

Towards an Oregon Coast Pathway

Lessons of Trails, Pathways, and Roads in 20th and 21st Century USA

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The Oregon Coast Pathway is a bold vision to build a [multi-use pathway](#) from Astoria to Brookings that would be completely accessible to users of all ages and abilities. This would be an unprecedented and ambitious project without any directly comparable example in the United States. In order to better understand the challenge, this research report examines specific examples of road, path and trail building in this and the last century in the USA.

America has a long history of road building from the wagon trails and railroads of the 19th century to the highways and freeways of the 20th century. Long pathways and trails specifically designed for human-powered travel have not been a priority for infrastructure investment due to the rise of the automobile. As a result, there is no coherent and intentionally built network of these types of paths. The successes and failures of all types of trails, pathways, and even highways, can inform our decision-making about whether and how to move forward with the Oregon Coast Pathway (OCP).

The Oregon Coast Pathway Concept

The premise of the Oregon Coast Pathway is that there needs to be a path the entire length of the coast that can be traveled safely with human power by just about anyone regardless of age or ability.

Currently, to travel the length of the Oregon Coast a person must use Oregon Coast Highway (aka Hwy 101). This highway was funded and built during the New Deal era and was designed specifically for motorized vehicles. It was a great achievement for its time. This route also includes significant sections of the [Oregon Coast Bicycle Route](#) and part of the [Oregon Coast Trail](#). In some cases, it travels alongside Oregon's beaches, which are publically owned thanks to the foresight of Governors Oswald West, Tom McCall and many others who fought to keep access to them free and open.

Though Highway 101 accommodates pedestrians and bicyclists to varying degrees of safety, the young, elderly, disabled and inexperienced should avoid much of it. This designated coastal byway offers amazing vistas, but the journey walking or cycling along it can be a harrowing experience. This prevents most people from freely traveling along the Oregon Coast without a motor vehicle.

Preventing safe and easy access for human powered travel on this public right of way is problematic for many communities. It is also a huge opportunity lost for coastal business, the State of Oregon, and for visitors. It is true that there are many sections that accommodate human power nicely, but it is far from being a useable network. Imagine Highway 101's usefulness if it detoured into off-road routes or an occasional dead-end.

An Oregon Coast Pathway would provide a host of transportation options for travellers from local residents, Oregonians, to out-of-state, and international tourists. The pathway would attract more visitors and improve the health and safety of its users, whether it is children walking to school, elderly people exercising, or tourists traveling from hotel to restaurant. It would create more escape routes in the event of a tsunami, as well as, options for disaster relief transport.



One possible segment of an Oregon Coast Pathway already constructed in Seaside

It's easy to see the benefits of such a pathway and perhaps even easier to see the challenges. The Oregon Coast is a rugged place blessed with rivers, capes, bays, marshes, forests, sand dunes, lakes, outcroppings and more. Building roads and highways on the coast has been difficult and expensive. The ocean and erosion have claimed many miles over the years.

Revenues for a large project like the Oregon Coast Pathway (OCP) are not readily available. Some people may fail to see the value of this kind of investment and others could be opposed to having a pathway nearby because of perceived and/or real privacy and crime issues. Finally, to build a 100% networked multi-use pathway will require right of way acquisition, which is a difficult and expensive endeavor.

There will be two kinds of support needed to make the Oregon Coast Pathway happen: community support and financial support. Willingness to invest will be greatly affected by the desire of the public to make it happen.

The goal of this report is to better understand what it would take to successfully build a pathway of this magnitude. Several pathways, trails, and roads have been studied and referenced in the research appendix (page 8). First, we start with key observations and conclusions we have come to, which were based largely on that research.

THE OREGON COAST PATHWAY

BENEFITS, BARRIERS, CONCLUSIONS and NEXT STEPS

Benefits

Creating the Oregon Coast Pathway would provide a continuous, auto-free, safe, multi-use pathway for all users. Below are some examples of its anticipated benefits:

- Putting safety first by eliminating conflicts between users and automobiles
- Increasing local tourism and economic development
- Reducing roadway congestion
- Improving public health by facilitating active transportation and safe recreation
- Providing path construction and maintenance jobs
- Raising land and home values along the pathway corridor
- Increasing transportation options
- Giving non-drivers, such as children, the elderly, and people without cars, more independence
- Lowering pollution and lowering greenhouse gas emissions by substituting car trips with bicycling and walking
- Connecting people and communities
- Offering further tsunami escape and disaster relief routes
- Creating new and inviting public spaces for everyone to enjoy

The list of benefits is long. Oregon Coast Pathway construction could be justified solely by the improvements to health, safety, and transportation. In an era of declining revenue for infrastructure, however, the economic benefit brought by path users may be the justification that clinches the deal.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Significant loss of manufacturing jobs on the coast (mostly in lumber mills) since the 1990s has been only partially replaced by service industry work (mostly geared towards tourists and retirees). *For more information, please consult [Understanding Oregon's Coastal Economy and Environment](#) (Earth Economics, 2008)*

The construction and ongoing maintenance of the Oregon Coast Pathway would create new construction jobs while trail users, both local and outside, would boost revenues to local services. Pathway construction is an excellent bang for the buck when it comes to transportation dollars and direct benefit to communities.

