

Summary of Primary Oregon Transportation Plan Public Comment Themes and Revisions

Public Review Period: March 24 to May 12, 2023

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) received input from a cross-section of urban and rural Oregonians during the Public Review Period for the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP) including 567 distinct comments from 220 individual submittals, 14 letters, and additional outreach events conducted in Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian and Spanish. The majority of comments fell into five primary categories:

- Accountability
- Investments and Funding
- Climate Resiliency and Sustainability
- Social Equity
- Environmental Resources and Wildlife Habitat

In response to input received during the public comment period, the following major changes were made to the draft OTP in the five categories below. Numerous other changes were made to address less common feedback, minor comments and more focused Plan suggestions. In total, nearly 45 percent of comments led to one or more changes in the Plan.

Accountability. Many comments received during the Public Review Period were complimentary of the Plan but concerned that it would not be implemented and the Vision not achieved. Therefore, there was significant interest in greater accountability following OTP adoption. Several changes were made to accommodate those comments.

Key Performance Targets were set for each of the priority objectives called out in the Vision statement: safety, equity and climate. Performance target dates have now been set to the year 2050, the planning horizon for the OTP, to help track Oregon's progress for these objectives:

- **Safety:** No fatalities and serious injuries across all modes, consistent with the Transportation Safety Action Plan.
- **Equity:** Unlike safety and climate that have more established performance measures, additional consideration is needed for equity. Therefore, the updated Plan includes a commitment to establish quantifiable targets and amend them into the Plan by 2025. In the interim, the OTP includes strategies to address the needs of systemically excluded or underserved populations.
- **Climate:** Reduce passenger VMT per capita by 20 percent by 2050 and transition to cleaner vehicles and fuels, reducing CO2e per mile by 77 percent, consistent with the Statewide Transportation Strategy: A 2050 Vision for Greenhouse Gas Reduction.

In addition to these changes, policy language was strengthened to link these performance targets more closely to investment decisions, noting that safety, equity and climate must be considered when making investment decisions in conjunction with OTP Key Performance Targets.

Investments and Funding. A number of commenters had questions about the investment scenarios described in the Plan, how and why funding levels change, as well as other questions about assumptions. Staff modified the investments scenario descriptions to more clearly describe scenarios to

meet the Plan's foundational goals. This clarifies how different categories of investments would be allocated to achieve the Plan outcomes at different funding levels.

In addition to the investment scenarios, there were several questions about how the policies will be applied to help identify and select projects. This ties into the earlier theme of Accountability, and as noted, policy language was strengthened to better tie performance outcomes to investment decisions.

Some commenters wanted more specificity in the Plan, seeking project lists. Changes were not made as the OTP is a policy planning document and does not reference specific projects. However, the OTP establishes more detailed tiered priorities for making project investments than prior state plans. In many cases, where changes are not recommended to the OTP, staff are sharing feedback with Regions and project development staff throughout ODOT to ensure further consideration of those comments.

Climate Resiliency and Sustainability. Many commenters noted the significant actions needed to help address the climate crisis and wanted assurances that the strategies in the OTP would be implemented. As noted under the Accountability theme, staff added a Key Performance Target for Climate as measured by CO2 emissions per mile in conjunction with the new Key Performance Target on passenger VMT per capita reduction.

A few comments highlighted the need to add climate analysis tools and incorporate climate data into decision making. Policy language was strengthened to ensure consideration of climate in investment decisions and expand risk assessments to consider the use of resilience corridors and climate hazard risk maps into prospective project planning, prioritization, and implementation.

Social Equity. Public feedback was generally complimentary of the equity policies in the draft OTP, while a few were concerned with an equity lens overall. Accountability was also a sub-theme of equity, with people wanting to ensure policies in the Plan are implemented. Edits to the Plan now require establishing quantifiable Equity targets within the next two years.

A few commenters were interested in expanding policy language to encompass restorative justice. Revisions were made to include a more focused restorative justice policy to document the impact of past decisions leading to current inequities and to develop restorative strategies to shape future investments. Staff also added a policy to address economic inequity by prioritizing mobility connections between low-income households and economic opportunities, including education and job centers.

During tribal consultation and other informal input, tribes mentioned the need to be called out distinctly from black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities and the need to recognize tribal sovereignty. Accordingly, the Plan was edited to reference Federally Recognized Tribes in addition to indigenous communities and to better recognize Tribal governments as sovereign nations to work with through the intergovernmental process differently than other partners.

Environmental Resources and Wildlife Habitat. Many comments about light pollution, wildlife corridors, and roadside vegetation management were received from advocacy groups and a large number of individuals. In response, the OTP now addresses light pollution and wildlife corridors under Goal 6.6 Sustainability and Climate Action. While no Plan changes were made regarding roadside vegetation management, the agency has committed to further reviewing this issue during the update of the Oregon Highway Plan slated to begin in the fall of 2023 and in coordination with staff directly working on these topics.