

Public Support for Climate-Friendly & Equitable Communities



On March 10, 2020, Governor Kate Brown's Executive Order 20-04 directed state agencies to meaningfully and urgently address climate change by developing measures to reduce Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions that stem from land use and transportation planning in eight key urban areas.

Oregonians understand this Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking process is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to tackle climate change head-on. By placing climate change, affordable housing, and equitable transportation choices at the center of how our cities are planned, built, and funded, we can create a brighter, healthier, and more inclusive future for all.

For these rules to achieve their full potential, they need to be strong, clear, and implemented with urgency.

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May 19, 2022

Land Conservation and Development Commission
 Department of Land Conservation and Development
 635 Capitol Street NE Suite 150
 Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon is ready to tackle climate change head-on

Dear Commissioners,

Climate change is here, and the time for tangible action is now.

The Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking process is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to achieve transformative outcomes for communities statewide. Increasing affordable housing options and ways to safely walk, bike, roll, and take transit will make our cities more climate-friendly, more equitable, and more livable.

The Commission has committed to creating communities that are “safe, equitable, sociable, and pleasant places where driving is not required, and the amount of driving is reduced.” To achieve this outcome the Commission must ensure that the rules it will soon adopt will put several critical policies in place:

- Climate Friendly Areas (CFAs) are intended to be the focal points for walkable, transit-friendly neighborhoods with diverse and affordable housing choices and nearby businesses. This means the rules should increase the possibilities for housing and employment in CFAs, and require cities to adopt affordable housing strategies.
- CFAs must provide abundant, safe, high-quality infrastructure for walking, biking, and transit.

- Transportation Investment priorities must change. The rules should prioritize accessible public transit, walking, rolling, and biking over projects that incentivize driving.
- To ensure these rules are enacted with urgency, clear and specific timelines for all key land use and transportation elements are needed.

The urgency to address climate change now cannot be overstated. So it is crucial that these rules are strong, clear, and implemented soon. Over 1,300 organizations, businesses, and individuals support the goal of this rulemaking, as well as the reasonable and necessary adjustments this Coalition of state-wide organizations is calling for.

Urgent and effective implementation of the Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rules will create more complete, vibrant, and accessible communities in Oregon with vital services nearby that can be accessed without the use of a car. By acting boldly to reduce carbon emissions with these rules, the Commission can help ensure a more climate-resilient, healthy, equitable future for Oregonians now and for generations to come.

Sincerely,

1000 Friends of Oregon

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 Charlotte Campbell
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 Carol Whipple

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| Ryan Lapoma | Shannon Mccarl | Steven Winkler |
| S Klof | Sharon Evoy | Stratton Matteson |
| Sally Palmer | Sharon Hunt | Su-Wen Chen |
| Salme Armijo | Sharon Steele | Sue Ann Alleger |
| Salvatore Hall | Shaundi Woolley | Sue Bastian |
| Sam Huck | Sheila Dooley | Sue Kozin |
| Samia Estassi | Shelley Z. Klappholz | Sue Leonetti |
| Samuel Bedell | Sheri Facer | Sue Privitera |
| Samuel Goldberg | Sherry Costa | Sue Staehli |
| Sandi Cornez | Sherry Logan | Sue Ward-Mccurdy |
| Sandra Joos | Shirley Moffat | Susan Albright |
| Sandra Siegner | Shirley Nelson | Susan Caswell |
| Sandy Thompson | Shirley Weathers | Susan Connolly |
| Sara Martel | Sid Friedman | Susan Conrad |
| Sara Mckean | Soeren Johnson | Susan Delles |
| Sarah Deumling | Solomon Allen | Susan Drew |
| Sarah Graham | Sonia Battrell | Susan Fthenakis |
| Sarah Munk | Spencer Lennard | Susan Gaylord |
| Sarah Stuart-Sikowitz | Spencer Woolley | Susan Hart |
| Sarah Walgenkim | Stacy Butler | Susan Haywood |
| Sarah Welte | Stacy Flaherty | Susan Heath |
| Sarah Worthington | Stan Fleming | Susan Khalsa-Wyborski |
| Savannah Wright | Stanley Oliver | Susan Koger |
| Scott Davenport | Stephanie Arnold | Susan Marrant |
| Scott Hutchins | Stephanie Routh | Susan Principe |
| Scott Kennedy | Stephen Alexander | Susan Sanford |
| Scott Shumaker | Stephen Bachhuber | Susan Schradle |
| Sean Hanna | Stephen Funk | Susan Strauss |
| Sean Mccuen | Steve Greening | Susan Thompson |
| Serena Appel | Steve Hill | Susan Uravich |

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| Susan Wolling | Tracy Habecker | William O'Brien |
| Susanna Defazio | Tracy M Lord | William Sweigert |
| Suzanna Nadler | Tracy Richards | Willow Denker |
| T Jeffries | Tracy Tindle | Zach Gustin |
| T Keith | Travis Mack | Zach Mulholland |
| T S | Tristen Madron | Zechariah Heck |
| Tamara Houston | Twila Jacobsen | Zed Langston |
| Tamara Stephas | Usha Honeyman | Zoe Griffith |
| Tammy Alunan | Ute Saito | Zoe Zagorski |
| Tandra Schmid | Val Snyder | Zora Hess |
| Tanya Owen | Valerie Snyder | |
| Tashia Davis | Vicki Nunenkamp | |
| Tawny Howlett | Victor Conway | |
| Taylor White | Victor Ortega | |
| Taylor Withers | Victoria Eells | |
| Ted Lapage | Victoria Koch | |
| Teddy Charlton | Virginia Feldman | |
| Teresa Mueller | Virginia Olea | |
| Teresa Smith-Dixon | Virginia Sackett | |
| Tessa Scheller | Walt Mintkeski | |
| Theresa M Bush | Walter Englert | |
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| Thomas Musselwhite | Wanda Graff | |
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| Tim Irby | Wayne Stewart | |
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| Tina Myers | Wendy Holzman | |
| Tobias Boyd | Wendy Mortensen | |
| Todd Looby | Wesley Wada | |
| Tom Gihring | Wesley Ward | |
| Tom Gilles | Will Green | |
| Toni Colotte | William Gilbert | |
| Tonia Moro | William Heerdt | |
| Tonya Stiffler | William Kepler | |
| Traci Engel | William Koch | |
| Tracy Glenn | William Lynn | |



CITY OF BEND

March 18, 2022

Dear City Councilors:

710 NW WALL STREET
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BEND, OR 97709
(541) 388-5505 tel
Relay Users Dial 7-1-1
(541) 385-6676 fax
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MAYOR
Sally Russell

MAYOR PRO TEM
Gena Goodman-Campbell

CITY COUNCILORS
Melanie Kebler
Anthony Broadman
Megan Perkins
Rita Schenkelberg
Barb Campbell

CITY MANAGER
Eric King

The Core Area Advisory Board (CAAB) convened on Thursday, March 17th to discuss the Department of Land Conservation and Development's (DLCD) proposed Climate and Equitable Communities rules. Damian Syrnyk, Senior Planner presented an update to the committee about the draft rules and schedule for adoption.

