



Oregon Public Transportation Plan

Executive Summary



The Oregon Public Transportation Plan is available online at:
<https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Planning/Pages/Plans.aspx>

Oregon Department of Transportation
Transportation Development Division, Planning Section
555 13th Street NE, Suite 2
Salem, OR 97301-4178
(503) 986-4121

For more public transportation related information, contact:
Oregon Department of Transportation
Rail and Public Transportation Division
555 13th Street NE, Suite 3
Salem, OR 97301-4178
503-986-3300



A New Vision for Public Transportation in Oregon

This executive summary highlights key elements in the 2018 Oregon Public Transportation Plan (OPTP), which is the end result of a two-year process informed by research, committee deliberations, and valuable input from public transit providers and riders, and many other stakeholders, including Oregonians from throughout the state and all walks of life.

Over the life of this plan, intended to provide guidance for up to 25 years, Oregon and its transportation system will see many changes. Oregon's population will grow and demographics will shift; new technology will influence transportation, with options on the horizon such as alternative fuels, connected vehicles, and advances not even yet imagined. This plan considers those trends and others, and delivers a long-term vision describing how Oregonians expect public transportation to contribute to their communities and to the transportation system statewide.

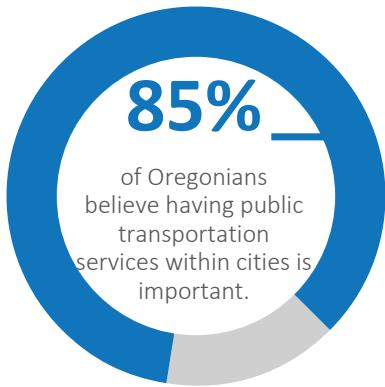
Vision for Public Transportation

In 2045, public transportation is an integral, interconnected component of Oregon's transportation system that makes Oregon's diverse cities, towns, and communities work. Because public transportation is convenient, affordable, and efficient, it helps further the state's quality of life and economic vitality and contributes to the health and safety of all residents, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



Increasing the role of transit and other forms of multi-passenger public transportation is an essential common element in most prescriptions for achieving many of Oregon's statewide goals: fostering a strong statewide economy; increasing freight mobility; preparing for large-scale emergencies; discouraging sprawl; improving public health; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; conserving energy; and advancing mobility equity across the state. This new OPTP provides guidance for decisions about enhancing public transportation services through the year 2045. If this long-range plan is fully embraced and aggressively implemented by both rural and urban public agencies and service providers, all parts of Oregon can be even more pleasant, more robust places to live than they are today.

David Lohman, City of Ashland, OPTP Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Chairman



Why Create a Public Transportation Plan?

Oregonians take over 100 million public transportation trips each year. In both urban and rural areas, these trips get people to jobs and medical appointments, offer choices for residents and visitors alike, and provide options that reduce the environmental impacts of the transportation system as well as congestion in Oregon's busy metropolitan areas. Public transportation is vital to the state's economy and the well-being of its people. This plan considers the benefits of a well-connected, efficient public transportation system and offers a framework to help cities, counties, transit providers, tribes, and the state make smart investment choices.



I appreciate the plan's ability to demonstrate the connections between providing resources for public transportation and the opportunity to increase economic and community vitality. Ensuring a holistic approach to transportation planning, which considers the impact on economic development, ensures that our public transportation system provides employers the ability to attract and retain workers and enhances accessibility for individuals to access jobs.

Amanda Hoey, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, PAC Member



On average, public transportation users **take 30% more steps each day** compared to those who don't use public transportation.

