Actively promoting bicycling, walking, carpooling, teleworking, and using public transportation to create livable communities and enhance the quality of life in Central and Eastern Oregon.
Moving Our Communities

Hello,

It is my pleasure to share our 2018 Annual Report with you! Commute Options envisions communities where people make thoughtful transportation choices to reduce the impact of driving alone. These decisions result in healthier individuals, safer streets, a cleaner environment, and a stronger economy.

Transportation options is not only about “reducing traffic,” but rather creating communities where people and businesses thrive. It’s about nurturing healthy lifestyles through physical activity such as walking and biking to work or school. It’s about building community by making our streets safer for all people, and it’s about offering equal options for all members of our communities, regardless of age, race, ability or income.

2018 was all about creating innovative ways to inspire people to walk, bike, ride the bus, carpool and telework. Through our new Walking School Bus Program, we help kids and families walk to school in a fun and safe manner. We also launched the Oregon Friendly Driver Program, a fun and friendly course to teach people how to safely use the road with walkers and bikers. And we continue to work with our partners and communities in ODOT Regions 4 and 5 on a variety of programs and services to keep people moving.

Commute Options is your voice for active transportation in Central and Eastern Oregon. Join us in celebrating 2018 and welcoming 2019!

— Jeff Monson, Executive Director

Our Statewide Reach

While we work directly in communities east of the Cascades, from the Columbia River to the California border, Commute Options also provides services that benefit all of Oregon.

As the Technical Assistance Provider for the Oregon Safe Routes to School programs, we help all Oregon regions develop programs that help students safely walk and bike to school. Through the Oregon Safe Routes to School website and newsletters, we provide tools, resources, news and a calendar of events available for all Oregon regions.

In 2018, Oregon began rolling out new funding mechanisms for walking and biking infrastructure and public transportation. As your voice for transportation options, Commute Options represents Central and Eastern Oregon on several statewide committees, such as the Oregon Public Transportation Advisory Committee, the Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund sub-committee and the Safe Routes to School Rulemaking Committee.

Commute Options was also selected to help all Oregon DMV offices offer educational packets for older people who no longer drive. The packets include region-specific information such as fixed route bus services, dial-a-ride services and carpool matching resources.

We also welcomed the 2018 Oregon Public Transit conference in Bend last year, showing the state that our region is committed to strengthening our public transportation options!

“...The ODOT Transportation Safety Division and Commute Options are making great strides this year in our partnership offering technical assistance for the Non-Infrastructure Safe Routes to School Program, supporting communities embarking on Safe Routes to School education, encouragement and enforcement programs.”

— Heidi Manlove, Oregon Safe Routes to School Education and Outreach Program Manager, ODOT
We recognize that the future lies with our young people and teaching children how to walk and bike to school lays the groundwork for them to be healthy and active throughout their lives. Our Safe Routes to School programs grew in 2018 as smiling students walked and biked throughout the region.

In 2018, with funding from Central Oregon Health Council, we launched the exciting new Walking School Bus program, which helps students and families walk to school in a safe, fun and convenient manner. Our dedicated staff created the routes, hired and trained adult leaders, educated the walkers, and promoted the program throughout central Oregon. We’re excited to see this program grow!

“"My favorite part of being a Walking School Bus Leader is seeing the kids outside and moving before and after school. I love watching them have their adventures and using their imagination.” —Bear Creek Elementary School WSB Leader

Our Safe Routes to School staff continued to work with schools in the region to teach bicycle and walking safety to students through activities such as International Walk and Roll to School Day, bike events and crosswalk classes. Students in Bend and Klamath Falls also learned how to ride the public buses through several “Meet the Bus” programs. Partnering with other programs, such as the Eco-Hero Adventure Camp in Bend, also helped us reach kids in the summer months as we enjoyed teaching kids how to safely bike around town.

Inspiring All People to Choose to Move

Our vision is for all people to have the access, ability and desire to choose walking, biking, carpooling, riding the bus or telework instead of driving alone. We reach people through a variety of ways to educate them on resources to help choose active transportation.

We launched our new website in 2018 and began featuring “Super Commuters,” real people who are walking, biking, carpooling and riding buses all throughout Oregon. Our monthly e-newsletters and our Facebook page also provided people with information on local events and new programs related to transportation options.

