

Oregon Community Paths Program Overview

Joint Committee on Transportation
Monday, March 10th, 2025

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What I'll give a brief overview of today:

1. Trail usage and importance in transportation system in Oregon.
2. How we do and do not fund off-street paths in Oregon.
3. What the current funding need is.
4. Oregon Community Paths program overview



Trails are integral to Oregon's Transportation System Plan

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network: The combined network of travelway intended for bicycles and pedestrians, which includes sidewalks, bicycle facilities, **trails**, and walkable and bikeable streets.

Public Health:

EC.3.3: Promote modes of transportation that increase physical activity and invest in the infrastructure that enables them (e.g., sidewalks, bikeways, off-street paths, and safe arterial crossings).

Accessibility:

MO.3.1.3: Develop and maintain pedestrian and off-street path networks

Trails in Oregon's Transportation System Plan cont.

Mobility:

MO.5.1.4: Invest in off-street walking and biking regional paths to enable more safe, comfortable, and direct connections between destinations.

Tourism:

EC.4.1.2: Designate priority routes for recreational trails, scenic byways, and multimodal activities such as cycle tourism, and support the safe use of these designated routes through investments in programs and system improvements.

Safety:

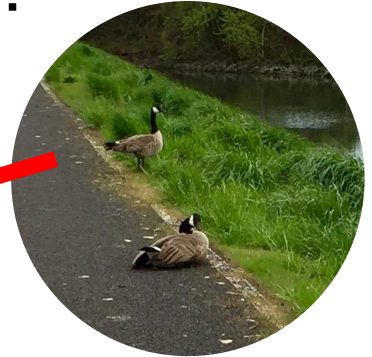
SA.2.1.2: Ensure trail safety by encouraging trail use and keeping trails well maintained and designed for good visibility.

An easy safety math problem:

OREGON'S FATAL AND SERIOUS INJURY FINDINGS:

52% of crashes occurred on state highways and
48% of crashes occurred on city and county roads.

What percent occurred on off-street paths?



And it's not because Oregonians don't use trails. . .

**More than 80% of Oregonians report
using local trails.**

-2025-2029 SCORP



How We Pay for Paved Trails/ ADA/ Multi-Use Paths in Oregon

- Federal Transportation Alternatives program funding
(competitive with on-street projects)
- Some local system development charges/ local bonds
- Some federal transportation grants
- **Oregon Community Paths program**
(oversubscribed by more than 4:1)



How we don't pay for trails in Oregon

- No state general funds go to our state or local parks and recreation department operations and maintenance (funded by lottery and user fees)
- No gas tax/state highway fund \$ or local gas tax \$ go to off-street trails.



Oregon Community Paths Program (ODOT)

Dedicated to helping communities create and maintain connections through multiuse paths, with the goal of complementing and expanding existing active transportation programs across the state.

OCP funds grants for project development, construction, reconstruction, major resurfacing or other improvements of multiuse paths that improve access and safety for people walking and bicycling.

Safety in our Communities is a Network Approach

Communities Need:

- Safe networks to walk, bike, and roll
- Complete streets in every community
- Connected trail networks

How do we get there? Increased funding for oversubscribed safety programs:

- Safe Routes to School infrastructure
- Great Streets
- Oregon Community Paths



Oregon Community Paths Program (ODOT)

Cycle One:

Total Funds requested (\$88M)

Total Funds available (\$15.2M)

- Federal Funds (\$8.2M)
- State Transportation Operating Funds (\$4M)
- State Multimodal Active Transportation Fund (\$3M)
 - Bicycle Excise Tax (est. \$2.1M)*
 - Vehicle Privilege Tax (7% of what goes into Connect Oregon) (est. \$0.9M)

Oregon Community Paths Program (ODOT)

Cycle Two:

Total Funds requested (\$81M)

Total Funds available (\$37M)

- Federal Funds (\$33M, which includes \$3M of SRTS funds)
- State Transportation Operating Funds (\$4M)
- Total MAT Funds were zero, as we were restoring funds into the account after Cycle One.

