



# commute options

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



# 2023 Annual Report

Commute Options is dedicated to innovative transportation options that connect people of all ages to the places they go – employees to their workplaces, students to their schools, and neighbors within their communities. We champion active transportation and infrastructure improvements, fostering essential partnerships, and educating the community on transportation options.

## Mission Statement

Commute Options increases access to transportation options across Oregon.

## Vision Statement

We envision communities using safe, convenient, and reliable transportation options that result in healthier individuals, a cleaner environment, and a stronger economy.

## 2023 Staff

Brian Potwin - *Executive Director*

Kim Curley - *Community Engagement Coordinator*

Whitney Bennett - *Education Program Manager*

Indigo Larson - *Communication & Program Coordinator*

Marika Tammaru - *Safe Routes to School Coordinator*

Emily Dougan - *Program & Administrative Coordinator (former)*

Shelby Sauer - *Program & Administrative Coordinator (current)*

## 2023 Board of Directors

Marshall Greene - *Board Chair*

Noelle Copley - *Treasurer*

Neil Baungard - *Secretary*

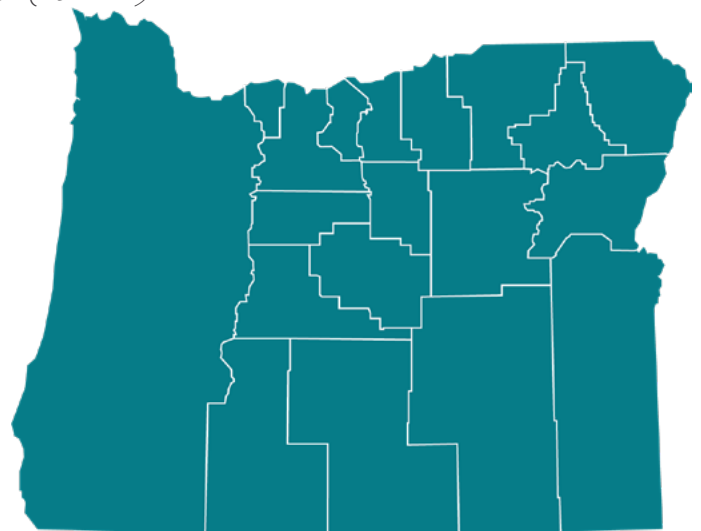
Zechariah Heck - *At Large*

Anthony Poponi - *At Large*

Jerry Huegel - *At Large*

Mark Russell Johnson - *At Large*

Jovi Arellano - *Ex Officio Member*



In 2023 Commute Options expanded to increase access transportation options across the entire state of Oregon.

## Top Accomplishments

- 1. Safe Routes to School Education.** Reached more students with Safe Routes to School Education by instructing walking and biking safety at 6 Elementary Schools in Central Oregon.
- 2. Safe Routes to School.** Increased participation in Safe Routes to School walk and roll encouragement events by 50%, compared to our 2022 events.
- 3. E-Bike Education.** Launched Introduction to E-bike Riding Online Course as a resource for e-bike education to our community.
- 4. OFD.** Awarded Administration and Coordination contract for Oregon Friendly Driver to manage the program statewide.
- 5. OFD.** Instructed OFD in a record number of Driver Education Class across Central Oregon, 390 new drivers are on the road as Certified Oregon Friendly Drivers.
- 6. Get There Rewards.** Distributed nearly 600 rewards to participating employees in 2023. We added new members, including Visit Bend, Humm Kombucha, Mid-Oregon Credit Union, RootedHomes homeowners, and created a new network for the Commute Options E-bike community (recipients of the E-bike voucher funds).
- 7. Get There Oregon.** Welcomed Tillamook in Boardman, Tent Engineering, DEQ Bend, and Morrow County employees into the online ridematching and trip logging platform.
- 8. Vanpool.** Secured funding to fully subsidize all vanpools starting and stopping in Crook, Jefferson and Deschutes counties including the cost of gas.
- 9. Vanpool.** Partnered with transit provider, Columbia Area Transit, to offer a vanpool subsidy of \$500 per month per van in Hood River County.
- 10. E-Bike Voucher Program.** Distributed 75 \$2000 vouchers for Bend, Oregon residents to purchase an E-bike and safety equipment. Funding came from Pacific Power Foundation in partnership with the City of Bend.

