



# CITY OF HOOD RIVER

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June 12, 2025

Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment  
900 Court St., NE  
Salem, Oregon 97031

Co-chairs McLain and Gorsek, Vice-Chairs Boshart Davis and Starr, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Will Norris, Urban Renewal Administrator for the City of Hood River. Thank you for the Committee's time to talk about Hood River in the context of the State's larger transportation needs.

The Hood River community has been asking for many years for safety improvements to the section of ODOT Highway, OR-281, that runs through our Heights Business District. 97% of Hood River homes are within a 1 mi. radius of this roadway. It also lies at the crossing of all the School District's planned Safe Routes to School.

This road is in bad shape. The pavement and sidewalks are crumbling. There is no bike or transit infrastructure, and it is labeled as "High Risk" in Oregon's Vulnerable Road Safety Assessment. Despite this poor condition, the section roadway does not have any budgeted maintenance projects in ODOT's STIP.

Responding to community demands, the City of Hood River took the lead on a comprehensive planning effort for this roadway. This effort was community led, in partnership with ODOT, and supported by traffic engineering to balance the needs of residents, businesses, emergency vehicles, and freight. The result was our Heights Streetscape Plan.

We now have a plan, but we do not have the authority to make these improvements. ODOT has told us that, while supportive, the improvements will be more costly and time-consuming if they happen under their jurisdiction. Understanding this, the City applied to the Jurisdictional Transfer Advisory Committee created by House Bill 2793. This committee was established to vet jurisdictional transfer requests and set up a queue. Hood River's application was supported by ODOT and recommended by the Committee.

Hood River is ready to start making improvements to OR-281 immediately. We can also take responsibility for the roadways' ongoing maintenance. In fact, we already provide its streets sweeping and snow removal.

What we ask is that the State invest in the Great Streets Fund. This investment will help us, and other cities like ours, overcome the historical disinvestment and existing poor

condition of these roadways that go through the core of our communities. It will also provide a return on investment as ODOT reduces the number of lane miles it is responsible for maintaining.

Thank you again for the Committee's consideration. Hood River is committed to showing how this Jurisdictional Transfer process can be a successful state-wide model.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Will Norris", enclosed in a dashed rectangular box.

Will Norris, Urban Renewal Administrator  
City of Hood River