

Metro Regional Travel Options Program

ACTIVE & HEALTHY TRAVEL OPTIONS



How does the RTO Program Support Active and Healthy Travel Options?

The Portland region is nationally recognized for its institutional and cultural support for active transportation. “Active transportation” includes biking, walking, and accessing public transit. Encouraging active transportation in the region is a key part of meeting Metro’s regional transportation goals, including expanding transportation choices, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and improving public health. The Metro Regional Travel Options (RTO) program supports community groups and local agencies in their efforts to increase the use of active and healthy travel options among Portland area residents in the following ways:

Builds enthusiasm and and reduces barriers for active transportation. Through events and marketing campaigns, RTO-funded programs introduce residents to existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and create fun opportunities to use them. Walking groups and bicycling events create comfort and safety in numbers, wayfinding systems make it easier to navigate unfamiliar areas, and several programs help overcome the expense and perceived inconvenience of riding a bike. Over 400,000 people participated in active transportation events organized by RTO partners during the 2013 - 2015 grant period.

WHAT IS THE RTO PROGRAM?

Metro’s Regional Travel Options (RTO) Program supports organizations and develops campaigns that encourage the region’s residents to stay healthy by using active transportation, such as walking, bicycling, and taking public transit.

RTO supports Metro’s regional goals, including expanding transportation choices, improving air quality, and minimizing contributions to climate change. Its biennial competitive grant program distributes funds to government, non-profit, and community organizations throughout the region.

Educates about active travel options. RTO programs provide information and education about everything from basic bike repair to safe walking routes to navigating public transit. Safety education campaigns help spread the word about the rules of the road and teach people how to avoid collisions while walking and bicycling.

Provides community health benefits. Active transportation provides many individual and community benefits, including lower risk of chronic disease, improved mental health, and longer life expectancy.¹ Reducing the number of trips made by automobile helps reduce pollution, which means cleaner air and lower health care costs to employers and the public.

Active and Healthy Travel Options

Active Transportation Events

State, regional, and local agencies have made significant investments in active transportation infrastructure across the Portland region, but many residents may not be aware of the opportunities that surround them. The RTO program supports projects that raise awareness of existing bike routes, parks, and trails. These projects also encourage continued use of these resources through fun events and activities.

Bike More Challenge

The Street Trust (formerly the Bicycle Transportation Alliance) has been organizing and promoting the Bike Commute Challenge for over twenty years. The event was re-branded to the Bike More Challenge to encourage all types of bicycle trips, and provide a platform for competing with other teams and tracking personal bike metrics. The Bike More Challenge takes place during May, which is also Bike Month, and provides many fun opportunities for fellow bikers to connect, such as coffee stops on major bike routes. Over 5 million bicycle trips were recorded as part of the Bike More Challenge during the evaluation period.

Exploring
New Routes

Events

Games/
Incentives



Sunday Parkways

Sunday Parkways is a series of five annual open streets events in which the City of Portland dedicates several miles of neighborhood streets to walking and biking in different neighborhoods throughout the summer months. These events expose residents and visitors to opportunities to bike and walk in a safe and fun environment. Over 300,000 people participated in Sunday Parkways during the evaluation period.



Bike Month

The Metro RTO program promotes National Bike Month through a social media campaign and stories on the Oregon Metro website. The campaign promotes bicycling with infographics and videos about the benefits of riding a bike, and documents statistics about bicycle use in the Metro region.



Go Lloyd

Go Lloyd hosts a number of bike related events, including a Bike to Work day party, Pedalpalooza group ride, and bike breakfast. The Eco fair promoted active transportation to 425 attendees representing Lloyd district businesses, organizations, and residents. The e-bike challenge pitted employers against each other in a friendly competition to use e-bikes for work related trips.



Understanding the System

To someone who usually travels by car, walking and biking can be intimidating. RTO supports programs that improve maps and wayfinding systems, and help connect residents with information and resources to make their walk or bike ride safer and more comfortable.

Oregonian Crossing Campaign

Metro partnered with ODOT to expand the Oregonian Crossing pedestrian safety campaign, which raises awareness of Oregon traffic laws and promotes safe and responsible travel behavior, with the goal of reducing the number of people hit or killed by vehicles in Oregon. Metro used targeted marketing techniques to promote the campaign, including video production, social media promotion, a digital ad buy, and community outreach.

- Participated in 7 community outreach events in partnership with Oregon Walks
- The Oregonian Crossing video received over 335,000 views on Facebook and YouTube
- Survey results indicate that the campaign led to changes in pedestrian and driver behaviors and was viewed favorably by the public



Sasquatch demonstrates crosswalk safety at Cesar Chavez K-8. Source: Dylan Rivera, Portland Bureau of Transportation.



Be Seen Be Safe Bike Ride. Source: TriMet.

