



TO: Columbia River Gorge Commission

FROM: Jessica Gist, Natural Resources and Land Use Planner
Krystyna Wolniakowski, Executive Director

DATE: April 11, 2017

SUBJECT: Discussion item: “Gorge 2020” Categorized Scoping Comments

Background: The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan, last updated in 2004, must be reviewed every ten years. The Columbia River Gorge Commission (Commission) is responsible for determining, based on that review, the elements of the Plan that need to be revised. The Commission approved the “Gorge 2020” Management Plan Review and Update Process which began with a scoping period to identify important issues, from January through March 8th, 2017.

The scoping process included three public listening sessions, public City and County meetings, several agency-to-agency discussions, and coordination with the implementing NSA county planning departments. Staff also reviewed the issues identified during the last plan review process that were not addressed in revision. Interested individuals and organizations submitted comments using a web-based form or by mail, email, or in person at public meetings. Staff also met with one Treaty Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, and we include their comments. However, meetings with the Tribal Councils of the other three Treaty Tribes will take place in May and June 2017. Their comments will be included in the final list presented to the Commission.

Review of Scoping Comments: At the March 14, 2017 Commission Meeting, staff presented a summary report of the public comments received during the three listening sessions and related written comments. Complete transcriptions of the listening session notes are available to the Commission.

Staff reviewed over 400 written comments in addition to comments made during the three listening session discussions. These are reflected in **Attachment A:** Public Comments Categorized. Copies of the individual letters and emails are available at our office. **Attachment B** summarizes detailed comments received from organizations, agencies, and Management Plan implementers. We met with several of these groups to discuss their comments in person. Staff also attended 17 County Commission, Planning Commission and City Council meetings, with one more scheduled for April 2017. **Attachment C** summarizes the comments received from local governments and the Tribes.

For purposes of our discussion, we have organized comments into one of four categories:

1) Comments that suggest process steps and approaches for conducting Gorge 2020;

We are actively incorporating many of these comments into the Gorge 2020 process. We agree that further public participation, through focus groups or advisory teams, will be helpful when we have identified issues to address. We also agree that it is important to discuss the data and information we are gathering related to resources, trends, and community needs. Staff are actively working with local experts to bring this resource information to the Commission. Today's agenda items on the Gorge economy and state policies for Urban Growth Boundaries changes are good examples.

As we have discussed in several recent Commission Meetings, current staffing and resources will not allow us to fully utilize the Vital Signs Indicators project to inform Gorge 2020. We are relying heavily on the framework provided in VSI to bring key metrics to the discussion and to engage partners in revising the Management Plan.

2) Comments that are directly related to sections of the Management Plan, that identify a problem to be addressed, that suggest a change to an existing section, or that identify a gap that should be addressed in the revised Plan;

3) Comments that are indirectly related to the Management Plan and can be addressed outside of Gorge 2020 through staff-led programs, partnerships, and operations;

Strategic partnerships are an essential component of Commission staff work even outside the Gorge 2020 process. We believe that many of the comments shared during scoping can best be addressed by on-going staff efforts that are not dependent upon Plan revisions.

4) Comments that do not relate to the Management Plan, are beyond the Commission's authority, are too general to be addressed, or conflict with specific Commission Rules and Resolutions

Next Steps: We invite general discussion of the comments and our initial sorting. Staff also requests the Commission identify any issues that are unclear as described or for which you would like more information. Included as an attachment is the memo provided to you in October 2017 compiling known/past issues identified to be reviewed during the Gorge 2020 process (**Attachment D**).

The Commission has now gathered general and specific feedback on the existing Management Plan and broad input as to how it should be revised. Our adopted work plan suggests that by June the Commission will prioritize the issues to be addressed through Plan revision. Given some questions about the schedules and agendas for the next two months, we welcome discussion of how best to proceed with issue prioritization.

Attachment A: Public comments categorized

Attachment B: Summary of Agency Comments

Attachment C: Summary of Local Government and Tribal Comments

Attachment D: Compilation of Management Plan Update Issues for Consideration-2016