



Charlie
 Hales
 Mayor

John
 Widmer
 Interim
 Director

TESTIMONY
 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BY
 CHRISTINE LEON
 CITY OF PORTLAND, BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

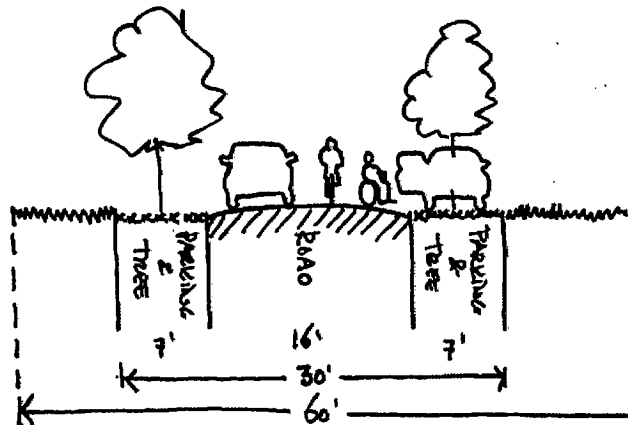
April 24, 2013

Senate Bill 345

Chair Read, members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. For the record, I am Christine Leon, Principal Engineer and Development Manager with the City of Portland Bureau of Transportation.

The City of Portland requests your support for Senate Bill 345. This bill will provide local jurisdictions the option, if they choose to post appropriate signs, to allow pedestrians to travel on designated low-speed narrow residential roadways, sharing the roadway with vehicles. This authority will enable local communities to implement context-sensitive street design standards that are also more cost effective for residents and taxpayers.

Currently, 45 miles of dirt and gravel roads exist in residential areas of Portland. The cost of upgrading the roads to meet traditional street design standards has proven a persistent obstacle to street improvements. To help address this problem, the City recently adopted a new street design standard for low-speed, low-volume residential streets as a more cost-effective option for neighboring property owners. This design standard calls for a narrow paved section that functions as shared space for bicycles, low-speed automobiles, and pedestrians (see figure below).



1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 800 • Portland, OR 97204 • 503-823-5185
 FAX 503-823-7576 • TTY 503-823-6868 • www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation

This is not the right solution for every street, but cities need flexibility to design and build more affordable, context-sensitive solutions. Building a shared roadway is cost effective, safe and a real alternative to the persistent problem of unpaved roads.

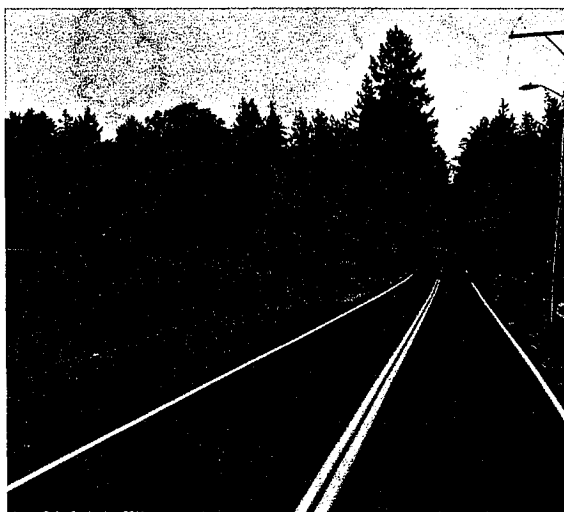
ORS 801.368 defines a narrow residential roadway as a two-way road not wider than 18 feet and located in a residential district. In recognition of the unique characteristics and uses of these streets, the Oregon Vehicle Code (ORS 811.111) specifies a 15 MPH regulatory speed limit on narrow residential roadways.

The Oregon Vehicle Code provisions governing pedestrian position along a roadway, however, do not differentiate between low-speed narrow residential roadways and wider, faster-speed roads. ORS 814.070. The Vehicle Code requires that for all roadways without sidewalks, pedestrians, including wheelchair users, must remain on the shoulder as far from the roadway as possible, and if no shoulder is available, travel as near as practicable to the left outside edge of the roadway facing traffic.

The current Vehicle Code provisions for pedestrian position along a roadway fail to recognize the unique character of low-volume, low-speed narrow residential roadways. The provisions also create an impediment to improving gravel and dirt roads with a low-cost and effective solution of a narrow residential roadway without sidewalks.

SB 345 would allow pedestrians and wheelchair users to travel on a low-speed narrow residential roadway so long as the local jurisdiction has posted signs that indicate the presence of pedestrians in the roadway and pedestrian does not create a traffic hazard. This effectively gives the local jurisdiction the voluntary option of designating a narrow residential roadway segment for shared use by pedestrians and vehicles, recognizing the unique character of these low-volume, low-speed narrow residential streets. This allows a jurisdiction, where appropriate, to forgo installation of the curbs, sidewalks, and associated ramps and driveway approaches that would separate vehicles and pedestrians in a traditional street, greatly reducing the cost of street improvements.

