

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

Please support SB 395. Allocating more funding for footpaths and bicycle trails will give people more transportation choices in how they get around. Although I write to you as an individual and not on behalf of any organization, my service as an elected board member of the Bend Park and Recreation District (BPRD) gives me a unique view on the need for better walking, biking, and rolling infrastructure.

Trails are consistently the most popular amenity mentioned in BPRD's public perception surveys. At the same time, I have heard from constituents that transportation is the number one barrier that prevents people from visiting parks and participating in recreation programming, especially among underserved populations.

As a volunteer soccer coach, I have walked to the practice fields after school with a dozen elementary school kids. I can personally attest that good walking infrastructure saves car trips. It also saves parents time because without it, they would have to take time out of their schedule to pick up and drop off their kids at practice. This would add more traffic, more emissions, and would take up parking spots. Imagine the trips saved if people had that option not just for soccer practice, but for school, work, errands and other trips.

As Bend grows and becomes more dense, land value is increasing rapidly. The result is that BPRD is finding it harder and harder to find park space. If the default mode of transportation is to drive, then the district must also devote more valuable park space itself to provide parking.

SB 395, especially the requirement to spend a minimum of 5% of State Highway Fund receipts on walking and biking, will help reduce car trips in our cities. This in turn will reduce the growing cost burden of transportation, not only on local governments who already can't keep up with paying for the existing road network, but on individual households as well.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ariel Méndez
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