

Rhododendron Main Street Redevelopment Plan: Survey Summary

From May 28, 2020 through June 19, 2020, Clackamas County, the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), and the MIG consultant team (the project team) conducted a community-wide online survey for the Rhododendron Main Street Site Redevelopment Plan. The purpose of the survey is to understand opportunities, challenges, and preferences for potential redevelopment of the project area: two privately held properties on the southwest side of US Route 26 totaling 3.73 acres. Publicly owned lands adjacent to Rhododendron Swinging Bridge, and Rhododendron Community Landscape at the Barlow Trail Oregon Historic Marker are also included in the project area.

There were a total of 116 respondents and the following is a summary of results from the survey. This survey is one of several methods for collecting input from the community. The project team will use results of all public involvement efforts to develop the conceptual alternatives, with additional opportunities for input to refine the preferred concept during the summer of 2020.

About the Survey

The online survey allowed anyone to provide input on the project at their own pace through a link posted on the Clackamas County project website. The link was also distributed to members of the Rhododendron Community Planning Organization via email and through the organization's Facebook page. This summary provides percentages based on the total number of respondents who viewed the question. For many questions, the survey allowed respondents to select multiple responses.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Rhododendron Main Street Site Redevelopment Plan (the project) offers an opportunity for Clackamas County, local residents and businesses to plan for redevelopment in a way that reduces demand on the transportation system while accommodating desired workforce housing.

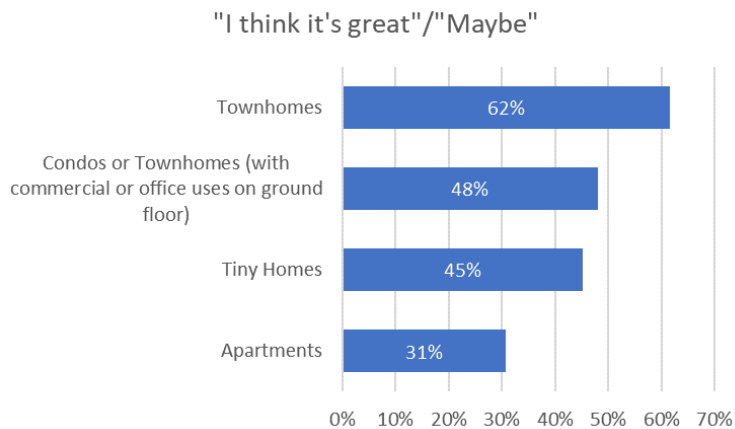
The project area is centered on two privately held properties on the southwest side of US Route 26 totaling 3.73 acres. Publicly owned lands adjacent to Rhododendron Swinging Bridge, and Rhododendron Community Landscape at the Barlow Trail Oregon Historic Marker are also included in the project area.

The project is a partnership with Mt. Hood Holdings, LLC, Rhododendron Community Planning Organization (CPO), Clackamas County, and the Transportation and Growth Management Program (TGM).

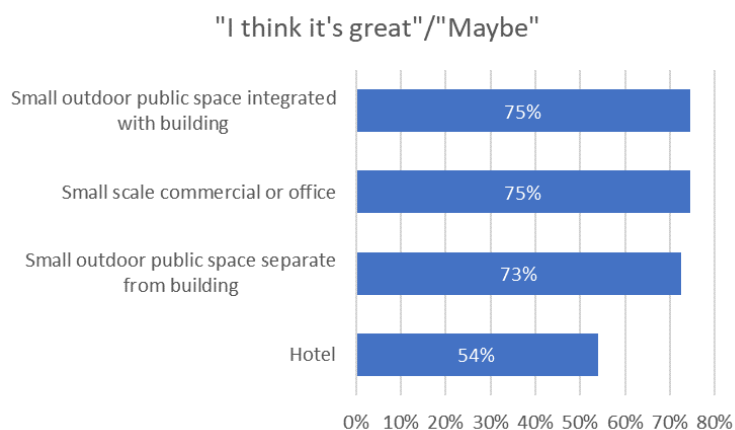


Key Findings

- The majority of respondents indicated that they are part time/seasonal residents.
- Safer highway conditions for walking and biking was the top response when asked about opportunities and challenges in the study area.
- Improving the appearance along the highway was also a popular response. Continuous sidewalks along the highway, landscaping between the street edge and new development, and parking that is behind or beside buildings were also ranked as the top three most important features for new development.
- When asked about potential types of new residential uses, townhomes had the highest preference (“I think it’s great” and “Maybe” responses), followed by condos or townhomes with commercial or office uses on the ground floor.

