



# Klamath Falls, OR

## Phase One Progress Summary for Oregon Avenue Separated Bike Lane

SUPPORTED BY BLUE ZONES PROJECT  
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## A mission to transform health outcomes through active transportation

Facing high rates of obesity-related chronic disease and a low ranking among Oregon counties for overall health outcomes, Klamath Falls recognized an opportunity to turn things around by improving its biking and walking infrastructure. The addition of a separated bike lane along Oregon Avenue is helping make it possible. Connecting the largest city park to downtown Klamath Falls, this two-phase project makes physical activity easier and safer while also increasing commercial activity downtown.



## Support from Blue Zones Project for a successful first phase

After Klamath Falls was chosen in 2015 to become a Blue Zones Project Demonstration Community, the local Blue Zones Project team joined the large group of collaborators for the separated bike lane. Leveraging its expertise in making healthier choices easier, Blue Zones Project:

- Hosted a series of public open houses to gather community input on the bike lane's development
- Helped secure approval from City Council by mobilizing a large group of supporters to a City Council meeting, comprised of an action force and volunteers
- Rallied key partners together to speak about the success of phase 1 at the ribbon cutting event post- construction
- Provided outreach and education to the community on the benefits and safe use of the bike lane
- Led a dedicated initiative to engage homeowners along the new route through a door-to-door campaign providing gift cards for local restaurants along the bike lane

*"I find that I am preferentially choosing to bike down these streets. It's easier to access businesses and restaurants, and regardless of how fast the cars are going, I still feel that the buffer is so comforting."*

– STEWART DECKER, MD (COMMUNITY MEMBER)

## Progress made, outcomes to anticipate and next steps

Completion of the project's first phase added 1.4 miles of a two-way bike lane with protective posts, which connects the hospital and university area to the downtown Klamath Falls. It also increased bike and pedestrian connectivity for a low-income neighborhood experiencing high rates of chronic disease.

As we wait to see and report the impact for Klamath Falls over the next year, and beyond, early data reported by Klamath Falls' City Engineer has shown decreased vehicle speed near the separated bike lane, offering improved safety overall. In time, we anticipate seeing measurable results like other communities have enjoyed with added bikeways\*, such as:

- Increased physical activity and active commuting through biking and walking, which has the potential to reduce the risk for chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, arthritis, depression, and others
- Better overall health outcomes, including reduced medical costs, fewer work absences due to illness, and lower risk of death
- Economic growth from greater traffic into downtown businesses, improved property values, and increased attractiveness for home-buyers and job-seekers
- Greater traffic safety, reduced pollution, and fewer costs related to vehicles, fuel, and parking

Going forward, Blue Zones Project continues to engage the community and provide support by:

- Planning organized rides and a bike parade on the separated bike lane
- Applying for a grant to fund electronic counters that can monitor the activity and number of people using the bike lane
- Researching grants to complete the second phase of the project, which will extend the bike lane to Moore Park with a shared-use path across the Link River

## Initial reactions in the community and beyond

Kittelson & Associates, the engineering firm recruited to help with the separated bike lane, was awarded the Judge's Choice award from the American Council of Engineering Companies' Oregon chapter. In this unique opportunity for the firm to connect health and transportation, they not only helped identify the best location for the project and provided several routes to vote on, they even helped gain public support and provided coaching on the implementation process.

A resident of Oregon Avenue shared, *"Your concept nailed what bigger cities have failed at: taking advantage of existing thoroughfare space, slowing vehicle traffic, and making non-motorized travel safer and more attractive. Oregon Avenue's greater corridor now has huge upside potential. The price point, up-and-coming outdoor recreation access, and access to OIT and Sky Lakes make it compelling for ground-floor investors."*



## More about the project and anticipated outcomes

To learn more, see the comprehensive case study completed by the Oregon Department of Transportation.\*

\* [www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Programs/TDD%20Documents/Oregon-Avenue-Protected-Bicycle-Lane-Case-Study.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Programs/TDD%20Documents/Oregon-Avenue-Protected-Bicycle-Lane-Case-Study.pdf)