

GTVP Bike, Pedestrian, Transit and Passenger Rail Subcommittee Outline of Vision and Recommendations Identified in Nov 19th Meeting

Vision Statement:

Provide safe and efficient transportation between destinations for people of all ages, abilities and incomes without the need for a passenger vehicle by increasing availability, access and connectivity between modes and jurisdictions. In addition, a sustainable source of funding will be available to ensure proper maintenance of the system and achieve long-term expansion goals required to meet Oregon's growing population (expected to increase 30% over the next 25 years).

Outcomes expected to meet or exceed the State's goals in the areas of:

- Health
- Congestion
- Economic Vitality
- Environmental Quality
- Safety

Preliminary recommendations (next 4 years):

- Redefine student transportation to ensure the state is meeting the changing needs of this population.
- Safe Routes to Schools: Finance with a targeted increase in the number of schools where students have a safe way of getting
- Enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety through focused investments in crossings and intersections
- Address paratransit inefficiencies
- Identify key transportation routes across the state (especially those where roadway congestion is an issue) and update system inventories in order to develop and maintain a prioritized list of priorities for all modes:
 - Close existing "gaps" in the system
 - Complete first/last mile connections to enhance access to public transportation, other modes, and to schools and businesses
- Optimize ridership and revenue of the Amtrak Cascades passenger rail service in Oregon to ensure continued funding.
- Identify and develop centralized modal transfer stations (mobility hubs) where bus and rail interconnect with walking and biking opportunities and park and ride facilities.
- Develop a trip reduction program to encourage alternative modes of transportation.
- Include Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs into all major projects in urban areas.
- Sustain and optimize Oregon's network of public and special transportation services through strategic investment in connected services, bus replacements, state leverage of federal resources and improved

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information technology. Oregon will strengthen the culture of safe public transportation and responsible asset management.

Mid-term recommendations (years 5 – 10):

- Expansion of the system to create new transportation options and/or connections required to reach key destinations
- Provide a “set-aside” of funding to support sidewalk ramp (ADA infrastructure) construction where insufficient funding exists to otherwise move forward a roadway project ready for reconstruction
- Broaden the focus of a safe routes to schools programs to ensure students have safe, reliable transportation options using multiple modes.
- Enhance local funding options that provide communities the opportunity to invest in more robust bike, ped, and transit networks

Long-term recommendations (years 10 and beyond)

- *Address constitutional restrictions associated with future transportation finance strategies (e.g., VMT tax, tolling, carbon tax, etc.)*
- *Off-system improvements or connectivity where appropriate*

Additional Background:

Passenger Rail Synopsis:

Intercity passenger rail service connects several of Oregon’s communities and is part of the federally-recognized rail system that connects cities all over the United States. ODOT and WSDOT pay for the Cascades service, which Amtrak operates. In 2010, ODOT purchased two new trainsets using federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, providing trains for continued Amtrak Cascades service in Oregon. Oregon’s lack of dedicated, sustainable funding for rail is one of the top challenges facing passenger rail in the state. Without funding, Oregon does not have a revenue source available to operate, maintain or enhance the passenger rail service. Key challenges include:

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- Passenger rail lacks adequate, dedicated and sustainable funding for capital and operating needs and frequently lacks the state funds needed to leverage federal funds.
- The rail system is complicated by private ownership of mainline tracks, which are owned and operated by freight carriers. Due to an increase in freight traffic in recent years, train traffic along this corridor has become increasingly congested, leading to challenges in meeting on-time performance.
- Over the next 25 years, the population of the Willamette Valley is expected to grow by approximately 35 percent, reaching 3.6 million by 2035. During the same period, freight volume is expected to grow by 60 percent. These increases may result in rail service demand that exceeds Oregon's available freight and passenger rail capacity in the Willamette Valley.

