

OREGON TOURISM TOWN HALL FINDINGS

OCT. 2016

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OREGON TOURISM TOWN HALLS SCHEDULE

Astoria - May 3

Portland - May 4

Gresham - May 5

Lakeview - May 9

Klamath Falls - May 10

The Dalles - May 10

Corvallis - May 11

Scappoose - May 11

Sandy - May 12

Reedsport - May 12

Brookings - May 12

Hillsboro - May 12

Burns - May 12

Prineville - May 16

La Pine - May 17

La Grande - May 18

Ontario - May 18

Silverton - May 19

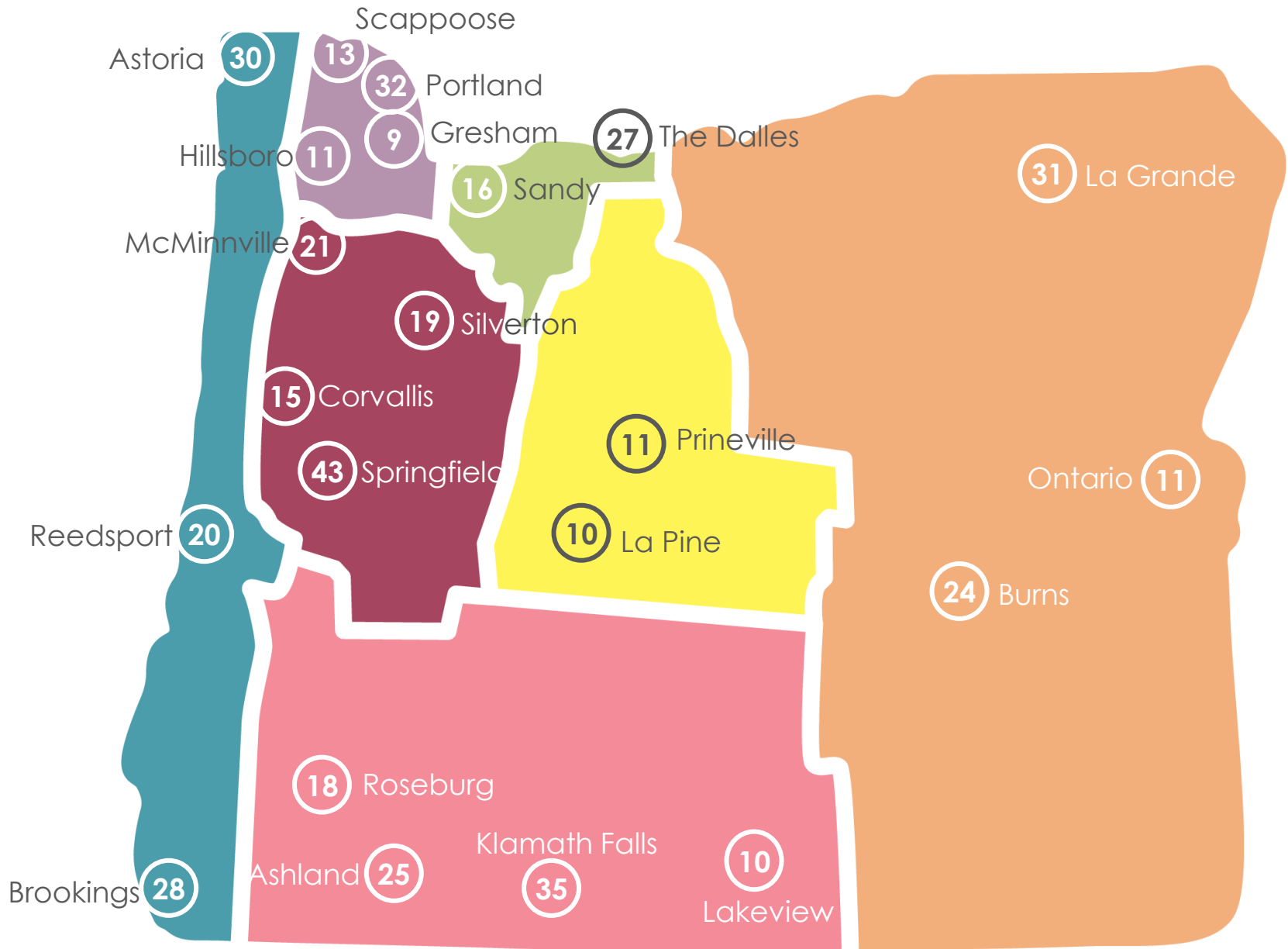
Springfield - Jun 27

Roseburg - Jun 27