Oregon Community Paths Program (ODOT)

Cycle Three (Current):

Total Funds requested (\$120 M)

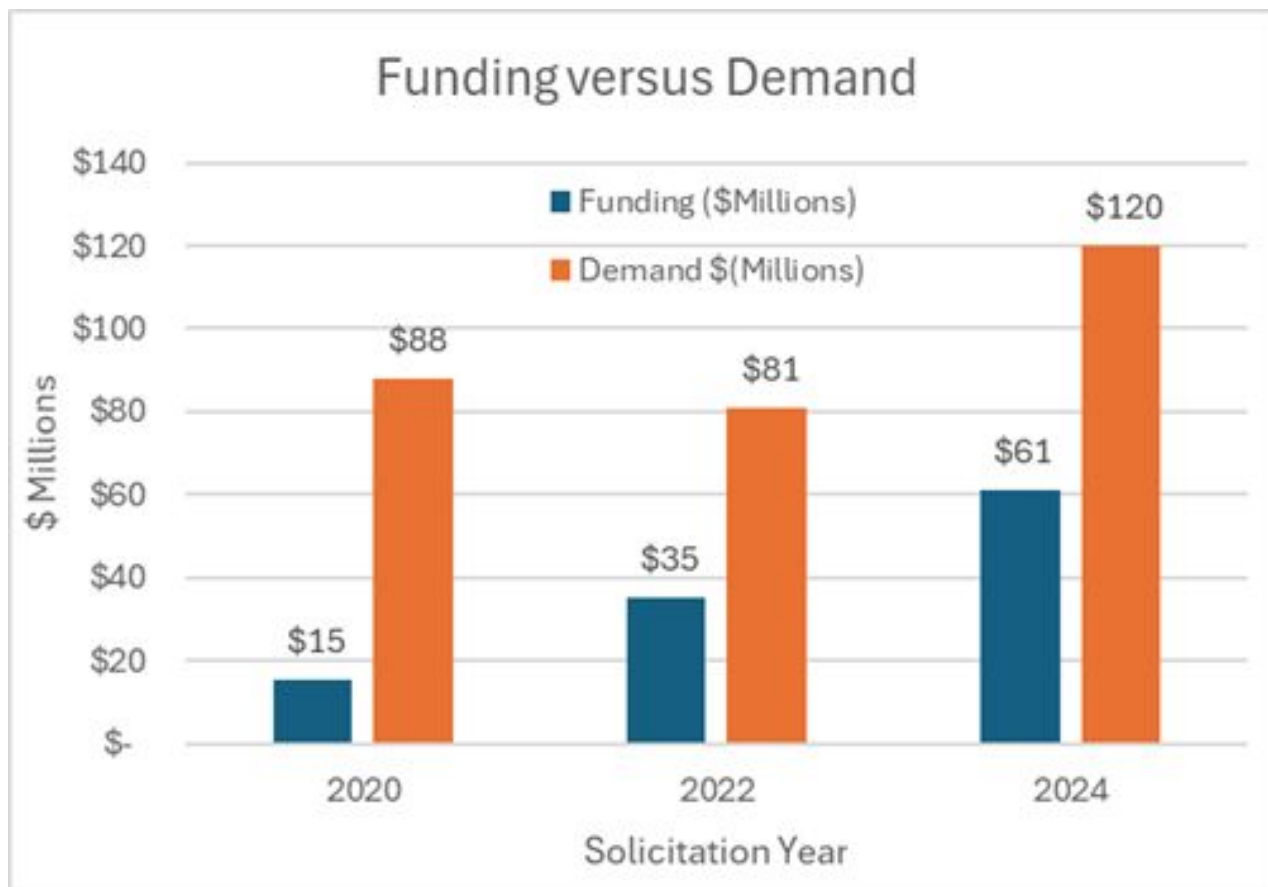
Total Funds available (\$61 M))

- All Federal Funds
- 0 MAT Funds as we are still restoring funds into the account after Cycle One. (Currently estimated at around \$9M)
- Much of federal funding was **one-time infrastructure bill funding**

A group of people are riding bicycles on a paved path outdoors. In the foreground, a person wearing a yellow safety vest and a helmet is riding a blue bicycle. To their left, another person is riding a white bicycle. In the background, several other cyclists are visible, some wearing helmets and safety gear. The path is surrounded by greenery and trees, and the scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**Oregon Community Paths
was oversubscribed by
more than 4:1 over its
first two cycles.**

Funding Gap for Oregon Community Paths



Example: Reedville Trail



Example: Tualatin River Greenway



Example: Umatilla River Trail



Example: Juniper Hills to Madras East Trails



What State Funding Is Needed to Build Out Oregon's Off-Street Path Network?



