

Hello,

This email is intended to submit my public comments to the Oregon Legislature Joint Committee on Transportation. I deeply appreciate the committee's willingness to hear from their constituents and fellow Oregonians.

My name is Zachery Christoff. I work as a pharmacist at a tribal non-profit health center in the Hazelwood neighborhood of east Portland. The intentions behind my writing is to represent my own thoughts and feelings, but to also take into account the stories and experiences of the patients I serve and utilize them as case studies regarding Portland's transportation system.

At the very center of my stance on transportation policy and investments are the same priorities listed in the Oregon DOT Strategic Action Plan (SAP). The main purpose of transportation funds at this time should be to prioritize equity, modernism, and economic viability. The Oregon DOT should be very familiar with the pitfalls of our current system of transportation as they exacerbate issues related to these topics. Therefore, the department should also be familiar with how the most common way people to get around their neighborhoods, cities, and state, driving a personal vehicle, is the primary factor keeping us from meeting our transportation goals.

Below I have listed my thoughts on approaching the Oregon DOT's SAP. Since the Oregon DOT and myself have the same goals, I expect the actions regarding future transportation investments and public policies to be similar. Many Oregonians, including myself who recently moved to Portland in March 2024, watch this legislature's and the DOT's actions very closely. We expect radical transparency and accountability of our state representatives and leaders, but also a lot of integrity and bravery. Challenging the massive influence and power of international corporations such as fossil fuel companies is not going to be easy, however, we have no other choice. Do not force my generation to tear down the consequences of your decisions.

1. Equity: An equitable transportation system allows any person, regardless of intrinsic or modifiable factors (e.g race, abilities, social-economic status, age), to have access to an economically viable, temporally competitive (i.e fast) means of moving from one place to another. As it stands, the only temporally competitive means of transportation in most places is driving a personal vehicle. This is unacceptable as driving is not economically viable for many working-class people and unnecessarily stresses the budgets of a large number of Oregonians. The freedom from needing to own, maintain, and fill/charge a personal vehicle opens up a tremendous amount of monetary resources that families can use to address the recent and catastrophic increased costs of living. The future of transportation in Oregon must provide alternatives to driving that are not simply "available" to people, but that are equally as temporally competitive or faster than driving so that more Oregonians can enjoy the monetary freedoms that come with car-free or car-lite living. Reducing dependence of driving is a direct anti-

poverty measure that the Oregon DOT can play a significant role in developing, implementing, and maintaining.

2. Modernism: Transportation in the 21st century should be fun, fast, quiet, efficient, comfortable, accessible, effortless, affordable, environmentally-friendly, and people-centered. Obviously, low carbon means of reaching destinations such as being able to walk or roll to all of one's daily needs are how we must proceed to achieve our climate goals. Therefore, the Oregon DOT's historic role from building and maintaining freeways absolutely must be transitioned to one supporting a modern, multimodal transportation system. This means more transparency, more accountability, more integrity, and an expansion in the Oregon DOT's efforts to support a multitude of travel options that prioritize climate action and actively dissuade and penalize pollution.

3. Economic Viability: Improved transportation efficiency is the primary objective of modern transportation projects. Low capacity modes of transportation (e.g driving a personal motor vehicle) are inherently less efficient than high capacity modes of transportation such as trains, buses, cycling, and walking. Transportation efficiency breeds economic efficiency and, thus, growth and sustainability. Therefore, it makes no sense to invest funding or direct public policy toward the expansion of low capacity/low efficiency modes of transportation, particularly when current funding shortages are clearly the result of the over-expansion and subsidization of car infrastructure. The current American culture, both inside and outside Oregon, surrounding transportation (since driving is the means most people use and is seen as the "default" mode) is that driving has always been cheap so it should remain cheap while transit riders rightfully need to pay their fares in order to keep their transit service financially viable. On one side, this culture makes increasing the monetary cost of driving politically unpopular, however, it also posits transit as a service that people need to fund which perfectly molds to the goals of the Oregon DOT. In addition to meeting other goals such as equity and climate action, this means that the Oregon DOT can meet its economic goals while stoking less political fury from our fellow Oregonians whose main objective is honestly just to get where they need to go in the fastest manner possible. This doesn't mean we shouldn't modify the way/amount vehicle owners pay to cover the maintenance costs of car infrastructure, however, it provides a more politically-viable option that would improve the Oregon DOT's financial viability.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Very respectfully,

Zachery Christoff, PharmD (he/him/his)