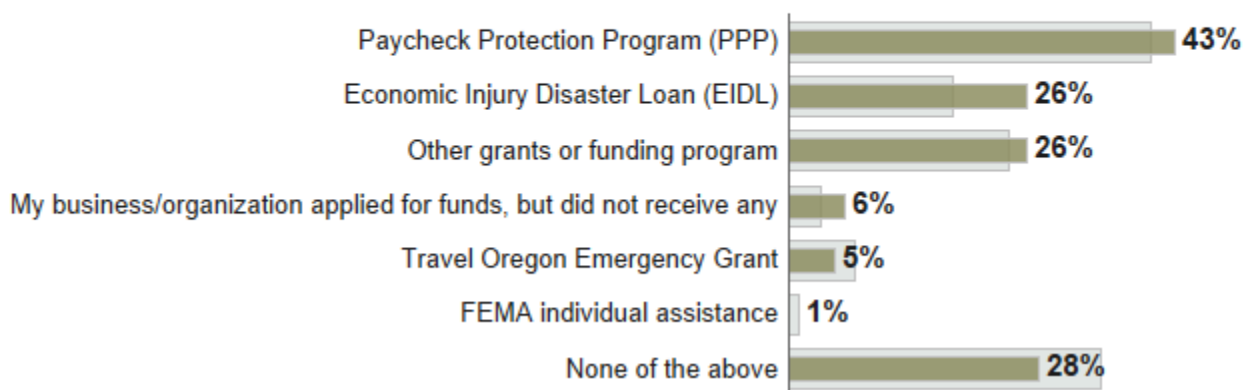


Roughly two thirds of all respondents work for businesses or organizations that sought funding, while a third neither sought, nor received funding. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) was the most-awarded funding source overall, followed by “other grants or funding program,” and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL). Relative to the statewide results, Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents were more likely to receive the EIDL.

## Funding Sources

■ Mt. Hood / Gorge    □ Overall

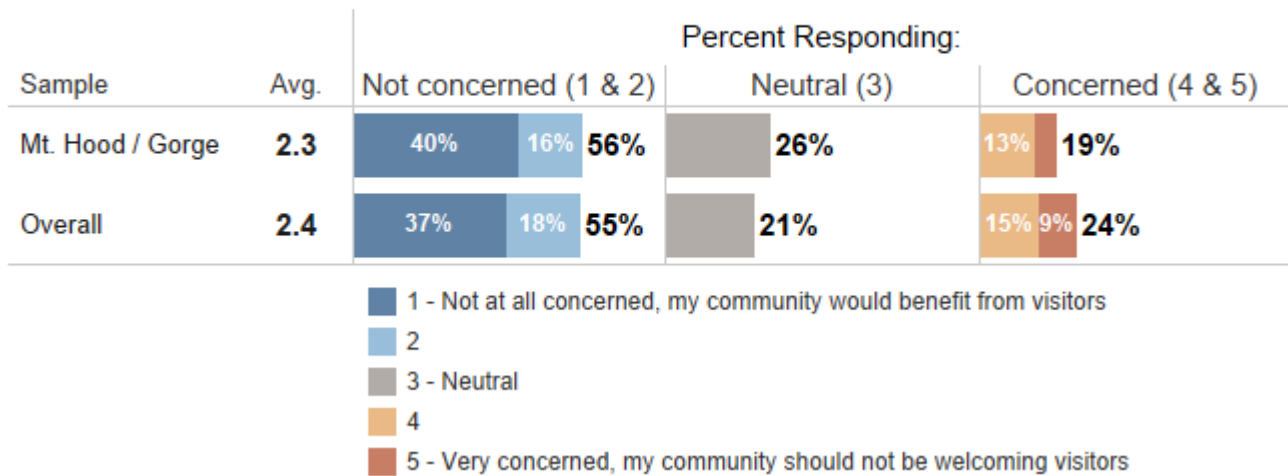
Q: Has your business or organization received funding from any of the following: (Check all that apply)



## RESILIENCY, RECOVERY AND REOPENING

During these uncertain times, it is important for the tourism industry to know how its stakeholders are feeling about reopening and their priorities concerning safety and economic issues. To broadly gauge the industry’s readiness to embrace visitation, respondents were asked to rate their level of concern with promoting their community. Statewide, more than half of respondents (55%) are not concerned about welcoming visitors right now, 21% are neutral, while 24% feel their community should not be welcoming visitors. Respondents in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region expressed slightly less concern with welcoming visitors, with 56% responding “2” or “1” (Not at all concerned, my community would benefit from visitors).

*Q: How would you feel if you saw an advertisement today promoting your community to visitors?*



A follow-up open-ended question asked respondents: “Why do you feel that way?” The survey resulted in 526 total comments from respondents that were not concerned with promoting their community (answered 1 or 2), and 241 total comments from respondents that expressed concern (answered 4 or 5). Among those concerned, commonly cited reasons include increased risk of contracting COVID-19, the fear that tourism will lead to increased cases and further, more prolonged shutdowns, and the feeling that their destination is already at maximum capacity and/or already experiencing adverse impacts due to tourism. Those that were not concerned cited primarily economic reasons for promoting their community/destination and the sense that tourism can operate safely amidst the pandemic. An additional 162 total open-ended responses were collected from respondents that were neutral, and it is worth noting that many comments on both sides recognized the fluidity of the situation and acknowledged both the risks and rewards of tourism in their communities. Selections of comments from Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents by response follows. A full list of open-ended comments from Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents is provided in the appendix.

### **CONCERNED with promotion (4 & 5): “Why do you feel that way”**

*As a medical provider in a small tourist centric town, I do not feel with escalating COVID numbers, tourism/travel should be encouraged or promoted. Small hospitals do not have the capacity, nor structure to handle the influx of COVID type patients. Additionally local residents in small communities do not deserve to be subjected to an influx of tourism during the COVID pandemic.*

*I don't think this is the time to be promoting any community to outsiders. There is already a high degree of visitation occurring from friends and family and people who are willing to travel during the pandemic. Advertising is not necessary and will only compound issues of high visitation that are already a concern. Oregonians and others in the Pacific NW who would have been taking vacations elsewhere are staying put and traveling within the region, so visitation numbers remain quite high in our community.*

*Our industry being that it generally can support social distancing can benefit from visitors during COVID, however, due to the wildfires that ravaged the Clackamas River Corridor, we worry that people won't come out because they can no longer access the highway that parallels the river; where a lot of our clients like to play during the fall, winter and spring months when the river levels are higher and best for whitewater activities. Not to mention hikers, bikers, mushroom hunters and campers.*

*People seem to have forgotten that there is a pandemic. I rarely see people wearing face masks on the street/in parks where they are passing others. And at restaurants, people remove their face mask as soon as their beverages are served and leave them off until they leave - my family only removes their masks while actively eating, and so we no longer dine outside; curbside pickup only!*

*We need visitors in our area but I worry that folks coming in won't take the necessary precautions to keep our community safe from the spread of COVID-19.*

### **NOT CONCERNED with promotion (1 & 2): "Why do you feel that way"**

*COVID is certainly still a threat, but this community depends on tourism to survive. I think we should be promoting responsible ways to travel during a pandemic and how to be respectful of the communities when traveling (i.e. being diligent about masks, being aware of local and state regulations, etc.)*

*Government Camp is a tourist town. There are few visitors visiting the businesses. Record numbers of people are doing day hikes in the National Forest, but they do not use the local businesses. Maybe they think everything is closed or just don't want to be around people. The restaurants, shops and museum is doing a super job of meeting social distancing.*

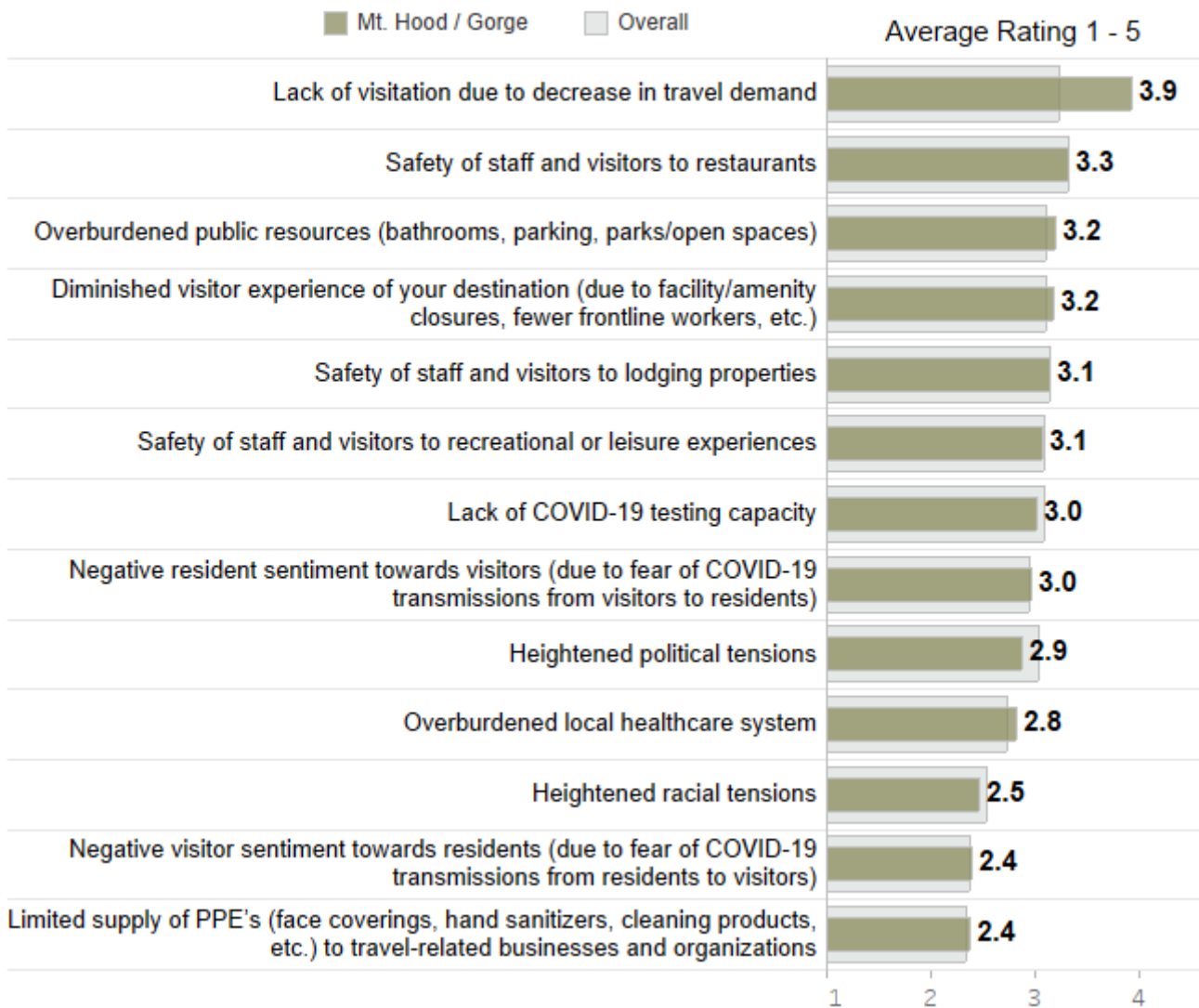
*I feel this way because the Dalles is mostly flat and open. Most activities here involve being socially distant. The sidewalks are large, COVID-19 cases are very few, most activities involve being social distant (i.e. hiking, fishing, hunting, windsurfing and other water sports, ROCKHOUNDING, etc.) The river walk that they have is miles long and many people like to bike, run, etc while taking in the beauty and geology of the gorge. Lodging is relatively inexpensive and within a short drive you can reach Cottonwood canyon, Deschutes river, White River Falls, etc.*

