

Executive Summary

Eugene-Springfield Metro Area, Oregon Campaign for Active Transportation

Background

With the forthcoming 2010 reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Legislation (SAFETEA-LU, 2005-2009), decision makers are presented with a critical opportunity to establish a new framework for supporting active transportation modes. Active transportation is human-powered modes of transportation such as biking and walking. Planning for the transportation needs of the 21st Century requires a significant shift in thinking and priorities; although we are confronted by many uncertainties, we can be sure that future transportation needs will be quite unlike the past. The national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy spearheaded the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation to inspire a grassroots effort to advocate for doubling the 2005 SAFETEA-LU investment for biking and walking. Factors contributing to this need include rapidly rising energy costs, an aging U.S. population, shifting land use and development patterns, the health of our population, and growing concern about the impacts of our transportation system on the climate. These factors, affecting communities throughout the country, are causing a significant rethinking of how transportation priorities and projects are developed. Increasingly, communities are questioning how best to meet their changing mobility needs in an efficient, equitable and sustainable manner.

The Eugene-Springfield Metro Area was invited to participate in this national active transportation advocacy. As a growing community committed to sustainable growth options, the Eugene-Springfield Metro Area recognizes that it cannot meet the transportation challenges of the 21st Century by investing in major road capacity increasing projects alone. Community leaders and residents alike recognize that balancing transportation priorities will be critical for increasing mobility and providing modal choice in their community. If land use patterns and travel behavior continue as they exist today, the forecast for the metro area is for a 277% increase in congested miles of travel. While the region has a strong record of investment in a more balanced transportation system that support biking, walking and transit infrastructure and programs, the Eugene-Springfield Metro Area has agreed that the potential opportunity for a significant strategic federal investment in active transportation would cost-effectively enhance mobility and mitigate congestion by shifting automobile trips to bicycling and walking. This investment would enable the community to make an unprecedented leap toward meeting universal mobility goals.

Making the Case

The Eugene-Springfield Metro Area has a strong record of supporting active transportation with infrastructure and programs designed to encourage walking and bicycling. Its greater than national average share of walking, bicycling, and transit trips in the metro area reflects this long standing support. Approximately 4% of work trips are taken by bicycle (8.5% in Eugene), 4% by walking (6.5% in Eugene), and another 3.5% on transit (5.4% in Eugene)¹. Strategic investment directed towards these transportation modes will further decrease the number of drive alone trips while simultaneously increasing the proportion of active transportation and transit trips.

The region has developed coordinated plans to catalyze the growth of active transportation through strategic investments in infrastructure, programs and new planning tools. Inspiration for what might be possible with dedicated funding can be found in the many dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the Eugene-Springfield Area. These include over 40 miles of off-street shared use paths, five bike/ped bridges spanning the Willamette River, and hundreds of miles of bicycle lanes and bicycle routes. There are numerous high-priority bicycle and pedestrian projects identified in our local and regional transportation plans. These include regionally significant shared use path projects, additional bike/ped bridges, and forward-thinking projects such as bicycle boulevard system plans. What is needed now is a strong commitment to fund these initiatives.

Planning for a balanced and sustainable transportation system is a priority; the Eugene-Springfield Metro Area's community leaders have pledged their support for the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation and are positioned to make this effort a top priority.

Case Statement

Our region's Case Statement answers the question that the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is asking communities across the country: What could be achieved in our community with a \$50 million federal investment to promote biking and walking investment through the next reauthorization of the next Federal Highway Transportation Bill? While our participation in the Campaign does not guarantee future funding for our area or success for biking and walking investment in the 2010 Federal Transportation Legislation; our region is committed to active transportation modes and is well-positioned and ready to implement the projects and programs described in these documents if given the opportunity.

¹ [2007 American Community Survey Data](#), U.S. Census Bureau