

Transportation Observations, Considerations, and Recommendations for Mt. Hood National Forest

Provided by the Interagency Transportation Assistance Group (TAG)

**Sandy, Oregon
June 24–26, 2009**

A field investigation of the current transportation infrastructure and operations at Mt. Hood National Forest (MHNF) by the interagency Transportation Assistance Group (TAG) was conducted June 24–26, 2009, on behalf of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). This TAG report was prepared subsequent to the site visit and documents the conditions observed, transportation issues and considerations, and recommendations arising from the TAG team’s analysis. The site visit and the preparation of this report were facilitated and funded by USFS.

The TAG focused on a study area within MHNF: the US 26 and OR 35 highway corridors, and access to adjacent destinations, such as Timberline Lodge and the Mt. Hood Meadows ski area. This study area was selected because it is the area of highest concentrated recreational use by visitors from the Portland metropolitan area, because US 26 experiences safety and capacity issues, and because it is the primary study area of the proposed Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan.

The TAG team concluded that MHNF is experiencing transportation impacts stemming from peak visitation and existing vehicle flow on a key freight and mobility route for Oregon. The last section of this report lists recommendations to improve the visitor experience; prevent resource degradation; improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety; and partner with surrounding businesses and communities to mitigate these impacts and improve the quality of life for all those who visit.

I. BACKGROUND

Overview

The Mt. Hood National Forest, located in north-central Oregon, encompasses approximately 1.1 million acres of dense forest and wildflower meadows, straddling the Cascade Mountain Range. Its most prominent feature is Mt. Hood (Figure 1), the tallest peak in Oregon and one of the tallest in the Northwest. The MHNF offers a variety of year-round recreational opportunities, including wilderness hiking, camping, sightseeing, and downhill and cross-country skiing. Because of Mt. Hood’s elevation, it is snowcapped year-round, providing opportunities for summer skiing.

The MHNF is less than an hour’s drive from Portland, Oregon, a metropolitan area with nearly two million residents, and attracts four to five million visitors annually. Timberline Lodge, located on Mt. Hood, was opened in 1937 and is owned by USFS; it provides lodging, restaurants, and year-round skiing opportunities, attracting nearly 1.9 million visitors annually. Forest visitors annually spend \$34,000,000 in local counties. Recreation, wood products, and

natural resource restoration amounts to 2,700 jobs annually, for an estimated \$74,000,000 in annual wages.



Figure 1: Mt. Hood (source: Volpe Center).

Destinations/attractions

The MHNH is approximately 56 miles east of Portland, Oregon (Figure 2). Located in north-central Oregon, it is bounded by the Willamette National Forest and the Warm Springs Indian Reservation on the south and southeast, and by the Willamette Valley on the west. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, with its steep rock walls and waterfalls and the Historic Columbia River Highway, borders the northern edge of the MHNH and is managed by a separate USFS unit. The MHNH headquarters office is located in the town of Sandy, Oregon. Administratively, the MHNH is part of USFS Pacific Northwest Region (Region 6), which is headquartered in Portland.



Figure 2: Location of MHNH within Oregon (source: GORP).

Total visitation to the MHNH is estimated to be four to five million visitors annually. Timberline Lodge alone attracts 1.9 million visitors annually. Given its proximity, many of the MHNH's visitors are from the Portland metropolitan area, including Vancouver, Washington. However, given the forest's reputation for scenic beauty and its recreational amenities, visitors also are attracted from the entire United States and beyond. Seasonal visitation statistics are not collected by USFS, but monthly traffic reports for US 26, a major state highway passing through the forest, show slightly higher volumes during summer weekdays than during winter weekdays. Weekend traffic volumes are substantially higher, by 50 to 100 percent, with summer volumes only slightly higher than winter, indicating the attraction of Mt. Hood as a year-round recreation area.

Recreational opportunities

Being less than an hour's drive from the center of Portland, the MHNH is a primary recreational resource for a major metropolitan area of nearly two million residents. Year-round and seasonal recreational activities include downhill skiing (which can be year-round higher on the mountain), cross-country skiing, hiking, fishing, camping, boating, hunting, and sightseeing. Berry-picking and mushroom collecting are also popular, and a trip in December to cut a Christmas tree is a longstanding tradition for many area residents. USFS conducted a National Visitor Use Monitoring project in 2003; Table 1 shows the percent of visitors participating in various recreational activities in 2003. Communities located along major highways to the forest depend upon business generated by these recreational visitors.

A recreation pass is needed at many of the recreation sites of MHNH such as trailheads, day use sites, and boat launches. Appendix A lists the 34 sites where a recreation pass is needed and the 12 concession-operated day use sites where a day use fee is required. A one-day recreation pass costs \$5 and the day use fee is \$6. The recreation pass is required from May 15 to October 1 except for four of the sites, where it is required year-round. MHNH also has over 80 campgrounds with over 1,250 campsites. The fee for camping in these campgrounds varies from no fee to \$18, with most sites costing \$10 or \$16 per night.

Table 1: Percent of Visitors Participating in Various Recreational Activities (2003)

Activity	% Participating	% as Main Activity*
Developed Camping	6.7	3.1
Primitive Camping	4.6	1.6
Backpacking	4.5	0.8
Resort Use	19.7	4.4
Picnicking	11.7	0.7
Viewing Natural Features	59.9	8.5
Visiting Historic Sites	31.8	2.0
Nature Center Activities	15.9	0.0
Nature Study	5.8	0.2
Relaxing	54.4	14.7
Fishing	4.8	1.5
Hunting	0.0	0.0
OHV Use	1.0	0.2
Driving for Pleasure	30.1	3.8
Snowmobiling	0.6	0.6
Motorized Water Activities	1.1	0.0
Other Motorized Activity	0.2	0.2
Hiking/Walking	51.8	17.2
Horesback Riding	0.2	0.1
Bicycling	4.9	1.3
Non-motorized Water	5.3	1.8
Downhill Skiing	27.7	24.5
Cross-country Skiing	3.7	2.3
Other Non-motorized	17.2	9.9
Gathering Forest Products	3.4	1.0
Viewing Wildlife	43.5	1.7

* This column may total more than 100% because some visitors chose more than one primary activity.

Government Camp – with a population of about 400 people, the unincorporated town of Government Camp, located on US 26, is a focal point for recreational activity in the study area. Government Camp is wholly encompassed by the MHNH. The community, located at the base of Mt. Hood, is in close proximity to various commercial downhill ski areas and offers lodging, restaurants, and some retail services.

Major ski areas in the vicinity of Government Camp include Timberline, Mt. Hood Meadows, and Mt. Hood Ski Bowl. Mt. Hood Ski Bowl, which is directly adjacent to Government Camp, operates various recreational services in the off-season, and because Mt. Hood is snowcapped during the summer as well as winter, summer skiing is available at Timberline. However, the ski season is largely determined by the weather, since snow-making capabilities are limited. If there is not enough snowfall and existing snow melts, the ski areas may close until enough new snow accumulates.

During the TAG, representatives from each of the ski areas reported that per the adopted MHNF Plan and their master plans, they could, on average accommodate more skiers on average per day than at present. However, each ski area stated that they are limited by the number of parking spaces. If there was more parking, or perhaps more skiers taking the bus, then the ski areas could accommodate them. Annual skier visits are:

- Timberline – 265,000
- Mt. Hood Meadows – 393,000¹ (the second most visited ski area in the state)
- Mt. Hood Ski Bowl – 110,000 visitors between June and September; 320,000 visitors in the winter

Snow play is an activity where families come up to the mountains so children can climb snow banks, go sledding, etc. According to some, there is currently high demand, yet low parking capacity and not enough designated snow play areas, for this type of activity within the MHNF.

Timberline Lodge is particularly prominent as a visitor attraction in the MHNF. It was constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and opened in 1937. It is a National Historic Landmark and is owned by USFS. The lodge is operated by a private concessionaire under a Granger-Thye permit, which provides for the operation and maintenance of solely government-owned facilities. Timberline Lodge offers skiing, lodging, restaurants, special events, and is a very popular sightseeing destination.

MHNF Ranger stations with small visitor centers located in Zig Zag and Parkdale will be expanded in the next few years. Currently, the Parkdale visitor center is open six days a week (it is closed Sundays) and can accommodate only several people. There are also non-MHNF visitor centers in Government Camp and the cities of Sandy and Hood River.

Wildwood Recreation Site is operated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and is located along US 26 outside of the town of Welches. This 550-acre forest park features Cascade Streamwatch and Wetland Boardwalk interpretive trails and offers access to the pristine Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness. Wildwood also provides group and family picnic sites, a playground, and a ball field. Cascade Streamwatch was developed by a public-private partnership between the BLM, USFS, and a local non-profit organization. Over 6,000 school children visit the Cascade Streamwatch annually. The site has parking for 50-75 vehicles. The site is open from March 15 to November 30 and access to the site costs \$5 per passenger car, \$10 per vehicle with 10 or more capacity, and \$20 per bus with 20 or more capacity.

Access

While there is limited seasonal bus service to MHNF, most people choose to drive their own vehicles to the forest. Though conditions can be congested and/or treacherous (due to weather), driving is still attractive in the winter for many skiers and snowboarders since they can transport all their equipment in their cars. Drivers must install chains on their tires when chain requirements are in effect.

Access to the MHNF study area is primarily via US 26, an Oregon NHS State Freight route. The MHNF is also reachable from Portland via Interstate 84 to OR 35, which runs along the northern edge of the forest from Portland (see Figure 3). The primary communities in closest proximity to

¹ Mt. Hood Meadows has had over 500,000 skiers annually in the recent past; their goal is to become the most-visited resort in the state, with 600,000 skiers per year.

the major activity areas of the MHNH are the cities of Sandy and Hood River, and the rural unincorporated communities of Government Camp, the Villages of Mt. Hood, and Parkdale and Odell in the Hood River Valley.

