



# State Rail Plan Vision Statement and Goals

**Oregon State Rail Plan Update - 2025**  
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**Prepared For:**



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# 1 State Rail Plan Vision Statement and Goals

The rail system in Oregon is predominantly owned by private railroads, yet freight and passenger rail services are critical components of the state's multimodal transportation network. Oregon recognizes the unique opportunities public- and private-sector collaboration presents and has a vested interest in proactively planning for the rail system's future, so that Oregon's residents and businesses can capitalize on the many benefits freight and passenger rail services provide. These opportunities include:

- **The rail system is a significant conduit for economic and job activity.** The 2011 Oregon Freight Plan, amended in 2023, estimates that just over 31 percent of Oregon's economy is based on industries that are dependent on goods movement, including those served by rail such as timber, wood products and paper, agriculture and food, manufacturing, construction, and wholesale and retail trade.<sup>1</sup> Efficient and accessible intercity passenger rail connects job markets, recreation and tourism centers throughout the state to support local economies.
- **The rail system improves connections for people and goods.** Passenger and freight rail systems in Oregon connect people and goods within the state, across the United States and to Canada. The freight rail system connects to ports in Oregon that import and export goods between international markets.
- **The rail system provides mode choice and relieves congestion.** Both freight and passenger rail systems provide modal options for users. Offering travel options lowers the transportation costs for residents and businesses. Likewise, removing vehicles from the roads brings positive impacts including congestion mitigation, reduced safety concerns and decreased wear and tear on other parts of the system.
- **Use of rail contributes positively to the environment.** In general, rail is a more efficient mode than passenger vehicles and trucks, in terms of fuel consumption, for moving both people and goods. This reduction in fuel consumption also leads to a reduction in emissions.
- **When coordinated, rail enhances community quality of life.** Through integration of rail systems and land use planning, community quality of life is enhanced. Passenger and commuter rail supports the development of livable communities, provides travel options and spurs economic opportunities at station locations. Preservation of rail corridors ensures that economic development opportunities can be realized in the future.

## 1.1 Oregon State Rail Plan Vision Statement

The Oregon State Rail Plan (OSRP) Vision Statement is a forward-looking statement that will shape the future of the rail system and ensure the beneficial outcomes of rail are realized. The Vision articulated in the Vision Statement is carried out through the OSRP's goals, policies, strategies and implementation framework.

*Oregon will have a safe, efficient, and commercially viable rail system that serves its businesses, travelers and communities through private resources leveraged, as needed, by strategic public investments.*

<sup>1</sup> Source: Oregon Freight Plan, An Element of the Oregon Transportation Plan (2023), Page 3-3, Table 3.2.

## 1.2 Oregon State Rail Plan Goals

The Vision is carried out through the OSRP's goals, policies, strategies, and implementation framework. Seven goals have been developed. Additional text, policies and strategies supporting these goals are articulated later in this chapter. The order in which the goals are presented in this OSRP is not intended to imply any priority among the goals because they are all critically important to meet the State Rail Plan Vision; rather, the use of goal numbers is a convenient way to refer to each individual goal. The goals for the OSRP include:

**Goal 1** – Partnership, Collaboration and Communication

**Goal 2** – Connected System

**Goal 3** – System Investments and Preservation

**Goal 4** – Funding, Finance and Investment Principles

**Goal 5** – System Safety

**Goal 6** – Preserving and Enhancing Quality of Life

**Goal 7** – Economic Development

## 1.3 Oregon Transportation Plan Goals

The Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP) was approved by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) in 2023. The purpose of the OTP is to define the long-range transportation policy for the movement of people and goods across the state and set the framework for policies and strategies from the present day to 2050. The Plan, which is adopted by the OTC, directs the work and decisions of ODOT. The plans of other state agencies, regional and local governments, and transportation providers must be consistent with the OTP. The goals for the OTP include:

**Goal 1** – Economic and Community Vitality

**Goal 2** – Social Equity

**Goal 3** – Mobility

**Goal 4** – Stewardship of Public Resources




**Goal 5** – Safety

**Goal 6** – Sustainability and Climate Change

The following chapter provides the framework for how the Oregon Transportation Plan and OSRP Vision align.

