

OSU-Cascades: Central Oregon Transformational Transportation Network Executive Summary

OSU-Cascades will begin operating as a 4-year university in Fall 2015. Throughout Central Oregon, some students who used to leave the area to attend a 4-year university will decide to stay at home and attend OSU-Cascades. In addition, an increasing number of students from outside of Central Oregon will enroll in the new 4-year university. Since the campus and associated housing will not be developed by Fall 2015, students will be finding affordable housing throughout Central Oregon. It is critical to expand and enhance the transportation network in Central Oregon to serve these students and reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicle transportation. Developing and incenting multi-modal transportation will reduce pressure on the transportation infrastructure, contribute to overall sustainability goals of Central Oregon and OSU-Cascades, and align with the values and behavior of students in the millennial generation.

This project will align with, and support, existing transportation projects of the City of Bend and Cascades East Transit (CET). The City of Bend has received an ODOT Transportation Growth Management grant that will develop a central and west side integrated land use and transportation plan. Partners who have contributed matching funds include OSU-Cascades, Deschutes County, and Bend Metro Parks and Recreation. The City of Bend also is planning to do streetscape improvements to 14th Street and Galveston, which will improve travel for OSU-Cascades students. All of these projects emphasize access and connections for walking, biking and transit.

This project will also align with CET's initiative to "Envision Better Public Transit for Central Oregon." In partnership, this project will help to identify the needed service enhancements to increase transit ridership, and the mechanisms to fund them.

If funded, this project will enhance the transportation network and reduce single occupancy vehicle travel by:

- developing park and ride lots;
- purchasing two new buses for direct service to OSU-Cascades and COCC;
- constructing bus stops with amenities such as roof cover, seating, wi-fi, and heating;
- develop incentives for ride-sharing or carpooling, in partnership with Commute Options;

The benefits of an improved transportation system include:

- reduced household transportation expenses;
- reduced traffic and thereby lessened air pollution and associated respiratory disease;
- lower highway maintenance costs by reducing road wear and tear;
- more walking and biking, and reduced obesity;
- expanded job opportunities for workers who cannot afford a car;
- an estimated 40-50 jobs for every million dollars invested in transportation improvements.

This project will include both short-term and long-term investments and benefits. Investments will occur in the short term, and students, workers and residents will benefit as soon as the improvements are in place. The improvements will leverage subsequent investments that will benefit the region in the long run.

The total project is estimated to cost \$1.5M million, with a target match of \$500,000.

OSU-Cascades: Central Oregon Transformational Transportation Network

Impacted Area: Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson Counties

Description:

Improving the transportation system to accommodate changing demographics, land uses, safety, and transportation revenues has become a priority for Central Oregon counties and cities. Infrastructure needs to be developed to connect where people live to where they work, go to school and recreate. The current tri-county transportation network system is designed for single-occupancy vehicle travel and is inadequate and antiquated.

The timing for the development of a Transformational Transportation Network is optimal now for the region, for generational trends, and for the branch campus' engagement. With the advent of planning for the future campus in Central Oregon and anticipated population growth trends, the region will experience a pronounced increase in the number of millennial residents (people aged 18 to 33, born between 1981 and 1996; also called echo-boomers or Generation Y). OSU-Cascades notwithstanding, Gen Y/Millennials are the fastest growing population segment in Deschutes County. By 2030, the State projects that there will be nearly 70,000 people 25 to 49 years in Deschutes County, up from nearly 43,000 in 2000. This group will account for 24% of total population growth between 2000 and 2030.

Millennials are leading the trend towards reduced driving. Between 2000 and 2009, there has been a 23 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled by millennials. There are fewer drivers, fewer trips and shorter trips. In fact, nationally 26 percent of millennials do not have a driver's license at all. Further, "*Generation Y ...is most likely to want high-quality public schools, a short distance to work or school, walkability, and proximity to amenities like shopping and transit...*" according to the Urban Land Institute in their recent article, "America in 2013: A ULI survey of views on housing, transportation, and community."

In addition to behavior changes of millennials, colleges have been playing an institutional role in reducing single occupancy vehicle miles travelled (VMT). A 2014 study by the US PIRG Education Fund and Frontier Group concludes that colleges can and have successfully helped students, faculty and staff reduce their reliance on personal vehicles. The benefits stated for both campuses and towns include environmental sustainability, building an attractive community for youth, saving money for college and reducing traffic. It concludes that policymakers should encourage local partnerships to expand transportation options, adopt explicit strategies to support non-driving modes of transportation and adapt to the transportation needs of a new generation.