After discussion and an opportunity for all attendees to ask questions and provide input, the advisory board voted to request that Council write a letter in support of the rulemaking effort in anticipation of the first public hearing before the Land Conservation and Development Commission on March 31, 2022.

CAAB discussion regarding the proposed rulemaking focused on the following topics of interest for Council to consider in future public testimony related to the rulemaking effort:

- 1) The majority of CAAB voting members support the state's efforts to encourage dense, urban-scale, mixed-use, bikeable, and walkable communities and agree these rules are consistent with and supportive of the vision for Bend's Core Areas including the Bend Central District. CAAB believes the Core Area would be an ideal location to consider for Bend's first Climate Friendly Area.
- 2) CAAB members believe that these rules should be coupled with adequate resources and support to local jurisdictions to ensure that staff have the appropriate resources to meet the demands of these rules, without delaying other necessary planning needs.
- 3) CAAB members would like to ensure that affordability height bonuses are still allowed and viable in Climate Friendly Areas so that the City is still able to offer valuable incentives to encourage Affordable Housing development.

We encourage the Council to support efforts for climate friendly and equitable communities and look forward to working with Council as rules are developed and implemented.

Sincerely,

Kurt Alexander, Chair
Core Area Advisory Board

The Bulletin

Central Oregon is ready for climate-friendly and equitable communities

March 13, 2022

Ben Gordon, Executive Director of Central Oregon LandWatch

Today's biggest contributors to climate change are tied to our built environment. Where we live and work and how we travel determine our impact on this planet. Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation are the biggest contributor to climate change nationally. That certainly rings true for Oregon, where transportation accounts for 40% of statewide emissions.

Established in the 1970s, Oregon's land use system was created to channel growth and development within city limits to prevent sprawl onto our surrounding farm lands and open space. We didn't know then that this land use system would also be one of our best tools for tackling climate change.

By thoughtfully guiding growth, Oregon has been able to develop more compact neighborhoods that reduce major carbon emitters, like vehicle miles traveled.

But we need to do more to meet this moment. As we continue to experience ongoing drought and rapid regional growth, land use planning is critical to creating a hopeful future where equity and sustainability go hand in hand.

Right now, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform our communities and tackle climate change head-on.

Oregon's Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) is in the midst of a Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking process. These rules will guide future development for cities across our state with a goal "to transform Oregon's communities to be safe, equitable, sociable, and pleasant places where driving is not required, and the amount of driving is reduced."

This could be a seismic shift from business-as-usual by placing climate change, affordable housing, and equitable transportation choices at the center of how our cities are planned, built, and funded. For instance, these rules would designate Climate-Friendly Areas in our cities and direct a portion of new housing development to those areas — and these rules would also direct cities to prioritize abundant, high-quality infrastructure projects for biking, walking, and public transit in those areas.

The very first goal of Oregon's land use system is public involvement, and this process has already included thousands of Oregonians.

LandWatch and other local groups have been deeply engaged in this effort to help ensure these rules are strong and effective and that they happen soon. We don't have another decade to wait.

We know local jurisdictions will need support and resources to accomplish the vital work ahead. On March 31, there is a virtual public hearing on these rules on LCD's website (oregon.gov/lcd/Commission) and comments can be submitted up until then. Central Oregonians need to show up to ensure this effort leads to transformative outcomes that change how our cities are built and how state transportation dollars get spent in our local communities.

At its heart, the Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking process should add up to one necessary outcome: all people should have the opportunity to thrive here in Central Oregon while we protect the environment around us.

That is why these rules need and deserve our community's attention and support.

If you share LandWatch's urgency in tackling climate change at the state and local level, join us at the virtual public hearing on March 31. Now is the time to make your voice heard about the future you want to see.

https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/guest-column-central-oregon-is-ready-for-climate-friendly-and-equitable-communities/article_460f4410-9ff5-11ec-8676-f705917ece4e.html

Oregon Capital Chronicle

Land use policy, cautious investments could help Oregon weather economic uncertainty

March 22, 2022

Julia Shumway

Conservative investments and decades of policies aimed at reducing dependency on cars could insulate Oregon from the worst effects of an economic crisis sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but state leaders and their advisers say much is still uncertain.

The state and national economy rebounded rapidly after the initial shock of the Covid pandemic and widespread shutdowns in 2020. Higher wages and more business transactions boosted Oregon's tax revenue so much higher than anticipated this year that state legislators had a surplus to spend this session.

They had budgeted more than \$25 billion for the two-year budget cycle that ends in July 2023. They ended up with more than \$1.4 billion extra. Oregonians are likely to receive large rebates on their taxes in two years because of a state law that sends money back to taxpayers if tax collections exceed the amount budgeted.

However, inflation was hitting Oregonians hard before Russia invaded Ukraine, and it's likely to get worse. A report from state economists in February noted that inflation-adjusted wages have declined for most workers, with inflation at a 40-year high in the U.S.

After Russia invaded Ukraine, gas prices skyrocketed. That has ripple effects on other commodities that travel by truck at some point.

Gov. Kate Brown told the Capital Chronicle she expects to meet soon with her council of economic advisers to talk about the war in Ukraine and potential impacts on struggling Oregon families. She believes recent legislation that will pour millions of dollars into workforce training, housing and child care will help, along with a plan to send \$600 payments to low-income Oregonians.

"We're obviously watching the markets very closely and looking for ways to help Oregonians make ends meet," Brown said.

Gas prices and land use

Joe Cortwright, chair of Brown's council of economic advisers, said the most obvious direct impact on Oregon's economy is higher gas prices. Not much can be done in the short term at the state level to address rising gas prices and related costs, he said.

"The bigger issue is just all the uncertainty that it creates," he said.

The Republican governors of Georgia and Maryland temporarily suspended state gas taxes last week, and the Democratic governors of Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin have asked congressional leaders to suspend the federal 18-cents-per-gallon gas tax through the end of the year. Federal legislation to suspend gas taxes remains stalled in Congress.

Brown has no plans to push for a suspension of Oregon's 38-cents-per-gallon gas tax, her spokesman said last week.

Oregon's long-term planning means the state is better situated to withstand fluctuations in gas prices than others, Cortwright said.