*Safety procedures are in place. Businesses need to be able to operate. Economy needs to get back on track and not be living in fear. If someone is ill, they need to take responsibility for self - isolate and stay home.*

*People need to know recreating responsibly is important to their physical and emotional well-being and we have worked hard to present guest experiences supported by appropriate safety measures.*

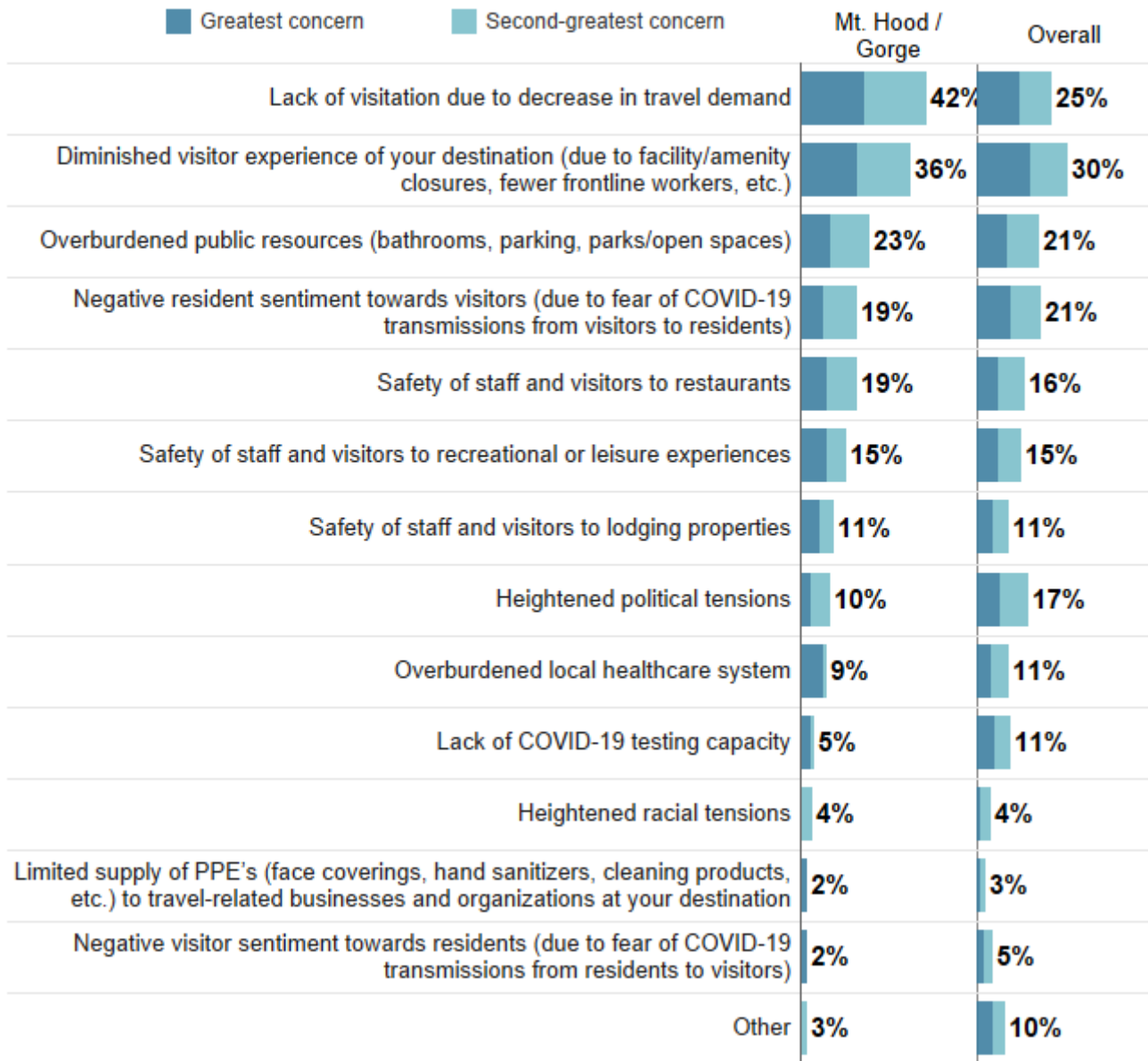
All respondents were asked to rate their level of concern with various aspects of welcoming visitors to their community, with "1" being "not at all concerned" and "5" being "extremely concerned." Overall, the safety of staff and visitors to restaurants, lack of visitation due to a decrease in travel demand, and safety of staff and visitors to lodging properties emerged as top concerns. Heightened racial tensions, negative visitor sentiment towards residents, and limited supply of PPE was of relatively less concern. Respondents in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region are much more concerned with a lack of visitation due to decrease in travel demand. Categories in the figure below are sorted in descending order by the average rating of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents.

Q: As you think about welcoming visitors to your community, how concerned are you about the following? (1 = Not at all concerned, 5 - Extremely concerned)



To further differentiate between concerns related to welcoming visitors, respondents were then asked to identify their two greatest concerns related to welcoming visitors to their community. Diminished visitor experience and lack of visitation due to decrease in travel demand were of the greatest concern with a quarter or more of respondents identifying them among their two greatest concerns. Mt. Hood/Gorge shared these top concerns to an even greater degree, with over a third of respondents identifying them among their greatest concerns. Concerns are sorted in descending order by the percent in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region responding greatest/second-greatest concern.

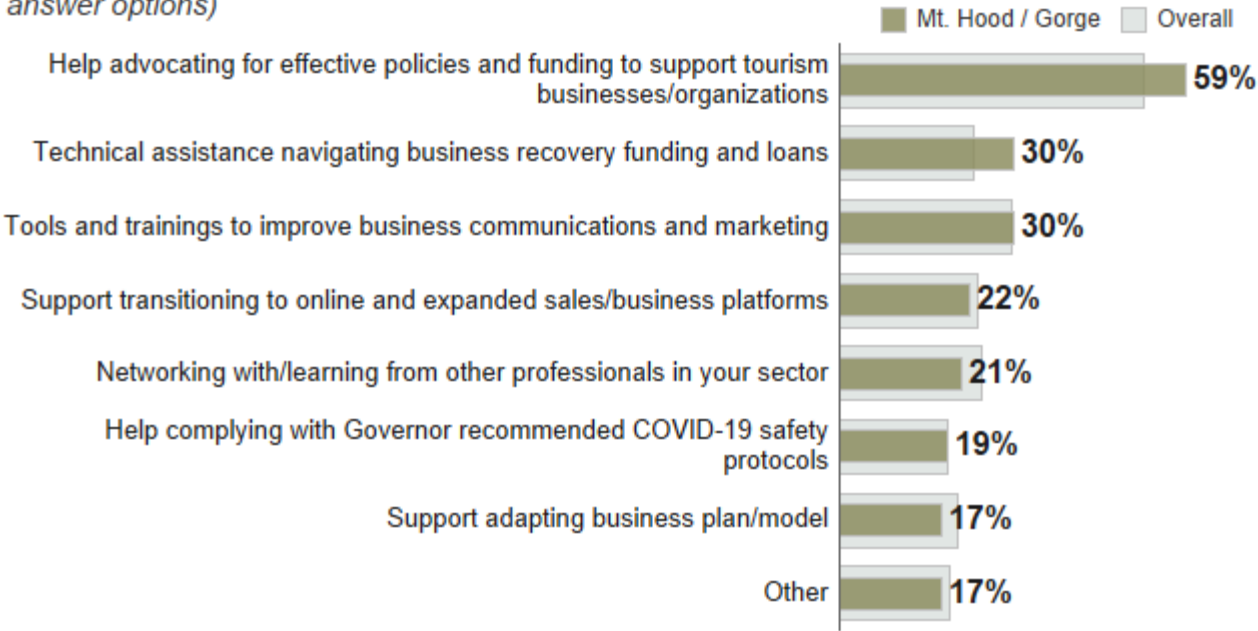
Q: From the list above, please identify your top two concerns related to welcoming visitors to your community.



The survey asked respondents to identify the resources or programs that would best assist their business/organization, and best assist their community in resiliency, recovery, and reopening. For businesses, by a large margin, help advocating for effective policies and funding to support tourism businesses/organizations was the most favored resource/program, followed by tools and trainings to improve business communications and marketing. Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents were even more likely to identify help advocating for effective policies and funding to support tourism businesses/organizations. They also placed greater emphasis on receiving technical assistance navigating business recovery funding and loans.

# Buisness/Organization Assistance

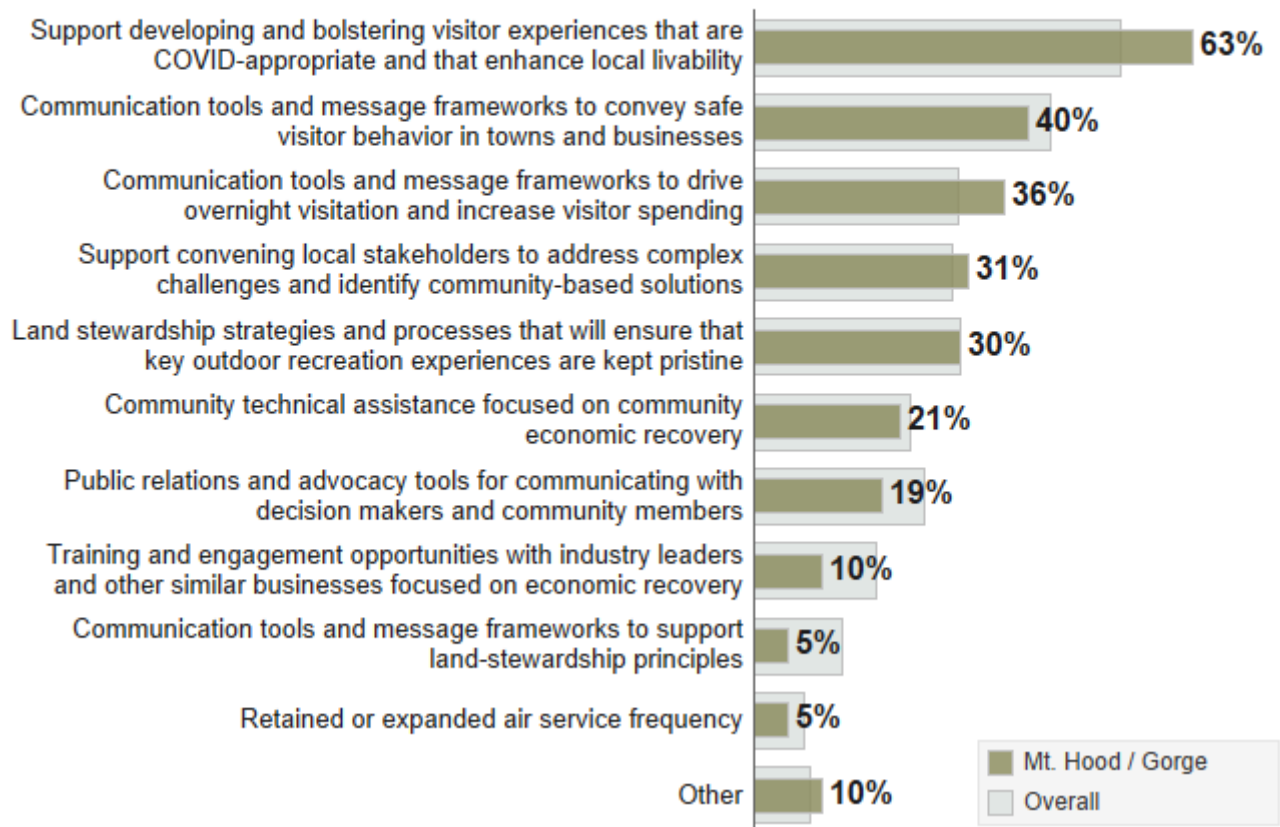
Q: Which of the following resources or programs would best assist your BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION in resiliency, recovery, and reopening? (Select up to three answer options)



From the perspective of their community, overall results favored two programs/resources: support developing and bolstering visitor experiences that are COVID-appropriate and that enhance local livability (53%), and communication tools and message frameworks to convey safe visitor behavior in towns and businesses (43%). The rank order of priorities among Mt. Hood/Gorge region respondents was similar to the statewide results. Support developing and bolstering visitor experiences that are COVID-appropriate and that enhance local livability was more desired in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region.