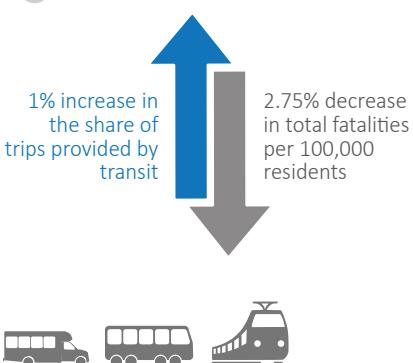
The Many Benefits of a Strong Public Transportation System

Public transportation connects people and places in both urban and rural areas. As a reliable commute option, it supports economic vitality by attracting businesses and workers. It enables rural residents to travel for jobs and services. It improves community health by supporting a more active lifestyle and by reducing congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Across the state, an efficient public transportation system also improves the movement of trucks and commercial vehicles by freeing up roadway capacity. Transit discourages sprawl and encourages efficient land uses. Public transportation can also enhance the ability to prepare for and respond to emergencies and natural disasters, in particular with evacuations and recovery.

Public transportation is an important tool for making access to opportunity more equitable, including employment, education, and other community resources. Public transportation is an alternative to private automobiles for youth, older adults, and people with disabilities who cannot drive, and it provides affordable transportation for people with lower incomes.

A strong public transportation system also enhances safety for all transportation users. When use of public transportation increases in a community, crash rates tend to decline for everyone, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit passengers.



Investing in more reliable, convenient, affordable, and clean public transportation is one of the most important investments we can make as a state. Transit helps people with transportation barriers (such as Oregonians with low incomes and those who are unable to drive because of age or disability) meet their daily needs and participate in their communities. It also improves air quality and reduces our impact on the climate. The OPTP is the “bus route” for equity and opportunity and for a cleaner, healthier environment.

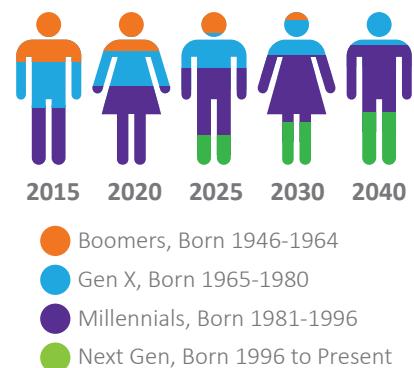
Chris Hagerbaumer, Oregon Environmental Council, Technical Advisory Committee Member



Evaluating the Trends

Communities throughout Oregon are working to meet growing needs and reflect the changing travel preferences of the population. Understanding trends is critical, and the plan looks in-depth at key trends affecting public transportation today as well as into the future:

- **Oregon is growing rapidly.** The state’s population has increased by about 1 million new residents since the first OPTP was adopted in 1997. Oregon is expected to grow by a million more people by 2045, with the greatest increase in urban areas.
- **Younger and older riders rely on public transportation.** Increasingly, older adults are using public transportation, and many depend on it for transportation. In addition, younger generations are driving less and relying on a broader range of transportation options, while youth need service to schools, after-school programs, and jobs.
- **Both minority and low-income populations are more likely to use public transportation.** Demand for public transportation service tends to increase with any growth in either of these populations, or transportation disadvantaged groups.
- **Increasing costs make keeping up with service needs difficult.** Costs to purchase, operate, and maintain vehicles continue to rise. This makes it difficult to sustain existing services, let alone expand.



As Millennials continue to comprise a greater share of the adult population and work force, their transportation preferences will have an outsized influence on the need for public transportation service.



The new OPTP strives to create a statewide public transportation network, and help the state and local communities develop transit options that best meet their need. A foundational element of the this plan is a desire to think of transit much like a universal public utility that warrants a level of service that is appropriate to each community.

People in rural communities are often without means of transportation much like those in urban areas, but this is often complicated by distance, making rural connections within town and to regional centers all the more important. The OPTP recognizes those challenges and will help measure success for rural areas in ways that may not be considered “success” in a dense urban area.

