



ENVISION
Bear Creek

Envision Bear Creek Community Engagement Plan

July 2022



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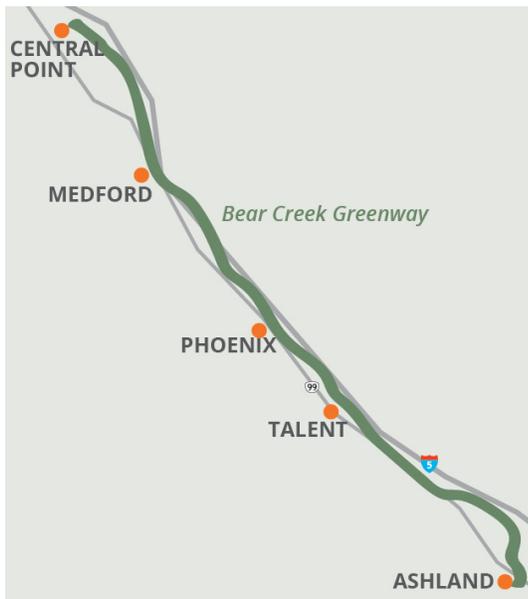
Contents

Introduction	1
Project Area	1
Community Engagement Overview	1
Community Engagement Process Goals	1
Decision-Making.....	1
Project Advisors.....	2
Public Engagement Key Activities	3
Project Timeline	4
Phase 1: Invite to Envision (February -June)	
Phase 2: Bear Creek Envisioned (July – December)	
Engagement Evaluation.....	5
EBC Communication Tools.....	6
Media	7
Audiences and Stakeholders.....	7
Public Engagement Documentation	8
Appendix.....	8

Introduction

The Envision Bear Creek (EBC) public engagement plan outlines the approach for the revisioning process of the Bear Creek Greenway. It reviews the strategies, methods, partnerships, and timing for gathering input from the community and partner jurisdictions to shape this multi-jurisdictional regional resource's future governance and funding structure.

After the devastating Almeda and Central Point fires affecting over half the Bear Creek Greenway, the EBC project provides the community a timely process to help shape its future for recreation and economic development opportunities, natural resources enhancement, transportation connectivity while also informing its maintenance, security, funding, and overall governance.



Project Area

The Bear Creek Greenway is a 20-mile, paved, multi-use trail that links the cities of Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford, and Central Point. The Greenway is continuous from the Ashland Dog Park to the Dean Creek Frontage Road near Seven Oaks Interchange on I-5, north of Central Point. The Greenway provides a separated route from cars, with only two at-grade road crossings. The trail parallels I-5, Highway 99, and Bear Creek. It provides Rogue Valley residents and visitors to the area a close-in spot for bird watching and wildlife viewing, as well as exercise and general recreation.

The Greenway is a consortium of public lands adjacent to Bear Creek that generally follows Interstate 5 and Highway 99, serving recreation and transportation needs. The Greenway consists of lands owned and operated by the cities of Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford, and Central Point, along with Jackson County and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

Community Engagement Overview

Outlined below is the 10-month Envision Bear Creek public engagement approach, with the methods to identify and engage the project area's full spectrum of stakeholders, the timing and frequency of public information, and input and review opportunities.

Community Engagement Process Goals

The Envision Bear Creek Engagement Team ("EBC Engage") commits to a process that is:

- **Realistic:** Be clear about the project constraints, objectives, and parameters
- **Accountable:** Respond to public feedback promptly
- **Inclusive:** Reach out to project-area stakeholders, including those who don't use computers or face other participation barriers
- **Meaningful:** Ensure that the public's input will be considered by decision-makers
- **Transparent:** Make the decision-making process easily understandable and accessible with essential project materials available on the project website
- **Timely:** Provide early on accurate, easily accessible, and widely available project information for the public to provide well-informed feedback

Decision-Making

Through a collaborative process, representatives of the six Bear Creek Greenway jurisdictions Bear Creek Greenway will provide a recommendation to their respective elected bodies on plan adoption.