## Community Assistance

Q: Which of the following resources or programs would best assist your COMMUNITY in resiliency, recovery, and reopening? (Select up to three answer options)



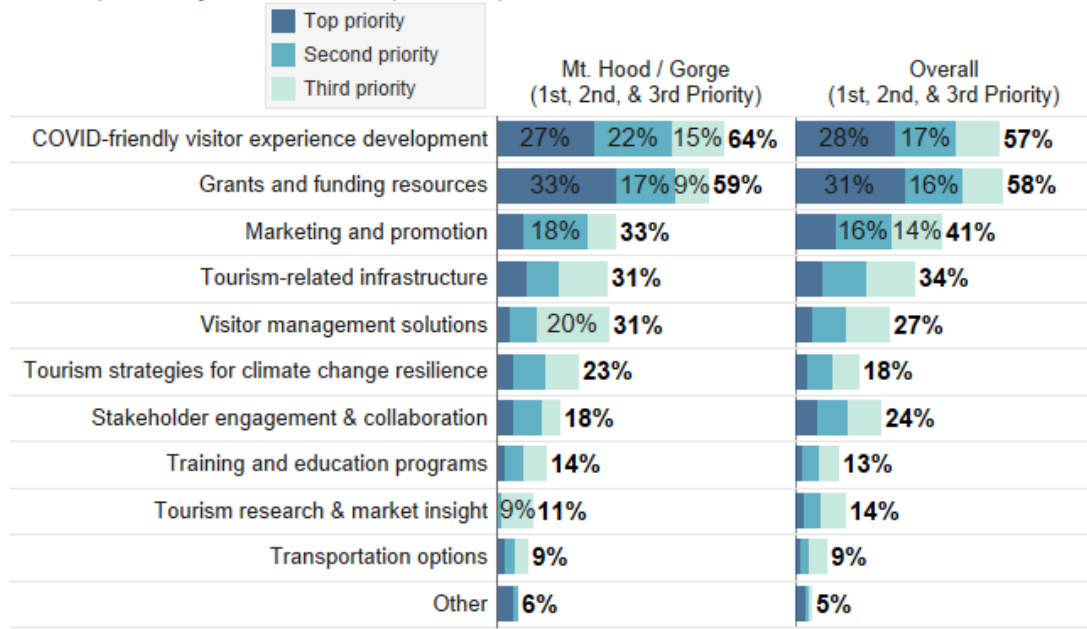
## PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Respondents were asked to identify the three areas that should be emphasized for immediate (6-12 month) recovery from COVID-19, wildfires, and related economic conditions. They were then asked to prioritize the same focus areas for longer-term tourism planning over the next 2-5 years. In the short-term, grants and funding resources emerged as the top priority among all respondents, with 31% of respondents identifying it as their top priority and 58% identifying it among their top-three highest priorities. COVID-friendly visitor experience development was the second most-identified priority (27% among their top three), by a small margin. COVID-friendly visitor experience development and grants and funding resources were the two clearly favored areas among Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents.



## Short-Term Tourism Priorities & Focus Areas

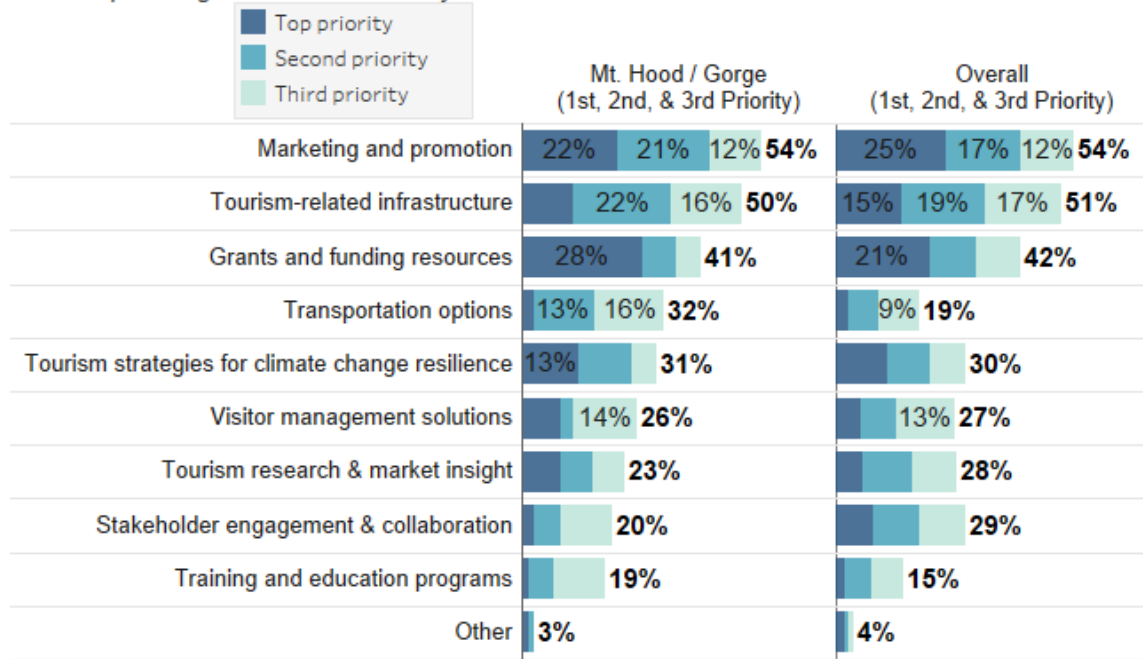
Q: Please identify the three areas that you believe should be emphasized for immediate (6 – 12 months) recovery from COVID-19, wildfires, and related economic conditions:



Over the long term, grants and funding resources fell to the third-highest priority behind marketing and promotion and tourism-related infrastructure. The top three long-term priorities in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region were the same as the statewide results, however, Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents were more likely to identify transportation options among their top three longer-term priorities.

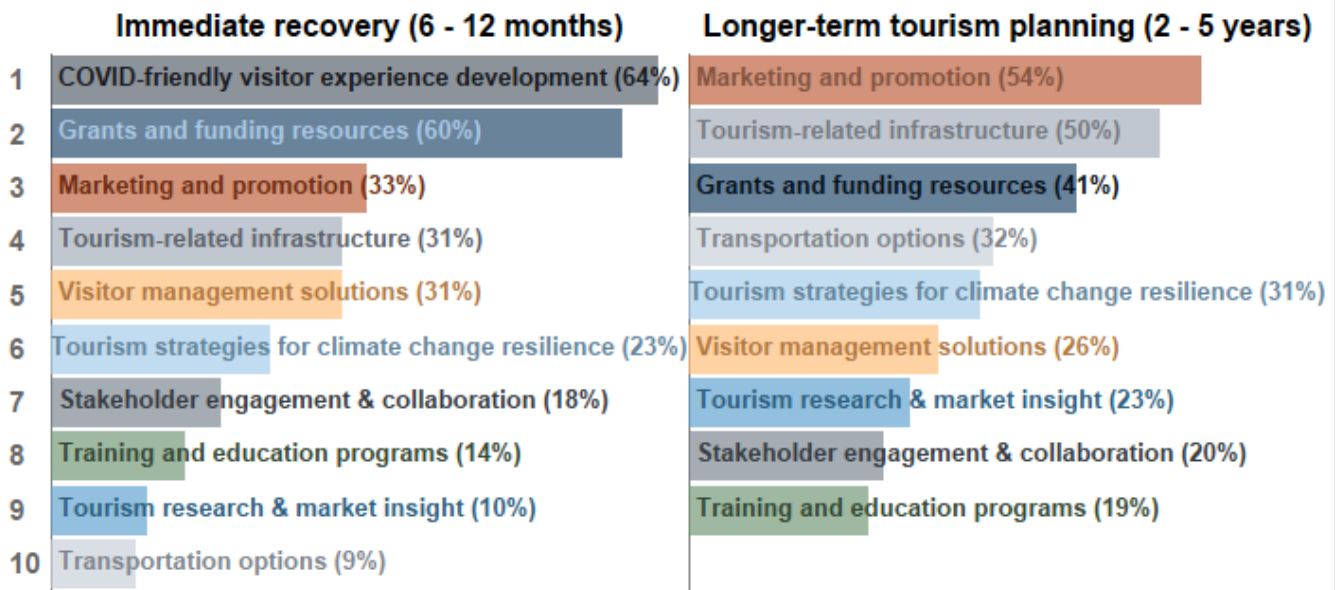
## Longer-Term Tourism Priorities & Focus Areas

Q: Please identify the three areas that you believe should be emphasized for longer-term tourism planning over the next 2 - 5 years:



The following figure compares the rank order of short vs. long-term priorities among Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents, with categories colored to more easily identify changes in rank order. Marketing and promotion, the third-highest priority for immediate recovery in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region, climbs to first in terms of longer-term planning.