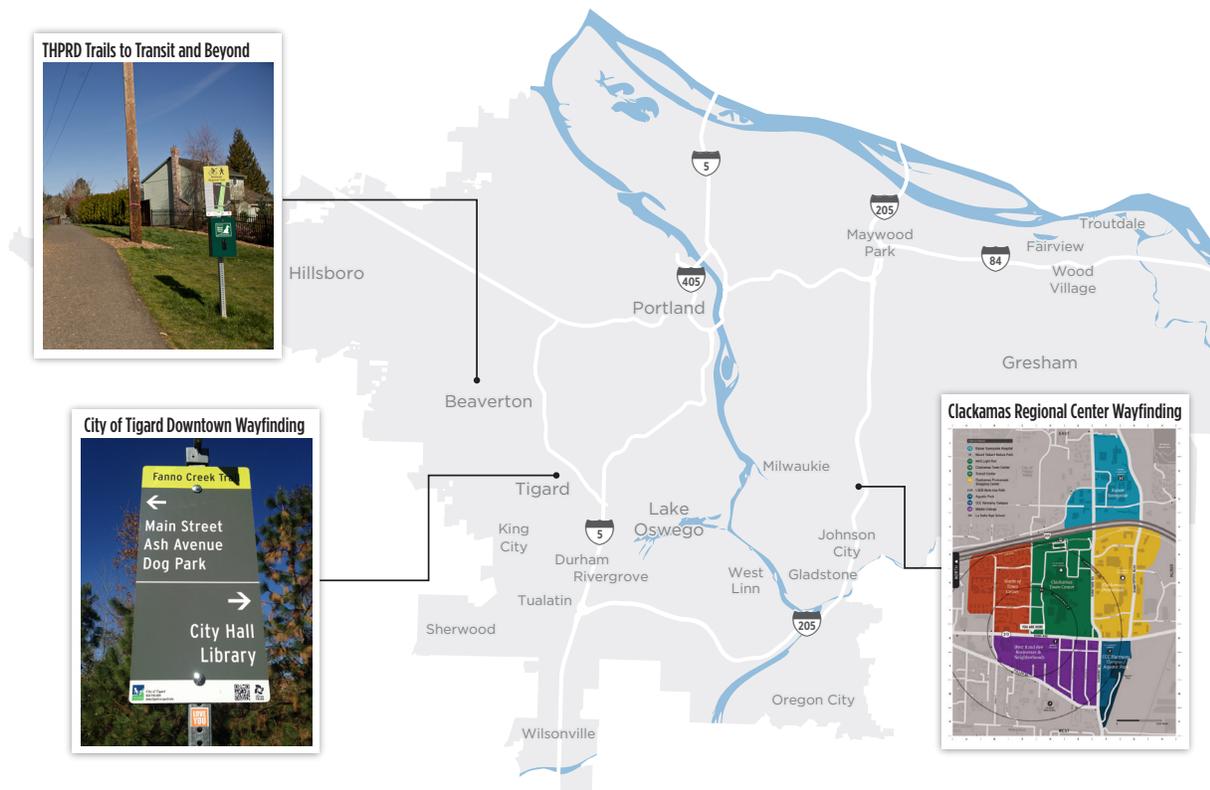
Be Seen, Be Safe

Metro and RTO partners collaborated with TriMet's yearly awareness and education campaign promoting safety for people using active and healthy travel options during the darker fall and winter months. The campaign placed advertisements in print, on buses, on television, online, and on social media.

- 47 street teams engaged with the public
- 125 volunteers assisted the program
- 18,000 blinking lights were distributed

Wayfinding

Wayfinding systems use signs, information kiosks, maps, and other visual cues to help people navigate. Three RTO projects completed between 2013 and 2015 use wayfinding to make it easier for people to get around.



City of Tigard Downtown Walking Map and Wayfinding

The City of Tigard conducted a community survey and pedestrian counts to identify the needs of people walking in downtown Tigard. Based on this information and stakeholder input, they developed an integrated Walking Map and Wayfinding System for the Downtown area, including new Fanno Creek Trail signage. More than 4,000 maps were distributed within the first year.

11% increase in pedestrians at 5 downtown locations from 2011 to 2013

THPRD Trails to Transit and Beyond Wayfinding System

The Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation Department (THPRD) developed a trail wayfinding and signage program to increase the number of residents of Beaverton and eastern Washington County who walk, roll, bicycle, or connect to public transit instead of driving alone. Their outreach campaign included in-person outreach, commuting classes, printed maps, and a website.

53% increase in average daily trail users from 2013 to 2015

Clackamas County Regional Center Wayfinding

Clackamas County surveyed transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians about challenges and concerns in the Clackamas Regional Center (CRC) area, and developed a wayfinding system designed to increase active transportation connections. The CRC Wayfinding Master Plan provides guidance and identifies future opportunities for the area's wayfinding system.