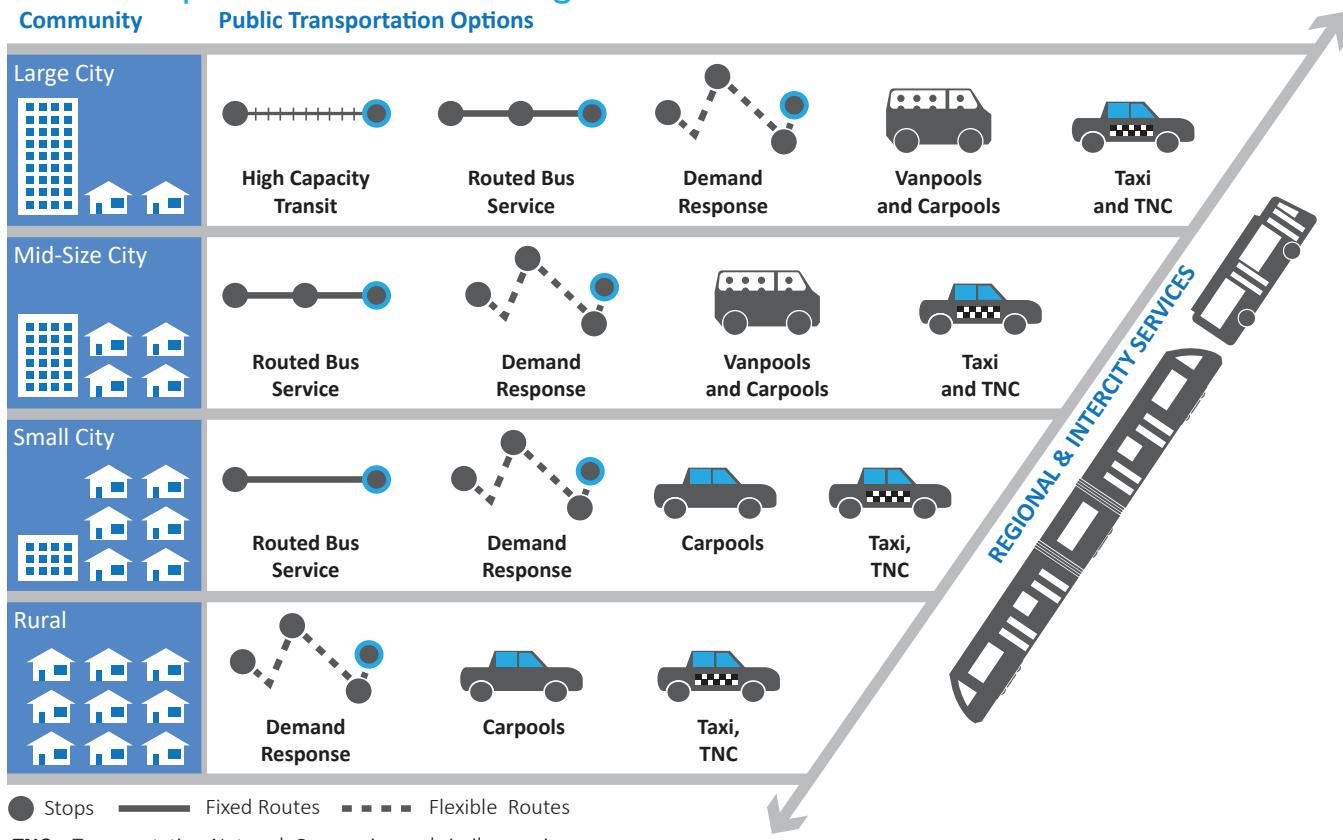
J.D. Tovey, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, PAC Member

Today: Where We Are

Oregon has a number of public transportation districts in addition to various city, county, private nonprofit, private for-profit, and tribal public transportation service providers. The work of the public providers is complemented by private companies and nonprofit entities that deliver transportation to the public. Examples include Greyhound and Bolt buses, taxis, airport shuttles, and others such as senior centers, churches, and human service providers that offer special transportation services for their clients.

The OPTP establishes statewide policies and strategies relating to traditional public transportation, and considers the relationship of the traditional services to others such as taxis, transportation network companies (TNCs, including Uber and Lyft), carsharing, carpools, and vanpooling. Services respond to the needs of individual communities, considering unique constraints and characteristics such as population, development patterns, prior investment decisions, and available funding. This results in a wide variety of public transportation services throughout the state. In general, services tend to get more numerous and more complex as the size of the community grows. Below is a chart showing the different types of public transportation you might find in communities across Oregon.

