



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Oregon Transportation Commission


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DATE: February 27, 2023

TO: Oregon Transportation Commission



FROM: Kristopher W. Strickler
Director

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item I** -- Innovative Mobility Program Update

Requested Action:

Receive an informational update and provide feedback on engagement and program development work for the Innovative Mobility Program.

Background:

At its March 23, 2022 meeting, the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) approved \$10 million in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) flexible federal funding and \$10 million in state funding for an Innovative Mobility Program (IMP). The OTC provided input to staff on the IMP framework and directed staff to involve historically excluded groups in program development and delivery.

The IMP is a new initiative that aims to improve access to walking, biking, rolling and taking public transportation, reduce the number of trips Oregonians make by car, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through innovative projects. The IMP has a special focus on equity and helping historically excluded groups to get to where they need to go more quickly, cheaply and safely while building capacity with community-based organizations (CBOs) to remove barriers to access.

Progress to Date

In the summer and fall of 2022, ODOT staff conducted community engagement to build awareness of the IMP, identify barriers that prevent or discourage community-based organizations from applying for state or federal funds, and identify transportation needs and gaps for historically underserved communities. ODOT staff received critical feedback that is informing the development of large competitive grants and contracted services. CBOs reported that their current barriers to accessing funding include access to information, a need for technical assistance to apply for grants, ensuring project delivery is successful, completing reporting requirements, and staff capacity. To address these barriers, staff are working directly with CBOs to design the large competitive grants program.

ODOT staff also received feedback that grant processes can be opaque, difficult to navigate, and set up to say “no.” In response, staff are creating an accessible and equitable grant application process that prioritizes need and includes technical support for applicants and awardees. Finally, respondents to the first round of IMP engagement reported that current project delivery methods have a power imbalance. In order to design a more equitable program, IMP grants and contracts will allow for different delivery models, such as partnerships between transportation options providers, local jurisdictions, and CBOs.

Staff and contracted partners will work on facilitating relationships between interested parties and support their grant applications and project delivery. ODOT staff will continue to conduct engagement throughout the life of the IMP, which is critical for not only designing and implementing an equitable program, but also for ensuring that program outcomes are equitable and reflective of community needs. A brief summary of what we heard and what we are doing as a result is included as Attachment 1; and the complete IMP 2022 Engagement Report is included as Attachment 2.

Staff will continue to conduct equitable and targeted community engagement with CBOs, transportation providers, local jurisdictions, and anyone interested in the program to inform program design and implementation. The [IMP webpage](#), 1-pager in Spanish and English, and a survey in Spanish and English are available to gather input for the development and implementation of the program.

IMP micro-grant applications opened in late 2022. Attachment 03 lists the micro-grant funding awards through December of 2022. To date, ODOT has approved 30 micro-grant applications, totaling \$142,573. Projects funded through IMP micro-grants include a monthly bike repair clinic for people experiencing homelessness, adaptive bikes, locks, and helmets for children with disabilities, and bike safety courses and free bike maintenance for youth in affordable housing. Local, regional, and state governments, public transportation providers, Tribes, businesses providing community services, and 501(c)(3) certified nonprofits are eligible to apply. The micro-grants are now available on a rolling basis with no deadline for application. Application materials are available on the [IMP webpage](#).

A request for proposal was issued in January 2023 for contracted vanpool services that will market services to low wage workers, shift workers, limited English proficiency, among other underserved groups. ODOT staff will be evaluating responses this spring for potential funding awards by summer.

Next Steps

Large competitive grants and contracted services are in development. The large grants program solicitation is expected to open in fall of 2023. Work in the first half of 2023 will focus on preparing program guidance, including a solicitation schedule, scoring criteria, and application materials. An advisory committee composed of stakeholders with a robust understanding of equity, including transportation options providers, CBOs, local government officials, and community members, is being convened to help ensure the program is accessible to those who have historically been excluded due to administrative and fiscal barriers.

ODOT staff understand that the availability of technical support is a critical need for organizations serving historically excluded groups that may have limited experience with government and delivering transportation-related services. In response to this need and the feedback received, a second request for proposal is in development. Consultants under this contract will provide technical support to prospective grant applicants and grant awardees.

Attachments:

- Attachment 01 – Engagement Summary
- Attachment 02 – IMP 2022 Engagement Report
- Attachment 03 – IMP Micro-grants awards as of December 2022
- Webpage Address: <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/RPTD/Pages/Innovative-Mobility-Program.aspx>

Innovative Mobility Program What we heard, what we're doing

Background

The Innovative Mobility Program (IMP) is a new initiative from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) that aims to improve access to walking, biking, rolling, and public transportation, reduce the number of trips Oregonians make by car, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The IMP has a special focus on equity and helping historically excluded groups to get to where they need to go more quickly, cheaply, and safely.

The IMP is funded by \$10 million in Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds and \$10 million in State of Oregon funds. From June-September 2022, ODOT staff conducted an initial round of engagement with community-based organizations, local and regional governments, transportation providers, and other state agencies to inform the development of the program.

ODOT aims to create an equitable and accessible grants program; therefore, the design and implementation of the IMP will reflect community feedback. Decisions include creating a \$5,000 micro-grant program with no deadline for application in addition to a large competitive grants program, allowing for various delivery models, and both facilitating and incentivizing partnerships between community-based organizations, transportation providers, and local/regional governments.

The following is a summary of what we heard and what we are doing because of the community feedback. The full Engagement Report is available on the [IMP website](#).

What we heard, what we're doing

What we heard: Federal funds can be challenging small organizations to work with, given restrictions on how funds can be spent and federal reporting requirements.

What we're doing: Focusing the federal funds on larger projects and on paying contractors to undertake capacity building and technical support work. Smaller competitive grants and micro-grants will be funded through more flexible state funds.

What we heard: The recipient/sub-recipient model can create a power imbalance that further marginalizes historically excluded groups

What we're doing: Allowing for different delivery models that suit local conditions, including incentivizing equal partnerships between community-based organizations, transportation providers and local/regional governments.

What we heard: Small organizations often serve communities with the greatest need but struggle to produce grant applications that can compete against larger organizations that serve the general population.

What we're doing: Designing a grant application process that prioritizes need and will include support for organizations to develop robust applications that can be competitive in an open, public process.

What we heard: Match funding is a major barrier for small organizations and jurisdictions that serve areas with low population density.

What we're doing: We encourage pooling resources and building on existing work. IMP micro-grants do not require match funding, and we will carefully consider appropriate match rates for large grants.

What we heard: ODOT's grant processes can be opaque and hard to navigate.

What we're doing: Working with communities to design processes that are as simple and clear as possible, being clear and transparent when changes are made and posting our guidance and evaluation forms online so you can see how your application will be assessed. We're also not rejecting applications if they don't meet a technical requirement but working with applicants to "get to yes" wherever possible.

What we heard: We only find out about grant opportunities after it is too late.

What we're doing: Publicizing the IMP a year before the first competitive grants will go out and inviting communities to help us to design the process. We've just completed our initial 6-month engagement process, but we'll keep an open door throughout the process so we can keep responding and improving.

What we heard: We need help now!

What we're doing: Our \$5,000 micro-grants will be issued on a rolling basis so that there's always an opportunity to access some funds.

What we heard: We know that there's need but we don't have the technical expertise to know what to ask for.

What we're doing: We plan to provide technical assistance for grant applicants and grant awardees. We'll also post examples of projects that have successfully secured a micro-grant to help give others' ideas for what kinds of projects they should apply for.

What we heard: Programs that have joint climate and equity goals often discriminate against historically excluded groups by prioritizing climate goals over equity.

What we're doing: The ideal IMP project will meet both equity and climate goals, and we'll work with applicants to help make that happen. If that isn't possible, we'll prioritize equity because we know that communities of color and other historically excluded groups are disproportionately affected by climate change and shouldn't be further excluded by climate change mitigation work.

What we heard: These funds are time limited, what happens when they run out?