OSU-Cascades is committed to playing an institutional role in reducing VMT to and from our campus and throughout Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook counties. OSU-Cascades' vision for sustainability is to *demonstrate an unwavering commitment to shaping a future that is socially, economically and ecologically sustainable*. A transformational transportation network is critical to our success in achieving our vision. The nascent stages of such a network are already in place:

- OSU-Cascades' transportation goal is to design and operate a campus that firmly establishes a new transportation paradigm for universities generally and Central Oregon specifically. That paradigm will de-emphasize single occupancy motor vehicle use and accelerate the transition to acceptance of a broader array of transportation options. Our objective is to develop a campus atmosphere that is not dominated by the motor vehicle, but is measured by a modal split where more than 50 percent of campus transportation needs are met through alternative modes.

The City of Bend and Cascades East Transit are planning for a multi-modal future in Central Oregon. OSU-Cascades will coordinate this project with outcomes from both City of Bend and CET current planning projects.

City of Bend

- The City of Bend is developing a Central and Westside Area Integrated Land Use and Transportation Plan. The City of Bend Growth Management Department will partner with community stakeholders to create and define land use and transportation scenarios for how the central and west side area of Bend will grow and develop. The scope of this work includes the existing OSU-Cascades GRC building and the future OSU-Cascades campus site. The project will also create land use and transportation performance measures and an implementation plan for multi modal transportation projects. The project will take about 12-18 months. The project cost of \$360,000 will be funded by an ODOT TGM grant and matching funds from OSU-Cascades, Deschutes County and Bend Parks and Recreation. The contract is currently being reviewed by ODOT. Work is planned to commence in September of 2014.

The City of Bend is also planning the 14th Street (Simpson to Galveston) streetscape improvements. While this project has not been defined in full detail, it is likely to have a similar process as the Galveston streetscape project. The project will improve the safety, access and connections for biking, walking, and transit in relation to the existing and future land uses. The connection to the OSU-Cascades campus at Colorado and Chandler will be a significant planning and design component for the project. And similar to the Galveston project there will be substantial public outreach and involvement in the design and implementation of the project. The overall project cost is estimated at \$2 million including design, right of way, and construction. This project will be funded from remaining funds from the City Transportation Bond program. At this time there is about \$2 million in reserve funds from the Bond program. The project is targeted to begin design in fall 2014.

If funded, this project will provide key funding for improvements recommended in the TGM planning effort and 14th Street streetscape improvement projects.

Cascades East Transit

- Cascades East Transit launched a recent initiative to “Envision Better Public Transit for Central Oregon.” Work is under way to identify a means to fund and implement service expansions called for in the Bend Transit Plan. The multi-modal capital investments proposed within this project will, if funded, provide a foundation on which to build service improvements through partner operational funding commitments. Additionally, the demonstration of regional and state funding support will serve as a catalyst for energizing stakeholders and partners, and will likely bring new interests and partners to the table.

The Bend Transit Plan provides an overall approach to expand transit services based on identified needs, demographic trends, etc. However, the Plan does not address how to fund service expansions, and the details of each service expansion may not fully meet the needs of core partners (e.g. the waiting time in between buses is longer in the Plan (60 minutes) versus the desire of no more than a 30 minute interval).

A coalition of 6 partner organizations – the City of Bend, OSU-Cascades, COIC/CET, COCC, St. Charles, and the Bend Chamber of Commerce – are developing a collaborative effort to create partnership agreements addressing the following questions:

- What are the details and schedule of CET service enhancements that should be made in Bend?
- How should these improvements be funded over the short term?
- How should this funding approach be modified when a dedicated local public funding tool is developed?

- How can this shorter-term approach improve the chances of developing a dedicated local public funding mechanism?

Project partners have requested designation as an Oregon Solutions (OS) project. OS would provide a neutral facilitator and, in coordination with the Governor’s office, ensure that partners keep the process moving forward. The desired outcome is an overall partnership framework and a series of partnership agreements (IGAs, contracts, etc.) specifying: 1) details of service enhancements and the schedule of enhancements; and 2) the short-term funding tools and appropriate modifications when a dedicated local public funding mechanism is identified. It is anticipated that the OS process will begin in the Fall. Investment in the Transformational Transportation Network project would provide a key capital resource to catalyze the collaborative process.