Public Transportation Services in Oregon



Opportunities and Challenges for Oregon Public Transportation

The OPTP responds to challenges and opportunities for public transportation that were identified and discussed throughout the plan development process, including:

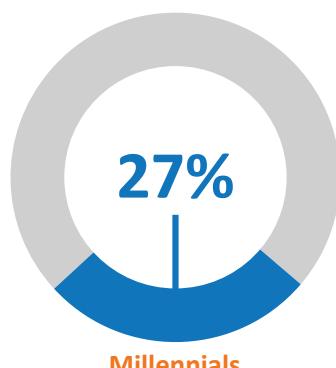
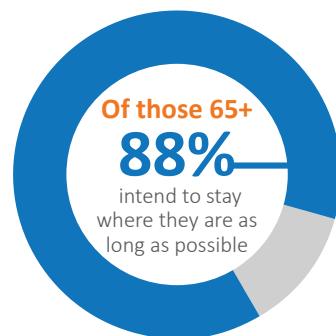
- A need for **enhanced collaboration and coordination** throughout transportation planning and service delivery. This includes coordination at multiple levels: community to community, provider to provider, and among local, tribal, regional, state, and federal agencies. Collaboration and integrated planning can make systems seamless and efficient by leveraging strengths and resources.
- **Improving regional and intercity connections** would benefit visitors and Oregonians who travel to other places for jobs, services, or other needs. Potential improvements include websites that share information about connections between multiple systems; one-call centers to facilitate trips; mobility hubs where multiple services meet; and creative partnerships, such as among providers, businesses, and institutions, to find opportunities for more efficient services.
- **Changing technology**, new information systems, connected and automated vehicles, fare payment methods, and new fuels and safety features can help public transportation be more efficient and easier for riders to use.
- Improving **connections for pedestrians and bicycle riders to public transportation**, known as the first/last mile connection, is essential for public transportation to function. This includes improved sidewalks and safe crossings, as well as potential hubs with multiple modes and mobility solutions sharing a facility.

Our Future: Goals, Policies, and Strategies to Guide the Way

The goals, policies, and strategies of the Oregon Public Transportation Plan support the vision for the future and provide a path towards achieving the vision.

Each goal is accompanied in the plan by policies and strategies that respond to today's opportunities while considering trends that may affect public transportation in the future. The goals, policies, and strategies are designed to be adaptable to local conditions throughout the state, and to provide guidance as communities and the transportation system change over time.

The numbers tell the story:



have become America's largest generation, representing

27% of Oregonians and they generally drive less than their parents and regularly use multiple transportation modes.

America's rural population is declining, but there has been an 8.6% increase in per-capita rural ridership over the past 8 years.

A graphic showing a grey downward arrow pointing down next to a blue upward arrow pointing up, indicating a contradiction between the two statements.

Oregon Public Transportation Plan Goals



Goal 1: Mobility - Public Transportation User Experience

People of all ages, abilities, and income levels move reliably and conveniently between destinations using an affordable, well-coordinated public transportation system. People in Oregon routinely use public transportation to meet their daily needs.



Goal 2: Accessibility and Connectivity - Getting from Here to There

Riders experience user-friendly and convenient public transportation connections to and between services and travel modes in urban, suburban, rural, regional, and interstate areas.



Goal 3: Community Livability and Economic Vitality

Public transportation promotes community livability and economic vitality by efficiently and effectively moving people of all ages to and from homes, jobs, businesses, schools and colleges, and other destinations in urban, suburban, and rural areas.



Goal 4: Equity

Public transportation provides affordable, safe, efficient, and equitable transportation to jobs, services, and key destinations, improving quality of life for all Oregonians.



Goal 5: Health

Public transportation fosters improved health of Oregonians by promoting clean air, enhancing connections between people, enabling access to services such as health care and goods such as groceries, and by giving people opportunities to integrate physical activity into everyday life through walking and bicycling to and from public transportation.



Goal 6: Safety and Security

Public transportation trips are safe; riders feel safe and secure during their travel. Public transportation contributes to the resilience of Oregon communities.



