

Public Transit

ODOT's Public Transit Division administers state and federal grant programs to help local jurisdictions provide rides to people that either need or choose to use public transit services. In the 2007-2009 biennium, **\$40 million in federal funds** and **\$21 million in state funds** were disbursed to transit programs throughout the state.

Oregonians took approximately **124.3 million annual rides** in urban transit districts and 3.4 million rides in rural areas during 2007 - 2009. People with special transportation needs (seniors and people with disabilities) took **3.4 million annual van or volunteer trips**. *Total trips provided averaged about 35 rides per Oregonian.*

Serving people with special needs

In the 2007-2009 biennium:

- Transit providers received about **\$16 million per year** in grants to address the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities.
- The division administered two special purpose federal grant programs specific to the work-related transportation needs of people with low incomes and people with disabilities, resulting in 17 grants for a combined total of approximately **\$2.5 million per year**.
- Local government, Indian tribes and nonprofit organizations purchased **149 transit vehicles** to improve and broaden service.
- PTD, in partnership with Association of Oregon Counties, provided assistance to local governments to prepare and adopt Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plans.

For the 2009-2011 biennium:

- The legislature approved the "Special Transportation Operating" program, providing an additional **\$10 million** in state general funds for projects targeting the operating costs of transit services benefiting older adults and people with disabilities.
- The legislature approved an additional **\$10 million** in Surface Transportation-Highway flexible funds for capital projects in special needs transportation including:
 - Replacing 200 old vehicles.
 - Improving three passenger shelters and one parking lot.
 - Purchasing equipment for transportation providers to improve transit service.

Expanding rural and urban options for everyone

- About **\$6.6 million per year** is granted to finance the cost of delivering bus service to the general public in small cities (those with population less than 50,000), in tribal communities and throughout other rural areas.
- Oregon's 38 small city and rural grant recipients are among 1,200 across the nation. Of these, only 12 are tribal governments, and one of the 12 is in Oregon. PTD is working with other tribes to learn about opportunities to provide public transportation services.
- PTD is assisting the City of Portland in the **purchase six contemporary streetcars** for a new extension of the popular Portland Streetcar network to Lloyd Center. The new streetcars are being built in Portland at the Milwaukee Iron Works and are estimated to **contribute to 300 Oregon jobs**.

- In 2008, PTD's Public Transportation Advisory Committee prioritized 13 transit project proposals seeking *ConnectOregon* funds. Five public transit projects representing an **\$11 million investment** were selected.

Alternatives to driving alone growing in popularity

PTD's Transportation Options (TO) program supports **multimodal transportation**, park-and-ride lots and "trips not taken" (i.e. telework and trip-chaining). Reducing auto trips means a reduction in:

- Congestion and delays.
- Greenhouse gas emissions.
- Commuting costs.

Reducing trips also builds road capacity, often at the least possible cost. And TO programs support public health by increasing activity levels (biking/walking) and reducing air pollution. Throughout Oregon, TO programs support the state's land use planning goals. Features include:

- Grants that support **four region rideshare programs**: Cherriots, Salem Area Mass Transit District; City of Corvallis; Commute Options of Central Oregon; and Cascades West Council of Governments, Albany.
- Start-up funds for **vanpools** in central Oregon and along the I-5 corridor, greatly reducing the number of vehicles on the busy interstate and U.S. 97. The vanpools

found ongoing funding and continue to reduce vehicle miles traveled per month by thousands (aggregate).

- A **statewide rideshare project**, in partnership with Washington and Idaho, that aims to reduce the number of drive-alone trips.
- The "Drive Less. Save More." campaign, which encourages people to reduce single-errand and drive-alone trips. Aggregate trip diaries report **1.5 million vehicle miles reduced**. In 2010, the program is expanding to cover more of the state.

Looking to the future

- PTD does statewide public transportation planning, provides guidance, and administers **\$600,000 in biennial grants** toward the transit planning efforts of Oregon's six Metropolitan Planning Organizations.
- PTD develops guidelines and manages planning grant resources and agreements for the non-urban area providers of public transportation.
- In coordination with ODOT's Civil Rights Office, PTD manages federal reporting requirements (including Title VI, disadvantaged business enterprises, and Americans with Disabilities Act) and provides guidance to sub-recipients.

To learn more about public transit in Oregon, visit www.oregon.gov/ODOT/PT/index.shtml.

Enhanced intercity transportation branches out

- About **\$2.8 million in federal funds** was used in 2009-2011 to fund vehicles, accessibility devices and intercity bus service connecting people living in rural communities to larger communities, the larger intercity bus network, and other transportation modes.
- PTD managed the rollout of the new POINT intercity bus program (free Wi-Fi):
 - New SouthWest POINT: covering Klamath Falls, Medford and Brookings
 - Improved High Desert POINT: covering Madras, Redmond, Bend and Chemult
 - Additional NorthWest POINT: covering Portland, Seaside and Astoria
- Find out more at www.oregon-point.com.