

Submitter: Reitler Hodgert

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

My name is Reitler Hodgert and I am a life-long Bend resident. As a Bend resident, I urge you to increase funding for the Oregon Community Paths program in HB 2025. Bend is growing at a breakneck pace. We need safe, connected, and welcoming walkable and bikeable routes that can be accessed by people of all ages and abilities.

I no longer own a car, moving to commuting via bike, and there is much of my own city that is, somewhat hyperbolically, off limits to me due to unsafe roads. I cannot afford the roughly \$8500/year that owning a car was costing me, and continue to own the home I live in! I am extremely aware that I am one of the few, and lucky, people to be able to own my home, in Bend, and is able to live car-free, but those two pieces are not mutually exclusive. I can afford my home BECAUSE I do not own a car, and I do not need a car because I can afford to leave in a specific part of town which allows me to be a bike commuter. That part of Bend is very small, very expensive, and relatively isolated. I am fully aware that I am limited in where I can safely go, within my own town, so when things are outside of that (like Costco, my doctors office, and anything in North-East or South-East Bend) I simply cannot go.

During the pandemic, and the movement against police brutality, conservative media spent millions of dollars talking about "no-go zones" in liberal cities. These zone only existed if you see everyone who looks, or prays, differently than you as a threat, but the reality is that there are huge "no-go zones", in every city, for anyone living without a car.

We cannot just build our way out of our crippling congestion, affordability, and unsafe street problems. Not if we build like we have for the past 100 years. Another parking lot will not solve it, Demolishing historic buildings to build more lanes will not solve it. Forcing everyone to drive, regardless of if they want or more likely can afford to, is morally bankrupt.

Moreover! Pedestrian infrastructure, particularly in urban cores, is incredibly cost-effective when compared to car-centric infrastructure. This is a fiscally responsible, and morally just, means of improving our infrastructure. Pedestrian, and other multi-modal, investments have lower initial costs, lower maintenance costs, and a greater return on investment, when compared to car-centric infrastructure. All while not being a blank-check subsidy for continued suburban sprawl: the very root of our deadly traffic woes in the first place.

Investments in multi-modal infrastructure isn't just smart planning, it's essential for a livable, sustainable Bend.