

Hello,

My name is Andrew and I am currently a resident of Downtown Portland and have lived in Portland for 7 years now. I am emailing to discuss what I believe should be the priorities for the upcoming 2025 transportation funding bill that the state legislature is expected to work on.

One of the most important projects to fund for the state's transportation future would be a city-center light rail tunnel in Portland. TriMet as an organization serves the urbanized area of the Portland metro which makes up roughly half of the population of the state. This tunnel would perhaps be one of the biggest "bang for our buck" transportation projects in the state as it would enhance the usefulness of the MAX system by allowing faster travel to/through the city center, as well as higher frequencies once trains no longer have to cross the Steel Bridge. IT would also allow resiliency for the state's most important transit system in the event of the big earthquake happening. I believe it is imperative to begin funding work on this project to take advantage of federal programs and protect our environment by encouraging more active transportation.

Another priority should be safety improvements to orphan highways. Roads such as Powell Blvd, Lombard St, and the Tualatin Valley Highway are extremely dangerous for anyone who uses them. These roads are often the deadliest roads in their cities and sometimes individually make up a sizable percentage of road deaths. Powell Boulevard on its own, for example, is sometimes responsible for 10% of traffic fatalities in a given year within the City of Portland. These roads are a danger to anyone who uses them and must be made safer; particularly for those not in cars.

I understand the instinct for this bill would be to fund freeway projects that are already in the works; particularly the Rose Quarter project, which has some federal funding. The reality of the situation is that ODOT does not have the funds to maintain what it currently has and will not be able to afford maintenance on the expanded road space these projects would create. It is also the case that you cannot build your way out of congestion. I grew up in a city where tens of billions of dollars have been spent expanding freeways as a means to fix traffic but still to this day traffic is at a standstill most of the day. I don't believe wasting billions doing what other states have tried and failed should be the future of Oregon.

Thank you for reading my written testimony and I do hope you consider a brighter future for the state where our cities are not constantly choked by traffic and pollution from vehicles, but rather a multimodal future where cities are safe places to be outside of a car.

Thank you,
Andrew