What we're doing: We're working to maximize the longevity and impact of the IMP by incentivizing applications that boost existing work, provide seed capital for projects that our local, regional, and state government partners were already looking at funding and by front-loading the spending of our federal funds (which need to be obligated by 2025) to make sure that some form of funding is available from 2022-2027.

What we heard: My organization is already doing this work, and I'm concerned that the IMP will cut across it or replicate what is already being done.

What we're doing: The IMP is intended to supplement existing work wherever possible. It isn't meant to replace work being done by our transportation options and transit partners or by local and regional governments. Tell us about the work you're doing, and we'll see what we can do to help, especially when it comes to connecting you with partners that can improve your equity focus and your reach into historically excluded communities.

**Innovative Mobility Program
Engagement Report | November 2022**

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Introduction

The Innovative Mobility Program (IMP) is a new initiative from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) that aims to improve access to walking, biking, rolling and public transportation, reduce the number of trips Oregonians make by car, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The IMP has a special focus on equity and helping historically excluded groups to get to where they need to go more quickly, cheaply and safely. It aims to work with community-based organizations (CBOs) not just as recipients of services, but also as delivery partners.

The IMP is funded by \$20 million in Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds, as well as \$10 million in State of Oregon funds. The federal funds must be obligated by 2025, whereas the state funds are programmed into the 2024-27 Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIP).

From June-September 2022, ODOT staff engaged community-based organizations, local and regional government, transportation providers, and other state agencies to inform the development of the program. The aims of the engagement were to:

- Identify barriers that prevent members of historically excluded groups from making more use of transportation options other than travelling alone in a car;
- Gauge CBOs' level of interest in participating in the program as service-delivery partners;
- Gain a greater understanding of the travel habits of members of historically excluded groups and the types of transportation projects that would best meet their needs;
- Identify barriers that prevent or discourage CBOs from applying for state and federal funds and gather input on ways to mitigate these barriers;
- Build awareness of the IMP to ensure that CBOs and other potential grant applicants are well prepared to submit applications for the IMP competitive grants program.

Engagement was conducted through:

- Virtual 1:1 and small group discussions convened and conducted by ODOT staff;

- Virtual presentations by ODOT staff at a variety of existing forums where leaders of community-based organizations, transportation professionals, local and regional government professionals and others with an potential interest in the IMP congregate;
- A series of virtual drop-in sessions conducted through ODOT’s consultants, Nelson Nygaard, and aimed primarily at transportation and local/regional government professionals;
- A short survey in English and Spanish.

ODOT and partners directly engaged 150 organizations and individuals, and 230 people responded to the survey.

Key Findings

Due to the demographic and geographical diversity of those engaged, as well as their different personal and professional perspectives and lived experiences, there were considerable variations in the feedback received. However, some common threads did emerge:

1. **There is deep need across Oregon for accessible and equitable transportation options.** Although living on a low/fixed income was common among those who experienced this need, it was evident across all racial, age, gender, ability and geographical boundaries.
2. **CBOs experience significant barriers to working with state and federal funds.** Accounting for public money, especially federal funds, is time-consuming and requires expertise that relatively few CBOs possess. ODOT’s processes are seen as uniquely difficult to navigate even among state agencies, and resources will need to be dedicated to assisting CBOs in transacting with the agency.
3. **CBOs serving historically excluded groups often unable to compete** for funds against better-resourced organizations with greater institutional reach. Organizations will need to be supported through the application process to ensure that IMP funds are allocated according to need, rather than the ability to quickly produce a polished application.
4. **There are major network and knowledge gaps** between those who have expertise in delivering transportation programming and those who understand the needs of historically excluded groups; creating mechanisms to bridge this gap will be critical to the success of the IMP.
5. **The recipient/sub-recipient model replicates and reinforces exclusionary power dynamics.** Those engaged strongly encouraged ODOT to explore alternative structures to ensure that relationships are more balanced and the needs of historically excluded groups are prioritized.
6. **Partnership working with other state, local and regional government agencies will be critical to the success of the program.** There are a number of equity-focused efforts underway across Oregon that either have an existing transportation element that would benefit from greater investment, or which are hampered by the lack of access to transportation. Effective partnerships will open up networks that ODOT does not have access to, prevent duplication and maximize the impact of public money by ensuring that efforts are aligned across multiple agencies.

Engagement Methodology

ODOT recognizes that there is a trust deficit between the agency and communities of color, those living with disabilities and on low-incomes, and many other groups that have been historically underserved or actively harmed by its policies.

This trust deficit impacts ODOT's ability to reach out to historically excluded groups and requires it to adopt methods that:

- "Meet people where they're at," by minimizing the intellectual and emotional labor required to give feedback and by using multiple methods so that those engaged can choose how much time and thought they wish to put into their responses.
- Honor existing networks and work with partners that are trusted in communities where ODOT is not.
- Respect those who give feedback by clearly demonstrating how it has impacted decision-making.

Participants were offered compensation for their time under ODOT's Equitable Engagement Compensation Program (EECP). However, due to the fact that almost all of those who took part in engagement did so as part of the professional duties of their employment, very few were eligible under the policy and no EECP compensation requests were made.

The starting point for engagement was existing ODOT networks. ODOT staff working on IMP engagement canvassed others in the agency who work with members of historically excluded groups. Wherever possible, those who held existing relationships acted as intermediaries, either facilitating introductions, attending meetings or both. ODOT staff also presented at a variety of professional and community forums where transportation and local/regional government professionals gather.

All of those engaged were invited to suggest others in their networks who might be interested in finding out about the IMP, resulting in ODOT being able to reach out to groups that it would not otherwise have been aware of, as well as in significantly increased likelihood of outreach resulting in a meeting and discussion.

In addition, ODOT reached out to other state agencies with strong networks among historically excluded groups or whose work overlapped with the goals of the IMP.

The majority of engagement was conducted through virtual 1:1/small group meetings, typically lasting one hour. Those engaged were given a short presentation detailing the IMP's goals and structure and asked to feedback on:

- Whether their organization was interested in participating
- What were the greatest needs experienced by the groups they work with
- What they perceived as being the biggest barriers to successful delivery of the IMP
- What they perceived as being the biggest opportunities presented by the IMP
- Who else they felt ODOT should engage with about the IMP

Participants were also invited to complete a short survey. Due to its small sample size and the participation bias inherent to opt-in surveys, the survey should not be considered scientific. The survey

results should be understood as outlining broad trends and preferences and should be read alongside qualitative feedback gathered through the engagement process.

Engagement Outcomes

Over 110 organizations were engaged. The full list of organizations can be found in **Appendix 1** of this document.

All of those engaged were asked the following questions:

- Which organizations run by and/or historically excluded groups do you think we should get in touch with?
- How can we best use the existing systems to meet the transportation needs of historically excluded groups?
- What are the biggest challenges you anticipate from what has been discussed today?

Question 1 was asked in order to facilitate effective engagement and did not generate any answers relevant to this section of the report. Common responses to questions two and three are given below:

How can we best use the existing systems to meet the transportation needs of historically excluded groups?

- **Better information in more languages:** people don't always know what services are available. Better information in more languages will result in a more positive impact than big investments in new services.
- **Fill the first/last mile gaps:** the beginning and end of journeys that rely on transit is a major barrier. Any services or improvements that can meet this need will have a very positive impact on the uptake of public transportation and transportation options.
- **Don't focus on Portland alone:** Rural communities also have deep need, especially among over 65s, people living on low incomes and living with disabilities. There are also much larger populations of BIPOC communities in rural areas than most people think.
- **Incentivize, don't dictate:** Set up the application process so that it incentivizes collaboration, don't be prescriptive about how groups should work together.
- **Speak to existing transportation providers about their equity work:** make sure that ODOT knows what work is already being done and set up the IMP so that it encourages deeper work rather than starting from scratch.
- **Work across jurisdictional boundaries:** Service users don't care which county or transit district they're in, they want services that get them to where they need to go. Structure services so that they reflect actual travel patterns, not arbitrary boundaries.
- **There are many factors that contribute to historical exclusions:** Because historical exclusions have multiple causes, there will need to be many different solutions to address them, don't rely on a narrow range of options but allow for lots of different types of projects to be funded.
- **Focus on the end-user experience, not on ODOT's needs and wants:** Ask people what they want services to look like and do the work needed to translate that into transportation policy. Don't expect people to use your jargon or care about your long-term transportation plans.