Primary access to Government Camp from the Portland area is via US 26, which carries a high volume of auto and truck traffic, and experiences heavy congestion from Sandy to OR 35 during winter and summer peak demand. US 26 also provides the most direct and quickest route from Portland to Bend (161 miles). US 26 between Sandy and OR 35 is considered a hazardous highway and was designated a “safety corridor” by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) in 1996. ODOT has completed and is planning several safety projects along this section of highway. The Mt. Hood Highway Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) calls for construction of an additional travel lane along segments of this corridor, but construction funding is lacking. Vehicular traffic on US 26 is projected to double over 2003 levels by 2020.¹

Interstate 84 is one of Oregon’s major roads in terms of volume of traffic and connected destinations. I-84 connects Portland to Boise, Idaho, and Salt Lake City, Utah. From Portland to Hood River, I-84 travels along the north side of the forest in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA). One of the main attractions of the CRGNSA is Multnomah Falls, which attracts over two million visitors annually. ODOT is currently conducting an interchange area management plan for the three interchanges in the City of Hood River. While some I-84 interchanges, such as the US 30-OR 35 interchange, currently operate effectively, others need improvements. ODOT has a programmed project for Exit 62. If the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs develop a casino in Cascade Locks, they will construct a new I-84 interchange in Cascade Locks.

OR 35 runs north-south and connects I-84 and US 26. While it is 55 miles from Portland to Government Camp on US 26, it is 105 miles on I-84 and OR 35. Most motorists from Portland travel to the ski areas on US 26 rather than via I-84/OR 35, although some people travel the latter route to access Mt. Hood Meadows, which is 66.3 miles via US 26/OR 35 or 97.4 miles via I-84/OR 35. Mt. Hood Meadows has been promoting use of the I-84/OR 35 route in their marketing and with coupon incentives with Hood River businesses; however, traffic studies indicate that on average, 75% of skiers are still taking the US 26/OR 35 route. I-84 is sometimes closed during severe weather events due to high winds and icy conditions in the Gorge.

The White River, located between the US 26 junction and Mt. Hood Meadows Road, flows under an OR 35 bridge where there is evidence of recurring debris torrents. Debris torrents can be triggered by glacial, meteorological, or geothermal events, and result in a significant discharge of water laden with rocks and boulders. The events can significantly change the streambed and have overwhelmed roads and bridges. Debris torrents have been occurring at this location, and to a lesser extent other locations on OR 35, for many years. Every three to six years, bridges are covered with debris and must be cleared. In the fall of 2006, highway access to Mt. Hood Meadows was cut off for six weeks due to debris flows at White River and Newton-Clark bridges. The damage was severe enough to cost \$8 million to clear and repair. In the 1950s, the White River bridge was raised nine feet to increase vertical clearance. The last major event, however, knocked the bridge off its pilings. Accordingly, there is a \$40 million project scheduled for the bridge over the White River to be raised 10 to 12 feet with an extended span.

¹ Cambridge Systematics, Inc., *Federal Lands ATS Study: Summary of Forest Service ATS Needs*, Jan. 2004.

Relevant planning documents

Dozens of studies pertain to transportation planning at MHNF. Below is a short description of some of the most relevant of these studies.

The *Work Program (Statement of Work) for the Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan* (March 2009) lays out a framework to for creating a multimodal transportation plan for the Mt. Hood region. Agencies involved with this effort include ODOT, MHNF, the Federal Highway Administration (Western Federal Lands Highway Division), and Clackamas and Hood River counties.

A Memorandum of Understanding between H Ski Corp.; Mt. Hood Meadows Oreg., Limited Partnership; and R.L.K. and Company (January 2006) lays out the three ski areas' collectively agreed-upon desired items for inclusion in federal wilderness legislation.

The *Mt. Hood Scenic Byway: Corridor Management Plan* (March 2005) lists existing and potential interpretive sites, enhancements, and prospective implementing partners. The Mt. Hood Scenic Byway designation for US 26/OR 35 was added to the Oregon Highway Plan in 2005. Clackamas County and the Forest Service are currently working on a Mt. Hood Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan in which these and other potential interpretive sites and necessary enhancements/mitigations will be examined in more detail.

The *Preliminary Feasibility Study and Fatal Flaw Analysis for an Overhead Transportation System Serving the Government Camp/Mt. Hood Area* was published in September 2001. As a strategy to foster economic development in the town of Government Camp, while also recognizing the need to improve traffic and circulation conditions related to US 26, the Clackamas County Development Agency commissioned a consultant to conduct a study of aerial transportation opportunities in the Government Camp area. The study identified four possible aerial transportation alignments and recommended gondola technology as the most feasible, given its costs, flexibility, and operating environment. The study also identifies potential areas for parking lots to serve the gondola system. A gondola system could provide an attraction for sightseers while also serving skiers accessing the ski areas in the vicinity of Government Camp. Depending upon choice of alignment(s) and parking location, the gondola system also could potentially divert traffic off of Timberline Road, an ODOT District-level highway up to the Timberline Lodge and ski area.

The *Mount Hood Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation, US 26 Rhododendron to OR 35 Junction/Clackamas County* (July 1998) defines and assesses alternative means for accommodating the existing and projected traffic on US 26, and selects a Preferred Alternative of specific improvement projects. Four alternatives were considered as part of this study; the Preferred Alternative is a blend of Alternatives 3 and 4:

- Alternative 1 – No Build with operational and safety improvements.
- Alternative 2 – Widen two-lane segment to three lanes, widen Laurel Hill to four lanes, provide moderate transportation demand management (TDM).
- Alternative 3 – Widen two- and three-lane segments by one lane and provide moderate TDM program.
- Alternative 4 – Widen entire corridor to four lanes and provide moderate TDM program.

As a follow-on study to the 1998 EIS, the *Mt. Hood Transit Feasibility Study* (June 1999) describes existing transit services on and to the mountain, the results from a visitor/traveler

telephone survey, various peer experiences with transit systems serving mountain areas, three potential levels of service and routing for public transit, along with options for funding and operating the service.

Partnerships

MHNF has worked to establish a number of partnerships. Local stakeholders appear to know and respect the MHNF. The ski areas worked with the forest and other stakeholders to create a memorandum of understanding (discussed below) and officials from several federal, state, and local agencies are taking steps to initiate an intergovernmental coordination group to address MHNF transportation issues. These agencies also provided input to the *Work Program (Statement of Work) for the Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan* described above.

Transportation infrastructure

Access to and through the MHNF is primarily by state highways. US 26 and OR 35 are on the National Highway System (NHS), and are designated statewide highways in the *Oregon Highway Plan*. Consequently, USFS is not able to control travel on the roadways. This contributes to difficulties in accurately monitoring visitation and also limits the ways in which USFS is able to influence travel patterns.

Scenic drives

For recreation, Portland Metro residents often take visitors along the [Mt. Hood Scenic Loop](#) from Portland east up the Columbia Gorge on Interstate 84 and/or the Historic Columbia River Highway, south on OR 35 to US 26 to visit Timberline Lodge and Government Camp, and continuing on US 26 back to the Portland Metro area (or in the reverse direction). This route is approximately 160 miles (excluding the 11-mile trip up and back on Timberline Highway to Timberline Lodge). The recently designated [Mt. Hood National Scenic Byway](#) applies to the Mt. Hood Scenic Loop with the exception of I-84 and the inclusion of local roads instead of US 26 to the west of the City of Sandy (Figure 3).

The [Hood River County Fruit Loop](#) is a 35-mile scenic drive through the Hood River valley that connects over 30 farms between Hood River and Parkdale on OR 35. This valley is well-known for its farms and orchards – it is the largest pear-growing region in the nation. People can visit farms and take a tour, pick their own fruit, or purchase fruit directly from a farmer. The region is also home to several vineyards.

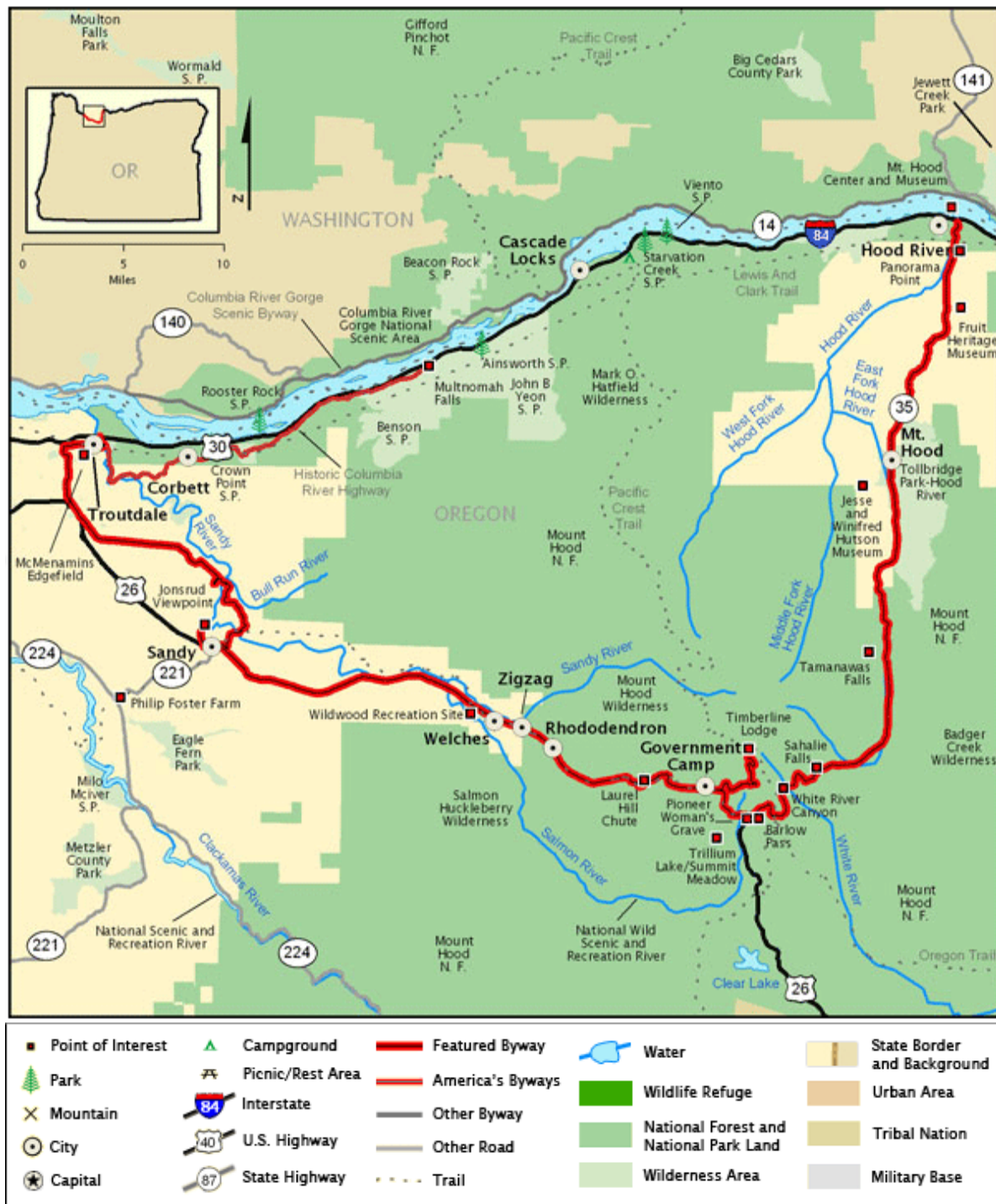


Figure 3: Mt. Hood Scenic Byway (source: www.byways.org).¹

Existing transportation services

A patchwork of public and private transit and shuttle operators provide limited service in the MHN area. These tend to target specific audiences and some operate only seasonally.