The average American drives about 25 miles per day, but the average Oregonian only drives about 20 miles per day, he said.

"We spend less money on cars and gasoline, so when the price of gasoline goes up in Oregon, it hurts us a lot less than it does the typical American," Cortwright said.

Residents of sprawling cities like Oklahoma City or Dallas, Texas easily spend twice as much on driving than the average Oregonian, he said.

Oregon cities don't sprawl to the same extent because of a 1970s law requiring urban growth boundaries, lines that limit where and how cities can expand. Cities need state approval to expand their urban growth boundaries, and state land-use laws require them to prioritize building up, not out.

Over the long run, that means fewer subdivisions proliferating on the far edges of towns and more development in the core area of a city, and Oregonians who live in cities don't have to drive far to reach most services. That insulates residents from some of the worst effects of inflation over the past year, which especially affected fuel prices and car prices, Cortwright said.

"The price of those things is going to fluctuate," he said. "What we could do locally is reduce our dependence on those things so that we don't have to spend a bigger fraction of our income."

Excerpted. Link to full article:

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2022/03/22/land-use-policy-cautious-investments-could-help-oregon-weather-economic-uncertainty/>

The Bulletin

Let's build more affordable, livable communities in Central Oregon

April 11, 2022

Ariel Méndez, Board Chair of Bend Park & Recreation District

Imagine living in a neighborhood where you're a 15-minute walk or bike ride from all your daily needs — work, shopping, school, etc. Bend's Comprehensive Plan calls them "complete communities."

This kind of development gives people attractive options for leaving their car at home, reducing household costs while making our city healthier, safer, and more livable.

Right now, the typical Deschutes County household can expect to pay about \$2,000 more over the next year thanks to higher gas prices. We are already spending over a quarter of our household income on driving. And driving rates as the number one source of greenhouse gas emissions as well as a primary cause of death and serious injury for all age groups. This really hurts because most people feel they have no option but to drive for most trips.

But there's good news on the horizon. The state's climate friendly and equitable communities rules, coming as early as next month, will accelerate the growth of Bend's "complete communities" and make it easier for more people to walk and bike when they want to.

So how will we get that done? Presently, master planning is one way to accomplish our goals. A master-planned community aims to share infrastructure costs, place amenities nearby, and provide housing options at a variety of price points. This helps create mixed-income neighborhoods that also tend to be more diverse with more equitable public services.

In Bend, we have several examples of master-planned communities. NorthWest Crossing was a master-planned community begun in the 1990s. Petrosa in northeast Bend is

another master-planned community that began construction in 2021. The city of Bend recently completed planning for a community in southeast Bend. (When the city leads the planning, it is known as an area plan instead of a master plan.)

Done well, master-planned communities can provide a variety of housing options with things like retail, schools, and parks nearby — with a way to walk or bike to them if you choose to! For example, Pacific Crest Middle School, constructed in 2015 as part of the NorthWest Crossing master plan, connects to miles of off-street trails and has become famous for its students who ride bikes year-round.

Master planning may not be a panacea, but there are real risks to developing large projects without it. For example, High Desert Middle School in southeast Bend was completed in 1993 without an area or master plan. Today, almost three decades later, it remains surrounded by 45 mph roads, incomplete sidewalks, and no safe crossings, and it suffers massive traffic and sometimes even crashes at pick-up and drop-off times. Several years ago, the school installed a raised crosswalk in the parking lot after a driver struck a girl so hard it broke her hip.

Sticking to our plans to build these safer, more convenient “complete communities” allows us to spend less on transportation and makes our city more livable. But it also means sometimes we have to say no to projects that are incompatible with those plans.

I suspect this was on the minds of Bend city councilors when they were asked to consider changing city land use laws for the Deschutes Public Library’s costly central library and performing arts center off U.S. Highway 20 north of Bend. Personally, I’m grateful that council decided to protect the integrity of our development code and comprehensive plan. I hope the library board comes back with a better approach that supports, not undermines, our city’s plans and goals.

Bend still has a great opportunity to grow in a way that doesn’t sacrifice safety and the climate, while lowering the cost of living and further improving our great quality of life. Good alternatives to driving mean less time at the pump and healthier, more livable community for us all.

https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/guest-column-lets-build-more-affordable-livable-communities-in-central-oregon/article_0882107e-b9bc-11ec-8b86-e70d7f88a2b0.html

The Bulletin

Bold CFEC rulemaking is needed to address climate change

May 4, 2022

Mark Molner

Oregon's Land Conservation and Development Commission is currently creating a framework for new and existing transportation and urban planning in Oregon's eight largest municipal regions, which includes Bend, to meet the state's climate pollution reduction goals. In his recent guest column from April 11th, Ariel Méndez of the Bend Park & Recreation District board cited the importance of the forthcoming Climate-Friendly & Equitable Communities rules for making Central Oregon more livable.

This framework can promote density rather than sprawl to decrease dependency on cars, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions along with the benefit of reduced traffic and congestion. Well-planned infrastructure, public transportation alternatives, biking and walking paths, multi-use building zones that allow people to live nearer to where they work, and other methods can all be part of a solution. Urban planning objectives that reduce carbon emissions contribute to a more livable urban environment.

I urge Oregon's Land Conservation and Development Commission to adopt rules that are strong, clear, and timely enough to meaningfully address climate change and its impacts on our communities. This includes deadlines for Transportation System Plan updates, incorporating National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) standards for bike network design, implementing affordable housing and anti-displacement strategies, and setting block lengths that are conducive to walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.

If you want the state to take bold action on addressing climate change, write to DLCD.CFEC@dlcd.oregon.gov before May 12th and express your support for strong and urgent Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rules.

https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-vote-for-jamie-mcleod-skinner-a-politically-motivated-leak-comment-on/article_a09bf370-cbcd-11ec-9c79-7bd24b5fbf58.html

The New York Times

Can Portland Be a Climate Leader Without Reducing Driving?

April 21, 2022

Nadja Popovich

Brad Plumer

Portland has tried harder than most American cities to coax people out of their cars.

Over the past few decades, Oregon's largest city has built an extensive light rail system, added hundreds of miles of bike lanes and adopted far-reaching zoning rules to encourage compact, walkable neighborhoods. Of the 40 largest U.S. metropolitan areas, Portland saw its residents drive the third-fewest miles per day in 2019, on average, behind only New York and Philadelphia.

But despite Portland's efforts, the number of cars and trucks on its roads has kept rising as the city and its suburbs have grown — along with tailpipe pollution that is warming the planet. While Portland has set ambitious climate goals, the city is not on track to meet its targets, largely because emissions from transportation remain stubbornly high.