We also reached out to people face-to-face at many events such as Cascades East Transit’s Transit Tuesdays, Redmond’s Streets Alive day, Ride Bend’s Summer Shuttle kick-off, the Earth Day Fair, and See and Be Seen Evening’s in downtown Bend.

Commute Options continued to administer Drive Less Connect, where people can track their non-drive-alone trips to win rewards. And the 2018 Drive Less Challenge was a success as people from all over Oregon logged their trips for the 15-day challenge.

“I carpool to help save gas, help friends, make it to work on time and to be a role model for my boys on how we all need to help one another.” —Candy Freiboth, Super Commuter
Supporting Businesses and a Strong Economy

Working with businesses is important to us and we’ve developed strong relationships in the business community. In 2018, we were thrilled to provide our partners with the opportunity for their employees to learn how to be a friendly driver through our new Oregon Friendly Driver Program. This fun one-hour class teaches drivers how to safely use the roads with people biking and walking.

Through our Commute Options Partner Program, we work with employers to help their workforce use transportation options. Several large employers, such as The Dalles School District, First Interstate Bank (Region 4 and 5), and North Wasco County Public Utility District signed on to participate last year, so their employees can track their trips and get rewards.

We served on Bend’s Downtown Parking Advisory Committee to explore ways to improve parking downtown, making parking easy, available, and safe. We helped promote the Ride Bend Summer Shuttle by visiting businesses along the route during their kick-off event. Our monthly articles in the Cascade Business News tie together the importance of transportation options to a strong business community and economy.

Serving Rural Oregon

Much of the work we do is in the rural parts of Oregon, which often have different needs than those of urban areas. These small towns show strong commitment to providing transportation options for people who live and work there.

In southeastern Oregon, the Lake District Hospital won the Drive Less Challenge Hospital Challenge, with Sky Lakes Medical Center in Klamath Falls coming in at a close second! Klamath County signed on to be a Commute Options Partner, and the Gilchrist schools started a Walking School Bus program. Our staff attended the Mid Columbia Medical Center Wellness Fair in The Dalles and the Lake County Expo in Lakeview to meet and talk with residents about opportunities for walking, biking, carpooling and using public transportation.

At the tail end of 2018, we finalized plans to serve the very northeast corner of Oregon, in Baker, Union and Wallowa Counties. We are looking forward to working in this rural area of Oregon to bring active transportation programs to individuals, businesses and organizations, so stay tuned on new developments!

“I was excited to get Commute Options back at our organization because I knew people who were already walking and biking to work and this gave them credit for it in a fun way, plus it’s a way to help others get started. We have such a walkable community most of the year. It only makes sense.” —Lacy Cleveland, Human Resources, Lake Health District
Many Thanks

We couldn’t do this work without our talented and hard working staff. They move through our communities with expansive knowledge and infectious energy to help people choose active transportation. Thank you to our staff, our board of directors and Working Group members for their dedication to our mission. Finally, a warm thanks to our funding partners, community leaders, partner organizations and volunteers across our region for all your hard work in creating sustainable communities in Central and Eastern Oregon.

2018 Board of Directors:
Gregg Morris, President
Marshall Greene, Secretary
Bill Caram, Treasurer
Emily Pelletier
James Cook
Kevin Wooster
Nancy Kraemer

2018 Staff:
Jeff Monson, Executive Director
Kim Curley Reynolds, Community Outreach
Brian Potwin, Active Transportation Manager
Kate Armstrong, Education Coordinator
Kersey Marion, Walking School Bus Coordinator
Tatiana Guerra, Education Assistant
Kathy King, Special Projects

“When there is transportation options work to be done, Commute Options always steps up to the plate to help.”
—Stephanie Millar, ODOT Transportation Options Program Manager

Commute Options 2018 Funding Sources

Commute Options Serves All of Central and Eastern Oregon

Baker County
Crook County
Deschutes County
Gilliam County
Grant County
Harney County
Jefferson County
Klamath County
Lake County
Malheur County
Morrow County
Sherman County
Umatilla County
Union County
Wallowa County
Wasco County
Wheeler County