¹ Note that this map does not include all of the new lands created by the March 2009 Omnibus Lands Bill.

Ski area shuttles – Ski Bowl operates a year-round free shuttle that circulates between its east and west locations and Government Camp. Ski Bowl staff has reported that this shuttle makes a difference in reducing car trips within Government Camp and to Ski Bowl. Mt. Hood Meadows has a fleet of several school buses that transport visitors from its more remote parking lots to the base lodge. Ski Bowl and Mt. Hood Meadows have employee shuttles that bring employees to work. Mt. Hood Meadows contracts with First Student school bus company to bring employees up from Gresham and Hood River.

Timberline has had various forms of employee shuttle vans over the years serving the area from Sandy to Hoodland and on up the mountain. According to Timberline, these shuttle vans do not move a lot of people and are very expensive to maintain. Instead of now running these shuttle vans for employees, Timberline offers carpooling incentives in the form of gasoline coupons; roughly 40 to 50 percent of their employees now carpool.

The Fusion Shuttle – Ski Bowl and Timberline offer a combined pass for ski or snowboard access to both areas called the Fusion Pass, and Fusion Pass holders can ride the Fusion Shuttle for free. The Fusion Shuttle operates on weekends and holidays between Sandy and the ski areas from December to February. The shuttle costs non-pass holders \$15 to/from Sandy, \$10 to/from Welches, and \$5 to/from Government Camp. The Fusion Shuttle departs Sandy at 7:00 AM and arrives at Ski Bowl at 8:00 AM and Timberline at 8:45 AM. The shuttle returns to Sandy at 4:00 PM. Stops include Hoodland Thriftway, Zig Zag Ranger Station, Collins Lake Resort, and Government Camp. While the bus is up on the mountain, it runs between Timberline and Ski Bowl three times a day. Employees can ride the Fusion Shuttle on a space available basis.

Timberline and Ski Bowl started the Fusion Shuttle to address over-capacity parking concerns in the Government Camp area, to provide a car-less way to travel to both ski areas, and to underscore the Fusion concept between the two areas. The 2009-10 ski season will be the fourth season of operation for the Fusion Shuttle. According to Timberline, the Fusion Shuttle runs at 95 to 100 percent capacity and is proof of the demand for an intermountain shuttle.

Charter bus service – Each of the ski areas also has charter bus service. These buses are contracted through private bus charter companies, mainly in the Portland area. Mt. Hood Meadows has the most extensive charter bus service, with 40 to 50 buses bringing skiers and snowboarders to the mountain each day. Overall, 26 percent of visitors to Mt. Hood Meadows come by buses that serve park and rides and other destinations around the Portland area. Most charter bus service to Mt. Hood Meadows is part of a structured program where riders pay six dollars per weekly visit for eight weeks. Mt. Hood Meadows estimates that buses must be at least 93 percent full to be profitable. This program is currently struggling; originally, this program targeted “stay-at-home moms,” but the mid-week skier demographic has changed. Timberline estimates that five to six percent of their visitors arrive by charter bus.

Mountain Express bus service is managed by Clackamas County with a contract bus operator. Mountain Express serves the Villages at Mt. Hood by connecting Rhododendron, Zigzag, Welches, Wemme, and Brightwood with the City of Sandy and Sandy Area Metro. This weekday service only (no holidays) has three runs in the morning and three runs in the afternoon running in each direction between Rhododendron and Sandy. The route takes approximately 30 minutes and costs \$2 one-way for adults and \$1 for students 10 and older (under 10 ride free), seniors over 60, and eligible people with disabilities. ODOT initiated talks with Timberline, Ski Bowl, and Clackamas County about extending service to the mountain. Timberline hoped this

service would at least extend to Government Camp, but perhaps all the way to the ski areas as a supplementary means to serve the local population, a lot of whom work at the ski areas. The consortium tried but was unsuccessful in obtaining FTA Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funding to extend service in 2009-10.

Sandy Area Metro (SAM) is the City of Sandy's transit agency. SAM currently has three routes: one that connects to Trimet's Gresham Transit Center, one that connects to the nearby city of Estacada adjacent to the MHNH Estacada Ranger District, and one that circulates through Sandy. Each route is free and operates six days a week (not on Sundays), except for the route to Estacada, which also does not operate on Saturdays. Buses serve Gresham Transit Center every 30 minutes (every hour on Saturdays) and Estacada every two to three hours. The trip to Gresham takes under 30 minutes and the trip to Estacada takes 25 minutes. The route around town runs at 5:30 AM, 6:30 AM, 6:30 PM, and 7:30 PM and is demand-response at all other times. Sandy is in the process of adopting a comprehensive transit plan and is considering initiating fares.

Columbia Area Transit (CAT) provides demand-response service in Hood River County and fixed route service to The Dalles. Once a week, CAT takes passengers to Portland, primarily to shopping destinations. For seven seasons, CAT provided winter service to Mt. Hood Meadows. This service, which had a five-dollar one-way fare, was discontinued three years ago for several reasons. First, the bus was expensive to maintain – it was a converted Greyhound bus that was specialized for the winter, and could not be used during the summer months. Second, because congestion on OR 35 was not bad enough to make the bus an attractive travel alternative for adults, the bus service mainly served adolescents; they often became unruly, making law enforcement an issue. Third, drivers became injured when they slipped on the ice up on the mountain. Fourth, CAT bought the bus expensive snow tires in the belief that that would obviate the need for chains; however, chains were in fact required in order to access Mt. Hood Meadows; installing the chains damaged the tires. CAT will be hiring a mobility manager to promote vanpools and carpools from Hood River County to Portland and other nearby cities and towns.

TriMet, the Portland Metro area's transit agency, used to run service up to Government Camp and the ski areas 20-25 years ago. The service was discontinued after a few years. Some constituents have proposed passenger rail service from Portland to Hood River. If this service could be worked out with the current freight provider (Union Pacific) that runs along the gorge and owns the tracks, right-of-way, and facilities, construction would cost between \$20 and 25 million. TriMet has a MAX light-rail line that runs to Gresham. The line's second-to-last stop is at the Gresham Transit Center, where several buses, including SAM, connect. The last stop is at Cleveland Avenue, where there is a park and ride lot.

Central Oregon Breeze, a private transit operator, provides bus service between Portland and Bend twice a day in both directions. Its stops include Portland Union Station, Portland Airport, Gresham (Cleveland Avenue MAX station), Madras Tiger Mart, CET connection in Redmond, Redmond Airport, and Bend Sugarloaf Mountain Motel. The bus will stop along US 26 in Welches, Sandy, Government Camp, or Warm Springs if requested and reserved in advance. The trip takes four hours and 30 minutes with buses leaving to Bend at 1:30 and 6:00 PM and buses leaving to Portland at 7:00 AM and 11:30 AM. Tickets cost \$49 one-way (\$88 round trip) for adults, \$44 one-way (\$78 round trip) for seniors, and the first two children are half price when

traveling with an adult. To date, the Breeze has served several thousands of people, a couple dozen of which have gotten off or on in Welches or Government Camp.

Mount Hood Railroad (MHRR) runs tourist and freight service along 22 miles of track from Hood River (at the intersection of I-84 and Highway 35) to Parkdale. In addition to their general excursions up to Odell or Parkdale, MHRR has a variety of themed excursions such as dinner, western train robbery, and murder mystery. Child-oriented programs include Thomas the Tank Engine and the Polar Express. MHRR is considering busing people from Portland to Hood River, having them board their train, and then continue by bus from Parkdale to Mt. Hood. MHRR started in 1986 and now serves 70,000 people per season (April to December). Over 90 percent of MHRR's income comes from excursion with the other 10 percent coming from freight (approximately 250 cars per year). MHRR would like to see more industrial development along the line. When necessary, MHRR connects a freight car(s) to its excursion train. At Hood River, freight cars are exchanged and taken by Union Pacific.

Amtrak service used to serve the Gorge but was discontinued in 1996. There is some discussion about re-instituting Amtrak service in Oregon in the Gorge; Amtrak currently provides several runs a day on the Washington side.

Bikeways

There is significant interest in bicycling in and around MHNH. Adjacent to MHNH, ODOT is working on a \$23 million appropriation request to create bicycle and pedestrian trails on abandoned sections of the Historic Columbia River Highway (HCRH). Eleven miles of this trail has been constructed from Hood River to Mosier. Twelve miles remain to be constructed between Mosier and Cascade Locks including rebuilding the Mitchell Tunnel.

Clackamas and Hood River counties also have local trails. MHNH has been working with Clackamas County and the community of Government Camp to construct connecting trails between the forest and the community.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

There are several variable message signs (VMS) along US 26 and along Mt. Hood Meadows Road. Existing ODOT VMS are at US 26 near Zig Zag and US 26 near Frog Lake. ODOT is also planning to install four more VMS along US 26 that will likely be installed between 2012 and 2013. These will include one at US 26 and US 212 and two at US 26 and OR 35. Mt. Hood Meadows also has four VMSs to guide motorists to the appropriate parking lot. Mt. Hood Meadows also sends text messages about the status of parking out to visitors who have signed up for these alerts so that visitors know what to expect when they arrive.

SnoParks

Visitors must have a valid SnoPark permit displayed in the windshield of their vehicle if they park in designated winter recreation parking areas (SnoParks) between November 1 and April 30. There are 23 SnoParks in MHNH (Table 2, below), each of which are posted with signs. SnoPark permits issued by Washington, California, and Idaho are honored in Oregon (and Oregon permits are honored in those states). Proceeds from the sale of permits are used by ODOT to maintain SnoParks (this mainly consists of snow removal). Clearing snow from the MHNH SnoParks last year cost approximately \$750,000.