Now the city faces a fresh challenge: To deal with traffic jams, state officials want to expand several major highways around Portland. Critics say that will only increase pollution from cars and trucks at a time when emissions need to fall, and fast.

There's a \$1.2 billion proposal to widen and partially cover a busy stretch of Interstate 5 near the Rose Quarter in the city's center. There's a nearly \$5 billion plan to replace and expand the aging six-lane bridge crossing the Columbia River from Portland to suburban Vancouver, Wash. And there's an effort to upgrade and add lanes to portions of Interstate 205 along Portland's southern edge, among other projects.

Supporters, including Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat, say Portland's highways need to be enlarged to improve road safety and alleviate growing congestion, while arguing that idling cars and trucks create extra pollution when stuck in traffic.

But opponents point to decades of research showing that whenever lanes are added to busy freeways, more cars show up to fill the available space, a phenomenon known as “induced traffic demand.” Emissions from additional driving would outweigh any benefits from reduced idling, studies show.

Youth activists have been protesting the highway plans for nearly a year, and environmental groups have filed legal challenges. “Portland has a reputation as a really progressive and green city,” said Adah Crandall, a 16-year-old organizer with the Portland chapter of the youth-led Sunrise Movement. “We should be a leader on taking climate action, and that’s just not what we’re seeing happen.”

Similar conflicts are unfolding across the United States. Transportation is the nation’s largest source of greenhouse gases, accounting for 29 percent of emissions. And most major U.S. metro areas have seen a sharp rise in driving-related emissions over the past three decades as cities have sprawled.

President Biden visited Portland on Thursday to promote the new federal infrastructure law, which invests billions of dollars in climate-friendly programs like electric-car charging stations and mass transit. But the law provides far more money for roads, which studies show could significantly increase emissions overall if states keep expanding highway capacity, as they have done for decades.

“We must build a better America, and a good place to start is right here in Portland,” Mr. Biden said.

Now the city has become ground zero for a nationwide debate over whether it makes sense to keep laying asphalt as the planet heats up.

“That’s what the big fight is,” said Jo Ann Hardesty, a city commissioner who oversees Portland’s bureau of transportation. “Do we plan for a future 50 years from now where we have mitigated climate change, where we have a variety of options and neighborhoods where we have created walking communities? Or are we going to be a community of suburbs where everybody drives to everything?”

A Struggle to Reduce Driving

In recent years, environmentalists and policymakers have focused on cleaner electric cars as the best way to cut tailpipe emissions.

But even with sales rising fast, it could take decades to retire all the gas-burning vehicles still on the road. And electric cars have their own environmental costs: They require mining for battery components and power plants to charge them.

To cut emissions fast enough to stave off dangerous levels of global warming, studies have concluded, Americans will likely also need to drive less.

“If we want to meet these ambitious climate targets, we really have to do everything,” said Heather MacLean, a professor of civil and mineral engineering at the University of Toronto. “Electric vehicles are critical, but so are policies that reduce the need for vehicle travel in the first place, like expanding high-quality public transit or designing neighborhoods where people can take shorter trips.”

Yet even progressive cities like Portland, which boasts some of the highest cycling rates in the country, are struggling to curb car travel.

In some parts of Portland, particularly near downtown, it’s feasible to go car free. The blocks are designed to be shorter than in most cities, and easily walked. Buses and streetcars are dependable; bike share stations and green bike lanes are ubiquitous. In 2015, the city opened the first major U.S. bridge entirely closed to cars and trucks, Tilikum Crossing over the Willamette River, which on a recent spring morning bustled with cyclists and pedestrians.

Just four miles to the east, however, automobiles rule the road. Along 82nd Avenue, a five-lane thoroughfare running through some of East Portland’s most racially diverse and low-income neighborhoods, there are no bike lanes, the sidewalks are narrow and poorly lit at night and cars speed furiously. Last year, two pedestrians were hit and killed by drivers at the same intersection in the span of a month. The city has a \$185 million plan to improve safety there.

The narrative about Portland as bike and transit-friendly “is only true for an absurdly small segment of the city,” said Vivian Satterfield, director of strategic partnerships at Verde, a

nonprofit helping to bring environmental investments to the city's low-income neighborhoods.

Portland has adopted an aggressive climate change goal to stop adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere altogether by 2050. But emissions from cars and trucks have crept upward in recent years.

Experts cite several reasons. After gasoline prices crashed in 2014, more people found it cheaper to drive, and transit ridership and cycling rates fell. (Whether this trend reverses now that oil prices are spiking again remains to be seen.) At the same time, Portland's transit agency, TriMet, cut service amid a budget crunch. By the time lawmakers had increased funding, the coronavirus pandemic arrived, scaring people off buses and trains.

What's more, despite zoning rules aimed at constraining suburban sprawl, much of the Portland area is not dense enough to support the amount of transit available in the city center. In recent years, housing prices in Portland's most walkable neighborhoods have skyrocketed, pushing lower-income residents further out to places like East Portland, where it's difficult to get around without a car.

"It is fair to say that Portland has tried harder than most U.S. metros to reduce car dependence," said Joe Cortright, an economist based in Portland who writes about transportation issues on his influential blog, City Observatory. "But our efforts around biking, walking, transit and land use are still puny relative to the scale of our climate objectives."

Portland officials are now trying to do more. The city is adding bike lanes and bus rapid transit to long-neglected parts of East Portland. It has eliminated requirements for new homes to include parking spaces, while Oregon's legislature has reformed zoning to allow slightly denser housing across most of the city. And policymakers are exploring ways to extend light rail or other transit to the northern suburb of Vancouver, Wash., though the idea has historically faced opposition from residents there.

Yet even small changes to take space away from cars can be contentious, said Ms. Hardesty, the Portland transportation commissioner. "I see pushback all the time," she said. "People are furious that we reduced speed limits on some streets to try to improve bike and pedestrian safety. It's not easy."

The other big obstacle has been money, said Rebecca Lewis, an associate professor of planning at the University of Oregon. Portland is still “not investing in transit in the way that we might need to” in order to reach its climate goals, she said.

Most of Oregon’s transportation budget comes from gas taxes, which under the state constitution must be spent on roadways. In 2020, Portland’s regional government asked voters to approve \$7 billion in additional funding for measures like expanding the city’s MAX light rail line and, in a nod to suburban voters, major road upgrades. But the measure failed, opposed by businesses that would have faced higher taxes and even by some activists who said it devoted too much money for cars.

Now, with the federal government sending Oregon at least \$4.5 billion for transportation over the next five years through the infrastructure law, the debate has erupted again: How much money should be spent on roads?

