

Yaquina Head Traffic Study

Public Involvement Plan

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Prepared for:
**Federal Highway Administration
(FHWA)**



In coordination with:
**Bureau of Land
Management (BLM)**



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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BLM	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
OC	Oversight Committee
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
ONA	Outstanding Natural Area
PIP	Public Involvement Plan
RPA	Robert Peccia and Associates

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has initiated a study in coordination with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to evaluate the transportation system at the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) and address traffic and safety needs at the site.

The Yaquina Head ONA is a high-use fee site located on a prominent headland north of Newport, Oregon. The 100-acre site was officially designated as an ONA due to its scenic quality and cultural and natural resources. BLM manages the site to optimize recreation, education, and conservation opportunities for the benefit of current and future visitors.

The site's transportation system includes 1.21 miles of two-lane asphalt surfaced roads and four parking areas which provide access to the historic Yaquina Head Lighthouse, Quarry Cove, and Interpretive Center. Additionally, several trails providing pedestrian access to various recreation opportunities in and around the historic Yaquina Head Lighthouse. Increasing visitation to the Yaquina Head ONA has resulted in growing traffic congestion and risk of user conflicts. The *Yaquina Head Traffic Study* will identify and address transportation needs including operations at the entrance station, overall site circulation, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and safety enhancements, parking management, pavement preservation, and congestion mitigation. When identifying potential improvements, the study will consider public and stakeholder comments, environmental constraints, constructability challenges, and financial feasibility. The study will be a collaborative process with FHWA, BLM, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the City of Newport, stakeholders, and the public to identify needs and potential solutions.

The study process involves early communication with interested parties to help identify needs, constraints, and opportunities to determine reasonable improvements given available resources and local support. Community, stakeholder, agency, and public involvement are important study components. Several strategies are proposed to disseminate information and elicit meaningful participation. These opportunities will include:

- providing information on critical elements and observations within the study area;
- seeking comments and answering questions throughout the study process; and
- presenting findings and recommendations.

1.1. Purpose of the PIP

Education and public outreach are essential parts of fulfilling the responsibility to inform the public about the study process. Public involvement is critical to ensure the study reflects visitor and local community needs, issues, and values. Comments from the public foster cooperation and help study staff, consultants, and local officials make informed decisions.

An initial step in the study process is to develop a *Public Involvement Plan* (PIP) to guide public participation opportunities. The PIP outlines key audiences, proposed public participation strategies, and opportunities for engagement with members of the public and stakeholders. The goal of the PIP is to facilitate ongoing public engagement throughout the study process to ensure the needs and concerns of all Yaquina Head ONA site users are appropriately identified and addressed. The PIP describes the information and participation opportunities that will be provided as part of the study.

2.0. AUDIENCES

Active participation will be encouraged at every stage of the study process. Development of the study will be overseen by an oversight committee (OC) that will guide work, review deliverables, and provide general oversight on all matters related to the study. The following sections discuss the study contacts, oversight committee, anticipated key stakeholders, and other interested parties to be included in the study process.

2.1. Study Contacts

The following contact information for FHWA, BLM, and RPA representatives will be provided in all published information. These individuals will serve as main points of contact for the study.

Carrie Warren, PE
FHWA Project Manager
610 East Fifth Street
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carrie.warren@dot.gov

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Yaquina Head Site Manager – BLM
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3147 Saddle Drive
Helena, MT 59601
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2.2. Oversight Committee

The OC will guide work and review deliverables produced by the consultant team. Regular OC meetings will be held to discuss study milestones, review materials, and provide feedback. RPA's project manager and support staff will facilitate meetings to present updates on the work effort. The meetings will track progress and address study development issues and questions. The meetings are important for the exchange of technical information and ideas during the development of the study. The following topics are anticipated to be covered at the OC meetings, which will be held using both in-person and virtual formats.