What are the biggest challenges you anticipate from what has been discussed today?

- **ODOT's trust deficit:** ODOT's historic and recent actions mean that reaching members of historically excluded groups have a low opinion of the agency and perceive it as difficult to work with. For the IMP to be successful, ODOT will need to invest in relationships and ensure that the program has the staffing to respond to community needs.
- **Working with federal funds:** working with federal funds is especially burdensome for CBOs. Some grants should be state-funded only to lessen this burden.
- **Need is often inversely correlated to ability to apply:** Some organizations have the resources to turn around competitive applications quickly. The ones that do not often serve the communities with greatest need. CBOs serving these communities will need to be supported through the application process to make sure they aren't crowded out by those with more institutional knowledge and reach.
- **There's a tension between the equity and climate goals of the program:** Communities of color and others who've been historically excluded are disproportionately harmed by climate change but climate change mitigation efforts have tended to focus on the needs of privileged populations. Equity will need to be given priority over climate to ensure that those who are already most harmed are not excluded further.
- **CBOs working with historically excluded groups often don't find out about grant opportunities until it is too late:** Small CBOs can't dedicate as many resources to communications, networking and grant prep/application work, ODOT will need to let folks know long before applications are due that the opportunity is there and take extra care to ensure that the program is publicized among groups it has traditionally found hard to reach.
- **There's a big knowledge gap between transportation professionals and CBOs working with historically excluded groups:** Transportation policy and delivery requires strong networks and a lot of technical and institutional knowledge. By definition, groups who have been excluded from institutions and decision-making do not have this knowledge. ODOT will need to bridge this gap
- **Grant application and reporting processes are opaque and hard to navigate:** Make sure your processes are clear, your decision-making process is public, and you publish information about successful applications so future applicants can learn from it.
- **Grant processes seem set up to say "no," find ways to "get to yes:"** Grants applications can often be rejected based on technicalities. If an application articulates genuine need but needs revision, work with the organization to revise the application instead of just rejecting it.
- **CBOs are overburdened:** Since the pandemic, state, local and regional government has been leaning very hard on CBOs. They're overburdened and any work generated by the IMP needs to move them towards their core mission instead of distracting from it.
- **CBOs will need support through the whole life-cycle of the grant process:** Applying for and reporting on grants is outside the core work of most CBOs, set resources aside to ensure that they are supported in doing this work.
- **The time limit on the funding is a concern:** It is a big lift to stand up a new program. ODOT will need to ensure that funding continues after 2027 in order to make participating in the IMP worthwhile for

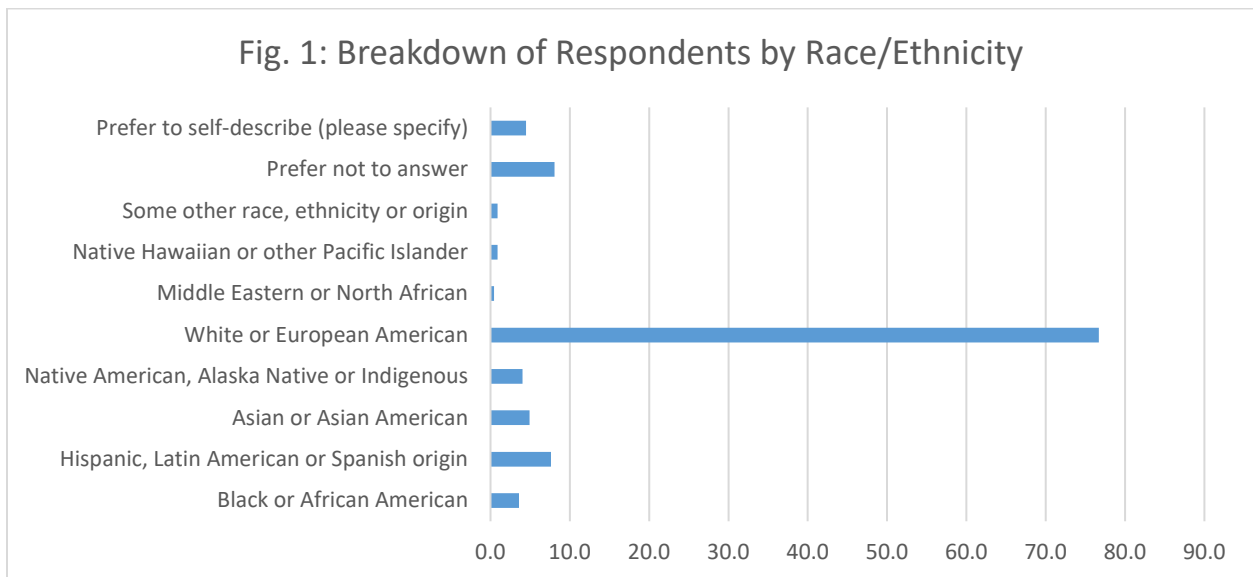
- **We have need, but not the FTE needed to administrate a transportation service:** The IMP will need to either fund FTE, or help find partners who can fund FTE for tasks like reporting to ensure CBOs have the capacity to deliver.

Survey Results

At the time of writing, a total of 228 people had completed the survey. The full results are too extensive to reproduce in full, but some of the highlights are given below.

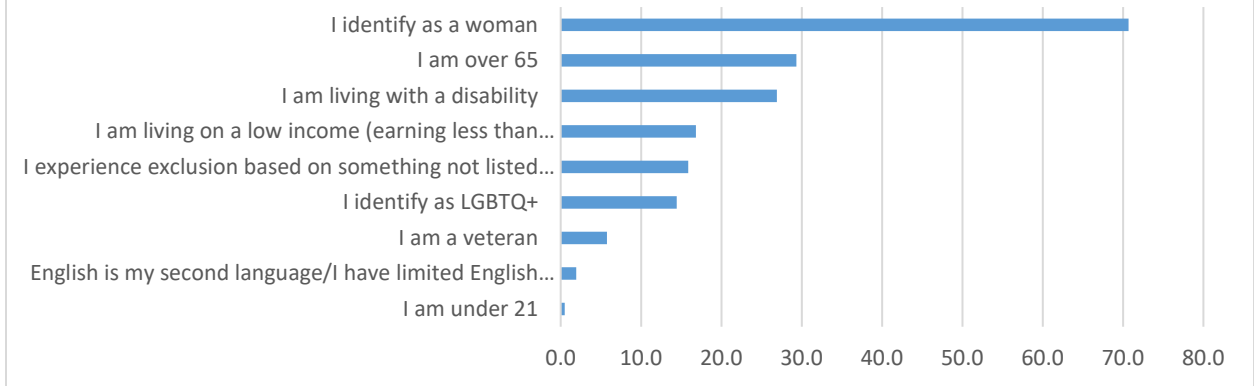
Demographics and Geography

The racial and ethnic breakdown of respondents shows that the response rate among BIPOC Oregonians is roughly proportionate to their representation in the population as a whole. This is an improvement on previous ODOT engagement work, which has tended to show a disproportionately high response rate from White/European American Oregonians, but shows that ODOT still has significant work to do in improving engagement with these communities.



