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April 6, 2023

DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY

Joint Committee on Transportation
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support House Bill 3113 to allocate funding for “Great Streets”

Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Gorsek and members of the Committee,

Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST) supports House Bill 3113 to allocate funding for the “Great Streets” program.

What is the purpose of a state highway: to move *through* or to be a *place* to be?

Between communities, the primary purpose is *to move* people, goods, and services efficiently *through*, driving Oregon’s economy.

But when a state highway is the main street of a community, it also is—or should be—a *place* where people want to be, where people come to work, shop, eat, learn, and play. To be vibrant, a community can’t just have drive-through traffic; it needs people to slow down, stop, and experience.

For example, in Lane County, consider Highway 58 in the heart of Oakridge or Highway 99 in the heart of Junction City. Both communities want to see economic development. The “Great Streets” program aims to transform such state highways into vital main streets.

Moreover, when a state highway runs through a community, it isn’t used just by cars and trucks. In the heart of a community, people of all ages and abilities walk, bike, use a mobility assistive device, or ride the bus. When a state highway designed for fast motor vehicles runs through a community, the results can too often be deadly. Speed is a major factor in traffic fatalities, especially for vulnerable roadway users. The “Great Streets” program aims to redesign main streets to be safe and practical for everyone.

Finally, the cost of funding the “Great Streets” program must be balanced against the cost of *not* funding it. When conducting an economic analysis, the U.S. Department of Transportation recommends using a Valuation of a Statistical Life of \$11.8 million.¹ For example, if \$100 million invested in the “Great Streets” program results in just 8.5 fewer deaths, then from an economic standpoint it represents a positive return on investment.

For BEST,

Rob Zako, Executive Director

¹ Departmental Guidance on Valuation of a Statistical Life in Economic Analysis, USDOT, 3/23/21, <https://www.transportation.gov/office-policy/transportation-policy/revised-departmental-guidance-on-valuation-of-a-statistical-life-in-economic-analysis>.

Building a successful community by bringing people together
to promote transportation options, safe streets, and walkable neighborhoods.

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