

Submitter: Michelle Poyourow

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure: HB2659

My name is Michelle Poyourow and I am a transit planner with a firm called Jarrett Walker & Associates, though in this testimony I represent only myself.

I evaluate and plan public transit networks around the US and the world, in rural, suburban and urban places. I have worked for large and small Oregon transit providers and cities, and in doing so I have observed what a huge impact parking supply and parking design have on the success of transit - and I don't just mean the light rail, BRT or frequent bus that people think of as underpinning Transit Oriented Development. I mean any transit, like the buses that go a few times a day between small towns, or infrequent routes in suburban areas.

All transit success is affected by parking.

- When buildings are required to build more parking than their particular use in their particular location need, it pushes those buildings farther apart.
- Buildings farther apart means fewer people and destinations are walking distance from any given bus stop.
- It degrades street and sidewalk connectivity.
- It increases the movement of cars across sidewalks and crosswalks, making it less comfortable and safe to walk.
- And it forces bus routes to be more circuitous, less direct and therefore less frequent and fast than they otherwise could be.

I can't overstate the damage I've seen parking requirements do to transit in communities of every size, across the US. This matters on bus routes in little towns like Woodburn or Monmouth, just as it does on the bus routes in big cities like Salem or Portland, and just as it does around light rail stations.

This is not a specifically urban or suburban problem - it arises from the geometry of how transit works, which is constant across every sized community.

And it's a hard thing to undo – parking supply affects block size, road width, curb placements and stormwater placement, all enormously expensive if not impossible to remake in pursuit of a denser, more walkable pattern, where transit works.

I understand that a few cities have objected to CFEC and have put forward HB 2659 to reject it. This would be a huge step backwards at a moment when we need to be racing forwards for the sake of our beautiful state, our planet, and our children.

Certainly simplifying the rules and making them easier to comply with, especially for small cities, would be a welcome improvement. But I urge you to reject HB 2659 as written and stand firm behind the policy reflected in CFEC.