Oregon Department of Transportation

INNOVATIVE MOBILITY

**Fall 2024
Proposal Grant Guidance**

Questions?
Reach out to Innovative Mobility Program Staff:
✉ **innovativemobility@odot.oregon.gov**
📞 **971-718-1025**

Informational webinar: Tuesday, Nov. 12 1-2 p.m.

Proposals due by 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20, 2024

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Part 1: Program Overview

The Innovative Mobility Program (IMP) is a new initiative that is designed to increase social equity and mobility while reducing the effects of climate change. The IMP is funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) passed by Congress in November 2021, as well as State of Oregon dollars. It was created in 2022 at the direction of the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC). The program has a total of $20 million for grants, contracts, and administration.

Program Objectives

The core objectives of the program are to:

1. Improve **historically underserved communities'** access to public and active transportation.
2. Reduce the number of drive-alone trips.
3. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The term "historically underserved communities" refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, whose access to resources and opportunities have been historically limited due to systemic barriers. This includes, but is not limited to, communities who have been historically underserved or under-resourced due to age, disability status, language, income, race/ethnicity, immigration status, or gender.

Recipients of Innovative Mobility Program funds will need to communicate how their projects are aligned with the Program Objectives, including how historically or currently underserved communities benefit and how climate goals are supported.

Program Framework

The Innovative Mobility Program is designed to provide a variety of different funding opportunities to meet the needs of a broad array of entities. Because the program is funded with both federal and state funds, which have different requirements and limitations, funds have been separated into distinct grant opportunities:

- **Microgrants:**
  - Non-competitive (e.g., first-come, first-served) opportunity funded using state funds.
  - These grants can be used to fund a wide variety of projects and activities, including events, demonstration projects, outreach and education, and minor infrastructure projects.
- **Study and Assessment Grants (Non-Infrastructure)**:
  - Competitive opportunity funded using federal funds.
  - These grants can be used to fund transportation needs assessments, shared mobility feasibility studies, first/last mile studies, implementation strategies and more.
- **Pilot Grants**:
  - Competitive opportunity funded using state funds.
  - These grants can be used to support the piloting of new shared mobility services, including funds for operations and minor infrastructure.

- **Service Continuation or Expansion Grants**:
  - o Competitive opportunity funded using state funds.
  - o These grants can be used to support the continuation or expansion of existing shared mobility services, including funds for operations and minor infrastructure.
- **Capital and Equipment Grants**:
  - o Competitive opportunity funded using federal funds.
  - o These grants can be used to support investment in capital and equipment purchases for shared mobility services, such as bicycles, etc.

Program staff will solicit applications for each competitive grant opportunity twice between 2024 and 2027. The competitive grant opportunities are also designed to enable project scaling. For example, an entity may apply for a Study and Assessment Grant to study the feasibility of a shared mobility pilot in 2024, and then apply for a Pilot Grant to carry out the pilot in 2027. Figure 1 provides an overview of when each solicitation will occur.

Figure 1: Innovative Mobility Competitive Grant Timeline
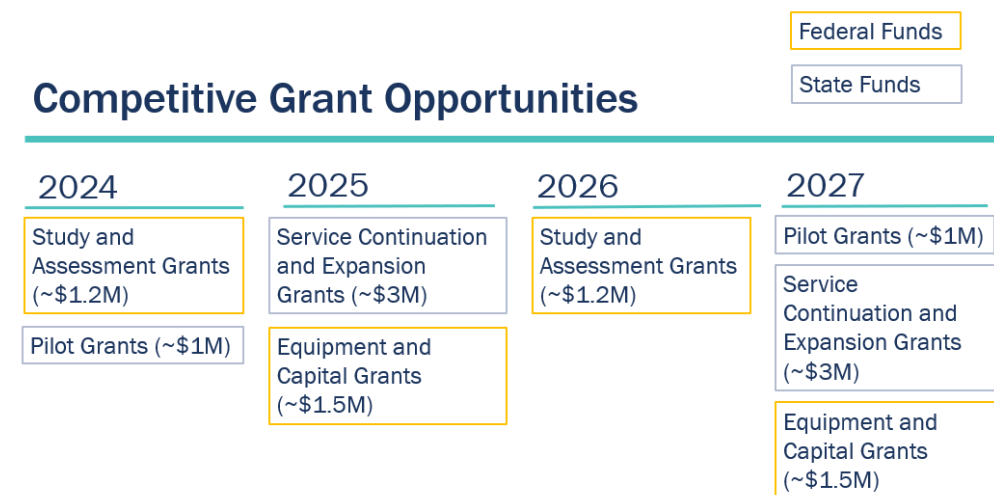
About Shared Mobility