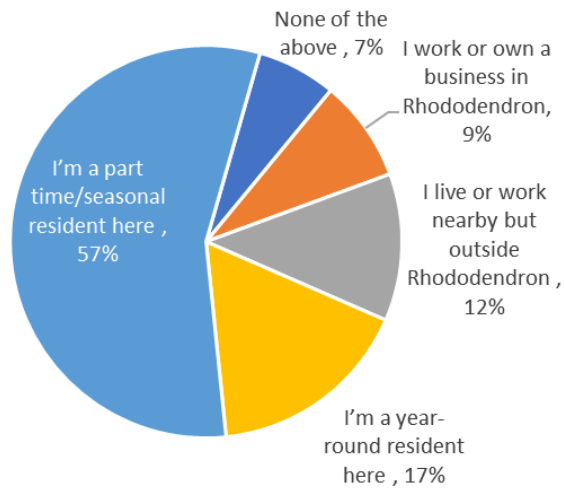


- When asked about potential types of non-residential uses, a small outdoor public space that is integrated with the building AND small scale commercial or office use had the highest preference (“I think it’s great” and “Maybe” responses).



Respondent Composition

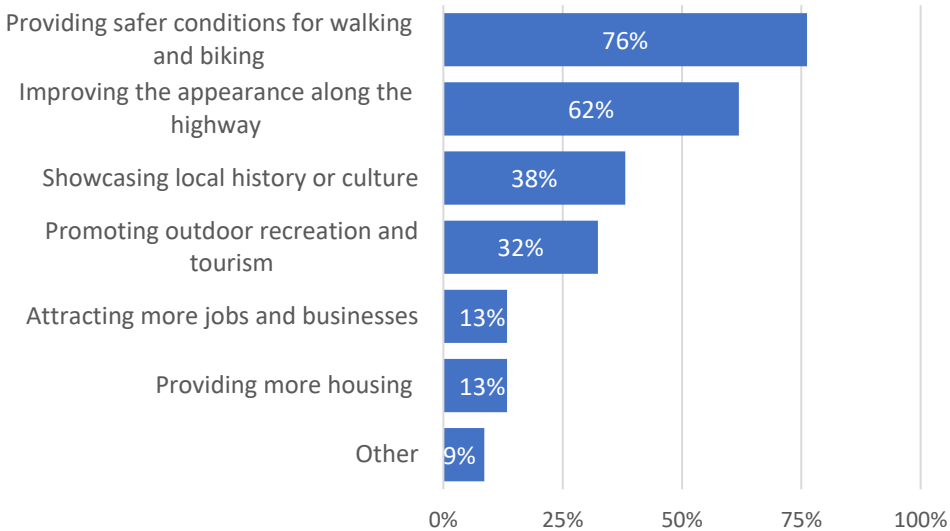
1. How would you describe yourself? Choose all that apply.



| Q1. Answer | Count | Percentage |
|--|-------|------------|
| I work or own a business in Rhododendron | 9 | 9% |
| I'm a year-round resident here | 18 | 17% |
| I'm a part time/seasonal resident here | 60 | 57% |
| I live or work nearby but outside Rhododendron | 13 | 12% |
| None of the above | 7 | 7% |

Opportunities and Challenges

2. When thinking about the Rhododendron community in general, what do you see as some opportunities? Choose your top three.