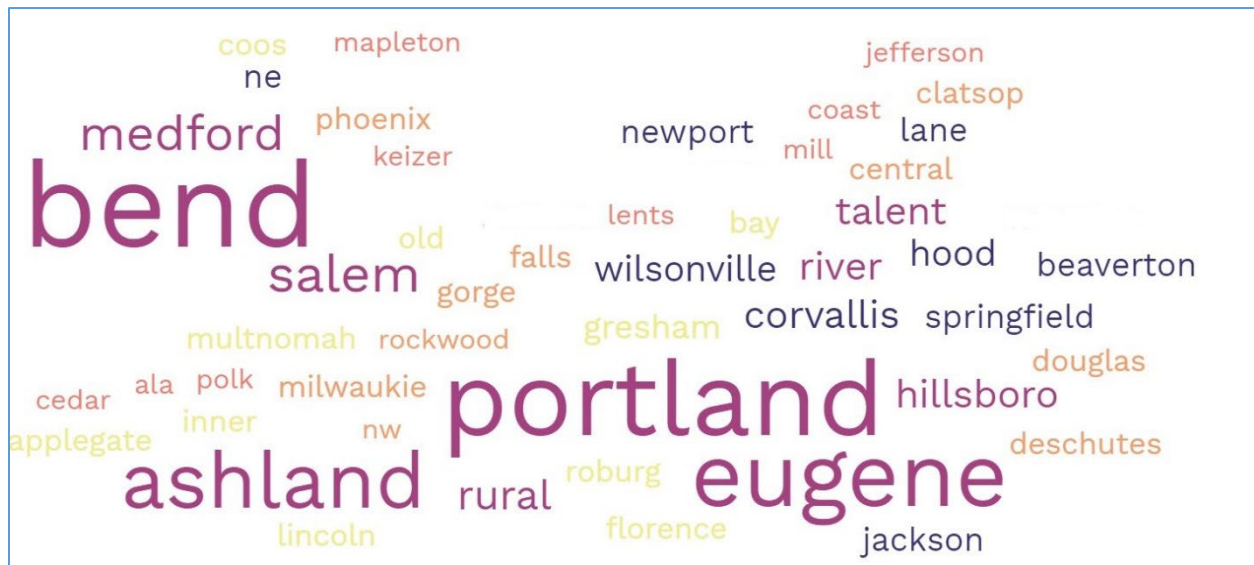
Many respondents identified as experiencing exclusion on the basis of gender, age, ability and income, indicating that the survey was successful in reaching members of social groups that are typically difficult for government agencies to access.

Fig 2: There are many other factors that can contribute to exclusion and marginalization. Do any of the following statements apply to you?



The geographic spread of survey respondents was reflective of Oregon’s major population centers. However there were a substantial number of respondents from outside the Willamette Valley. A high number of responses from Bend, Medford, Ashland, as well as a good spread from rural and low-population areas is reflected in the word cloud below.

Fig. 3: Word cloud depicting geographical spread of survey respondents



Transportation Modes and Preferences

The charts below show respondents’ transportation behaviors, preferences and the barriers they face to accessing safe and equitable transportation.

Notable trends include that:

- Walking and cycling are the most used forms of transportation after driving alone, indicating that investments that improve the experience of users of these modes will be the most impactful interventions that the IMP and other ODOT initiatives can deliver.
- The journey time associated with public transportation, active transportation and transportation options is the single biggest barrier to uptake, followed by the lack of connections and the fact that users did not feel safe using these modes of transportation.
- A “Transportation Wallet” that bundles discounted fares for various forms of transportation was seen as the most effective service that would improve respondents’ travel experiences. Improved Park and Ride facilities and a statewide bike share were also popular, closely followed by rural vanpools, which were significantly more popular than urban vanpools.
- Minor infrastructure improvements such as improved access, bike parking and lighting were cited as the type of interventions most likely to improve uptake of transportation options. Financial support, better information and free equipment were also popular, gathering roughly equal support in the survey.

Fig. 4: In a typical week Which of the following forms of transportation do you use to get to work or access essential services (medical, grocery shopping, employment)

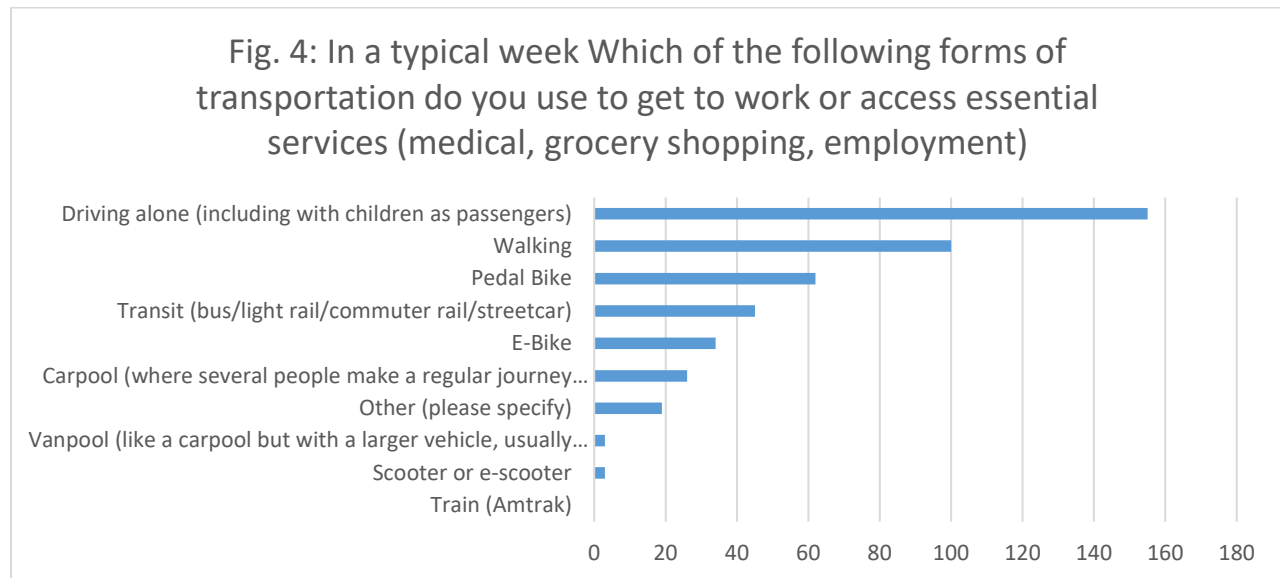


Fig. 5: What are the biggest barriers you experience to using travel options other than driving alone?

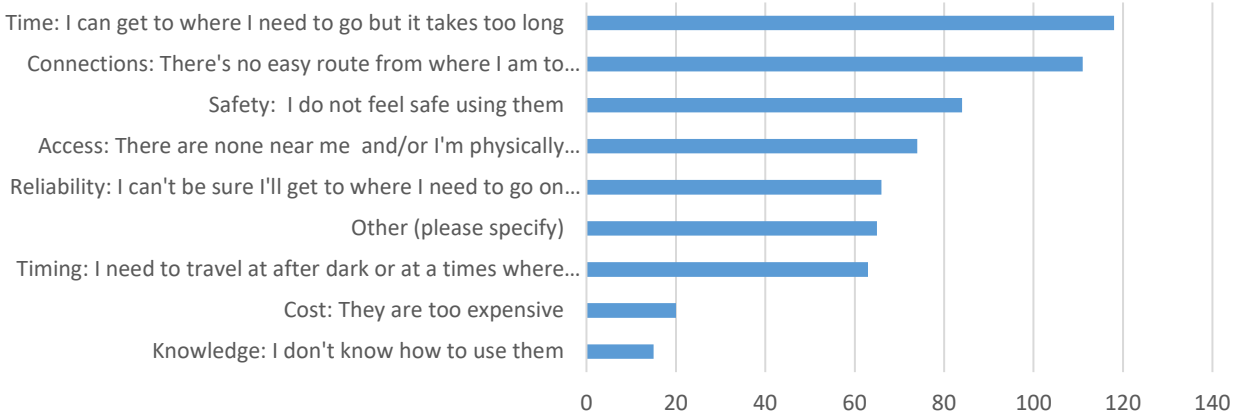


Fig 6: Which of the following services would result in the biggest improvement in your travel experiences?