## 2 OSRP/OTP Crosswalk


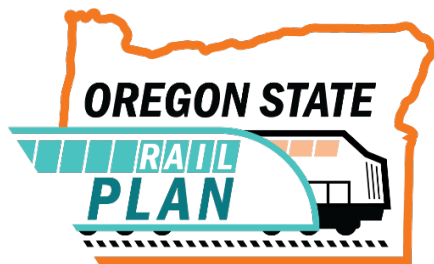

The OTP vision, goals and objectives provide a framework for the OSRP. The crosswalk below compares the OTP Foundational Goals to the OSRP action strategies, as revised since 2022.




 		
Foundational Goal (OTP)	OSRP ID	OSRP Action Strategies
		<p><b>Safety:</b> Enable safe travel for all people, regardless of their age, ability, race, income, or mode of transportation.</p>
		<p><b>OSRP Background:</b> Oregon will continue to approach all aspects of rail system operation with safety and security as a top priority. Shared freight and passenger corridor operations, exclusive right of way and street running, at-grade rail crossings, and trespassing on private rail property are specific areas where rail safety and security are a concern, and solutions will be coordinated with private-sector and local community partners, including emergency response providers. Highway-rail at-grade crossings are a point of conflict between freight and passenger rail operations and the traveling public using the crossing facility. While Oregon has a statute to eliminate crossings wherever possible, project cost, weighed against the available resources, expected benefits and consideration of local conditions, may result in application of alternate mitigation approaches, such as lower cost improvements and use of technology. Inspections, safety education and awareness programs are key components to improving rail system safety. Rail safety relies on partnerships between railroads, federal and state agencies, local communities and emergency response providers. The ODOT Commerce and Compliance Division ensures compliance with state and federal regulations related to track, locomotives and rail cars, hazardous material transport and railroad operating practices.</p>


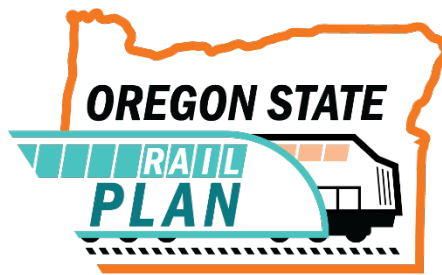


Foundational Goal (OTP)	OSRP ID	OSRP Action Strategies
	SA 1	Design transportation projects to avoid, reduce or address potential safety concerns with at-grade or grade-separated crossings in coordination with the ODOT Public Transportation and Commerce and Compliance Divisions.
	SA 2	Make every effort to further the safety and security of employees working on the rail system, passengers of the rail system, communities near the rail lines and the commodities being transported by rail.
	SA 3	Increase safety through reduction, prevention or management of potential conflicts between rail and other users of the transportation system, including the consideration of quiet zones when federal requirements are met, and safety is fully considered.
	SA 4	Coordinate and support safety and security awareness programs, operational improvements, new technology and equipment, inspections, enforcement activities, and coordinated response plans and training that promote overall system safety and security.



 		
Foundational Goal (OTP)	OSRP ID	OSRP Action Strategies
		<p><b>Social Equity:</b> Improve access to safe and affordable transportation for all, recognizing the unmet mobility needs of people who have been systemically excluded and underserved. Create an equitable and transparent engagement and communications decision-making structure that builds public trust.</p>
		<p><b>OSRP Background:</b> Both passenger and freight rail system benefits can help to meet Oregon’s quality of life objectives. Rail links residents to jobs, contributing to community livability through mode choice, increased mobility and lower transportation costs. Quality of life is enhanced, and passenger and commuter rail spurs economic opportunities at station locations through better integration of rail systems, land use planning and Transit-Oriented Development. Rail systems also provide critical links to underserved areas in the state by providing key connections to urban areas, multimodal facilities and national or international markets.</p> <p>Increasing the use of both passenger and freight rail provides benefits beyond the rail system, such as reducing emissions, fuel consumption, roadway congestion and pavement maintenance costs.</p>
	SE 1	Develop and maintain a short-/long-range rail investment needs inventory in partnership with railroad owners and operators that is consistent with needs identified in the OSRP.
	SE 2	Support and make investments in intercity bus transportation and transit services that enhance, supplement and expand access and connectivity of the intercity and commuter passenger rail networks in Oregon.
	SE 3	Promote and support the co-location of economic activities and appropriate transportation facilities with convenient and reliable access to freight and passenger rail options.