Table 2: SnoParks in MHNH

Parking Area	Number of Spaces	Downhill Skiing	Sledding /Snow Play	Cross-Country Skiing	Snow-mobiling
Timberline 6 miles north of Government Camp.	900	x	x		
Glacier View 1/2 mile west of Government Camp on US 26.	40			x	
Ski Bowl West Across from Government Camp off US 26.	370	x		x	
Ski Bowl East South of Government Camp off US 26.	200	x	x		
Summit Ski Area Located at Government Camp on US 26.	130	x	x	x	
Government Camp Government Camp Loop Road.	972				
Government Camp Maintenance Station 1/4 mile east of Government Camp on US 26.	80			x	
Snow Bunny Lodge 3 miles east of Government Camp on US 26.	75		x	x	
Trillium Lake 3 miles east of Government Camp on US 26.	75			x	x
Barlow Pass 2 miles north of US 26 on ORE 35.	50			x	
Boy Scout Camp 4 miles north of US 26 on ORE 35.	40			x	
White River West 4 miles north of US 26 on ORE 35.	228			x	
White River East 4 miles north of US 26 on ORE 35.	40			x	x
Bennett Pass 6 miles north of US 26 on ORE 35.	55			x	x
Mt. Hood Meadows 38 miles south of Hood River on ORE 35.	1,600	x		x	
Hood River Meadows 37 miles south of Hood River on ORE 35.	660	x		x	
Teacup Lake 36.5 miles south of Hood River on ORE 35.	45			x	
Clark Creek 36.5 miles south of Hood River on ORE 35.	76			x	
Pocket Creek 34.5 miles south of Hood River on ORE 35.	40			x	
Little John	40		x	x	x
Cooper Spur 30 miles south of Hood River on ORE 35.	300	x	x	x	
Frog Lake 4.5 miles east of ORE 35 on US 26.	~50			x	x
Skyline Road 10 miles east of ORE 35 on US 26.	~50			x	x

There are three types of permits: an annual permit which costs \$20, a 3-day permit which costs \$7, and a daily permit which costs \$3. Permits are sold at all DMV offices and by permit agents in resorts, sporting goods stores, and other retail outlets. Agents are allowed to charge a service fee for each permit they sell. SnoPark permits are not sold at any of the MHNH ranger stations. The cost of the annual permit provides a discount to frequent SnoPark users over the three day

and daily permits. A survey of SnoPark users indicated that annual permits are used on average more than 13 times per winter. Parking in an Oregon SnoPark without a permit may result in a \$30 fine.

Planning framework

All cities and towns in Oregon must have a comprehensive plan that includes a land use element, a transportation system plan (TSP) and an urban growth boundary (UGB), which delineate an area in which future urban development can occur. TSPs have three primary functions: 1) they establish a system of transportation facilities and services to meet 20-year projected growth; 2) they serve as the transportation element of a local comprehensive plan; and 3) they need to be consistent with the State Transportation System Plan (Oregon Transportation Plan and Modal/Topic Plans) and other state, federal and local policies.

The Portland Metro metropolitan planning organization (MPO) creates a Regional Transportation Plan, which cities and urban areas in the counties need to be consistent. The Metro MPO does not include Hood River County or the eastern part of Clackamas County adjacent to MHNF.

ODOT conducted major corridor studies of US 26 and OR 35 in the mid 1990s. Highway improvement projects in these plans were incorporated into the Clackamas and Hood River county transportation system plans.

Government Camp is an unincorporated urban community with a UGB that is surrounded by the MHNF. The Villages of Mt. Hood are unincorporated Clackamas County rural communities along US 26 west of the MHNF, and Parkdale and Odell are rural unincorporated communities north of MHNF on OR 35. The counties' comprehensive plans and TSPs regulate development and transportation improvements in these areas.

As a management goal, wherever possible, the MHNF would prefer additional resort development within the Government Camp UGB and ski areas' existing footprints to an expansion of those footprints within the MHNF.

ODOT regulates access to state highways through their approach permitting, and the agency participates in county and MHNF development review. ODOT may recommend or require proportionate mitigation for site-specific transportation impacts to the state highways. For example, ODOT will require Mt. Hood Meadows to construct a left turn lane on OR 35 to provide for safe ingress/egress for their proposed Bennett Pass parking lot.

The Mt Hood Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan identifies potential improvements recommended for further evaluation as part of an implementation plan by Clackamas County and the Forest Service. The plan identifies several locations for where improvements to parking and access are proposed or may be needed. Some potential related transportation improvements would be minor (e.g., turn lanes), others such as proposed highway undercrossings could be significant. The list of prospective interpretive sites listed in this plan has been revised in the recently completed Mt. Hood Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan.

The 1990 Land and Resource Management Plan for Mt. Hood National Forest (the "Forest Plan") guides all natural resource management standards and guidelines for the forest. The forest management direction section of the Forest Plan states that "Since most of the long term transportation network currently exists, the focus will shift from development to planning,

managing, and maintaining the existing network to meet changes in land uses. These changes will include managing for increased recreational traffic.”¹

The Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 designates new Mt. Hood wilderness and wild and scenic rivers and includes a provision for a multimodal transportation plan. The section lists potential projects to be evaluated including park and rides, an interchange near Government Camp, and an aerial tram.

Several agencies recently created a Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group² to coordinate and cooperate on long-range planning initiatives and issues as well as on current issues, development proposals, and project funding and implementation. The agencies include MHNF, ODOT, Clackamas County, Hood River County, FHWA Western Federal Lands, and the Governor’s Office. Agency managers and staff support this group as appropriate. The Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group held its first meeting on July 22, 2009.

Government Camp tax-increment financing

Through its urban renewal district, Government Camp, which is unincorporated, instituted a tax-increment financing (TIF) plan in 2000, which has raised over \$9 million to encourage development and improve the conditions for pedestrians around the town area. New sidewalks, a pedestrian bridge, and trails (created by the USFS) were constructed using TIF funding.

The TIF had its last collection recently and expires later this year once its remaining funds are allocated. Depending on whether Government Camp incorporates³, it may create a maintenance district to continue investing in area improvements. Government Camp was able to leverage its TIF funds to raise an additional \$4 million in federal and state transportation funding.

Wilderness legislation/land swap

The Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 calls for a land swap of 770 acres of land at Cooper Spur in exchange for approximately 120 acres of National Forest System land in the Government Camp area. This land will be developed in accordance with local zoning and other developmental standards. Mt. Hood Meadows has already offered their land and triggered this process.

¹ *Land and Resource Management Plan for Mt. Hood National Forest*, 1990, pg. 4-34.

² The name of this group is not set yet.

³ Government Camp has a population of about 400 people, 150 of who are registered voters. They will soon be voting about incorporation; last time they voted on this issue, it did not pass.

II. TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, NEEDS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Trends

The vast majority of people coming to MHNF are coming for the day from the Portland metropolitan area and, to a lesser extent, from central Oregon. Both of these regions of the state are projected to grow over the coming years. Accordingly, congestion along US 26, which is already significant, will worsen. Travelers may choose to take alternative routes (primarily I-84 to OR 35), which would result in increased traffic on these roadways.

Central Oregon has been doubling in population every eight years, and Portland is growing at twice the average American growth rate at 1.5% annual growth. Recreation use is projected to increase based on demographic patterns in the Portland area. Population growth in Central Oregon not only means more people visiting the forest from that region, but will likely result in more vehicular and freight traffic on US 26.

In addition to local population growth, and a subsequent increase in recreation in the forest, Oregon may become more of a destination for skiers from other parts of the country and world. Some experts believe that due to climate change, snow conditions for the Mt. Hood region will improve in relation to other U.S. ski destinations.

With regard to safety, combined with challenging weather and topography, more travelers and more congestion may lead to more crashes on highways and roads in the MHNF. The traveling public – motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians – will all face this risk. There is likely to be a growing need for intersection, pedestrian crossing, and other safety improvements.

Other likely impacts to the forest in coming decades include more hydrologic effects, such as debris torrents on OR 35, and seismic events, such as eruptions and/or earthquakes. These events are unpredictable and may be more or less frequent than in the past.

Problem statement and governance

The Work Program for the Mt Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan identifies the existing and projected transportation issues facing MHNF, however, there is no single, clear problem statement summarizing the transportation issues in the region. Even with the current collaboration and coordination among many of the stakeholders, there are competing interests, as well as some inherent conflicts of purpose, that need to be resolved, reconciled, or at least acknowledged.

Congestion

Within the MHNF, US 26 is a two- to four-lane facility. As both a recreational and a freight through route, US 26 carries a high volume of auto and truck traffic and can experience serious congestion, particularly during the winter with ski traffic and icy conditions. During summer and winter weekends and holidays, existing traffic volumes approach or surpass the capacity of US 26, and volumes are projected to double over the next 20 years. The TAG team heard that it is not unusual on winter weekends for the 31-mile trip between Sandy and Mt. Hood to take up to two to four hours. On high volume days, the 9.3-mile drive from Government Camp to Rhododendron can take two hours. ODOT has said that US 26 experiences approximately 150

days of congestion: primarily Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons in both the winter and summer.

Congestion on US 26 is caused by a variety of factors, foremost of which is volume. The roadway was designed decades ago. Since that time, freight and through travel has increased along with day use recreation on Mt. Hood. There are competing interests for the use of the roadway between ski areas, which would like to see the greatest and quickest use of the roadways for their visitors, and through traffic, which would like to travel the shortest amount of time on the roadway to reach destinations on the other side of the forest. Commuter traffic between the mountain communities to Sandy and Gresham and resort and recreation traffic between Bend and Portland also add to the overall traffic flow on US 26.

Commercial trucks and buses can cause travel delay and sometimes congestion by traveling under the speed limit while climbing or descending grades along the roadway. Safety is a factor since crashes can cause congestion until the accident has been cleared. Similarly, adverse weather can cause motorists to slow down and is also a leading factor in crashes. Parking affects congestion since motorists may need to circle on portions of the roadway in search of available parking spaces. Finally, inadequately designed intersections can contribute to congestion from vehicle queuing.

Access to Timberline Lodge is via Timberline Road, a state highway, which intersects US 26 just east of Government Camp and runs 5.5 miles, climbing approximately 2,100 feet. Timberline Road is a winding two-lane facility with narrow shoulders, which is kept open in winter despite difficult snow conditions. This highway can experience congestion during busy periods and is subject to closure when the parking lots at Timberline Lodge are at capacity. During these periods, the road is closed and buses are used to shuttle visitors from Government Camp.