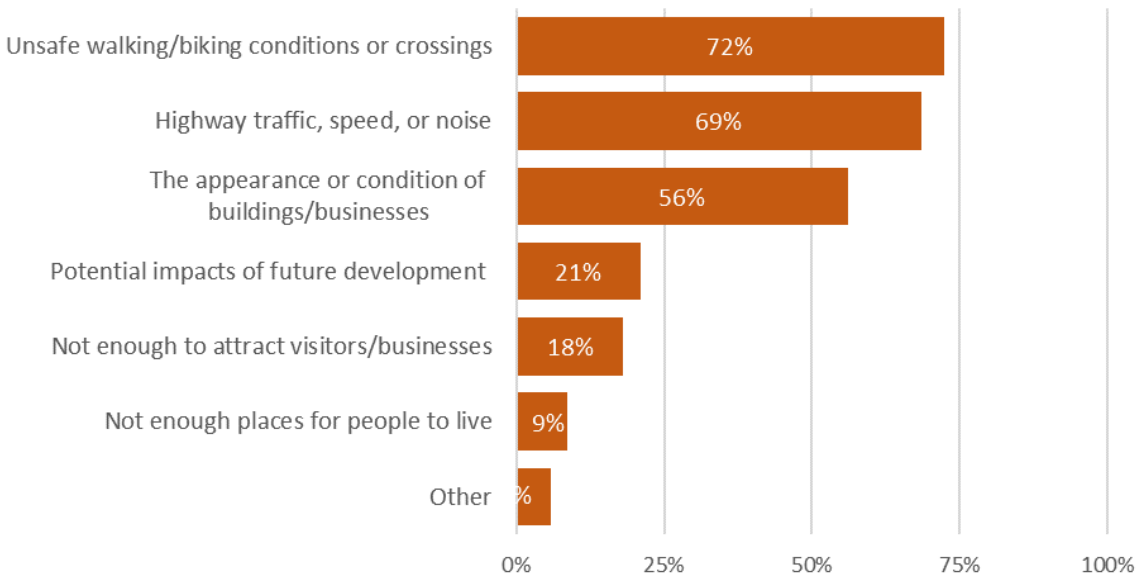


| Q2. Answer | Count | Percentage |
|---|-------|------------|
| Showcasing local history or culture | 40 | 38% |
| Promoting outdoor recreation and tourism | 34 | 32% |
| Providing more housing | 14 | 13% |
| Attracting more jobs and businesses | 14 | 13% |
| Improving the appearance along the highway | 65 | 62% |
| Providing safer conditions for walking and biking | 80 | 76% |
| Other | 9 | 9% |

Q2. Responses to “Other”:

- Conservation of the surrounding forest
- a joke
- none of the above / leave Rhododendron as it is
- Speed reduction
- less crime, especially from people living on forest land
- Safe walking, biking & driving AND safe access to businesses & homes.
- ego centric blow hards
- Whatever improvements/ business brought in, need to be top quality.
- Slowing traffic

3. We've heard about some of the challenges facing Rhododendron today. What are some of your biggest concerns? Choose your top three.



| Q3. Answer | Count | Percentage |
|---|-------|------------|
| Highway traffic, speed, or noise | 72 | 69% |
| Unsafe walking/biking conditions or crossings | 76 | 72% |
| The appearance or condition of buildings/businesses | 59 | 56% |
| Not enough places for people to live | 9 | 9% |
| Not enough to attract visitors/businesses | 19 | 18% |
| Potential impacts of future development | 22 | 21% |
| Other | 6 | 6% |

Q3. Responses to "Other":

- the last thing this tiny community needs is more housing
- crime
- ego centric "you pay" folk
- Safe Access to the local business
- Bicycle lanes
- Gentrification

Preferences

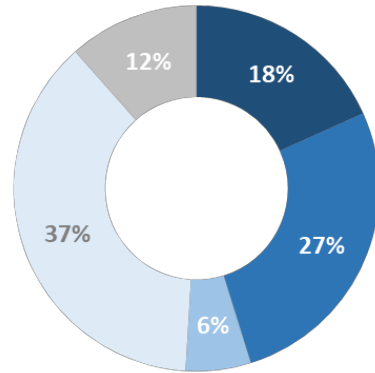
Part of this project will include a feasibility study to better understand the type of land uses most suitable for the redevelopment parcels. It's also important to gauge what you think and would like to see in the future.

The image below is of the redevelopment parcels looking west along Hwy. 26. Take a look at the photo to consider your responses to the following questions.



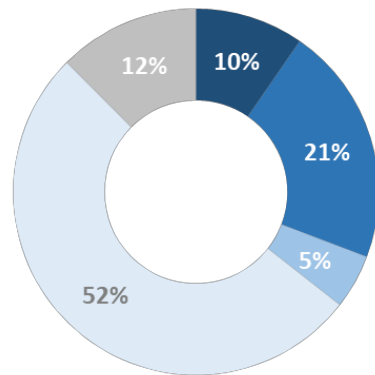
4. Based on your preferences, what type of housing could have potential for this site. Tell us what you think of the following examples (images are for illustrative purposes only).