‘Break Up With Freeways’

On a damp February afternoon, a group of mostly teenage protesters gathered outside Harriet Tubman Middle School, which overlooks the stretch of Interstate 5 that state officials want to widen, and wrote “Valentine’s” cards imploring Oregon’s Department of Transportation to “break up with freeways.”

Below, traffic slowed to a crawl as commuters crowded I-5. A few years ago, the school had to install a multimillion-dollar heating and cooling system to filter out vehicle exhaust from the highway. Students have been warned to limit their time outside.

The protests have come as Portland has been battered by global warming. Last year, a record-shattering heat wave killed 54 people across the city and temperatures rose enough to melt the cables on Portland’s streetcar system.

“The goal is to stop freeway expansions and instead invest in decarbonizing our transportation system,” said Ms. Crandall, a former Tubman student. “These are our futures on the line.”

The demonstrations are having an impact. Local leaders and community groups have increasingly urged Oregon’s Department of Transportation to address the project’s effects

on the climate as well as the surrounding community. In January, the Biden administration ordered the state to redo its environmental analysis of the I-5 Rose Quarter expansion.

The state transportation agency, which established a climate office in 2020, has not historically considered induced traffic demand when planning new highways. But according to a calculator developed by the Rocky Mountain Institute, a nonprofit focused on clean energy, a project like the I-5 expansion could increase local greenhouse gas emissions by tens of thousands of tons per year if, as expected, vehicle travel increases.

Amanda Pietz, an administrator at Oregon's Department of Transportation, said that while addressing climate change will "require a fundamental shift in how we do business," officials need to balance climate goals with other transportation imperatives.

"From a safety perspective and from a congestion perspective," Ms. Pietz said, expanding I-5 through central Portland "is still the right solution." The project, which has support from the trucking industry and commuters sick of being stuck in traffic, would significantly widen the shoulders and add two "auxiliary lanes" along a 1.7-mile segment to make merging easier. The agency is exploring how to make sure those changes don't lead to additional emissions, potentially including new tolls to curb traffic demand and help pay for the project, she said.

The latest version of the project, costing some \$1.2 billion, would include construction of a four-acre "cap" to partly cover the highway and reconnect the former Albina neighborhood, a historically Black community that was partially destroyed when I-5 was built in the 1960s. The plan, which came out of negotiations with local Black leaders, will also relocate the middle school away from the highway.

Rukaiyah Adams, the chair of Albina Vision Trust, a nonprofit organization that aims to revitalize the neighborhood, said the group would rather see the highway gone but supports the latest compromise.

"Being purist about it doesn't really solve the problem for us," Ms. Adams said. A highway cap would allow for safer walking routes across the freeway and the development of more mixed-income housing in an area where many Black residents have been priced out in recent decades, she said.

Climate activists have questioned why state leaders can't cap the highway without expanding the road beneath it.

The highway expansions in Portland illustrate a nationwide truth: Cities, even those with big climate ambitions, don't always control their own destiny when it comes to transportation.

In Texas, the city of Austin plans to invest billions of dollars in a new light rail system. But at the same time, the state is pushing ahead with a \$5 billion plan to add four lanes to Interstate 35 through downtown. In Illinois and Washington, state officials are eyeing highway widening projects around Chicago and Seattle even as they set goals for slashing greenhouse gas emissions.

Opponents of these projects say traffic can be more effectively managed with tools like congestion pricing, which involves charging fees during peak travel periods, in order to discourage some trips. But others say highway expansions are hard to avoid.

"We're growing and there are always going to be transportation needs, especially on the freight side," said David Schrank, a senior research scientist at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute. "Even if we're working from home, all these things are being delivered to us."

Portland is no stranger to these fights. When the federal government was building interstate highways through cities in the 1960s and 1970s, residents in Portland famously blocked the proposed Mt. Hood Freeway that would have torn through Southeast Portland. In the aftermath, city and state officials began diverting unused highway funds toward biking and public transportation projects instead.

While those protests weren't about climate change, the debate resonates today.

"Fifty years ago we had the political will to stop freeways," said Aaron Brown, a co-founder of the group No More Freeways, which has been working with the youth climate activists in Portland. Now, "the big question is not just how we stop this in Portland, but how we get people to make the connection between freeways and climate change all over the country."

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/04/21/climate/portland-emissions-infrastructure-environment.html>

The New York Times

How green is your metropolis?

April 21, 2022

Paul Krugman

Normally, a special election for California's State Assembly wouldn't have much national significance — especially not an election in San Francisco, a liberal, Democratic city that's the opposite of a swing district.

But this particular election was fought largely over housing policy. The winner had the backing of the newly rising Yimby — Yes in My Backyard — movement that has emerged in opposition to Nimbyism, calling for more housing construction and higher urban population density. And if this is a straw in the wind for national policy, the consequences for both the economy and the environment could be hugely positive.

Some background: On the eve of the coronavirus pandemic, America's big cities were in many ways in better shape than ever before in their history. Urban social problems hadn't vanished, but they had receded. In New York, in particular, homicides were down 85 percent from their level in 1990. At the same time, the knowledge economy was drawing businesses to large, highly educated metropolitan areas.

For a little while it seemed as if the pandemic might reverse these gains: The coronavirus hit New York hard during its early months, and there were many assertions that high population density was a health hazard. As we learned more about how to deal with the virus, however — and especially after vaccines became available — densely populated urban areas became substantially safer than rural areas, if only because their residents were more willing to wear masks and get vaccinated.

It's true that crime, especially shootings, rose sharply during the pandemic. But this is not restricted to big cities. And even now New York's crime rate is considerably lower than it was when, say, Rudy Giuliani was mayor. (Whatever happened to him?)

And if housing markets are any indication, big cities' appeal has rebounded. Rents in New York fell sharply during the worst of the pandemic, but they have now fully reversed that decline.

Which is a problem. You see, cities have become highly desirable places to live and work; as I'll explain in a minute, they're also good for the environment. But they've become increasingly unaffordable, largely because of local-level opposition to new construction.

Where does this opposition come from? There has always been a segment of U.S. opinion that views dense urban living as inherently dystopian. Senator Tom Cotton was widely mocked when he tweeted (falsely) that Democrats "want to make you live in downtown areas, and high-rise buildings, and walk to work, or take the subway" as if this lifestyle — which quite a few of us find appealing — was horrible. But many Americans probably share his views.

Some of the opposition also reflects selfishness: Affluent residents of expensive communities often want to keep housing prices high by restricting the housing supply.

But a significant proportion of the opposition to density may reflect honest misunderstandings of what density does.

According to a recent YouGov survey, three in four Americans believe that it's better for the environment if houses are built farther apart. And you can sort of see why they believe that. Someone who lives in a leafy suburb, let alone in a rural area, is surrounded by more greenery than someone in an urban high-rise. So wouldn't the nation as a whole be greener if everyone spread out more?