Ashland - Jun 28

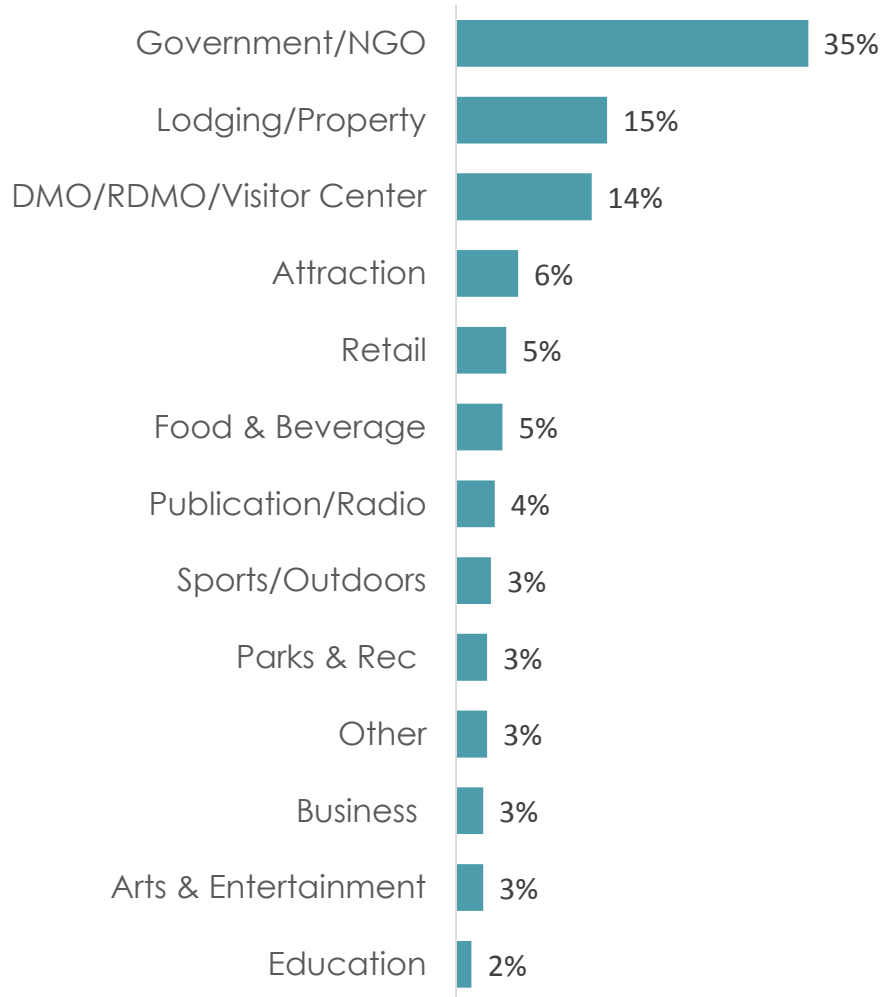
McMinnville – Oct 13

TOWN HALLS: LOCATIONS & PARTICIPATION

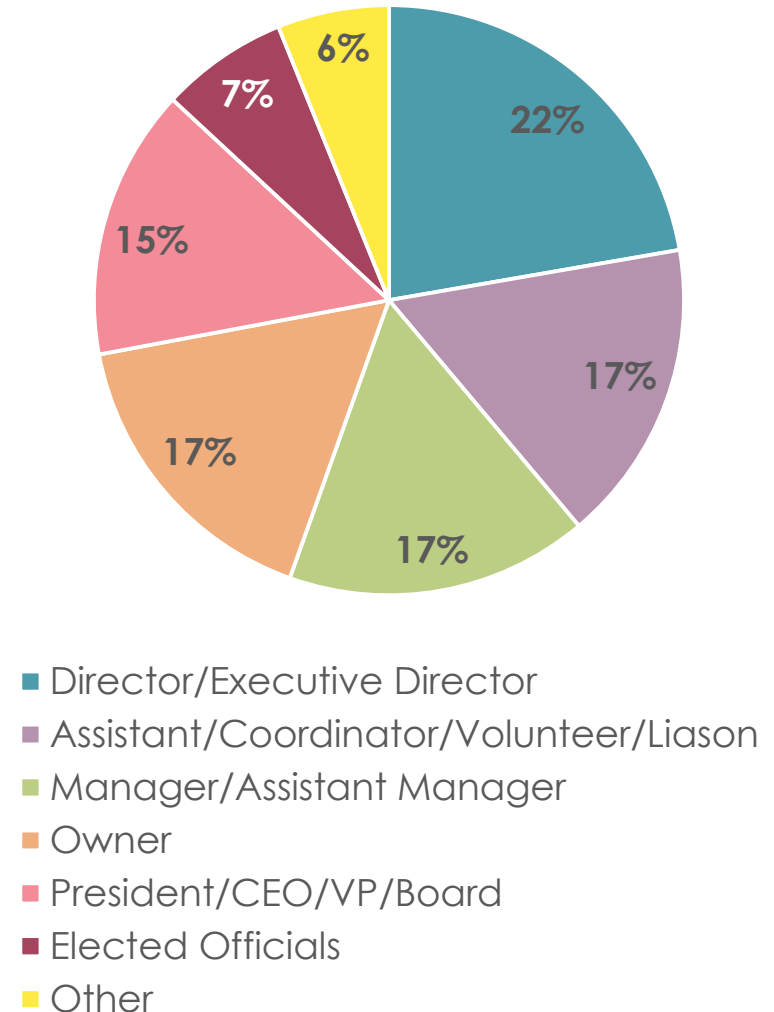


TOWN HALLS: DEMOGRAPHICS

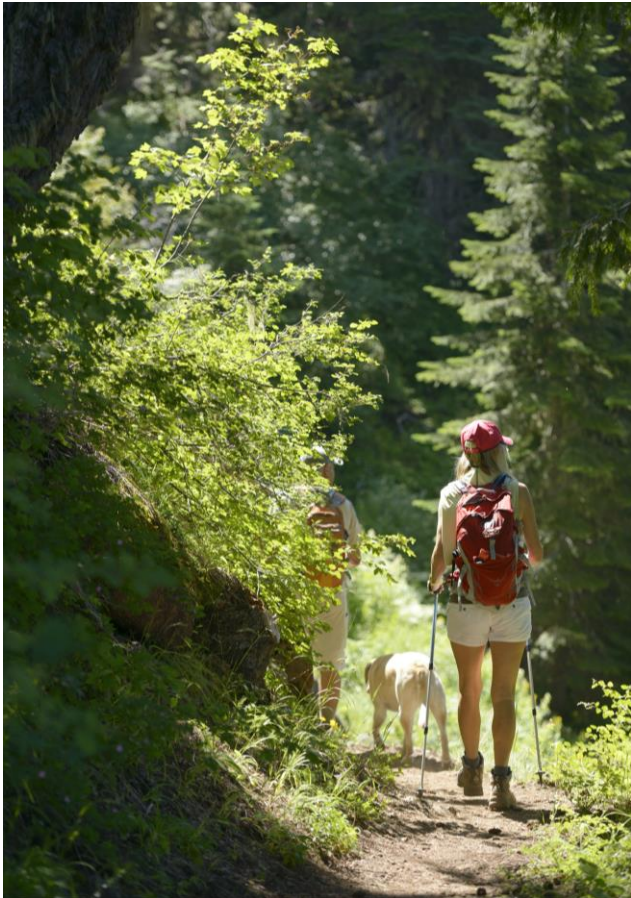
Organizational Category



Organizational Position



TOWN HALLS: ATTENDEES WERE ASKED WHAT THEIR LOCAL PERSPECTIVES WERE ON...



- How engaged are you with the tourism partnering structure?

Local > DMO > RDMO > Travel Oregon

- What opportunities/challenges currently face your business or community?
- What excites you about the role tourism plays in your future?
- What 1-3 priorities do you want us to consider as we build the Travel Oregon 2017-2019 strategic plan?

TOWN HALLS: STATEWIDE THEMES

Development

Oregon is blessed with an abundance of tourism assets. Stakeholders want to see **more lodging development in rural areas**, as well as an emphasis placed on **agri-tourism, outdoor adventures and “lesser known” natural attractions**. **Sustainable development, capacity management, and support through focused marketing efforts** were also discussion themes.