IMP competitive grants are primarily focused on funding shared mobility projects that improve access to public and active transportation for historically underserved communities. **Shared mobility** refers to transportation services that are shared among users. Users may use the service at the same time or independently of one another.[1] Examples include:

- Transit
- Microtransit/ flexible shuttle service
- Ridesharing (e.g., carpooling, vanpooling)
- Carsharing
- Micromobility (e.g., bike, e-bike, scooter sharing)

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[1] See Shared Mobility Definitions from FTA and Shared-Use Mobility Center Definitions for more information.

- Delivery service (e.g., e-cargo bike sharing)

These services represent "innovative responses to the demand for new transportation options, and offer an opportunity to:

- Provide more mobility choices
- Offer first and last mile solutions
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Mitigate various forms of pollution
- Reduce transportation costs
- Improve efficiency
- Identify choices for those who cannot afford to buy and maintain a vehicle
- Create accessible mobility options for those with limited physical mobility.[2]"

The four different competitive grants are designed to support all aspects of shared mobility projects from planning to implementation.

Part 2: Solicitation Overview

Grant Types

There are two types of grants offered in this solicitation:

1. **Study and Assessment Grants (Non-Infrastructure).** These grants are intended to support communities in conducting assessments to better understand their transportation needs and identify gaps in the system. They can also be used to conduct shared mobility feasibility studies or plan for the development of a new shared mobility service. All projects must meet the core objectives of the program. Eligible activities include:
   a. Research and learning
   b. Feasibility/technical evaluation and consultation
   c. Community outreach and education
   d. Collaboration and partnership building
2. **Pilot Grants.** These grants are intended to support the piloting of new shared mobility services (not intended for an existing service that reaches a new audience), including funds for operations and minor infrastructure. Eligible activities include:
   a. Purchasing equipment, materials, and supplies
   b. Installing supportive infrastructure
   c. Launching and marketing services
   d. Tracking ridership or service use
   e. Evaluating pilot outcomes

Funding

The Innovative Mobility Program is funded with a combination of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds and State of Oregon funds. For this solicitation,

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[2] Shared-Use Mobility Center

ODOT plans to award up to $1,200,000 in federal funds for Study and Assessment Grants, and up to $1,000,000 in state funds for Pilot Grants.

Applicants may submit proposals for a minimum of $50,000 and a maximum of $200,000 in grant funds per project. This means an applicant can submit a proposal requesting up to $200,000 in grant funds for a Study and Assessment Grant and/or a Pilot Grant. Grant funds may be no more than 89.73% of total project costs and applicants must provide 10.27% of project costs in match funds. See Parts 3 and 4 for a list of eligible match sources for each grant type.

Solicitation Schedule
Please note that minor modifications to the schedule have been made and are highlighted in yellow.

September 25 – November 1	Pre-applications accepted
November 4 – December 20	Full proposals accepted
December 27, 2024 – January 2025	Proposal review
February 2025	Awardees announced

Part 3: Study and Assessment Grants
This section contains eligibility criteria and guidelines specific to Study and Assessment Grants. Please review thoroughly if you plan to apply for a Study and Assessment Grant.

Purpose
These grants will support communities in conducting assessments to better understand their transportation needs and identify gaps in the system. They can also be used to conduct shared mobility feasibility studies or plan for the development of a new shared mobility service. All projects must meet the core objectives of the Innovative Mobility Program.

Funding Overview and Match Requirements
Study and Assessment Grants will be funded using Federal SBTG funds. **Applicants must provide 10.27% in matching fundings upon federal grant award**. Local or state funds may be used as match, but federal funds may not be used to match other federal funds. Applicants must meet all federal requirements if granted federal funds.

Total Funding: ODOT plans to award up to $1,200,000 in federal funds for Study and Assessment Grants this cycle.

Award Limits: Applicants can submit proposals for projects between $50,000 and $200,000 (plus required match).

