

Submitter: Kayla Walker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

This testimony supports an amendment on HB2025 that would provide new funding to Oregon Community Paths via a tax on new luxury vehicles.

This spring my four-year-old learned to ride a pedal bike. Last night he asked to go on a bike ride to "stretch his legs in Milwaukie." We frequently use the Trolley Trail and Kronberg Multi-use Path but have to drive into town to do so (there are no off-road paths from our house to downtown Milwaukie). These important pieces of infrastructure provide safe access to everyone looking to navigate our community outside our cars. Last night, we saw many pedestrians and cyclists using the same trails to access businesses in downtown, notably the new pFriem location. Not only do trails make our transportation systems more equitable by providing for the "least of these," but they contribute to the economic vitality of our communities and support our outdoor recreation economy.

Oregon Community Paths program funds grants for project development, construction, reconstruction, major resurfacing or other improvements of multi-use paths that improve access and safety for people walking and bicycling. This program is used to fund the off-street portions of Safe Routes to School projects as well as access to parks, transit centers, and alternatives to high-speed roadways. The program was oversubscribed by more than 4:1 in its first two funding cycles, so the need is strong.

More than 80% of Oregonians report using local trails. Increasing funding for off-street paths is critical to meeting our community's demand for more safe places to walk and bike. There is broad public support for investing in trails.

I urge you to support the amendment providing for more funding for Oregon Community Paths so that our transportation system fully reflects the needs of our communities.