“Travelers who participated in bicycle related activities while traveling in Oregon spent nearly \$400 million in 2012 - representing about 4.4 percent of the direct travel spending in the state” [The Economic Significance of Bicycle-Related Travel in Oregon](#), (Dean Runyan and Associates)

Pathways help connect people to services. They allow people to linger and explore. The Oregon Coast Pathway would be a major enhancement to an economy already geared and moving in the direction of family based tourism and retiree services. When families and retirees limited to driving for transportation, opportunities for coastal business (especially local

businesses) are often lost. When people can walk, bike, or roll to get around, then restaurants, hotels, other shops, and attractions become more likely destinations. As we show in the appendix 3b, the Great Allegheny Passage trail users have been a boon to local economies. Bicycle related travel, alone, already brings millions into the state of Oregon. This kind of windfall over time, will justify project cost.

OTHER BENEFITS

Though economic development may be the lynchpin, the value of health, safety, and transportation benefits are significant. Furthermore, there will be revenue and grants available related specifically to these issues. For example, the Department of Homeland Security offers grants to help prevent and mitigate natural disasters. Escaping tsunamis is a very real safety concern. Highway 101 has the potential to become a deadly parking lot if there were a tsunami. Offering more options for foot and bicycle escape could save lives.

HEALTH

Obesity, diabetes, arthritis and other health related ailments could be alleviated by the simple act of walking or riding a bicycle. There are literally hundreds of public and private organizations looking to support projects that help combat those diseases.

ENVIRONMENT

Recreation that is founded on active transportation is cleaner for the environment, as well. Imagine the reduction in greenhouse gases and other pollutants every time a car tour is replaced, even in part, by a bicycle or walking tour.

TRANSPORTATION

Even folks who may never use the path but drive the Coast Highway could favor this project because it would help give vulnerable road users safer options for commuting.

It is not hard to see the benefits but the project cost must be weighed before the project moves much further, it would be wise to approximate the actual value of the benefits of an OCP in terms of:

- How many lives could be saved
- What would be the value of the improvement to community health
- How much pollution could be reduced
- How many construction and maintenance jobs would be created per dollar of investment when compared to other infrastructure projects
- What would be the economic impact to Oregon in terms of jobs and revenue related directly related to an OCP

These factors could help coastal communities and all Oregonians decide if the endeavor is worth it. Even with grants and special funds it will be Oregonians who will foot most of the bill and the opportunity-cost for such large project. They will have view it as a worthwhile proposition before supporting it.

Barriers

Even with all these great benefits, it has been historically difficult to complete long trails in the United States, and there is no significant networking of pathways. Before the automobile age, most roadways were often little more than dirt paths. Walking them was the main form of

transportation. Any path of significance has since been paved to make way for the motor vehicle. This means available right of way for non-motorized pathways is very limited.

RIGHT OF WAY

Abandoned rail lines and active railways offer a great opportunity for right of way for paths. Otherwise obtaining right of way is a difficult and expensive process. Multi-user path (MUP) building is less expensive than roadways are, of course, but it still carries a certain expense. Physically separated bike/walkways run about \$1,000,000 per mile or much more if the terrain is complicated or urban. Another barrier to path building is that because roadways carry business activity, i.e. freight and commuters, trails are often considered only a secondary path for commuters and a recreational offering.

Lack of right of way, building expense and corresponding lack of perceived value explain why it is so difficult to complete long trails and multi-user pathways. It may also explain why there is no trail network in this country even though President Lyndon Johnson defined such a network as a national need as far back as 1965. In 1968 the National Trails System Act (NTSA) was approved and provided the framework for a national network of recreational scenic trails to promote community and environmental health. The NTSA was instrumental in helping finalize the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail but it has never been funded to the level necessary to achieve its goals.

NIMBY

Another constraint is that some neighborhoods and communities don't want trails in their backyard (NIMBY) because they are worried about crime and privacy issues brought on by trails and those who may use them. This attitude may be becoming less prevalent but it must be considered especially as the Coast's aging demographic is more likely to actively oppose new projects in their communities according to a [2011 Saint Index report](#). Aging communities may have the most to benefit from active transportation options, however. Support, once again, must be built through an understanding of the benefits. This will be the key to preventing the kind of roadblocks that stem from community members actively opposing large new projects.

FUNDING

Once communities near the trails perceive the benefits there must be funding to build the trail and obtain right of way. Connecting different jurisdictions poses a much greater challenge due to lack of funding mechanisms, available funds, and political will. Every long trail system included and in this report that is *not* rails-to-trails remains unfinished because of this common problem. The Willamette River Greenway (appendix 1b) is the strongest case in point that popular and even legislative support is not enough. It is essential to have an over-arching goal, legislative and community support, but securing funding is the ultimate ingredient for completing a trail.

Conclusions

Successfully completing the entire Oregon Coast Pathway will be possible with the political will to raise the funds for such a project. A strategic first step would be for interested parties to create local committees that promote an overarching vision and intent to build such a path. The affected communities and State agencies should then endorse the vision. To gain traction and momentum, the most doable sections should be tackled first for immediate results. If those sections are successful, then the cascading effect as described with the East Coast Greenway

can occur (*appendix 2b*). However, it is essential that if the network is to be completed, funding for the project as a whole must be obtained earlier in the process and not as a hopeful afterthought. This key to success cannot be left for an indefinite date in the future.

