

Community priorities drive ODOT decision on federal funds

What is the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act?

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is a big federal investment in transportation and infrastructure passed by Congress in 2021.

From 2022 to 2026, Oregon will receive \$1.2 billion in new funds for projects including roads, bridges, transit, footpaths, bike paths, climate mitigation and electric vehicle charging. \$800 million is directed to specific areas but \$400 million is flexible funding. This means it can be spent on any transportation-related projects.

How did ODOT engage the public?

After passage of the IIJA, ODOT and the Oregon Transportation Commission engaged hundreds of Oregonians from across the state to hear how they would like to invest these resources to improve Oregon's transportation system and communities. ODOT held conversations with advisory committees, hosted multiple webinars, and talked to many others to seek input on priority investments.

ODOT used this input to develop four options or scenarios for how to use the flexible funds. Scenario 1 prioritized fixing existing infrastructure, Scenario 2 focused on public and active transportation, Scenario 3 prioritized building new infrastructure and Scenario 4 split funds evenly between these three categories.

To get public comment on the options, ODOT engaged its advisory committees, hosted an online open house in which over 500 people participated, and reached out to marginalized communities whose voices are typically not heard in decision-making processes. The Commission received hundreds of written and verbal comments and held three meetings on the topic. Ultimately, ODOT and the Commission heard from over a thousand Oregonians about their priorities for using these federal resources.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT OF 2021

A big investment in Oregon's transportation system



BRIDGES



EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE



CARBON REDUCTION



RESILIENCE



SAFETY



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION



LOCAL PRIORITIES



TRANSIT



PASSENGER RAIL



DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

Equitable engagement: Intentionally including historically and currently marginalized communities

The IJA represented a unique opportunity to engage equitably with communities across Oregon and elevate the voices of those who have been historically excluded from ODOT decision-making.

ODOT made an intentional and targeted effort to reach out to groups who have been excluded based on age, race, income, disability, language (limited English proficiency), and income. Engagement methods included:

- Three online focus groups
- A presentation and Q&A by ODOT leadership to the Governor’s Racial Justice Council
- An online town hall with Latino/a/x leaders
- An online open house translated into Spanish.
- A survey in English and Spanish of Latino community members.
- A survey in English and Spanish of BIPOC community members and COBID-certified businesses.

We learned that the priorities of certain marginalized groups were similar to the general population. However, members of these groups cared more strongly about fixing existing roads and making urban highways safer.

The final OTC decision closely matched the priorities of historically and currently marginalized groups.

How will the money be spent?

Throughout this public engagement, two key themes arose: support for investments in transportation options that advance equity, improve multimodal mobility, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support for repairing deteriorated roads and bridges.

On March 30th, after careful and deep consideration of the feedback gained from community stakeholders, local governments, employees, and leaders from across Oregon, the Commission decided on a final option that focuses on public and active transportation, and fixing existing transportation infrastructure.

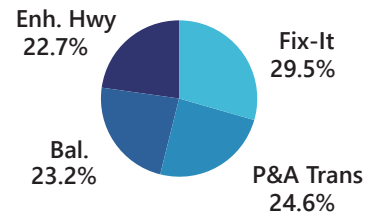
The Commission also asked for the creation of a new Innovative Mobility Program. This program will receive \$10 million in IJA funds and \$10 million in state funds to improve access to alternative transportation options like electric bike lending libraries, cycling training and safety programs, and subsidized van-pools.

These are the total spending allocations for flexible funds:

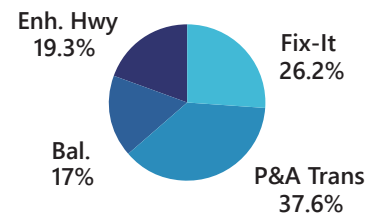
- \$95 million for improving accessibility for individuals with disabilities.
- \$30 million to fund new Safe Routes to Schools projects.
- \$15 million to assist local governments to reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions by planning climate-friendly communities.
- \$50 million to transform state-owned urban highways to reflect their status as community main streets and to make them safer to use for people walking and biking.
- \$10 million to fund a new mobility program that will work directly with community-based organizations to fund micro-mobility efforts with equity as a central priority.

Funding options and level of priority

RESPONDENTS OF COLOR DATA



GENERAL POPULATION DATA



- \$75 million to repair damaged and unsafe roadways in Oregon.
- \$7 million for business and workforce development to help grow small construction contracting firms and to increase the size and diversity of the construction workforce.
- \$50 million for highway and interchange improvements to reduce congestion and improve freight mobility.
- \$40 million in matching funds to help Oregon compete effectively for billions of dollars in competitive federal grant opportunities.
- \$40 million to fund maintenance and operations activities.

Total federal investment

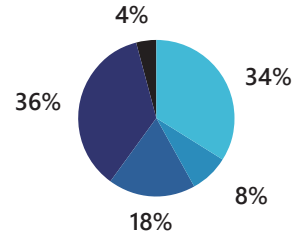
The \$412 million in flexible funds were only about a third of the additional federal funding coming to Oregon for transportation improvements. Now that these funds have been allocated, we have a better picture of how all of this new federal funding will be spent.

What happens next?

Over the next few years, ODOT will identify, prioritize, and build many new projects using IIJA funds. We want to make sure that all communities are equitably included at every step in the process, from initial project and program planning to project and program completion and maintenance.

If you would like to participate in future engagement, or just keep up with the latest developments you can email ODOT’s Office of Social Equity at SocialEquity@odot.oregon.gov.

FUNDING ALLOCATION OF NEW FEDERAL FUNDS



- Sustainable and equitable transportation investments
- Americans with Disabilities Act improvements
- Safety, local priorities, and other investments
- Highway, bridge, and other maintenance and repair projects
- Highway enhancements

For questions:

Office of Social Equity
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