



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Transportation Commission

Office of the Director, MS 11

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Salem, OR 97301-3871

DATE: May 03, 2021

TO: Oregon Transportation Commission

FROM: Kristopher W. Strickler
Director

SUBJECT: *Agenda I – Oregon Community Paths Program FY 2021-24 Awards*

Requested Action:

Approve the Public Transportation Division's (PTD) Oregon Community Paths Program (OCP) FY21-24 grant awards for walking and biking facilities

Background:

Oregon's Community Paths (OCP) program is a new competitive grant program that supports investments in walking and biking facilities that are "off system," meaning transportation facilities that are not primarily on or along a roadway. Off-system facilities are multi-use paths or trails that serve a transportation function. Examples include a path along a greenway, on an old rail line, between housing developments or areas that are not otherwise within the public road right-of-way. These facilities provide high quality, safe and comfortable walking and biking within and between communities.

The program is funded by both state and federal funding sources. The state funding includes the Multi-Modal Active Transportation (MAT) fund, established under [ORS 367.091](#) and consisting of the bicycle excise tax, vehicle privilege tax, and lottery bond funding. The federal funding includes the Federal Highway Administrations (FHWA) transportation alternative (TA) set-aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program. Additionally, state [Department of Transportation Operating Fund](#) (TOF) funding for FY2021-24 has been allocated to OCP, pending approval of the ODOT's budget by the Oregon Legislative Assembly in July 2021. The various funds each have different program requirements, which affect how projects must be managed and govern overall project requirements.

The OCP program funds two types of pedestrian and bicycle projects:

- 1) **Construction Grants** - Development, construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, or other capital improvement of multiuse paths, bicycle paths, and footpaths that improve access and safety for people walking and bicycling
- 2) **Project Refinement Grants** - Preliminary planning grants to help communities prepare for a later OCP construction grant request.

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Off-system paths are popular in communities as they're safe and comfortable walking and biking facilities that serve people of all ages and abilities. Communities in Oregon rely on the the State Highway Fund to pay for the majority of their transportation facilities. However, the State Highway Fund is restricted to projects within the road right-of-way. Many ideal locations for multi-use paths are outside of the road road-right-of-way and therefore unable to use highway funds. The OCP was created to address this gap in available funding. The demand for this first round was significant with a roughly 3:1 request ratio to available funding. The OTC decision to allocate \$36 million of discretionary federal funding in the 2024-2027 STIP for OCP will further support communities as they work to increase the number of people walking and biking.

The table below indicates available funding for FY2021-24.

Funding Cycle	Transportation Alternatives (federally funded)	Multi-Modal Active Transportation (state funded)	Transportation Operating Fund (state funded)	AVAILABLE FUNDS
FY21-24	\$8,200,000	\$ 3,300,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$15,500,000

Application and Award Recommendation Process

Eligible applicants for OCP are local governments, school districts, tribal governments, mass transit or transportation districts, a special government body or other unit of local government, or a non-profit organization or other private entity with documented support from one of the governmental bodies along the regional path.

ODOT received 81 initial Letters of Interest in fourth quarter 2020, which resulted in 57 applications submitted by the February 1, 2021 deadline. ODOT staff reviewed project applications for eligibility and feasibility, and scored the projects on criteria developed and approved by the Oregon Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (OBPAC).

Staff presented funding scenarios and ranked project lists to OBPAC at their March 24, 2021 meeting. The lists included prioritized applications and a list of alternate projects in priority order to be considered if a project is withdrawn or if additional funding becomes available for the OCP program.

At the March 24 meeting, OBPAC unanimously voted to recommend a scenario which limits project refinement awards to \$1.5M to allow for more construction projects and supports funding projects ranked by staff scoring. The final recommendation includes funding four state funded and 13 federally funded projects. At the March meeting, OBPAC was informed that TOF funding for the program had become available pending approval from the state legislature. OBPAC supported the additional funds to be used for construction projects. The addition of \$4 million TOF funding will allow the award of four additional construction projects.

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Attachment 1 details, for the Commission's review, tables of the recommended and alternate projects for the Oregon Community Paths Program for FY 2021-24.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – *List of recommended and alternate OCP projects*