- **OC Meeting 1** (May 2021, in person): Work Tasks, Data Gaps, Public Involvement Plan, Schedule
- **OC Meeting 2** (September 2021, virtual): Existing and Projected Conditions, Preliminary Issues and Concerns, Public Outreach #1 Summary
- **OC Meeting 3** (November 2021, virtual): Existing and Projected Conditions Memorandum
- **OC Meeting 4** (January 2022, in person): Concept Identification, Public Outreach #2
- **OC Meeting 5** (February 2022, virtual): Concept Refinement, Public Outreach #2 Summary
- **OC Meeting 6** (March 2022, virtual): Draft Feasibility Report, Public Review Period
- **OC Meeting 7** (May 2022, virtual): Public Comments, Final Report

2.3. Stakeholders

A stakeholder contact list will be developed to include individuals or groups identified in coordination with the OC and through the public involvement process. Comments from a diverse range of stakeholders is important to the study process. Areas of concern will be identified through stakeholder outreach and may include visitor safety, conflicts between user types, site access, right-of-way encroachment, and alignment with statewide and local planning efforts. Stakeholders will include adjacent and nearby property owners and residents, state and local governments, tribal organizations, educational and non-profit organizations, recreational interest groups, business and tourism interests, and other interested parties. Specific stakeholder representatives will be identified building from the initial list developed at the OC meeting, as identified in the following list.

- Adjacent property owners
- Yaquina Head neighbors
- City of Newport / Newport City Council
- Lincoln County / Lincoln County Commission
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Coast Guard
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Friends of Yaquina Lighthouses
- Oregon Coast Trail Committee
- Surfrider Foundation
- Pedestrian/bicycle community
- Spanish-speaking community / Centro de Ayuda
- Limited Mobility Advocates

All stakeholders will be invited to participate in public outreach activities. To ensure a broad range of stakeholder participation, outreach through direct emails, phone calls, and other forms of communication may also be used. Coordination with select stakeholders may occur through BLM staff as appropriate.

2.4. Public Contacts

Members of the public representing both local and visitor perspectives will be invited to participate in the study. Public comments will be solicited throughout the study process. Additionally, an official comment period will be provided after the release of the draft *Yaquina Head Traffic Study* to obtain feedback on the proposed improvements identified.

All public comments will be directed to BLM and FHWA. Comments will be forwarded to RPA to catalog, collate, characterize and form draft responses to comments received. FHWA, in conjunction with BLM, will provide final responses to all public comments.

Common themes from public comments will be compiled and published in a public-facing document, such as a project newsletter, to show the public how their comments were considered.

3.0. OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Information will be provided in multiple formats, and public and stakeholder comments will be solicited and encouraged at every stage of the study process. Several public engagement strategies are proposed to reach a broad audience and elicit meaningful participation. This section provides an overview of the outreach methods that will be used to gather comments from stakeholders and the public.

3.1. Outreach Strategies

Targeted outreach is intended to obtain meaningful comments and dialogue about the study process, to share information, and to identify important considerations. Anticipated targeted outreach activities and strategies are described in the following sections.

Mailing List

A contact list of email and physical addresses will be maintained and updated throughout the study process for those wishing to receive periodic updates. The list will include members of the public who have expressed interest in the study and all identified stakeholders, including landowners directly adjacent to the study area. The list will be developed in coordination with partner agencies including BLM and the City of Newport building from known contacts from previous studies or projects in the same geographic area. Outreach to the contact list will include distribution of newsletters, outreach announcements, and other important information regarding the study process.

Website

RPA will be able to share important study information via the website of Friends of Yaquina Lighthouses and/or the BLM's site. Materials including public outreach notices, newsletters, study reports, and other relevant study information may be posted on the websites.

News Releases

Before public outreach activities, news releases will be developed, reviewed, and approved by FHWA and BLM, and distributed to local media outlets to be identified in coordination with the oversight committee, potentially including the *Newport News Times*, *Oregon Coast Daily News*, *Oregon Coast Today*, *News Guard*, and local radio stations. In addition to announcing the event location, time, date, and format, the releases will explain the study purpose and key issues.

Stakeholder Outreach

Targeted stakeholder outreach will be conducted at the time of public outreach activities to encourage stakeholder participation. Stakeholder outreach methods may include email, telephone contacts, or coordination through BLM.

Public Outreach Activities

Two sets of public outreach activities will be conducted for this study. The first effort will occur during the 2021 summer field data collection period and will be focused on gathering information from the local community and site visitors. The purpose of this outreach will be to explain the study process and gather information from the public to identify issues and concerns relating to the site. To provide the public with background information and explain the study process, RPA will prepare a brief recorded presentation to be posted on the Friends of Yaquina Lighthouses website. To gather background information and public opinions, RPA will prepare a survey. RPA will provide handouts with a link or QR code directing visitors to the survey at the Yaquina Head ONA Interpretive Center and the entrance gate. Visitor signage including flyers and notice boards with information about the study and the survey will also be developed and posted at the site. RPA will coordinate with BLM to identify the best locations to post information and collect completed paper surveys to gain a broad sampling of site visitors. It will be important to capture the opinions of different user groups, including yearly visitors, new visitors, residents, disabled users, bicyclists, pedestrians, and others. The goal of the first outreach effort will be to share information about the study and gather feedback from visitors about site needs based on their observations and experiences and the site.

