

Testimony in Support of HB2025, Transportation Package

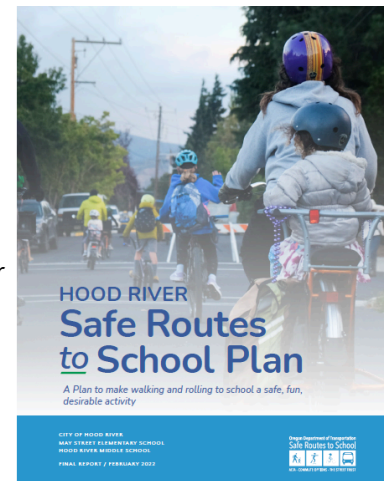
Committee: Transportation

Submitter: Megan Ramey, Safe Routes to School Manager for Hood River County School District, Board Member for Columbia Area Transit

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

My name is Megan Ramey, I write to you from Hood River County as the Safe Routes to School Manager for 8 schools and . With only one objection regarding 12 foot minimum lane widths for freight, I am in full support of HB2025 to fund safety, transportation options and maintenance on Oregon's roads.

First, well done on increasing the Safe Routes to School infrastructure budget from \$30 to \$50 million! Thanks to ODOT planning assistance, Hood River County will soon have five safe routes to school plans, with close to 100 infrastructure recommendations total. Both our City and County look forward to applying for these funds to make our streets safer and more convenient for children to walk or roll to school. Safer streets for children means safer and more joyful streets for everyone, which will decrease school drop-off and pick-up traffic, estimated at 30% of urban congestion.



Second, the increase in Great Streets funding would also benefit the City of Hood River's safe routes network. The Heights, bisected by the highway 281 couplet, could be the artery of our safe routes network and is a poster child project for Great Streets funding. On either side of hwy 281 is housing, the Middle School, an Elementary School, the hospital, grocery store, as well as numerous businesses for daily life. Out of the 32 infrastructure opportunities in the City's Safe Routes to School Plan, 4 of the 5 top priorities are in The Heights.



Third, a robust rural transit system serves our most vulnerable communities, connecting us to each other, while taking vehicles off our streets, highways,

interstates and outdoor tourism parking areas. CAT Transit continues to grow in ridership and serves an invaluable transportation service to our youth, as they ride for free.

Fourth, by ensuring our local governments are properly funded, they are able to maintain our roads with repairs and maintenance during the winter months when school buses need to get our children the long distances to school.

Lastly, I would be remiss to highlight a missed opportunity of this package in not funding an E-bike rebate program for low income Oregonians. E-bikes quickly change behavior and lives by offering a convenient and joyful alternative to vehicle ownership. They could play an incredibly important role in lessening the burden of inflation and housing by removing the high cost of owning and operating a vehicle. Please consider funding an E-bike rebate program for all Oregonians versus overbuilding and committing to an expensive infrastructure project that mostly benefits the metro Portland region. The cost of a E-bike rebate program that would create so much joy, would be a rounding error of a megaproject's cost.

My 15 year old daughter transports herself to school by E-bike and has not shown interest in taking her driving learner's permit exam. Imagine if 25% of our youth were offered this as an option. We would be more connected, resilient and reduce our dependence on fuel.

Here is our story in photos:







Sincerely,
Megan Ramey



WALK & ROLL
HOOD RIVER COUNTY SCHOOLS