Average Daily Traffic

According to ODOT, average daily traffic (ADT) up the mountain is 8,500 from Rhododendron, 14 to 17 percent of which are trucks. ADT past the US 26 and OR 35 intersection on US 26 eastbound is 5,000. Last, ADT at Warm Springs is 6,900. East of Sandy during peak travel times, approximately 20 to 25 percent of traffic is destined for Government Camp, five percent to Ski Bowl, and 20 to 25 percent to Timberline. The remainder of the trips proceed toward Bend or to OR 35 and Mt. Hood Meadows.

The ADT at Mt. Hood Meadows is 1,800. This number is calculated for December through March and July through September. The ADT for this area ranges from 700 in November to 2,450 in December. To access Mt. Hood Meadows, 20 to 25 of visitors use OR 35 and 75 to 80 percent use US 26.

Safety

The mountain sections of US 26 have a poor safety history. The crash rate is two times higher than crash rates for other primary, rural non-freeway highways in Oregon. Between January 2003 and December 2008, there were a total of 22 fatalities on US 26. Crashes are mainly weather related; even if people drive safely above the “white line” (the snowline), their attention may waiver further down, which can result in lane crossings. Drinking during apres-ski activities can also contribute to crashes. Finally, commercial trucks can contribute to crashes since people

sometimes risk passing slow vehicles they cannot see around, and trucks can take longer to brake when necessary.

In 1996, the State designated the section of US 26 between Sandy and OR 35 as a “safety corridor,” with increased police presence, driver education, and highway improvements such as rumble strips to divide the highway. In 2008, a median cable barrier was installed in the Cherryville section west of the Villages of Mt. Hood. ODOT conducted a rural safety audit in June 2009, with a report expected in August 2009. ODOT has conducted numerous safety and preservation projects on US 26 in the past 10 years. Planned roadway modernization to add through travel lanes, however, has not occurred east of Rhododendron.

Accessibility

Year-round access to the forest is primarily by people who own or have access to private vehicles and can afford the time, gas, and maintenance costs to travel to the forest. Charter buses bring a fraction of people to the forest, and only a handful of people bicycle to and in the forest.

In the Portland metropolitan area, the cities, Metro, Trimet, and ODOT have invested millions of dollars over several decades to improve transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. Many Portlanders pride themselves for being environmentally sensitive, and their transportation system allows them to travel by modes that have less of an impact on the environment than the private vehicle. Indeed, Portland is often heralded as the most sustainable city in the United States with one of the highest transit and bicycle use rates in the nation. However, Portlanders almost always must drive to access the forest due to the limited availability of transit options.

The limited access to the forest by transit can also prevent Portlanders from traveling to the forest for economic reasons. The 2000 Census reports that 8.5% of families and 13% of individuals in Portland are living below the poverty level. Low-income people may consider the cost of making the trip to the forest too expensive since they may not have the means to travel in a private vehicle over 50 miles from Portland to the forest. Existing bus service to the forest via the Central Oregon Breeze is also expensive.

People may also be inhibited from traveling to the forest by the sometimes-unpleasant driving experience. Not only do people have to contend with congestion, but driving in adverse weather conditions and/or sharing the road with commercial trucks can be difficult and stressful. Visitor services west of MHNH are clustered in Sandy and the Villages of Mt. Hood, at Government Camp within the forest, and in the rural communities and City of Hood River to the north.

Traveling to and in the forest can also be confusing for visitors. While there is existing signage for many trailheads, campgrounds, SnoParks, ski lodges, and some historic sites, and some variable message signs (VMS) to relay up-to-date conditions and parking availability at Mt. Hood Meadows, signage and visitor information could be improved. The Mt. Hood Scenic Byway Corridor Plan and recent Interpretive Plan propose design styles and hierarchy for more consistent signage for points of interest.

Overall, recreational opportunities in the forest are under-utilized when visitation is measured against what could be sustained by forest resources. While each of the factors mentioned above discourage visitors to the forest, the lack of ski area parking may be the most significant limitation for visitation in the winter, and the lack of parking at Timberline limits summer visitation to the Lodge and alpine trail. There is a capacity mismatch: ski areas want to handle

more visitors, but parking lots are occasionally congested. If a first-time visitor encounters a full parking lot or has an unpleasant traveling experience to the forest, they may not return in the future even if conditions have improved. A more effective transit system for Mt. Hood recreation could reduce vehicle travel and the overall need for parking at the ski resorts.

Parking

Within the forest, there are visitation peaks and associated transportation impacts. While congestion is temporary until conditions improve, the lack of parking is an ongoing problem. On peak days, there is not enough parking to accommodate all potential visitors. If there was more parking, people would not need to circulate looking for parking, thereby reducing the amount of traffic in the area. Though people must pay for parking in each of the SnoPark lots (which are located at each of the ski areas), the price of parking is relatively inexpensive (an annual parking pass costs \$20).

The ski areas have thousands of parking spaces, but each would like to expand their parking capacity. Ski Bowl has parking for 500 cars on the west side of US 26 and parking for 400 cars on the east side. They estimate that their parking lots reach capacity five to ten days a year in the winter. Ski Bowl staff informs potential visitors that their lots are full; visitors may then try to park in Government Camp, try to visit another ski area, or they may return home.

Timberline has parking for 1,000 cars, but would like to add an additional 900 parking spaces. They have had to turn away people during 17 days last year because parking was at capacity. Timberline is considering building an additional parking lot at the base of its Molly's lift two-thirds of the way up Timberline Highway.

When parking is full at Ski Bowl or Timberline, people try to park at Government Camp, which can reduce parking availability for Government Camp businesses and housing. There is limited on-street parking in Government Camp during the day, with slightly more availability over night. SnoPark permits are required to park on Government Camp Loop Road in the winter. Timberline runs shuttles from Government Camp when their parking lot is full.

Mt. Hood Meadows has parking for 2,500 vehicles and is designing an additional parking lot at Bennett Pass on OR 35 that will accommodate 900 more vehicles. The construction of this parking lot will occur in the next few years if enough funding can be secured to pay for a new culvert that will allow for fish passage. Mt. Hood Meadows has a tiered parking system: on busy days, its upper lot is full by 8:30 AM, so VMS and staff direct motorists to their annex lot, then to another lot, then to parking along the access road. All spaces are full four to five times a year, at which time Mt. Hood Meadows must turn people away.

Potential conflicts among road users

In addition to the conflict between recreation travelers and commercial trucking along US 26, other conflicts exist among road users. Several of the key intersections along US 26 have poor design with acute connections that make it difficult to see oncoming traffic. This problem is especially apparent at the intersection of US 26, West Government Camp Loop Road, and East Ski Bowl Access. ODOT attempted to develop an intersection improvement project at this intersection several years ago and will undoubtedly need to make improvements to address safety. ODOT's policy is to not install traffic signals in high-speed, isolated rural areas for two

reasons: people do not expect the signal since the distance between signals is great, and people do not see signals in time (especially during adverse weather) since they often travel at high speeds through rural areas and the MNNF.

Another problematic intersection is US 26 and Timberline Highway. Additionally, Ski Bowl would like to add a ramp from US 26 to the Multitorpor Overcrossing, but this idea has not been supported by ODOT because it would not meet *Oregon Highway Plan* interchange spacing standards. An interchange with a flyover was constructed to improve access from OR 35 to Mt. Hood Meadows in 2002-03. This project, which had been discussed since the 1980s, is largely considered a success.

Pedestrian safety is also an issue, as visitors and residents must sometimes cross the roadways on foot when navigating between destinations and parking areas and destinations. There is the possibility of pedestrian and vehicle conflicts, especially at popular activity nodes, where the speed is high and intersections are obtuse. ODOT sets the speed for all roadways in the state, regardless of jurisdiction, based on land use and prevailing travel speeds. The forest is rural, so the speed limit on US 26 and OR 35 is generally 45 to 55 MPH. The Villages at Mt. Hood communities have requested crosswalks on US 26, but ODOT will not approve them due to high travel speeds. The Government Camp plan includes proposals for additional pedestrian undercrossings or overcrossings of US 26; currently the Multorpor Overcrossings provides the only pedestrian/bicycle facility across US 26 within Government Camp.

Regulatory framework

There are conflicting rules and regulations that impact the transportation system in the forest. When possible, stakeholders and agencies need to be flexible and work together. ODOT regulates access to the highway and considers highway conditions and the traffic impacts of new development on several factors such as safety and mobility. ODOT's roadway standards are often in conflict with community access desires. ODOT's priorities are safety, maintenance, and then modernization. Funding for modernization, which includes the construction of additional travel lanes, new roads or interchanges is limited. Highway intersection improvements, such as new turn lanes or re-alignment, are selected through a statewide process that evaluates their ranking in the state Safety Priority Index System.

Public transit viability

The viability of public transit to the forest is currently limited. Two public transit systems served the forest in the past (TriMet and CAT), primarily to ski resorts; these routes only lasted a handful of years. Complicating factors for the success of public transit include diffuse origin points, a long haul from origin points, and somewhat diffuse destination points. Relative to public transit service to the forest, charter bus service to the ski areas – distinguished by higher fares, lower service frequencies, and the need for advance reservations – has been successful.

III. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The TAG team developed a number of recommendations for MHNF to consider as it moves forward in considering transportation solutions. The TAG team considered recommendations in three basic categories: access to MHNF, through trips across MHNF between the Portland metropolitan area and central Oregon, and access within MHNF. The TAG team also considered whether its recommendations could be executed in the context of existing institutional structures and arrangements, or whether new governance would be needed, in both the short and long term. A matrix in the summary section shows how the recommendations fit under these various categories.

Recommendations – Short-Term (1 to 5 years)

These five recommendations are the highest in terms of priority. The first recommendation is the top priority since this groundwork needs to be established for many of the subsequent recommendations to be successfully implemented.

1. Develop problem statement and establish forest transportation goals

MHNF itself should develop a transportation problem statement, and forest transportation-specific goals, for its own purposes. These goals will be essential in guiding future planning efforts. This work should be an internal forest staff effort; the forest supervisor can establish these goals as a management policy consistent with the existing forest plan.

As one member of the TAG team stated, “If you don’t think big enough, you can’t solve the problem.” The problem statement should consider the economic, social, and ecological/environmental aspects of transportation issues.