With funding support, the Central Oregon Transformational Transportation Network Project will be able to reduce VMT by supporting specific projects:

- Provide improved opportunities for multi-modal travel between communities by park and ride lots in south Redmond, north Bend and improvements to the existing lot at the north end of La Pine. A well-designed, visible and accessible park and ride lot system will promote non-single occupancy vehicle trips between communities, and will specifically better serve OSU-Cascades students commuting to campus from areas outside of Bend.

Development of park and ride facilities provides an efficient connection between auto, bike, and pedestrian modes and carpool, vanpool, and local/regional transit. According to the ODOT Region 4 Park and Ride Lot Plan (2014), park and ride improvements can facilitate alternatives to medium to long SOV commute trips, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions and critical resource use; reduce the need for additional travel lanes on the roadway systems and reduce miles traveled by single occupant vehicle; and help build livable communities.

The Region 4 Park and Ride plan identifies high priority locations in Central Oregon for park and ride lot development. Locations in south Redmond, north Bend, and La Pine were identified as high priority locations. Capital costs for developing lots in these locations are estimated to be \$400,000; these costs include constructing shelters, grading, paving, striping, and constructing bus stops for the south Redmond and north Bend lots, as well as improvements (e.g. lighting) at the existing La Pine/Wickiup Junction lot.

However, this cost estimate does not include land acquisition costs. Identifying specific properties and funding the market-rate purchase price have proven to be significant barriers to implementing the park and ride infrastructure within the high priority locations identified within the Park and Ride plan. Therefore, the proposed plan for park and ride lot development would include a request for support from the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee and Regional Solutions Team to assist project partners in identifying an appropriate property to site the park and ride lots (preferably a publicly owned parcel), and in identifying resources and/or negotiating a low-cost lease or purchase agreement.

- Purchase two new buses to provide direct service to the OSU-Cascades and COCC campuses. The new buses will have customer friendly, choice rider bus stops at OSU-Cascades and COCC, in addition to two additional priority stops (ex. Redmond Park-n-Ride, Hawthorne Station and St. Charles.)
- Design bus stops to be “cool” and appealing for riders who have multiple transit choices by including amenities such as roof cover, heating, free Wi-Fi, seating and coffee.
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- Develop incentives for carpooling or ride sharing through existing and new Commute Options programs for OSU-Cascades faculty, staff and students, and employees at other partner organizations.

And with matching funding, OSU-Cascades may be able to:

- Develop OSU-Cascades on-site and near-site infrastructure, including multi-modal paths, cross-walks, and appropriate lighting to encourage multi-modal transportation to and from the OSU-Cascades' campus.
- Make multi-modal infrastructure improvements on Bend's west side between OSU-Cascades and community retail, commercial or recreation amenities. This would include connecting the campus to the 14th Street corridor, downtown and/or the Mill District per recommendations in the City bike/pedestrian, 14th Street, and Galveston Streetscape projects.
- Collaborate with the City of Bend bike/pedestrian safety enhancement project to better connect east and west Bend.
- Develop bike share hubs on campus and at key offsite locations (including electric bikes), additional on-campus covered bike storage, bike commuting incentives for students, faculty and staff, and improved bike parking through-out Bend to encourage year-round bicycle commuting.

The culmination of these efforts will create a transformational transportation network for Central Oregon.

Measurements and goals:

Around the country investments in public transportation and in encouraging other modes of transportation are proven to create individual and community health. This success can be created in Central Oregon:

AASHTO, a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico whose primary goal is to foster the development, operation, and maintenance of an integrated national transportation system reported in 2009 that one-million dollars of transportation improvements creates about 35-50 jobs.

Huffington Post reported that “[i]nvestment in public transportation can stimulate the economy and create jobs. More than 570 jobs are created for each \$10 million invested in the short term. According to the [American Public Transportation Association](#) (APTA), every \$1 billion invested in public transportation creates and supports 36,000 American jobs. That is real job growth.

Mass transit is a stimulant for the economy in so many ways. Direct investment into transit operations means more public transportation and lower fares, which in turn helps local businesses. It brings people with jobs to their stores with more money in their pockets so they can buy things.