Jackson County Board of Commissioners and the city councils of Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford, and Central Point have the final decision-making authority for plan adoption.

Project Advisors

Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Bear Creek Greenway has a long-standing history of regional community engagement dedicated to its creation and sustained value as a regional resource. The committee's composition includes representatives from all jurisdictions reflecting all trail users' perspectives, including Southern Oregon University, Gordon Elwood Foundation, Bear Creek Greenway Foundation, Jackson County Parks and Recreation, bicycle shops (Piccadilly Bicycles, Cycle Sport), Siskiyou Velo, Rogue Valley Council of Governments Senior and Disability Services Program, Rogue Valley Audubon Society, Phoenix-Talent Schools, Mountain View Estates, Jackson County Bicycle Committee, residents, and trail users (cyclists, runners). Meeting three times throughout the project, the CAC will provide an initial review on materials for public engagement, advise on public engagement strategies, offer input on key project deliverables, and assist with communication outreach.

Meeting 1: Introduce project with an on-site, in-person workshop, including a community-led tour of the corridor to identify issues and opportunities; provide insights into communication messaging, and review Community Survey #1 and related engagement strategies.

Meeting 2*: Review governance structure and funding options; provide feedback on the project list, review evaluation of public engagement to date, and offer guidance on its second phase.

Meeting 3*: Review of draft final EBC Plan.

Meetings 2 & 3 will be virtual.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Comprised of representatives from natural resources, law enforcement/safety, fire/fuel, economic development, transportation, and general recreation, the TAC will meet up to three times to provide their review and expertise on project deliverables. Timed to review input from the CAC and before the Steering Committee meetings, the TAC's meeting topics include:

Meeting 1: Review existing conditions analysis and provide feedback on the issues and opportunities based on TAC's technical expertise and experience.

Meeting 2: Review governance structure and funding options; provide feedback on the project list, review evaluation of public engagement to date, and offer guidance on its second phase.

Meeting 3: Review of draft final EBC Plan.

All TAC meetings are virtual.

Steering Committee

Guiding the project is the Steering Committee, comprised of staff and elected officials from each jurisdiction along the Bear Creek Greenway, the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). It will meet five times timed after the CAC and TAC meetings to review key project deliverables and provide direct input into developing the final plan. The Steering Committee serves as the project's key communication conduits to their jurisdictional networks using provided project materials (e-updates, fact sheet, bookmark, social media messaging, etc.).

Meeting 1: Project Kickoff

Meeting 2: Existing Conditions

Meeting 3: Review of Phase 1 Public Engagement

Meeting 4: Capital Improvement Project List, Governance Structure Recommendations, and Funding Options