Goal 7: Environmental Sustainability

Public transportation contributes to a healthy environment and climate by moving more people with efficient, low-emission vehicles, reducing greenhouse gases and other pollutants.



Goal 8: Land Use

Public transportation is a tool that supports Oregon's state and local land use goals and policies. Agencies collaborate to ensure public transportation helps shape great Oregon communities providing efficient and effective travel options in urban, suburban, and rural areas.



Goal 9: Funding and Strategic Investment

Strategic investment in public transportation supports the overall transportation system, the economy, and Oregonians' quality of life. Sustainable and reliable funding enables public transportation services and infrastructure to meet public needs.



Goal 10: Communication, Collaboration, and Coordination

Public and private transportation providers and all levels of government within the state and across state boundaries work collaboratively and foster partnerships that make public transportation seamless regardless of jurisdiction.



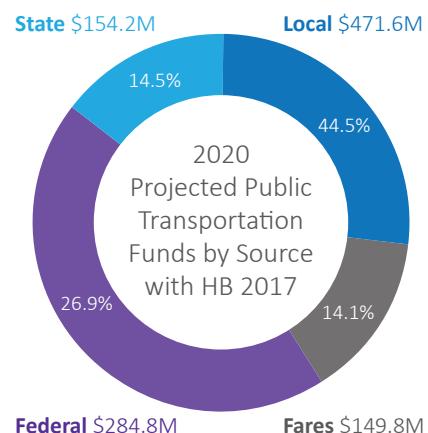
Funding and Investment

Each provider is unique, and so is each provider's particular mix of funding; sources reflect agency type, location, services offered, and other variables. Overall, Oregon's public transportation system is funded by a mix of local, state, and federal funding programs, in addition to transit system-generated revenues such as passenger fares, advertising revenue, and building leases. The graph at right shows the projected statewide funding mix for 2020, when the Keep Oregon Moving Act is fully implemented.

Funding amounts vary from year to year and do not meet all statewide needs. In local government budgets, as well as the state budget, public transportation services compete for funds with many other infrastructure and service needs. One key component of each investment scenario is that any new funding remains supported by existing revenue sources rather than replacing them.

In 2017, the state legislature passed the Keep Oregon Moving Act. It provides a new and consistent source of funds for public transportation. This is a very important investment that will enable service improvements throughout the state, but it still does not meet all needs, and will not achieve the OPTP vision. The inset on the new law explains the new funding source.

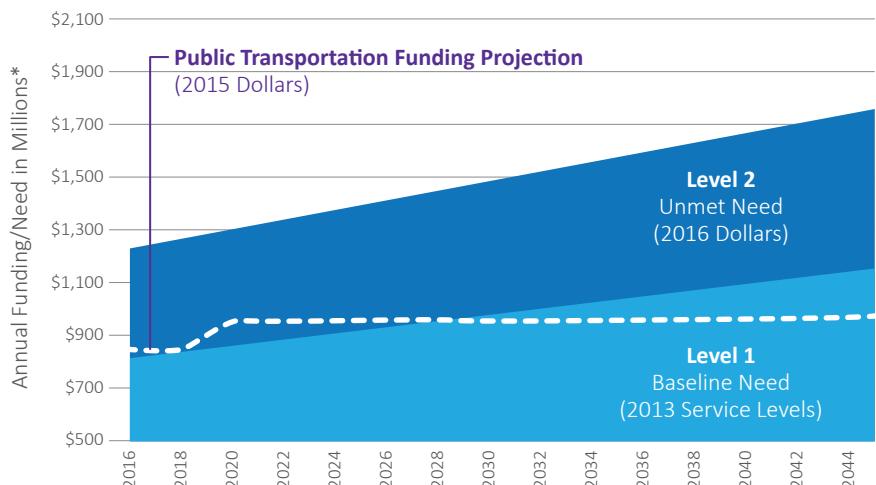
The OPTP studies public transportation needs in terms of how well investment levels can maintain at least the current level of transit service per person in the state. Level one is maintaining current service levels, and level two reflects raising service levels in communities to at least the average level of service in Oregon communities of similar size (see the OPTP for more details). The graph at right shows how the current funding projection, including the new Keep Oregon Moving Act funds, helps keep up with population growth for about ten years, but then funding starts to fall below the amount needed to maintain today's level of service per person.