More jobs and more business. Isn't that the very definition of economic recovery?”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lawrence-j-hanley/public-transportation-jobs_b_1662270.html

Further, Good Job First reported that “[a] high-quality public transit system creates a variety of benefits for a metropolitan area. As [Transportation for America](#) and its hundreds of members explain, metro areas that give people a choice to use transit strengthen the local economy, improve public health, promote social equity, and protect the environment. More specifically, transit:

- Increases worker satisfaction and productivity by reducing commuting times;
- Protects family budgets by enabling households to get by with one car or no car instead of two or three;
- Cushions the impact of high gasoline costs on working families;
- Reduces traffic and thereby lessens air pollution and associated respiratory disease;
- Lowers highway maintenance costs by reducing road wear and tear;
- Encourages people to do more walking and thereby reduces obesity; and
- Expands job opportunities for workers who cannot afford a car.

The [Center for Transit-Oriented Development \(TOD\)](#) defines TOD as walkable development that occurs within a half mile of a rail or rapid bus transit stop, is linked to a network of walkable/bikeable streets, and contains mixed-use retail, residential, and workplace activities. TOD can provide residents with improved quality of life and reduced household transportation expenses. It can also provide the region with stable mixed-income neighborhoods that reduce environmental impacts and provide alternatives to traffic congestion.”

<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/smart-growth-working-families/connecting-jobs-public-transit>

In addition to job creation, households in neighborhoods with diverse transportation choices (such as walking, biking, transit) save about \$600 annually on transportation costs (Housing and Transportation Affordability Index, Center for Neighborhood Technology, February 2012). Households typically spend about \$7-\$8,000 on transportation costs annually or about 12% of a household budget. For families in poverty, this expense could mean the difference in their ability to get to work or not.

Additional benefits include:

- Targeted investments in public transportation systems tend to translate into large-scale savings in health care costs (Estimating the effects of light rail transit on health costs, Health Place 2008)
- Walkable and diverse commercial uses substantially increase the walking and transit modes and increase the value of neighborhoods (Business Performance in Walkable Shopping Areas, November 2013, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)
- Walkable locations (Street Corridors) perform better economically and have lower per household transportation costs (Walk this Way, The Economic Promise of Walkable Places in Metropolitan Washington D.C. Christopher B. Leinberger and Marela Alfonzo, Brookings , May 2012)

Development of the transformational transportation network will greatly improve access to higher education for residents throughout the tri-county area, which improves job prospects and economic development for these underserved areas.

Economic Benefits of transit improvements:

Transit provides a variety of benefits including direct benefits for users (mobility) and indirect economic, social and environmental benefits. From an economic development perspective, transit provides a number of benefits:

- Transit is often cited as a desired infrastructure for businesses considering locating to a region as well as a key consideration for highly-educated, highly-skilled potential residents.
- Central Oregon’s housing costs are increasing, commuting rates will be increasing. Low cost public transportation options will help connect workers to employment centers. US Census data shows increased average commute rates over the past 30 years.
- The region’s workforce labor market is tightening, so businesses are digging deeper into the labor pool to find qualified workers. The transit system removes an employment barrier; expands the pool of low income workers available to businesses.

- This investment will help to support the Community Connector shuttle system – 80% of riders on this system use it to access work or school.
- Generally, transit supports the region’s growing sectors – including education and tourism.
- Transit serves as a catalyst for compact downtown development.

The CET transit system already is serving critical employment-related mobility needs. CET officials estimate 80% of inter-community transit rides are for school and work appointments. The proposed infrastructure and service improvements will expand employment and education access for Central Oregon residents.

While a majority of the capital investments funded by this project will be focused in Bend, the regional benefits of the project are significant:

- Provides improved access to the OSU Cascades Campus and other Bend destinations for residents of communities outside of Bend. Park and ride lots, bus stop improvements, bus capacity, the new fixed route, and leveraged operational investments which will decrease headways will result in easier, more convenient access.
- Will serve as a catalyst for further CET system development. The CET system has been labeled as ‘struggling’ due to funding reductions and the system’s modest service levels. The capital investments proposed in this project, along with the leveraged operational service increases, will result in the first CET service expansion in several years. The vibrant partnership supporting this project, along with the commensurate service expansions, will demonstrate to communities that CET is a growing system with a vision of better serving the region’s citizens, visitors, businesses, institutions and communities.