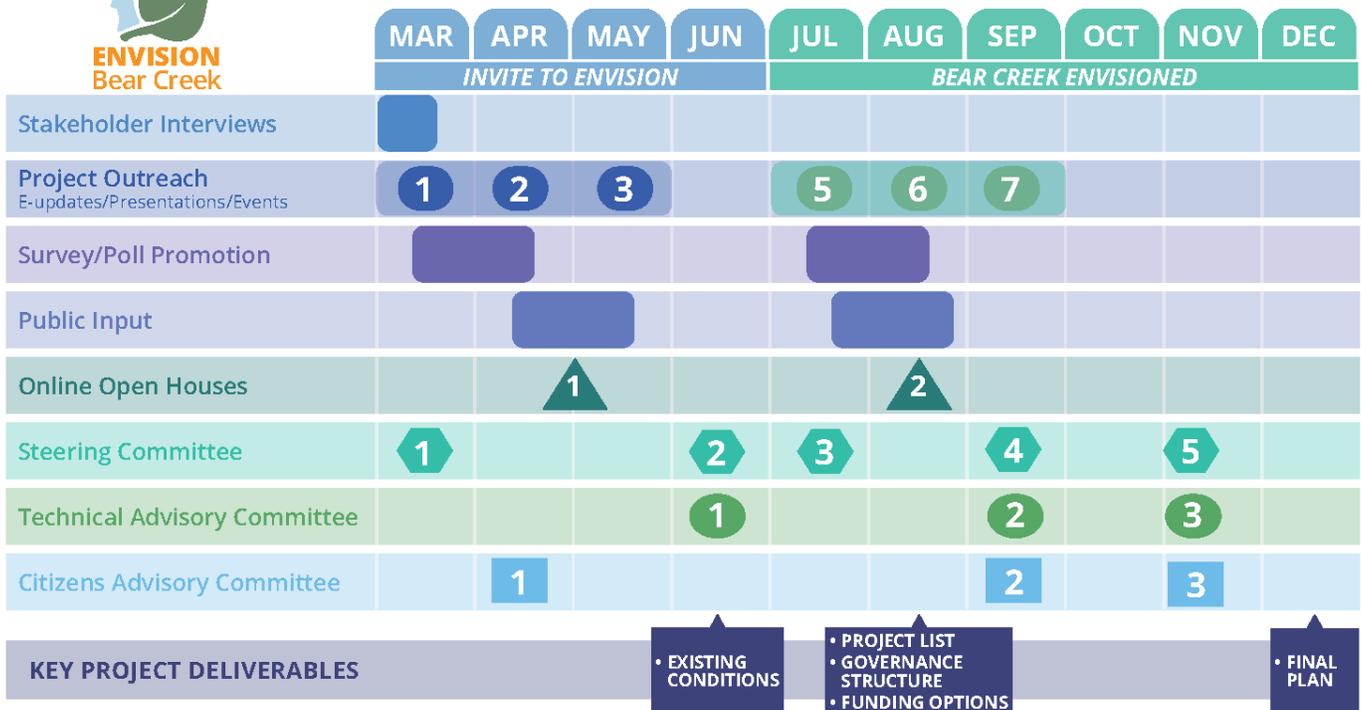
Meeting 5: Final Plan

All Steering Committee meetings are virtual.

Public Engagement Key Activities

Between March - December 2022, the project team will use the following primary activities and strategies to reach and involve EBC stakeholders. The below schedule, subject to minor schedule changes, outlines the key engagement methods, their timing, the relationship to EBC planning deliverables, and the advisory committees' input for informed decision making by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners.

Project Timeline



Phase 1: Invite to Envision (February -June)

Stakeholder Input

EBC Engage will review the draft Community Engagement Plan with up to five key stakeholders to ensure the proposed engagement strategies reach their intended audiences and to check mid-way through the process for new opportunities. These discussions will affirm the approach, adapt where needed, and identify opportunities to leverage outreach activities (e.g., events, community meetings, etc.).

Proposed interviews to explore both broad and targeted engagement opportunities:

- Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD)
- Firebrand Collective
- Phoenix-Talent School District
- Southern Oregon University
- Medford Police Department Cultural Liaison

Presentations

EBC Engage will coordinate for the Project Management or Steering Committee members a series of project presentations to corridor community and business groups. The purpose of presentations is to establish collaborative relationships, introduce the project, provide informational materials, explore communication opportunities, and seek input on project deliverables.

Suggested presentations include, but are not limited to:

- Southern Oregon Regional Health Equity Coalition, Housing and Transit Coalition
- Latino/a/x Interagency Networking Committee (LINC)
- Chambers of Commerce in Medford and Jackson County

Events

Coordinating with key regional partners (Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD), Southern Oregon University (SOU), Rogue Community College (RCC), Firebrand Collective, Medford Parks and Recreation, Jackson County Continuum of Care-Homeless Task Force, Jackson County Multi-Agency Resource Centers, etc.), EBC Engage will provide and request distribution of EBC communication materials. Identification of additional opportunities will occur as part of preliminary stakeholder discussions.

Survey/Polls

Community Survey #1:

The first survey serves to introduce the project and advertisement for Open House #1. Broadly advertised, the survey will gather public input on the Greenway's current use, future use, and long-term vision. The survey timing will span a few weeks before Open House #1 and two weeks beyond to allow for community members to notify others to respond. In addition, the survey will include an interactive map to identify specific trail elements that currently work well or require improvement to inform the Existing Conditions analysis and the preliminary capital improvement list.