Tiny Homes (detached)



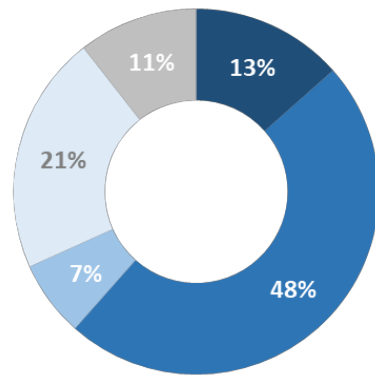
- I think it's a great fit
- Maybe
- I'm not sure/no opinion
- I don't think so
- No answer

Apartments



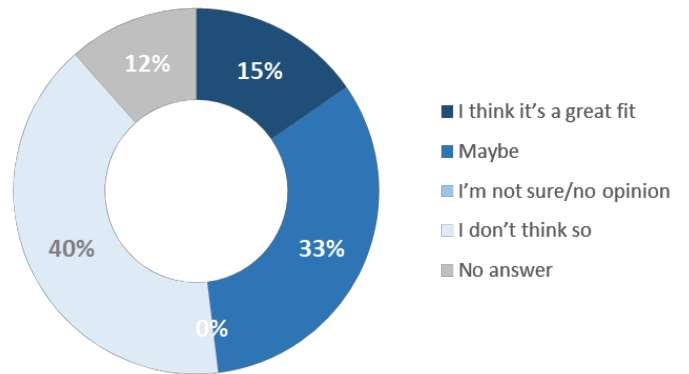
- I think it's a great fit
- Maybe
- I'm not sure/no opinion
- I don't think so
- No answer

Townhomes (attached)



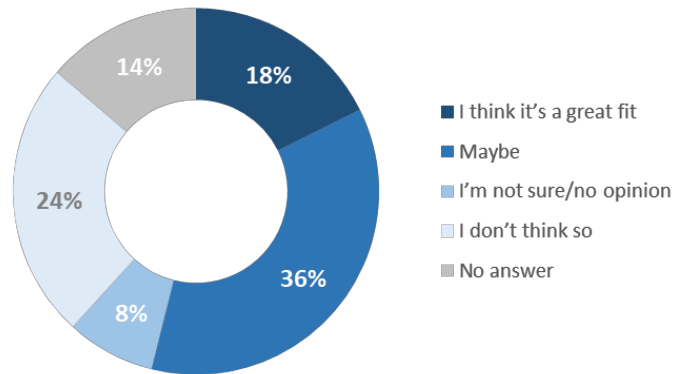
- I think it's a great fit
- Maybe
- I'm not sure/no opinion
- I don't think so
- No answer

Condos or townhomes with commercial or office uses on ground floor (2 – 3 stories)

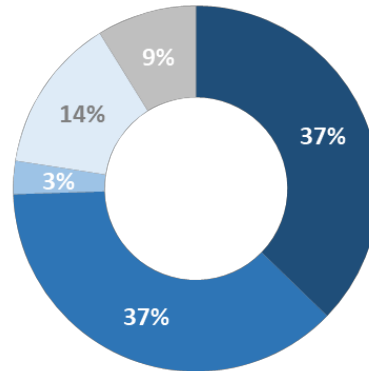


5. Based on your preferences, what type of non-residential development could have potential for this site. Tell us what you think of the following examples (images are for illustrative purposes only).

Hotel (2 – 3 stories)

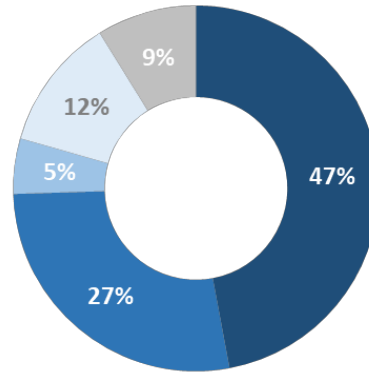


Small-scale commercial or office uses
(1 – 2 stories)



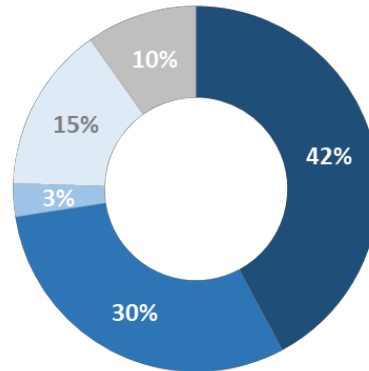
- I think it's a great fit
- Maybe
- I'm not sure/no opinion
- I don't think so
- No answer

