

Jennifer Williamson

Oregon State Legislature: House District 36



General Approach. The City of Portland has often been named the best bicycling city in the country. At the same time, car vehicle miles traveled are increasing while traffic congestion grows. Why do you think more Portlanders don't walk, bicycle, or take transit for transportation, and what will you do to help Portland (especially your legislative district) become an even better city to bike in, as well as a great city to walk and take transit?

There are many reasons why people choose not to bike, walk or take transit. In my district, however, the urban areas allow for more people to walk, bike, or take transit. In fact, the TriMet stop on the PSU campus is the most used stop anywhere in the system. But in some parts of my district, particularly near Multnomah Village and Hillsdale, there are no sidewalks or streetlights and many of the roads are unimproved. There are also many areas that are very

dangerous for walkers and bikers. I would support legislation that would increase sidewalks in this district and other districts with the same issues.



Choices and Public Perception. Critics of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects often contend cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users don't pay their fair share in road taxes and other user fees. How would you make the case for allocating funds for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects?

Transit, bike lanes, and sidewalks are imperative for people's health and safety and are a path to a more sustainable future. The easier we can make it for people to choose alternatives to driving their personal cars, the more money we save on wear and tear on our roads, and ancillary expenses like health care and pollution abatement.

State Funding for Active Transportation. HB 1700 from 1971 (ORS 366.514) requires the state set aside at least 1% of the highway fund to build bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Meanwhile, one-quarter of Oregonians (roughly a million people) are too poor, young, old or infirm to drive. Do you feel that the 1% is an adequate allotment to fulfill the safety and transportation needs of the everincreasing bicycling and pedestrian community? If not, what would you do to change it?

Clearly we have an unmet need and we must find a way to address this issue. I will work with my colleagues and stakeholder groups to determine the best way to fund our safety and transportation needs.

Traffic Safety. Traffic-related crashes are the top cause of death and injury for Oregonians aged 1 to 34. Pedestrian injuries and deaths are a serious problem in Oregon, with one serious injury a day and one death a week, encompassing 14% of traffic deaths in Oregon and 30% of deaths in Portland. Not surprisingly, most walkers and cyclists are injured or killed on busy streets. How will you improve traffic safety for walkers and bicyclists, especially for youth?

It is imperative that we address the areas of our city that do not have access to sidewalks and preserve the Safe Routes to School program. I would engage Portland State University's Center for Transportation Studies to advise on the best options for addressing this issue.

Sensible Traffic Laws. For over 30 years, Idaho has had a law allowing cyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs, and come to a rolling stop instead of a complete stop (out of understanding of the laws of physics and the excessive use of stop signs on neighborhood streets). Over those last 30 years, Idaho police departments have seen no increase in safety problems, and have provided testimony in favor of the law. The Oregon legislature has considered passing a similar law in Oregon, but has failed to. What are your views on such a proposal?

I am interested in learning more about this issue. I would engage Portland State University's Center for Transportation Studies to advise on the best options for addressing this issue.





CRC Highway Mega-project. There has been a lot of pressure to build the most expensive public works project in the region's history, the five-mile long highway project known as the Columbia River Crossing. Despite being a multi-billion dollar project, bicycle and pedestrian facilities involved are substandard, including an under-highway mile-long path, a five-block corkscrew detour into Vancouver, and a mostly minimum-width-allowed 16-foot path width, all for a facility designed to serve the next 100 years. The project is diverting billions of dollars from other regional priorities to build an expansion that won't solve congestion. What are your views on the mega-project and what would you do about its funding as a legislator?

I support the CRC but it needs, like any major project, strict oversight and I would appreciate input from all interested parties and community members.

Cleaner Transportation, Better Choices through Land Use. Smart land use planning has a huge effect on how many people use transportation choices. In 2010, legislators passed Senate Bill 1059, which requires Metro to make its land use planning decisions lead to specific reductions in global warming pollution. It also requires Eugene-Springfield to plan on how it would accomplish such reductions. Would you support an effort to provide \$300,000 for a grant to do scenario planning for one of Oregon's other four Metro areas, which would be designed as a competitive pilot effort to model how Salem/Keizer, Corvallis, the Rogue Valley, or Bend could reduce their transportation pollution? If so, how would you go about finding that funding?

Yes, and I would work with local and state elected officials to identify appropriate funding sources.

Transit funding. Transit systems throughout the state continue to struggle to make ends meet, especially in their quest for operating funds. In response, often service is cut while fares are increased. While the payroll tax cap was increased in 2009, it only increased for some cities. If you think public transit funding is inadequate, what sources of funds would you work increase or create as a legislator?

I would work with local and state elected officials to identify appropriate funding sources.

Transportation Equity. Recent census data show nearly 10,000 people of color, mostly African Americans, have moved from Portland's city core to the city's eastern edges over the past ten years. East Portland has much sparser sidewalks and bikeways, grocery stores and parks, and less access to transit. How would you ensure these increasingly diverse and historically under-invested neighborhoods are revitalized for their current residents? How would you improve transportation choices for low income communities and communities of color?

Continuing to grow our light rail system and stop the elimination of bus lines. We must also increase the number of sidewalks and bike lanes, and improve our roads.



jennifer williamson



Personal Example and Understanding. How do you currently travel around town, and how do you commute to work?

I utilize the “walkability” of West Portland neighborhoods everyday to run errands and support my local shops and grocery stores. I walk to work downtown and I carpool to Salem when the legislature is in session.

Past Accomplishments. Do you have any specific accomplishments in improving the quality of life for bicycle, pedestrian and transit users in Oregon or other places?

I worked with Sisters in Action to ensure that Portland Public School students continue to receive TriMet passes. These passes are vital, especially for low-income students, to provide a way to get to school everyday.