Today, Amtrak and the state of Oregon make an annual investment in maintaining passenger rail service and safety on the Union Pacific Railroad-owned freight rail tracks connecting Portland, Salem, and Eugene. This investment is critical to preserve passenger rail access and keep the corridor active into the future. Because moving upward on the high speed rail development requires an increase in ridership, near-term investments that make service more efficient and attractive are critical to the long-term vision for high speed rail. In recent years, Oregon has made significant public investments in the rail system. However, these investments have been made using a variety of one-time funding sources with no dedicated revenue stream to support them. This leads to a lack of certainty about funding levels – an environment that is not conducive to effective long-term planning. Sustainable funding sources working in tandem with one-time funding sources, such as Oregon's multimodal *ConnectOregon* program, are required to maximize the utility of the rail system.

Once a funding source is in place, it can be used to leverage additional private and federal funding for rail projects. Examples are multimodal grants from Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) and the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) programs. Oregon's rail system has received some grants from these programs, but participation has been limited by lack of required state matching funds.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Synopsis:

Oregon has one of the highest rates of walking and bicycling in the country and the rate continues to grow as options increase. Safety is a key issue for active transportation in Oregon and while fatalities and serious injuries for people driving have declined, the rates for walking and bicycling have not. In addition, about 41% of automobile trips in Oregon are 3 miles or less making active transportation a viable option and one that would promote improved health for Oregonians. Key challenges include:

- Critical gaps exist within biking and walking network in both rural and urban areas. Of the 900 miles of urban highways in the state of Oregon, 37% lack sidewalks, and 40% lack bikeways, and a significant percentage lack curb-ramps and other features required for people with disabilities
- Many city and county roads across the state also face significant gaps in their bikeway and walkway networks due to a lack of needed funds. For example, 45-55% of regional trails, walkways, and bikeway in the Portland metro area are incomplete.

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- From 2007 to 2011, there were a total of 1,896 traffic fatalities in the state of Oregon, 250 of which were pedestrian fatalities.

Current funding levels do not keep pace with walking and biking investment needs. Existing money is primarily used to address the most significant safety issues and add minimal connections in the most critical areas. Some funding also goes to maintaining the existing system but is not sufficient to assure mobility is preserved across all walking and biking routes. Total need exceeds \$100 million annually.

At least some level of additional funding is needed. With as little as a 30% increase in annual spending, significant improvements to the walking and biking system could be possible. Critical connections could be made, along with a broader array of safety enhancements to making biking and walking more accessible, safe, and viable.

Public Transit Synopsis:

Oregon has a Public Transportation Investment Gap. Oregon's public transportation system needs to perform strategically to meet future mobility and growth-related challenges. Unstable, insufficient, and cobbled together resources are a barrier to success. Oregon needs to diversify revenue available to public transportation: the system is too dependent on federal sources for public transportation which restrict the investments necessary to meet Oregon's growing needs and strategic goals.

The following estimates will implement the recommendations suggested for the next 4 years for providing public transportation mobility needs of Oregonians through strategic use of the existing system.

- Special Transportation Statewide (\$59.5 million) will stabilize the current Special Transportation Fund Program for urban and rural areas to increase mobility options for seniors and people with disabilities.
 - Urban Systems. \$41 M will fund costs toward federally mandated service for people with disabilities. Urban systems will improve frequencies; add back evening and weekend service.
 - Statewide, Rural and Small Urban (Albany, Corvallis, Medford, Grants Pass, Bend, Milton-Freewater). 18.5 M will sustain the current average trips per year for seniors over 65 and persons with disability and keep up with a growing senior population.
- Rural and Small Urban General Public Transportation (\$22 M)
 - Medford (RVTB), Albany, Bend, Grants Pass, Corvallis and Milton-Freewater will draw all annual FTA funds set aside for them and make additional connections, expanded hours and frequencies.
 - Urban systems will establish electronic access to trip information for all populations and social service agencies.
 - Rural systems will provide hours and frequencies of service so that jobs access is possible for areas within community boundaries.

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- Rural and Small Urban Facilities (\$4.5 M)
 - 3 additional rural and small urban systems will have their own special purpose transit buildings to have efficient operations and maintenance of their vehicles and program management.
 - Pilot of technology and mobile data devices will be in place to connect rural vehicles with more efficient real time trip making and trip information.
- State of Good Repair (\$22 M)
 - Oregon's 1,000 public transportation vehicles will move from 50% and worsening annual average condition to improvement within 80 % federally defined "state of good repair."

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