Small outdoor public space integrated
with building



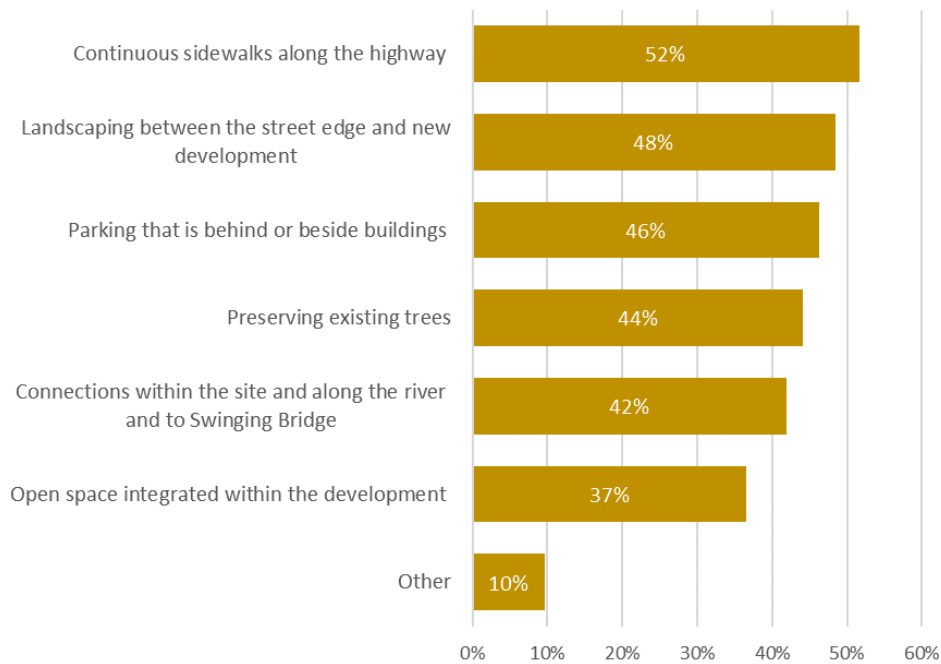
- I think it's a great fit
- Maybe
- I'm not sure/no opinion
- I don't think so
- No answer

Small outdoor public space separate
from building



- I think it's a great fit
- Maybe
- I'm not sure/no opinion
- I don't think so
- No answer

6. Finally, what are some of the most important features of any new development? Choose your top three.



| Q6. Answer | Count | Percentage |
|--|-------|------------|
| Parking that is behind or beside buildings | 43 | 46% |
| Landscaping between the street edge and new development | 45 | 48% |
| Preserving existing trees | 41 | 44% |
| Open space integrated within the development | 34 | 37% |
| Connections within the site and along the river and to Swinging Bridge | 39 | 42% |
| Continuous sidewalks along the highway | 48 | 52% |
| Other | 9 | 10% |

Q6. Responses to “Other”:

- Parking in front of bulidings
- good hwy access
- leave it alone!!!
- Sidewalks would also be great.
- Safer access to POST OFFICE from both sides of Hwy 26

- Economical, affordable, Sustainability
- It should be given back to the USFS
- bike walking lanes slower traffic
- Any new housing is relatively affordable and scaled to serve needs of local businesses who need help retaining employees

7. Do you have additional ideas or comments you would like to share?

The following list includes responses to this open-ended question. Comments are unedited expect to remove any personal information. Based on content of the responses, there are several key themes.

- Protect forested, cabin identity
- Ensure consistent design of new development
- Limit development
- Improve traffic flow
- Slow speeds
- Improve existing buildings/street front
- Create a safe crossing
- Support mixed-use or commercial development
- Consider snow removal operations
- Consider increased traffic impacts
- Consider affordability/displacement
- Add trails

Q7. Responses:

- I recommend tiny homes (or small cabins) over condos or townhomes because they can feel more like little cabins. People who live here do not want apartments or condos or townhomes, cabins provide the mountain atmosphere they are looking for. If there is a "tiny home" village, I suggest they actually be cabins. A friend built a 550 sq ft cabin in Welches last year and it was less expensive for permits, etc. than a tiny home would have been. Keep this simple and less expensive. I suggest some 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom, so you can accommodate multiple sizes of families. Build in CC&Rs that permit only LTRs or permanent residences, so they do not have the opportunity to become STRs or even non-rented vacation homes. Normally, I would say more shop and restaurant space, maybe more office space, but in our current situation, people are learning to work from home and we might see some businesses go away, creating more commercial space. On the other hand, if we are looking into the future, we could create a cool little village in Rhody that has lots to offer and is walkable. I do not think you need to create an outdoor gathering space; Rhody is surrounded by the Mt Hood National Forest, lots of outdoor gathering spaces that you can walk or bike to from downtown Rhody.
- Quality and respect for the forest and existing community is crucial. Limit the amount of visitors and promote higher quality of services. No transients or off site employee housing for government camp businesses are welcome here.