While transportation is only one component of a successful university, it is a critical one. Without a transformational transportation network that reduces the reliance on single occupancy vehicle travel, OSU-Cascades will encounter additional land use hurdles and community backlash. It will also deter efforts to recruit students from around Central Oregon and beyond who find it difficult to access the campus using the current transportation network. The overall economic impact of expanding OSU-Cascades will be \$19.5 million in 2017 and \$115.5 million in 2025 when it reaches its goal of 5,000 students. Inadequate transportation networks will delay enrollment growth and the realization of these economic benefits for the region.

What would happen if this project was not accomplished?

Individuals with access to a reliable and convenient public transportation, and to user-friendly rideshare and bike loan programs, will have easier access to education and job opportunities, and be more likely to become active contributors to their communities. Without this project, reliance on single occupancy vehicles will persist, stressing the transportation infrastructure and eliminating the benefits of multi-modal transit.

Does the project have strong community and agency support?

In addition to OSU-Cascades, potential community and agency involvement for the Transformational Transportation Network includes (not all have been contacted yet):

- City of Bend
- County
- Bend Parks & Recreation District
- COIC/CET (infrastructure grants)
- Bend Memorial Clinic – BMC is chairing OSU-Cascades Health Care Task Force
- Central Oregon Community College
- St. Charles
- City of Redmond

- City of Madras
- City of Sisters
- City of Prineville
- Central Oregon Environmental Center
- Commute Options

Budget

State Funds Requested: \$1M (\$100,000 non capital construction; \$900,000 capital construction)

System design and start-up costs: (\$100K)

- Transportation engineering and planning to site new bus stops and park and rides (\$25K)
- OSU-Cascades TDM Coordination through Commute Options (\$50K) (This is one time funding and there will not be future requests of the committee for ongoing operations)
- Carpooling/ride sharing incentives (\$25K)
- Consulting support: OSU-Cascades Transportation Task Force (in-kind)

Capital infrastructure: (\$900K)

- Park-n-Ride in Redmond and/or North end of Bend and upgrade of LaPine Park-n-Ride (\$400K)
- CET bus route improvements to include OSU-Cascades campus (purchasing 2 buses \$300K)
- Customer friendly bus stops at OSU-Cascades, COCC, downtown, Mill District, Mt. Washington, Galveston Corridor, BMC, St. Charles, Hawthorne, and Redmond park-n-ride. Stops would be “cool” for choice riders, including being covered, heated, free Wi-Fi, seating, coffee, etc. (4 stops \$200K)

Potential match: \$500,000

- The City of Bend 14th Street streetscape project has a budget of \$2M. Some funds will be dedicated to multi-modal improvements necessary to connect OSU-Cascades to Simpson Ave. The City will seek to include streetscape improvements to the OSU campus. The improvements to the campus are identified on the recent City priority list for biking and walking improvements.
- OSU-Cascades on-site multimodal infrastructure improvements, including pathways, bike parking and bike share
- Park-n-Ride land or lease (OSU-Cascades in coordination with CET will seek regional partners to locate park-n-ride)
- Multi-Modal Paths

Are there operating or maintenance costs associated with the project?

The first two years of operations are covered by grant funds. Maintenance agreements will need to be developed between partner organizations for park-n-ride, bus stops, bike share hubs, CET operations and car share sites.

COIC has committed to implementing service improvements that will directly serve the new OSU Cascades Campus location. An improved route 11 will be implemented in August of 2015. The costs for operating this route are estimated to be \$150,000 per year. While the specific funding mix has not been identified, it is anticipated that the new route will be funded by a combination of fares, existing CET resources, and new partner commitments. The capital improvements proposed within this project are a necessary element of building out route 11, and therefore we consider the operational investments as leveraged funding.

OSU-Cascades will commit funds to maintain on-site campus operations. During the first two years of operations OSU-Cascades will partner with Commute Options, the City of Bend, and CET to develop an on-going operations plan.

Is this project characterized as short or long term? (short = 1-2 years)

This project will include both short-term and long-term investments and benefits. Investments will occur in the short term, and students, workers and residents will benefit as soon as the improvements are in place. The improvements will leverage subsequent investments that will benefit the region in the long run.