To see the Oregon Coast Pathway vision through to completion, it will be necessary to build a dedicated coalition of citizens, volunteers, business, labor, chambers of commerce, environmentalists, lobbyists, road users, and lawmakers. There will need to be a willingness to find the funds from a variety of different sources and likely one key-funding source. If it is done right, the citizens of Oregon will take ownership and pride in the project and will be the path's most ardent users and supporters. Ultimately, the OCP will be a success as the whole network will be greater than the sum of its parts. An Oregon Coast Pathway has the potential to trigger more funding to extend the network up and down the Pacific Coast and towards the Willamette and Rogue valleys.

Next Steps

Our Oregon Coast Pathways Team is currently in the process of raising approximately \$15,000 to prepare project promotion materials for community outreach, along with powerful materials to encourage financial donation for moving forward with the next steps of concept plan development.

Promotional materials would include:

- Project mission and overall description
- Project graphics (route and typical sections)
- Work program and strategy for preparing concept plan
- Cost estimate for preparing concept plan
- Public presentation materials including a detailed slideshow summarizing needs, benefits, and a detailed proposed work program

Once promotional materials are complete, further outreach to directly affected and neighboring coastal communities and networks will begin. Shortly thereafter, the OCP non-profit board will be formed and the next phase of developing the concept plan will occur.

The concept plan will include:

- An in-depth project description
- Coastal pathway location, destinations, plans, sections and typical details
- Opportunities and constraints
- Future coastal pathway connections to Portland, Salem, Eugene and the Rogue Valley (conceptual alignments only)
- Cost estimate for building and maintaining a coastal pathway
- Potential funding sources
- Project phasing and detailed timelines

Actual project fundraising and state funding will be developed after reviewing, concept plan, cost estimates, and phasing.

Dan Kaufman of PDXK Productions and Ron Buel of Donovan Cards will spearhead initial fundraising for project promotional materials. A 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor will need to be identified

and enlisted for this initial round of funding. The award winning design firm [Crandall Arambula](#) has been selected by the OCP Team to help prepare these initial promotion materials and has agreed to assist.

Get involved and stay up to date on the Oregon Coast Pathway by signing up for newsletter updates at info@coastpathway.org .

Research Appendix

Criteria for choosing the paths included in this study

For the purpose of this research, we considered paths throughout North America to find those that provided the most relevant examples of success and failure in modern path building. It is not the goal to spell out all details and project histories but to glean information that we believe would be pertinent to the Oregon Coast Pathway.

This is the list of trails, paths, and highways studied and referred to below:

1. Oregon Paths and Trails
 - a. Oregon Coast Trail
 - b. Willamette River Greenway
 - c. Salmonberry Corridor
 - d. The Promenade, Seaside Oregon
 - e. The Riverwalk, Astoria Oregon
2. Coastal Trails not in Oregon
 - a. California Coastal Trails
 - b. East Coast Greenway
3. New Trails
 - a. Virginia Capital Trail
 - b. Great Allegheny Passage and C&O Canal Towpath
4. Oregon Highways and Scenic Bikeways
 - a. [Oregon Coast Highway 101](#)
 - b. Oregon Coast Scenic Bikeway
 - c. Columbia River Scenic Highway

Paths, trails, and roads in Oregon were weighted heavier because of their historical context and proximity. Recently built trails and those under construction outside of Oregon were also considered. Rails-to-trails and rails-with-trails were studied extensively. Only about 10% of the OCP could potentially be rail/trail but those miles are very significant because they could serve as key pilot projects.

1. OREGON PATHS AND TRAILS

a. The Oregon Coast Trail

Where: Oregon Coast.

What: Hiking path traversing beaches and adjacent trails.

Status: Useable but with important unfinished connections that have been identified for completion.