- No starbucks
- This is a critical piece of infrastructure along highway 26. You need to consider adding a second lane to the highway for seasonal traffic as that, as we all know, is a 2 plus hour bottleneck on high volume days.
- I believe that no development can happen until the speed limit is significantly reduced both ways going into Rhododendron.
- clean up and give some "character" to the existing buildings in Rhody. It is a blip on the road to Mt. Hood and the eastside, nothing more. Rhody rising is a waste of money on things we do not need when there are needs in the communities of Mt. Hood. It is a ridiculous idea. Clean up and improve what you've got. If the need for more was there the existing businesses would survive.
- Slow Traffic Down and make it safer for pedestrians to cross Highway 26.
- Safe Crossing of Highway 26
- "the area outlined is too small to bring additional housing let alone businesses. The ideas of the ""Rhody Rising"" group do not represent those of us who have either lived or owned property in that are for over 100 years. Additionally, ""Rhody Rising"" does not include, in it's zealous desire for change, the thoughts, feelings and concerns of the majority of the of residents and property owners. The majority of the residents and property owners choose to live and/or own property because it is not overrun with development. If ""Rhody Rising"" ever got a true and real take on what the majority of property owners felt, I'm certain all this ""progress"" would not be tolerated. "
- Safer pedestrian crossing along this stretch of Highway 26 is LONG OVERDUE! I slipped on gravel and broke my wrist while walking across Highway 26 with 3 grandchildren. We were going from our Forest Service cabin to the store. TERRIFYING. Cars and big trucks barely slowed down let alone stop.
- Install a traffic speed indicator with flashing lights when entering Rhododendron area. I see too many speeders not slowing down to 40mph when entering the speed change zones. Many drivers accelerate too early to start the climb up 26 to Government Camp.
- We honestly don't want to see a lot of new development in town. We've lived here 27 years & like it rural. Gresham has turned into Portland & Sandy into Gresham. We don't want to turn into Sandy. Limited, tasteful development might be OK, but the key word is limited. Not something that adds congestion of either people or traffic. I think a lot of people here like living with the forest & would be very upset with a less rural town. We could improve some on the appearance, but don't go crazy with it. Thank you for the opportunity to give you our opinion.
- I'd rather see things undisturbed than see another Subway etc..
- Access business on either side of the highway are the main issue we have. Crossing from the swinging bridge to DQ is scary.

- Possible multi use with shared office spaces, web access, etc
- I think this could be a nice destination with food service and shops, etc. I'm not in favor of anything that turns this area into a drop off point that encourages people to wander into adjoining neighborhoods that are mostly vacant vacation homes and private (and quasi-private forest service) property.
- I would like to see architectural design standards that would be uniform with new and existing businesses which would make the community more attractive to people who are passing through. Rhododendron could become more attractive like the improvements to Government Camp.
- The most important thing to address - and the thing to address before anything else - is the extremely unsafe conditions in Rhododendron for pedestrians, bikers, etc. To try to cross 26 means taking one's life in one's hands. The risk rises exponentially on weekends and icy conditions. Rhododendron desperately needs a stoplight to enable people to get from one side of 26 to the other.
- I really don't think Rhododendron needs or can support substantial commercial development. Currently the infrastructure (water sewage) needs to be improved for existing housing and shouldn't be put upon for new large development.
- "We lived in Rhododendron from 1973 - 1989 and we still own 6 rental properties on the North side of Hwy 26 for over 40 years. Main problem is traffic and street is dangerous for pedestrian use. The traffic comes down from The Mt too fast and I am against traffic calming methods because of the big trucks not being able to slow down in time for pedestrians to use a crosswalk. Also, snow plows need to have places to push snow - we've seen seasons when the 4 lane has been reduced to two because of large amounts of snow piled up in the center lanes. Planning to slow traffic needs to start further East of Rhododendron in order for it to slow down enough for a ""village"" atmosphere. Traffic going East tends to speed up in Rhododendron in order to be in front of any right lane traffic going East because of the highway funneling into two lanes total. (Also the pull over lane further East is not long enough and is dangerous as people unfamiliar with the road think there is plenty of lane for pull over and it runs out too fast....And same going West in the same location.) Another thing to remember is the flood that took place in the 60's took out a lot of the property at Toll Gate Park, many cabins and lots of waterfront. That needs to be researched. Would WES - Clackamas County Sewer System be able to serve a hotel or apartments? There is a dearth of living arrangements for people that work in the area and at the ski areas BUT take a look at Summit House Apartments in Govy - they are known as ""scummit"" and are low income and have been run down since they opened. I wish I knew the answer to the Rhody blight. The Log Lodge and Motel was kept up nicely for years but after the original owners retired, it has run down horribly. Thanks for all your hard work addressing these needs.
- "This is probably beyond the scope of this project, but I would love to see some sort of safe pedestrian/cyclist connection between Rhody and ZigZag. As a cabin owner in ZigZag, I would