The answer, of course, is no, because this seemingly common-sense view involves a fallacy of composition. Imagine taking a square mile of Manhattan holding about 70,000 people — which, by the way, is much quieter and feels much less crowded than people who haven't lived in such a neighborhood can easily imagine — and spreading its population out to a typical suburban density. These people would then occupy about 35 square miles. The footprint of their houses, the roads they need to get around (because everything has to be done in a car), their shopping malls and so on would end up paving over far more green space than they used in New York.

Dense cities also use much less energy per capita than suburbs, largely because their residents drive less, relying instead on walking and various forms of public transit, including the extremely efficient mode known as the elevator.

So while nobody is suggesting that we force Americans to live like New Yorkers, allowing more people to live that way by permitting more density would be good for the environment.

It would also be good for the economy. Some people are willing to pay very high prices for urban housing because they're more productive in big cities. So limiting density makes America poorer, by preventing workers from making the best use of their talents. One recent study estimated that reducing land-use restrictions in a few major cities would add 3.7 percent to U.S. gross domestic product — that is, almost \$900 billion a year.

So let's hear it for Yimbys. Opposition to urban density has done a remarkable amount of harm. Reducing that opposition could do a surprising amount of good.

https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/21/opinion/housing-density-cities.html?campaign_id=39&emc=edit_ty_20220422&instance_id=59162&nl=opinion-today%C2%AEi_id=68624886&segment_id=89940&te=1&user_id=6fd01d767089e918516c2d993e5a10b1

STREETSBLOG

International climate report demands 'systemic' changes to transportation and urban planning

April 22, 2022

Christian MilNeil

The deadline to make dramatic reductions in climate-heating pollutants is closing fast, according to the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and cities and transportation agencies will both need to transform themselves dramatically in the next decade to avoid the worst effects of a heating climate.

Earlier this month, the IPCC published the third and final volume of its latest climate assessment report. While volume one synthesized the most recent physical science on climate change, and a dour second volume surveyed the severe impacts and disasters already underway from a heating climate, the third volume focuses on what humanity needs to do to curtail climate pollution and limit warming to 1.5° to 2° C above 20th-century temperatures.

The IPCC offers policymakers a long menu of policy ideas that could help society meet that goal. But progress to date has been so sluggish, and the need to dramatically reduce emissions so urgent, that policymakers will need to adopt most of the report's recommendations, and on a blisteringly fast timeline, while also forcefully turning away from fossil-fueled industries and energy-inefficient transportation systems.

As the third volume's executive summary puts it:

"Continuing investments in carbon-intensive activities at scale will heighten the multitude of risks associated with climate change and impede societal and industrial transformation towards low carbon development. Meeting the long-term temperature objective in the Paris Agreement therefore implies a rapid turn to an accelerating decline of greenhouse gas emissions towards 'net zero', which is implausible without urgent and ambitious action at all scales."

Many of the necessary mitigation strategies will involve major changes in the ways we generate electricity, manage forests, and practice agriculture.

But the report also stresses that cities and urbanized regions (which includes most of Massachusetts) will need to play a significant role in eliminating greenhouse gas pollution.

“A range of 5-30 percent of global annual greenhouse gas emissions from end-use sectors are avoidable by 2050... through changes in the built environment, new and repurposed infrastructures and service provision through compact cities, co-location of jobs and housing, more efficient use of floor space and energy in buildings, and reallocation of street space for active mobility,” according to the report’s Summary for Policymakers.

The report argues for increased use of electric vehicles, but also makes clear that simply replacing gasoline with batteries won’t be enough: cities must also dramatically curtail the use of automobiles and avoid “locking in” future emissions with more car-dependent infrastructure.

An entire chapter of the new report focuses on cities and urban development, while another chapter focuses on the transportation sector. These two chapters offer numerous marching orders for municipal officials and transportation agencies like MassDOT:

- “There is a growing need for systemic infrastructure changes that enable behavioral modifications and reductions in demand for transport services that can in turn reduce energy demand” (10-4)
- “Cities are especially prone to carbon lock-in because of the multiple interactions of technological, institutional, and behavioral systems, which create inertia and path dependency that are difficult to break. For example, the lock-in of gasoline cars is reinforced by highway and energy infrastructures that are further locked-in by social and cultural preferences for individual mobility options. The dominance of cars and their supporting infrastructures in auto-centric urban forms is further reinforced by zoning and urban development patterns, such as dispersed and low-density housing distantly located from jobs, that create obstacles to create alternative mobility options” (8-54)
- “Cities can reduce their transport-related fuel consumption by around 25 percent through combinations of more compact land use and the provision of less car-dependent transport infrastructure. Appropriate infrastructure, including

protected pedestrian and bike pathways, can also support much greater localized active travel” (10-4).

- “Infrastructure investments influence the structural dependence on cars, which in turn influence the lock-in or path dependency of transport options with their greenhouse emissions. The 21st century saw a new trend to reach peak car use in some countries as a result of a revival in walking and transit use... there is a need for increased investments in urban form strategies that can continue to reduce car-dependency around the world” (10-15)
- “How new cities and towns are designed, constructed, managed, and powered will lock-in behavior, lifestyles, and future urban greenhouse gas emissions” (8-4)
- “Integrated spatial planning to achieve compact and resource-efficient urban growth through co-location of higher residential and job densities, mixed land use, and transit-oriented development could reduce greenhouse gas emissions between 23–26 percent by 2050 compared to the business-as-usual scenario (robust evidence, high agreement, very high confidence)” (8-6)

<https://mass.streetsblog.org/2022/04/22/international-climate-report-demands-systemic-changes-to-transportation-and-urban-planning/>



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@1000FriendsOfOregon · Nonprofit organ

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General

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1000 Friends of Oregon · March 23 at 2:51 PM · 🌐

41

"Residents of sprawling cities like Oklahoma City or Dallas, Texas easily spend twice as much on driving than the average Oregonian.. Oregon cities don't sprawl to the same extent because of a 1970s law requiring urban growth boundaries, lines that limit where and how cities can expand."

Want to reduce climate change, create more walkable neighborhoods, and save money on gasoline? Read below for more information. 📄 📄 📄 📄

Right now, rules designed to create more climate friendly and equitable communities are being drafted at the state level by the Department of Land Conservation and Development.

We need your help to make sure these rules are strong, clear, and implemented with urgency, read and sign our letter here: <https://bit.ly/3CvbTpJ>

<http://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/.../land-use-policy.../>



OREGONCAPITALCHRONICLE.COM

Land use policy, cautious investments could help Oregon weather economic uncertainty – Oregon Capital...

