

Oregon Innovative Partnerships Program

In 2003, the Oregon Legislature created the Oregon Innovative Partnerships Program and gave it broad authority to explore public/private partnerships (PPPs) for “any undertaking that facilitates any mode of transportation in the state.”

This program is charged with:

- augmenting traditional state funding resources with new sources of revenue;
- accessing development capital from private sources;
- tapping into private financial expertise on innovative financing options;
- engaging entrepreneurial approaches to project development; and
- accelerating project delivery.

Key elements:

- It allows private sector partners to enter transportation project development early in the process.
- It permits ODOT to solicit proposals or accept unsolicited proposals for transportation projects from private firms or government units.
- It exempts the program from most requirements of the state procurement law so partners can be selected based on a best value rather than lowest bid.
- It provides for formation of special funding districts to raise revenues for transportation projects within the district.
- It creates a special “holding” account, called the Oregon Transportation Enterprise Fund, to help finance public/private transportation projects.
- It authorizes bonding of transportation project revenue under a public/private agreement.
- It gives ODOT expanded authority to use eminent domain to allow private sector ownership of project facilities.

The Innovative Partnerships Program is reviewing the feasibility of several potential partnership projects, including:

- The Solar Highway — a pilot project launched in 2008 involves installing privately owned solar panels on public rights of way (along selected Oregon roadways) and facilities, wherein ODOT will buy the power generated and begin the shift to renewable energy;
- Alternative Fuels Distribution Corridor — using ODOT right of way and other property to dispense non-fossil fuels, increasing availability and demand of these growing commodities;
- Charging network — establishing a network of charging stations for electric vehicles to encourage and accelerate private investment to convert to electric vehicles; and
- Columbia River Crossing — exploring the proposed Portland-Vancouver bridge replacement project as a possible PPP.

ODOT’s Innovative Partnerships Program will continue to carry out its legislative mandate to explore opportunities for public/private partnerships. Anytime a potential transportation project shows benefits for Oregonians, ODOT may turn to this valuable tool to help implement it in a timely, cost-effective manner. For more information about the program, visit: www.oregon.gov/HWY/OIPP.

Partnerships have a long history in Oregon, especially when it comes to transportation. In 1859, a party of pioneers set out in search of a route over the Cascades. They largely followed trails used by Native Americans. When they returned from their journey, they proclaimed success and joined with local ranchers to form the toll-funded Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Wagon Road Company. To go from Sweet Home to the Deschutes River using the route, it cost a rider and horse \$.75.