

To: Lane County Commissioners

From: Bryce Oakes Mayall, 3703 Garden Ave, Springfield OR

Date: Feb 12, 2019

Subject: Fixed Object Removal Project for Sears Road

Thank you Transportation committee for your time in considering the issue of fixed object removal along Sears Road. As I understand it, the impetus for this action comes from several fatalities on this road over a span of years. As we examine the root causes of such fatalities, we often find that there are several underlying issues, namely intoxicated driving, distracted driving, falling asleep at the wheel, and excessive speed. I believe most if not all of the fatalities on Sears Road falls under these categories.

When considering fixed object removal, I think we should consider it in the framework of these issues. For drivers who are intoxicated, distracted, or asleep at the wheel, the lack of a tree directly next to the road when a multitude of trees still stand just a few feet away may make no difference whatsoever. How many of us have seen such cars a hundred or more feet out into a field or upside down in a ditch. The speed at which they leave the road would often just carry them into the next fixed object, and their dulled or absent reaction time contributes to this outcome.

For drivers who are prone to speeding, fixed object removal may actually have an adverse effect. Several studies have shown that merely the appearance of a wider roadway increases speeds, even when speed limits stay the same. Thus, we may have more speeding vehicles, not fewer, resulting in a greater chance of roadway departures.

Sears Road is the major North-South bicycle corridor, and cyclists as well as local pedestrian traffic of residents are the people most likely to be affected by increased speeds on this road. We have already had one terrible vehicle-cyclist accident on another one of our rural roads, and I would hate to see the incidence increase on Sears Road as well. Additionally, Sears Road brings many cyclists down to the communities of Creswell and Cottage Grove where they have an economic impact. My wife and I have stayed at the Village Green with our tandem bicycle to take advantage of the local roads. We've gotten cokes and ice cream bars at convenience stores in both communities. And Busters Café can tell you how many times they serve tables filled with lycra-clad cyclists out on a weekend excursion. Making this major bike throughway more dangerous is not in the best interests of the residents, the cyclists, the local economy, and perhaps not even the drivers themselves. I urge you to find other ways to spend these traffic calming funds, hopefully ways that can greater benefit our community.

I am an avid cyclist and Lane County resident who uses Sears Road regularly. Fixed object removal on Sears Road will negatively impact cycling safety, economic development, and quality of life in Lane County. While fixed object removal may improve safety for motorists who choose to operate vehicles at high speeds and in an unsafe manner, it would have the perverse impact of decreasing the safety for cyclists. Perceived safety is directly linked to the speed motorists drive and removing the trees will encourage motorists to drive even faster than they already do.

Further, the scenic qualities and shade provided by the trees greatly enhance the cycling experience. Sears Road is the primary road for cyclists who are accessing south Lane County from Eugene and Springfield. A degraded experience, both because of safety and a less scenic environment, would discourage cyclists from traveling to the area. Lane County and Travel Oregon have identified cycling and bicycle tourism as economic development tools, particularly for rural areas. I personally spend money almost every weekend during the summer in Cottage Grove and Creswell as a result of riding my bike there. Degrading the cycling experience on Sears Road would degrade the economy in south Lane County.

Please do not degrade this vital cycling connection between south Lane County and the metro area.

Thank you,

Andrew Martin
1360 W. 5th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97402

February 12, 2019 Public Hearing on Sears Road: Removal of fixed objects.

I'm Gwen Jaspers. I live in Commissioner Sorenson's district. I'm a member of the county's Transportation Advisory Committee. However, my comments today, represent my personal views. *I am opposed to removing 61 trees along a 2 mile stretch of Sears Rd.*

After 7 vehicle crashes in a 6 year period, all into roadside trees, it's initially understandable that staff recommends removing trees close to the road. Their proposal reflects part of the philosophy of the current Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP). What the proposal does not sufficiently address, however, is that all the drivers were speeding, all were driving under the influence and/or distracted and a majority if not all were young people.

