

# Interpretive Plan Executive Summary



## Capitol History Gateway



CAPITOL HISTORY  
GATEWAY



January 10, 2014

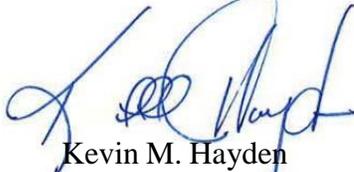
This report, the *Interpretive Plan for the Capitol History Gateway*, is a continuation and refinement of the determined efforts of numerous groups and individuals that have worked since 2005 to use the unique opportunities that exist at the Capitol to connect Oregonians with their history and encourage their participation in the future of our great state.

In September of 2012, the Oregon State Capitol Foundation laid the cornerstone of these efforts with delivery of their *Strategic Plan for Oregon's History Gateway at the State Capitol*. Following the Legislative Administration Committee's approval of the strategic plan, we immediately embarked on a process to develop this interpretive plan, which engaged staff and volunteers from all elements of the Legislative Branch, stakeholders from Oregon's history and heritage organizations, and of course the members of the Oregon State Capitol Foundation. Whether participating in formal focus groups, workshops, one on one conversation, or by providing feedback on ideas and drafts along the way I cannot thank our partners enough for the passion and commitment that were continually demonstrated as this interpretive plan was developed.

Building on the mission and goals outlined in the strategic plan, this document plots the course we intend to steer as we move to implementation. A great deal of work remains to be done; however, this report provides *primary* and *secondary interpretive goals* with associated messages that will allow us to put in place a framework of strategies designed to shape the visitor experience and achieve those goals.

Notwithstanding distractions made up of daily operations, legislative schedule, and the Capitol Master Plan Renovation Project, I am determined to stay focused on the Capitol History Gateway, seeing it through to full implementation. I hope that we continue to have your commitment and support.

Looking to our future and ever mindful of our past,



Kevin M. Hayden  
Legislative  
Administrator

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The framework for the Capitol History Gateway was developed in the overall *Strategic Plan for the Capitol History Gateway at the State Capitol*, which was completed in 2012. Phase 1 of that framework called for an Interpretive Plan to be developed that would guide the remainder of the project.

An interpretive planning specialist, contracted with by the Legislative Administration, worked extensively throughout the entire process with an internal Project Planning team and stakeholders through meetings, submittals and presentations to develop the plan. The process began with identifying the interpretive program goals and key messages that would drive the remainder of the process. The next step focused on developing the Context Report, which contained profiles of the target audiences, the parameters (constraints) under which the network must be developed and under which it must function, and opportunities afforded by the features in the State Capitol building. The final step focused on developing the plan for a network of interpretive opportunities that would effectively attract and hold target audiences long enough to communicate the key messages, and wayfinding strategies to facilitate the visitor experience.

## The Capitol History Gateway Interpretive Experience

The new Capitol History Gateway Interpretive and wayfinding networks focus on providing and facilitating the entire visitor experience from pre-to post-trip, beginning with the **Capitol History Gateway Web Site**. The site contains an array of interpretive, orientation and wayfinding strategies designed to pique interest, provide a basic understanding of the stories and guide potential visitors to the state capitol building. It also contains downloadable versions of all trip planning and interpretive publications.

Upon arrival, wayfinding elements of the new information network will guide visitors to the hub of the Capitol History Gateway, which occupies the east end of the Galleria and Room 148. In the Galleria section they can use a **Self-Serve Orientation Area** provides basic orientation and wayfinding information, publications associated with the Capitol History Gateway and an opportunity to sign up for any tours open to the public on that day. Associated exhibits focus on highlighting the self-guided walking tours to motivate visitors to spend time exploring the visitor areas of the building and the surrounding grounds.

Visitors move from the Self-Serve Orientation Area to view exhibits focused on achieving the Primary Interpretive Goal of the Capitol History Gateway, derived from the Purpose, Core Values, Mission and Goals for the Gateway established in the Strategic Plan, which is to:

***Increase participation in Oregon's democracy***

To that end, the exhibits focus on communicating the following key messages:

**Message 1:** The quality of my life has been and continues to be shaped by what happens in Oregon's government.

**Message 2:** It is people [like me] that make a difference by shaping history in ways that make a difference in the quality of life we [I] enjoy.

**Message 3:** It is easy to get involved in Oregon's democracy.

With the exception of the exhibits in the window cases along the hallway adjacent to the Galleria, all exhibits are movable to maintain flexibility for using that space periodically for other functions, and to move the exhibits to other locations if and when the building is closed for remodeling.

Exhibits adjacent to the doorway to Room 148 will be designed to motivate visitors to engage in the interpretive opportunities located in that room. Those exhibits focus on achieving the secondary goal of the Capitol History Gateway, also derived from the Strategic Plan, which is to:

***Increase interest in Oregon's history, and especially in the history of government***

To that end, the exhibits focus on communicating the following key messages:

**Message 4:** Oregon has long been a fertile ground for ideas and innovation, resulting in groundbreaking achievements that affect people within and outside the state.

**Message 5:** It is important and of value for you [me] to know Oregon's history.

**Message 6:** You can discover stories of the past by 'reading' it in the world around you.

As the 'Gateway' to other attractions involved in preserving and communicating Oregon's history, Room 148 will also provide opportunities for visitors to find historical attractions in the part of Oregon in which they live. Hopefully, increased interest in Oregon's history will result in an increase in motivation to participate in Oregon's democracy.

Self-guided tours begin at the Capitol History Gateway and encompass all the primary visitor areas within the building, Capitol Park and Willson Park. The Tower Tour remains a guided tour opportunity.

To upgrade the experience for school groups on field trips, Legislative Administration will seek to develop partnerships with educators to develop strategies that focus on better preparation of students prior to arrival, and a tour that is more consistent with the needs of the educators and the goals of the Capitol History Gateway.

## **Next Step**

Development of the Capitol History Gateway web site and the new exhibits for the window cases were initiated prior to completion of the plan, and will be completed in 2014. Following approval of the plan, a designer will be retained to design additional high priority elements of the Capitol History Gateway.



**CAPITOL HISTORY**  
**GATEWAY**