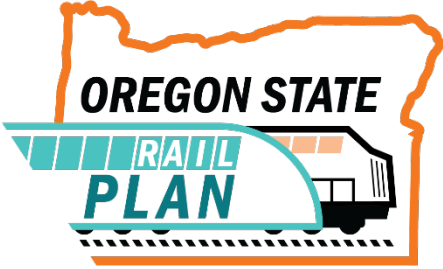
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Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Action Strategies
		<p><b>Sustainability &amp; Climate Action:</b> Minimize transportation's negative role by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for all sectors of transportation, while also reducing air toxins, noise and light pollution, water toxins, and habitat loss.</p>
		<p><b>OSRP Background:</b> Both freight and passenger rail system benefits can help to meet Oregon's quality of life objectives. Increasing the use of both passenger and freight rail provides benefits beyond the rail system, such as reducing emissions, fuel consumption, roadway congestion and pavement maintenance costs.</p> <p>Rail passenger services links residents to jobs enhancing community livability through mode choice, increased mobility and lower transportation costs. Quality of life is boosted and passenger and commuter rail services spurs economic opportunities at station locations through better integration of transportation systems, land use planning and Transit-Oriented Development. Rail passenger service also provides critical links to underserved areas in the state by providing key connections to urban areas, health and educational services, multimodal facilities and national or international markets.</p>
	SC 1	Enhance or develop performance measures and benefit/cost-type tools that inform evaluation of rail investments based on benefits to Oregon's economy, improved freight and passenger mobility, improved safety and improved environmental conditions of the transportation system in Oregon.
	SC 2	Increase use and investment in freight and passenger rail systems to conserve and improve Oregon's environment and community cohesion.



 		
Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Action Strategies
	SC 3	Advance fuel-efficient rail operations, vehicle design and the use of cleaner fuels as part of Oregon’s goal to move toward a cleaner and more diverse energy supply that protects people’s health and the environment while making the system more resilient to oil price uncertainty and shocks.
	SC 4	Make passenger and commuter rail improvements that enhance existing compact communities and neighborhoods and support the continued integration of residential, commercial and employment land uses.
	SC 5	Work with railroads to provide efficient intercity mobility through and near urban areas in a manner that minimizes adverse effects on urban land use and travel patterns, including noise mitigation, where appropriate, and rail crossing considerations.




 		
Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Action Strategies
		<p><b>Economic &amp; Community Vitality:</b> Improve prosperity, opportunity, and livability for all people who live, work, and recreate in Oregon.</p>
		<p><b>OSRP Background:</b> The 2023 Oregon Freight Plan (OFP) estimates that freight demand will grow by nearly 64% in tons moved and 92% in commodity value moved between 2017 and 2050, comprising a substantial part of Oregon’s overall economy.<sup>2</sup> The OFP estimated just over 31% of Oregon’s economy is based on industries that are dependent on goods movement, including a substantial portion served by rail, such as timber, wood products, and paper; agriculture and food; manufacturing; construction; and wholesale and retail trade.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Oregon is expected to add about 1.3 million residents through 2040, increasing passenger travel demands. Without preservation and strategic investments in the rail system, other modes will have to shoulder the load, and Oregon’s highway system will experience increased congestion. Degenerative highway and rail systems both will negatively impact Oregon industries and cause them to be less competitive in an increasingly challenging global economy. Rail system investments are critical to retaining Oregon’s existing jobs and businesses and provide an opportunity to leverage private sector funds. Rail also plays a key role in growing existing Oregon industries and attracting new ones to the state. In particular, maintaining and growing rail connections to ports and identifying opportunities to spur cargo-oriented development are two examples of investments communities can spearhead, in partnership with private sector partners, to contribute to state and local economic development efforts.<sup>2</sup></p>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Oregon Freight Plan, An Element of the Oregon Transportation Plan (2023), Page 2-11, Table 2.2