New signs serve the 23.6% who walk or bike to CRC transit

Encouraging New Cyclists and Walkers

Many RTO programs provide resources, education, and activities for people who are new to active transportation. They help make bicycling and walking more comfortable, affordable, easy, and fun. More than 1,250 people participated in the following projects between 2013 and 2015.

City of Wilsonville – Walk Smart and Bike Smart

Wilsonville SMART, the transit agency for the city of Wilsonville, encourages the use of active and healthy travel options through its SMART Options program. They distribute Wilsonville Walks and Wilsonville Bikes maps, and host walking, bicycling, and transit related events, including the Wilsonville Sunday Streets event and regular group walks. In 2013, participants in the ten group walks hosted by Walk SMART took over 38 million steps.



SMART Bike Repair at the Arts Festival. Source: City of Wilsonville.

Forth (formerly Drive Oregon) – E-bike Pilot

Drive Oregon deployed 30 folding E-bikes to three Kaiser Permanente worksites as part of a pilot research study conducted by Portland State University. The study found that the E-bikes effectively decrease the barrier of entry for new bicyclists by minimizing physical exertion and providing easy storage of the bicycle.

Community Cycling Center – Building Momentum

The Community Cycling Center Building Momentum program increased access to bicycling for underserved communities with activities such as bicycle mechanic training, bike safety education, and the earn-a-bike program. The CCC also worked with Verde’s Living Cully project to increase local knowledge of bicycle routes in North Portland.

“An active lifestyle helps us and motivates us to use better modes of transportation, take care of the environment, to better our health, and we gain tools to meet new people...”

– Lucia Llanos Pino, member of Andando en Bicicletas en Cully

Westside Transportation Alliance (WTA) – Bikeshare Pilot

In 2013, WTA partnered with the Open Bike Initiative to operate its 1st pilot bikeshare system with Intel employees – over 300 users completed over 1,100 trips. They have since operated pilot systems with employers including Nike, Kaiser Permanente, and Columbia Sportswear.



Intel Pilot Bikeshare. Source: Westside Transportation Alliance.

Promoting Active Transportation Investment

RTO grantees work to create more public interest in, and use of, active transportation infrastructure. This inevitably leads to more demand for safe places to walk, bicycle, or access transit. The more the region invests in active transportation, the more people will choose to make their trips by walking, bicycling, or transit, thereby helping inspire even more investment in the future.

Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce – East County Bicycle Infrastructure and Economic Development Project

The East County Bicycle Infrastructure and Economic Development project built capacity and support for bringing more bicycle tourism to eastern Multnomah County. The project team developed a list of top

action priorities for supporting bicycle tourism that includes engaging businesses in the Bicycle-Friendly Business Program, identifying routes, and installing infrastructure and facilities. Two Bicycle Tourism Studios drew approximately 90 total attendees, and 877 people participated in outreach events.

Safe Routes to School Campaign

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) advocates for policies and funding that promote walking and bicycling for school-age children. Metro has provided support for SRTS advertising campaigns since 2015 and worked with the Safe Routes to School National Partnership to develop a Regional Safe Routes to School Framework in 2016, which identifies strategic priorities and infrastructure needs for improving conditions for children walking and biking to school.

What's next?

There are major regional investments in active transportation coming up in the next several years. These projects will provide opportunities for the RTO program and its partners to continue their work in outreach and education and have a lasting effect on the health and well-being of people in the Portland metropolitan area.

- **Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure investment.** Across the region, planning is underway for infrastructure improvements. The City of Portland's Central City Multimodal Project, Oregon City's Molalla Avenue Walking and Biking Improvements, and the Beaverton Creek Trail in Washington County are just a few examples of Metro-funded projects that will create important routes for people walking and bicycling.^{2,3}
- **Improved transit corridors.** The Division Transit Project and the Southwest Corridor Plan will improve transit capacity, frequency, and travel times in two major regional corridors.^{4,5} The City of Portland is undertaking the Enhanced Transit Corridors Plan⁶ to identify investments to improve service in major urban bus corridors. These improvements include making it easier for regional residents to walk or bike to transit.
- **Safer routes to schools.** Metro is developing a new Safe Routes to School program in its 2018 RTO Strategic Plan, working to enable more children and young adults to walk or bike to school. The new SRTS program will fund up to \$1.5 million in investments in educational and outreach efforts.

2013-2016 Regional Travel Options Evaluation

Metro works with an independent contractor every two years to conduct an evaluation of its RTO program including both Metro administered programs and competitive grant projects. This report is one of four reports developed for the 2013-2016 RTO Evaluation.

For more information, visit oregonmetro.gov/travel-options-research or contact RTO@oregonmetro.gov

ENDNOTES

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