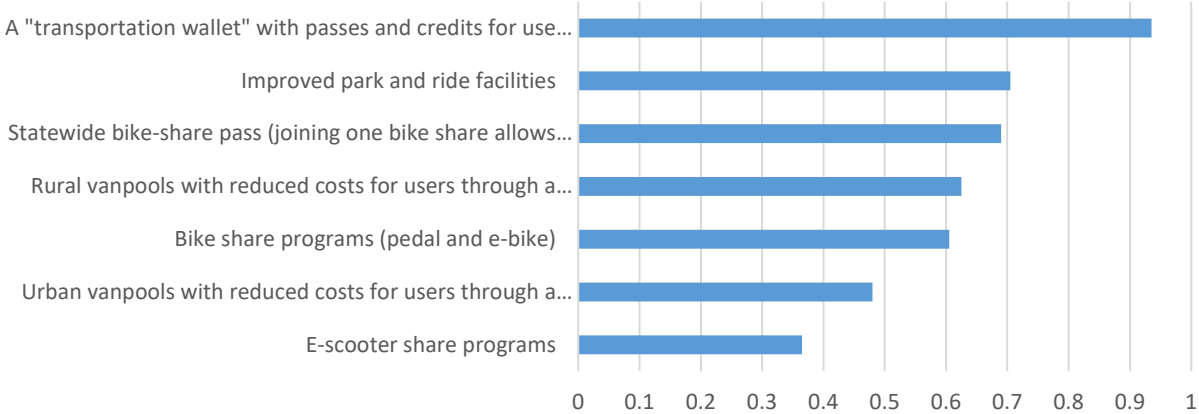
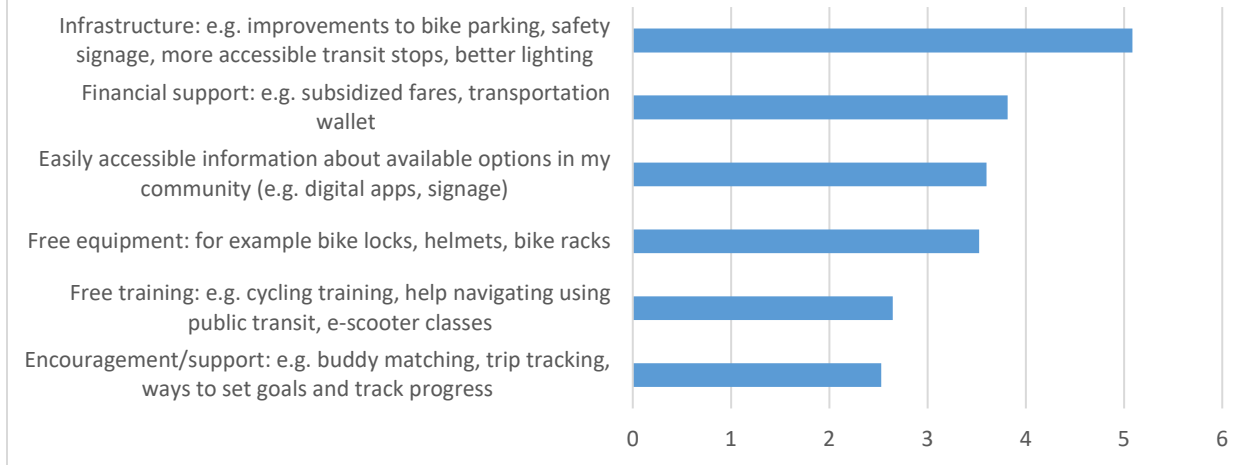


Fig: 7: Using the list below, please rank which kinds of support are most likely to encourage you to travel options other than driving alone?



Conclusion/Next Steps

As a result of feedback received by ODOT through the IMP engagement process, the agency has taken or is taking a range of steps to ensure that the IMP works for communities who have been historically excluded. Some of the actions taken so far are:

- Hiring two staff, the Innovative Mobility Program Manager and Innovative Mobility Program Coordinator to provide multi-lingual, culturally appropriate and ongoing support for prospective and successful applicants.
- Structuring funding so that federal funds are prioritized for contracted and consultant services rather than grants.
- Considering significantly reduced or no match funding.
- Prioritizing equity over climate considerations if/when the two goals are not aligned.
- Allowing for multiple delivery options to increase flexibility and make the program better able to respond to local conditions.
- Translating IMP materials into Spanish at a minimum, with the possibility of translation into other languages.
- Extensively publicizing the IMP through both mainstream and culturally/demographically specific channels.
- Setting aside significant resources for capacity-building and technical assistance
- Working closely with other state agencies to identify areas where joint working and funding are possible.
- Designing an iterative grant process where staff will work with applicants to evolve project proposals that initially fail to meet technical, legal or regulatory specifications.
- Encouraging existing transportation options providers to deepen their work with historically excluded communities in preparation for the launch of the competitive grants program.

Organization

1000 Friends of Oregon
Ace Ride Transportation LLC
Afghan Support Network
African Community Development Corporation
Anson's Bike Buddies
Bend Bikes
Better Eugene Springfield Transportation
Bikeskyway.org
Black Rural Network
Blanchet House of Hospitality
Business Oregon
Cascade Comprehensive Care

Cascades East Transit

Cascades West Council of Governments
Cascadia Mobility

Cherriots

City of Corvallis
City of Eugene
City of Gresham
City of Malin
City of Medford

City of Oakridge
City of Powers
City of Tigard

Clackamas County
Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance
Community Cycling Center
Commute Options
Department for Environmental Quality
Department for Land Conservation and Development
Espousal Strategies
Eugene Whiteaker International Hostel

Explore Washington Park (Washington park TMA)
Familia Unida Bike Builders
Frog Ferry
Getting There Together Coalition

Engagement Type

Small group
Micro-grant applicant
Email
One-to-one
Micro-grant applicant
Small group
One-to-one
Micro-grant applicant
One-to-one
Micro-grant applicant
Small group
Small group
Consultant focus-group attendee
Consultant focus-group attendee
Small group
Consultant focus-group attendee
Consultant focus-group attendee
Small group
Email
Email
Email
Consultant focus-group attendee
Micro-grant applicant
Email
Consultant focus-group attendee
Micro-grant applicant
Micro-grant applicant
Micro-grant applicant
One-to-one
One-to-one
One-to-one
Micro-grant applicant
Consultant focus-group attendee
Micro-grant applicant
Micro-grant applicant
Small group

Gilliam County	Consultant focus-group attendee
Go Lloyd	Consultant focus-group attendee
Governor's Racial Justice Council Environmental Equity Committee	Presentation to existing forum
Healthy Klamath	Small group
Jazz Not War	Micro-grant applicant
Josephine County	Consultant focus-group attendee
Just Transition	One-to-one
Lane Council of Governments	Consultant focus-group attendee
Lane Transit District	Small group
Lane Transit District	Consultant focus-group attendee
Latnet	Email
Lifeways	Email
Malheur Council on Aging/ADRC	Consultant focus-group attendee
Metro	Small group
Metro Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee	Large group
Metropolitan Family Service	Micro-grant applicant
Meyer Memorial Trust	One-to-one
Mid-Columbia Economic Development District	Consultant focus-group attendee
Mid-Wilamette Valley Council of Governments	One-to-one
Morrow County	Consultant focus-group attendee
MySuma	One-to-one
Nonprofit Association of Oregon	Small group
Northwest Housing Alternatives	Micro-grant applicant
Oak Creek Elementary School	Micro-grant applicant
OHA PartnerSHIP Committee	Presentation to existing forum
OHSU	Consultant focus-group attendee
OPAL	One-to-one
Oregon Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee	Presentation to existing forum
Oregon Chinese Coalition	Micro-grant applicant
Oregon Coast Community College	Micro-grant applicant
Oregon Environmental Council	Small group
Oregon Health Authority	Small group
Oregon Metro	Small group
Oregon Metropolitan Planning Organization Consortium	Presentation to existing forum
Oregon Transit Association	Presentation to existing forum
Oregon Walks	Small group