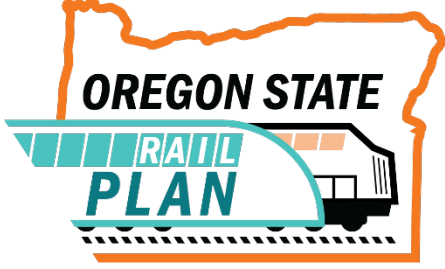
<sup>3</sup> Source: Oregon Freight Plan, An Element of the Oregon Transportation Plan (2023), Page 3-3, Table 3.2

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Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Action Strategies
	EC 1	Provide planning guidance (e.g., transportation system planning guidance, model zoning ordinances, design standards and best practices) to regional and local jurisdictions to minimize conflicts from incompatible land uses in rail corridors and better integrate rail into communities.
	EC 2	Provide planning guidance and work with local jurisdictions and railroads to better integrate and plan for passenger and commuter rail systems in land use plans (e.g., multimodal connectivity, station area planning and new or relocated stops policy).
	EC 3	Leverage investments in the freight rail system to provide Oregon a competitive advantage by moving goods faster and more reliably to regional, national and international markets.
	EC 4	Make and facilitate investments that address intermodal terminal and rail yard capacity needs consistent with the OSRP (e.g., identification or provision of suitable sites and assistance with permitting requirements), where there is market support for such facilities.
	EC 5	Develop and maintain a short-/long-range rail investment needs inventory in partnership with railroad owners and operators that is consistent with needs identified in the OSRP.
	EC 6	Provide incentives under new or existing funding programs to encourage system owners to adopt best practices to identify and address system vulnerabilities and to reduce recovery times.
	EC 7	Make investments in the passenger rail system so that intrastate, interstate and international travelers can travel easily for business and recreation.
	EC 8	Coordinate private and public resources to provide rail system improvements and services that contribute to, or help develop, active and vital economic centers and jobs throughout Oregon.


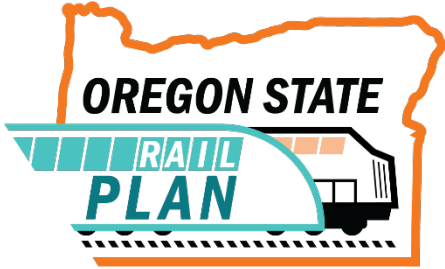
 		
Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Action Strategies
	EC 9	Emphasize intermodal, multimodal and first- and last-mile connectivity to key multimodal facilities, including ports.


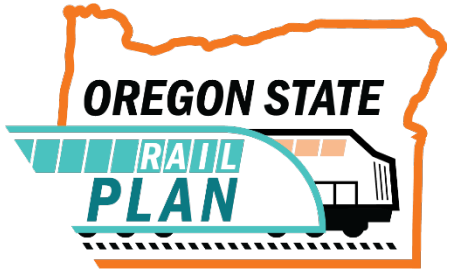

 		
Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Actions
		<p><b>Mobility:</b> Create a resilient multimodal transportation system that enables the diverse range of community members and businesses with different needs to get where they need to go safely, reliably, affordably and with minimal environmental impact.</p>
		<p><b>OSRP Background:</b> For rail to effectively play its critical role in Oregon’s transportation system, it must be integrated with and connected to other modes and to other rail systems. Rail corridors and services ensure connectivity within and across the state and nation, linking major population and employment centers, and linking industrial users to their suppliers and markets. Passenger stations and platforms, freight rail yards, transload and port facilities provide the connection points at which modal transfers are made, whether by people or goods. From the first mile to the last mile, each element of a connected system has a distinct role, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the system are only as good as the performance of the weakest link. Promoting, preserving and enhancing rail services and connections ensure that modal options are available to enhance mobility and overall transportation system resiliency for residents and businesses. As noted in Chapter 3, rail can also play an important role in providing transportation system redundancy and resiliency in the event of natural disasters. The Oregon Resilience Plan identifies some high priority routes that would improve system resiliency and recommends ensuring that these rail routes meet seismic standards.</p>
	MO 1	Provide planning guidance and work with local jurisdictions and railroads to better integrate and plan for passenger and commuter rail systems in land use plans (e.g., multimodal connectivity, station area planning and new or relocated stops policy).
	MO 2	Work in partnership with railroad operators, state and federal agencies, local communities and emergency response providers to provide for the safe and secure transport of commodities throughout the state. Continue state efforts to address the movement and transport safety of hazardous materials.


