Outreach Summary

2018 Stakeholder Meetings and Online Open House

Oregon Public Transportation Plan
Overview

ODOT sought public feedback on the Draft Oregon Public Transportation Plan (OPTP) after the draft plan was released for public comment by the Oregon Transportation Commission on May 17, 2018. ODOT staff met with many stakeholder and interest groups to present and discuss an overview of the OPTP. In addition, the agency hosted an online open house that allowed the public and stakeholders to review the plan, an overview of the plan content, view charts and graphics and respond to survey questions. ODOT also developed and distributed materials to the OPTP’s Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) so that PAC members could give presentations and facilitate discussions on the OPTP themselves.

Notification

The comment period and the online open house were advertised in emails to many stakeholder groups, interested parties lists, letters to affected agencies, letters and meetings with tribes, statewide press releases, and social media postings. ODOT emailed invitations to the online open house to over 700 individuals and agencies and about 100 stakeholder groups. Several groups assisted ODOT by sharing the online open house invitation via their newsletters.

Stakeholder and Public Meetings

Staff made presentations and shared information at stakeholder and public meetings around the state. Outreach events were held with a diversity of stakeholders and groups, including:

- All twelve Area Commissions on Transportation, whose members are primarily local elected officials and local transportation stakeholders. These meetings are open to the public and are advertised locally and online.
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- All nine federally recognized tribes
- Various statewide boards and commissions
- Other groups with an interest in public transportation

Altogether, more than 560 individuals participated in about 40 ACT, public, and stakeholder meeting presentations and discussions.

ODOT sent individual letters offering meetings and inviting recipients to the online open house. Letters were sent to various groups, including interested state and federal agencies, federally recognized tribal governments, natural resource agencies, equity groups, and others.
In-person meeting participants shared their thoughts and OPTP topics of interest, including:

- If congestion pricing is approved; there will have to be an adequate public transportation system as an option
- Importance of access to public transportation system to the success of public transportation and commuter level frequency of buses in I-5 corridor
- An interest in the concept of transit priority corridors
- Importance of reliability of public transportation services and system
- How the OPTP affects future transportation planning
- Importance of easy connections between transit systems and the various services, routes, and modes within transit systems
- Interest in the definition of public transportation and how the definition works with transportation options and transportation network companies
- Pleased with the inclusion of equity and integrating transit in plans
- Appreciated the breadth of the definition of diversity in the plan
- The practice of giving tribal preference to Native Americans in hiring should be addressed in the OPTP as part of equity and diversity. Workforce equity preference for hiring tribal members
- Interest in coordination and cooperation: ODOT providing assistance and helping to convene stakeholders
- Carrying transit considerations all the way through to project delivery and maintenance
- Suggestions that there may be a need for ODOT to lead in bus technology, such as those enabling real-time vehicle information
- Interest in continuing leadership on transit issues from ODOT and OTC after plan adoption

---

**Online Open House Feedback Summary**

The online open house was available to participants from May 18 to July 20, 2018. It presented summary plan information, links to the plan document, and a survey that enabled respondents to provide written comments. The online open house is archived at [http://openhouse.oregondot.org/optp](http://openhouse.oregondot.org/optp).

**Participation**

Over the two months it was open, the online open house received 584 unique visitors and 53 survey responses.
Survey Response Overview
Respondents were largely supportive of the OPTP Draft as written, including the Goals, Policies, and Strategies (Question 1: 75% agree or strongly agree) and Key Initiatives (Question 5: 61% agree).

Many of the commenters were generally supportive of making improvements to the public transportation system and cited a range of reasons such as: improving the environment, supporting rural communities, outgrowing the current system, and serving seniors and people with disabilities.

Recommended additions to the OPTP Draft tended to focus on specific transportation services and strategies (electric bus and other technologies, bus-on-shoulder, public awareness campaigns), or adding and strengthening desired Plan outcomes, such as transit equity, intercity connections, rural service, improved air quality, and reducing driving.

Some commenters felt that some of the goals could be more specific, and the plan could use more detailed solutions and metrics for determining success or failure over time.

Some respondents expressed concerns about the costs of improvements, and felt that the Plan may not equitably serve non-users or those who do not want public transportation service in their communities.