A map of the Portland Metro area, including parts of Vancouver, Hillsboro, Beaverton, and Gresham. The map shows a network of green lines representing trails and off-street paths. There are numerous yellow squares and rectangles scattered across the map, indicating gaps in the trail network. The text is overlaid on the map in a large, bold, black font.

Metro's plan envisions an interconnected system of nearly 800 miles of off-street paths and trails. As of 2024, there are hundreds of miles of gaps in the trail network.

A recent request for shovel ready projects yielded \$390 Million dollars of unfunded projects from 21 agencies and organizations just in the Portland Metro area alone.

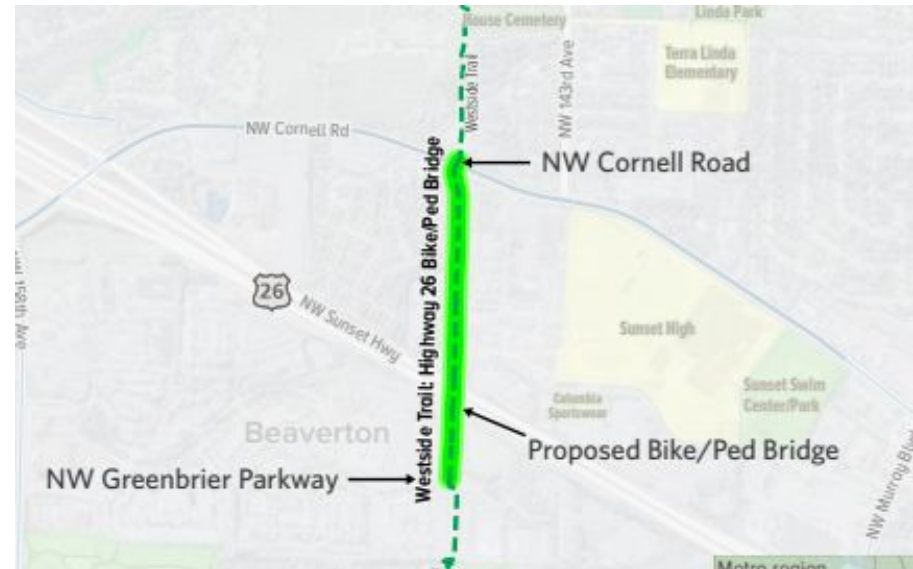
Unfunded Project 1: Westside Trail Bike & Pedestrian Bridge

Will complete a key trail segment in the Metro Regional Trail system and connect the 25-mile-long Westside Trail over U.S. 26 in Beaverton, linking communities from King City to the City of Portland.

