Walkways and Bikeways

Walkways and bikeways: Percent of urban state highway miles with walkways and bikeways in “fair” or better condition

Our strategy
ODOT Public Transportation Division (PTD) works with local partners to create safe, walkable, and bikeable communities. Oregon law (ORS 366.514) requires walkways and bikeways when state roads are constructed or reconstructed, as well as annual expenditure of at least one percent of the State Highway Fund revenues on walking and biking facilities.

This goal addresses the percentage of total highway roadside miles in urban areas that have complete walkways and bikeways. Urban areas are defined as areas with populations over 5,000 where the population density in the area bordering the highway meets federal definitions, along with incorporated cities with populations under 5,000. One goal of the 2006 Oregon Transportation Plan was to complete the walkway and bikeway network (100% target) by 2030.

Between 2006 and 2008, ODOT completed an inventory of all walkways and bikeways on highways in urban areas and small cities throughout the state. This inventory is updated annually using site visits, construction contract review, and highway video logs. The 2022 update included an update to walkway/bikeway “need” areas as well as an update to the existing facility inventory, resulting in a significant increase in number of roadside miles in the denominator for this measure. The Oregon Transportation Commission adopted its Strategic Action Plan in December 2020, targeting an outcome of improved access to walking, biking, and transit. This focus will allow ODOT to improve equitable access by increasing dedicated funding for walking, biking, and transit and better leveraging broader agency investments to include prioritized multimodal investments.

About the target
The Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2016) defines policies and strategies to make biking and walking safe and

| Bike Lanes and Sidewalks - Percent of urban state highways with bike lanes and sidewalks |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Actual  | 43.0% | 38.0% | 39.0% | 39.0% | 39.0% | 39.0% | 43.7% | 42.0% |
| Goal    | 46%   | 48%   | 50%   | 52%   | 52%   | 52%   | 52%   | 52%   |

Fact
Urban areas are expanding at a faster rate than ODOT can provide needed walkways and bikeways.
comfortable options. The plan and related analyses revised the goal, reducing the target from 56 to 52 percent. PTD has developed a new measure that will better reflect statewide access to walking and biking and will begin using it in 2023.

How we are doing
ODOT makes strategic investments in walking and biking improvements on both the state and local system where Oregon communities and ODOT have identified the greatest need. In recent years, ODOT has increased resources and investment in walking and biking, creating region Active Transportation Liaisons (ATL) and allocating funding for the state network in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

According to the Oregon Household Survey conducted from 2009-2011, 11 percent of adults travel by walking or biking, but this percentage increases to 52 percent if the household does not have access to a vehicle or has more workers than vehicles. Current analysis of facilities on the state highway system estimates it will take over 150 years, at the current rate of investment, to close gaps in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Factors affecting results and what needs to be done
Over the last several biennia, ODOT has targeted additional funds to address gaps along the state system. In January 2021, the Oregon Transportation Commission approved an 85% increase in state and federal funds in the 2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program cycle dedicated to improving walking and biking on state facilities.

However, despite constructing miles of walkways and bikeways every year, the percent of urban highways with complete walkways and bikeways in “fair” or better condition has declined or remained relatively flat over the last seven years. This is due, in part, to definitional changes for what constitutes an urban area, but the larger issue is that scarcity of funding frequently results in road maintenance being prioritized over pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The number of miles of walkways and bikeways ODOT constructs is not the only factor. Recent adjustments to the federally defined urban areas have added many new roadway miles into Oregon’s expanding urban areas because formerly rural highways are unlikely to have walkways and bikeways. Jurisdictional transfers can also negatively affect this goal when a local government assumes ownership of a state highway. Such transfers are typically preceded by significant improvements to the highway, including adding walkways and bikeways. ODOT may build walkways and bikeways on a highway one year, increasing our progress toward our goals, only to transfer the road to local ownership the next year, causing our percent completed to drop.

About the data
TransInfo is the official ODOT data source for the State Highway network and is used to tabulate the official State mileage, including the number of highway miles that have bike lanes and sidewalks, and the condition of the facilities.

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Data source
ODOT TransInfo