Transportation goals should tier from the Forest Management Plan, from other management documents and policies, and from USFS management goals generally. Examples can include:

- **Environment** Work toward using green energy, minimize development footprint, minimize carbon footprint, minimize emissions
- **Safety** Reduce collisions, improve bike/ped safety, reduce winter driving by reducing the number of cars on the road, facilitate emergency access, provide safety information to road users
- **Visitor experience** Offer a good visitor experience (consistent with overall forest purpose/message), provide good connectivity/mobility options including seamless transit access from Portland, reduce parking/traffic congestion, provide thematic links to transportation, facilitate access by different users and underrepresented groups, minimize scenic impacts, and minimize impacts to the historic, cultural, and environmental resources in the forest
- **Freight/through movement** Ensure smooth movement of through traffic including freight, provide sufficient chain-up areas
- **Business development** Allow permittees and gateway communities opportunities to sustain and grow their business operations
- **Jurisdictional/** Overcome stovepiped/overlapping plans; work toward

- | | |
|---|---|
| governance | structure to make key regional decisions, obtain funding, and undertake projects |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial/management | Operate a financially sustainable transportation system; minimize cost to the public (in terms of public-sector investments as well as direct transit/parking costs to users) |

Having a clearly defined problem statement, and defined transportation goals, will enable the development of evaluation criteria that can be used to analyze future planning efforts. Once established, these goals can be shared with the wider Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group and other stakeholders.

2. Maintain and expand an inventory of all relevant transportation resources

An inventory of transportation resources should be updated regularly to keep track of all of the different resources that are relevant to transportation on major roads within the forest, so that transportation decisions can be made using, and in the context of, these resources. This inventory should include information about all relevant plans, projects, organizations, funding sources, transit and charter services, bicycle access, jurisdictions, data, and missions/goals of all stakeholders (even if conflicting). The inventory should be made public with an accessible library of all documents. The list of resources at the end of this document and the list of resources developed as part of the multimodal transportation plan work can be used as a starting point for this inventory.

3. Encourage the Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group

The Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group should be encouraged to shape and guide transportation planning in the MHNF. This Group should be the conduit for coordinating with the state, counties, and with stakeholders in their communities.

As a first step, the Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group should define the problem, vision, and goals by developing a framework to jumpstart this work (possibly along the lines of recommendation #1, above). The Group should identify and consider inherently conflicting goals, examples of which are:

- Maximizing highway throughput, but minimizing developed footprint (by not expanding roads).
- Maximizing access to forest (increasing the number of visitors to the forest), but minimizing traffic and parking congestion (by not increasing the number of cars being driven to the forest).

The Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group needs to gain legitimacy and authority to be seen as the unified voice for the region. Due to its importance, the Group needs to be an initiative driven by both the forest and the state. The issues the Group will be addressing are bigger than just transportation and access; they are economic, social, and environmental.

The Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group should anticipate what the forest and surrounding areas will look like in the future and, within that context, define their vision for the forest. The Group should then define their goals and objectives needed to obtain that

vision. To bring as many interests together as possible, a coalition of stakeholders needs to have a unified vision.

The Group should study the feasibility of – and if viable, consider creating – a “Mt. Hood Regional Transportation Authority” to be an eligible recipient of FTA funding. One example of such a structure is the Eastern Sierra Transportation Authority (ESTA), which serves a two-county area including Mammoth Mountain in California. ESTA was created in 2006; its business plan, which describes its formation and governing structure, is attached as Appendix B. Creating this kind of entity would enable regional decision making regarding transit spending as well as other transportation issues.

The Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group should also consider creating Stakeholder Groups that include other interests (tourism, economic development, environment, gateway cities, transit districts and private transit providers, tribes, etc.). These groups, which could meet on an as-needed basis, could address issues specific to their topics and report back to the Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group.

As an organization, the Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group would be better positioned to consider a broader geographic scope of transportation issues, including the Mt. Hood Scenic Loop (I-84, OR 35, and US 26) and the relevant state, county, and municipal transportation plans.

Other issues for the Group to consider are how to ensure there are regular communications with interested stakeholders, how to determine who will be members of and lead the Group, how to define decision-making protocols, who will fund the recommended work of the Group, and how to manage and provide staff support for the Group’s efforts. The Group should also consider how the region should be branded in terms of a unique identity that distinguishes it and promotes informed decision-making by visitors. Along these lines, the Group should consider inviting a tourism industry representative from the Governor’s Office to join the Group.

4. Work with ski areas on new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

MHNF should work with its ski areas on crafting a new MOU. The forest and counties were active in shaping the previous MOU, so their involvement in shaping a new MOU is logical. Such a document could provide a valuable common ground for agreeing on general principles for a shared vision for the future and making transportation planning and investment decisions accordingly.

5. Identify and use funding for planning

MHNF and partner agencies should identify and use funding for planning. The 2006 ATPPL planning grant for \$100,000 needs to be used in a manner consistent with the original application for funding, and expires September 30, 2011. ODOT and other partners could add funding for planning purposes as well. The forest and its partner agencies need to determine if this funding should be used for:

- The first phase(s), or re-organized phase(s), of the Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan SOW

- Synthesis and analysis based on demographic projections and the resulting changes in land use and visitor demand that are anticipated
- Identification and analysis of routes, and proportions of vehicles using each route to access forest destinations (ski areas, etc.) and central Oregon
- Synthesis and analysis of travel behavior and use patterns during other seasons in addition to winter (what percentage of volume is freight and what percentage is through traffic to/from Bend?, etc.)
- Keeping the momentum up by organizing and holding a Transportation Summit for the Mt. Hood region
- Developing case studies of comparable regions with a focus on their decision-making process/governance, funding sources, and partnership opportunities, such as private-public partnerships (PPP)
- Studying how scenarios of possible future conditions for US 26 would affect access to MHNH and conditions along US 26. US 26 will continue to serve freight and traffic moving across the state. Accordingly, as part of this study, ways (if they exist) could be identified for MHNH to influence traffic on US 26 to the extent required to truly affect its projected level of service and performance measures.

The forest applied for \$480,000 in 2009 Forest Highway Program planning funding; this application was not approved for funding. The original application was to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and for the design of park-and-rides, but the application was changed to support development of the Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan. This funding could have been used for a resource capacity study, analyzing in more detail the current bottleneck situation: no more cars can be accommodated in the existing footprint, but forest resources (ski areas, trails, etc.) can accommodate more people.

Other possible funders for transportation planning work include ODOT, MHNH, FHWA-Western Federal Lands Highway Division, FHWA Oregon Division, Clackamas and Hood River counties, and possibly others. Future funding avenues include FTA Sarbanes Transit in the Parks applications, Travel Oregon, the National Scenic Byways Program, FTA (if a recipient is identified), and other programs, some of which are listed at industry.traveloregon.com/upload/otc/departments/tourismdevelopment/grantsources2.pdf.

Recommendations – Medium-Term (5 to 10 years)

6. Work with ODOT to install traffic counter(s) at Government Camp

The forest should work with ODOT to install permanent traffic counters at Government Camp to better understand transportation patterns, specifically destinations, time-of-day, and day-of-month peak travel periods.

7. Develop west side snow play area

The forest should work with ODOT and other relevant stakeholders to create a west side snow play area at a lower elevation to provide a “get to the snow” location that does not require traveling to the Government Camp area. This could reduce traffic and safety concerns along a portion of US 26 and could reduce demand for parking closer to the ski areas.

8. Improve visitor information

The forest should work with its partners, primarily ODOT, to improve visitor information to the forest from Portland, Bend, and other surrounding areas. Via an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)-based traveler information system, which can in part be based on the information in ODOT's TripCheck program, visitors from Portland should be informed in real time of which route to take to Government Camp (I-84 to OR 35 vs. US 26) and travelers from Bend should be informed of which route to take to Portland (US 197 to I-84, OR/US 20 and OR 22 to I-5, or US 26). This information would vary based on weather, crashes, congestion, and other conditions. Using roadside variable-message signs, or information provided via cell phones or the Internet, travelers can be informed as to which parking lots are full or available.

The forest and its partners should also improve signing and road markings so people know what route they are on, and can therefore better alter their route as needed. To increase capacity during peak times, a study should be commissioned to examine the feasibility and usefulness of installing an ITS-based variable-lane system, which would use over-road-mounted electronic signs, displaying Xs and Os, to allow a variable road configuration: two travel lanes down and one travel lane up, or two travel lanes up and one lane down, depending on peak demand.

9. Increase parking enforcement

Parking enforcement at ski areas and SnoParks should be increased to discourage parking in unofficial areas and to encourage the purchase of SnoPark permits. In line with this recommendation, the forest's law enforcement officers and/or Oregon State Police should increase their patrols.

10. Encourage freight traffic to avoid traveling on US 26 during peak travel times

Trucks moving slowly up or down the mountain can cause significant back-ups, and motorists who try to pass these trucks can crash head on with oncoming traffic. Additionally, the high speeds associated with US 26 being a primary route for freight and through traffic can create hazardous conditions for crossing pedestrians and vehicle traffic.

While US 26 is a designated freight route and is part of the National Highway System, the forest and its partners should use ITS to encourage freight traffic to avoid US 26 from Sandy to OR 35 during peak travel times. The ODOT statewide long-range and freight transportation plans need to clearly review what viable ITS options exist for this section of US 26 during peak times.

11. Improve the roadway design, intersections, and crossings along the US 26 corridor¹

The recreational and tourism values of the MHNf are Portland and state issues: they drive economic growth and jobs and they affect quality of life for all residents of the region. The roadway design along the US 26 corridor through the forest should reflect the scenic quality of the surroundings and should be context sensitive wherever possible.

¹ While this recommendation is similar to Recommendation 16, this recommendation specifies more immediate needs than the general needs described in Recommendation 16.

High speeds and freight traffic make US 26 a very dangerous road to cross, for motorists and pedestrians. The proximity of several destinations in the Government Camp area, including Ski Bowl and destinations in the village itself, cause pedestrians and motorists to want and need to cross the highway. The Timberline-Ski Bowl-Government Camp area should be considered and designated as a primary regional tourism destination. This designation would mean that the impact of the US 26 corridor through the area should be reduced and safety should be improved, primarily by reducing the emphasis on freight haul through the corridor and by focusing on traffic calming and community needs for area. Specifically, the intersection of US 26 and Government Camp Loop near Ski Bowl is at an obtuse angle that limits sight lines for merging and crossing traffic. The TAG team experienced first-hand the difficulty of crossing US 26 from Ski Bowl onto Government Camp Loop, and this was on a dry summer day. This and other intersections should be redesigned, especially if the speed and the volume of traffic along the corridor stays the same or increases.

