

Submitter: James Feldmann

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

Hi, I'm submitting testimony as citizen but I'm also writing to support HB 2025 given my experience as a transportation planner in the Lincoln, Benton, and Linn County area.

Safe Routes to School and the Great Streets programs are two of three invaluable programs that deserve the highest funding possible. These programs can transform neighborhoods and even cities in ways that most infrastructure spending doesn't. Not only do they support safe walking, biking, driving, and transit, but they can also drive economic development, improve health outcomes, and strengthen community livability. Just ask anyone that has benefited from a new connection to school or main street revitalization.

Unfortunately, the current version of HB 2025 does not include funding for the critical Oregon Community Paths (OCP) program. OCP is an invaluable resource for filling critical bike/pedestrian gaps and expanding our network of the safest places for walking and biking. This should be well funded as the 'third leg' of a Safe Routes to School and Great Streets trio because it can uniquely reach far more areas of Oregon than those two programs.

Last, the provision for requiring 12 foot wide lanes on highway freight routes should be removed from HB 2025. In many cases, this provision would stymie existing and future efforts to improve safety for people biking along busy highways and the design of Great Streets through downtowns. The ODOT Highway Design Manual clearly supports narrowing lane widths to 11 feet in certain contexts to encourage safer behavior and improve separation between vulnerable road users and the high volume/speeds of trucks. Eleven vs. 12 feet wide travel lanes can be the difference between a Great Street project succeeding or failing because of limits to what can be accomplished in the curb-to-curb cross section of a project (moving curbs is often not financially possible).

Thank you.