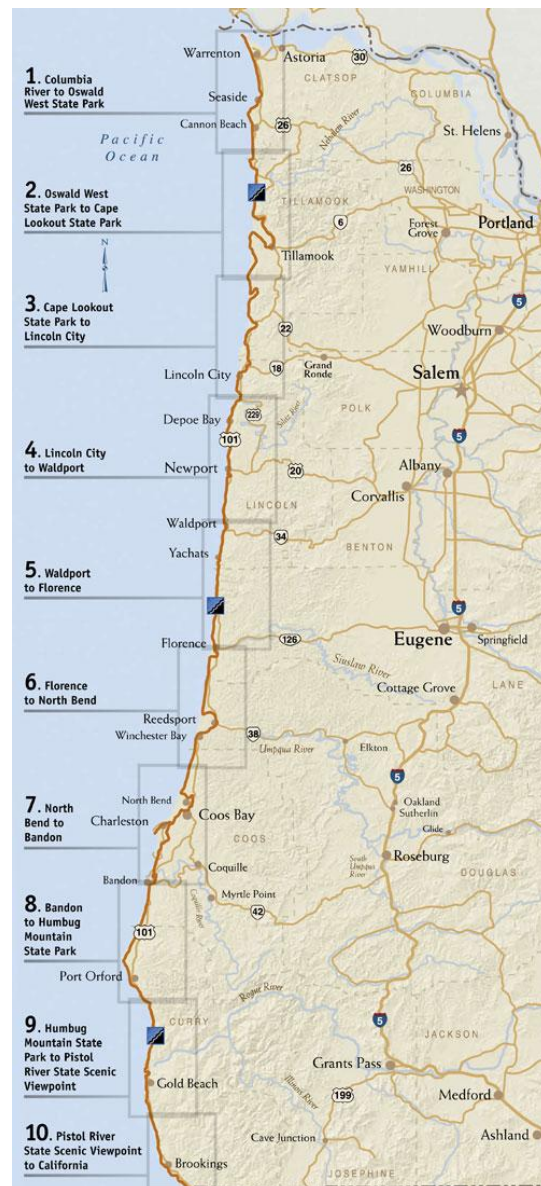
Key Takeaways: This low cost trail takes advantage of Oregon's beach right of way. It is not accessible to most kinds of human powered vehicles and is not designed for commuting. Some of the key connections that are being addressed would be shared with the proposed Oregon Coast Pathway.

It makes sense to start with the Oregon Coast Trail since it already exists in the same project area as the Oregon Coast Pathway concept and it, too, runs the length of the Oregon Coast.

"The Oregon Coast Trail is envisioned as a hiking trail stretching about 400 miles from the Columbia River to the California border! Roughly 200 miles uses the beach and 155 miles is along completed inland trails and roadway sections with 45 miles of gaps to be developed. Trail development began in 1971 by Oregon State Parks and the agency declared it "hikable" in 1988 and continues to build new sections with a target date of 2021 for completion. Although still a "work-in-progress," it offers varied recreational opportunities from day hikes to overnight treks." [Oregon Coast Trail Website](#)

The Oregon Coast Trail takes advantage of Oregon public beaches to provide half of its system. Several miles utilize coast trail systems and the rest run along local roads and Highway 101. Because of streams, tidal, estuaries and other water features, travelers must use road crossings or ferries at several locations. There are two sections where it is not advised to walk on the road at all.

The Oregon Coast Trail is an up-close experience with the Pacific Ocean and provides amazing scenery. Hiker-biker campsites and other reservation-based campsites, as well as, hotels and motels, provide a plethora of places to stay beyond primitive camping where it is



allowed.

The OCT is a low-cost trail system that is years in development and will remain a work-in-progress for a great many years. The trail is not intended to be accessible for those not able to hike. It is not considered a piece of transportation infrastructure although ODOT is working alongside trail advocates including trail champion, Al LePage, to help improve several of the problematic crossings.

There may be some sections of the OCT that could be part of an OCP but they are, for the most part, two distinct systems. There is an opportunity for the trail and path to converge to solve problematic crossings, which could become a win-win. As a recreational opportunity, the OCT and OCP would be complementary and provide more options for touring the Oregon Coast.

Information on the Oregon Coast Trail was provided by [Oregon Coast Trail](#) website, [Oregon State Parks](#) and Al Le Page, Executive Director of the [National Coast Trail Association](#).

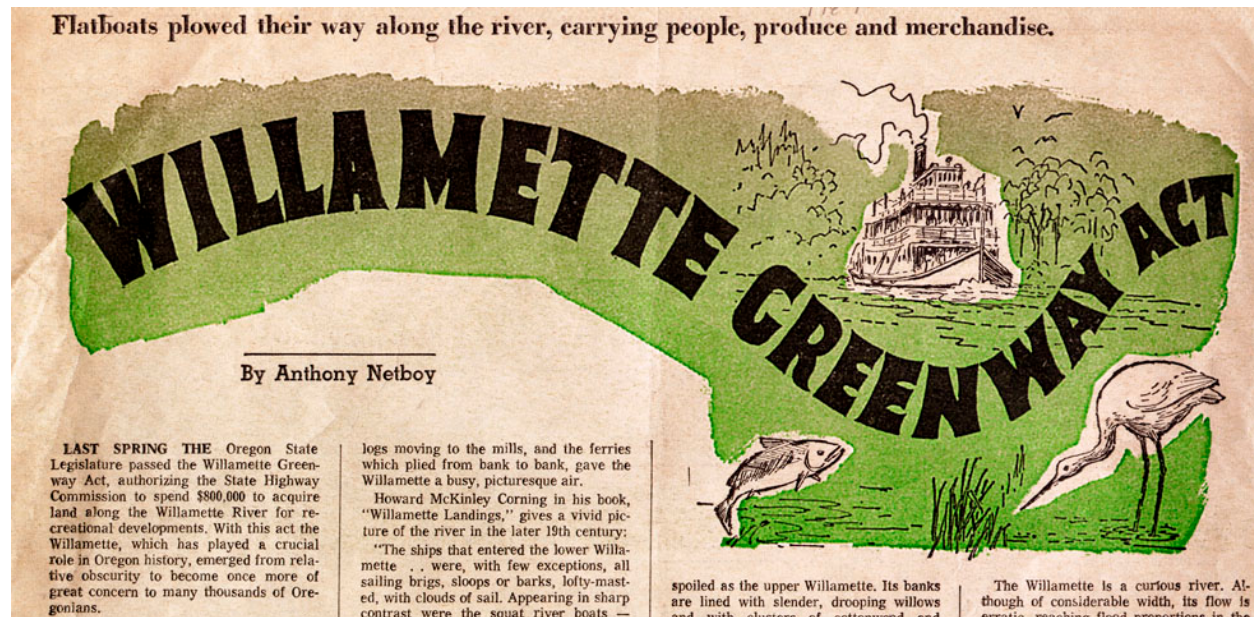
b. Willamette River Greenway

Where: Willamette Valley Oregon.

