

Thank you for considering my testimony.

I am a student at Reed College who, as a young person, cannot afford to buy a car and rely primarily on walking, biking and public transit to get around. I recently published the following opinion piece about transportation policy in our state on BlueOregon.com. I would like to share these thoughts with the committee, in order to encourage passing HB 2017 with strong funding for the transportation options I depend on. The full piece, copied below, can be found at <http://www.blueoregon.com/2017/06/oregon-needs-statewide-transportation-package-next-generation/>

## Oregon needs a statewide transportation package for the next generation

*By Anthony Bencivengo of Portland, Oregon. Anthony studies environmental policy at Reed College.*

When was the last time you drove somewhere?

If you're a college student like me, it might take you awhile to remember. I haven't driven myself anywhere in weeks because I don't own a car. When I need to get somewhere I usually walk, bike or take public transit.

I'm not alone. **My entire generation is moving away from cars as our main mode of transport.** As of 2014, 23.3% of people between age 20 and 24 said [they don't even have a drivers' license.](#)

There are many reasons why. Some of us can't afford cars (me). Others choose to walk or bike, hoping to save the planet and get fit (also me). And more and more of us are recognizing that in places with a fast and reliable mass transit system, owning a car is simply unnecessary.

**I need my state to invest in a reliable, equitable, affordable and sustainable mass transit system for the future. That means expanded bus service, more light rail, and communities that are safe to walk and bike in.**

This isn't just about convenience, or even reducing air pollution and our carbon footprint. It's about saving lives. Across the US over 37,000 people die in car accidents every year, [1,600 of them children.](#) Those numbers didn't seem real to me until Mark Angeles, a student who had just graduated from my college, was killed when a car struck his bike at an intersection in Portland. When I cross the road where he was hit - as many of my fellow students do each day going to and from campus - I try not to wonder whether one of my friends will be next.

**No more ghost bikes.** Our state needs a transportation system that works for people without cars, and we need it now.

The state legislature just released a new [transportation funding package](#), and there are some promising proposals:

- A major new Statewide Transit Improvement Fund, dedicating a projected \$107 million/year to expand transit service in rural areas and underserved urban neighborhoods
- Over \$15 million/year for bike and pedestrian safety, including sidewalks, off-road bike paths and new bike lanes
- \$10 million annually for the Safe Routes to School program, giving elementary and middle schoolers safe ways to walk to class

Through the tough negotiations to come, it's important that these items stay in the package. And in my opinion, we need far more investment in transit, bikeways and sidewalks. In the current proposal these active transportation investments represent about 15% of the package, most of what remains being poured into highway projects.

**Young people like me need a package that funds clean, affordable ways to get around, not the dirty and expensive transportation investments of the past.** I urge our state legislators to fund the multimodal transportation system of the future that all Oregonians deserve.