

From:

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Submitted written testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation for the 6/4 Roadshow Hearing:

Dear legislators:

My family is lucky. We live one mile from our school and we have sidewalks, safe streets, and safe crossings on our route so my kindergartener and first grader can walk or bike to school with us. This means that they get the physical activity that they need and get to school ready to focus on learning. They get to feel like a part of their community, saying hi to neighbors and other families on their way to school. It also means that we're not creating congestion on our streets, reducing air quality, contributing to carbon emissions, or taking up parking spots near school.

My friend's family across town is not so lucky. They only live half a mile from their school, but their children do not walk or bike to school because their route involves a 35mph street with no sidewalk. They don't feel like it's safe to get to school without a car, so they drive.

My friend's family is one of many across our state who are in the same predicament, and they are still luckier than most because they have the means to afford a car and can choose to drive instead to walk or bike. Other families don't have access to a car and so are forced to walk with their children in unsafe conditions alongside fast-moving traffic, just to get their kids the education they deserve.

As you think about how to prioritize our transportation spending, please remember this story and make sure that we are prioritizing funding for walking, biking, and transit. That investment is key for all of our safety: the safety of our children, of our neighbors who can't drive due to physical or financial barriers, of our friends with asthma who struggle to breathe in polluted air, and to any of us trying to make our way through life without getting into a car for every trip.

Thank you,
Claire Vlach