



[Home](#) / [Council Clerk](#) / [Council Documents](#) / [Communication](#)

743-2024

Communication

Request of Kate Walker to address Council regarding sustainable transportation

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A brief description of Communication: Sustainable transportation

Document History

Item 743 Communications in [August 28, 2024 Council Agenda](#) (<https://www.portland.gov/council/agenda/2024/8/28>)

City Council

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Requested Agenda Type

Communications

Date and Time Information

Requested Council Date

August 28, 2024

From: [Katherine Walker](#)
To: [Council Clerk](#)
Subject: City council communication
Date: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 9:16:26 AM

Hi I arrived for my city council time and was was turned away from the front door repeatedly by the security guards who could only wave at me.

I appreciate technical issues but I've now gone through the construction zone and entirely around the building twice and am now having a PTSD meltdown. I will not be able to give testimony today.

My communication is attached, I hope that we can find a way to connect in the future.

- Kate Walker

Hello city council, my name is Kate Walker and I use they/them pronouns. I live in Buckman in East Portland; and I'm never going to own another car.

Why, after 30 years of car ownership, why would I move halfway across the country to ride a bicycle around a city where it rains **all** the time? It's the cars. Cars are awful, polluting, and especially **dangerous** machines.

A major reason why I got rid of my car is simple economics. Keeping a car on the road costs thousands of dollars a year. Private automobiles are the primary form of transportation all across the United States, and they are an economic burden. Beyond that, cars are a fragile transportation system. What that means is that any shock to the price of oil is going to have a huge effect on transportation cost. Given the ongoing conflicts across the world, it's not hard to imagine the price of oil going up rapidly.

In 1973 the oil crisis caused huge problems for our country, and we've only become more oil dependent since then. The price of car transportation is now a big factor in the cost of labor and private car debt is the largest it has ever been. Our car-based transportation system is both fragile and expensive.

And this is while we still have relatively cheap gasoline.

Why do we continue to prioritize an expensive transportation system powered by oil? Why do we continue to invest in more car lanes when we know that we can't afford more cars? Electric automobiles are even more expensive than gas-powered cars, which is why we're making slow progress on electrification.

We cannot continue subsidizing the cars that are killing us with road violence, making us sick from pollution, and bankrupting us with the cost. The only way to solve these problems and make transportation cheaper is to promote sustainable alternatives to cars and to severely restrict private automobiles. Portland has been ahead of most US cities in preparing for the future. We need more than ever to double down on our climate leadership and sustainable transportation goals.

I believe Portland should both increase the gas tax and consider a congestion charge for all cars. We need to make cars pay for the air they pollute, and to FULLY pay for their infrastructure. The revenue should go to the Transportation Operating Fund to pay for more frequent public transit, safer bike lanes, and improving the pedestrian infrastructure across the entire city. Investing in clean transportation and taxing the polluting vehicles will encourage more people to get rid of their cars, which will go a long way towards making a more sustainable, affordable, and safer Portland.

Thank you for your time.