love to walk to Rhody but it's impossible without using the 26 bridge over the ZigZag river and it feels scary and dangerous. Anything that makes this corridor more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists will be good for businesses, people, and the environment. We might also get more tourists stopping in and eating/drinking/using the businesses more."

- Wish there was a plan to make crossing the highway as a pedestrian easier.....
- "The folk are braggarts. It is a very remote area at 1800' 45 miles from Portland and they are trying to make it real. No industry, no work, no nothing, and they want to make it ""something"". Next, they will want ""transportation"" or medical service or groceries rather than letting the skiers go the extra 10 miles to Govy to ski Any extra property should be given back to the USFS!!"
- Snow plowing in the past was plowed to the middle of the road and caused trouble to access the local business.
- Maintaining the feel of a historical mountain town would be important consideration.
- I would love to see only one story buildings to keep low profile. I understand if the building is lodging it might need to be two stories.
- "cross walk from bridge-- maybe flashing YELLOW like they have in Bend,etc. attractive sidewalk or signage to show a TOWN FEEL. Welcome sign. Slow down .. City signs prior to Rhody"
- So hope at least 2 restaurants be included.
- A way to safely cross Hwy 26 is of top priority! Many of the buildings along that stretch of Rhododendron are terribly run down.
- I would like to see Rhododenron become a town to come to for business needs. Business needs such as restaurants, a laundry mat, a post office, a grocery store, other small business needs, and a bike lane. I think bicyling is important for our local residents to do to go out and shop get their mail, eat out, and for tourism development. The Mt Hood corridor should be user friendly. Slow traffic down and make it more attractive to stay here. Commercial vehicles normally drive on Hwy 26 as a means to get from Portland to Central Oregon. Not against commerce. But lets make the Mt Hood corridor safer for all of us.
- We need to be careful about encouraging housing in areas where people must drive to access jobs and services. To the extent that a mixed use development may mitigate some of these impacts by eliminating some trips that might otherwise begin/end at the development, that's great, but what are the net impacts? More commuter traffic on Hwy 26 into Portland, for people who are dependent upon their cars? That should be a nonstarter, full stop.
- Safety getting across 26 is TOP PRIORITY.
- We love to walk and bike around rhody but it does not feel safe to do so. We would more of a trail system and places that we can walk to without having to dodge traffic.

- Please don't "fix up" Rhody and inadvertently squeeze out locals. We have small group of CPO participants with a vocal leader and, while I appreciate their interest in making improvements to the community, I don't share the same interest in improving property values. I see nothing wrong with a gritty commercial center that doesn't cater to the wealthy or the realtors who care only to sell vacation rentals around it. If a transit stop is needed, this is a fine location. And if there is an opportunity to add housing that is relatively affordable, look at the apartments south of the Hoodland library in Welches as a great example.
- Rhododendron is a charming little town, please don't turn it in to Sandy. Whatever new development happens should really be done in a way that maintains its quaint atmosphere.
- We need a stoplight!
- The biggest safety concern is the speed of traffic through the town - slowing that down should be the number one priority. The second priority I would like to see is visual improvement of the town. Some ideas are: Under grounding all utilities, sidewalks with decorative streetlights and a facade improvement plan that includes a Rhododendron Style facade that reflects the history of the community. Create this situation and business will come and thrive!
- I am happy to see that something is finally being done with the eye-sore of those two properties/ also safe pedestrian crossing is very important