Eligible Applicants
The following entities are eligible to apply:

- Local, regional, Tribal, and state government agencies (excluding the Oregon Department of Transportation),
- Public schools, school districts, colleges, and universities,
- Transportation providers*, and

- Nonprofits with 501(c) status or organizations with fiscal sponsorship from a nonprofit with 501(c) status.**

*For-profit transportation providers are not eligible to apply as lead applicants but they can partner with eligible entities on projects.

**Nonprofit entities must be 1) Designated by the Federal government as a 501(c) nonprofit entity 2) Registered and certified with the Oregon Secretary of State as a nonprofit organization and 3) NOT on the Oregon Department of Justice list of Disqualified Charities.

Eligible Projects and Activities

Eligible project types include:

- **Transportation equity needs assessments** to identify the specific transportation needs of historically underserved communities; or
- **Shared mobility feasibility studies** to evaluate the opportunities and challenges of implementing or expanding a shared mobility service in a particular area; or
- **First/last mile studies** to evaluate the challenges that travelers face in getting to/from public transit and identify strategies for improving connections; or
- **Implementation strategies** for new programs or services that will increase access to public and active transportation for historically underserved communities.

Eligible activities include:

- Research and learning
- Feasibility/technical evaluation and consultation
- Community outreach and engagement
- Collaboration and partnership building

Funding Restrictions

Study and Assessment Grants are limited to non-infrastructure projects, so funds may not be used for the planning, design or construction of infrastructure projects. Other ineligible expenses include:

- Lobbying activities
- Operational expenses (e.g., day-to-day costs associated with operating a transportation service)
- Incentives (e.g., gift cards, etc.)
- Food for engagement events
- Items procured or work completed *prior* to ODOT issuing a Notice to Proceed (NTP)

Please note that Study and Assessment Grants are **reimbursement-based**. Grantees will receive reimbursements from ODOT based on claims and source documents submitted to IMP staff for eligible activities.

Grant Requirements

All grantees must:

- Enter into an agreement with ODOT that specifies legal and contractual obligations, including required federal terms and conditions.

- Deliver projects within the agreed-upon scope of work (SOW), timeline, and budget.
- Provide a minimum match of 10.27% of the total project amount. IMP funds can pay up to 89.73% of project costs. Cash match (non-federal) or in-kind match (donated product or volunteer time) is required.
- Follow federal procurement standards for purchases and third-party contracting. Applicants should consider these procurement requirements while planning and budgeting for the project.
- Have up-front funding available and sufficient to cover the costs associated with delivering their grant. Federal grants are reimbursement-based and ODOT cannot advance federal funds prior to work being done.
- Submit quarterly reimbursement requests with supporting documentation for reimbursement.
- Submit quarterly progress reports using agreed-upon reporting methods and submit a separate final report at the end of the grant that summarizes the grant activity, results, and lessons learned.

Grant Timeline

Grants officially begin when agreements are signed and ODOT issues a Notice to Proceed allowing grantees to begin work. Grantees will have up to three years to complete projects after a NTP is issued. Applicants should be aware that if they are interested in building upon their project with a follow-up grant in 2027, such as a Pilot Grant or Capital/Equipment Grant, they are advised to complete the project within two years. (For instance, if the applicant is awarded a Study or Assessment Grant to conduct a shared mobility feasibility study and they would like to apply for implementation funding with a Pilot Grant in 2027, the study will need to be completed by the time they apply for the next grant.)

Part 4: Pilot Grants

This section contains eligibility criteria and guidelines specific to Pilot Grants. Please review thoroughly if you plan to apply for a Pilot Grant.

Purpose

These grants will support the piloting of new shared mobility services (not intended for an existing service that reaches a new audience), including funds for operations and minor infrastructure. Examples of shared mobility services include:

- Transit
- Microtransit/ flexible shuttle service
- Ridesharing (e.g., carpooling, vanpooling)
- Carsharing
- Micromobility (e.g., bike, e-bike, scooter sharing)
- Delivery service (e.g., e-cargo bike sharing)

Funding Overview and Match Requirements

Pilot Grants will be funded using State of Oregon funds, in compliance with Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 184.730. **Applicants will be required to provide 10.27% in matching funds** unless the proposed project meets the criteria to be eligible for a 0% match. Matching funds may be local funds, other state funds, federal grants, philanthropic grants, and/or in-kind match (donated product or volunteer time).

Eligibility for 0% Match: If the service area of the proposed shared mobility pilot includes <u>at least one Census Tract</u> designated as High Disparity OR Medium-High Disparity on [ODOT's Social Equity Index](#), the applicant is eligible for 0% match.