Open House #1: Invite to Envision Bear Creek

This online community meeting's purpose is to provide the public with the EBC project overview, planning context, ways to stay involved, points of community influence, preliminary issues and opportunities for discussion, and the Community Survey #1 promotion. The presentation will be available in Spanish with live interpretation provided at one of the sessions. In addition, the recorded presentation will be available for jurisdictions to post on their websites, with a Spanish voice-over version included.

Phase 2: Bear Creek Envisioned (July – December)

Survey/Polls

Community Survey # 2:

The second survey is a community barometer reading on the proposed management structure, potential funding mechanisms, maintenance policies, and corridor safety plan. The survey will be an interactive map to gather input on proposed capital improvements on the Bear Creek Greenway. The survey timing will span a few weeks before Open House #2 and two weeks beyond to allow for community members to notify others to respond.

Open House #2: Bear Creek Greenway Envisioned

Based on Open House #1 feedback, the TAC, CAC, and Steering Committees' input, Existing Conditions Review and Analysis, Open House #2 will provide for public input the draft elements of Greenway Management Plan priorities, including proposed governance structure, potential funding mechanisms, maintenance policies and corridor safety plan. The presentation will be available in Spanish with live interpretation provided at one of the sessions. In addition, the recorded presentation will be available for jurisdictions to post on their websites, with a Spanish voice-over version included.

Targeted Outreach

To ensure historically underrepresented communities – specifically low-income and unhoused residents, communities of color, LGBTQ+, people living with disabilities, people with Limited English Proficiency, youth, and families – many of whom traditionally have the fewest resources to participate in planning processes, the EBC Engage will work with community organizations about creative and supportive participation strategies. Being mindful of communities affected by the Alameda and Central Point Fires, the EBC Outreach will reach out to organizations serving disaster survivors.

Engagement Evaluation

As noted in the CAC meeting #2 and Steering Committee meeting #3, EBC Engage will evaluate corridor input to evaluate and adjust activities to ensure participation from identified historically marginalized communities.

EBC Communication Tools

The Bear Creek Greenway has multiple and current transportation, land use, and natural resource restoration planning projects, including:

- Envision Bear Creek
- Bear Creek Restoration Initiative
- Highway 99 and Bear Creek Corridor Revisioning

While fortunate for inherent planning synergies and communication leveraging, the potential for public confusion is high. Clear public messaging is critical on how the projects relate, support another, and where to find more information. EBC Outreach, with guidance from Jackson County, will work to create a general message for inclusion on all projects' websites. Doing so supports the public understanding of how transportation, land use, and natural resource restoration coordination support the future Bear Creek Greenway.

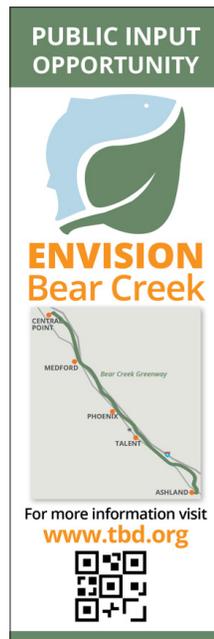
Messaging Content

Phase 1: Invite the Envision

A community opportunity to envision collectively how the Bear Creek Greenway could connect to our lives, neighborhoods, destinations, natural experiences, and the supportive governance structure and financing to support this unique regional resource.

Phase 2: Bear Creek Envisioned

An opportunity for the community to weigh in on potential governance structure, financing mechanisms, and initial project list as a result of community and jurisdictional input.



Bilingual Project Bookmark

For distribution along the Greenway corridor to adjacent businesses, trip attractors, community agencies, libraries, medical facilities, etc., the bookmarks with QR scan codes will reach a more diverse stakeholder audience of Bear Creek Greenway users and non-users.