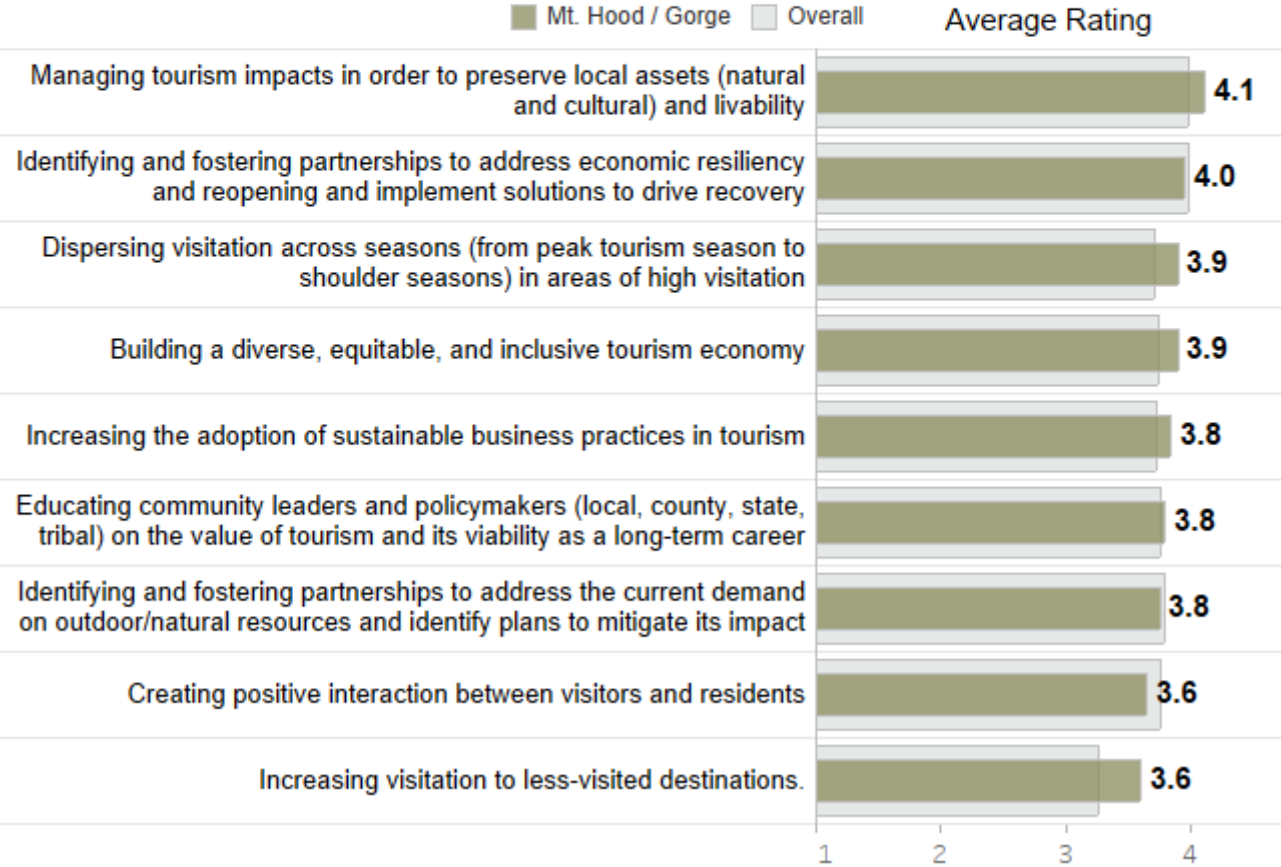
### Short vs. Long-Term Priorities: \*Mt. Hood / Gorge



Respondents were asked to rate on a 1-5 scale (with 1 being “not a priority” and 5 being “high priority”) various tactical planning and management opportunities. Among all respondents statewide, “identifying and fostering partnerships to address economic resiliency and reopening and implement solutions to drive recovery,” and “managing tourism impacts in order to preserve local assets (natural and cultural) and livability” were the two highest priority tactics, while “increasing visitation to less-visited destinations” was a low priority. There were six tactics that received ratings of 3.7-3.8, indicating a broad range of competing priorities. Priorities in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region generally aligned with the statewide results, however dispersing visitation across seasons (from peak tourism season to shoulder seasons) in areas of high visitation was a relatively high priority.

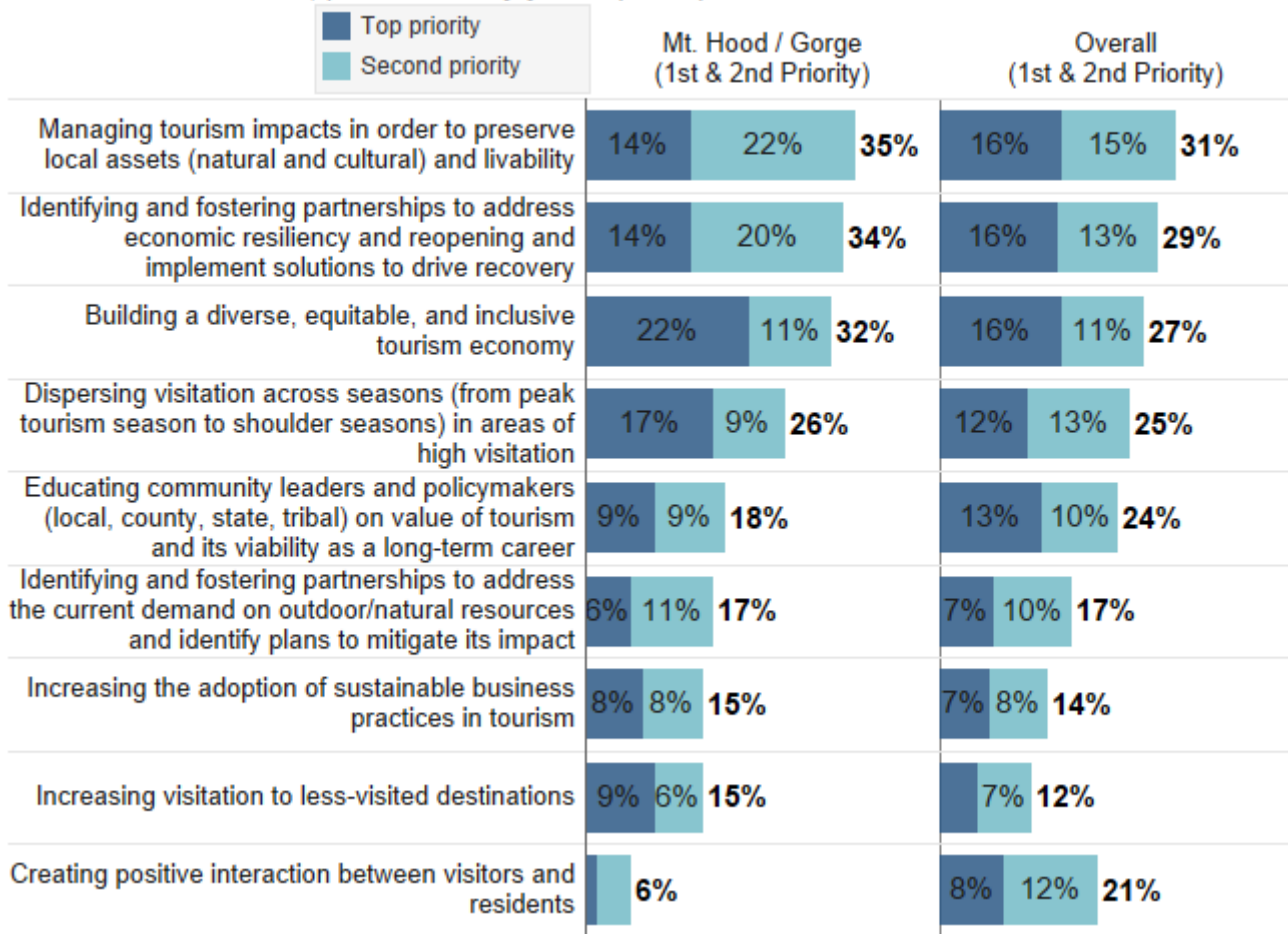
# Planning and Management

*Q: Please indicate how you would prioritize the following tactical planning and management opportunities to advance the economic impact of tourism and ensure its vitality and sustainability. With limited resources available, not all tactics should be considered extremely high priorities, and some may not be feasible given budget realities. Please differentiate between tactics which you believe deserve new/continued investment and those areas which you believe to be less important. (1 = Not a priority, 5 = High priority)*



This rating question formed the basis for a follow-up question that asked respondents to select their top-two highest priorities. The nature of this follow-up question helps to differentiate between tactics that, while important, may not be among the top-two highest priorities. Overall, the top three priorities were managing tourism impacts in order to preserve local assets (natural and cultural) and livability (31%), identifying and fostering partnerships to address economic resiliency and reopening and implement solutions to drive recovery (29%), and building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive tourism economy (27%). The rank order of priorities in the Mt. Hood/Gorge region align with the statewide results.

Q: From the list above, please identify your top two priorities:

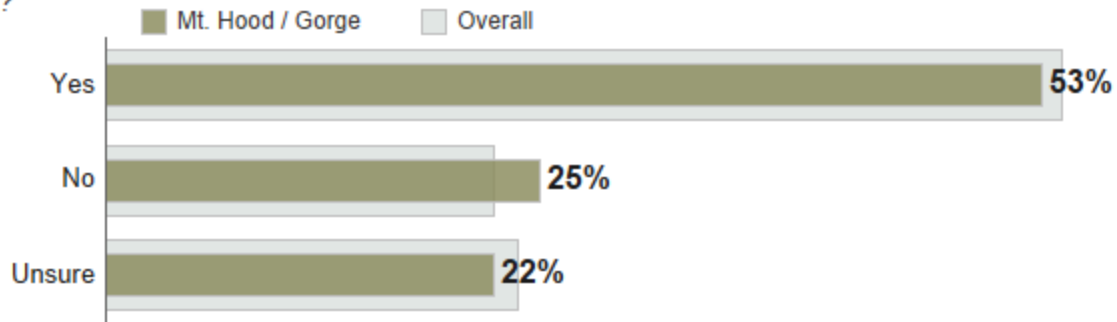


## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

With the national spotlight on inequities faced by Black, Indigenous, and people of color sparking a global movement against racial injustice, a handful of questions aimed to better understand the Oregon tourism industry’s attitudes towards this movement and preparedness to address these inequities.

Statewide, 54% of respondents feel the Oregon tourism industry should play a role in advancing social and racial justice, 22% do not think the industry should play a role, and 23% are unsure. Respondents from Mt. Hood/Gorge region were slightly less likely to feel the industry should play a role in advancing social and racial justice (53% responding “yes”). Younger respondents, those under 34 years of age, were more likely to respond “yes” (80%) than older respondents. Further, support for the industry playing a role tends to increase with education level (41% among those with high school or less and 62% among those with a graduate degree or more).

Q: Do you think the Oregon tourism industry should play a role in advancing social and racial justice?