Responses by Question
Each online open house page corresponded with a chapter of the OPTP draft and provided visitors with a high-level overview of each chapter’s content and key messages. Survey questions allowed respondents to express their level of agreement or support for the findings and proposals in the final three chapters of the OPTP draft and to provide feedback and suggest revisions as needed. Optional demographic questions were included to help the project team build a participant profile and understand the extent of geographic participation.

The summarized and abbreviated responses below are presented by open house page and corresponding chapter.
Goals, Policies, and Strategies (Chapter 3)

Question 1: “Do you think that the goals, policies, and strategies reflect public transportation opportunities and challenges in your community?”

(53 people responded to this question.)

Question 2: “If you disagree with the statement above, or if you have specific comments on Chapter 3, please explain below. If you noted page number references for your comments, please provide those too.”

Comments from respondents who agreed with the goals, policies, and strategies:

Comments on Goals and Policies

- Goals are well stated.
- Suggested goal: Improve public transit awareness through better marketing.
- Equity policy should be stronger, recognizing obligations to provide transit to historically marginalized communities.

Support for Specific Ideas

- Support for bus on shoulder.
- Conversations about mobility management, non-traditional schedules, and equity are appreciated by people with disabilities. They should be involved in future conversations on these subjects.
- Improve transit frequency and intercity links to support aging populations outgrowing the existing system.
- Improve safety by adding transit staff to support seniors and riders with disabilities.

Concerns and Revisions

- Confirm the accuracy of figure 2-10.
- Concern about increased costs to taxpayers.
Respondents who disagreed with the goals, policies, and strategies, or who were not sure mentioned these issues:

- Inadequate focus on air quality related to diesel emissions from trucks and busses. (3)
- Not enough emphasis on technology as a solution for addressing problems like congestion and pollution. (2)
- Disproportionate focus on public transit stakeholders; concerns about inequitable benefit to non-transit users. (2)
- Plan doesn’t go far enough to make transit a better or easier option than driving.
- Need more focus on improving intercity service.
- The plan lacks specific goals, targets, solutions, and metrics for determining success or failure.

Investment Considerations (Chapter 4)

Question 3: “Do you have specific comments on Chapter 4? If you noted page number references for your comments, please provide those too.”

Comments by Scenario

- Scenario 1: The best option without additional funding; takes care of what we have.
- Scenario 2: A better option if funding is available; the minimum acceptable Scenario.
- Scenario 3: The best option contingent on available funding. Light rail, frequent service, and regional connections can make transit more appealing than driving.

Concerns and Revisions

- Does not reflect health and air quality benefits of electric and alternative fuel bus fleets. (2)
- Due to cost, efare expansion should be part of Scenario 2, not the baseline scenario.
- Costs may outweigh benefits.
- Does not reflect minimal role ODOT plays in funding transit.
Moving Forward (Chapter 5)

Question 4: “Do you have specific comments on Chapter 5? If you noted page number references for your comments, please provide those too.”

Comments

- Technology is important. (2)
- Key initiatives are the most important section.
- Support for intercity service.
- Support for investment in an excellent public transportation system.
- The Plan is well thought-out.
- ODOT should partner with Travel Oregon to develop a statewide campaign on the benefits of public transportation.
- These are good projects for ODOT and will help it become more than just a “highway” agency.

Concerns and Revisions

- Plan is wishful and vague; needs more concrete and actionable items to be useful.
- Could be shorter and less wordy.
- “Coordination” should mean respecting the wishes of communities that do not want transit.

Question 5: “In your opinion, do the key initiatives address the most important things to work on first?”

(23 people responded to this question.)

Respondents who disagreed with the question or had other comments:

- Public Transportation Plan Integration: unclear which activities Oregon and providers already do (well or badly).
- Key initiatives are too vague and lack deadlines.
- Consider whether investments on expensive technology would be better spent on marketing, service improvements, or priorities benefiting low-income and transit dependent populations.
- Consider car-free urban centers and reduced or no-fare transit.
- “Goal is unclear. Seems to be driven by government not true public interest.”
Question 6: “Do you have any other comments on the draft plan? Please explain below. If you noted page number references for your comments, please provide those too.”

