Rebuilding Our Transportation Vision Draft Subgroup Problem Statements

Purpose

The draft subgroup problem statements are intended to provide a starting place and initial framing for each subgroup's work. They are not final recommendations and are not intended to limit discussion by the Vision Workgroup or subgroup. Rather, they are meant to help clarify the condition, gap, or pressure each subgroup is being asked to examine and the impacts if that issue is not addressed.

Taken together, the subgroup problem statements are intended to help the Vision Workgroup understand needs, impacts, and tradeoffs across Oregon's full transportation system, including state and local roads and bridges, transit, passenger rail, biking and walking facilities, freight movement, and the people and businesses that rely on the system.

Each goal statement identifies the intended focus of the subgroup's work and the type of input the subgroup is expected to provide to the Vision Workgroup.

Relationship to the Subgroup Charge

The subgroup charge establishes the shared expectations, process, scenarios, decision lens, deliverables, and timeline for all subgroups. Because each subgroup covers a different topic area, the draft problem and goal statements provide additional specificity about the issue each subgroup is being asked to examine and the type of input it should develop for the Vision Workgroup.

Draft Problem and Goal Statements

Funding Tools and Financial Scenarios

Problem: Transportation funding is limited and often prescriptive, and there is not a clear, consolidated picture of current and potential funding options, their allowable uses, and the level of transportation service, investment or transportation goals they could realistically support.

Goal: Develop a potential set of transportation funding and finance options, evaluating each source based on criteria such as revenue potential and affordability to provide an unbiased, comprehensive list of options for consideration.

Maintenance, Operations, Preservation, and Emergency Response

Problem: Over 37 billion vehicle miles were traveled on Oregon's roads in 2024, adding wear and tear to an already aging system. Costs to keep roads in a state of good repair far outpace available funds and system conditions are rapidly declining. As maintenance and preservation fall behind, Oregon drivers will experience rougher roads, more delays, more closures and restrictions, and less reliable travel across the state.

When Oregon cannot keep roads, bridges, culverts, traffic systems, and maintenance facilities in fair or better condition, small problems become more expensive rebuilds. Staffing levels have dropped at the same time that extreme weather events are increasing and seasonal conditions are making it even more challenging to keep roads open, safe, and restore reliable travel after crashes, storms, slides, snow, or wildfire.

Goal: Define what level of service Oregonians should expect, what must be protected first, and what funding is needed to maintain and operate a safe, reliable transportation system.

Community Livability and Safety Programs

Problem: Oregon's roads are some of the most unsafe in the nation. Crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians have increased. Unsafe biking and walking conditions exist due to gaps in sidewalks, bikeways, and crossings.

At the same time, many Oregonians cannot drive or choose not to drive, do not have reliable access to a car, or have limited mobility. These gaps also impact people's ability to get to critical destinations such as schools, transit stops, downtowns, jobs, and shopping.

Goal: Identify essential funding programs and any increases needed to reduce transportation fatalities and serious injuries and address critical gaps within the multimodal system.

Major Project Funding and Delivery

Problem: Major transportation projects are challenging to prioritize, fund and deliver. Costs have grown beyond original estimates, funding is episodic, there is no effective process to prioritize and sequence projects, delivery capacity is limited, and accountability systems are not consistent or well-developed.

Without a more disciplined approach, major projects will remain underfunded, will crowd out basic system needs, will lose public and legislative trust, and won't be delivered on time and on budget.

Goal: Identify how major projects should be advanced, what funding or financing would be needed, what tradeoffs they create for the broader system, and what accountability measures are needed to improve delivery, cost control, and public trust. Recommend changes to current processes to identify, develop and build major projects.

Transit and Passenger Rail

Problem: Transit and passenger rail provide essential connections for people traveling to jobs, school, health care, and daily needs, while offering alternatives to driving that can reduce congestion, improve air quality, and improve safety. Nearly one in four Oregonians cannot drive because of age, disability, income, or other barriers, making reliable transit and passenger rail especially important for access to daily needs. However, many riders still face limited schedules, long waits between trips, and few evening, weekend, rural, or intercity options. As costs rise, almost all transit providers across the state have already made cuts. Without stable funding, additional service reductions, fare increases, delayed vehicle replacement, and declining reliability could leave many Oregonians with fewer safe and affordable travel options.

Goal: Understand future funding projections and challenges. Define funding and support needed to sustain existing service levels and make critical improvements. Identify potential funding options to recommend to the Funding Tools and Financial Scenarios subgroup.

Freight Mobility

Problem: Oregon's freight network includes highway, rail, and intermodal connections that move goods across the state and to national and global markets. Oregon has several freight truck bottlenecks, including two that rate in the top 50 in the nation. This congestion creates delays that increase costs and make trips unreliable. Weight-restricted bridges further affect the freight industry through lengthy and costly detours. Truck parking is limited and presents safety issues. On the multimodal freight system, capacity generally exists on other modes but infrastructure conditions and travel times can be restrictive.

Goal: Prioritize investments to improve the safe and reliable multimodal movement of goods throughout Oregon to help foster a strong economy. Share recommendations with the maintenance and operations and major projects subgroups, noting freight-related impacts and dependencies.