Instructions on how to determine 0% match eligibility:

1. Navigate to the [ODOT TransGIS web application](#). Select the "Planning and Climate Change Resilience" layer from the "Layers" category to the left of the map.

2. Select the "Social Equity Index" layer at the bottom of the list and click "Submit". This will display the Social Equity Index on the map. The Social Equity Index is categorized by census tracts.

3. Click on "Legend" to the left of the map to see the Social Equity Index legend.

4. Click on the Identify Features button ("**i**" icon), typically found on the right side of the map screen. This feature allows you to interact with each census tract area.

5. Look within the boundaries of your service area and **determine the highest level of disparity**. If there are areas in your service area that are categorized as High Disparity or Medium-High Disparity, the project is eligible for 0% match.

Total Funding: ODOT plans to award up to $1,200,000 in state funds for Pilot Grants this cycle.

Award Limits: Applicants can submit proposals for projects between $50,000 and $200,000 (plus required match).

Eligible Applicants
The following entities are eligible to apply:

- Local, regional, Tribal, and state government agencies (excluding the Oregon Department of Transportation),
- Public schools, school districts, colleges, and universities,
- Transportation providers*, and
- Nonprofits with 501(c) status or organizations with fiscal sponsorship from a nonprofit with 501(c) status.**

*For-profit transportation providers are not eligible to apply as lead applicants but they can partner with eligible entities on projects.

**Nonprofit entities must be 1) Designated by the Federal government as a 501(c) nonprofit entity 2) Registered and certified with the Oregon Secretary of State as a [nonprofit organization](#) and 3) NOT on the Oregon Department of Justice list of [Disqualified Charities](#).

Eligible Projects and Activities
Projects eligible for selection are limited to **new [shared mobility service](#) pilots** (not intended for an existing service that reaches a new audience), that:

- Fill a previously identified community need; <u>and</u>
- Expand access for [historically underserved communities](#).

Applicants must explain what need the proposed pilot will fill and how the need was identified. (For example, the applicant previously completed a transportation equity needs assessment or conducted extensive community engagement to identify the need for a shared mobility service) Applicants that cannot meet the above pilot requirements should consider applying for a Study and Assessment Grant instead.

Eligible activities include:

- Purchasing equipment, materials, and supplies (e.g., bikes, e-cargo trikes, electric vehicles, etc.) to implement the proposed project.
- Installing supportive infrastructure (e.g., bicycle racks, secure storage hubs, etc.) for the project.
- Launching and marketing the pilot service to intended users.
- Collecting data on ridership and service use.
- Project reporting and evaluation.

Funding Restrictions

While some planning can be a part of a pilot grant, implementation of the pilot must be the primary focus. Planning expenses should not exceed 20% of the total project budget, and administrative/overhead costs should not exceed 10%.

Other ineligible expenses include:

- Purchase of vehicles or devices for lease-to-own programs.
- Use of grant funds to offer incentives or rebates to individuals for the purchase of personal vehicles or devices.
- Purchase of vehicles or devices for business use besides providing a designated shared mobility service.
- Purchase of materials or goods to be used in raffles or contests.
- Lobbying expenses.
- Items procured or work completed _prior_ to ODOT issuing NTP.

Please note that Pilot Grants are **reimbursement-based**. Grantees will receive reimbursements from ODOT based on claims and source documents submitted to IMP staff for eligible activities. (ODOT may advance some funds prior to work being done depending on project specifics.)

Grant Requirements

All grantees must:

- Enter into an agreement with ODOT that specifies legal and contractual obligations.
- Deliver projects within the agreed-upon SOW, timeline, and budget.
- Provide a minimum match of 10.27% of the total project amount unless the match requirement is waived. IMP funds can pay up to 89.73% of project costs. Cash match or in-kind match (donated product or volunteer time) is required.
- Have up-front funding available and sufficient to cover the costs associated with delivering their project unless otherwise agreed upon. (ODOT may advance state funds prior to work being done depending on project specifics.)

- Submit reimbursement requests with supporting documentation each quarter for reimbursement.
- Submit progress reports using agreed-upon reporting methods each quarter and submit a separate final report at the end of the grant that summarizes the grant activity, results, and lessons learned.