What: Ecological preservation, hike, bike, and river path.

Status: Stalled out, not funded.

Key Takeaway: Legislative and popular support is not enough to finish a project.



Article, *Willamette Greenway Act* // *Northwest Magazine* Sunday Nov. 5, 1967

"The Willamette River Greenway was originally established by the 1967 Oregon Legislature as a grant program for land acquisition to State Parks along the Willamette River from Eugene through Portland. The Greenway evolved from a state parks and recreation program in 1970 to a natural corridor program in 1972. Goals for the state program are to protect, conserve, restore, enhance and maintain the ecological, natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic, cultural and recreational qualities and resources along the Willamette River.

*There is an important trails aspect to this target area, with many completed sections (including large sections of the Portland-area 40 Mile Loop), but **significant remaining gaps.***

Many cities in the metro area located along the Willamette River have renewed their commitment and effort to improve access and recreation opportunities, water quality and ecological restoration of the river during the last 10 years. Several citizen groups have formed to

advocate for the cleanup of the river and to create more miles of trails and access points along the river. “ [Metro website](#).

More than just a trail system, the Willamette Greenway was another great idea from the 1970s that still has a long way to go. Building this multi-use path has been difficult because of the massive amounts of right of way needed for completion. The section of trail from Portland to McMinnville remains a possibility, but overall the project has become too daunting and is essentially defunct.

Even with public excitement and legislative backing, the project should be considered a failure if completion were to be considered the factor for success. The Oregon Coast Pathway could face a similar fate without a source of significant funding.

Information on the Willamette Valley Greenway was provided by the [Oregon History Project](#), and [Metro](#).

c. The Salmonberry Corridor

Where: Willamette Valley over Coast Range and down Oregon Coast

What: Multi-use rail-trail path

Status: Developing master plan, legislative support, no construction started.

Key Takeaway: Popular project in process. Could be the pilot project for the rest of the Oregon Coast Pathway as well as key access point to the coast by human power from the Portland area.

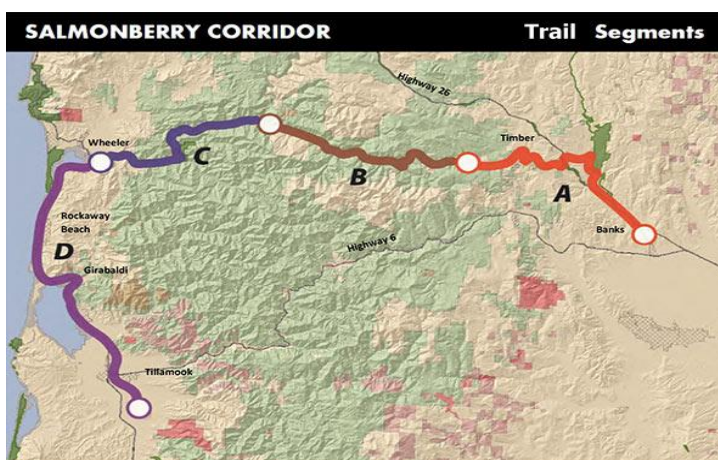
“The Port of Tillamook Bay (POTB) railroad through the Salmonberry River canyon once connected the Willamette Valley to the Oregon Coast. Decimated by significant floods and debris flow, the rail connection has been cut off since 2007. Many people have expressed interest in finding a way to restore the full connection to the Willamette Valley, not necessarily as a rail line, but as a trail opportunity.” [Salmonberry Trail Coalition Blog](#).

This trail concept received support from State Senator Betsy Johnson and Representatives of Tillamook County, Port of Tillamook Bay, Cycle Oregon, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Department of Forestry, Travel Oregon and many others who have created what is known as the Salmonberry Corridor Coalition.

A preliminary [feasibility study](#) has been conducted by Walker+Macy Landscape Architects and the project has now moved into the planning and public process stage.

The Salmonberry corridor trail is an exciting prospect because it could connect the Willamette Valley to the Oregon Coast. That connection would be relevant to the OCP because it could

provide a non-motorized route from the Willamette Valley to the pathway. More significantly, a key portion of the envisioned trail runs along the Oregon Coast from Nehalem Bay to Tillamook where the Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad currently operates. This section could possibly be transformed into a rails with trails section of the OCP. If built out as rails with trails, this section could be the key pilot project for the Oregon Coast Pathway.