OSU Cascades	Consultant focus-group attendee
Polk CDC	Email
Portland Bureau of Transportation	Small group
Portland Playhouse	Micro-grant applicant
Professional Business Development Group	Small group
Public Transportation Advisory Committee	Presentation to existing forum
REAPUSA	One-to-one
Ride Salem	One-to-one
RideConnection	Small group
Ridethebus	Small group
Rogue Valley Transportation District	Small group
ROSE Community Development	Micro-grant applicant
Sarah Bellum's Bakery & Workshop	Micro-grant applicant
Seed of Faith Ministries	Email
Shift Community Cycles	Micro-grant applicant
Somali American Council of Oregon	One-to-one
Springfield Public Schools Motor Team	Micro-grant applicant
The Arc of Lane County	Small group
The Arc of Lincoln County	Email
The FLIP Museum	Micro-grant applicant
The Fourth Dimension Recovery Center	Micro-grant applicant
The Gate Youth Association	Micro-grant applicant
The Next Door	Email
The Northwest Hub	Micro-grant applicant
The Routing Company	One-to-one
The Street Trust	Small group
TOGo Transportation Options Annual Conference	Large group
ToGo Transportation Options Conference	Presentation to existing forum
Travel Lane County	Email
TriMet	Small group
Tualatin Chamber of Commerce	Consultant focus-group attendee
Tualatin Chamber of Commerce	Consultant focus-group attendee
Tualatin Chamber of Commerce	Consultant focus-group attendee
Umpqua Public Transportation District	Consultant focus-group attendee
United Way of Columbia County	Micro-grant applicant
Urban League of Portland	One-to-one
UTOPIA PDX (United Territories of Pacific Islanders)	Micro-grant applicant
UTOPIA Portland	One-to-one
Via Connect	Small group
Wallowa Mountains Bike Club	Micro-grant applicant
Wallowa School District	Micro-grant applicant

Washington County

Westside Transportation Alliance

Consultant focus-group
attendee

Consultant focus-group
attendee



Oregon Department of
Transportation

Innovative Mobility Program: Engagement Summary

DRAFT October 2022

N NELSON
NYGAARD

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INTRODUCTION

In September 2022, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) convened small groups of stakeholders representing jurisdictional, transit, and transportation options professionals from across Oregon. Five engagement sessions were held, one for each ODOT Region.¹

A full list of invitees and participants is provided in Attachment A. Invitees received a one-page overview describing ODOT's Innovative Mobility Program (IMP) prior to attending the sessions. Though sessions were organized by ODOT Region, participants could self-select into the session that best fit their schedule; not all participants attended the session for their respective region.

Engagement Purpose

The purpose of the engagement sessions was to gather input from local and regional jurisdictional staff to help inform the Oregon Transportation Commission's decision-making on the IMP funding process. Specifically, the objectives of the sessions were to:

- Help understand the transportation needs of people historically underserved by public transportation services
- Help identify organizations that represent historically underserved groups that could potentially administer or deliver transportation services and programs
- Get feedback about the potential delivery models for the IMP being considered

Process

The sessions were held virtually for one-hour and were facilitated by Nelson\Nygaard. Kazim Kaidi, Strategic Planning and Communications Manager at ODOT, was also in attendance to answer questions. The breakdown of each session was as follows:

- Presentation #1: Introduction of the IMP. The presentation differentiated IMP's one-time funding from other ODOT funding programs such as Commute Reduction and Transportation Options. The potential timeline for the IMP funding program was introduced and potential opportunities for funding were provided, which included bike share feasibility studies, mobility wallets, and specialized transit services.
- Discussion #1: Participants were asked the following questions.
 - *What groups are hardest to reach with your programs and services?*

¹ Oregon Department of Transportation Regions. <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/regions/pages/index.aspx>

- *What are the specific unmet transportation needs and challenges they face?*
- *Which organizations that work with historically excluded groups in your region might be interested in this funding opportunity?*
- Presentation #2: Possible funding delivery models. Potential delivery models of IMP funding were presented, and advantages and disadvantages of each model were described.
- Discussion #2: Participants were asked the following questions.
 - *In reviewing the potential delivery models, which one(s) do you think would work best and why?*
 - *What are the biggest challenges to consider from what has been presented today?*

DISCUSSION #1: HISTORICALLY EXCLUDED GROUPS AND UNMET NEEDS

The first discussion focused on the groups that are hard to reach with transportation programs and services, the unmet transportation needs, and potential organizations that could be good partners for the IMP.

Groups that are hard to reach

The following groups were mentioned as hard to reach with transportation programs and services:

- **Native American communities.** Participants recognized the importance of reaching out to Native American communities, while acknowledging the challenges of reaching and engaging with these communities.
- **People of color and people who are non-native English speakers.** Participants also identified Spanish speaking audiences and other groups who speak English as a second language as hard to reach due to lack of translation or outreach resources.
- **Frontline workers and people who work shift schedules.** Challenges to reach these groups were heightened particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. These workers have nontraditional schedules, often in long shifts, and often overlap and identify with other groups of historically underserved populations such as people of color and non-native English speakers.
- **Veterans, older adults, people who are considered low-income, people who cannot drive or do not own a vehicle.** These groups were often mentioned

together as historically excluded and underserved groups that rely on transit services to travel throughout the region. These groups are frequent users of Dial-A-Ride services. Specifically, older adult populations in unincorporated areas with limited transit service were highlighted as a challenge to reach.

- **People with disabilities, people with mobility issues, people who require non-emergency medical transport.** These individuals may be Medicare clients who do not qualify for the Oregon Health Plan, are not eligible for Medicaid, or may not have supplemental insurance to qualify for Dial-A-Ride and need transportation to their appointments. Stakeholders also noted a need to provide transportation to daily services, not just to Medicare.
- **Rural communities and urban visitors in rural areas.** Many participants highlighted their jurisdictions are in rural areas where groups were hard to reach because of geography and location.

Unmet transportation needs and challenges

Participants were asked to summarize unmet transportation needs and challenges and were encouraged to provide specific examples from their jurisdictions.

- **Funding longevity and program maintenance.** Many participants appreciated the amount of funding available through IMP but raised concerns about the longevity of programs funded by IMP after the funding period ends. Funding is necessary to maintain these programs such that they are not temporary and continue to reach and support groups in need. A couple of participants asked if funds can be used for planning purposes to help organize and sustain programs.
- **Organizational structure and administration feasibility.** Participants raised the concern that they do not have the staff and capacity to administer and/or deliver transportation services despite possible funding from IMP. In rural areas especially, planning staff is limited to one staff member and transportation services may not be their priority.
- **Marketing, operations, and awareness.** Participants expressed a need for help with marketing and operations to improve awareness that current transportation service is available. This lack of awareness extends to transit service and delivery where bus stops do not have signage, benches, or stop infrastructure to convey to the public that transit is available at those locations. Individualized marketing was mentioned as an area of need for education and outreach to historically excluded populations.
- **Translation and interpretation.** In smaller and/or rural jurisdictions, there is not internal staff member to translate information materials for education and outreach of historically excluded populations. Participants recognize this requires working with

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groups in the community which is a great opportunity to build connections with this group, but time is always a restraint to have these materials ready for outreach. This makes engagement with underserved individuals challenging and is a barrier to communicating the public about existing transportation services.

- **Unreliable or lack of service.** Overall concerns were expressed for areas that have unreliable transit service, no Saturday service, no weekend service, or no service at all. The issue came up as to how to service unincorporated areas where there are no fixed routes or commuter routes. In areas with shuttles, there is not enough shuttle service. Transportation in rural areas and to worksites outside of the urban core is an ongoing issue.
- **Delivery staff and scheduling issues.** Participants often mentioned there are not enough drivers to operate transit services, and there are not enough demand response vehicles. The demand for transit exceeds the ability to supply. This also presents an ongoing issue with scheduling, particularly in the case of Dial-a-Ride in rural communities. In urban communities, there are not enough Uber or Lyft drivers.
- **County connections.** There is an unmet need of connecting the various counties in Oregon, and many expressed interest in a network to connect counties. Participants expressed a desire to collaborate and made connections during the engagement sessions.
- **Rising interest in car service, decreasing interest in transit.** Communities are interested in local taxis but not interested in bringing ride hail services such as Uber or Lyft. They are also not looking for transit but door-to-door services similar to taxis.
- **Rideshare is a big opportunity.** Some areas are seeing increased interest in carpool and vanpooling services, particularly for nontraditional workers who work long shifts and cannot rely on transit.
- **First and last mile.** First and last mile is a need in many jurisdictions. This was highlighted as a concern especially regarding transit to worksites, where there is a lack of options for workers to travel to work.
- **Lack of protected walking and biking facilities.** In both urban and rural areas, the lack of protected and high-quality pedestrian and biking facilities makes it challenging for people to uptake active transportation. Neighborhoods that are not walkable rely on transit, but it is not reliable for those that need it the most.
- **Micromobility.** Many participants identified a need and interest to implement micromobility to give the public options when fixed route transit is not feasible.
- **Perceived safety.** Participants mentioned perceived safety as a barrier to transit, and that transit is generally perceived to be less safe than car or vehicle services. This is even more of a challenge for people commuting very early in the morning or late at night when there are less people taking transit.

