

# Oregon Scenic Bikeways Program Strategic Plan 2020-2025





*Mission: The mission of the Oregon Scenic Bikeways Program is to establish a thriving, lasting collection of the best places to ride a bicycle in Oregon.*

*Vision: Oregon's Scenic Bikeways Program is a superb collection of cycling routes that inspire people to experience Oregon's natural beauty and cultural heritage by bicycle, and offers economic and social benefits to the state's communities and residents.*



## Program Overview 2009-2020

The Oregon Scenic Bikeways System The Program was established in 2009 after the legislature passed Oregon Administrative Rule #736-009-0025. The Program celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2019 in the Capitol galleria highlighting the network of 17 routes that showcase Oregon's breathtaking landscapes, cultural treasures, and western hospitality. The program remains the nation's best example of a statewide recreational road cycling network. Our success has been motivating other states to adopt and adapt our model to develop similar programs.

The unique program shares responsibility and leverages agency and community resources. It succeeds because of the emphasis on collaboration, resulting in a low-cost high return. The Program is managed by the Scenic Bikeway Coordinator, an OPRD employee dedicated half time to work collaboratively with local proponent groups, agency leadership, advisory committee members, and the general public.

Everything needed to plan a Bikeways adventure is located online including detailed, downloadable maps and GPS files, short videos describing each bikeway, information on State Park facilities, bike-friendly lodging, camping, dining and more, Guide and shuttle companies, and local cycling events.

As the program approached its 10th anniversary, the staff and committee agreed to pause accepting new proposals until a review of the program was completed and the strategic plan was updated. During the pause the Committee has reviewed and analyzed the Program, performed a SWOT analysis, and offers recommendations to help the Program shift from the first ten years of development into the next phase of oversight, management and promotion.

## Strengths and Results

- **17 designated routes** met rigorous criteria resulting in a portfolio of five extreme, three challenging, eight moderate, and one easy route throughout the state. Once designated each route is reviewed every five years as mandated by the OAR to ensure it still meets criteria.
- **Active Bikeways Advisory Committee** is comprised of founding partners, road managers, recreation agencies, business owners, tourism professionals, and cycling enthusiasts meets regularly and provides expertise, input, evaluation, and reporting for the program.

- **Proponent Groups** represent the local agencies and advocates who develop and promote the routes. Proponents use local knowledge and experience to design and propose routes and related promotional activities. Currently seven Bikeways hold annual events.
- **Development and Marketing** has put the program literally on the map. Travel Oregon played a key role in developing and marketing the program. They held Bicycle Tourism Studios in all Bikeways communities and led the creation of an economic impact report, which found that Bikeways generated \$12 million annually.

## Priorities and Opportunities

- **Communication and Promotion** of new routes, Economic Impact reports, Annual Surveys/Reports, promotional campaigns, program successes, best practices, and impacts is essential to maintain support and to continue to build ridership.
- **Proponent Engagement** has lapsed with staff changes at OPRD and other key agencies, causing loss of connection and threatening ongoing designation. An annual conference last held in 2015 has been the key method for supporting proponents and connecting best practices.
- **Route Criteria** is rigorous and favors remote and challenging routes. An additional 18 routes were proposed but did not meet criteria. More mild routes are desired in the portfolio as well as ways to create “second tier” routes that may not be formally designated but could still be promoted.
- **Partner Agency engagement** has changed as staff have changed and as the program has evolved. There’s a need to re-engage with partners at the committee and individual level to clarify roles and commitment.

## Strategic Priorities 2020-2025

1. Align and integrate Scenic Bikeways into partner agencies’ strategic, communications and funding plans.
  - A. Identify and promote funding opportunities to individual routes and system-wide (Founding Partners, OOR Linkages, RTP, FHWA FLAP, etc.)
  - B. Identify opportunities to promote Bikeways through partners (e.g., Travel Oregon, OOR, RDMOs, etc.)

2. Re-engage and re-energize proponents.
  - A. Hold annual conference or similar to support proponents and share best practices.
  - B. Conduct five year reviews to ensure existing system continues to meet criteria.
  - C. Conduct annual survey to gather regular input from proponents and users.
  - D. Provide and promote access to funding opportunities.
3. Develop route portfolio to increase easy routes and geographic representation.
  - A. Accept new proposals for designation. As long as routes meet criteria they can be designated.
    - a. Add more easy routes. Consider designating bikeways within State Parks, including Fort Stephens, Champoeg, and other separated bikeways. May require updates to criteria.
  - B. Develop “second tier” routes through RidewithGPS Ambassador routes, or similar.
4. Promote Bikeways locally, statewide, and nationally.
  - A. Produce, distribute and promote annual report to share program impact.
  - B. Identify promotional campaign opportunities with relevant partners.
  - C. Evaluate and update Advisory Committee membership to reflect current program needs.
5. Evaluate Advisory Committee membership and update to reflect Program needs.

