



April 7, 2023

To: Co-Chair McLain Vice-Co Chairs Boshart Davis and Boquist, Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation

Re: Support HB 3113 at \$100M

Dear Chairs and Committee Members:

The Street Trust is an advocacy organization representing all street users regardless of mode. We work to win policy and investments that save lives, reduce barriers, and expand mobility and opportunities to the people and neighborhoods our current system neglects. Sustainable funding to keep people and goods moving safely and efficiently on our roadways is a top priority we share with the members of this committee.

With an additional \$100M in funding for Great Streets, we can reduce the number of serious injuries and deaths on our roads while strategically investing in vibrant, safe, and sustainable communities across Oregon. We ask that the committee allocate this revenue from the **State Highway Fund**. We also support the OMPAC's request that funding be made available **not just for state highways under ODOT's jurisdiction but also for local streets that were formerly state highways which now serve as community main streets**, having already gone through the jurisdictional transfer process.

Over 50 years ago, Oregon created the Bike Bill driven by the idea that people traveling our state deserve a fair shot at arriving home safely to their families each day, regardless of their zip code or travel mode. Republican Don Stathos proposed the investments when he was almost run off the road by a car while biking with his daughter. He said, "It occurred to me that here we are, the richest country in the world, and it's almost impossible to go anywhere except in your car."

In 2021 on the Bike Bill's 50th Anniversary, The Street Trust with sponsor Senator Prozanski forwarded [SB 395](#) to increase the share of state Highway Trust Fund dollars allocated for active transportation infrastructure on road projects from 1% - where it had flatlined for all 50 years of its existence. We were unsuccessful in winning even a fraction of a percentage increase to this effort.

Unfortunately, Oregonians are paying with their lives for our failure to make good on the Bike Bill's promise. According to NHTSA data, Oregon had the [10th highest traffic fatality rate in the U.S.](#) in the second half of 2022. [Pedestrian fatalities in Oregon were up 61 percent](#) over the previous year in that same period and these abysmal conditions [disproportionately affect BIPOC and low-income Oregonians](#).

Launched in 2022 with \$50M in IIJA/BIL flexible funding, ODOT's [Great Streets](#) is an innovative infrastructure program to make safety improvements and increase access to walking, biking, and transit, including on the state's Orphan Highways. Many of these state highways that pass through communities were designed and built to move traffic through quickly and do not prioritize safety for people or promote community and economic vitality. Great Streets is a small but important first step for Oregon to begin more equitably tackling its deadly Orphan Highway problem through a more equitable, systematic corridor investment strategy.

The Oregon Legislature has already committed significant funding to transfer to local jurisdictions several Orphan Highways including Territorial Highway (Lane Co.), Cornelius Pass Road (Washington Co.) and Outer Powell Boulevard and 82nd Avenue (Multnomah Co.) but demand for upgrade and/or transfer of these roadways exceeds current allocations. The way that the federal government and ODOT break funding into siloes makes it difficult to meet the comprehensive, multimodal upgrades needed on these critical routes. Dedicated funding to the Great Streets program can help bridge the gaps while leveraging available funding sources to improve these roads.

The Great Streets program is some of the best work ODOT is doing and a step in the right direction for rebuilding sorely needed trust with the community by aligning spending with stated equity and climate action goals. A project review team evaluates projects in six outcome areas on a 100-point scale: 70/100 of these points are given based on EQUITY, CLIMATE MITIGATION, and LOCAL ENGAGEMENT. Since the first round of Great Streets funding in 2022, many community organizations including ours have provided significant input into the Great Streets program priorities and structure. We hope that ODOT continues to seek community input into how Great Streets projects and spending are prioritized to achieve transportation justice, reduce GHG and air pollution, and increase options to Oregonians who need them most.

Investments in Great Streets benefits Oregonians:

- **Safety:** Safety is a priority in ODOT's Strategic Action Plan (SAP) and Great Streets funding supports catalytic improvements on our most dangerous roads. By prioritizing the safety of all users, including people walking, biking, and driving, investments in Great Streets can help reduce the number of accidents

and injuries on our roads. This means fewer emergency room visits and lower medical expenses, which can save money in the long run.

- **Economy:** By revitalizing streets and creating more walkable and bikeable communities, businesses can see an increase in foot traffic and revenue. This economic boost can result in increased tax revenue for the state and the creation of new jobs.
- **Public Health:** Creating more walkable and bikeable communities can have a positive impact on public health. By providing more opportunities for physical activity, the program can help combat the rising rates of obesity and related health problems. This can lead to lower healthcare costs and a healthier population, which can benefit the state in many ways.
- **Climate Change:** This program helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change. By encouraging more people to walk, bike, and take public transit, Great Streets can help reduce the number of cars on the road and the amount of carbon emissions they produce.
- **Environmental Justice and Equity:** Great Streets promote equity by improving access to transportation for underserved communities. Nearly 27% of Oregonians do not have a driver's license. By creating more walkable and bikeable streets, the program can help reduce transportation costs for low-income households and provide more transportation options for low-income people who may not own a car. This can help reduce transportation-related barriers to education, employment, and other opportunities while improving air quality in neighborhoods.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Sarah Iannarone
Executive Director, The Street Trust