

Top Ten Reasons, Support Significant Funding Oregon Community Paths Program!

June 25, 2025

Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment, State Capitol, Salem, Oregon

Co-Chairs Pham, McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Starr, Boshardt Davis, Committee Members:

I urge you to prioritize and significantly increase funding for the Oregon Community Paths (OCP) program in **HB 2025**. Here are the **top ten compelling reasons why** this investment is critical for Oregon's future:

1. **Safety:** Off-street paths provide the safest alternatives to walking or biking compared to high-speed, high-traffic roads, directly addressing the epidemic of traffic fatalities and serious injuries on Oregon's roadways.
2. **Broad Public Use and Support:** More than 80% of Oregonians use local trails or off-street paths, showing overwhelming community demand and support for investments in these facilities.
3. **Economic Impact:** Off-street paths are valuable visitor amenities that support Oregon's outdoor recreation and tourism economies, boosting local business vitality and community prosperity.
4. **Leverage Federal Funds:** OCP is one of the few state programs that provide matching funds, enabling Oregon and local governments to unlock significant federal dollars for trail projects.
5. **Multimodal Connectivity:** OCP creates critical links connecting schools, downtowns, employment centers, and neighborhoods, enhancing access to essential destinations without relying on cars.
6. **Climate and Environmental Benefits:** By encouraging active transportation modes like walking and biking, OCP reduces greenhouse gas emissions and supports Oregon's climate goals.
7. **Health and Wellness:** Access to safe, accessible paths promotes physical activity, improving public health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs related to sedentary lifestyles.
8. **Equity and Accessibility:** OCP projects serve diverse communities, including underserved areas, providing equitable transportation options and improving mobility for all Oregonians.
9. **Community Quality of Life:** Trails and paths enhance livability by providing green space, recreational opportunities, and safe routes for families and children, strengthening community bonds.
10. **Proven Demand Exceeds Funding:** Despite awarding millions in grants, OCP has consistently received project applications worth four times the available funding, demonstrating urgent unmet needs.

This program is a cornerstone for building a safer, healthier, more connected, and economically vibrant Oregon. **Investing significantly in the Oregon Community Paths program is an investment in the future** of our communities, environment, and economy.

Thank you for your consideration to advance this critical transportation priority!

Respectfully,

Albert LePage / Eugene, Oregon