



Sightline Institute is an independent think tank working to advance sustainability in the Pacific Northwest. We believe that a thriving economy, environment and population each depend upon one another.

We're writing in support of HB 3113, funding for ODOT's Great Streets program. Trips that include walking or biking likely represent more than 10 percent of all trips taken in Oregon,¹ and this bill would bring state investment in the quality and safety of those trips slightly closer to parity.

However, as a housing policy specialist I also want to emphasize a benefit of this bill that may be less obvious: **economic development in the form of less costly commercial and residential construction.**

One of the biggest ways to reduce the cost of new buildings, with the fewest negative tradeoffs, is simply for their users to need fewer parking spaces. This isn't a regulatory matter, as addressed by Gov. Brown's Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities package that reduced parking mandates. Regulatory flexibility on parking is useful only to the extent that people are willing to walk and bike for at least some trips. That depends on our streets.

When the residents of a building or the customers of a store don't need as many parking spaces, then all economic activity becomes cheaper and the associated space and money can be put to other, more profitable use.

If a new apartment building could naturally reduce its parking ratio by half of a parking space per home, this would tend to lower its break-even rents by about \$150/month. That's half of Oregon's entire median statewide increase in rent since 2016.² **This economic efficiency exists no matter where your city is on the urban-rural spectrum.** Other things equal, gradually reducing average auto ownership in Monmouth from 2 cars per household to 1.5 would be just as economically useful as reducing it in Portland's Kenton neighborhood from 1.2 cars per household to 0.7.

¹ 2017 National Household Transportation Survey: Nationally, 10.5% of trips are taken on foot, 2.5% on mass transit, and 4.4% "other" including bicycle, wheelchair, etc.

² American Community Survey, median contract rent in 2016 and 2021.

Reducing market demand for parking space is not a fast process. But it can work---if and only if we dedicate time and money to improving the alternatives to driving, such as walking, biking and mass transit (which of course relies heavily on pedestrian infrastructure).

HB 3113 would do this. Please support it.

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