Community Based Organizations

Community based organizations (CBOs) that work with historically excluded groups throughout the region and may be interested in the IMP funding opportunity were named by participants and listed below:

- AllCare Health
- Be Safe, Be Seen campaign
- Columbia George Community College
- Columbia River Housing Authority
- Columbia River InterTribal Fisheries Committee
- Community Care Organizations (CCOs)
- Commute Options
- Council on Aging
- County libraries (multiple)
- County public health departments (multiple)
- Employers and HR departments (multiple)
- EUVALCREE
- Forefront (City of Medford)
- Gap Medical
- Healthcare organizations
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)
- Kayak Public Transit
- Latino Community Association
- Mercy Medical Angels
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworks Childhood Education
- Oregon Human Development Corporation
- Pahto Transit
- Ready Ride Service
- Rogue Retreat
- Safe Routes to School programs (multiple)
- Salem for Refugees
- The Next Door Inc.
- Transportation Reaching People
- United Community Action Network (UCANN)

- WorkForce

WHAT WE HEARD

“Our vanpool program is gaining a lot of traction. More employers are interested in enrolling, but it is a challenge to figure out how to move forward strategically and with an equity lens.”

– Transportation Options Coordinator

“We have to balance infrastructure improvements with our desire to work with different groups of people, we need to ensure we have the capacity to coordinate accordingly” –

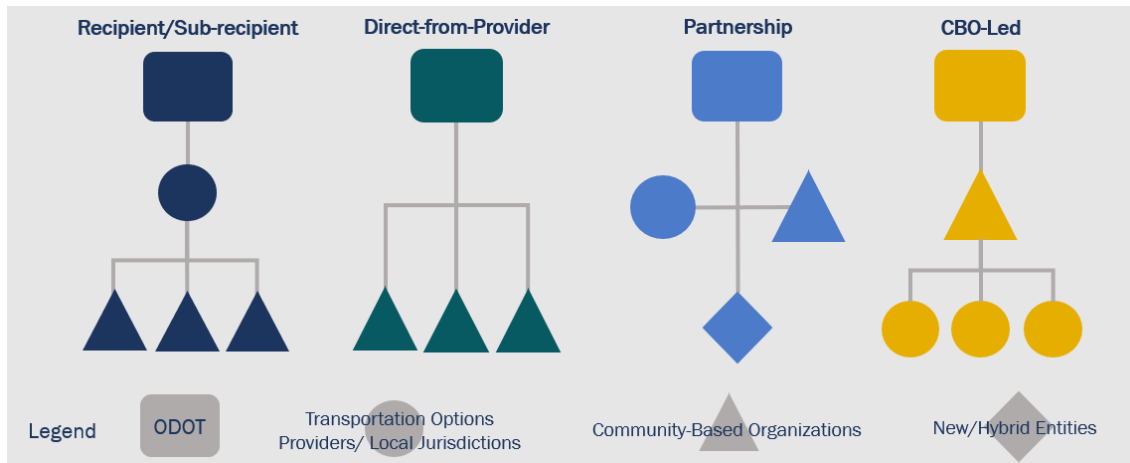
Principal Planner

“The public knows we exist, and might not know what we do, but they don’t ask until there’s a problem” – Transit Manager

DISCUSSION #2: POTENTIAL DELIVERY MODELS

The second portion of the discussion focused on potential delivery models of ODOT IMP funding (Figure 1). These models were presented as flexible and not “one size fits all,” as delivery will depend on the mix of applicants and program type.

Figure 1 Potential delivery of ODOT IMP



Feedback on potential delivery models

- **Recipient/sub-recipient.** This model was seen as beneficial as it leverages existing TO providers’ expertise and relationships while also leveraging the work of CBOs.
- **Direct-from-provider.** Concerns were raised about this model as CBOs might not have experience in transportation options. It would be disadvantageous to exclude

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the transportation options expertise entirely. It might also be challenging for ODOT to sustain partnerships with CBOs. The number and expertise of CBOs also varies significantly across the state. Stakeholders noted that training of CBOs in transportation options programs would be necessary – would this fall on TO providers to provide that training?

- **Partnership.** Participants commented that this model is good and appropriate because agencies traditionally work with groups that deliver transportation options such as employers. Participants like the idea of the co-application process, partnering with CBOs to leverage their connections and continue fostering relationships. Participants noted that this model could work very well in urban settings but may be more challenging in rural setting where there are fewer CBOs. Participants also worried about the time commitment to create a partnership. Participants agreed this would be a complicated, unprecedented model, but acknowledged it plays to each stakeholder's strength and broadens reach. Similarly, local governments and transportation groups could fit into a partnership model.
- **CBO-led.** Participants expressed a concern that CBOs do not exist in certain locations, or the ones that do would not focus primarily on transportation. It would be ideal to have relationships with CBOs, but not every agency does. There may be a need for advocacy from ODOT or local agencies.

The overall feedback on the potential delivery models was that it is better to have more options and flexibility as delivery models will vary between each region and organization. This flexibility is crucial to tailor transportation options to people in underserved communities. An optimal delivery model would have the lowest number of contracting hurdles. There are prohibitive factors to contracting, such as limits on award amounts and working with non-profit organizations.

WHAT WE HEARD

"The potential delivery model greatly depends on the capacity and resources of the CBO. We have to avoid overburdening the CBOs." – Transportation Demand Management & Outreach Program Manager

"Without a transportation background, this could mean more time and resources are lost to training. This needs to be a consideration in finding a delivery model" – General Manager (Transportation District)

"Maintaining some sort of flexibility to really tailor options to the key people in the communities is crucial." – Transportation Manager

SUMMARY OF KEY CHALLENGES

This section summarizes the key challenges and concerns expressed by participants for ODOT consideration.

Longevity

Implementing transportation programs requires sustainable funding. If the goal is to grow and continue a program, the long-term outcomes and delivery must be considered. Providing transportation, particularly to historically excluded groups, should not be a short-term project, but a long-term program.

Simplicity

The process of accepting and receiving the IMP funds must be as simple as possible to be mindful of staffing and administration capacities. The more complex the process is, the harder the uptake and the more resources that are needed to manage the process. Stakeholders also described a need to ensure that organizations that receive IMP funds have the capacity, the expertise, and the desire to deliver programs.

Priority

It is a constant challenge of local agencies to prioritize different projects, while also applying an equity lens to ensure services are reaching populations and locations where they are most needed. Another challenge is implementing an equity-based planning framework to better identify how to bolster the relationship between agencies and CBOs.

Knowledge

Education and awareness is an ongoing challenge for transportation programs. Agencies and organizations that work on transportations programs are also limited.

ATTACHMENT A STAKEHOLDER LIST

Figure 2 outlines the full list of participants invited to the stakeholder groups. Figure 3 notes who attended.