Keep Oregon Moving Act

The Keep Oregon Moving Act provides ongoing funding for public transportation through a statewide employee payroll tax of 0.10 percent. This tax is anticipated to generate approximately \$100 million for public transportation after it fully takes effect, increasing to \$140 million annually by 2024. Most of this funding is designated for local providers to develop and operate public transportation services.

Oregon Public Transportation Funding and Needs



*All figures are corrected to 2016 purchasing power

Investment Scenarios

Achieving the plan's vision of a reliable, interconnected system will require significant investment and cooperation. Because today's level of available funding does not adequately support implementing the plan's vision, there are several investment scenarios in the plan that provide a snapshot of how the public transportation system might look given progressively increasing levels of investment. They describe possible paths for incremental development of the system.

Costs to provide service are increasing over time and therefore, despite efficiencies gained through partnerships, technology, and other solutions, the level of funding available strongly affects outcomes. Exploring these outcomes, the OOPTP investment scenarios represent a continuum of services and improvements corresponding with different levels of investment. The examples described in the scenarios reflect the plan goals and policies. Following the plan strategies, they emphasize first preserving current service, then improving frequency and reliability, and finally adding services to meet further transportation needs.

It's important to note: The OOPTP does not direct investments. Instead, it serves as a framework to support local decisions and investment choices that reflect community values, characteristics, and system needs. The investment scenarios describe examples of possible outcomes of investment at three increasing levels. All investment scenarios assume that the various current local, state, and federal funding sources continue into the future, growing moderately, in proportion to population growth.

Scenario 1: Preservation and Critical Improvements. Current funding, including new funding from the Keep Oregon Moving Act, and modest increases in other sources.

- If funding is maintained at current levels, some improvements will be made to the system but these will not keep up with population for long. Service will again fall behind demand, become less attractive to riders, and not successfully support livable communities or economic development over time.

Scenario 2: Expanding Services. Ambitious funding, assuming twice the funding from the Keep Oregon Moving Act is available, in addition to modest increases in other sources.

- If more is invested, the system can be maintained and expanded, meeting more needs, improving service, and encouraging more trips on public transportation, but it may not serve all the trips people might like to take via transit.



Scenario 3: Realizing the Vision. Aspirational scenario, assuming additional investment that funds most public transportation needs.