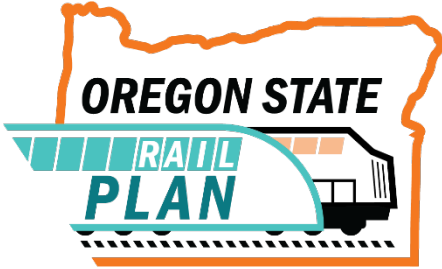



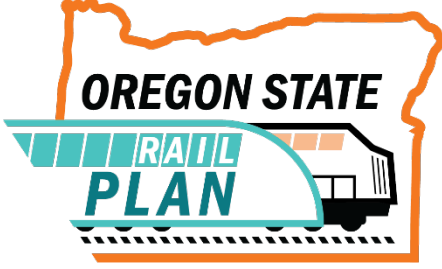
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Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Actions
	MO 3	Emphasize intermodal, multimodal and first- and last-mile connectivity to key multimodal facilities, including ports.
	MO 4	Continue to work with the Federal Railroad Administration on a Corridor Investment Program to facilitate decisions on future rail service in the Amtrak Cascades corridor, including general rail alignment, number of daily trips, travel time objectives and the rail technology to be used.
	MO 5	Increase use of and investment in freight and passenger rail systems to conserve and improve Oregon's environment and community cohesion.
	MO 6	Provide incentives under new or existing funding programs to encourage system owners to adopt best practices to identify and address system vulnerabilities and to reduce recovery times.
	MO 7	Make investments in the passenger rail system so that intrastate, interstate and international travelers can travel easily for business and recreation.
	MO 8	Coordinate private and public resources to provide rail system improvements and services that contribute to, or help develop, active and vital economic centers and jobs throughout Oregon.
	MO 9	Emphasize intermodal, multimodal and first- and last-mile connectivity to key multimodal facilities, including ports. (Same as MO 3).
	MO 10	Support and make investments in intercity bus transportation and transit services that enhance, supplement and expand access and connectivity of the intercity and commuter passenger rail networks in Oregon.


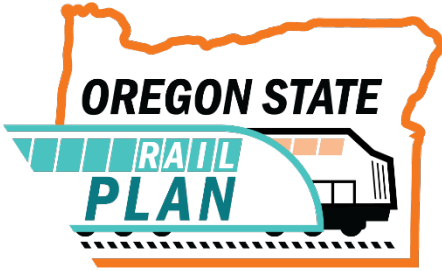


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Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Actions
	MO 11	Participate in high-speed rail visioning to develop a conceptual corridor assessment and high-level costs for high-speed rail between the Eugene-Springfield area and Vancouver, Washington, with implementation beyond 2035.
	MO 12	Work with Washington state to initiate a public process and formalize a new policy for the Amtrak Cascades corridor. In the interim, evaluate new proposals to add station stops based on benefits and disadvantages for the entire service.
	MO 13	Make investments that benefit system operations for freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail service (or do not degrade one service type in favor of another) that eliminate conflicts in shared-use corridors and among modes and that allow for future service improvements.
	MO 14	Maximize and leverage railroad investments through Connect Oregon and other multimodal funding programs.
	MO 15	Make passenger and commuter rail improvements that enhance existing compact communities and neighborhoods and support the continued integration of residential, commercial and employment land uses.

