

Dear members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

Your leadership is needed to move Oregon towards a major shift in our transportation priorities. We need to stop encouraging our society's expensive car addiction and start encouraging more efficient and safer transportation while making our society more equitable and accessible.

I need these options for my daily life, as do many in all corners of the state who don't have access to a car. And even for those who do have access to a car, having other more affordable and safer options is a great benefit.

Right now, I'm thinking about the way transportation options will change for me this Winter, even though they don't have to. It will start with the leaves--in a few short weeks all my commutes will be not only rainy but also dirty and dangerous as leaves begin to fall and cars will kick up leaves into bike lanes around the city. Then will come the puddles--as rain picks up mid-Winter, I'll have to start merging into traffic to get around large and deep puddles on the sides of roads along my most common routes, while many sidewalks are made nearly impassable. Finally the snow--which will come and get packed down and removed on arterials for cars within a day or two, but will remain in the bike lanes along with branches and debris for a week or more after a big storm.

My mobility is never as great as my neighbors. Every day I make options based on a smaller segment of the city available to me. But during the Winter my effective street network shrinks even further. It doesn't have to be like this. If we prioritized lane space for all, if we made a commitment to ensuring access for pedestrians first along every road, if we committed to ensuring non-drivers have access to nearly as many jobs as drivers, we could make our society more equitable and more accessible within just a few short years. But the continued investment in oversized and bank-breaking megaprojects means that non-drivers around the state are stuck with another year or more of being stuck in homes, missing economic opportunities, and facing social isolation.

I make the choice to be a non-driver, but many others weren't offered the choice to begin with. Youth, many people with disabilities, and people without the financial means can't buy and operate a car. They're excluded from full participation in our society, and we're all the less for it.

Please: as you prepare for the next legislative session, dream big and plan to make change. Not marginal, but fundamental change to the direction of our transportation investments. Stop expanding vehicle capacity on our roadways, and start drastically increasing our budgets for active and public transportation, in all corners of the state. Reallocate funding for lane expansion at the Rose Quarter, i5 bridge, and elsewhere, while maintaining smaller budgets for caps over i5, transit infrastructure, and earthquake resilience. It's past time for us to present equal options to non-drivers, and a fair economic deal to our descendents.

Best,

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Thomas Sherlock Craig