Comments

• Document audience is unclear; document is very long/should be shorter to appeal to those outside of transit agencies and government.
• To be useful, it should be relevant to many people and offer implementable solutions.
• Ensure that people know about the plan or about the role they need to play in moving it forward. Take advantage of local transit agency local knowledge for outreach and to generate future support for implementation.
• Good job on the draft; good visuals; goals make sense.
• Amtrak Cascades is crucial for connecting Eugene and Portland: need more definition and clarification on funding source for passenger rail; need for a rail plan that improves time and efficiency on shared tracks.
• ODOT should work with cities to prioritize public transit investment over highways.
• Smaller cities may benefit from public shuttle networks.
• Weekend and rural transit service help support employment.

Participation Demographics

Counties

(24 people responded to this question.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multnomah</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clackamas</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deschutes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klickitat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linn</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamhill</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant Affiliations
(23 people responded to this question.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested member of the public</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit organization</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation provider</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State government agency</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local or regional government</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private transportation provider</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transit Ridership

How often do you ride transit?
(23 people responded to this question.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t ride transit</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally (less than once a month)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do you use transit?

(23 people responded to this question.)

- Commute to work: 9
- Access recreation or visit other places: 8
- Visit others or access social activities: 7
- Other (specified below): 5
- I don’t ride transit: 5
- Access shopping, medical, or other services: 4

Respondents that responded “Other” listed the following:

- Transportation to the airport
- Transportation when their vehicle is unavailable
- Transportation during when there is significant congestion

Age

A total of 23 people responded to this question.

- 65 or older: 3
- 55-64 years old: 7
- 45-54 years old: 4
- 35-44 years old: 3
- 25-34 years old: 5
- 18-24 years old: 1
- Under 18 years old: 0
Race/Ethnicity
A total of 22 people responded to this question, and respondents could check all that apply. Options that received no responses included African American (not Hispanic), American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Asian or Pacific Islander.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian (not Hispanic)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/prefer not to specify</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender
A total of 22 people responded to this question. Survey participants were also given the option to indicate another gender not listed, but there were no responses that indicated “other.”

- Male: 12 (55%)
- Female: 9 (41%)
- Prefer not to specify: 1 (4%)
Other Stakeholder Feedback Letters and Testimony

ODOT received nine letters providing comments from individuals and groups separately from the Online Open House. The following summarizes comments received via letter.

- Expressions of support for the OPTP and key components such as Goal 4 Equity and Goal 5 Health.
- Recommendations to be clear about being inclusive of transportation disadvantaged people and people with disabilities throughout the plan and in future transit planning and plan implementation, as well as in transit facilities and services.
- Revise policies to support including transportation disadvantaged individuals in leadership roles and in decision-making.
- Revise policies to acknowledge housing issues more explicitly, including displacement and gentrification.
- Concerns about how the plan helps to implement targets for greenhouse gas reduction and contributes to improved air quality, such as: Assess how the level of effort or investment called for in the OPTP relates to the level of transit service identified in the Statewide Transportation Strategy. Consider amending the OPTP to include a strategy to evaluate expansion of transit service to levels called for in the STS as metropolitan regional transportation plans are updated.
- Making sure efficient and user-friendly bicycle and pedestrian connections and facilities are supported by relevant policies.
- Prioritize public transportation funding to focus on improvements in low-income areas.
- Support for implementing reduced fares for low-income individuals and youth.
- Emphasize the importance of public transportation and access to parks and open space.
- Revise the OPTP implementation chapter to emphasize ODOT’s role in OPTP implementation.
- Adopt regionally-appropriate mode share targets.
- Integrate transit more fully into the discussion around highway value pricing in the Portland metro region.
The OTC conducted a public hearing on the Draft OPTP at its July 20th, 2018 meeting in Seaside. ODOT presented a brief overview of outreach on the Draft OPTP. One representative of a public transportation provider gave testimony supporting the plan and its development process.

The OPTP Draft Plan comments and feedback provided in person, via the online open house and letters, and in testimony will be used to help ODOT and the PAC complete the final draft of the plan. Written comments will be assembled together, with a response from ODOT for each. This record will be shared with the PAC; ODOT and the PAC will determine whether any changes are needed to the plan draft to reflect comments received. The written comment record and this overall summary will then be shared with the Oregon Transportation Commission when they consider adoption of the OPTP in September, 2018.