



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Weekly Report

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Below are some highlights from the Governor's [Regional Solutions \(RS\) Coordinators](#), on behalf of the eleven interagency teams across Oregon.

Regional Solutions (RS) Director – Leah Horner

North Coast Region – Jennifer Purcell

- **North Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee meeting – Background** – The role of Regional Solutions Advisory Committees (RSACs) is to identify and affirm regional community and economic development priorities, assist Regional Solutions Coordinators and Teams with connecting to local resources, and advise the Governor's Office and state agencies on community and economic development issues and opportunities in the region. As we look to recovery, RSACs will play an important role in advising the Governor's Office and state agencies on the economic response and recovery needs in the region, identifying critical business sectors and their response and recovery needs, connecting technical and financial assistance resources to support response and recovery efforts, considering policy and budget priorities to eliminate opportunity gaps for historically underserved populations, and providing a forum for public, private, and civic sector stakeholders to discuss, understand, and leverage resources to ensure equity is at the center of the region's response and recovery.
 - **Update** – The North Coast Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RSAC), convened by Senator Betsy Johnson, met this week for the first time in over a year. A refreshed RSAC membership includes representatives from cities, counties, private sector business, community-based organizations, education, and manufacturing research and development in Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook counties, bringing together a diversity of perspectives regarding community and economic development priorities. New members learned about the Regional Solutions Program and RS Team members shared RS project successes and milestones. Economic development partners from Clatsop Economic Development Resources, Columbia County Economic Team, Tillamook County Economic Development Council, and Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District joined a roundtable discussion identifying the greatest obstacles and opportunities for community and economic recovery. The conversation also included a review of the Governor's 10-Point Economic Recovery Plan and consideration of regional project and programmatic investment priorities.
- **NW Oregon Outdoor Recreation Coordination – Background** – Regional Solutions and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) convened regional outdoor recreation partners early in the pandemic to coordinate closure plans, reopening strategies, messaging, and readiness concerns. Cities, counties, ports, state and federal landowner partners, and destination

management organizations in Tillamook, Clatsop, Columbia, and Lincoln counties continue to meet monthly.

- Update – Committee members met this week, continuing planning and coordination for the 2021 season. Recreation partners shared plans for opening camping facilities and considerations regarding gathering and event spaces and seasonal event permitting.
 - OPRD indicated that special events and group facilities would likely begin to come back online in May/June, along with additional cabins. While OPRD is not currently issuing special events permits, the Department is in the process of finalizing criteria by which special event applications will be evaluated. More information is expected in the coming weeks.
 - Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) indicated they are moving forward with fully opening campgrounds, pending final hiring and contracting. ODF is issuing special-use permits for events, following COVID protocols.
 - Federal facilities, including those managed by US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), are operating normally for day use sites and camp areas, while visitors centers generally remain closed.
 - County partners indicate day use areas and boat launches are busy, with high demand for picnic and shelter areas being limited by social gathering restrictions.
 - Port partners report RV parks and marinas are extremely busy, in some cases already sold out for the summer season and nearing capacity for spring.
 - Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA) shared that a number of tools are being developed to assist with destination management this season. OCVA is working on a google map of public restroom facilities along the coast. Additionally, OCVA and Travel Oregon are planning geo-fencing campaigns in high-use areas, pushing stewardship messaging via social media.

Firework displays and other summer events are top of mind, with communities weighing options and guidance. Outdoor recreation and community partners are particularly concerned about balancing the COVID requirements with concerns about the fire danger associated with unpermitted fireworks activities. Shared concerns as we head into the 2021 summer season continue to include hiring and finding seasonal volunteers to ensure service levels and facilities maintenance. The group shared some creative solutions regarding hiring young people, youth outreach, and connecting with local workforce investment boards.

Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- **Marion County Public Health and POC Leaders Meeting** – In partnership Marion County Commissioner Kevin Cameron, RS convenes the bi-weekly meeting. This week, the group discussed how to message the Johnson & Johnson vaccine pause. In addition, April Cox, Director of Reentry Services with De Muniz Resource Center, discussed a new bilingual housing navigator recruitment and partnership opportunities for community-based organizations.
- **Santiam Canyon Wildfire Recovery** – RS convenes bi-weekly partner meetings to give status updates from the RST, FEMA, and Federal partners. This week, the American Planning Association (APA) team and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments talked about the scope of work for the upcoming Santiam Canyon project. The APA team will be collecting and reviewing planning related documents to assess possible projects and gaps. The resulting work will be used in the future undertakings such as community visioning.

- **Mid-Valley Regional Project List** – The Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG), the region’s COG and Economic Development District (EDD), and Regional Solutions Team (RST) staff completed a project solicitation request in mid-summer 2020. The purpose was twofold:
 - 1) to generate a list of projects that might be eligible for Economic Development Administration (EDA) CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT funding, and
 - 2) to engage/continue to work with the Regional Solutions Team (RST) to identify potential funding and technical resources to move projects forward.