Respondents that indicated that the Oregon tourism industry should play a role in advancing social and racial justice were asked: “How do you see Oregon’s tourism industry playing a role in advancing social and racial justice?” Those that replied “no” or “unsure” were asked: “do you have any comments on your response to the previous question regarding the Oregon tourism industry’s role in advancing social and racial justice?” A selection of responses to both questions from Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents follows:

**[If Yes] How do you see Oregon’s tourism industry playing a role in advancing social and racial justice?**

*As the main face of tourism in the state (which has an ugly history of white supremacy) TO has a responsibility to make all feel welcome.*

*I think you need to speak directly to BIPOC and LBGTQ+ communities to hear what they have not say, not me. What do they need to feel comfortable traveling to small rural areas in eastern Oregon? What are their recommendations?*

*By helping with resources to give folks in the industry opportunities to learn about systemic racism and how to combat it.*

*Continued promotion of diversity in communications and promotions. Continued long-term investment in international travel*

*Current leaders and business owners taking time to evaluate and understand how current practices may be rooted in white dominant culture and finding new ways of doing business to welcome BIPOC communities to the table in a way that supports, respects and empowers.*

**[If No/Unsure] Do you have any comments on your response to the previous question regarding the Oregon tourism industry’s role in advancing social and racial justice?**

*Everyone should now realize that we all need to get along better and should be respectful of each other’s diversity. If media and government just shut up and let things normalize, things can improve more rapidly.*

*Government entities based on revenue generation for the communities should not have political or religious opinions. The focus should be on attracting more travel not being an activist of social causes.*

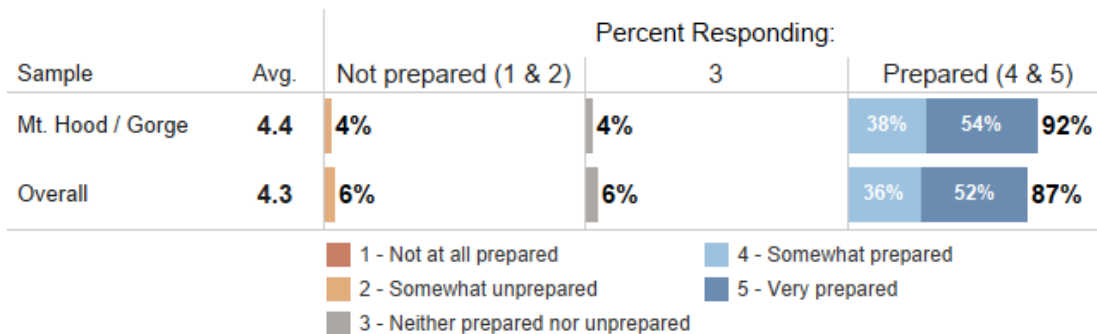
*I don’t believe it is the tourism industry professionals’ responsibility to add social justice/politics to their job description of developing and marketing tourism attractions and destinations.*

*I feel Travel Oregon should promote travel and tourism. It’s up to the individual communities to craft policies and education that provide for social and racial justice. In my opinion this is tantamount to the tour industry weighing in on criminal justice reform, or some other area that is not in its lane and does not allocate its funding to what it’s purposed for.*

*Please focus on your job to promote tourism here, not getting caught up in these feel good tactics. If you want to help the Natives here with tourism opportunities that would be great. They have been discriminated against in the past, but everyone here wants to move forward!*

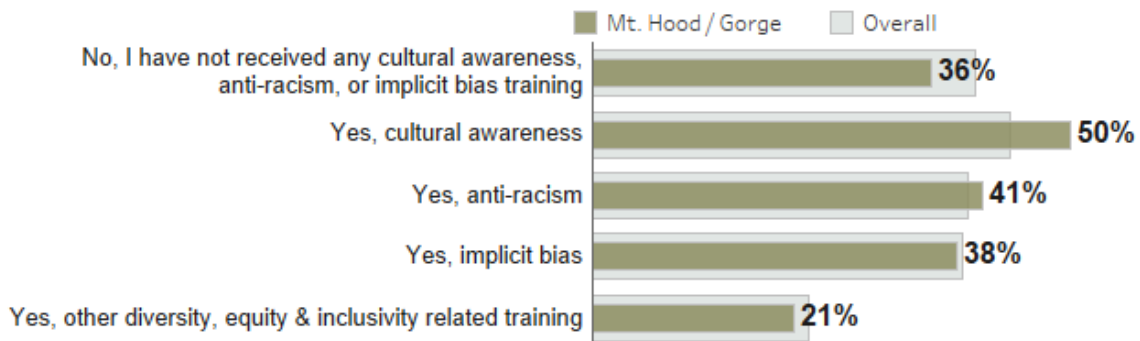
Both statewide and in Mt. Hood/Gorge region, respondents indicated high levels of preparedness to interact with visitors/clients/coworkers of diverse ethnic/racial/cultural backgrounds. Roughly nine in ten respondents indicated that they felt somewhat or very prepared. Just 6% of all respondents, 4% in Mt. Hood/Gorge region, indicated that they were somewhat unprepared or not at all prepared.

*Q: How prepared do you feel to interact with visitors/clients/coworkers of diverse ethnic/racial/cultural backgrounds?*

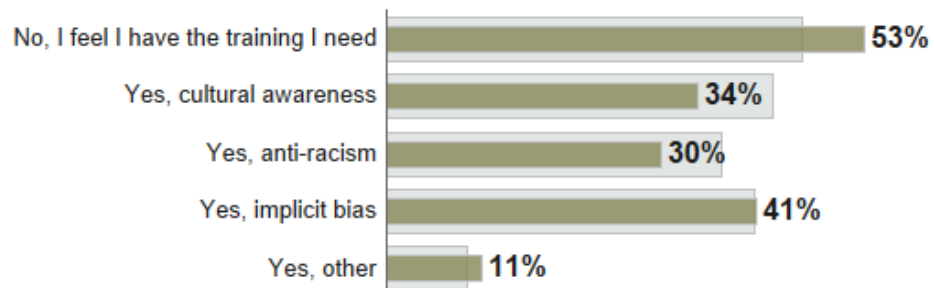


Statewide, three in five respondents indicated that they have participated in training related to cultural awareness, anti-racism, implicit bias, or other diversity, equity, and inclusivity training. Slightly more than half of all respondents (54%) would be interested in participating in such a training. Rates of participation in trainings were slightly higher among Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents. They were slightly less likely to express an interest in participating in trainings.

*Q: Have you participated in trainings related to any of the following? (Check all that apply)*



*Q: Would you be interested in participating in trainings related to any of the following? (Check all that apply)*

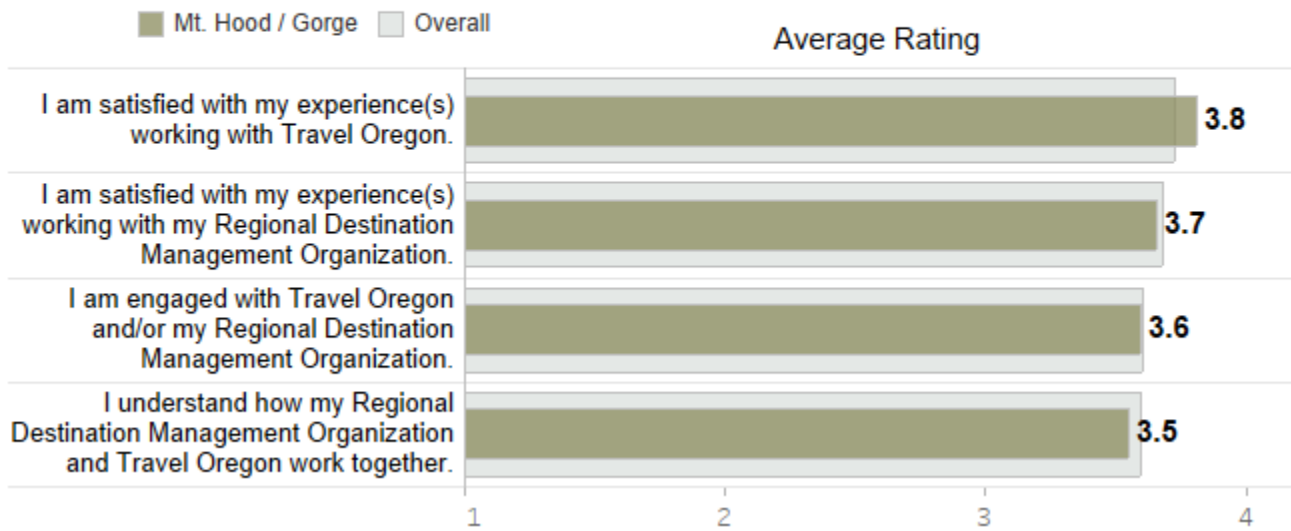


## INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Statewide, respondents indicate high levels of satisfaction working with Travel Oregon and their RDMO, and high levels of engagement and understanding of how their RDMO and Travel Oregon work together. On a 1-5 scale of agreement, the overall average rating of all statements ranged between 3.6 and 3.7. Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents on average agreed more with the statement, “I am satisfied with my experience(s) working with Travel Oregon.”

### Industry Engagement

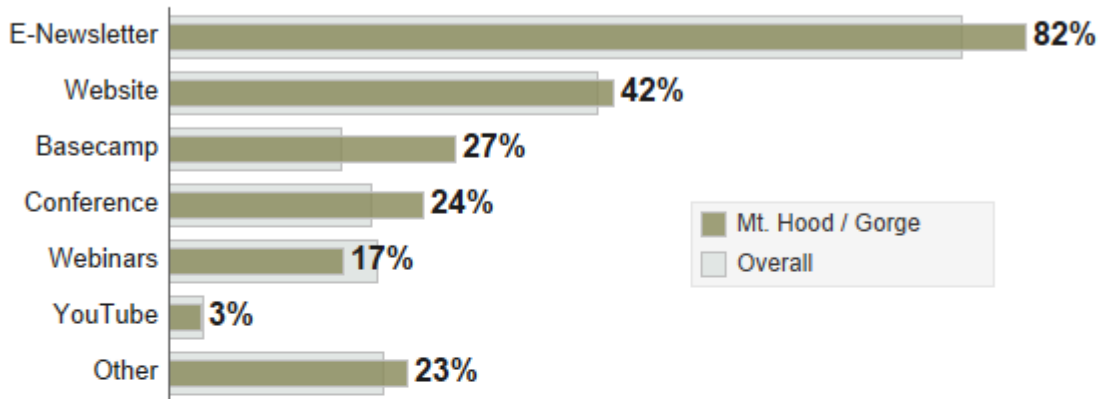
*Q: Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree)*



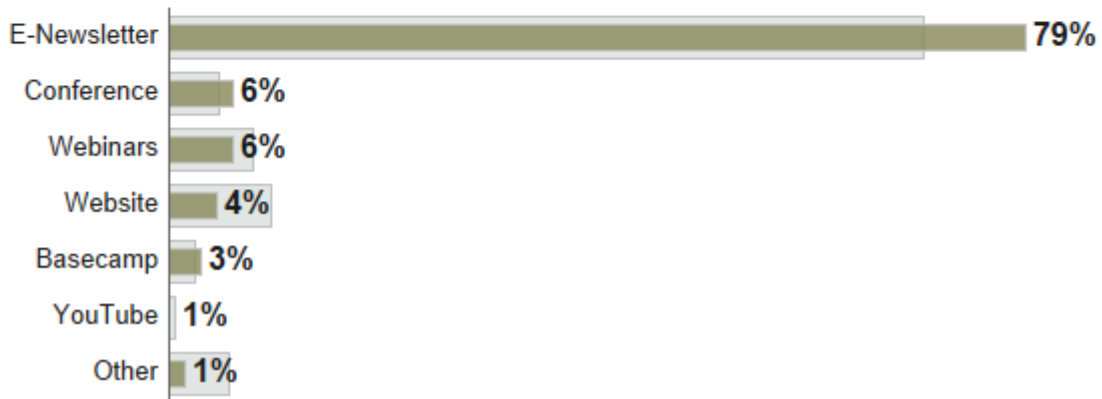
Seventy-six percent of all respondents currently receive tourism industry-related information from Travel Oregon and RDMOs via e-newsletter, followed by website (41%). Just 3% of all respondents currently receive information via YouTube. By a large margin, e-newsletters are considered the best way for respondents to receive information, and this source is particularly popular among respondents from the Mt. Hood/Gorge region.