Safety issues must be addressed around recreational and local residential uses in the corridor and should be given high priority statewide. If addressing these issues means more pedestrian crossings at Government Camp, special ITS permanent installations, or roadway design improvements, then ODOT should prioritize these types of projects in the corridor and in the STIP. If it is determined that there will be a growing need for US 26 to accommodate more traffic accessing the middle part of the state, then mitigation projects for this impact on the corridor should be identified.

12. Increase vehicle occupancy

The forest should work with its partners and permittees to encourage increased vehicle occupancy through preferred parking spaces at ski areas, employee carpooling incentives, and other incentives/disincentives for parking. The forest and its partners would have to identify regulatory constraints (e.g., federal regulations, management policies, permit/concession requirements) before pursuing these measures.

13. Improve inter-forest transit service to the Mt. Hood

The forest should work with its partners, especially the ski areas, to improve transit service to MHNF. The most viable way to provide transit service to the mountain is to provide charter bus service from Portland. While this service is already provided by some of the ski areas, it could be made more formalized – possibly with its own brand identity – and a single charter bus system could serve all of the ski areas on a regular basis. Outside of the ski season, charter service could be offered for sight-seeing trips to the mountain with stops at Timberline Lodge and other scenic viewpoints.

Paired with a transit service on the mountain (see the following recommendation), this service could pick up from the Portland International Airport, the Gresham Transit Center (TC), and a designated stop in Sandy, and would terminate in Government Camp.¹ With a stop in Sandy, it is estimated that it would take 60 minutes from Gresham TC to Government Camp. Adding the airport to Gresham TC would take an extra 20 minutes. Charter/shuttle

¹ While the Central Oregon Breeze makes this trip, its schedule does not make a day ski outing possible; in addition, the fares are much more expensive than typical “transit”—\$22 from Gresham/Sandy and \$31 from Portland.

systems like this exist and are successful in other areas in the country. For example, Colorado Mountain Express regularly takes visitors from Denver International Airport to several Colorado ski resorts throughout the winter.

For a service like this to be viable, it should be combined with both financial and non-financial incentives (e.g., bus riders would not have to pay parking fees on mountain, bus riders would be dropped off immediately at their destination instead of having to walk across a huge parking lot). Also, the advantages of such a service should be publicized (comfort, no driving in dangerous conditions, no hassling with trying to find a parking spot, etc.); tourism bureaus and Metro could be engaged to promote this service. To maximize these incentives/advantages, the ski areas may need to implement daily parking fees within their own facilities (which would likely be different from SnoPark permits) and, when/if constructed, the Government Camp parking hub (see below).

Such a service could link with an internal, on-mountain shuttle/aerial tram system to enable a completely carless trip from Portland. If a park-and-ride facility was constructed below the snowline (e.g., below Laurel Hill),¹ the service could also make a stop at a facility at this location. Similar to current arrangements with charter bus companies and the Fusion, the ski areas may be open to partially funding or subsidizing this kind of system, if it provides a service that would interest their customers.

14. Improve intra-forest transit service on the Mt. Hood

The forest should work with its partners, particularly the ski areas, to improve transit service on the mountain. A facility constructed at Government Camp could be used as a parking/transit hub. The location of this facility could be adjacent to or before Government Camp and could include a snow play area to remove some traffic during the winter. The draft Mt. Hood National Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan and Design Guidelines could be updated to describe interpretive and general transit service signage, traveler information, and visitor amenities that should be constructed and integrated into the facility and transit service.

During winter months, the parking/transit hub would be a focal point for an on-mountain shuttle transit system that serves each ski area. Skiers would take a charter bus or drive to the facility, unload their equipment, and board a shuttle to their ski area of choice. With the existence of this facility, the parking lot at Timberline Lodge could be reconfigured so as to be used only for people staying at the lodge. To function properly, the facility would need to include a parking lot/structure and a shelter/waiting area. A new/improved interchange or intersection with US 26 may need to be constructed to safely access the facility. Outside of the ski season, a shuttle service could pick people up at the parking/transit hub and drop them off and pick them up at trailheads, Timberline Lodge, and other locations throughout the forest, perhaps just on weekends.²

Similar to current arrangements with charter bus companies and the Fusion, the ski areas may be open for partially funding or subsidizing the operation of this kind of system, as it provides a service of interest to their customers. This arrangement could be discussed and articulated in a new MOU between the ski areas. Additionally, to partially fund the

¹ Major improvements, possibly an interchange, on US 26 would likely be needed to accommodate such a facility.

² A similar system operates in other areas, including in the White Mountain National Forest by the Appalachian Mountain Club.

construction of the facility and the operation of the shuttle system, there could be a parking fee to use the parking lot/structure.

Prior to the construction of a transit hub at Government Camp, an interim on-mountain transfer point could be located at Ski Bowl. Similar to how the Fusion runs between Ski Bowl and Timberline on holidays and weekends (a travel time of approximately 15 minutes), perhaps an additional shuttle could run between Ski Bowl and Mt. Hood Meadows (a travel time of approximately 20 minutes). If successful, service from Ski Bowl to Timberline and/or Mt. Hood Meadows could be expanded to other days of the week.

Recommendations – Long-Term (more than 10 years)

15. Construct an aerial tram system on-mountain

In line with the 2001 *Preliminary Feasibility Study and Fatal Flaw Analysis for an Overhead Transportation System Serving the Government Camp/Mt. Hood Area*, an aerial tram system – similar to gondolas seen at ski areas throughout the nation – could be constructed on-mountain. While Alignment Corridors B and C, as described in the 2001 study, seem viable, an updated analysis of the corridors should be performed when a potential funding source is identified, especially given the potential construction of a transit hub facility at Government Camp. This study should include the input of all relevant stakeholders, should examine the impacts of such a system on transportation in general, and should estimate construction, operating, and maintenance costs. Although the construction of this system would be completed in the long term, the planning, developing partnerships, and conducting a full NEPA alternatives analysis could be initiated much sooner. For example, planning for a gondola system would need to assess the parking needs for a gondola station in Government Camp and potential impacts of vehicles accessing the gondola station to US 26 and the Government Camp Loop.

There are several benefits of constructing a gondola: it could reduce parking demand on the mountain and at the ski areas, increase accessibility, improve economic growth, provide a base for transit, and would reduce congestion on Timberline Road. The greatest challenge to developing a gondola is cost. There would likely need to be a public-private partnership to develop this gondola with the forest and ski areas both involved to a degree; however, in addition to the environmental analysis that would be required, any public funds to be obtained would have to be justified in terms of the overall management objectives of MHN. The gondola would need to operate in four seasons to serve Timberline Lodge and other destinations during the summer and fall months. Due to its length and views, the gondola would likely become an attraction and destination for tourists.

16. Improve the functional safety of US 26¹

The forest should work with its partners, primarily ODOT and FHWA-Forest Highways, to improve the functional safety of US 26 and connecting roadways. The forest should work with ODOT for rural project funding and should advocate that ODOT reduce posted speeds in high activity areas in the forest and Government Camp. The safety of this corridor can be

¹ While this recommendation is similar to Recommendation 11, this recommendation specifies less immediate needs than those described in Recommendation 11.

improved by measures such as “T-ing” up intersections, adding acceleration and deceleration and turn lanes, adding additional SnoParks, creating roundabouts, and by improving safe pedestrian access through congested areas such as Government Camp.

17. Improve highway capacity

Implementation of the additional travel lanes on US 26 and consideration of major modernization improvements such as interchanges and roundabouts should be undertaken. It will be important to consider the forest environment and impacts to the scenic and environmental integrity of the area when designing highway improvements.

18. Reconcile and plan for parking in the long-term

The three major ski areas’ proposals for increased parking at their facilities on the mountain would be stop-gap measures. There should be a mountain-wide plan for parking upon which the forest and its partners agree. For example, there needs to be agreement on ski areas’ proposals for more parking consistent with USFS regulations, but considering key stakeholders’ input. To develop joint projects for parking and interpretation, plans for more parking can be coordinated with plans for interpretation as outlined in the draft Mt. Hood National Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan and Design Guidelines.

Parking policies can be crafted to affect visitors’ decisions to drive or take transit. A financial incentive or disincentive for parking on the mountain can particularly encourage people to take transit alternatives. To accomplish these changes, ODOT, working with the forest and its partners, may need to change the fee structure for SnoParks and the forest may need to change fees for other visitor sites in MHNF for all-season recreation. Where possible, ski areas could offer preferred parking closer to the slopes, or a smaller fee for people who carpool. Revenues from a revamped fee structure could be directed to fund transportation improvements on the mountain.

19. Develop a portal staging concept supported by mass transit

Once charter bus service to the mountain and shuttle or gondola service on the mountain is in place, the forest could work with its partners and other stakeholders, including all relevant transit agencies, to establish true mass transit service from Portland to MHNF (as opposed to the charter service described earlier, which is presumed to be too costly to appeal to a mass audience). This service could be established using a portal staging concept with Sandy and/or Hood River as a portal served by mass transit from Portland that would then be a launching off point for other transit to the Government Camp transit hub and elsewhere in the MHNF.

Summary

There are several recommendations that the forest and its partners should consider. In addition to the recommendations being categorized temporally (short-term, medium-term, and long-term), it may also be helpful to categorize the recommendations as affecting access to the forest, access through the forest, and access within the forest as well as in terms of whether they could be executed in the context of existing institutional structures and arrangements or whether new governance would be necessary. Table 3 lists each of the 19 recommendations categorized by each of these two additional variables.