Programs



# get there rewards

Get There Oregon initiative sponsored by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and its partners across the state, helps commuters and employers shift business practices and work habits one trip at a time. Commute Options' [Get There Rewards](#) program changes personal travel behavior, improving health, saving money, and reducing parking needs. Employees earn incentives through the Get There Rewards program, which encourages use of walking, biking, carpooling, vanpooling, remote work and compressed work week instead of driving alone. During 2023, Get There Rewards continued to grow in central and eastern Oregon as companies headed back to the office. Solving employee transportation problems is one of the ways Get There Rewards solves recruitment and retention issues for growing companies. Commute Options network of over 3,600 logged nearly remote work trips on Get There Oregon in 2023. Other achievements include over 82,000 alternative mode trips, totalling over 835,000 miles not driven. Participants burned more than 6 million calories during the year walking and rolling!

We continue to offer a \$20 Tango card as the reward once a participant has logged 45 Transportation Options trips. There are hundreds of options with the Get There Rewards choices expanded with the Tango Card, offering a global catalog of the most popular gift cards, prepaid cards, and donations that are sent directly to the recipient's email.



In October we hosted the first ever TEAM Get There Challenge where participants won prizes, reduced carbon emissions, and improved their own personal health! The 2023 challenge had 1,180 participants in 254 teams logged 21,575 trips/remote work days, reduced 190,311 drive-alone miles, and reduced 120,988 lbs. of CO2. The local AAA Team (ODOT Region 4) was the first to log 40 trips during week 1, and won \$50 Ruffwear gift cards for each team member! Locally, 44 teams with 212 people saved 42,079 miles, \$21,563 in transportation costs, while logging 4,443 trips during the 15 day challenge.

This challenge highlighted a team's ability to log trips together. We had groups of co-workers, book clubs, neighborhood teams, and more. The 2023 Get There Challenge celebrated those employees and assisted essential workers accessing their jobs by rewarding people for working together on reducing single occupant car trips.



In 2023 Oregon Friendly Driver reached people who drive through the virtual [Oregon Friendly Driver Online course](#) course and Live Webinar, as well as through in person classes that were offered across Central Oregon. Driver education teachers have integrated the materials into their curriculum and regularly invite our instructors to teach the training during their driver education classes. In 2023 we focused on increasing our in person classes and improving our online course.

[Oregon Friendly Driver](#) is a course for people who drive that helps to educate on how to safely use the roadway with people who are walking and biking. The Live Webinars, the Online Course, and the in-person class include pre- and post-tests.

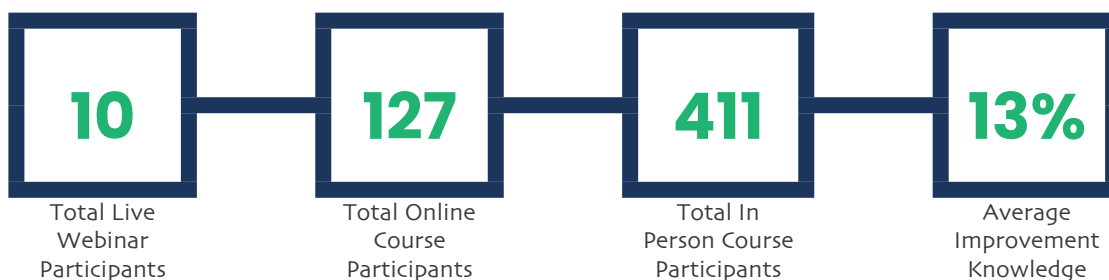


*Oregon Friendly Drivers learn about proper use of bike lanes*

Participants learn about:

- The safest ways to utilize the roadway network.
- The rules of the road for people driving, people riding bicycles, and people walking.
- How to avoid common crashes.
- How people riding bikes use the road and how people driving can respond.
- How to use roadway features: sharrows, bike lanes, and rapid flashing beacons.

Last year 548 participants successfully completed the class, received an Oregon Friendly Driver Certificate, and became a more friendly driver on our roadways.