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Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Actions
	<b>Stewardship of Public Resources:</b> Guided by open, data-driven decision-making processes, secure sufficient and reliable revenue for transportation funding and invest public resources to achieve a resilient and sustainable multimodal transportation system.	
	<p><b>OSRP Background:</b> Bottlenecks, capacity needs and other system deficiencies degrade the performance, safety and attractiveness of the rail system. In particular, deficiencies that impact system travel time and reliability influence how, and how frequently, rail service is used. Maintaining the passenger and freight rail system condition in a state of good repair, closely aligned with system demand and economic development potential, ensures the system can serve residents and businesses in the most efficient manner possible while providing modal options. Making improvements on rail lines with shared passenger and freight operations can provide more reliable trains, more frequent trains and shorter travel times. The loss of any rail service in Oregon is an economic loss. The further loss of rail corridors/right of way signifies the end of development opportunities that could be served by rail in the future. The state will work with local agencies to consider factors and choices for preserving or protecting rail services and corridors, so that rail services continue to function and so that future system expansion is possible. Rail abandonment will only be used as a last resort if there are no justifiable reasons to save the line or right of way.</p>	
	SP 1	Work towards securing a sustainable funding source to address critical freight, passenger and commuter rail system needs for both capital improvements and operations.
	SP 2	Support and make investments to improve accessibility within and to various regions of the state, including east-west connectivity and connectivity across state lines, consistent with strategies on passenger and commuter rail service and stops.
	SP 3	Maximize and leverage railroad investments through Connect Oregon and other multimodal funding programs.

 		
Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Actions
	SP 4	Use funding and financing mechanisms that are understandable to transportation system users and the public and minimize undesirable long-term impacts.
	SP 5	Evaluate the benefits of designating strategic rail facilities and corridors and its role in informing public investment and planning decisions.
	SP 6	Enhance or develop performance measures and benefit/cost-type tools that inform evaluation of rail investments based on benefits to Oregon's economy, improved freight and passenger mobility, improved safety and improved environmental conditions of the transportation system in Oregon.
	SP 7	Leverage and support Class I railroad investments to eliminate critical bottlenecks and choke points.
	SP 8	Leverage investments and support short line railroads to upgrade track and maintain the system in a state of good repair where there is a demonstrated rail system, and an economic and public benefit for the state and/or region, and when a viable long-term business plan has been demonstrated. Work may include incentives for businesses to locate and utilize rail assets. The Industrial Rail Spur Fund or similar improvement opportunities are one example of these incentives.
	SP 9	Preserve the rail system through a hierarchy of investment and action: (1) preserve service, (2) preserve infrastructure, (3) rail banking, and (4) rail line abandonment (last resort).

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Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Actions
	SP 10	Actively engage ODOT Regions, Area Commissions on Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, the general public and others. Provide public information on freight and passenger rail benefits (including system congestion, economic, environmental and sustainability benefits), the availability of passenger rail service (as a means of encouraging ridership), objectives and opportunities as part of a multimodal transportation system, and information on the benefits and opportunities for public-private partnerships in rail.
	SP 11	Include the following factors for decision making on preservation actions, at a minimum: existing industry base using the line; potential industrial customers not presently using the line but which can be accessed by it; manner in which the line is connected to the national railroad system; geography of the line and its potential service territory; unique circumstances affecting operating costs and revenue potential; and regional vision for the future (What is expected to happen in the area served over the next 50 years?).
	SP 12	Integrate rail system considerations in state, regional and local system and facility plans. Provide guidance documents that promote best practices for multimodal transportation planning and rail integration.
	SP 13	Provide planning guidance (e.g., transportation system planning guidance, model zoning ordinances, design standards and best practices) to regional and local jurisdictions to minimize conflicts from incompatible land uses in rail corridors and better integrate rail into communities.
	SP 14	Work with local jurisdictions and private industries to coordinate local planning activities and interactions with Class 1 and short line railroads and service providers

 		
Foundational Goal	OSRP ID	OSRP Actions
	SP 15	Work with local jurisdictions to plan for integrated multimodal station areas with connectivity to the local street network, intercity bus and local transit systems, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
	SP 16	Increase rail use by Oregon industries and businesses through programs, investments and facilities that help aggregate freight rail traffic and Cargo-Oriented Development (COD) consistent with private railroads' business models.
	SP 17	Use public-private and public-public partnerships for system investment that benefits both private and public objectives.
	SP 18	Provide guidance and contact information to local jurisdictions and other partners seeking to plan for, make investments in or conduct work near railroad facilities.
	SP 19	Make and facilitate investments that address intermodal terminal and rail yard capacity needs consistent with the OSRP (e.g., identification or provision of suitable sites and assistance with permitting requirements), where there is market support for such facilities.
	SP 20	Work toward rail system connectivity, resiliency and redundancy within the overall transportation system to help Oregon mitigate and recover quickly from natural disasters or human-caused disruptions.