



June 12, 2025

Senator Chris Gorsek
Representative Susan McLain
Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Co-Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber's 1,750 members and 8,500 business in Central Oregon, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in support of the Great Streets program as outlined in HB 2025.

As the fastest growing metro area in the state, Bend has unique transportation needs to accommodate our growing population and the needed housing. Over the past four years, Bend Chamber has leaned into housing initiatives, specifically middle market housing for our workforce and supported numerous legislative and local policy initiatives. We have even created our own Revolving Loan Program to aid in the development of needed housing. One of the key barriers to development is the infrastructure and transportation network to serve expansion areas current within our UGB in Bend.

Alongside the City of Bend and our coalition, [Partners for Affordable Housing](#), we express strong support for the Great Streets program which includes provisions that would support funding essential, safety-focused infrastructure projects.

- The Southeast Bend Area is a highly valuable opportunity area for the City of Bend. Already 7,500 homes have been approved for the area, including more than 1,000 deed-restricted affordable housing units. This is the largest number of homes in the state of Oregon that have already been approved, but are unable to be built quickly and efficiently because we lack the infrastructure funding to create safe transportation access to this region of our city.
- The challenge is that existing county roads in the area are woefully inadequate for managing the coming growth. In fact, these roads are so inadequate and unsafe for managing the anticipated growth that we are unable to proceed with building the thousands of homes already approved for this area.
- Separately, in recent years we have seen a dramatic increase in traffic on the ODOT-managed Parkway (Highway 97) that runs through the center of Bend. Drivers regularly speed down the highway at 60 MPH in this 45 MPH zone, often in highly congested conditions.
- The funding provisions in this bill will be a major asset to both the State of Oregon and to the City of Bend because if Bend can access funding, we can divert traffic from the Parkway to a corridor on the eastern edge of the city that would also serve the new opportunity area developments in Southeast Bend.
- With funding from this bill, Bend can essentially create a "bypass" alternative route to the Parkway, while also ensuring that county roads are right-sized to city standards with complete streetscapes that make traveling safer for drivers, bikers and pedestrians.

- The new neighborhoods planned for Southeast Bend are also the kinds of complete communities that reduce vehicle miles traveled as they will be mixed use areas with neighborhoods, parks, schools and commercial districts. But we must have the infrastructure funding to build the roads that connect it all.

The Chamber, our coalition members at Partners for Affordable Housing, and the City of Bend are all committed to working together to leverage state funding to increase traffic safety and increase housing production. Funding transportation and safety improvements will benefit our communities with a more sustainable future and more places for all Oregonians to call home.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our city's needs, and we urge consideration as you consider this important policy.

Regards,

Sara Odendahl
Director of Government Affairs and Strategic Initiatives
Bend Chamber of Commerce