During the 2022 winter site visit, a second round of public outreach will be conducted to share information. An open house event is proposed to enable drop-in participation at the public's convenience. At the event, study team members will share existing conditions information, key findings, and preliminary improvements concepts. The meeting location will be determined in coordination with the oversight committee in the vicinity of the City of Newport and the Yaquina Head ONA. A ticketing system for individual appointments or other

measures may be incorporated depending on local health and safety guidelines. Members of the public will have an opportunity to view exhibits summarizing key findings and preliminary recommendations, talk with members of the study team, provide feedback, and obtain printed copies of study materials.

The second round of public outreach activities are proposed to be held in person, however the format may be modified as needed based on health and safety restrictions. Supporting materials will be developed for each set of outreach activities and may include a combination of exhibits, informational sheets, and newsletters. Exhibits will display the study area and the surrounding vicinity, site photographs, proposed improvements as they are developed, and the study schedule. Printed and digital versions of the materials will be provided.

Newsletters

Two study newsletters will be developed corresponding with each of the two sets of public outreach activities to be held during the study process. The newsletters will include background information about the study, identified needs, observations and findings, proposed solutions, public involvement activities, anticipated schedules, and a feedback mechanism to elicit comments from the recipients. Following review and approval by BLM, up to 200 printed copies will be distributed on site, and a digital version will be developed for distribution to the study email list and to partner agencies.

3.2. Access and Visibility

The study team will strive to provide convenient, accessible opportunities for the public and stakeholders to participate in the study process. The following measures will be used.

Published Materials

All published study information will be developed in compliance with applicable federal accessibility regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Alternative formats will be available upon request. Contact information for FHWA, BLM, and RPA representatives will be provided with all published materials. The BLM Public Affairs Group will review all materials before publishing.

Spanish Language Outreach

RPA will contact and coordinate with the Newport Centro de Ayuda to outreach to the Spanish-speaking community. The organization provides interpretation and translation services and is a valuable resource to ensure Spanish-speaking community members are informed and represented in study efforts. Additionally, RPA will provide Spanish versions of all printed outreach materials.

Consideration of Public and Stakeholder Comments

All comments from stakeholders and the public will be considered by the OC throughout the study process. Comments received through public outreach efforts and throughout the study will be summarized in project newsletters. Public comments received on the draft *Yaquina Head Traffic Study* will be documented and included as an appendix.

Considerations for Traditionally Underserved Populations

Additional efforts are necessary to involve traditionally underserved segments of the population, including disabled, minority, non-English-speaking, and low-income individuals. The following steps will help with these efforts.

- Plan Meetings Carefully – In-person public meetings will be held in locations that are accessible and ADA compliant. Alternative accommodations will be available upon request.
- Seek Help from Community Leaders and Organizations – To facilitate involvement of traditionally underserved populations, community leaders and organizations that represent these groups will be consulted about how to reach their members most effectively.
- Be Sensitive to Diverse Audiences – At public outreach events, the study team will attempt to communicate as effectively as possible. Presenters will avoid using overly technical language and will explain concepts in simple terms. Spanish-language materials will be provided.

4.0. OUTREACH SUMMARY AND SCHEDULE

This PIP establishes guidelines and procedures for encouraging public participation. The following communication strategies and techniques will be used to share information and to seek public and stakeholder comments.

- A mailing list will be developed to contact interested stakeholders and members of the public.
- The Friends of Yaquina Lighthouses and/or BLM websites will be used to post study information.
- News releases will be prepared to announce public outreach activities and provide status updates.
- Stakeholder outreach will include targeted invitations to participate in study activities.
- Two set of public outreach activities will be held to learn about issues and concerns and to share proposed concepts.
- Newsletters will be developed in advance of public outreach activities.
- Public comments will be collected and considered throughout the study process.
- Published materials will be sensitive to diverse audiences and will be approved by the BLM Public Affairs Group.

The proposed schedule for public and stakeholder involvement activities is illustrated below.