Education

Many communities need help in **educating local leaders on the role of tourism** and its impact on local and regional economies. In addition, **assistance with local marketing/branding** and **increased frontline staff training** are in demand to foster positive a visitor experience, especially among small businesses.

Grants

Stakeholders find some aspects of the grant process to be **complicated and limiting**. They would like to see a **more simplified, accessible and inclusive process** that is clearly communicated.

Partnerships

A rising tide floats all boats. Stakeholders suggest that **more structured partnerships across regions, communities and businesses** could improve the overall tourism economy through **enhanced communication and cooperative marketing efforts**.

TOWN HALLS: STATEWIDE THEMES (Cont'd)

Seasonality

Seasonality puts pressure on Oregon tourism communities. Stakeholders would like to see fewer “peaks and valleys” with an **increased focus on options for winter and shoulder season visitation**.

Transportation

Improvements to **transportation infrastructure** was a major theme of the regional town halls. Discussions included **mitigation of congestion, improved signage and way-finding**, and pursuing **alternative, car-free, methods of transportation** between rural destinations and attractions.

Workforce

Ensuring that a **quality tourism workforce** is both available and sustainable is top of mind across the state. **Low wages, lack of affordable housing and fluctuating seasonal populations** were all challenges to attract and retain the workforce necessary for tourism growth.

TOWN HALL FINDINGS BY REGION

Willamette Valley



Development

- Leverage the excitement around existing tourism assets (Wineries etc.)
- Infrastructure is in disrepair
- More focus on agri-tourism
- Increase marketing to enhance their “dot” on the map
- Need for increased hotel/convening space

Partnerships

- More partnerships between DMOs and chambers of commerce
- Collaboration needed between wineries, vineyards, and farmers markets
- Improve cooperation and cross promotion of lodging, small businesses and small communities
- Assistance with marketing expertise/collateral, especially in rural areas

Seasonality

- Increase tourism in the wet, winter months

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Decrease seasonality of visitation
- ✓ Leverage Travel Oregon’s marketing campaigns/programs
- ✓ Some destinations reaching carrying capacity

Willamette Valley



Transportation

- Transportation, parking and general congestion are an issue
- Support alternative transportation options (i.e. bicycle tourism)
- Creation of new scenic byway
- Improved way-finding

Workforce

- Too few staff to market major assets
- Lack of affordable housing

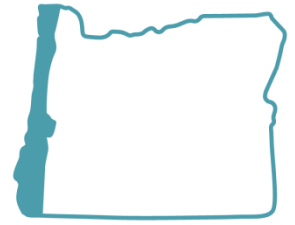
Grants

- Increase grants for local businesses
- Create a more straightforward grant process
- Educate stakeholders on the grant process

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Capacity to convene and manage projects
- ✓ Congestion reduction and alternative transportation options

Coast



Development

- Funding for outdoor infrastructure
- Distinction between North and South Coast
- More focus on new tourism opportunities rather than existing ones
- More focus on events

Education

- Front line staff training and professional development opportunities
- Education of local, regional and state public officials on importance of tourism, especially in the face of recession
- Help small businesses be successful with education & resources
- Educate people and government on TLT taxes and tourism impact

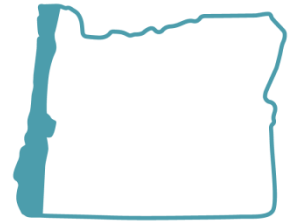
Grants

- Minimize grant restrictions and make process straightforward and clear
- Limited funds for advertising and promotion
- More equal grant distribution

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Capacity to convene and manage projects
- ✓ Education and training of frontline staff
- ✓ Leverage Travel Oregon's marketing campaigns/programs

Coast



Partnerships

- Lack of communication, coordination and accountability among local/DMO/RDMO/Travel Oregon
- Lack of support and cooperation from local government
- Improve partnerships with and between small businesses
- Develop communication channels that will support cooperative projects

Seasonality

- Need for focus on better managing increased visitation in high season
- Expand the winter/off season

Transportation

- Improve signage: make clear, transferable and digital
- Poor road conditions & congestion
- Highlight and promote RV travel options