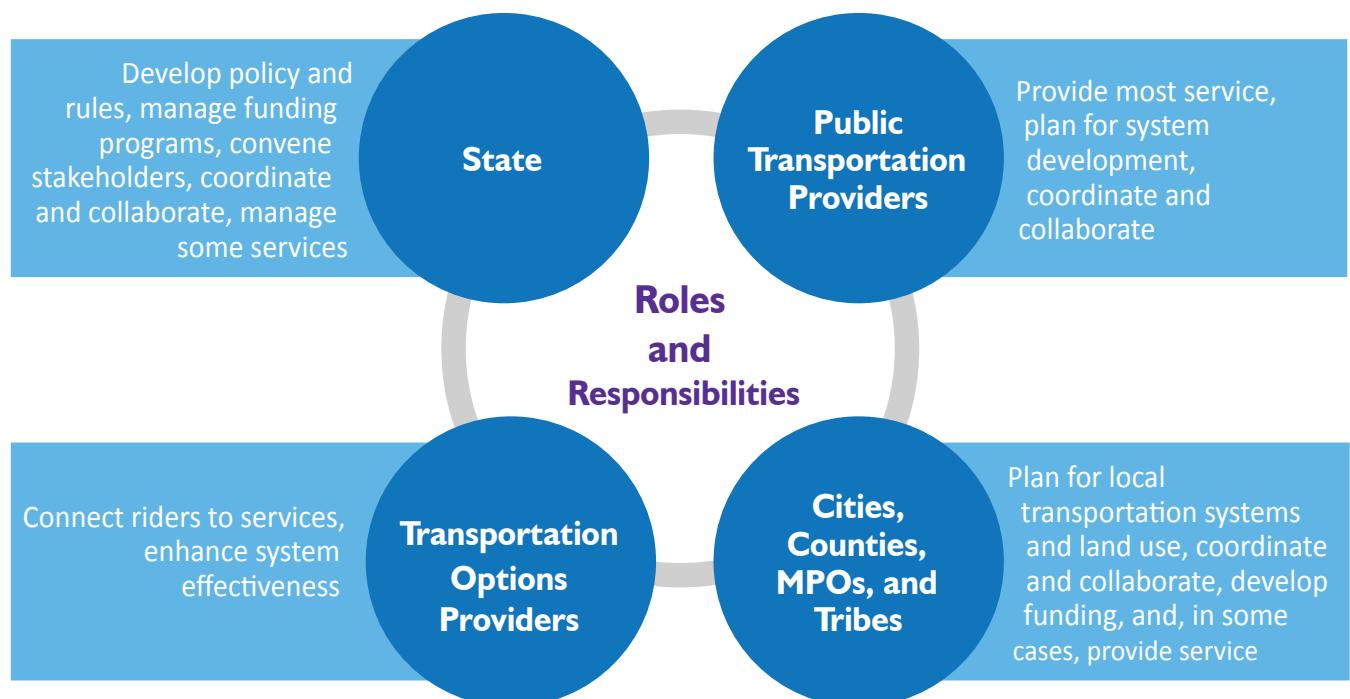
- If funding is substantially increased, and those funds are strategically invested to meet needs and improve service, the system can approach the OPTP vision and provide public transportation services that meet the needs of Oregonians.

A Starting Point

Working together is critical to achieving the OPTP's vision and goals. Local providers, state and federal agencies, cities, counties, regional governments, tribes, private transportation operators, and other public transportation stakeholders, all have different and important roles to play in OPTP implementation. The participation of all these stakeholders will be essential to the success of the OPTP. Responsibility for implementing policies and strategies may shift over time, as funding, policy, or organizational responsibilities evolve. The following graphic shows the typical roles for several key participants in the public transportation system. Ongoing relationships and coordinated efforts by these participants are needed for an optimal public transportation system.

Investment Scenario Themes

- Service increased in frequency, extensions and new routes when needed.
- Improved connections and fewer missing links.
- Increased use of technology for safety, communications and rider information, fare payment, lower emissions.
- Improved coordination between providers and local and state agencies.





The implementation of this plan is really going to be about forging partnerships with agencies and others that embrace shared goals. Developing this plan brought together different agencies and different interests. We learned a lot from one another, and the OPTP reflects all those interests coming together. For example, the Land Conservation and Development Commission works on land use, and there is a section of the plan that addresses how public transportation and land use interests can work together and support one another's goals. If we use our resources in disparate or uncoordinated ways going forward, we will not achieve the OPTP goals.

Robin McArthur, Land Conservation and Development Commission, PAC Member

Key Initiatives

Key initiatives respond to important themes emphasized by stakeholders throughout OPTP development and serve as a starting point for implementing the OPTP. The initiatives address multiple goals, are critical to OPTP implementation, and require further development. While the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) may be able to initiate some short-term work related to these initiatives, most will require long-term effort and collaboration among multiple partners.



Public Transportation Plan Integration

This key initiative promotes an effective, efficient, and seamless public transportation system, building on the need to plan for transportation together. The focus is to help agencies further integrate their planning activities and coordinate efforts throughout their organizations. ODOT will look for ways to assist local agencies and providers with these efforts.

Regional and Intercity Service

Regional and intercity public transportation emerged as an important topic throughout OPTP development. This key initiative considers how best to provide public transportation service between cities and regions as well as connecting Oregon communities to other states. ODOT's statewide perspective can assist providers, help fill gaps, and promote a logical system that links areas throughout the state.



