



BIKE LOUD_{PDX}

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BikeLoudPDX.org

Dear Chair Beyer, Chair McClain, and Members of the Joint Transportation Committee,

Bike Loud PDX is an all-volunteer organization which advocates for safe and accessible bicycling infrastructure for everyone, including people of all ages, races, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientations.

Bike Loud PDX is thrilled to join The Street Trust, Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation, the Oregon Trails Coalition and many others to support the Safe Routes for All Act (SB 395). This year is the 50th anniversary of passing the Oregon Bike Bill, signed into law by then Governor Tom McCall. The Bike Bill has required 1% of highway transportation funds to be spent improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities every year.

This investment has propelled Oregon to become a leader in Active Transportation. Oregon boasts 2.3% of people bicycling to work, four times the national average. The thousands of miles of scenic bikeways across the state have brought tremendous benefit to our rural economies. A recent Travel Oregon report showed that cycling for recreation brought in \$1.5 billion in revenue, more than golf, fishing, hunting, and skiing combined¹.

Investing in Active Transportation has meant good paying jobs. According to AARP, every \$1M spent on pedestrian and bicycle facilities creates 4 more jobs compared to building highways². Research at Portland State University has shown that Main Streets with bicycle infrastructure see increased sales³. What's more: when households can spend less on gas, repairs, and car payments, that allows more money to go into local businesses, spurring an upward economic trajectory.

Oregon has accomplished much in the last 50 years, but we have learned a lot since then.

¹ "Oregon Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Study," Travel Oregon, 2019.

<https://industry.traveloregon.com/resources/research/oregon-outdoor-recreation-economic-impact-study/>

² "AARP Livability Fact Sheets," AARP.

<https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2014/Livability%20Fact%20Sheets/AARP-Livability-Fact-Sheets-080615I.pdf>

³ "Understanding Economic and Business Impacts of Street Improvements for Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility - A Multi-City Multi-Approach Exploration | National Institute for Transportation and Communities." Accessed December 9, 2020. <https://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/research/project/1031/>.

We've learned that we must act quickly to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Last summer's wildfires were only a preview of the threat to our communities. Transportation accounts for 40% of Oregon's GHG emissions. With over 1/3rd of trips under 3 miles, or a 12 minute bicycle ride, the major barrier to using this carbon-free form of transportation is the lack of a network of safe, fully protected bicycling facilities that is accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

We've learned that Oregon has lost over 500 people in 2019 on our roadways, with 16% of our neighbors and loved ones killed while walking. Many of our state highway facilities lack safe, accessible footpaths and sidewalks, let alone bicycling facilities. One analysis from Multnomah County Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) has shown that for every \$1 invested in Gresham's Active Transportation plan, the community receives \$2.48 in lower healthcare costs, reduced transportation costs, and improved air quality⁴. An analysis of the Portland 2030 Bike Master Plan showed that every \$1 invested returns \$20 in reduced healthcare costs, reduced transportation and maintenance costs, and \$8 million for each statistical life saved⁵. As more Oregonians continue to migrate to urban environments, public health is increasingly tied to our built environment.

Last, but of utmost importance is the need to lift up our Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities that have been neglected for far too long. Oregon Walks has shown that Black Portlanders are three times as likely to be killed crossing the street as white Portlanders⁶. Tribal communities also see a disproportionately higher rate of deaths on our roads compared to the total population.

Safe Routes for All will help meet the tremendous need for safe walking and rolling infrastructure. At current funding levels, it will take well over 150 years for us to complete Oregon's bicycle and pedestrian master plans. SB 395 will increase the annual spending for bicycle and pedestrian improvements from 1% (~\$7M) to 5% (~\$35M) of total statewide highway funds, reducing that timeline to around 30 years.

Safe Routes for All will provide greater transparency and accountability. SB 395 requires state and local transportation agencies to submit annual reports of their bicycle and pedestrian spending, giving communities and Oregonian's necessary oversight.

⁴ Multnomah County REACH

https://nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/bikeloud/docs/research/ATP%20Cost%20Benefit%20Technical%20Document_FINAL_2-12-19.pdf

⁵ Gotschi, Thomas. "Costs and Benefits of Bicycling Investments in Portland, Oregon." *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* 8, no. s1 (January 2011): S49–58. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.8.s1.s49>.

⁶ Willamette Week. "Black Portlanders Are Killed Crossing the Street at Three Times the Rate of White Pedestrians."

<https://www.wweek.com/news/2020/11/25/black-portlanders-are-killed-crossing-the-street-at-three-times-the-rate-of-white-pedestrians/>.

Safe Routes for All will create exemptions for pedestrian and bicycle improvements that exceed 20% of the total project cost. This is a fair trade-off considering most bicycle and pedestrian improvements can be performed for far less.

Safe Routes for All will require bicycle and pedestrian improvements when resurfacing a roadway. While roads are reconstructed every 25-30 years, repaving tends to happen every 5-10 years. Adopting SB 395 will mean 100% of Oregon's roads will be made safer for people rolling and walking over the next 10 years.

The Joint Transportation Commission should not hesitate to adopt such a bold plan to provide economic recovery while addressing equity, climate, safety across Oregon. We ask that the Joint Transportation Committee vote YES for SB 395 to provide Safe Routes for All Oregonians.

Sincerely,
RJ Sheperd (he/him)
Co-Chair, Bike Loud PDX
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