Grant Timeline

Grants officially begin when agreements are signed and ODOT issues a Notice to Proceed (NTP). Grantees will have up to three years to complete projects after a NTP is issued. Applicants should be aware that if they are interested in building upon their project with a follow-up grant in 2027, such as a Service Continuation/Expansion or Capital/Equipment Grant, they are advised to complete the project within two years. (For instance, if the applicant is awarded a grant to pilot a new service and would like to apply for additional funding in 2027, the Pilot Grant will need to be completed by the time they apply for the next grant.)

Part 5: Proposal Requirements and Submission Information

Entities interested in applying for funding must submit a complete proposal via an online form by 5 p.m. on Friday, December 20, 2024. Program staff will screen all proposals to ensure that the organization and project are eligible for funding. After the initial screening, a scoring committee will evaluate the proposals. **Please note that proposals submitted by entities that did not submit a pre-application will not be considered unless prior arrangements were made with program staff**. Information about each proposal component is provided below.

Proposal Requirements

1. Key Information (Not Scored)

All applicants will be prompted to provide the following information in the online form:

- Name of organization/entity
- Organization/entity mailing address
- Organization/entity website
- Contact name, title, email and phone number
- Eligible applicant type
- Type of grant (Study/Assessment or Pilot)
- Project name
- One sentence project description
- Total project budget
- Amount of grant funds requested
- Project match rate
- Eligibility confirmation for 0% match *(if applicable)*
- Length of proposed project
- Project area

2. Project Narrative (Scored)

The primary purpose of the project narrative is for the applicant to describe how the proposed project meets the selection criteria. Applicants will be required to submit a document that addresses all sections of the project narrative outlined below. (Templates for the Study and Assessment Project Narrative and Pilot Project Narrative are provided as guides. Usage of the templates is optional.) **The project narrative should not exceed five (5) pages. Applicants may include images or other reference materials as appendices to the project narrative.** The project narrative will be scored.

Section 1: Community Benefit (25 points possible)

Study and assessment grant proposals must include:
- A narrative description identifying what the applicant intends to study and how the information gathered will be used for community benefit. *(10 points possible)*
- A narrative description of how the study will help fill an existing gap in knowledge or understanding of existing conditions. *(10 points possible)*

Pilot grant proposals must include:
- A narrative description identifying what community need the proposed pilot will address, and how the need was identified. *(10 points possible)*
- A narrative description of the community engagement efforts that were conducted to inform the project concept, including research, lived experience, and/or outreach that served to identify the need. *(5 points possible)*
- A narrative description identifying how the proposed pilot will fill a gap in the transportation system and/or facilitate improved connections between modes. *(5 points possible)*

All proposals must include:
- Three outcomes the applicant hopes to achieve through the implementation of the project along with a narrative description of how progress will be measured. *(5 points possible)*

Section 2: Alignment with ODOT Priorities (50 points possible)

Study and assessment grant proposals must include:
- A narrative description identifying how historically underserved communities will benefit from the proposed project. *(15 points possible)*
- A narrative description of how the study or assessment will facilitate a greater understanding of the opportunities and challenges related to reducing drive-alone trips, or the ways it can facilitate less drive-alone trips in the future. *(15 points possible)*
- A narrative description of how safety-related issues faced by historically underserved communities will be addressed in the project. *(10 points possible)*

Pilot grant proposals must include:
- A narrative description identifying how historically underserved communities will be served by the project. *(15 points possible)*

- A narrative description identifying how the project will support or encourage non-drive-alone modes of travel. *(15 points possible)*
- A narrative description of how safety-related issues and concerns aligned with the proposed pilot will be addressed in the project. *(10 points possible)*

All proposals must include:

- An outreach and engagement strategy as part of the proposal that addresses how communities will be engaged in culturally sensitive ways throughout the duration of the project, and how feedback will be documented and incorporated. *(10 points possible)*

Section 3: Project Approach and Readiness (20 points possible)
All proposals must include:

- A list of anticipated project activities along with a timeline of key milestones and deliverables to show that the project can be realistically accomplished in the designated timeframe. *(5 points possible)*
- A staffing overview that identifies roles and responsibilities for the project management team. If the applicant plans to secure additional team members, applicant should describe their plan for identifying, hiring, and/or contracting with additional team members and ensure adequate time is budgeted in the project scope. *(5 points possible)*
- A narrative description of the applicant's experience implementing grant-funded projects. This should include relevant work experience of key project staff, including past work with historically underserved communities, if applicable. *(5 points possible)*
- A narrative description identifying potential risks or barriers to the proposed project and how the applicant intends to address those barriers, as applicable. (For instance, if an update to a local ordinance is needed before the project is implemented applicant should identify the plan for accomplishing the update.) *(5 points possible)*