Interested Parties List

Through outreach, the generation of the EBC Interested Parties List (IPL) will augment Jackson County's list with additional stakeholders, including businesses, community organizations, related associations, transportation stakeholders, residents, schools, etc. In addition, the IPL will reflect the engagement scope conducted throughout the project's course and provide a resource for future EBC communications.

E-Updates

Through distribution by project advisory committees' networks and other identified communication channels, EBC Engage will provide up to five project e-updates with messaging about upcoming input opportunities.

July	Save the Date Open House
August	Survey Promotion#2
September	Draft Plan
November	Public Hearing Notification
December	Plan Status and Ways to Stay Involved

Lawn Signs

Re-usable lawn signs will advertise upcoming engagement opportunities. Placed strategically along and at trail access points, nearby intersections, and community trip attractors (e.g., Ashland Dog Park, U.S. Cellular Park, Railroad Park) to reach and inform Greenway users and non-users.



Social Media

EBC Engage will provide messaging and request project posts on local and regional social media sites, including RVT, Rogue Community College, SOU, Firebrand Collective, EBC Advisory Committees, and other partner agencies and community groups. In addition, the project's IPL will identify additional social media opportunities.

Media

Working with Jackson County Public Information Officer, EBC Engage will produce a schedule and content of press releases/news flashes for the primary public engagement events.

Audiences and Stakeholders

Outlined are the stakeholder categories with local, regional, and stakeholder examples to highlight the diverse scope of public engagement sought to inform and enhance the EBC Plan development.

Stakeholder Category	Examples
Transportation Committees/Commissions	Medford Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Council Ashland Transportation Commission RVTD Special Transportation Advisory Committee Jackson County Bicycle Committee
Trip Generators	Amy's Kitchen, Asante Health System, Harry & David, Lithia Motors Inc., Pacific Retirement Services and Providence Health System
Recreation	Southern Oregon Runners, Rogue Run, Southern Oregon Running Enthusiasts,
Emergency Service providers	Medford Police Department, Ashland Police Department, Talent Police Department, Jackson County Sherriff Office
Businesses	Flywheel Bicycle Solutions Piccadilly Bikes Cycle Sport
Business Associations	Chambers of Commerce – Medford and Jackson County, Ashland, Central Point, Talent Downtown Ashland Association Downtown Medford Association Travel Oregon Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.
Residents	Mobile Home Communities (e.g., Medford Estates, Whispering Pines, Mountain View Estates)
Community Groups	First Presbyterian Church, Phoenix Bear Creek Greenway Foundation Gordon Elwood Foundation Siskiyou Velo Kids Unlimited Calvary Neighborhood Outreach - Food Distribution Center Southern Oregon Climate Action Now Ashland Bicycle Advocacy Group Housing and Transit Coalition Rogue Climate Rogue River Greenway Disabilities Recreation Project Southern Oregon Success
Social Service Agencies	ACCESS Firebrand Collective Southern Oregon Navigators United Way of Jackson County Medford Police Department: Homeless Task Force Housing Authority of Jackson County Columbia Care
Title VI & Environmental Justice	Black Southern Oregon Alliance Latino/a/x Interagency Networking Committee UNETE
Educational institutions	Southern Oregon University, Rogue Community College, school districts, Jackson County Libraries

Public Engagement Documentation

A draft and final summary of public feedback resulting from website comments and staff responses, outreach events, presentations, surveys, open houses will describe how public input informed the final plan recommendations. The summary will highlight which engagement strategies worked best to reach non-computer households and historically marginalized communities to inform future Bear Creek Greenway and Jackson County communications.

Appendix

Title VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the federal law which protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of their race, color, or national origin in programs that receive federal financial assistance.

Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice (EJ) is a term that comes from the Presidential Executive Order 12898, building upon the anti-discrimination provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. EJ is also expressed as “social justice” and “equity” all of which is grounded in the practice of making sure that both benefits and burdens of transportation investments are shared as equitably as possible among all affected communities. The focus is on inclusive planning approaches that reach out to traditionally underrepresented populations, particularly low- income and minority populations.