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Performance Based Planning/Scenario Planning

SMALL COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLANNING WITH DECREASING TRAFFIC  
VOLUMES

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Many transportation improvement programs are based on needs identified to address issues related to motor vehicle congestion. What happens when traffic volumes in a small community decrease and those needs go away? How do you effectively pursue project funding without having a demonstrated need for traffic operations improvements? The Transportation System Plan Update for the City of Cottage Grove, OR (approximate population of 10,000) illustrates a case study in pivoting away from mobility-oriented projects to multi-modal access, safety, and connectivity improvements.

Despite increasing population and an expanding urban growth boundary, traffic volumes in Cottage Grove decreased by 10 to 30 percent between 2006 and 2014. The adopted Transportation System Plan (TSP) had identified a series of roadway capacity expansions and extensions to better serve mobility needs. With new traffic analysis results, most of those needs were no longer applicable. The City even turned down committed project funding from ODOT in one instance.

The updated Transportation System Plan (TSP) was revised to include lane reconfigurations, new pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safe street crossings, and new local street connections. The project list was reoriented to focus on improving safety and increasing opportunities for residents to make healthier transportation choices. Projects were packaged together to work in coordination to support community goals and provide an excellent candidate for pursuit of external funding opportunities. The updated TSP better supports Historic Downtown Cottage Grove and enhances recreational opportunities that drive the burgeoning tourism activities in the community.