

March 6, 2019



TO: Joint Committee on Transportation  
RE: HB 2702

**PROTECTING YOUR  
RIGHT TO ROAM**

In regards to HB2702, Oregon Walks, Oregon's state-wide pedestrian advocacy organization, strongly supports local jurisdictions having the autonomy to set speeds on locally-owned streets according to local needs and conditions. We urge the Joint Committee to grant ODOT authority to research and establish minimum guidelines to certify local jurisdictions to set their own limits if they so choose. Oregon Walks is dedicated to ensuring the conditions for walking are safe, convenient, and accessible for everyone living in Oregon. As such, we were instrumental in creating The City of Portland's Vision Zero policy and are committed to reaching its goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries as soon as possible.

Managing speeds on urban streets is critical to achieving safe streets as speed is identified as a major factor in nearly half of the traffic deaths on Portland streets, especially in areas like East Portland which has 28 of the city's 30 high crash intersections and 15 arterials that are high crash corridors, which is more than in any other section of the city. Slower speeds reduce both the number of crashes and the severity of crashes; at slower speeds, people driving can stop more quickly, avoiding a crash altogether. And when a collision does occur, there is less of a chance of death or serious injury; a person walking struck by a vehicle driving 40 mph is eight times more likely to die than one struck by a vehicle driving at 20 mph.

Recent national and international research has honed in on best practices for speed management. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (2018) found that "lowering the speed limit in urban areas is an effective countermeasure to reduce speeds and improve safety for all road users" while the National Transportation Safety Board (2017) found that "the current level of emphasis on speeding as a national traffic safety issue is lower than warranted and insufficient to achieve the goal of zero traffic fatalities in the United States." The World Health Organization's Global Status Report on Road Safety (2018) recommends that urban speed limits should not exceed 30 mph and local authorities should have the power to set speeds. Furthermore, a consensus is developing in the transportation planning profession that the 85th percentile methodology of setting speed limits is obsolete, and is designed solely for vehicular traffic. Cities need the authority to set speed limits to meet local conditions including providing safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and mobility device users, and do so in a timely manner.

Oregon Walks strongly supports any legislation that will move Portland closer to having the ability to more quickly and efficiently set consistent speeds across street types that are intuitive for drivers, responsive to street context and safe for all road users. We strongly urge you to support HB 2702 and to give local jurisdictions the ability to set speed limits on city-owned streets.

Inna Levin,  
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