



McKenzie Rebuilds Meeting Summary

May 26th, 2022 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

McKenzie Rebuilds Project Purpose: *To help communities of the McKenzie River Valley that suffered devastating impacts from the Holiday Farm Fire to bring back residents, students, and businesses as quickly as possible while meeting community priorities for restoring an environmentally sound, equitable, and climate-smart built environment.*

Members in-person: Co-convenor Commissioner Heather Buch, Co-convenor Mandy Jones, Lane Tompkins, Devin Thompson, Matt McRae, Cliff Richardson, Melissa Murphy.

Members in zoom: Alexis Amavisca-Nieve, Amber Bell, Jody Christensen, Karmen Fore, Linsey Eichner, Merrick Firestone, Heidi Khokhar, Patrick Wingard, Karl Morgenstern, Wendy Willis, William Gray, Mary Camarata.

Oregon Solutions Staff: Kristen Wright, Margaret Van Vliet

Documents/presentations reviewed: McKenzie Project Overview Timeline (Attachment A)

Understanding Project Timelines and Key Decisions Points

- Oregon Solutions presented the McKenzie Project Overview timeline which included major projects in the areas of land use, wastewater, and housing. The timeline helps participants to have a sense of how projects are likely to move through time, how they relate to one another, and when there are key moments for community input and key decision points.
- Patrick Wingard (DLCD) talked about the Transportation Growth Management Program (TGM), which is a shared program between the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). The TGM's purpose is to update the zoning and development standards for the Blue River rural community to align with the Oregon Administrative Rules 660 Division 22 which is the Oregon unincorporated community rule. The second primary outcome of the TGM will be to update the rural community boundary, especially for the community park along the Blue River, which has been identified as a potential opportunity site for the treatment of effluent wastewater facilities, but it's currently outside the community boundary. It is expected that the 9-12 months out before the TGM process is completed, which gives time for subcommittees to work on different projects and be well informed to influence the TGM process.
- Mary Camerata (DEQ) provided an outline of the potential wastewater projects, highlighting areas such as soil and ground water evaluation, Lane County identifying a suite of options with their associated costs and permitting needs, developing a design and completing a public engagement process, permitting, securing funds, and construction. Mary shared that the processes are similar for a simple or complex system but that a complex system just takes longer to complete.

- Discussion:
 - Question was raised about how to know the housing density ahead of the 9-12 months TGM process as rebuilding needs to keep moving. DLCD has a good idea of what will happen in Blue River regarding a range of density. Patrick Wingard developed a future buildout scenario, which has not been shared yet because it is only for internal use. However, he will be willing to share it if the project team considers it necessary.
 - There is a concern about if the Blue River sanitation project can start before the TGM is ready and there is more information about what the zoning is going to allow. Can projects be done in parallel? Prior to the fire a feasibility study had already been done. It was mentioned that the current feasibility study could use some of the data from that.
 - A question was raised about the overlap of projects with CDBG-DR funding. OHCS is publishing its action plan in the next two weeks. There is a desire to ensure there is flexibility in the funding uses. Funding will not hit the ground likely until next summer at the earliest. It is very common for the State to take multiple years to distribute those funds or adjust every year or two how they're going to spend the dollars. Lane County has provided feedback to OHCS directly for infrastructure to be bumped up from 10% to 30% at least, so that amount is allowable to use for infrastructure. OHCS has 6 years to expend funds. Not clear how much Lane County will receive for help with Three Sisters Meadow. Homes For Good will provide comment in support.
 - It was noted that it would be hard for the water and sewer district to complete a loan without sewer rates, so would be best to focus on grants so can start the funding process sooner.
 - Question was raised about whether Three Sisters Meadow was part of the Oregon Solutions process. This is a possibility, but there may be enough existing community processes to support it.
 - A question was raised about whether the project team be looking at getting funds earlier in the process.
 - Timeline feedback:
 - Wastewater: Need to add in when is the decision point when decide between simple or complex community system.
 - Wastewater: "Additional funding" item we need to move up earlier in the process
 - Wastewater: Need to add where is the decision around housing and range of flows.

Project Team Q&A and Feedback to Subcommittees

Housing Subcommittee

- Patrick Wingard's early draft of a future buildout scenario is a good start for subcommittee planning and conversations.
- Consolidated survey of downtown Blue River needed. Trying to figure out how to ensure it is consistent if there are 2 survey companies engaged. Trying to figure out how to reimburse people who have already done surveying. County reiterated that property owners should not wait to complete surveys.

Economy Subcommittee

- Where is funding beyond CDBG-DR (OHCS is saying they don't really have funding to address businesses with rebuilding funding gaps)? Funding needs to be part of the agenda for the subcommittee since there are no funds available to help essential businesses and costs to rebuild exceed insurance reimbursements. It is suggested to make an argument to the State or the Federal Government for more funding to help business owners who have been affected.
- Businesses are not able to be re-insured, and the insurance is not covering replacement due to supply chain issues, inflation, etc. It is necessary to identify where those individuals are facing these insurance and funding gap issues.
- Regarding CDBG-DR, OHCS said money would only be for essential businesses but It is important to define what is essential business, and what the community considers essential.

Communications

- It was raised that there is a need to advocate for the special committee on wildfire recovery to continue to support all the work that is needed. The group reached consensus in support of developing a letter or communication that advocates for the continuity of committee.

Public Comment and Next Steps

- Judy Casad, a board member of the Chamber of Commerce, provided comments:
 - All have been impacted by the fire, it is important to expand beyond just Blue River.
 - The Chamber is just now rebooting. Working with new owner of Leaburg Store and ways to communicate out. Willing to help with the work of the communications and engagement group.

Action Steps:

- Subcommittees will incorporate feedback from project team.
- Oregon Solutions will incorporate feedback and make adjustments to project timeline document.
- Oregon Solutions will escalate with the necessary state entities in order to advocate for the insurance issues at McKenzie.
- Develop a letter or communication that advocates for the continuity of the special committee on Wildfire recovery in this next session.
- Patrick with DLCDC will share document on build out scenario with project team.

Next meeting: July 14th, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm