

Making connections for cars, bikes and pedestrians

Walking. Driving. Riding bicycles. Taking transit. People who live, work or travel through the Southwest Corridor use many different transportation types to get around. Having safe and convenient options through a network of roads, bike lanes, sidewalks and trails is key to a quality of life for many residents. This quality of life is being compromised in the Southwest Corridor by increasing congestion, unreliable travel times and much needed improvements for walking, biking and transit use.

The good news is that a partnership of city, county, transportation planning agencies and local stakeholders are moving forward on a shared plan to improve and build new transportation facilities. Approximately 80 projects have been selected as critical projects to improve connectivity, safety and travel times throughout the area and next steps are to identify funding sources and implementation timelines.

These projects are part of the Southwest Corridor Plan Shared Investment Strategy – a set of potential investments that support land use, transportation and community building goals throughout the corridor. The plan’s steering committee adopted the Shared Investment



Strategy in 2013 and recommended a list of strategic transit, roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, park and habitat restoration projects that help implement local aspirations and goals. The strategy also recommends local policies, incentives and regulations local communities can put in place to promote private investment and commits to developing a collaborative funding strategy.

Next steps

- Discussions with local stakeholders will call out must-have projects to fund and build early on to provide key multimodal connections and enact the local land use visions.
- Partners from local jurisdictions, ODOT and Metro will identify potential funding sources for specific projects in a 5-, 10- and 15-year time frame.
- Decisions on narrowing the potential high capacity transit alignments will determine which multimodal projects are “corridor connections” and which are “HCT-aligned” (see box on next page).

Southwest Corridor Plan Glossary

HCT-aligned Roadway, bikeway, sidewalk and trail projects that provide direct connections to a potential future high capacity transit (HCT) – light rail or bus rapid transit – system, particularly providing safer, more direct access to stations. HCT-aligned projects are eligible to be included in a federal transit funding request.

Corridor connections (aka land use supportive) Roadway, bikeway, sidewalk and trail projects that improve connectivity and mobility across the corridor, beyond the immediate geographic area of a potential HCT line. Corridor connections fill in gaps in the existing system or provide new access points to key destinations. Corridor connections are eligible for multiple types of local, regional, state and federal funding sources.

How we got here

In 2012, partners collected a wide-ranging list of more than \$4 billion in roadway, bikeway, sidewalk and trail projects that support the collective land use vision for the Southwest Corridor. Through public meetings and online surveys, staff and community stakeholders filtered this large list through a three-step screening process that highlighted project goals and objectives including cost, land use impact, access, mobility, connectivity and safety for all modes.

Step 1: Does the project support the community and Corridor vision? Does the project meet the transportation needs? Does the project support land use goals of the community?

Step 2: Does the project protect or expand on existing facilities?

Step 3: Can we afford it and when? Are the impacts reasonable?

This process led to a narrowed list of \$500 million in projects for a 15-year time period. The list includes projects that would be highly supportive of a future high capacity transit investment, and a strategic list of corridor connections projects that support each community's land use vision (see box above). The list of high capacity transit-aligned projects were further refined in 2014 as alignment options were removed.



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Building our Shared Investment Strategy projects

Tualatin River Greenway Gap

The Tualatin River Greenway hugs one of the region's most significant and beautiful waterways along the western and eastern parts of Tualatin. But in the middle of this trail, a crucial three-quarter mile gap has stymied the full potential of the 4.5 mile trail to be a connector and a resource for all of the city's 26,000 residents and throughout the Corridor.

Completing this gap was identified as part of the broader Southwest Corridor Plan Shared Investment Strategy, and will connect several apartment complexes and single-family neighborhoods east of the freeway with shopping and employment centers to the west. Via the Ki-a-Kuts Bridge across the Tualatin River – one of the busiest trail bridges in the region – the greenway will also provide connections to the Fanno Creek Trail.

Now, that gap will finally be filled, opening new transportation opportunities to residents, employees and visitors to Tualatin. The \$3 million project will be funded by a \$1.5 million grant from state lottery dollars, \$750,000 from Washington County's major streets improvement program, \$352,000 from the city of Tualatin and a unique \$600,000 cash donation from a commercial developer whose properties the trail will pass. The construction, currently going to bid for contractors, could be completed by the winter of 2015-2016, though a short section might be delayed as it awaits the redevelopment of a former RV park into an apartment complex.

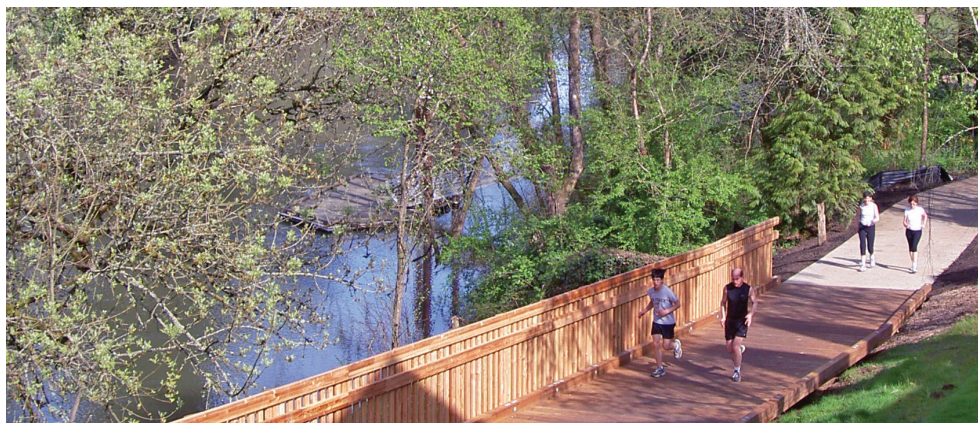


“This is one of those rare times [when] there's support everywhere you turn,” said Tualatin community services director Paul Hennon. Indeed, the city's proposal for state lottery dollars included letters of support from local elected officials, business associations, environmentalists, apartment owners and park advocates.

The \$600,000 cash donation came from CenterCal properties, a commercial developer whose properties in the area include the Nyberg Woods shopping center, Bridgeport Village and the new Nyberg Rivers shopping center.

CenterCal president Fred Bruning said his company developed its shopping centers in the area with the express purpose of protecting recreational opportunities along the Tualatin River, which flows directly behind their buildings.

Bruning praised local and regional leadership for making the trail happen. “Connectivity and being able to enjoy nature is something many communities don't think about,” he said. The new trail section will provide access to a surprisingly peaceful section of the river, given its proximity to major shopping centers and residential developments, Bruning said. “You won't even see our buildings,” he said.



99W and 72nd/Dartmouth improvements in Tigard

The Tigard Triangle – framed by Interstate 5, Highway 217 and Highway 99W – has become an important commercial district for the community, drawing shoppers and workers from throughout the region, as well as commuters who pass through it. But as the area has attracted new business activity, congestion has strained the capacity of local roads and made it more difficult to get around by any mode.

But the city is working to fix these challenges as the area continues to grow.

Drivers making left turns off Highway 99W used to gather in a two-way middle turn lane before attempting a daring dart across two lanes of oncoming traffic. On 72nd Avenue, people walked on the shoulder of a road, and a major intersection at Dartmouth Street was struggling to get thousands of cars daily through a four-way stop.

Thanks to recent improvements in the city, that outdated four-way stop has been replaced with a smooth traffic signal. To the south, 72nd Ave now has plenty of room to handle traffic safely – and new sidewalks, bike lanes and street trees, as well.

Meanwhile, Highway 99W in the Triangle has a new, tree-lined median for several of its busiest blocks.

Altogether the improvements make the stretch safer and more predictable by limiting turning movements and enhancing driver expectation at key intersections. Sidewalks have also been widened and pedestrian crossings were made more prominent.

Although roads in the area were already scheduled for improvements, the recent expansion of a Walmart helped provide a catalyst to upgrade streets, said Tigard planner Mark Bernard. Walmart contributed several million dollars to mitigate traffic impacts from the expansion in the area. Tigard, in turn, widened 72nd Avenue.



Bernard said the projects are an example of Tigard working to make its transportation system safer for everyone. High capacity transit from the Southwest Corridor Plan could eventually connect the Triangle to the rest of the region along its eastern edge. But the city isn't waiting until those decisions and investments are made to cure transportation challenges. "We're getting stuff done where we can in the near term and we're making sure what is done aligns with future projects," Bernard said.

The fixes also reflect two important pieces of local policy: Tigard's new strategic plan, which advances a vision to become the "most walkable city in the Pacific Northwest," and a nearly complete Tigard Triangle Strategic Redevelopment Plan, which the Tigard City Council will consider adopting this summer.

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