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Want to reduce climate change, create more walkable neighborhoods, and save money on gasoline? Read below for more information. 📄 📄 📄 📄

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Right now, rules designed to create more climate friendly and equitable communities are being drafted at the state level by the Department of Land Conservation and Development.

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We need your help to make sure these rules are strong, clear, and implemented with urgency, read and sign this letter: bit.ly/3CvbTpJ



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Bend Bikes

@BendBikes · Nonprofit org

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General

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Bend Bikes @BendBikes · Mar 16

State rules designed to make Bend an equitable and people-centered community with "complete" neighborhoods are in the works. Help ensure these rules meet the moment for people who walk, bike, and roll by signing onto this letter with us: bit.ly/3CvbTpJ!



1 1 3



Right now, state rules designed to make Bend an equitable and people-centered community with "complete" neighborhoods are in the works by the Department of Land Conservation and Development.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to increase affordable housing options and create more ways for people who walk, bike, roll, and take transit to get around.

We need to make sure these rules are strong, clear, and implemented with urgency.

Help ensure these rules are ambitious enough to meet the moment for people who walk, bike, and roll by signing onto this letter with us: bit.ly/3CvbTpJ **link in bio**

#climatefriendlyandequitablecommunities

1w



dirtdancedesigns Signed

1w 1 like Reply

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dseeley2 Signed! I love this

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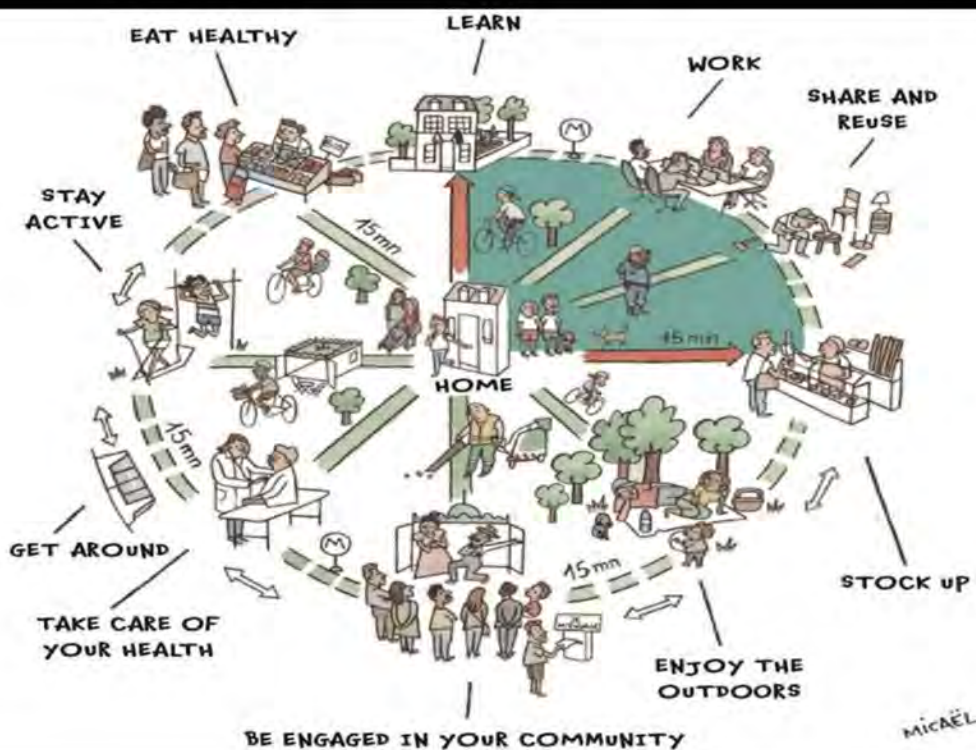


Liked by scottrockshomes and 32 others

MARCH 17



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Central Oregon LandWatch

@COLandWatch · ★ 4.3 (16 reviews) · Nonprofit organization

43

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About

2843 NW Lolo Drive, Ste 200 Bend, OR 97703

General

1,492 people like this

1,714 people follow this

Post details



Central Oregon LandWatch
March 14 · 🌐

"Today's biggest contributors to climate change are tied to our built environment. Where we live and work and how we travel determine our impact on this planet."

Some big things coming up this month, with chances to make some big changes for our future.



Performance for your post

188 People Reached

11 Likes, Comments & Shares

| | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 11 Likes | 11 On Post | 0 On Shares |
| 0 Comments | 0 On Post | 0 On Shares |
| 0 Shares | 0 On Post | 0 On Shares |
| 16 Post Clicks | | |
| 0 Photo views | 8 Link clicks | 8 Other clicks |

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

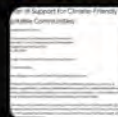
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Central Oregon LandWatch @OregonLa
Climate change is here, and the time for

24 hours left to sign on to this letter of support for Equitable Communities for Oregon.

[#ourclimatefriendlyfuturecantwait](#)

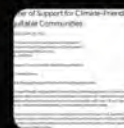


docs.google.com
Letter of Support for
To submit March 21
Development Comr



Central Oregon LandWatch @OregonLandWatch · Mar 22
Our state's visionary land use policy helps insulate Oregonians from economic tumult and can guide climate-friendly and equitable outcomes for our communities: [oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2022/03/22/lan...](#)

