



## Corvallis to Albany Multiuse Path Project Overview

April 28, 2021

### Need

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As the urban and employment center for the Cascades West region, the Corvallis and Albany region experiences a significant number of daily trips both between and through the two cities. Using 2017 Census data, there are approximately 28,000 employees that travel from other cities to Corvallis and Albany every day. While it is hard to predict the exact number of employees traveling between the two cities, the congestion on Highways 20 and 34 would indicate it is significant. As commute for work trips only account for 1/3 of all trips, the demand for travel between the regions is high.

With flat terrain and separated by only 8 miles, the connection is well suited to be traveled by bicycle, however no comfortable routes exist. The shoulder width on Highway 20 varies, and the high speed of vehicles combined with significant freight volume insures only the most confident people use it. The current alternative, along Riverside Drive, is lower speed and lower volume, but has next to no shoulder along most of the length.

*Constructing the Corvallis – Albany path would help achieve regional transportation goals, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide a low cost, and safe travel method other than motor vehicles, for residents and employees alike.*

### Background + History

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Planning for the multi-use path first began in 2004 with a feasibility study conducted by Benton County. After a long hiatus, planning began again in earnest in 2016, with a formal study to evaluate route options and garner public feedback. With preliminary design completed in the fall of 2017, Benton County started to identify funding options for sections of the path.

Currently, a section at the edge of Corvallis and a section at the edge of Albany are complete. Benton County is coordinating with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) on their Highway 20 Safety Project from Conifer to Merloy to jointly procure the Right of Way (ROW) needed for the path in that section and continues to seek funding opportunities, including the recent ODOT Community Paths program.

In 2018, the Albany Area and Corvallis Area MPOs received a grant to evaluate the multi-modal (i.e. walking and biking) connectivity between the two regions, due to the high volumes of travel and relative proximity. The study evaluated the safety and comfort of traveling between the two cities by bike, which are only 8 miles apart, and found there is no “low stress” connection. This means only the most confident people would travel by bike, and there is no option for those that are interested, but concerned about their safety, such as those with children or identifying as older adults.

For more information, please contact: Nick Meltzer, OCWCOG Transportation Manager at [nmeltzer@ocwcog.org](mailto:nmeltzer@ocwcog.org); and Laurel Byer, Benton County County Engineer at [Laurel.Byer@Co.Benton.OR.US](mailto:Laurel.Byer@Co.Benton.OR.US)

This demographic of the interested but concerned represents over 50% of the general population, or the group that is most likely to travel by bicycle that currently is not.

### **Local + Regional Support**

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This project has strong support from regional elected officials. Highway 20, associated congestion, and the construction of a multi-use path are topics of frequent discussion at Albany Area MPO (AAMPO), Corvallis Area MPO (CAMPO), and Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation (CWACT) meetings. In 2008, CAMPO was unsuccessful in applying for a Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) grant to evaluate the long term travel needs of the corridor.

While this initial conversation led to the Highway 20 safety study, that project does not address the long term travel needs. Since then, every local jurisdiction in the corridor has updated their transportation system plan (TSP) and identified Highway 20 as an issue requiring further study. As such, AAMPO and CAMPO are in the process of submitting a TGM grant this year to evaluate the long term transportation needs of the corridor, based on population and job growth. The multi-use path between Albany and Corvallis is one part of the intended solution, as well as increases in transit service and traffic signal improvements.

This proposed multi-use path is also a high priority project for the Benton County Commissioners. It directly supports their Mobility and Transportation goal within the Benton County Thriving Communities Initiative (2040 TCI). The goal specifically states “Benton County will ensure people are efficiently connected to the places they work, play, shop, learn and enjoy” The goal further states that residents will “receive services through transportation options that promote activity, reduce congestion, and build community.”

### **Project Details**

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Attached is a map for the Corvallis-Albany Multi-Use Path – the alignment in North Albany will change slightly, but for the purposes of this discussion, that section of the path already has funding allocated from the State for construction. The phases for the project have been broken into lengths that are more competitive for grant applications, but can be combined in any progressive order. The phases are as follows:

- Conifer (Pilkington) to Merloy (1.03 miles): Design funding acquired, but need funding for construction \$1,000,000
- Merloy to Granger (1.67 miles): \$2,100,000
- Granger to Independence (0.81 mile): \$1,200,000
- Independence to Rondo (1.12 miles): \$1,500,000
- Rondo to Scenic (1.0 mile): \$1,200,000
- Scenic to Rainwater (0.6 mile): \$1,200,000
- Rainwater to Hickory (0.75 mile): \$1,000,000 construction already funded through State

**Total project cost: \$8.2 million** (not including the segment built in Corvallis in 2013 or the Rainwater to Hickory piece that is already funded)