

Sept. 27, 2024



Dear Co-chairs McLain and Gorsek and members of the committee,

The Intertwine Alliance is a coalition of public, private and nonprofit organizations working to preserve and nurture a healthy regional system of parks, trails and natural areas across the Portland metro region.

As legislators tackle our transportation funding challenges broadly, **we ask you to include addressing the funding gap for the Oregon Community Paths program that was oversubscribed by more than four to one in its first two funding rounds.**

Off-street paths provide the backbone for both active transportation networks, and The Intertwine Alliance's vision for all people in our region is to have access to nature. Trails create safe, comfortable places for people of all ages and abilities to walk, bike, skate and roll. Trails provide safe alternatives to walking or riding on high-speed and high-traffic streets to local families and commuters, as well as increase access to nature and all of its health and wellness benefits for all.

Unfortunately, our regional trails system is currently filled with large gaps that prevent it from serving as the strong backbone our communities deserve.

Metro's most recent call for immediate trail investment needs in our region yielded 29 project nominations from 19 different Metro area agencies and organizations totaling more than \$390 million dollars in trail projects that are seeking funding now: that's \$390 million dollars in trails projects in the Metro area alone, when the first two rounds of Oregon Community Paths funding were just \$15 million and \$37 million respectively for the entire state.

Metro recently developed a [story map](#) that we invite you to explore to get a fuller picture of some of the investment needs in our region. Because of the state statute restricting highway funds to the road right-of-way, our local agencies don't have the option of investing any of their local share in these valuable transportation projects.

Dedicated funding for trails is crucial.

If we are going to fill the regional trails system gaps in our children's lifetimes, we need to put more state funding on the line to move more small projects forward and provide match for the federal funding opportunities for larger needs.



As you look beyond the gas tax, at all the transportation funding mechanisms available, we implore you to dedicate more funding to regional trails.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership,

Tara Wilkinson, Director  
The Intertwine Alliance  
[tara@theintertwine.org](mailto:tara@theintertwine.org)

