

Please accept the following as my written testimony. I live in Portland, Oregon and attended the 'roadshow' on June 4, 2024.

Submitted by Sarah Risser:

My name is Sarah Risser and I am testifying on behalf of Families for Safe Streets. All of our members have been impacted by a vehicular crash, either through the loss of a family member or because they themselves were seriously injured. I survived the crash that killed my son, Henry. Crashes like mine that take beautiful children from their families are not uncommon. This is because our traffic system - which consistently prioritizes vehicular traffic - is deadly and dangerous by design. It claims over 40,000 US lives - with horrific violence - every year. Since 2010 well over half a million US citizens have been killed in road traffic. In no other area of public life do we tolerate this level of danger and death.

The vast majority of road fatalities are caused by cars, trucks and SUVs. Directing public resources away from projects that lock us into a car-centric transportation system such as widening highways - and **toward** prioritizing modes of transit that are less deadly to other road users - such as public and active transit - would certainly save lives. This would confer a number of additional benefits. Time does not allow for me to discuss all of them. To the extent reasonable people deserve alternatives to driving and to have the option to leave their car behind or rid themselves entirely of financially burdensome car ownership.

Our car-centric transportation systems is expensive. I am under the strong impression that the financial cost of widening highways in Oregon will drain state coffers and leave little left over for maintaining and improving the roads we already have. This begs the question: If we don't have enough money to care for what we already have, is it responsible to consider building more?

This question becomes more urgent when we examine the costs a system that prioritizes individual vehicles imposes on society [pause] and the earth and whether prioritizing public and active transportation systems would result in a more efficient, more equitable, safer, and healthier Oregon.

We are in a climate crisis, a financial crisis, and a road fatality crisis. Directing resources toward widening highways at this time will exacerbate these crises. I wonder how future generations will judge the state of Oregon for draining public coffers to lock in climate pollution and road fatalities. What we desperately need now, more than anything, is a climate friendly, people friendly, affordable transportation system. What the people of Oregon need is a promise from their leaders that they will work tirelessly to ensure our transportation system is sustainable, offers Oregonians true choices, and is one that can be used without worrying about the violent loss of life.