An example - This collector road in SW Portland lacks sidewalks but **does not meet the definition of narrow residential roadway**:



**SW 45th Avenue in
Portland does not meet
the definition of a
narrow residential
roadway**

Shared streets must be residential, narrow, and slow speed. Two examples of candidate streets in Portland:

A narrow residential roadway in southeast Portland (SE Mill Street)



A narrow residential roadway in southwest Portland

Gravel streets, meanwhile are a barrier to mobility and accessibility for bus operators, TriMet lift service, bicyclists, Portland Fire Bureau trucks, pedestrians, wheel chair users and strollers.



A gravel street in northeast Portland

Typically a resident or developer finances residential street improvements. If funding is available, the City also may design, construct and finance a capital improvement project. The City of Portland estimates that design and construction of a shared narrow residential roadway could achieve a 75% cost reduction compared to construction of a traditional street.

- Traditional street (design & construction) with pavement, curb, sidewalks, planter area, surface stormwater treatment and discharge to disposal point. Cost per street (350ft long block) may be on average: \$525,000
- Shared residential street (design & construction) with pavement and gravel shoulders. Cost per street (350ft long block) may be as low as: \$115,000

We respectfully urge the committee to approve Senate Bill 345, which will provide local governments the option of allowing pedestrians to travel on low-speed narrow residential roadways and enable more cost-effective street design standards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachments:

Letter of support from Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood Association

Letter of support from Cully Association of Neighbors.

Letter of support from East Portland Neighborhood Association



Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood Association

Post Mail Box 547
4326 South East Woodstock Boulevard
Portland, Oregon 97206

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

We would like to state our endorsement for the Street by Street / Out of the Mud Initiative, with the following urge: that the Bureau of Transportation work to explore and develop additional measures to continue to reduce the cost per property owner.

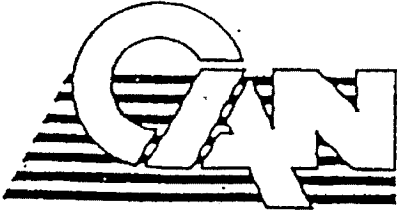
We would like to specifically support two aspects of this initiative:

- 1) The two design standards for dirt and gravel streets, named "Separate Residential" and "Shared Residential," and
- 2) The changes in the Oregon Vehicle Code that would require vehicles to yield to pedestrians, which would be necessary for the "Shared Residential" street design to succeed.

The Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood Association believes that the Out of the Mud Initiative would add to the livability and safety of our own neighbors and of the citizens of the entire city. We are pleased to see an initiative that creatively and practically addresses the need to improve our roadways and increase non-car road user's safety, while also beginning to address the issue of financial burden to individual property owners.

Sincerely,

Brentwood-Darlington Neighborhood Association



CULLY ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORS

Date November 25, 2012
TO: Members of the Portland City Council
FROM: Cully Association of Neighbors
SUBJECT: Street by Street Initiative

The Cully Association of Neighbors supports and endorses the proposed *Street by Street Initiative*, under consideration for adoption by the City Council on November 29, 2012.

As a neighborhood with among the City's highest concentration of dirt and gravel streets, which impacts our livability and safety, we recognize that new tools are needed to more quickly tackle dirt and gravel streets. The two new design standards, Shared Residential Street design and Separated Residential Street design, will help in this regard by significantly reducing the cost of basic improvements through the Local Improvement District Program.

The Cully Association of Neighbors also supports the proposed change to the Oregon Vehicle Code needed to allow the Shared Residential Street to succeed.

In addition, we support the continued efforts by the Bureau of Transportation to refine the entire process for improving dirt and gravel streets to make it more affordable, easier and efficient for neighborhoods to form Local Improvement Districts.

Sincerely,

Kathy Fuerstenau, Chairwoman
Cully Association of Neighbors



April 22, 2013

Expression of Support for Senate Bill # 345

(Needed Clarification to ORS 814.070 re: carefully defined pedestrian uses of narrow residential roadways)

Members of the 2013 Oregon House Committee:

East Portland is an area of 140,000 people which was annexed into the City of Portland more than 30 years ago and which has retained the block and street patterns in use at that time for most of its neighborhoods. Growth has made the need for safe pedestrian ways much more urgent. However, the city is without the funding base needed to provide streets that fit historic state definitions used in the past.

Most East Portland neighborhood streets are used for many purposes which include automobiles but also include pedestrian travel and parking. Currently there is no way to provide an affordable separation for those uses and that causes increasingly unsafe conditions for residents who need a way to meet their transportation related needs.

We have worked with the City of Portland for more than a year to find answers which provide safety for people living in these areas. We need a modification to ORS 814.070 in order to try some of those approaches beginning this year.

We ask your support for Senate Bill #345.

Then we can continue to find ways in certain defined residential zones to provide cost effective and safe pedestrian options for residents of our area as they use public right-of-way to circulate in their neighborhoods.

Sincerely,


Linda Bauer, Chair

On Behalf of the:

East Portland Neighborhood Associations
Land Use and Transportation Committee