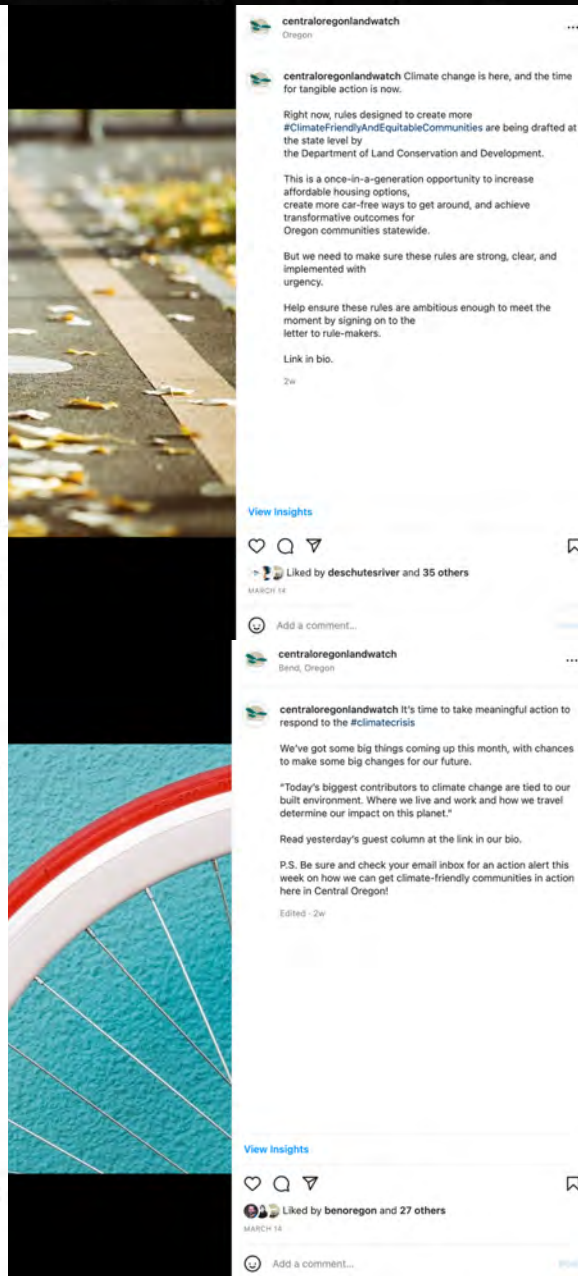
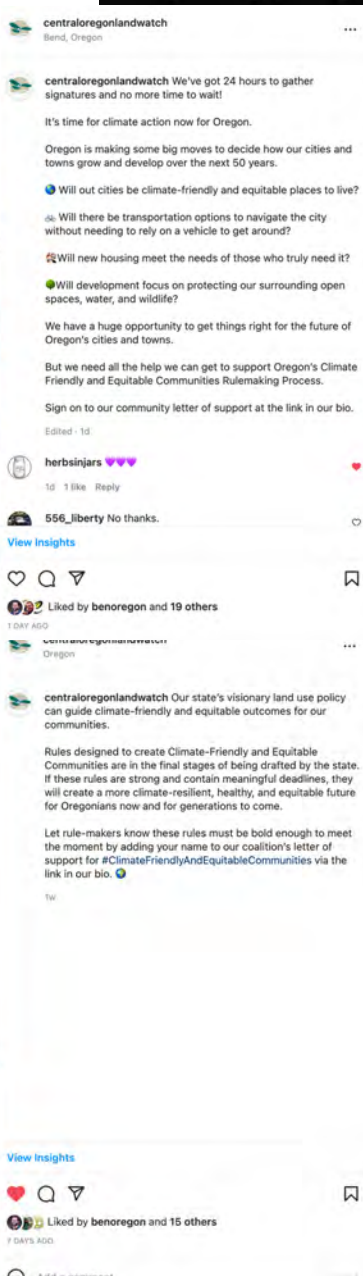
Sign the letter of support for [#ClimateFriendlyAndEquitableCommunities](#):



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Letter of Support for Climate-Friendly & Equitable ...
To submit March 29, 2022 Land Conservation and Development Commission Department of Land ...



OREGON'S LAND USE POLICY
CAN GUIDE CLIMATE-FRIENDLY
AND EQUITABLE OUTCOMES
FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

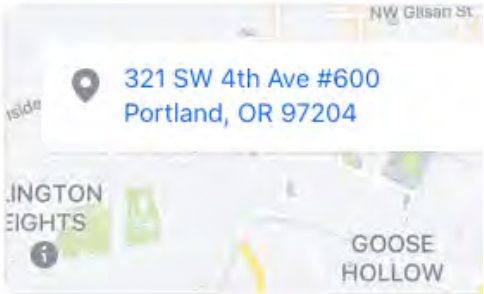




Oregon League of Conservation Voters

@oregonlcv · Nonprofit organization

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General

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Conservation Voters @OLCV · Mar 25

Oregon's Land Conservation and Development Commission is currently going through a rulemaking process to create more bikeable and walkable communities around the state. You can help show your support by signing the petition today! ➡️ Learn more: [olcv.org/help-create-bi...](https://www.olcv.org/help-create-bikeable-and-walkable-communities/)



🗨️ ↻️ ❤️ 2 📤



olcv Oregon's Land Conservation and Development Commission is currently going through a rulemaking process to create more bikeable and walkable communities around the state. You can help show your support by signing the petition today!

➡️ Learn more: <https://www.olcv.org/help-create-bikeable-and-walkable-communities/> (link in bio!)

#ORClimateAction

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9 likes

4 DAYS AGO

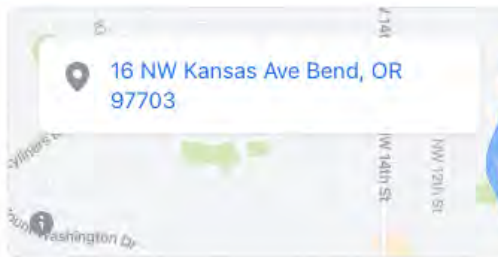
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General

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ACTION ALERT: Show your support for the Climate Friendly & ...

March 28, 2022 at 8:43 AM
ID: 4989174491120273

Interactions

1 reaction 0 comments 1 share

Overview Performance Paid results Feed preview

Performance

Reach

| | |
|---------|-----------|
| Total | 83 |
| Organic | 83 (100%) |
| Paid | 0 (0%) |

Engagements

| | |
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| Reactions | 1 |
| Comments | 0 |
| Shares | 1 |

Negative interactions

| | |
|--------|---|
| Total | 0 |
| Unique | 0 |



envirocenterbend · Following



envirocenterbend 🚩 Action alert: Please join us in urging Oregon's Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) to fulfill their promise to "transform Oregon's communities to be safe, equitable, sociable, and pleasant places where driving is not required, and the amount of driving is reduced." The LCDC is now taking public comment on the Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rules, which will impact how we live, work, travel, and play.

These new rules will ensure that Oregon's land use planning system meets the demands of the climate crisis. They will reduce the need to drive by making our communities more walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly, while promoting more diverse and affordable housing options.

🔔 Take action today– the LCDC's final hearing is THIS WEEK!

Here are ways to show your support for this critical set of rules:

1. Sign the Letter of Support (link in bio) to tell the LCDC that you are in favor of rules that enable climate-friendly and equitable communities. Sign the letter by Tuesday, March 29, 2022.
2. Send an email to the LCDC: esther.johnson@dlcd.oregon.gov. Use the subject line: CFEC Comment for LCDC
3. Speak directly to the Commission by participating in the virtual LCDC meeting on Thursday, March 31, 2022
4. SHARE this post with your networks 🌐

#inbend #bendoregon #climateaction #climatechange #takeaction #sustainableliving #greencities #equity

1d



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1 DAY AGO

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ACTION ALERT:

SUPPORT CLIMATE
FRIENDLY &
EQUITABLE
COMMUNITIES IN
OREGON TODAY

