

Submitter: Mark Bentz
On Behalf Of:
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Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3626

I am all for making our streets safer by facilitating micromobility Personal Electric Vehicles (PEVs) and finally recognizing them in Oregon Vehicle Code. Portland produces many e-skateboards that have astounding capabilities.

Please reconsider the language limiting powered micromobility devices to PEVs that have a physical top speed below 30 mph. The physical top speed of a vehicle is only one single measurement concerning it's overall safety.

We don't limit school zones, residential roads, or neighborhood greenways to vehicles that have a top speed of <30 or any speed. We post speed limits and signs and lights and bumps and have an expectation that people will operate their giant trucks and hot rods safely, even though we know they have trouble seeing kids. PEVs don't have visibility restrictions or mass like cars and trucks do.

a PEV that has a top speed of 30 mph is significantly limited outside of bicycle infrastructure. You cannot merge into 25 mph residential street traffic on a vehicle that tops out at 30 mph, because all the cars on 25 mph roads are actually going 30-35 and they tailgate, honk, and harass riders that are going 25mph. A lack of speed to merge into traffic forces PEVs onto sidewalks and paths and shoulders with cyclists and pedestrians.

Automotive drivers earn their licenses by meeting measurable standards before being allowed on public roads. Motorcycle riders go through a training course, demonstrate their safe riding ability, and receive an appropriate endorsement on their license. Oregon can promote safety by implementing a similar program where PEV riders can test their safe riding skills in a measurable way and validate it - or require public PEV operators to have a motorcycle endorsement.

Please don't ban faster PEVs from sharing slower infrastructure. Many places in Oregon only have one place for PEVs to operate slowly: the shoulder / bicycle lane. People will still buy PEVs if they aren't allowed to ride them in a safe place, but many will ride them less safely. Understand the audacious rider's thought process: if PEV riders can't ride slow and safe in a bicycle lane, they have to get into traffic at a much higher speed, so they need a faster machine with steeper consequences.

I have ridden over 16,000 miles on my 3 electric unicycles (EUC) since 2021. These vehicles have characteristics similar to a moped without the noise or pollution, can turn on a dime, and climb a curb or hill without effort, and fit under a work desk. All of

the EUCs that have enough range for a suburban to city center commute also can exceed 30 mph. It's simple to set the software to emit a speed warning beep or limit speed, and very easy to ride slow and share the trails with my neighbors. The top speed of a vehicle has little to do with it's overall safety. An 85 pound EUC is more maneuverable than a stroller but can safely carry a rider down a connecting road in traffic.

Every aspect of PEVs are evolving daily by competitive engineers worldwide. Last year's fastest wheel is now obsolete to the superior machines of this season. The companies producing these vehicles aren't engineering many sub-30 mph devices because that limits their marketability. On the biggest EUC distributor website ewheels.com, only 11 of the 47 EUC offerings have top speeds below 30 mph, but they all can be adjusted by the rider to be limited to lower speeds. Only 7 of those 47 exceed 100 lbs in weight.

Excluding all PEVs that can exceed 30 mph from powered micromobility devices will banish them back to the "Not defined in Oregon Vehicle Code" realm, but please don't prevent more capable PEVs from riding slowly on mixed use paths and bicycle lanes. Expecting PEVs to avoid bicycle infrastructure and mixed use paths creates more unsafe riding than merely requiring everyone using such paths to travel at a safe, posted speed limit - especially reducing speed around kids, dogs, runners, and groups.

Thank you for your consideration