



March 11, 2025

Re: SB 5541 Testimony to the Joint Committee on Ways & Means - Subcommittee on Transportation & Economic Development

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Sarah Iannarone and I serve as Executive Director of The Street Trust, representing the many Oregonians who can't or don't drive and must depend on walking, biking, rolling and public transit for their lives and livelihoods. I'm here today to voice strong support for a fully funded ODOT budget that prioritizes safety, system maintenance, and multimodal investments.

Oregon is in a transportation funding crisis. The combination of rising costs and declining gas tax revenues has left ODOT struggling to meet its core mission of providing a safe and reliable multimodal transportation system that connects people and helps Oregon's communities and economy thrive. Despite the challenges we face, cutting essential programs, especially those that save lives and provide equitable access to mobility, is not a responsible solution.

Let's be clear: safety as first priority is non-negotiable - regardless of mode, jurisdiction, or sector. Last year, over 500 Oregonians died in traffic crashes, many on roads we have long-identified as dangerous. Programs like Safe Routes to School, Great Streets, and Oregon Community Paths deliver proven results in addressing these hazardous conditions and reducing injuries and fatalities, especially for our most vulnerable system users including youth, older adults, people living on low incomes, and people with disabilities. We cannot afford to cut parts of the budget that work and must fully fund critical ODOT safety programs.

At the same time, ODOT must be held accountable for responsible financial management. Their recent billion-dollar budget miscalculation is concerning, and we support stronger financial oversight and transparency with lawmakers, OTC, and the public. But let's implement oversight in alignment with our need to transition off the gas tax and so that it fixes ODOT's core systems, not breaks them further. A functional ODOT isn't just a public necessity, it's an economic imperative to keep Oregon's economy moving in the right direction despite the obstacles we face. Safe, well-maintained roads benefit businesses, freight movement, and all road users.

I urge this committee to fully fund ODOT's safety and multimodal programs, while demanding smarter management and revenue solutions that reflect the transportation system priorities that you heard from the public at the listening tour this past summer. The stakes are too high to allow political division to block progress.

Thank you for your time. I welcome any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sarah Iannarone  
Executive Director, The Street Trust

The Street Trust is a nonprofit organization representing street users from across Oregon regardless of mode. We work to break political gridlock and win policy and investments that save lives, reduce barriers, and expand mobility and opportunities to the people and neighborhoods our current system neglects.