# SafeRoutes

## Oregon Safe Routes To School



[Safe Routes to School](#) is one of Commute Options' foundational programs and is part of a national network of providers bringing walking and biking education and encouragement to students. We do this through a combination walking and bike safety instruction across Central Oregon, as well as encouragement events.

### Safe Routes to School Education Program

Spring 2023 brought lots of opportunities to implement Safe Routes to School programming in our partner schools. We offered walking and biking education at five Bend La Pine Schools and Sisters Elementary. In the summer we stayed connected to the community by offering bicycle education at Eco Hero Camp summer program.

### Spring Walk and Roll Challenge

We organized a May Walk and Roll Challenge on May 11, 2023. Students recorded the number of trips they walked and rolled to school to qualify for prizes. Two students were awarded the grand prize this year, and they took home new scooters.

### Fall Walk and Roll to School Day

October 4, 2024 was Walk + Roll to School Day. Schools organized walking groups, students logged their trip to win prizes, and families discovered the joy of walking to school for the first time.

### Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day

We gathered at Juniper Park to enjoy hot cocoa, donations from a local bakery, and a few words about Ruby Bridges. The group divided to walk to school, some making their way to Juniper Elementary and the rest heading to Bear Creek Elementary. It was a wonderful opportunity for families to connect, learn, and get a few extra steps into their day.



*Bike Safety Education*

# Oregon Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School



ALTA • COMMUTE OPTIONS • THE STREET TRUST

Commute Options provides support to statewide Safe Routes to School efforts as a part of the Technical Assistance Program team. In 2023, 29 Hub meetings brought SRTS implementers together, 10 statewide webinars offered training for SRTS practitioners, 4 quarterly statewide meetings brought the community together and 9 JumpStart bicycle and pedestrian safety education Train-the-Trainer sessions were held across the state. After creating new toolkits for practitioners, we were able to award 150 kits to different programs this year to help grow and strengthen their SRTS Programs. In addition we prepared guides and incentives for Walk+Roll to School Days with event ideas, outreach material in English and Spanish, and tips for making events successful. We continued to lead the Oregon SRTS statewide communication efforts, and help with the design and implementation of bicycle and pedestrian safety courses.

*Technical Assistance Program Team*





# Walking School Bus

Let's Walk and Roll

The [Walking School Bus](#) program is picking up steam once again within our partners schools. Many school districts around the country have organized special or one-off walking school bus events, but we are one of the few programs that offers mapped walking routes and a legacy of successful program implementation that has shaped the way we plan the Walking School Bus program.

The Walking School Bus program is a way to alleviate many of the challenges faced by families trying to sort out transportation; by schools working to increase attendance and decrease tardiness; and by students facing more sedentary time inside and less time outside getting exercise. The Walking School Bus benefits the overall health, safety, and wellness of our community.

We expanded the Walking School Bus program by adding more routes during the 2022/2023 school year, more funding, more leaders, and more creative ways to integrate walking and biking safety into the daily journey of each of the Walking School Bus groups. We had 3 active Walking School Bus routes supported by 1 paid leader and 4 volunteer leaders. There continues to be a growing interest in and demand for the Walking School Bus Program. Over time we plan to see the Walking School Bus as very broadly implemented transportation option for all schools

*Walking School Bus Group*







This year Commute Options expanded on our [Vanpool](#) subsidy program that started in 2020. The program has expanded to cover the vanpool lease fee as well as gas for every van that starts or stops in Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook counties. The expansion of the subsidy program has allows Central Oregon commuters a new option to get to and from work that saves workers time, money, and the stress of commuting. This program matches 5+ people with similar commutes and schedules to share a SUV or van that brings them to and from work on a regular schedule. With the expansion of the subsidy we have been able to grow the program over 200% bringing our total number of vans to 27.

Vanpooling provides a solution for employers to reduce carbon emissions, parking needs and the number of solo drivers on the road. Employees arrive to start their workday in a better state of mind. And the IRS provides tax incentives for employers and employees for vanpooling. All of these benefits make it a win for commuters, employers, communities and the environment!

*Vanpool for Brasada Ranch*







City Club - The Future of E-Bikes in Bend. Commute Options Staff (Left to Right): Kim Curley, Indigo Larson, Marika Tammaru, Brian Potwin, Whitney Bennett, Shelby Sauer

**THANK YOU!**