Table 3: Recommendation Matrix

Recommendation	Forest access?	Institutional arrangements required?
<i>Short-Term</i>		
1. Develop problem statement and establish forest transportation goals	To, Through, and Within	Existing
2. Create an inventory of all relevant resources	To, Through, and Within	Existing
3. Encourage the Mt. Hood Intergovernmental Transportation Group	To, Through, and Within	New
4. Work with ski areas on new MOU	To, Through, and Within	Existing
5. Identify and use funding for planning	To, Through, and Within	Existing and New
<i>Medium-Term</i>		
6. Work with ODOT to install traffic counter(s) at Government Camp	To, Through, and Within	Existing
7. Develop west side snow play area	To and Within	Existing
8. Improve visitor information	To, Through, and Within	Existing
9. Increase parking enforcement	To, Through, and Within	Existing
10. Encourage freight traffic to avoid traveling on US 26 during peak travel times	Through and Within	Existing
11. Improve the roadway design, intersections, and crossings along the US 26 corridor	Through and Within	Existing
12. Increase vehicle occupancy	To	Existing
13. Improve inter-forest transit service to the Mt. Hood	To	Existing and New
14. Improve intra-forest transit service on the Mt. Hood	Within	Existing and New
<i>Long-Term</i>		
15. Construct an aerial tram system on-mountain	Within	New
16. Improve the functional safety of US 26	To, Through, and Within	Existing
17. Improve highway capacity	To, Through, and Within	Existing
18. Reconcile and plan for parking in the long-term	To, Through, and Within	Existing and New
19. Develop a portal staging concept supported by mass transit	To, Through, and Within	Existing and New

TAG PARTICIPANTS

Transportation Assistance Group (TAG)

- Christy Darden, Deputy Director of Engineering, U.S. Forest Service, Regions 6 and 10
- George Fekaris, Transportation Planner, Western Federal Lands, Federal Highway Administration
- Peter Field, Transportation Planner, Western Federal Lands, Federal Highway Administration
- Greg Humphreys, Environmental Protection Specialist, Western Federal Lands, Federal Highway Administration
- Bill Ramos, Community Planner, Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
- Terry Slider, Regional Landscape Architect, U.S. Forest Service, Regions 6 and 10
- Floyd Thompson, National Tourism and Byways Program Leader, U.S. Forest Service
- Alan Yamada, Engineering Program Leader, San Dimas Technology and Development Center, U.S. Forest Service
- Eric Plosky, Community Planner/Program Coordinator, U.S. Department of Transportation, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
- Ben Rasmussen, Community Planner, U.S. Department of Transportation, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

U.S. Forest Service/Mt. Hood National Forest

- Christine Arredondo, Public Affairs Officer
- Daina Baimbi, Ranger, Hood River Ranger District
- Gary Larsen, Supervisor
- Sandra Musser-Wilson, Engineer, U.S. Forest Service, Regions 6 and 10
- Tom Torres, Forest Engineer
- Kathleen Walker, Recreation Staff, Zigzag Ranger District

Oregon Department of Transportation

- Sonya Kazen, Senior Planner, Oregon Department of Transportation, Region 1
- James McNamee, Government Camp and Parkdale Maintenance Manager, Oregon Department of Transportation, District 2C
- Kristen Stallman, Senior Planner, Gorge Coordinator, Oregon Department of Transportation, Region 1

Stakeholders/Meeting Participants

- Teresa Christopherson, Administration Services Manager, Clackamas County Social Services
- Matthew Drake, Chairman and CEO, Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort
- Josette Griffiths, Senior Planning, Hood River County
- Brian Keicher, Project Manager, Construction and Development
- Jeff Kohnstamm, President, Timberline Lodge
- Joyce Ledoux, Mt. Hood Villages
- Greg Leo, The Leo Company, Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort
- Kevin Liburdy, Senior Planner, City of Hood River

- Tim Morgan, Tourism Development Manager, Clackamas County Economic Development Office
- Scott Pemble, Planning Manager, Clackamas County
- Dave Queener, Project Manager, Government Camp URA, Clackamas County Development Agency
- Bob Reeves, Board of Directors, Villages at Mt. Hood
- Jerry Schmidt, Chair, Government Camp TIF Committee
- Dan Schwanz, Executive Director, Hood River County Transit, Columbia Area Transit
- Julie Stephens, Transit Manager, City of Sandy, SAM Transit
- Jon Tullis, Director of Public Affairs, Timberline Lodge
- Hans Wipper, Operations Manager, Mt. Hood Ski Bowl



Appendix A: Mt. Hood National Forest Recreation Pass Sites



Required May 15th to October 1st (Snow dependent and except as noted *)

The following sites require each vehicle to display a recreation pass. Either of the following types of recreation passes is honored at these sites: Annual Northwest Forest Pass, National Forest Recreation Day Pass, Interagency Annual Pass, Interagency Senior Pass, Interagency Access Pass, Interagency Volunteer Pass, Washington and Oregon Recreation Pass, Golden Age, and Golden Access.

Site Name	Type of Facility	Site Name	Type of Facility
Badger Creek.....	Trailhead	Hidden Lake.....	Trailhead
Bagby Hot Springs * Year-round..	Trailhead	High Prairie.....	Trailhead
Barlow Pass Snopark.....	Trailhead	Knebal Springs.....	Trailhead
(Access to PCT/Twin Lakes and Grave Trail)		Little Zigzag Falls.....	Trailhead
Billy Bob Sno-park * Year round...	Trailhead	McCubbins Day Use OHV.....	Trailhead
Cast Creek (Riley Campground).....	Trailhead	Mirror Lake.....	Trailhead
(Access to Sandy R. Tr., Horseshoe Ridge Tr. and Cast Creek Tr.)		Pacific Crest Trail on Road 42.....	Trailhead
		(near Joe Graham Horse Camp access to Old 1916, Headwaters & Miller Trails and PCT.	
Clackamas River * (Indian Henry)	Trailhead	Old Salmon River	Trailhead
Year round.....			
Clackamas River * (Fish Creek)	Trailhead	Paradise Park.....	Trailhead
(And river put-in) Year round		Pioneer Bridle at Tollgate.....	Trailhead
Cloud Cap.....	Trailhead	Polallie.....	Trailhead
Dog River West (Dog River)	Trailhead	Ramona Falls.....	Trailhead
East Fork Tamanawas Falls.....	Trailhead	Salmon Butte.....	Trailhead
East Fork.....	Trailhead	Salmon River West.....	Trailhead
Eight Mile.....	Trailhead	Surveyors Ridge South.....	Trailhead
Frenches Dome.....	Trailhead	Tilly Jane.....	Trailhead
Frog Lake Sno-park PCT).....	Trailhead	Top Spur.....	Trailhead
(Access to Frog Lake, PCT and Twin Lakes)		Umbrella Falls/Sahalie	Trailhead
Glacier View Sno-park.....	Trailhead	Whatum Lake	Trailhead
(Access to Crosstown & Pioneer Bridle Trails)			

The following are concession operated day use sites. Only the Annual Northwest Forest Pass and National Forest Recreation Day Pass are honored at the following sites. All other Recreation Passes mentioned above are not honored at the following sites.

The Day use fee is \$6.00 per vehicle per day.

- ◆ Carter Bridge
- ◆ Frog Lake
- ◆ Gone Creek (Timothy Lake)
- ◆ Hoodview (Timothy Lake)
- ◆ Oak Fork (Timothy Lake)
- ◆ Pegleg Falls
- ◆ PGE- West Dam (Timothy Lake)
- ◆ Pine Point Campground/Day Use (Timothy Lake)
- ◆ Rock Creek
- ◆ Trillium Lake
- ◆ Two Rivers
- ◆ Lake Harriet

**Fee
Stations
at each
of these
sites**

None of the recreation passes are honored at Olallie Lake or Lost Lake. However, a \$3.00 discount is offered to bearers of the Golden Age, Interagency Senior Pass, or the Interagency Access Pass. Buses and large vans pay additional fees.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES

File Name	Type (Pages)	Short Description
Aerial Tram County Dev Agency Fatal Flaw 2001 – Final	Word (22)	“Preliminary Feasibility Study and Fatal Flaw Analysis for an Overhead Transportation System Serving the Government Camp/Mt. Hood Area” from September 2001 for Clackamas County Development Agency
Agency_StakeholderInvolvement	Excel (2)	List of stakeholders who have been/could be involved
FS-R6-OR-Mt. Hood transitPlanning	Word (10)	ATPPL FY 2006 application for a planning project – “Highway 26 Alternative Transportation Opportunities”
I-84 Columbia River Gorge Bridges 0609	PDF (2)	Newsletter on updates on the status of ODOT projects in the Columbia River Gorge from June 2009
LaurelHillP&R3_31_08	Word (3)	An ODOT letter regarding Mt. Hood Meadows proposed Mt. Hood Laurel Hill Park and Ride Laurel Hill Pit (former quarry) site from March 2008
MHMTP_FINAL_WORKPROGRAM_3_27_09	Word (40)	SOW for the Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan (MHMTP) from March 2009
MHMTP_Presentation_4_21_09	PDF (9)	Slides from a presentation on the MHMTP, given by Sonya Kazen (ODOT) in April 2009
MHMTPDocInventory7_7_08	Excel (3)	Inventory of MHMTP background documents (as of June 2008)
MHMTPInterview Summary11_04_08	Word (8)	MHMTP summary of stakeholder interviews from November 2008
MHMTPSummary5_2009 (with tracked changes)	Word (2)	Letter about the MHMTP from ODOT from May 2009
MtHoodTransitFeasStudy1999 (odd pages only)	PDF (54)	Mount Hood Transit Feasibility Study for ODOT performed in June 1999 by David Evans and Associates, Inc., and Nelson/Nygaard Consulting
Transit Feas Study 1999 (has all the pages of the body of the report, but not the cover page or appendices)	Word (85)	
ODOT Response to Ski Operators Proposal4_7_06 (with tracked changes)	Word (4)	ODOT response in April 2006 to ski areas’ MOU and presentation on a vision for transportation improvements to serve Government Camp and the three major ski operations located within the Mt. Hood National Forest
pnw_gtr778	PDF (114)	USDA/USFS General Technical Report titled “Outdoor Recreation in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska: Trends in Activity Participation” from April 2008.
Ski Operator MOU2006	TIF (9)	Memorandum of Understanding between H Ski Corp.; Mt. Hood Meadows Oreg., Limited Partnership; R.L.K. and Company from January 2006
USFS Field Report_Mt Hood	PDF (15)	Field report on Mt. Hood National Forest provided by FHWA and FTA in the early 2000s

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NOTICE

This Transportation Assistance Group (TAG) was convened at the request of the U.S. Forest Service. The TAG is an agency-independent effort that is intended to provide technical assistance in support of federal lands transportation and federal lands transportation programs, and does not imply, preference, or guarantee programmatic funding or project support, or further assistance of any kind. This document is disseminated in the interest of information exchange. The recommendations found herein reflect the collective expertise and consensus of the individual TAG members, do not represent regulatory or programmatic requirements, and do not in any way reflect the official opinion of any federal agency. The United States Government assumes no liability for the contents of this document or use thereof.