Currently Oregon Parks and Recreation has submitted a grant to build a one-mile rail with trail section between Garibaldi and Barview. This project would cost \$2.5 million. It is interesting to note that if the rail were stripped from the right of way the pathway would cost \$150,000 to \$400,000.

If the coastal section of the Salmonberry were to be built out entirely as a multi-user path between Nehalem Bay and Tillamook it would represent a significant section of the OCP of about 27 miles or 7% of the total pathway. This section is even more significant if weighted for population and tourist use. This path would travel through six north-coast towns. High-traffic tourist areas include the Tillamook Creamery, Kilchis Point Reserve, Barview County Park, Rockaway Beach, and Nehalem Bay.

There are two key advantages in looking to the coastal section of the Salmonberry Corridor as a possible pilot project for the OCP. First, it is already being envisioned and promoted. Second, it could be built on or next to railroad right of way. Even with the extra expense of rails with trails it is still easier to pursue this kind of path than one without any existing right of way. For these reasons, the Salmonberry would make an excellent pilot project for the greater OCP pathway.

Information about the Salmonberry Corridor Trails was provided by Rocky Houston, Oregon State Trails Coordinator and the [Salmonberry Trail Coalition Blog](#).

d. The Seaside Promenade and e. Astoria Riverwalk

Where: North Coast cities of Astoria and Seaside

What: Coastal multi-use city paths

Status: Completed and successful.

Key Takeaway: The Oregon Coast Path can be envisioned and success gauged from these already existing walkways, though they are not, of course, networked.



The Seaside “Prom” is a 1-1/2 mile stretch of beachfront paved pathway completed in the 1920s. It has been a signature landmark of Seaside Oregon and a key to its economic success. Seaside is the most popular resort town on the North Coast. The promenade allows residents and tourists a way to easily

and safely get to downtown and back by foot, bike or wheelchair.



The Promenade along with the [Astoria Riverwalk](#) (a 5 mile rail-trail project) and a handful of other multi-use path (MUP) miles could be considered founding (and already built) sections of Oregon Coast Pathway. The economically beneficial impact the Seaside Promenade and the Astoria Riverwalk have had on their communities is undoubtedly significant.

2. COASTAL TRAILS NOT IN OREGON

a. The California Coastal Trail

Where: California Coast

What: A variety of foot paths, trails, and paved multi-user paths

Status: Long term work in progress. Many significant sections complete.

Key Takeaway: Sections of pathway are continually being completed but there is no mechanism that will ensure that a network could ever be completed.

The California coast trail concept was set in motion through the initiative process and the passage of proposition 20 in 1972. Later the California legislature recommended a trail system along or near the coast. Proposition 20 was approved even though supporters were outspent by opponents by a margin of nearly 100-to-1.



So far, 50% of the trail has been completed. The California Coastal Conservancy has the principal role in the implementation of a system of public access ways to and along the state's coastline, including development of the [California Coastal Trail](#). It is unlikely the trail will ever be complete. The trail models itself loosely after the Pacific Crest Trail. There are a variety of trail types that are built depending on community desire. You will find a 36" dirt path, a variety of multi-use trails and even a class-one bikeway (paved and physically separated paths) on the completed sections. Most of the trail from Los Angeles to San Diego has a paved path. It would be difficult to ride a bike at high speed on

many of those sections because of high pedestrian traffic. This problem with user conflict in high-density areas is common with many successful multi-use paths. It should be considered when building in high-use areas along an OCP route.

The Coastal Conservancy is mandated to consider the effects of sea level rise and global warming on the pathways. They try to avoid building paths that are more likely to be affected by sea level rise or erosion during a 20-year span. Exceptions are made for less expensive pathways. This is another important consideration of building an OCP.

The most expensive and difficult right of ways for the CCT to obtain are those in urban areas with lots of owners. Also difficult are the areas with very wealthy landowners who can afford to battle in court to keep access to their land private.

There is no overarching funding mechanism in place to complete this project. A CCT board member (who asked to remain anonymous) said the trail would not be completed without some sort of regular funding mechanism.

Information about the California Coastal Trail was provided by an interview with the board member mentioned above, Wikipedia, the Coastal Conservancy website, and the California Coast Trail website.

b. The East Coast Greenway

Where: Eastern Coast of USA

What: A variety of paved multi-user paths

Status: Long term work in progress. Many significant sections complete.

Key Takeaway: Sections of pathway are continually being completed but there is no mechanism that will ensure that a network could ever be completed though project has strong momentum.

*“The East Coast Greenway vision is for a long-distance, urban, shared-use trail system linking 25 major cities along the eastern seaboard between Calais, Maine and Key West, Florida. It will serve non-motorized users of **all abilities and ages**. A 3,000-mile long spine route will be accompanied by 2,000 miles of alternate routes that link in key cities, towns, and areas of natural beauty. This green travel corridor will provide cyclists, walkers, and other muscle-powered modes of transportation with a low-impact way to explore the eastern seaboard. It is about 29% complete.*



Our vision is for a **continuous firm-surfaced route**, mostly paved, but some of it on packed stone dust tread, all of it suitable for walkers, wheelchairs, and road bicycles. In the future, a continuous route serving equestrians and in-line skaters is envisioned, as well. Some sections of the Greenway already accommodate those users.”

