

I am a concerned North Portland resident and parent volunteer at James John Elementary, where I work on transportation and safety initiatives and walk, bike or take transit everywhere that I can. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the conversation about safer, more livable streets.

In North Portland, we face challenges that threaten neighborhood safety. Lombard Street (U.S. 30 Bypass) divides our community, making it difficult and dangerous to cross, especially for children, families, and seniors. While curb ramps installed after a lawsuit improved accessibility, they do not address broader safety concerns for those who walk, bike, or use transit along this highway.

Even small safety changes—like installing a "No Turn on Red" sign at intersections where children cross Lombard—are difficult to implement, making it hard to protect vulnerable pedestrians. Simple improvements like diverters on greenways are essential to making streets more walkable and livable but face significant approval barriers.

I also share concerns about the new I-5 bridge and its potential to increase cut-through traffic in St. Johns, further jeopardizing safety and livability. It is critical that ODOT considers the impacts and takes steps to mitigate the traffic burden.

Expanding transit options would help reduce car dependency and ease congestion across I-5 and St. Johns. Investing in reliable bus service, express routes, and mass transit will offer alternatives to driving, reducing car volumes and supporting those who rely on sustainable transportation. Improved transit would relieve traffic pressures, making our streets safer and more accessible.

While challenges persist, there are positive developments, like the bike lanes on Willamette Boulevard, encouraging more people to bike. However, businesses and services vital to our daily are on Lombard, an ODOT roadway that remains hostile to non motorized users. We need a vision that prioritizes safety for all, not just cars.

Jessica Fletcher