## Communications

Q: How do you currently receive tourism industry-related information from Travel Oregon and your Regional Destination Management Organization? (Check all that apply)



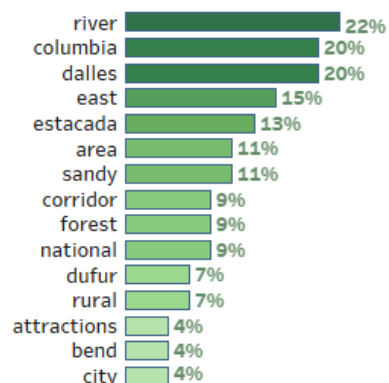
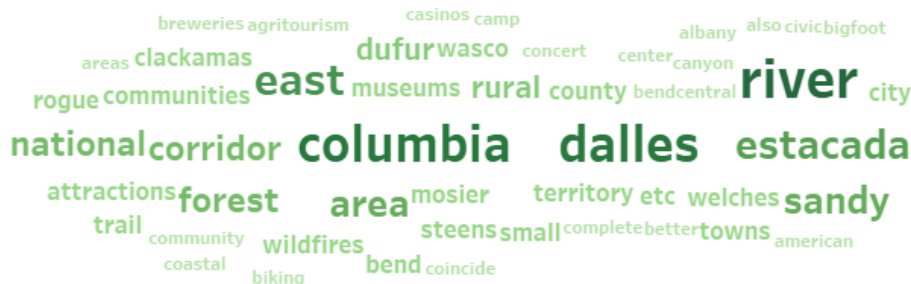
Q: What is the best way for you to receive tourism industry-related information from Travel Oregon and your Regional Destination Management Organization?



Respondents were asked to provide up to three destinations or attractions in Oregon that they believe would benefit from increased tourism development once it is considered safe to travel. The following word cloud and bar chart summarize these open-ended suggestions from Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents. The values of the bar chart and size of words represent the percent of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents that used a particular word. Commonly used words, including “Oregon” and region names, have been omitted.



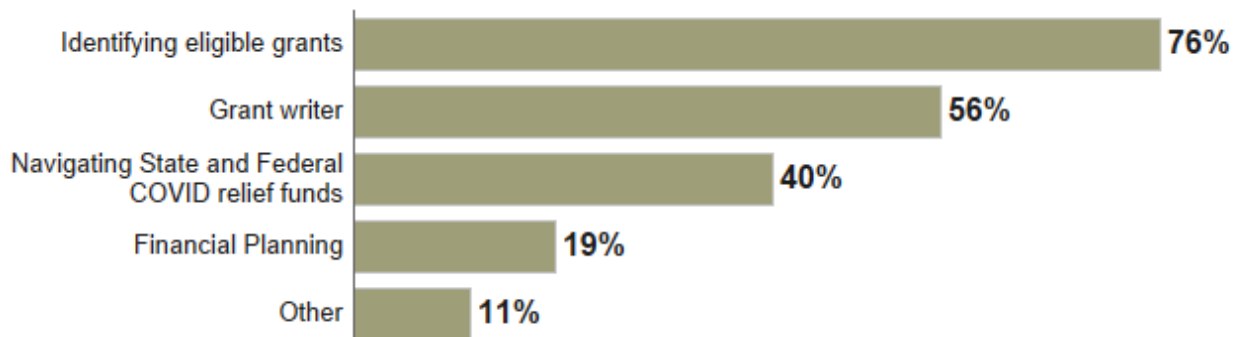
Q: Once it is considered safe to travel, are there destinations or attractions in Oregon that you believe would benefit from increased tourism development? (Provide up to three)



## MT. HOOD/GORGE REGION QUESTIONS

Each region had the opportunity to ask a series of custom questions of specific interest to their stakeholders, challenges, and opportunities. Findings from these custom questions are presented below. Custom questions that contained open-ended comments appear in the open-ended comment appendix.

Q: The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge RDMO is looking into hiring a contractor to offer financial/grant support for our tourism partners. What skill sets would be most valuable to you if you had access to this resource? (Check all that apply)



## OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

The survey resulted in an extensive number of open-ended responses. A selection of responses to the most relevant open-ended questions are presented below in the respondents' own words with no editing, spelling, or punctuation changes. The opinions expressed are the respondents' own and do not reflect the opinions of Travel Oregon. All open-ended responses are viewable in an online dashboard format with accompanying word clouds and bar charts. Included are responses to the following questions from Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents:

- Q: Do you have any additional comments regarding welcoming visitors to your community?

- Q: Do you have any comments on your priorities for immediate (6 – 12 months) recovery from COVID-19, wildfires, and related economic conditions?
- Q: Do you have any comments on your priorities for longer-term tourism planning over the next 2-5 years?
- Q: What topics or resources would be most beneficial when it comes to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion trainings?
- Q: In a few words, what, if anything, needs to change for your community to feel like a destination where ALL who travel can enjoy their journey and feel welcome?
- Q: What are your greatest Destination/Visitor Management concerns (ex. trail congestion, trash, spread of visitors, COVID-compliance, etc.) for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region while we are in a pandemic? (\*Asked of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents only, includes all responses).
- Q: What are your greatest Destination/Visitor Management concerns (ex. trail congestion, trash, spread of visitors, COVID-compliance, etc.) for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region when we are post-pandemic? (\*Asked of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents only, includes all responses).
- Q: Other (please specify): The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge RDMO is looking into hiring a contractor to offer financial/grant support for our tourism partners. What skill sets would be most valuable to you if you had access to this resource? (Check all that apply) (\*Asked of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents only, includes all responses).
- Q: What are your greatest concerns going into this coming winter season? (\*Asked of Mt. Hood/Gorge respondents only, includes all responses).
- Q: Is there anything else you would like to share about the topics discussed in this survey?

#### Q18: Do you have any additional comments regarding welcoming visitors to your community?

1st greatest concern: There is little to no leisure travel in the Dalles. This winter is going to be just terrible here after all the windmill operators, railroad workers, etc. close projects for the weather. 2nd greatest concern: We tend to have get quite a few people who don't believe COVID-19 is a real thing and flat out refuse to comply with regulations. It's to the point it's abusive verbally to our employees.

It seems that our region is receiving a high level of visitation due to the number of experiences people can have safely here in our area (wine tasting, outdoor dining on farms, outdoor recreation). Whatever amount of diminished visitation we may be experiencing is met with open arms by locals - locals are reclaiming spaces and really enjoying not being inundated with people from outside the region. It feels more comfortable.

It sounds bad to not be welcoming. For those who visit we should be welcoming, certainly not hostile. But we really don't need more advertising! The word is out...and people are coming. Being on a major east-west interstate means that both tourists and non-tourists will be coming through anyway, even if not for the Gorge itself. We have trains, boats, planes, cars, buses, and a huge recreation infrastructure that is growing each year with talk of more. The more people that we reach, the more that come and along with that, a certain percentage with no outdoor ethic...trash, loud music, entitlement, etc.

Most folks from out of town are at least conscious they are entering a small community. Some are completely oblivious and don't care about the safety of staff and residents

My personal sentiment is that people should absolutely limit travel, and despite working in the tourism industry, I also find myself feeling negatively about visitors to this small area (Columbia Gorge). However, the health of the business where I work depends on visitors, so I think it's about doing all we can to keep our staff, community, and guests safe, and mitigate the spread of infection as much as possible.

People are very aware of face coverings, regulations, and are pleased to get out and engage w people, go out to get food, buy items/markets, get outside and exercise, aware of smaller groups and distancing.

Until there is an all clear from the Governor's office, no money should be spend on driving tourists to the Gorge. More money needs to go to businesses to help them re-open once the all clear is signaled. The piece meal approach to reopening is an effective use of money.

We are also experiencing cancellations and less demand due to lawlessness and homelessness in Portland. I know these are bigger problems for Portland but they effect travel all over the State. TO should should make these issues their top priority and lobby to solve these problems first. Travelers will love to come back to Oregon when it solves these problems.

We have to think of ways to not have people in large groups, ie, festivals, concerts, etc but still have seasonal, cultural and community events, Even parking, lines for restrooms, things like that concern me. I wish I had more solutions.

We need to rally together to sell either regions or Oregon as a whole to start recovery. Towns shouldn't have to compete with one another. We need to network and refer versus enticing businesses to relocate or spread rumor mills of hear say that effect economies of communities.

Worried about training of staffs and enforcement of visitors regarding safe practices.

**Q22: Do you have any comments on your priorities for immediate (6 – 12 months) recovery from COVID-19, wildfires, and related economic conditions?**

Being a mostly outdoor-based economy, COVID is the least of my concerns. More people should be outside. Transportation alternatives need to be seriously looked at to reduce congestion and help air quality.

Businesses need HELP both financially and marketing in order to survive!

Businesses should open fully.

Get our county (Clackamas) into phase 2!

I feel like this is the new norm and we need to learn to adapt.

I see COVID-friendly experience development and visitor management solutions being nearly one in the same, so I just picked visitor management solutions

Many jobs and businesses in our community rely on tourism. If we don't get tourists back soon, the economy will get much worse. If Portland continues to do nothing about lawlessness, and some areas of Oregon cannot accommodate tourists due to fires, then please help us get the message out to visit other areas of Oregon that are ready, willing and able to provide a positive Oregon experience. Thanks.

One plan does not fit all

relief funds needed to weather a difficult time of year and the closure of 224 related to wildfires.

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The Forest Service should keep the Forest and developed recreation sites open to the public. they have been to quick to close roads, campgrounds, and vig areas for a variety of reasons from fire danger to littering. Goal should be to keep the Forest open so people can spread out and get fresh air. they even closed there offices as they didn't want people coming in and exposing employees to the virus. They could install shields and ware masks like other businesses.

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This won't be fixed over night and will require cooperation from every level, consumers need to be patient and we need enforcement of current protocols.

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**Q24: Do you have any comments on your priorities for longer-term tourism planning over the next 2-5 years?**

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Concern about excessive negative visitor impacts on the Gorge and the natural resources

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Counties, cities and regions had programs in place using bedroom tax to support a vast variety of programs that supported tourism. That all went away with Covid 19 restrictions on travel. It will take years to rebuild the funding and staff to support those programs. The state could jump start those State, region and county programs with grants and loans.

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How can we plan when we do not know if this is ever going to end.

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Hwy 26 MUST be completed w/ 4 lanes both East and West, no more 'bottle necks' in the villages such as just our of Rhododendron... it takes lives each year and gives first time visitors a very bad experience. BUILD the TRAM!

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Just to be always at the ready with new, creative and different ideas

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Measuring the weight of each option's importance seems to baffle me some.

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Our community will need help with the promotion as our community is now competing for the tourist / visitor with the entire world!

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Responsibility and ethics in tourism... I remember when we had to scrimp and save to try and pull together a lame campaign. Now, with the TRT \$, the Gorge is getting trampled to death. CAPACITY PLANNING, people! How much is enough? How much does it take to destroy the very thing you are promoting? Hiking trails now are crowded, and there's plenty of trash along the trail itself, plus feces / toilet paper along the way. People are cutting trails, etc. Please work with Friends of the Columbia Gorge and Trail Keepers of Oregon to start thinking AHEAD about use policies before these magical areas are destroyed forever.