Figure 2 List of Invitees

Organization	Name
Basin Transit Service (BTS)	Adrian Mateos
Benton County (BCSTF)	Greg Verret
Central Oregon Breeze	Unlisted
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council	Derek Hofbauer
Cherriots	Kiki Dohman
City of Albany	Lynne Smith
City of Beaverton	Jean Biggs
City of Canby	Todd Wood
City of Corvallis	Josh Capps
City of Cottage Grove (South Lane Wheels)	Unlisted
City of Gresham	Elizabeth Coffey
City of Hillsboro	Mary Loftin
City of Lebanon	Kindra Oliver
City of Milton-Freewater	Laurel Sweeney
City of Milwaukie	Ryan Dyar
City of Oakridge	Robeart Chrisman
City of Oregon City	Kendall Reid
City of Pendleton	Julie Chase
City of Sandy	Ashley Howell
City of Silverton	Unlisted
City of Springfield	Liz Miller
City of Woodburn	Chris Kerr
Clackamas Community College	Ray Atkinson
Clackamas County	Scott Hoelscher
Clackamas County	Karen Buehrig
Columbia Area Transit	Amy Sclappi
Columbia Corridor Association	Corky Collier

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Organization	Name
Columbia County (Columbia County Rider Transportation)	John Dreeszen
Community Connection of Northeast Oregon (CCNO)	Connie Guentert
Commute with Enterprise	David Meigs
Coos County Area Transit	Melissa Metz
Curry County Public Transit Service District	Kathryn Bernhardt
Douglas County (UTrans and DouglasRides)	Cheryl Cheas
Explore Washington Park - TMA	Keith Baich
Former Columbia Area Transit Manager	Patty Fink
Forth Mobility	Barrett Brown
Forth Mobility	Kelly Yearick
Gilliam County	Shania Drinkwine
Gilliam County	Sabrina Wagenaar
Gilliam County	Leah Watkins
Go Lloyd	Amber Johnson
Go Lloyd	Ophelia Cavill
Go Lloyd	Owen Ronchelli
Grant County Transportation District / The People Mover	Unlisted
Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center	Erin Beggs
Harney County	Lisa Moody
Hood River County Transportation District (CAT)	Amy Schlappi Fink
Josephine County (JCT)	Scott Chancey
Lake County	Darwin Johnson
Lane Council of Governments	Ellen Currier
Lane Council of Governments	Julia Wooley
Lane Council of Governments	Kelsey Moore
Lane Council of Governments	Syd Shoaf
Lane County of Governments	Kelly Clarke
Lane Transit District	Theresa Brand
Lincoln County Transportation Service District (Lincoln County Transit)	Julie Kay
Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services (MCOA)	Brittany White
Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD)	Kathy Fitzpatrick

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Organization	Name
Morrow County	Katie Imes
Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG)	Katie Trebes
Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG)	Nick Meltzer
Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)	Jenny Cadigan
Oregon State University Cascades	Casey Bergh
Portland Community College	Michelle Dubarry
Portland State University	Ian Stude
Sherman County	Marnene Benson-Wood
SMART	Michelle Marston
Snake River Transit	Terri Lindenberg
South Clackamas Transportation District (SCTD)	Shyloh Masuo
South Waterfront Community Relations - TMA	Pete Collins
Special Mobility Services	Unlisted
TAC Transportation (HighDesert POINT)	Joel Manning
Tillamook County Transportation District (TCTD: The Wave)	Unlisted
Tualatin Chamber of Commerce	Anneleah Jaxen
Tualatin Chamber of Commerce	Susan Noack
Washington County	Dyami Valentine
Washington County	Christina Deffebach
West Columbia Gorge Chamber of Commerce	Unlisted
Westside Transportation Alliance (WTA)	Jeff Pazdalski
Westside Transportation Alliance (WTA)	Caitlin Ahearn
Wheeler County	Johnathan Asher

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Figure 3 List of Attendees

Title, Organization	Name
Senior Operations Manager, Explore Washington Park (Washington park TMA)	Keith Baich
Executive Director, Westside Transportation Alliance	Jeff Pazdalski
CEO, Tualatin Chamber of Commerce	Anneleah Jaxen
Title Unknown, Washington County	Christina Deffebach
Transportation Program Manager (Campus Access and Commute Services), OHSU	Jenny Cadigan
Long Range Planning Manager, Clackamas County	Karen Buehrig
Chamber Board Chair, Tualatin Chamber of Commerce	Susan Noack
Active Transportation Program Specialist, City of Corvallis	Josh Capps
Transportation Options Coordinator, Cherriots	Kiki Dohman
Cascades West Transportation Manager, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments	Nick Meltzer
Transportation Options Specialist – Springfield/Coburg, Lane Council of Governments	Kelsey Moore
Principal Planner – Central Lane MPO, Lane Council of Governments	Ellen Currier
General Manager, Umpqua Public Transportation District	Cheryl Cheas
Transit Manager, Josephine County	Scott Chancey
Transportation Marketing Specialist, Lane Council of Governments	Julia Woolley
Transportation Program Manager, OSU Cascades	Casey Bergh
Mobility Manager, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District	Kathy Fitzpatrick
Dispatcher, Gilliam County	Sabrina Wagenaar
Commissioner, Gilliam County	Leah Watkins
Transportation Outreach and Marketing Manager, Lane Transit District	Theresa Brand
Transit Manager, Morrow County	Katie Imes
Transportation Demand Management & Outreach Program Manager, Go Lloyd	Ophelia Cavill
Outreach and Engagement Administrator for Cascades East	Derek Hofbauer
Public Works Maintenance Supervisor, City of Oakridge	Robeart Chrisman
Senior Planner – Multimodal Transportation, Clackamas County	Scott Hoelscher
Transportation Manager, Malheur Council on Aging/ADRC	Brittany White
POINT Project Manager, ODOT	Joel Manning
Former Columbia Area Transit Manager	Patty Fink

ODOT's Innovative Mobility Program

December 2022

ODOT's [Innovative Mobility Program](#) offers several funding opportunities, including \$5,000 micro-grants on a rolling basis. Below is the list of the latest awardees.

Summary of approved micro-grant applications as of 12/12/2022:

Organization	Description	Location	Amount Received
Anson's Bike Buddies	Bike helmets and locks for low-income children	Hood River	\$5,000
Blanchet House of Hospitality	Recurring monthly bike repair clinic for people with low incomes and people without housing	Multnomah	\$3,000
Cascadia Mobility	Bike helmets for people with low incomes	Lane	\$5,000
Community Cycling Center	Bikes, helmets and safety education for children during holiday bike drive	Multnomah	\$5,000
Commute Options	Bike helmets for children participating in Safe Routes to School programs	Multiple counties in central Oregon	\$5,000
Eugene Whiteaker International Hostel	Bike sharing station for people with limited English proficiency and temporary jobs	Lane	\$5,000
Familia Unida Bike Builders	Bike helmets, bike repair and safety education for low-income and at-risk youth	Jackson	\$5,000
Jazz Not War	Subsidized public transit fare, bike helmets, bike locks and minor bike repairs	Multnomah	\$5,000
Metropolitan Family Service	Helmets and bike locks for e-bike program	Multnomah	\$5,000
Neighborhood Health Center	Transportation wallets for people with low incomes in the farm-working and Latinx communities	Multnomah	\$5,000
Oregon Chinese Coalition	Assistance for Taishanese and Cantonese-speaking Chinese-American seniors	Multnomah	\$5,000
Portland Playhouse	Bike rack installation for organization where most staff identify as Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC)	Multnomah	\$4,715
Sara Bellum's Bakery and Workshop	Bike helmets and safety education for people with disabilities, low incomes and traumatic brain injuries	Multnomah	\$5,000

Organization	Description	Location	Amount Received
Springfield Public Schools Motor Team	Adaptive bikes and trikes, locks and helmets for children with disabilities	Lane	\$5,000
The Gate Youth Association	A bike repair station, distribution of helmets, lights and locks, and bike repair events for youth	Polk	\$5,000
United Way of Columbia County	Pedestrian, bicycle and transit maps for seniors	Columbia	\$5,000
Wallowa Mountains Bike Club	Bike helmets and bike refurbishing for children from low-income and rural homes	Wallowa	\$5,000
Wallowa School District	Bike racks and locks for students	Wallowa	\$4,858
		TOTAL	\$87,573