



February 23, 2018

SKATS Policy Committee
100 High Street SE
Suite 200
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Members of the SKATS Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed updates to the 2018-2023 Transportation Improvement Program. The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is excited to see that so many of these projects would include significant upgrades for people walking and biking, such as added sidewalks and bike lanes. It's wonderful to have regional planners considering such a significant investment in new active transportation projects in the region. Good planning and dedicated funding for these types of projects allows kids to walk and bike safely in their neighborhoods, provides equitable access to transportation, and promotes healthy and vibrant communities.

I would like to make a few specific comments on some of the proposals being considered:

Connecticut Avenue – I strongly recommend the inclusion of this project in the TIP update, especially for its designation by the Salem-Keizer School District as a high-priority area in need. Students are already using this route daily for walking and biking to school. Investing in this project would help solidify the accessibility and safety for children and families in this area.

Wheatland Road – I would also like to recommend that this low-cost proposal be included in the TIP update. This project is focused on increasing the safety of children who walk and bike to school, including both Forrest Ridge and Clearlake Elementary schools. I also want to highlight the importance of the City of Keizer's inclusion of the following statement in the project description: "This plan would also include community involvement to assure the design plan is consistent with the needs of key stakeholders (neighborhoods, schools, and businesses)." This type of commitment to work with the community on developing needed improvements, is something I would hope to see in any of the TIP projects under current consideration.



Brown Road – This proposal appears to be a reasonably priced project that would make significant improvements for Salem residents who walk and bike. I recommend the inclusion of this added funding in the TIP update, so that the existing project may be completed with the necessary inclusion of essential sidewalks and bike lanes.

Orchard Heights – While the proposed budget amount for what has been designated as a pedestrian project is greatly appreciated, I am interested to know how the budget would be allocated within the project. The project covers 4,300 feet – 840 feet of which would include new sidewalks. I might ask the City of Salem what percentage of funding would be spent on pavement restoration and resurfacing, and how much would be dedicated to new infrastructure for the benefit of people walking and biking?

Center Street– This high-traffic area is inarguably in great need of updates. The area is not currently safe for people who walk and bike to school, work, shopping, etc. I would like to suggest to Marion County Public Works, that in addition to the proposed sidewalk and bike lane on the north side of the route, to consider doing the same for the south side, if not already in place, and also to consider widening the walkways and bike lanes along Center St. As stated in the project description, this high-traffic street is part of a designated school walking route for many schools in the area. This is a great opportunity to ensure safety for students and families who walk and bike along Center street on a daily basis.

On behalf of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, I want to thank you for your careful consideration of these proposals which have the potential to provide great benefits to people who walk and bike in the Salem/Keizer region.

Thank you,

Becky Gilliam
Regional Policy Manager
Safe Routes to School National Partnership