

My name is Megan Ramey. My family in Hood River gets around by foot and bike. I am also a Planning Commissioner for the City of Hood River and the Active Transportation Representative for ODOT Region 1 ACT. My testimony in support of SB395 today will focus on 4 key aspects; Neighborhoods Not Highways, Bikes For Resiliency, E-Bike Highways, and Pedestrian Crash Rate.

First, the need to prioritize neighborhoods over Highways. Where we live, in the heights neighborhood of Hood River, we face the same problem as many small towns in Oregon: a state highway bisects an otherwise unified neighborhood. We do not feel comfortable letting our very street-savvy 11 year old cross the frogger Highway 281 alone, nor do any of the parents we know. This highway makes the city pool, middle school, and 2 elementary schools feel miles apart when they are in fact mere blocks apart. Funding walking and rolling infrastructure that connects children and neighbors across orphan highways, would change the world of children young and young at heart.

My second point centers on bicycles as tools of resiliency. We happily own an electric-assist Dutch "box bike" cargo bike, with a large bucket up front, which we often use for toting a kid, groceries, building materials, and whatever else we need to move around. Recently a neighbor had a diseased holly tree cut down and chopped up, but she didn't want the half cord of firewood left over and after 7 trips, I had it stacked in front of our house. Modern bikes should be seen as nimble and critical response tools following extreme events like forest fires and the pending Cascadia Subduction Zone.

My third point is on how easily e-bikes could replace a car for normal people in cities across Oregon. Put simply, e-bikes sell themselves. People who haven't ridden a bike since they were 5 years old get on one, and they cannot stop smiling. Adoption will come. The question before you is how to make it safe for all these new and returning riders to go about their business without using a car. We need a network of ebike highways that can be made by protecting shoulders of existing highways.

My final point concerns the increasing pedestrian crash rate. Pedestrians are being hit and killed at increasing rates, due largely to the trend of increasing vehicle sizes and the lack of safe infrastructure. This bill could rectify the historic lack of investment for people of color and lower incomes, where residents typically do not own personal vehicles at the same rate as residents of more affluent neighborhoods, and where relatively fewer funds have been spent on pedestrian safety improvements."

Thank you all, I have to get to my daily routine of walking my daughter across 12th and 13th to her distance learning program.