

## **2021-23 Draft Strategic Rebuild Plan and Budget Public Comments**

*Public comment period was open from April 26 – May 18, 2021 on Travel Oregon's industry website.*

**1. David Zielke, Port of Portland  
Director, Air Service Development**

Todd,

Thanks for providing the Port the opportunity to provide comment on the 'draft' strategic plan. Clearly lots of work, and thoughtful discussion led to a really impressive plan, from our perspective. Sonja, Rick, Tamara and I came up with the following thoughts/comments, that might be helpful as you finalize the plan in the coming days/weeks.

1. We applaud Travel Oregon's commitment to 'lead with a racial equity lens' when developing the strategic plan. The Port has made a similar commitment throughout our entire organization as we develop, and implement, our DEI strategies that are fully immersed in all our lines of business at the Port in order to generate shared prosperity for the region.
2. In the equity statement, we would suggest redefining 'equity'. The definition used reflects more 'equality', as described below in the picture below that we have used for illustration at the Port.
3. The equity statement references: 'Oregon becomes a more equitable destination' for visitors. It might be helpful to consider a reference to equity as it relates to all the workers in the tourism industry as well.
4. How will you be able to define 'success' as referenced in the equity statement, and what would you envision a more equitable Oregon tourism industry look like?
5. The last comment would be the critical need for Travel Oregon to be able to continue funding inbound sales & marketing programs in support of our nonstop inbound international flights at PDX, including Asia, Europe and the transborder markets. We are confident that the strong, long standing, partnership that the Port shares with you, and your team, will keep this priority at a high level as we come out of the pandemic. The ICN, AMS and HND flights, specifically, will require tremendous support from both the Port and our tourism partners. The international visitors stay longer, and spend more dollars than domestic visitors, which has a substantial impact on visitor spend fueling our state's economy.

Thanks for asking for our input, Todd! As stated above, overall we think the plan looks really good.

Best regards,

David

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## **2. Jefferey Key, President Oregon Paleo Lands Institute**

Jeffrey is currently the President of Oregon Paleo Lands Institute (OPLI) which manages a visitor center in Fossil Oregon in Oregon's poorest county Wheeler.

He is certified as an Interpretive Guide by the National Association of Interpretation.

Jeffrey manages 2500 acres of range and timberland and 5 residences in the John Day Basin. He has been slowly developing ecotourism opportunities on his lands.

The following comments are Jeffrey's personal views and he is not representing any of the aforementioned organizations.

I am pleased that Travel Oregon (TO) is reviewing its strategies and actions. The messages sent by TO in the last 18 months have been clearly heard. The first round of support grants offered up by TO in 2020 excluded organizations with budgets of less than 100k. The latest round of support grants seem to have perpetuated the same message. If you are small....good luck!

Travel Oregon's Draft Strategic Plan 21-23

The current Equity Statement is lacking in identifying the lack of equity of financial and leadership resources for many communities. And it could use a statement of commitment to invest specifically in economically challenged regions. Travel Oregon may want to do an internal audit that could identify investments made by TO compared to local county and city budgets. This could provide some guidance to make real equity investments in struggling communities.

I would encourage TO to focus early investments in infrastructure in local communities. When the Painted Hills was recognized as one of Oregon's 'Seven Wonders' it resulted in a real spike in visitors. Visitors that often struggled to easily find accommodations, services and meals. When citizens can not find what they need or want, they drive home or out of the region.

If TO really wants to act like a business and encourage longer stays in more remote parts of the state, I would encourage developing real partnerships with experienced businesses. The sharing economy continues to grow and TO should embrace it. Creating real relationships with businesses like Air BnB and VRBO may be challenging. But working with sharing economy start ups like Hipcamp and RVezy could benefit visitors and local communities.

As a land manager in the John Day Basin I have aspirations of creating ecotourism adventures on my properties. Creating a local or regional planning guide and providing staff to assist in planning for destination tourism could really kick start some new visitor experiences in Oregon. Risk management is my primary concern for ecotourism development. State and regional guidelines for creating food carts and roadside

Regular engagement and tourism business planning support for county and city staff with limited resources would further TO's mission. For example, engaging a County Planning group to create and/or simplify RV hookup and camping opportunities could generate significantly more overnight stays in Oregon.

Having staff dedicated to do this work is the most important investment. Travel Oregon could provide business development staff to work with local interested partners.

If operating like a business is one of TO's objectives, then they should consider offering support and developing partnerships with real businesses not just non-profits and governments. For example, TO may want to engage a handful of private, and public land owners and offer to help build their tourism business. i.e. Set up the legal framework, secure insurance, finance infrastructure development, manage employees, develop trails, create the operating manual, sell franchises.

I have participated in many Travel Oregon workshops and commend the work and opportunities that I have had to learn what needs to be done to create an outstanding experience. My challenge has been creating it all and getting it operating while still managing all the challenges associated with real property management. Supporting the creation of regional Co-operatives and/ or Local Improvement Districts may be effective strategies.

Thank you for the consideration. *Jeffrey*

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**3. Curt Melcher, Director**  
**Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife**  
[Curt.Melcher@odfw.oregon.gov](mailto:Curt.Melcher@odfw.oregon.gov)

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. I will keep it brief but we think you are on the right track.

We appreciate the intent expressed in the Rebuild Plan to steward and sustain Oregon's outdoor places and the continued focus on encouraging responsible recreation. We're pleased to see that stakeholders shared these views. This should help ensure we can all enjoy Oregon's outdoor recreation resources and the fish and wildlife that make those experiences more memorable. (Ref. -pg 34 & 37, pg 22, 28 & 29.)

Key Action #4 on page 38 references partnering and supporting public land management agencies with an emphasis on outdoor recreation and wildfire prevention. It may be unintentional, but this statement limits the focus to only land management agencies, primarily federal agencies. This overlooks the important role of other state, federal and local agencies in outdoor recreation and wildfire prevention. (Ref – page 38, #4.)

We're pleased to see Travel Oregon focus on diversity, equity and inclusion and the desire to identify and implement strategies to eliminate barriers. We look forward to Travel Oregon's team helping every organization make Oregon's outdoors more welcoming to all. (Ref. pg 8 & 36.).

Hope all is well.

CM

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**4. Natalie Inouye, Vice President of Destination Marketing  
Travel Lane County**

Hey Staj, Great work on all of the engagement and planning process. Thanks for powering through and keeping all of us moving forward! This page is fabulous - it is so very easy to get to all of the relevant documents! <https://industry.traveloregon.com/about/strategic-plan/2021-2023-strategic-planning/>

I'm looking at the draft plan and appreciate how easy it is to follow. I just have a couple of questions. How will you report out on your KPIs and expected outcomes? I have particular interest in KPI #2 for level of welcome and visitor sentiment. And of course #3! Will results be shown on your monthly dashboard? See screen shot below. We are dropping our sentiment research, so would love to know whether we can get meaningful insights from your regional look! I am also interested in whether I will be able to see the next level of detail of the plan. It looks like it ends at this level. Do I contact individual departments if I want to know, for example, which global markets you will be targeting?