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The river cruises brought large numbers through our museum. Who and how will we fill this gap? Tour groups are the lifeblood of any cultural institution. We need new strategies to drive local residents to our locations.

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There's really no good way to get from Portland to the Gorge without a car, and there's no local infrastructure to move freely between Hood River and White Salmon without a car. I believe investing in an effective public transportation network will have benefits across the board. It will reduce the barrier of transportation cost for people to get to Hood River & other towns in the Gorge. It will encourage public transportation, and therefore hopefully reduce the overall carbon footprint of tourism in this area by limiting the use of cars. If we make this new system powered by hydrogen fuel cells, then it would be revolutionary in setting a nationwide precedent for environmentally-friendly public transportation. (<https://blog.ballard.com/fuel-cell-trains>). Lastly, marketing and promotion of this new system would be necessary to 1) get people to use it, and 2) put Oregon on the map for confronting climate change head-on and investing in sustainable growth. Another benefit that sells across the board is creation of jobs in both the short-term and long-term. Obviously there will be new jobs created to build and operate the train and everything that goes along with that, but in addition, a high-speed train would open up the workforce. By that I mean people in the Gorge would now have the ability to commute to Portland efficiently and sustainably for work, creating access to a broader job market with more opportunity. I think this will lead to people in the Gorge earning more money, which would then get filtered back into the local economy in Hood River, The Dalles, and Cascade Locks, which will ultimately make it an even more desirable tourism destination. If we start now, we can make a significant contribution and set a precedent that will help this country reach net zero emissions by mid-century.

**Q27: What topics or resources would be most beneficial when it comes to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion trainings?**

Calling out specifically where racism and implicit bias shows up in tourism.

Culture and local focus tourism. How to bring the visitor and local communities together as they travel in our area

Diversifying both our work force and inclusively welcoming guests of all color to outdoor recreation experiences.

Helping whole communities in the state address and work on their racial issues first, then work with them to understand what that means to be welcoming to visitors.

How to engage local community members in the discussion

How to handle or deal with hate groups in communities that could affect tourism. I.e. when the Proud Boys show up.

How to include the entire community in discussion of race and bias

I think if there is a way to build on ORLA's Guest Services Gold would be a smart choice. It means a full day event, but easier to get them scheduled for one, as opposed to many trainings. Since both trainings touch upon each other, it would be a good fit. I also feel that all tourism professionals need to spend time on the retail end of the industry. You tend to hear questions you were not expecting to field beyond a survey. The fresh air will also do you some good.

Local history

over emphasis on marketing to the privileged has re-enforced the gap and unintentionally excluded people of color/immigrants from being able to enjoy the resources of the gorge on an equal basis - long term solutions include training and community conversations, change in policies

Promoting hiring resources for BIPOC, implicit bias training for managers and supervisors

Understanding racism and how it impacts our communities and organizations

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We're struggling most with how to create long-term impact - not just the occasional presence of diversity, but the long-term presence and contribution of diverse people in the outdoor industry. This goes hand-in-hand with making sure our workplace is receptive to diversity, so inclusion trainings will also be helpful.

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workforce development and training

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**Q29: In a few words, what, if anything, needs to change for your community to feel like a destination where ALL who travel can enjoy their journey and feel welcome?**

A better understanding of the desire and goals of the traveler and how to increase the comfort levels to ask questions and share insight of each other's thinking

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All are welcome at our business and community.

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awareness by the employees who serve the community (beginning with awareness by the business owners and business management)

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Better systems for visitor management and better amenities to accommodate the volume of users - both in and around town - for both locals and visitors to alleviate congestion and user conflicts. Also, better education of visitors before they get here on what is and isn't open, what local customs are, how to travel in a way that is respectful and developing opportunities for visitors to learn more about the regions cultural history and current day culture.

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Encouraging community businesses to stay cohesive, supportive, and friendly to all. Our community works very hard and appreciates all the visitors who come and support our local businesses and unique area.

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Enhanced access

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Hood River itself needs to do better to exist as an integrated community in order to move forward as a community that truly promotes equity, diversity and equality

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I am a recent transplant to my local area. While I have had a lot of training most of this community has not and could benefit from well done presentations. There is currently a lot of political division which might make it difficult for people to hear what they would need to though.

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I don't know the answer to this. I feel like we are a destination that welcomes everyone with open arms. I feel like we treat all guests the same regardless of who they are, what they look like or where they come from. I think this question can only be answered by someone who feels uncomfortable coming to our community.

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Locals need to stop finding their way into the news for the wrong reasons--e.g. for implicit or overt acts of racism

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media reading the news and allowing the public to make their own judgement, versus the fear mongering and hate fearing agendas being presented due to their own political agendas.

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MORE DIVERSITY IN PRINTED MATERIAL

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More land acknowledgements of the native lands we're on

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More stability in Portland; the rest of Oregon is fine.

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Nothing...we already welcome everyone and, judging by, for example, Multnomah Falls, one can see people from literally every country and state. Take a look at the visitor log!

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Our community as a whole is generally welcoming to all. If anything needs to change it's our government and it's lack of empathy/understanding for all of its constituents. I fear it is a systemic problem where some people/beliefs think that it is OK to be racist.

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Our community is made up of many races and welcomes all.

Spanish language signage; local awareness of indigenous lands/issues; better infrastructure to support wheelchair access

Target rec opportunities to diverse ethnic/racial/cultural backgrounds. Our community will treat all visitors with respect once they are her.

We are a very warm and inclusive community ... I feel that we have a very strong message that all are welcome and personalities to back that up.

**Q51: What are your greatest Destination/Visitor Management concerns (ex. trail congestion, trash, spread of visitors, COVID-compliance, etc.) for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region while we are in a pandemic? (All Comments)**

All of the above listed examples are of great concern. I have continued to see the Gorge area inundated with tourists despite the current pandemic. There are varying degrees of COVID compliance with massive congestion on the waterfront this summer and the post canyon trail system. Local residents feel uncomfortable venturing into restaurants due the to the high volume of tourists eating here. I have honestly never seen so many out of state license plates in Hood River as I have this year.

Any visitors that are coming are still just going to the high use areas. More so than normal. Trash on trails and land managers ability to manage that is also of great concern.

Availability

Awareness of how tourism (and lack thereof) impacts so many segments of our local economy. And how tourism related businesses have taken the responsibility and initiative to protect their employees, guests and the community, while struggling to stay open.

Barton Co. Park to Carver float during summer months.

Bathrooms and other congestion points for visitors being kept clean

By far, the amount of trash left behind for others to clean up and the theft that sometimes happen in the area that tourism is blamed for.

Car congestion through Sandy

Civic compliance, overuse, trash, pollution

Coivd compliance

congestion - COVID -

COngestion at trailhead parking and in-between across the entire region; very busy trails, trash being strewn around

COVID Compliance

COVID compliance and trail congestion

Covid19 compliance, people smoking along trails (are you kidding me?!), lack of parking /restrooms/bottled water availability at trailheads (not tourist or family-friendly)

Covid-compliance

trash

wildfires

accommodations

COVID-compliance from visitors and locals alike.

COVID-compliance, trail congestion, restaurants closing

Decreased tourism/visitorship.

Fire destruction, reviving tourism in this area when the perception is that it's all burned... and much of it is!

Forest service closing recreation sites for extended periods of time and then not reopening everything. The top 5 places are over-used still and there are many under-utilized assets. We need to educate the public on new places to go and hopefully not have so much closed to visitors.

Garbage in the National Forest, spread of visitors and its impact on the local community, Covid compliance, resources for employing BIPOC

High numbers of visitors, congested areas (Hood River waterfront, trails)

increase in homeless visibility

Infrastructure is a big issue while the pandemic is still with us.

Keeping employees safe

Lack of visitors including locals

Lack of visitors.

Maintaining trails and facilities. Things are not being maintained, cleaned, monitored, etc.

My biggest concern is just reminding people that we are here and a great place to get out and explore safely.

None

Public facilities are inadequate: public restrooms, handwashing stations, etc. Winter weather will make it hard to dine outside.

safety

Since the VH is closed, but people can still drive up and walk around the VH, we worry about vandalism. We nor OPRD can have someone up there round the clock. The VH attracts tourists and locals still at all hours. Very difficult to police.

spread of Covid from our city area

Spread of Covid while recreating.

Spread of COVID-19 and how to encourage compliance.

Spread of the virus

Spread of Visitors to the East End of the Gorge

Support of small businesses

The Army Corps of Engineers not taking care of and maintaining the park along the river. It is not supposed to be open for overnight free camping and it is. This takes business away from us and also brings drugs and theft to our area.

The fact that the Multnomah Falls lodge company is losing a lot of money due to the Eagle Creek fire and now COVID with sustained expenses. Visitation has been down due to COVID.

the lack of visitors

traffic

Traffic in the winter.

Trail congestion; lack of public services (restrooms/rest stops); finding funding to pay overworked staff at small non-profit

Trash

Trash Traffic Crime

Trash and damage in dispersed camping areas of the Nat. Forest

Trash and human waste

Trash and misuse of areas/facilities--fire safety --"homeless" conditions



trash, lack of parking, visitors not staying safe (spread out, masks, etc)

Trash, people not following social distancing, congestion at the major destinations like the waterfall corridor.

Unsafe behaviors from visitors who won't wear masks and ignore social distancing, then circulate through our community.

we have little tourism in winter

Wildfire on top of the pandemic didn't help what-so-ever. Tourism halted due to social media panic / false news that community is devastated. Temporarily evacuated yes, but open for business.

**Q52: What are your greatest Destination/Visitor Management concerns (ex. trail congestion, trash, spread of visitors, COVID-compliance, etc.) for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region when we are post-pandemic? (All Comments)**

Access to toilets and hand wash stations.

Advertising.

Availability

Bringing attention to lesser known attractions

Bringing back visitors in the numbers we had pre-pandemic.

Build a better bond with government, and non-tourism segments of the community by showing how tourism's benefits far outweigh negative impacts.

Car congestion through Sandy

Congestion

Congestion, maintaining pristine conditions, wildfires

congestion - visitor education on how to not leave a foot print

Congestion at popular trailheads: ie, Mirror Lake, Tamanawas Falls. Stop promoting these and promote less popular sites/trails.

Continued degradation of our natural resources. We have OVER promoted them to the point that they are being loved to death. My heart weeps for the loss of so much pristine beauty now trashed by ignorant visitors (and residents, to be fair).

Economically how will visitors recover and will their recreation patterns change. We may never see the large festivals that were once held in the gorge. Who will we replace those events? Will we see smaller, localized events. How will consumers react, post pandemic.

enviorenmental

Even in the immediate post pandemic time frame, precautions will still need to be in place, as it will be quite some time before vaccine and crowd immunity collide. It will be imperative that small communities, such as Hood River, continue vigilance to keep the community safe

Finding continued funding to pay for staff as visitor counts slowly increase

Fire destruction, reviving tourism in this area when the perception is that it's all burned... and much of it is!

Garbage in the National Forest, traffic management, impact on local community, resources for employing BIPOC

Getting people to try out trails that are less trod upon. Finding opportunities for cities/towns that are less polished from a tourism perspective

Heavy use of local infrastructure by visitors that relies on volunteer maintenance (Post Canyon mountain bike trails)

Highway 26 traffic congestion on winter weekends.

I would like to see visitors year round and I would like more visitors pulled further east down the gorge.

increase in homeless visibility

Increasing infrastructure: Directional Signage, activity guides and mass transit options

None

Not being able to handle the numbers of visitors. There is not enough parking, the old highway cannot handle the high season traffic, all the 'other' stuff that comes with so many visitors (trail congestions, trash, buses and cars parking anywhere and blocking roads, etc.)

Parking, in town and trail heads, trash

Perception of a welcoming environment for visitors

poor stewardship of public lands/ trails etc., visitor congestion

Public facilities are inadequate: public restrooms, handwashing stations, etc. Burden is put on private fueling stations and convenience stores.

resource protection and over use of popular destinations

restaurants are closing because of restrictions. they need to be able to seat people outdoors, in parking lots or other unusual ways to adapt.

Returning to normal

Revenue lost during pandemic / wildfires destroys future marketing unless the larger partners can provide shared opportunities.

Same as above

Same as above (minus covid19 compliance)

same as above, the funding seems to be disappearing from the NF for trail maintenance, road maintenance, etc.

Spread of visitations across the region. Ability to get people to come back from out of state.

Spread of visitors

Spread of Visitors to the East End of the Gorge and the messaging that we are a SAFE and FUN place to explore!

Spread of visitors, protection of high impact areas

that businesses that had to shut down or severely cut back on business offerings, staff, etc to be able to regain customers, hire back staff, etc.

The Army Corps of Engineers not taking care of and maintaining the park along the river. It is not supposed to be open for overnight free camping and it is. This takes business away from us and also brings drugs and theft to our area.

traffic

Traffic on the highway winter.

Traffic, trail congestion

Trail and traffic congestion, visitor conflicts, trash, increased fire danger, loss of feeling of being alone, impacts to pristine locations (Oneonta gorge), impact to local, state and federal budgets (toilet paper, trash disposal, personnel costs).

Trail congestion, lack of week day travel, lack of overnight travel

Trail congestion, or more broadly, concentrated volume of visitors. Encouraging visitors to travel during shoulder season is great.

Trail Congestion, trash and peak highway traffic transportation

Transportation plan to resolve traffic congestion

Trash

Trash Traffic Crime

trash, lack of parking, funds for businesses that may not make it out of the pandemic.

Visitation at sites that were already congested during the pandemic increasing even more. I would like to see the region put visitor management strategies into place much like they are doing with Multnomah Falls and at ski areas (requiring reservations) for more sites experiencing issues.

**Q53: Other (please specify): The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge RDMO is looking into hiring a contractor to offer financial/grant support for our tourism partners. What skill sets would be most valuable to you if you had access to this resource? (Check all that apply) (All Comments)**

all

collaboration

Communication. Currently those at the eastern end of the district feel underrepresented. It's party due to the chamber being ineffective advocates for local businesses.

For my partners - not myself

how about hiring a native american!

Likely all of the above

You need a jack (or jill) of all trades. Rely on SBA, OR State Chamber, College Business Depts. for I.D. and Navigating.

**Q54: What are your greatest concerns going into this coming winter season? (All Comments)**

Being able to operate freely with little to no restrictions

concern of possible resurgence of COVID and resulting closing of businesses; disproportionate impact on lowest paid hospitality workers

Covid 19 and it's effect on tourism

Decreased tourism/visitorship.

diminished travel and therefore few guests.

drop in business, drop in revenue, layoffs that cannot return, businesses closing, perception that there is no longer vitality,

Economic health of small businesses

economy - jump start travel again

Establishment of the "open for business". Status when that happens

Government Regulations killing tourism. For example, the Clackamas County Commissioners pushing for a Short Term Rental Registration and Fee process right now.

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Governor has already extended restrictions into 2021. 3rd wave is building and election results are simmering to a boil. We all need to promote getting back to family values & natural mental health - road trips, shopping at the source vs. box stores, supporting local small communities / farms / historic places / scenic parks and places. Support local produce, dairy in order to cook at home. Dog, bike, hike friendly destinations. These things are not cancelled.

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Having enough visitors to support the museum via donations and gift shop sales.

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Highway and back road safety in wildfire areas - cross country trails, etc.

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How businesses and restaurants will be able to maintain outdoor/distanced seating during the colder season.

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How do we maintain staff morale? How can we effectively communicate with our constituency that is accustomed to attending events onsite?

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How long will the vaccine take? When will politicians realize that "saving our forests" results in fires that produce most of the CO2 that causes climate change?

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I am an artist, lack of travelers means lack of sale for the gallery and shops I am in, the Columbia Gorge and coast.

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I am worried that many businesses in our area won't make it through the winter. They have already been hit so hard and they are struggling to keep their doors open.

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I am worried that the local food economy (restaurants especially, but also local food producers) don't have their usual revenue from busy, summer seasons to keep them afloat for the winter.

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I believe we will stay busy, so we need to be sure we have enough employees and that they continue to practice safe behaviors outside of work, and that guests still have a good time with limited access (less people on the ski hills, winter snow play areas potentially closed or too crowded, restaurants and other activities closed). We need to be sure we communicate well how it will be different this winter.

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I operate in the summer only, working a job all winter and am just hopeful to open next summer.

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I think the Gorge has will likely see a spike in COVID cases, I have concerns about our local health care facilities handling any increase in volume.

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Increased COVID-19 cases as everyone moves indoors, which will set up 2021 as a financial disaster since we are essentially playing whack-a-mole with cases due to the fact that the federal government has not only taken zero leadership in guiding the nation through this pandemic but has become experts in disinformation and misinformation that are scientifically un-founded.

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It's hard to predict booking patterns or plan for next summer without knowing which phase of reopening we'll be in or what the restrictions will be.

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Limited national understanding that Oregon is safe to visit

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Losing businesses

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Low customer volume due to the time of year, COVID AND the wildfires that have effectively shut down access to recreational assets up into Mt. Hood National Forest along the Clackamas River. This is going to be a very very stressful winter.

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Many businesses will never recover from this. The devastation we will see on Main Street could be disastrous to our local communities. Property owners will see vacancies, local government agencies will see reduced revenues. Non-profits will have less participation and resources. Larger communities can weather the storm but the smaller town will feel the impact disproportionately.

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N/A- we're summertime or fair-weather only anyways.

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No business.

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None

Not getting outside, into community and nature

Restaurants and small businesses closing up due to lack of customers - unless you can offer curbside pickup and online ordering on your website, I don't believe you can sustain a profitable business.

Restaurants will not be able to support outside seating and walk up options due to inclement weather

Rise in number of Covid cases. Travel bans. Visitors not feeling safe to come to our community.

Second and third waves of COVID, civil war?!

Significant drop in visitors and businesses not surviving to make it to the next busy season.

Social behaviors -- intelligent problem solving.

Spread of the disease because people are moving indoors and also restaurant sustainability

sufficient sales to keep employees employed

That if there is an additional spike and shutdown due to covid, that many in our local industry may not recover. From the fairgrounds, to hotels.

That my business can survive long enough for things to open back up. Without financial assistance, it is not sure that we will make it.

That the ski areas can remain open, safe, and successful

That we get through the winter using our reserves to hang on to our office. That we maintain our funds so that we can open our store and operations when the VH is finally able to open.

The Army Corps of Engineers not taking care of and maintaining the park along the river. It is not supposed to be open for overnight free camping and it is. This takes business away from us and also brings drugs and theft to our area.

The County or State getting shut down again and our businesses not being able to survive and recover.

The economy in general

The high number of layoffs in both the public and private sector getting worse and continuing the downward economic spiral.

the lack of visitors and covid restrictions

the survival of our businesses!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

traffic

transmission of the coronavirus coupled with the flu

unable to do outdoor events (covid safety) and businesses going under

Visitors knowing / following our safety measures A second wave leads to lock downs. Team members are kept safe while working but are exposed to the virus while away from the workplace

We need to open up. COVID has all but killed my business.

we will have no work. we have to shut down yet keep our high priced insurance.

What the spring will look like. If we get enough spring visitors to survive another year without school field trips.

**Q66: Is there anything else you would like to share about the topics discussed in this survey?**

I appreciate Travel Oregon and the work they do to drive tourism to our great state. I am happy to see Travel Oregon doing their part to stand for social injustice. Diversity in an organization is so key and I feel Travel Oregon is always striving for excellence and they work hard to listen to their community needs and concerns.

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I have been involved in tourism in the Columbia Gorge for 20 years and I can really see how the tourism partners have built a great net-work with the help of Travel Oregon.

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I hope this organization is successful in voicing the concerns of both the restaurant/service industries and cultural/non-profits. We have been hit hard by the lack of river cruise traffic and tour groups.

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I would like to see more questions asked of our DMO's and RDMO's before programs are handed or implemented in our region. I feel that education of our regions and what we have done as Chambers and RDMOS really needs to be told to Travel Oregon. I feel that we need to have a chance to educate Travel Oregon of what has worked and hasn't worked and we need to feel valued as a DMO for both our efforts and time!

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Lobby to disengage Clackamas County from Multnomah and Washington County's. It is not fair to punish communities like the Hoodland Corridor that have very few COVID cases just because Oregon City and Milwaukee are in the same county. Open Clackamas County up.

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Marketing and PR investment needs to include the expected behaviors when people are visiting, and where to find our safety measures and protocols

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No, appreciate the work of the Travel Oregon. THANK YOU!

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Please for the love of God do something about coming up with plans to address over-used natural areas. Look at Portland- it used to be quirky and gritty, now it is just a god-awful mess that lost its soul. Same thing is happening to our natural assets. People who are visiting these areas are literally shitting everywhere. I have been a long-term hiker and know most of these trails very well, and have seen the change due to tourism.

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Please note that our layoffs occurred mid-March-early summer and most everyone who was able to came back to work by mid-July at the latest.

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Really appreciate the opportunity to weigh in - thank you and looking forward to hearing results of the region.

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The Amy Corps of Engineers not taking care of and maintaining the park along the river. It is not supposed to be open for overnight free camping and it is. This takes business away from us and also brings drugs and theft to our area.

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The pandemic completely ceased our operations. All we can do now is manage our funds so that we have enough to open when we can. We have received federal assistance and a grant from the Cultural Trust of Oregon. We believe we can manage through the pandemic but we are effectively closed right now. There are two of us working on contract to maintain funds, monitor our merchandise and our office. We are planning how to re-open once a vaccine comes available. All we can do. Our relationship with Travel Oregon is minimal.

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This seemed like more than common knowledge to respond to (for me). Thank you for trying to do what should be right -- for the good of all.

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Travel OR does a good job.

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We need to strike a balance between helping local businesses and overloading the Gorge.

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When and what is the plan to being new visitors into .the area in a safe status....?

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Wow, how has our world turned upside down and changed in the past 7 months. We are all relearning and re-inventing what we do. I applaud you for hanging in there and figuring this out. Whatever you do, you cannot get it wrong, it will be different and we will live with it and move on. And I do believe, this will pass.

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