

Submitter: Anna Wilson  
On Behalf Of: Our City  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: HB3113

“Portland is the Bike City” is something I’m sure everyone has heard when traveling or welcoming visitors to our city. How many tote bags, t-shirts, business logos, etc use a picture of a bicycle as an advertisement for Portland?

Why are we still pretending that’s what we are?

With impossible-to-navigate bike path systems, dangerous roads, and countless fatalities, how are we still calling ourselves the “Bike City?” Or even a city worthy of all the other qualities we claim as our own?

When looking at cities around the world— ones that are beautiful, safe, and have a steady stream of tourists and new residents —what image emerges?

Green parks. City squares. Lighted sidewalks. But most importantly, people outside of their cars or homes, walking or biking the streets.

Isn’t that the idealized American dream? What’s shown in TV shows or movies of happy, beautiful towns? P

The numbers, I’m sure, have already been shared by those with more expertise. What I want to convey is the imagery of what kind of city Portland could become.

Too often these days the people in power forget about the legacy they’re leaving behind. Every decision is short-sighted and seeks immediate result for the least amount of sacrifice. That’s not how great cities are built, or even how good decisions are made. Your time in office is limited. What you contribute now can either bring short-term benefit to yourself, or long-term admiration from future generations.

How do you want your legacy to be written? What contributions will you make during your short time here that will last? How will you leave an imprint on this city that says “I made this place better”?

You won’t be remembered for your business savvy. You won’t be lauded for your networking. You will only be remembered if what you do is visible.

This city needs someone to look beyond their own interests, and the interests of their friends and business partners. This city needs fewer short-sighted policies that will never be written about in the history books.

This city needs leaders that will prioritize making a visible difference in how this city will look to our children, our grandchildren. THAT is your legacy; and the only thing you can do that will ever really matter.

Beautify our city. Make our streets safer. Create a true “bike city” that will change how our, and your, story is written. Turn Portland into the paradise it deserves to be.