[East Coast Greenway website](#)

The ECG helps promote trail building up and down the Coast by assisting communities who want to build sections of the trail along the corridor.

The ECG non-profit was established in 1991 with only a small percentage of pathway inventories. Community building of Multi Use Paths have had a cascading effect. Once one community sees the value other communities want to do the same. This cascading effect could cause a change in recent federal resistance to pathway building.

Funding the sections in between communities is still the greatest hurdle to eventual completion.

3. NEW TRAILS

a. Virginia Capital Trail

Where: Jamestown to Richmond Virginia

What: A paved multi-user path

Status: One third complete

Key Takeaways: This project, which is not rails-trails, is successfully moving forward because of creative funding from the state and private sources.

“The Virginia Capital Trail is a dedicated, paved pedestrian and bicycle trail that will connect the Commonwealth’s past and present capitals of Jamestown and Richmond along the Scenic Route 5 corridor.

Once complete, the Trail will traverse 50+ miles, four jurisdictions, and more than 400 years of history along one of the first inland routes in North America. The Virginia Department of Transportation is in progress building the Capital Trail, and there are currently 16 miles completed.” [Virginia Capital Coalition trail website.](#)



This project has had well-connected supporters, Federal MAP 21 funding, and a unique open container law [fund](#) that backers were able to access, plus one \$300,000 gift. This combination of funding along with an engaged public and backing from the Virginia Department of Transportation is making this long trail possible without using rail-trail right of way. This makes the VCT somewhat unique in that there are few long trails being built without existing right of way.

Information on the Virginia Capital trail was provided by Beth Weisbrod, Executive Director at Virginia Capital Trail Foundation and their [website](#).

b. The Great Allegheny Passage and C&O Canal Towpath

Where: Pittsburgh Pennsylvania to Washington DC

What: A non-paved rails to trail

Status: Complete and successful.

Key Takeaway: Persistence pays off. Project has been a boon to local economies.



This is a 150 mile rail-trail path combined with a 185 mile towpath trail (a *towpath* is a road or trail on the bank of a river, canal, or other inland waterway) that runs from Pittsburgh to Washington DC. The connected pathways are separate entities but both use crushed limestone as the predominant trail surface. The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) was built by putting together several railroad and a few towpath right of ways starting back in 1986. The GAP was completed in 2012.

The 335-mile span of the combined pathways comes close to the same distance as the OCP. The difference, however, is these pathways were able to take advantage of much more existing rights of way that would not be available on the Oregon Coast.

Though there are significant differences in these pathways there some great lessons for the Oregon Coast Pathway and trail building in general. First, it was discovered as far back as 2001 that communities were not taking advantage of the tourism opportunities that the GAP offered according to William Prince, Program Manager for the [Trail Town Program](#) of the GAP. This Non-profit Community Development Financial Institution was created as an offshoot of the 2005 Trail Town Manual. It is funded mostly through foundation grants and gets some federal funding. The program and the manual create a win-win by encouraging and assisting businesses that cater to trail users. Since 2007 communities along the trail have netted 52 new businesses. An estimated \$50 million in direct spending is attributed to GAP trail users.

Another important lesson of the of these pathways is that the whole network becomes more significant than the sum of it's parts. "When you connect missing links users can stay longer and do more than just ending their trip," says Prince. Every major connection saw a significant increase in users and the same has been true since the completion in 2012.

Building pathways is only one step in success for the GAP/C&O pathways. Promoting businesses that serve users and connecting all the sections together have been key to the success.

Information about the GAP/C&O was provided by William Prince, Trail Town Program Manager, their [website](#), and The Allegheny Trail Alliance [website](#).

4. OREGON HIGHWAYS AND SCENIC BIKEWAYS

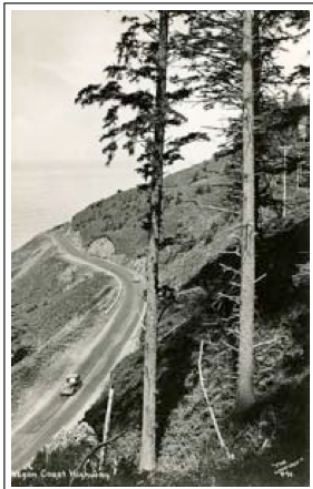
a. Oregon Coast Highway 101

Where: Oregon Coast

What: An automobile Highway and scenic byway

Status: Completed 1936

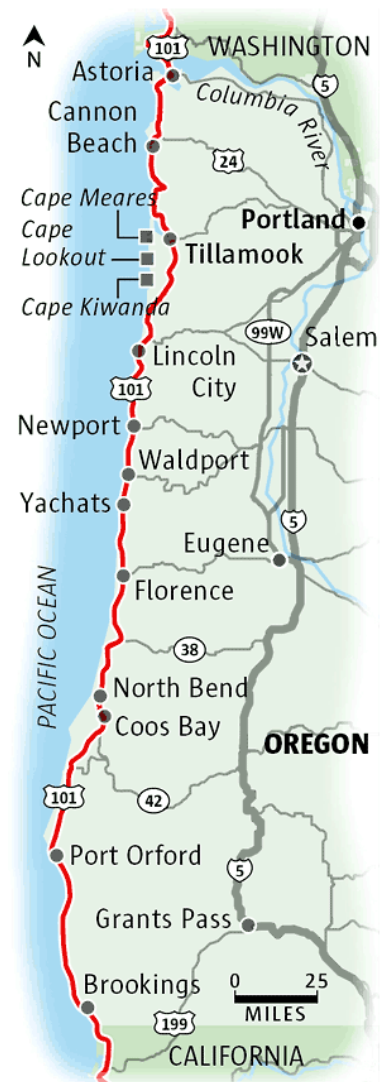
Key Takeaway: Area is difficult for road building and also dangerous.