Public Transportation Technology

Transportation technology is rapidly changing and will undoubtedly have an impact on public transportation. This key initiative focuses on efforts to better understand and effectively use that technology to help Oregonians meet routine needs via public transportation. The OPTP provides a flexible framework to enable ODOT, local governments, and providers to adapt to these changes as they occur.



We are moving forward into the future where we are going to see big changes. We need a relevant starting point, and we need a dynamic plan that doesn't lock us into the technologies or the solutions of today but must remain relevant to the changing needs of our communities. This plan is that starting point.

Stephen Dickey, Salem-Keizer Cherriots, PAC Member

Successfully implementing the OPTP will include working together with coordinated actions responding to the goals, policies, and strategies, and advancing the key initiatives such that:

- Public transportation supports healthy, equitable, and thriving Oregon communities, economies, and individuals.
- Public transportation is easy to use and a viable option for many trips.
- People for whom public transportation is essential can meet their needs on transit.
- Public transportation is routinely considered in planning and development decisions.

Tracking Progress

Performance measures provide a means to track progress with regard to the OPTP's goals, policies, and strategies, the key initiatives described above, and plan implementation and general outcomes. OPTP performance measures are designed to be used at a statewide level; they complement and do not replace local performance measures tracked and reported by providers. The OPTP performance measures are listed to the right; read more about them in the plan.

OPTP Performance Measures

- Statewide public transportation ridership per capita.
- Public transportation revenue hours per capita.
- Cost per boarding for fixed route service (adjusted for inflation).
- Percent of public transportation vehicle fleet that is low- or zero-emission.
- Transit vehicle condition: percent of public transit buses exceeding useful life.



The OPTP is important because we now have a current vision for public transportation that reflects the perspectives of stakeholders and the public throughout Oregon. The OPTP represents a work plan for ODOT and our regional and local partners to get to that vision; and now there is also a consistent source of funding to start that work. There is a new, clear future for public transportation in the State of Oregon, and I look forward to being part of new services, connections, and technologies that will provide opportunities for people throughout the state.

Hal Gard, ODOT Rail and Transit Division Administrator

Moving Forward Together

The OPTP sets a path forward for maintaining and improving the public transportation system across the state. It calls for further integrating public transportation with the transportation system and for making its use a convenient, easy, reliable choice.

Realizing the vision, reaching the goals, and successfully implementing the policies and strategies will require a new level of collaboration between all of the agencies and stakeholders that fund, develop, and operate the public transportation system.

Working closely together will be required, but accomplishing the OPTP vision for public transportation will benefit everyone, communities, businesses, residents, and visitors alike. Progress toward the vision benefits anyone who values a safe, economically vital state with healthy, vibrant communities where all can meet their travel needs with a variety of efficient transportation options.

You are invited to read the OPTP online, and thank you for your support of Oregon's public transportation system!



Acknowledgments

The OPTP is the result of the dedication and thoughtful contributions of the public; local, regional, and state agency staff statewide, and the OPTP Policy Advisory Committee members:

David Lohman – Oregon Transportation Commission (Chair)

Craig Campbell – AAA Oregon

Stephen Dickey – Cherriots (Salem-Keizer Transit)

Ben Duncan – Multnomah County

Karen Girard, Heather Gramp, and Steve White – Oregon Health Authority

Amanda Hoey – Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

Sharon Konopa – City of Albany

Robin McArthur, Bill Holmstrom, and Matt Crall – Land Conservation and Development Commission and Department of Land Conservation and Development

Neil McFarland and Kate Lyman – TriMet

Jeff Monson – Commute Options

Susan Morgan – Association of Oregon Counties

Tonia Moro – Rogue Valley Transit District and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Cosette Rees – Lane Transit District

Bob Russell – Oregon Trucking Association

Lisa Scherf – City of Corvallis

John David (JD) Tovey – Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Elaine Wells – Ride Connection

The Oregon Transportation Commission adopted the OPTP in September 2018. The Oregon Transportation Commission members were:

Tammy Baney, Chair

Alando Simpson

Sean O'Hollaren

Bob Van Brocklin

Martin Callery

The OPTP and additional information is available online at:

<https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Planning/Pages/Plans.aspx>

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