

Innovative Mobility Pilot Program, DRAFT

March 23, 2022

Background

The Oregon Transportation Commission has directed ODOT to develop a pilot Innovative Mobility Program that will provide grants to community-based organizations and government agencies for innovative public and active transportation programs and projects that will enhance sustainable and equitable mobility.

The Innovative Mobility Pilot Program (IMPP) would significantly expand ODOT's ability to leverage private and other public funds through partnerships with certified non-profits, local agencies, transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, and tribes to meet a broad range of community needs that make it easier for people to walk, roll, bike, share rides, vanpool, and take public transportation to meet daily travel needs. This program would complement and significantly expand the scope and funding of ODOT's current [Transportation Options program](#) (\$5.5 million in the 2021-2024 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program).

Funding

ODOT anticipates dedicating \$10-20 Million over 3 years to the IMPP, with \$5-10 million from IJA federal highway flexible funds and an additional \$5-10 million from other sources of state funding, such as the Transportation Operating Fund. The use of state funds expands project and recipient eligibility and simplifies access to and use of funding for recipients who may struggle with the strings attached to federal funds.

ODOT's Proposed Program Approach

Innovative Mobility Competitive Grants

Grants may be awarded on a rolling basis as well as through an annual competitive cycle. At least \$3 million will be available through an "Immediate Opportunities" fund that will allow planning and project applications to receive funding at any time.

The annual competitive grant program will include extensive outreach and technical assistance to ensure potential applicants are aware of the funds and how they can be used. Award recommendations will be made by a selection committee, comprised of at least one member of the Oregon Transportation Commission, ODOT staff and representatives from outside the Agency including members of ODOT advisory committees, community based organizations, local agencies, and others. The Commission will approve program criteria and all grant awards. The program will be evaluated and refined to ensure it is achieving program goals and is accessible.

The Innovative Mobility grant program approach goals will include:

- Collaborate with marginalized groups and organizations that serve these communities to develop and deliver innovative multimodal transportation efforts and projects that serve marginalized groups.
- Build capacity with community-based organizations to successfully apply for and deliver transportation options programs and services.
- Build community trust with ODOT, establish, and maintain personal relationships and networks, especially in communities where historically ODOT has struggled to engage.
- Utilize public funds to leverage other public and private sector investments.
- Provide jobs and job access for members of marginalized communities.

Project selection criteria will include:

- Provide or encourage use of multimodal transportation options, with a focus on marginalized communities who lack strong multimodal access.
- Support equitable solutions and transportation options for those impacted by congestion pricing.
- Increase mode share for non-single occupancy vehicle transportation options and reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), and related Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions.

Program Structure and Eligible Activities

The funds are proposed to be allocated as follows:

- Innovative Mobility Competitive Grants (\$5-10 million)
 - Targeted marketing to promote carpools near affordable housing locations
 - Electric bike lending library for low income communities
 - Multimodal transportation wallet for low income (eg., bus pass, bike share membership, and car sharing membership)
 - Travel training and encouragement programs (all modes)
 - Bicycle safety gear, skills and safety training, and bike racks
 - Houseless persons pedestrian and bicycle safety and security outreach
 - Incentive programs
 - Other types of services that make it safer and easier for all people, particularly communities of color and people experiencing low wages, to make trips necessary for daily life
- ODOT Convened and Partner Delivered Programs (\$5-10 million)
 - Vanpool Subsidy (Urban and Rural Programs): \$2-4 million. Incubate and launch expanded urban vanpool, including focus on mitigating impacts of tolling in Portland Metro/Clackamas County Area.
 - Transportation Management Association(s): \$1 million. Incubate and launch Transportation Management Associations, focusing first on the Portland Metro/Clackamas County Area to mitigate the impacts of congestion pricing.
 - Electric and Pedal Bikeshare Capital and Planning: \$2-5 Million. Incubate and launch pedal and electric bikeshare systems.

Both program areas would focus a portion of the funds on tolling mitigation for the I-205 Toll Project.

ODOT and Partner Delivered Programs

Vanpools

ODOT will work with large and small urban transit providers to implement a vanpool program for commuter vans that begin, end or pass through the Portland Metropolitan Area, to mitigate the impacts of congestion pricing. Vanpool programs around the country provide a subsidy to increase affordability and uptake of vanpools, and subsequently reduce VMT, SOV trips and GHG emissions.

The rural vanpool program could improve job access to areas like Bend/Redmond, La Pine, Medford, Hermiston, Roseburg, and others where high housing costs force low wage workers to live long distances from jobs. ODOT would develop a statewide program and contract with a vendor to manage a vanpool program in non-urban areas of Oregon.

Transportation Management Associations

The Portland Metropolitan Area lacks sufficient coverage of transportation options service delivery, with Clackamas and East Multnomah County being most underserved. ODOT will work with Metro and other regional partners to expand existing and/or create new TMAs, which will also mitigate congestion pricing. While TMAs traditionally serve employers and address commute related solutions, application of additional and more flexible funding could also be targeted at equity-based solutions.

Interoperable Bikeshare

ODOT would contract with a micromobility management nonprofit to create a bikeshare system that serves urban areas such as Eugene/Springfield, Corvallis, Salem/Keizer, and other interested communities. Under this scenario, ODOT would purchase electric bikes and hire a non-profit to manage a multi-city bikeshare system. The economies of scale created by the shared system would allow greater purchasing power for equipment, insurance, and operations costs. These funds would cover capital costs and planning. Programs would be started only with local partners that commit to fund ongoing operations through some combination of fares, private sponsors, and local funds.