

June 5, 2017
Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Transportation package - HB 2017-3

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gerik Kransky, Policy Director with The Street Trust. I'd like to thank you for all the work you've done to craft a transportation package for Oregon and for the opportunity to testify today. My comments will focus on the parts of this package that address safety on our streets and how, with a few small amendments, we can dramatically increase our return on investment.

We are grateful to see a package that invests in transit. This is a critical need in all of our communities and HB 2017 makes a down payment towards reducing congestion by providing Oregonian's more choices for how they get around. Thank you for making this commitment.

Regarding the revamped Connect Oregon program, I want to thank you for including a funding target of \$15M for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Maintaining and expanding this investment will allow us to build commuter trails to help reduce congestion. While our organization does not support the proposed sales tax on bicycles we know that people need more safe places to walk and ride bikes. We prefer the Oregon Legislature raise revenue for more trails from a broad base, including all trail users and industries that benefit from trails.

Regarding the Safe Routes to School proposal in the package, unfortunately it falls short of a comprehensive approach to creating safe streets for kids and reducing congestion from morning and afternoon drop-offs and pick-ups at school. This could be a huge missed opportunity and amendments are needed before my organization can support the package.

Safe Routes to School is an initiative with a 12 year-long track record of success that combines street safety improvements near schools with education and encouragement programs to make it safe and accessible for kids and families to choose to walk, bike, and safely access transit to school.

Street safety projects alone only increase walking and biking by about 20%. When these projects are completed at the same time as education and encouragement

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programs about 40% more kids walk and bike to school.¹ At a time when congestion is a growing problem and the cost of building roads is rising, we cannot afford to ignore this return on investment.

We have addressed these issues in the form of House Bill 3230. I ask you to please support the inclusion of HB 3230 in place of the current Safe Routes to School proposal in the transportation package. To be clear, our priorities for amendments are:

- Remove the ten-year sunset on the program
- Expand street safety funding to \$15M per year
- Fund in-school education and encouragement
- Include criteria prioritizing Title 1 (low income) schools for safety projects
- Create flexibility in the local match requirement for Title 1 schools
- Expand the radius for eligible projects around schools to 1 mile

Only by taking a comprehensive approach will we be effective at creating safe streets for kids and encouraging more families to walk, bike, and take transit to school. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



Gerik Kransky
Policy Director

¹ http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR_Review_SRTS_May2015.pdf McDonald NC, Steiner RL, Lee C, Rhoulac Smith T, Zhu X, Yang Y. Impact of the safe routes to school program on walking and bicycling. J Am Plann Assoc. 2014.

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