Cost Est.: \$35.4 million



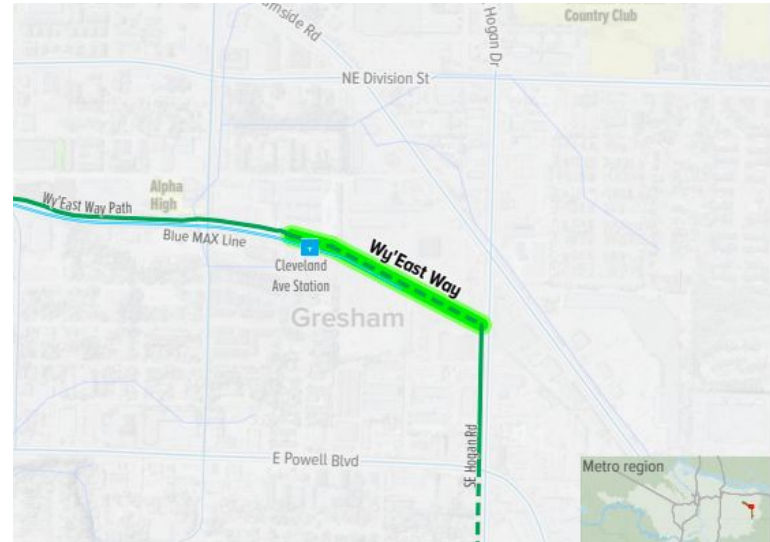
Image credit: Toole Design/THPRD



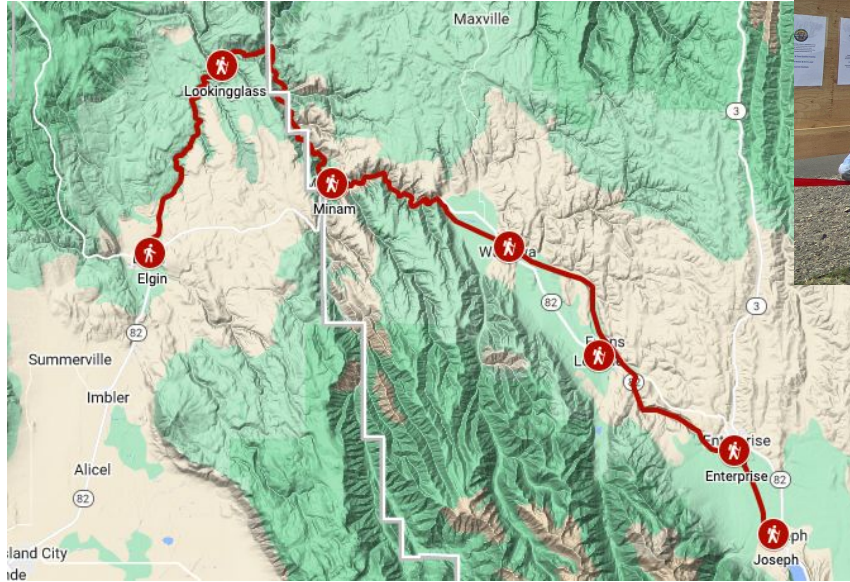
Unfunded Project 2: Wy'East Way Path

This project will complete the east end of the Wy'East Way 2.5-mile multi-use path, which connects Gresham's urban centers of Rockwood, Civic, and Downtown.

Cost Est: \$4.2 million



Unfunded Project 3: Joseph Branch Trail



Approximately 1.4 miles funded of 63-mile trail that will connect Eastern Oregon communities of Elgin, Lookingglass, Minam, Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise, and Joseph.

How Other States Fund Trails: Voters from Missouri to Minnesota to Montana vote YES for trails!



- Missouri (St. Louis region): Two voter- approved sales tax levies to create and expand Great Rivers Greenway District
- Minnesota: \$619 M invested since 2010 from 14.25 percent of the sales tax revenue resulting from the voter-passed Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment
- Montana: Tax on recreational marijuana: Montana Outdoor Fund: \$16 M/annually to trails
- North Carolina: General Assembly's 2023-2025 budget: \$54.9 million for trails and greenways
- Many states: highway funds/gas tax

Funding Gap for Oregon Community Paths

\$50 Million annually in state funds would mean:

- More communities filling small but critical network gaps
- More match funding for federal funding for larger projects.
- More major restoration projects to maintain the current the system and address current barriers to access

Funding must come from mechanisms outside of State Highway Fund

Past and current state funding sources have included:

- Lottery bond funds
- Connect Oregon (16%-19% of investments prior to 2017)
- Vehicle Privilege Tax
- Bicycle Excise Tax
- Transportation Operating Funds



MAT > \$5 M/year

Oregon Community Paths in Transportation Package

- For local communities, **Oregon Community Paths** works as part of a suite of safety programs with **Safe Routes to School and Great Streets**.
- ODOT currently lacks the funds to meet **community demand for all three programs to prevent fatalities and serious injuries in our communities**.
- Safe Routes to School and Great Streets can be funded within Highway Fund, but **Oregon Community Paths must be funded with mechanisms outside of Highway Fund**
- **\$50 Million annually would make major gains toward meeting community demand for Oregon Community Paths funding.**

In Review: Why Fund Trails?

- Trails are the backbone of active transportation networks; 80% of Oregonians report using trails.
- Trails create the safest places for people of all ages and abilities to walk, bike, scoot, and skate
- Trails help communities meet VMT reduction and climate goals and support local tourism economies
- Trails increase access to nature and health and wellness