Oregon Coast Highway Postcard

The Oregon Coast Highway was started in 1921 and was completed in 1936, a significant accomplishment. Building roads and bridges on the most difficult sections could not have been completed without major investment from the public works relief programs of the Great Depression. The highway has required extensive amounts of maintenance. The highway was designed for much slower and smaller cars of the day and in some areas it still carries the same small footprint as when it was first built.

Today the Coast Highway 101 is a significant commercial, commuter, and tourist route. As it rolls by breathtaking vistas and quaint beach towns, the highway is also one of the most dangerous roads in Oregon for car drivers, bike riders and pedestrians. There have been many recent and notable fatalities.



Source: ESRI, TeleAtlas
ED SAUER / THE SEATTLE TIMES

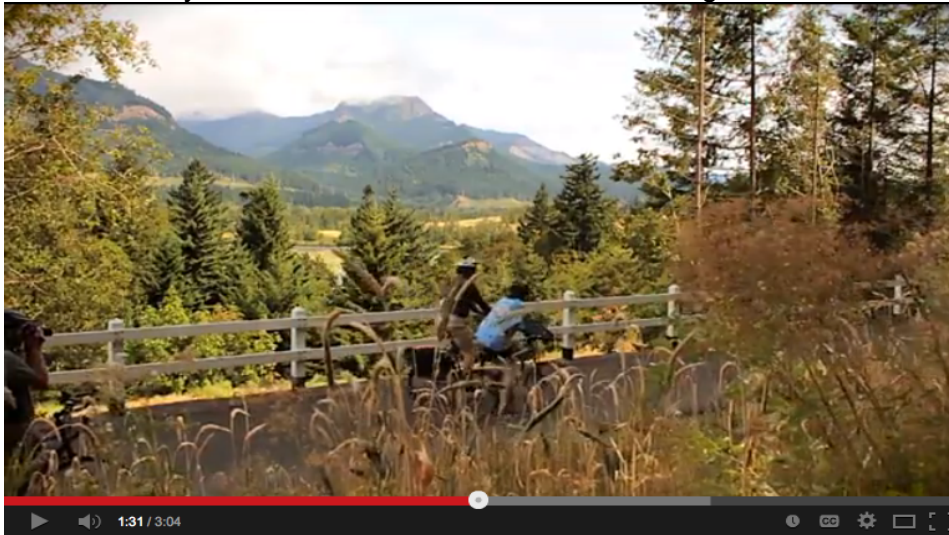
An excellent book on the subject of building the Oregon Coast Highway is Lifting Oregon Out of the Mud, by Joe R. Blakely.



Seattle Man [Killed in on Highway 101](#) in Lincoln City

Known as the “King of Roads”, the Historic Columbia River Scenic Highway was built in such a way that takes advantage of all the viewpoints of the Columbia River Gorge without ruining the view. Significant portions of this now-designated historic landmark were destroyed or made obsolete by the I-84 freeway. In 1987, the Oregon Legislature directed ODOT to develop a plan to preserve, restore and maintain existing portions of the historic highway and to reconnect missing segments with a State Trail allowing recreationists on foot and bicycles to enjoy a reasonable approximation of the original historic highway. Hikers and bicyclists can now use some of those sections. Eventually the route will extend from The Dalles to Troutdale. Some stretches will be available *only* to cyclists and hikers.

Funding has been obtained to complete the environmental work and preliminary engineering on all of the sections between Cascade Locks (Wyeth) and Hood River. These will be some of the most difficult and expensive parts of the project. The whole trail should be engineered by the 100th anniversary of the completion of the highway. Approximately \$45-million will be needed to build the Wyeth to Hood River section, which is a significant amount for a trail project.



[Reconnecting the Historic Columbia River Highway Video on YouTube](#)

There are many lessons from the HCRH that can be applied to the OCP. First, there was a legislative mandate that required ODOT back this project, but without significant funding. Second, it took almost a decade between the legislative mandate and the start of work, and it remains a work in progress, although there is an end in sight. Third, many backers and a couple of champions continue to work tirelessly to help make it happen. Fourth, the entire route when complete will not be a physically separated multi-use path. It will be interesting to see how that affects its use.

Information for this section was provided by *ODOT's Historic Columbia River Highway project coordinator*, Kristin Stallman, Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Manager Sheila Lyons, The Travel Oregon [website](#), and [Wikipedia](#).

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Get involved and stay up to date on the Oregon Coast Pathway by signing up for newsletter updates at pdxk@pdxk.com