We received 61 project responses including road improvements, expansion of broadband servicing, childcare needs, workforce housing initiatives, and planning work/feasibility studies to support community and economic development. The submissions were not full project proposals, but rather an overview of the projects. As the projects move forward, more details and federal/state program requirements will be needed. It is important to note that several of the submitted projects were already on the RST’s radar, but sponsors wanted to be reviewed by the EDA. The list has a few additional projects as of 4/15/2021 with 71 total projects in various stages of development.

To date, the following actions have been taken:

- August 2020 – All the submissions were reviewed by the RST. The team provided updates and program identification. Again, many submissions were existing projects.
- July 2020 - MWVCOG began the review process with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for possible alignment with CARES ACT funding. The EDA representative gave a high-level review of all 61 projects. Three projects have been moved forward and encouraged to submit applications. MWVCOG is assisting in the process.
- March/April 2021 - the project sponsors have given updates on the status and funding requests.
- April 2021 - the RST has again reviewed the entire list for updates, additional resource identification, alignment with the Governor’s 10-Point Recovery Plan, and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Thank you to Marion County Economic Development Coordinator Jason Schneider for providing and managing the application platform. In addition, thank you to the Mid-Valley RST for their review time and expertise - Renata Wakeley, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments; Jae Pudewell, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT); Mary Camarata, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Dennie Houle, Melissa Murphy, Arthur Chaput, and Michelle Bilberry, Business Oregon; Chris Castelli and Kirk Jarvie, Department of State Lands (DSL); Kiel Jenkins, Sarah Marvin, and Patrick Wingard, Department of Land and Conservation Development (DLCD); Kim Travis, Oregon Housing and Community Services; Pat O’Connor, Oregon Employment Department (OED); Ryan Sparks, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department; Brian Wolfer and Jennifer Ringo, Oregon Fish & Wildlife.

[South Valley/Mid Coast Region](#) – Sarah Means

SVMC Economic Recovery Team: The SVMC ERT meets monthly to discuss topics related to both COVID-19 and the wildfire impacts and opportunities for economic recovery within the region. During the weeks that this group doesn’t meet, RS engages with local partners to stay up-to-date on needs and issues. A few topics to highlight from this week:

- Lane County continues to work with partners on the FEMA Housing Mission. There have been a few delays related to needed permits. RS continues to monitor and add assistance as appropriate.
- A number of local partners have expressed concern about workforce challenges, particularly in the service sector and in coastal communities. Businesses in these communities aren't able to fill positions needed to operate. Connections have been made with the local WIB to see if there might be some creative solutions (one that has been discussed has been a workforce shuttle). This is becoming an urgent concern given the projection of a busy spring/summer season in high traffic tourism/recreation areas of the region.
- RS has been working with regional leaders to identify appropriate priority projects related to ARPA. RS met with multiple mayors/city staff and county commissioners that participate on the RSAC to confirm economic recovery priorities as they relate to Governor Brown's 10-Point Recovery Plan and to help inform identification of priority projects.

Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- No report this week.

Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Westside Economic Alliance (WEA) Economic Development Forum**: RS served as a panelist alongside John Tapogna, President of ECONorthwest and John Southgate, Real Estate Development Consultant during WEA's Economic Development Forum. The focus of the panel discussion was on economic recovery. I provided an overview of the Governor's 10-Point Economic Recovery Plan and Guiding Principles for Investment of the state's share of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars. There were 140+ attendees including economic development practitioners, academics and leaders from the business, real estate, workforce development industries, etc. who work in the Westside of the Portland-metro region.
- **National Policy Consensus Center / Portland State University Panel**: RS participated on a panel discussion for an undergraduate/graduate course entitled "Collaborating Across the Urban-Rural Divide" alongside my counterpart Courtney Crowell, Regional Solutions Coordinator for Greater Eastern Oregon to discuss the challenges and opportunities in urban and rural Oregon related to the pandemic and economic recovery. We were also joined by Duncan Hwang, Deputy Director of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) and Harney County Commissioner Kristen Shelman.
- **League of Oregon Cities (LOC) President's Roundtables for the Metro Region**: Provided an overview of the Governor's 10-Point Economic Plan and Guiding Principles/Investment Criteria for the state's share of ARPA dollars to two LOC President's Roundtables for the Metro Region. Local leadership asked questions about the process for allocating resources, U.S. Treasury Guidelines, etc.

North Central Region – Nate Stice

- **Bi-State Recreational Insights**: Working with Regional Solutions, Lynn Burditt continues to convene land managers, local leadership, state and federal agencies, and recreational partners to help coordinate and share best practices during COVID. All land manager report very high usage and expect even higher usage in the coming months. Working with the Gorge Tourism Alliance and other destination management organization, the group has produced shared messaging. I continue to be thankful for the leadership of Lynn, Emily Reed, and Lizzie Keenan.

- **Electric Tractors:** Members of the team have met a few times with representatives from Forth Mobility, Sustainable Northwest, and Wy'East RC&D to discuss their collaborative efforts around electric tractors. Wy'East delivers education, outreach and on-the-ground technical assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to accelerate the demand for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Based in Dufur, Wy'East is serving as the first testing point for these tractors before they are sent out further to farms throughout the state for further testing. The team is working with these partners to help build further relationships, and think about how we further leverage this local activity around agriculture and technology.

Central & South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- No report this week.

Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- No report this week.