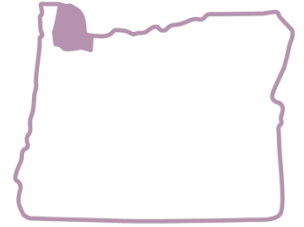
Workforce

- Lack of expertise and workforce planning
- Need for living wage jobs that retain local human capital
- Minimize seasonal turnover and high costs of training
- Increase workforce housing

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Congestion reduction and alternative transportation options
- ✓ Decrease seasonality of visitation
- ✓ Visitor way-finding and signage

Greater Portland



Development

- More support for culinary, beer, winery tourism
- Development of infrastructure as winter sports and outdoor activity destination
- Supporting the growth of agri-tourism
- Lack of accommodations and capacity in the outlying cities and towns
- Supporting the needs of international visitors
- Homelessness and its impact on visitor experience

Education

- Provide technical help and education in branding and marketing of tourism, specifically to small businesses
- Frontline staff customer service training
- Educate stakeholders on the importance of tourism economics

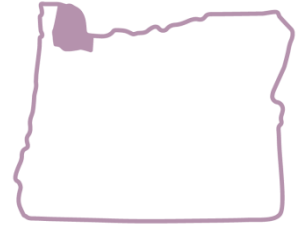
Grants

- Reassess grant program, process, and overall understanding across industry
- Potential to stratify grant structures according to purpose (i.e. capacity)

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Capacity to convene and manage projects
- ✓ Education and training of frontline staff
- ✓ Some destinations reaching carrying capacity

Greater Portland



Partnerships

- Competition with Portland and other communities within the Greater Portland area
- Need for more partnerships between local businesses to encourage shopping and leverage local attractions (i.e. Mountain Biking)
- Build a more cooperative, multi-regional marketing effort

Transportation

- Increase the availability of way-finding assets (maps, signage, etc.)

Seasonality

- Address seasonality specifically with regard to winter marketing

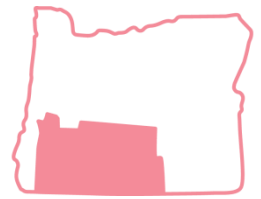
Workforce

- Ensuring a living wage and mitigating transitional risks
- Workforce retention
- Access to a quality workforce
- Attracting, educating and retaining quality industry professionals
- Lack of affordable housing

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Decrease seasonality of visitation
- ✓ Leverage Travel Oregon's marketing campaigns/programs
- ✓ Visitor way-finding and signage

Southern Oregon



Development

- Improve rural infrastructure
- Enhance product development
- Assist in creating alternative lodging opportunities
- Promote and market rural destinations as tourism assets
- Support communities/businesses with brand/asset development and marketing collateral

Education

- Frontline staff training
- Support the creation of an educated and qualified workforce

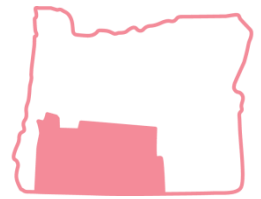
Grants

- Reduce restrictions and make process more straight forward
- Increased grants for small towns and recreation tourism development
- Make grants available to for-profits to revitalize and improve tourism
- More promotion of Travel Oregon grants

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Education and training of frontline staff
- ✓ Leverage Travel Oregon's marketing campaigns/programs

Southern Oregon



Partnerships

- Need for regional partnership structure and communications between local/DMO/RDMO/TO
- More communication between cities and destination marketing organizations
- Increased partnerships with national parks

Transportation

- Improved signage for visitors
- Public transportation that makes sense for tourists in rural areas
- Highway issues (i.e. narrow roads, quality, access)
- Lack of commercial airports

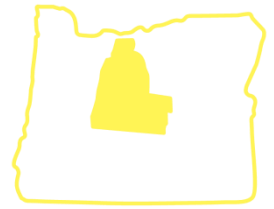
Seasonality

- Need to address the seasonality of tourism

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Congestion reduction and alternative transportation options
- ✓ Leverage Travel Oregon's marketing campaigns/programs
- ✓ Visitor way-finding and signage

Central Oregon



Development

- Support for developing more recreation infrastructure (facilities, trails, info centers, campsites, etc.)
- Increase marketing efforts for rural and county parks
- Lack of lodging availability in rural areas
- Balance between growth and the protection of natural tourism assets

Education

- More information about marketing to domestic/international markets
- Help for local areas to understand “nuts and bolts” of how and what to market
- More education to understand and adapt to emerging tourism trends

Partnerships

- Address the disconnect between tourism marketing structures

Transportation

- Lack of transportation options inside communities and between key surrounding destinations
- Potential for alternative solutions: Bus to bike etc.

