

Submitter: Hilda Perez

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

My name is Hilda Perez. My family and I have lived in Forest Grove, Oregon, for over 17 years. There are six of us in my family: my husband and our four children. For us, public transportation has been a lifeline. When my children were young, we relied on the bus to get to doctor's appointments, dentist visits, WIC appointments, therapy sessions, and much more. In 2012, my oldest son took the bus every day from Portland to Cornelius, and then to Forest Grove for college and work. He did this for over two years until he was finally able to buy his first car.

But when we moved in 2014, things changed. Now, I have to walk about 40 minutes just to get to the nearest bus stop, and there are no grocery stores nearby. I've had to rely more and more on my children and husband to get me where I need to go. This isn't right, and I know I'm not alone. I believe Oregon's transportation package must expand transportation options while keeping costs low for working families and low-income people.

One of the most urgent needs in Forest Grove is a safe crosswalk on Yew Court. I have witnessed serious accidents there, including that of a man on a bicycle and a young mother pushing her baby in a stroller. She was fleeing a violent situation, trying to build a better life, and was struck and killed. Her baby, too young to understand what had happened, was eventually sent to live with relatives she didn't even know.

That crosswalk is located near several businesses where many people in my community work. They rely on the bus and cross that dangerous street every day to get to work or school. By investing in public transit, sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and safety-oriented crosswalks, we create neighborhoods where people can live, work, and play without fear. That's why I'm here today, to advocate for students, workers, caregivers, and all those who, due to physical, emotional, economic, or other barriers, don't have the privilege of driving. I'm here to say that walking 40 minutes down a dangerous street to get to a bus stop shouldn't be the norm. I'm here to say that public transportation must be safe, reliable, and accessible for all.

Thank you very much.