Section 4: Long-Term Impact (5 points possible)
Study and assessment grant proposals must include:
- A narrative description of potential next steps after the grant is completed. Applicants should identify what they plan to do with the information gathered and if applicable, potential funding opportunities. *(5 points possible)*

Pilot grant proposals must include:
- A narrative description of potential next steps after the grant is completed. Applicants should identify what additional funding opportunities they may pursue for the continuation of the service if it proves valuable. *(5 points possible)*

3. Project Budget (Not scored)
All applicants **must submit a project budget** that is complete, clear, and appropriately scaled to the proposed project with a description of estimated expense categories using the program's budget template. **(Applicants must use the provided budget template.)**

The first tab in the document includes instructions for how to fill out the budget. <u>The second tab includes the budget the applicant should complete</u>. The third tab shows an example budget for a Pilot Grant, and the fourth tab shows an example budget for a Study and Assessment Grant.

4. Letters of Commitment (If Applicable)

Applicants that plan to partner with other organizations or entities to deliver the project must submit letters of commitment from the partner organizations or entities confirming their willingness to help deliver the project should it be funded.

Part 6: Selection Criteria and Scoring Rubrics

The review committee will score proposals on four criteria and proposals can be awarded up to 100 points. The scoring criteria are:

- Community benefit (25 possible points)
- Alignment with ODOT priorities (50 possible points)
- Project plan and readiness (20 possible points)
- Long-term impact (5 possible points)

Category	Maximum Number of Points
Community Benefit	25
Alignment with ODOT Priorities:	
Equity	25
Climate	15
Safety	10
Project Approach and Readiness	20
Long-Term Impact	5
Total Maximum Score	**100**

The review committee will use the following rubrics to score proposals:

- [**Study and Assessment Grants Scoring Rubric**](#)
- [**Pilot Grants Scoring Rubric**](#)

The scoring rubrics show the questions that applicants are required to answer in their project narrative along with the information reviewers will use to score each response. Applicants will be awarded full points, partial points, or no points for each response according to the rubric provided. Applicants are encouraged to be as detailed, specific, and clear as possible so that reviewers have a firm understanding of the proposed project. (Responses will be scored based on <u>content only</u>; spelling and grammar will not be part of the scoring considerations.)

More Information

IMP staff will host an informational webinar on **Tuesday, November 12th from 1-2PM**. Advance registration is required. This webinar will be recorded and available to view afterwards. and available to view afterwards.

If you have questions, IMP staff can be reached by email at **innovativemobility@odot.oregon.gov** or by phone at 971-718-1025.

You can also see answers to Frequently Asked Questions on our FAQ page. This page will be updated weekly.

Appendices

Acronyms

BIL	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
IMP	Innovative Mobility Program
NTP	Notice to Proceed
ODOT	Oregon Department of Transportation
ORS	Oregon Revised Statutes
OTC	Oregon Transportation Commission
SOW	Scope of Work
STBG	Surface Transportation Block Group

Resources

- FTA Shared Mobility Definitions: This webpage includes a list of definitions for shared mobility terms, including bikesharing, carsharing, micromobility, and more, as used by the Federal Transit Association (FTA).

- Shared-Use Mobility Center Definitions: This resource from the Shared-Use Mobility Center includes a list of shared mobility related definitions, including terms like "first and last mile".

- Transportation Demand Management: This Association for Commuter Transportation webpage provides an overview of what "transportation demand management" (or TDM) means and a list of typical TDM strategies. In Oregon, many of these strategies will more often be called "transportation options".

- FHWA/FTA Equity in Transportation: This webpage provides an overview of what "equity in transportation" means and includes links to additional resources.

- Transportation Equity Needs Assessment Toolkit: This resource was developed by researchers at the University of South Florida with funding from the US Department of Transportation (USDOT). It includes a definition of a "transportation equity needs assessment" along with a series of tools to use.

- Roadmap to Equitable Community Transportation: This resource from The Greenlining Institute provides an overview of best practices for conducting a mobility needs assessment. (This may also be referred to as a "transportation needs assessment" or a "community transportation needs assessment.")

- Mobility Hubs Overview: This webpage from Chicago's Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) provides a brief description of mobility hubs.