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Congestion reduction and alternative transportation options
- ✓ Education and training of frontline staff
- ✓ Leverage Travel Oregon's marketing campaigns/programs
- ✓ Some destinations reaching carrying capacity

Eastern Oregon



Development

- Upgraded facilities to attract domestic and international tourism
- More support for rural tourism
- Expand adventure tourism and “Frontier Oregon”

Education

- Education and training for front line staff, especially customer service
- Tourism education needed to create leaders in the industry
- Educating the mom and pop workforce
- Engage local leaders to help them understand the importance of tourism

Partnerships

- Create a shared vision through partnerships with local businesses and communities
- Foster regional, sub-regional & inter-business cooperation

Seasonality

- Need to address the seasonality of tourism

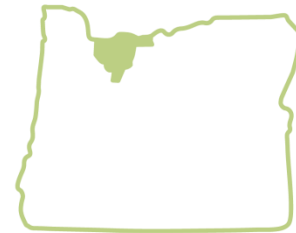
Workforce

- Overall lack of workforce capacity; need funding to grow the workforce
- Improve workforce retention
- Unpaid roles are unpopular

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Decrease seasonality of visitation
- ✓ Education and training of frontline staff
- ✓ Leverage Travel Oregon’s marketing campaigns/programs
- ✓ Visitor way-finding and signage

Mt. Hood/Gorge



Development

- Identify ways to increase hotel capacity for overnight stays instead of “drive through”
- Focus more on agri-tourism and rural development
- Further communicate tourist options that go unknown
- Expand food infrastructure
- Capacity limits reached at main attractions (e.g. Multnomah Falls)

Education

- Frontline staff and customer service training, for both tourist and non-tourist focused businesses
- Education on the role tourism plays in promoting Oregon and maintaining assets

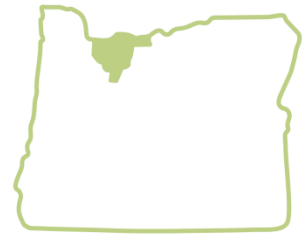
Grants

- Increase availability of grants for infrastructure improvements to key tourism assets
- Increase rural grant opportunities
- Assist in grant process to build grant writing skills and improve marketing abilities

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Education and training of frontline staff
- ✓ Leverage Travel Oregon’s marketing campaigns/programs

Mt. Hood/Gorge



Partnerships

- Engage with recreation areas to become more tourist friendly, accessible & maintained
- Strengthen partnerships between Travel Oregon, tourism entities & BLM
- Cooperate and engage with other regions, especially Washington (state) & Clackamas County
- Improve tribal relationships

Transportation

- Improve car-free options
- Improve signage and way-finding
- Partner with federal lands and transportation to expand parking, access, etc.
- Market availability of bicycle transportation options
- Congestion on major recreational lines

Workforce

- Shortage of quality workforce to support visitors
- Need to create living wages

Alignment with Regional Stakeholder Findings

- ✓ Congestion reduction and alternative transportation options
- ✓ Visitor way-finding and signage

TOWN HALLS: THEMES MATRIX

	PDX	Southern	Willa- mette	Central	Coast	Eastern	Hood/ Gorge
Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education	X	X		X	X	X	X
Grants	X	X	X		X		X
Partnerships	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Seasonality	X	X	X		X	X	
Transportation	X	X	X	X	X		X
Workforce	X		X		X	X	X

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAVEL OREGON

1. Though the mission of Travel Oregon may remain the same, the way in which it *executes* on its mission may need to expand or morph beyond its historical scope (i.e. being an industry change agent, the way it influences at the policy level, etc.).
2. Overall, insights gathered to date provide a solid foundation for making strategic and operational choices both now, and throughout the 2017 – 2019 strategic planning and industry engagement processes.
3. Oregon's tourism future is shifting and the Commission and Travel Oregon leadership must identify the range of variables and metrics that will define success.



THANK YOU

Stay Engaged

Industry.TravelOregon.com

Contact Us

Industry@TravelOregon.com