The action plan finishes its safety piece with what may be the most important sentence, "Reducing fatal collisions in Lane County requires a **culture that prioritizes safety.**"

I argue that to accommodate irresponsible driver behavior, does not promote a **culture that prioritizes safety.**

A first step to safety is to **reduce the speed limit.** Sears Rd residents asked for this at a July 2018 public input session in Cottage Grove. The answer? ODOT sets the speed limit, and it's often a futile effort to apply for a change. Recently though, an agency official revealed that an ODOT rule change is being considered that would weigh the larger context of the road in question, rather than relying so heavily on current speeds used on the road. I urge Lane County to support this rule change. Reducing speed is crucial so accidents that do occur are not so serious.

Among a growing number of transportation consultants advising that **wider lanes provide less not more safety** for *all* road users, is Jeff Speck, a long time planner, and observer of people and transportation around the country. He contends, "The safest roads are those that feel the least safe, demanding more attention from drivers."

Based on Mr. Speck's model, the eventual paving of 4 to 5 foot shoulders will make speeding and crashes more frequent. Yes, creating a shoulder is essentially widening the lane because it gives drivers the subconscious message they can safely drive fast, and eventually they're speeding.

This makes that now longer trip to the mailbox of a Sears Rd. resident navigating a walker or wheelchair increasingly more dangerous.

Traffic calming devises used in Midwest rural areas, slow highway traffic entering small towns. They include a variety of innovative products (speed tables, flexible bollard markers, painting the speed limit large, right on the paved road, and transverse roadside markings). An example here in Lane County is where Crow Road approaches Territorial Hwy. Two sets of rumble dots warn drivers they are approaching a busy intersection.

Please consider ways of 'thinking outside the box' or rather, 'inside the lane' to successfully slow down traffic speeds on Sears Rd., to save lives, and robustly contribute to a culture that prioritizes safety for the long term.

Thank you.

Petition statement to be delivered to Lane County Commissioners and Transportation Advisory Committee for Lane County:

Save Sears Road and 61 trees

Name
Email
Phone (optional)
ZIP Code
Password
Confirm Password

LAUNCH PETITION

Go back and fix something ([create_revise.html?skin=](#))

By creating this petition, you agree to the Terms of Service (see below) and to receive email messages from MoveOn.org Civic Action and MoveOn.org Political Action. (You may unsubscribe at any time.)

Stop project #128: Removal of 61 trees from Molitor Hill Road to Row River Road.

Stop project #129: Widening Sears Road to 11' lanes with 4' shoulders

PETITION BACKGROUND

As a property owner on Sears Road we do not want the removal of trees that bring beauty and enjoyment to the area. The widening of Sears Road is not needed and would only enable excessive speeding and decrease land values by taking more than the existing right of way and encroaching into our front yards creating new safety concerns.

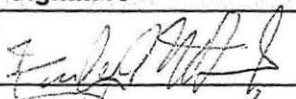


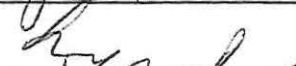
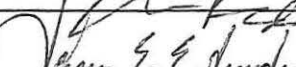

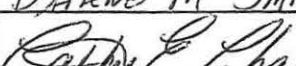
Petition to [action]

Petition summary and background	We say 'no' to removing trees and widening Sears Rd.
Action petitioned for	We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to Reject project # 128. Reject project # 129

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Marlene Nowak	Marlene Nowak	78561 Sears Rd		2/10/19
LINDA RADE-Vaughn	L. Raught	78561 Sears Rd		2/10/19
Corina Scott	Corina Scott	33399 Row River Rd		2/10/19
Kim Smith	Kim Smith	78409 Sears Rd		2/10/19
Jim Paris	Jim Paris	78409 Sears Rd		2/10/19
JANIE ANDREWS	Janie Andrews	78414 Sears Rd		2/10/19
Karen Thomas	Karen Thomas	78420 Sears Rd		2/10/19
LARRY C THOMAS	Larry C Thomas	78420 SEARS RD		2-10-19
Robert L Smith	Robert L Smith	78463 Sears Rd		2-10-19
CONNIE L FARRID	Connie L Farrid	78463 SEARS Rd		2-10-19
Lela Chatham	Lela Chatham	78469 Sears Road		2/10/19
Louise LaCoste	Louise LaCoste	78479 Sears Rd.		2/10/19

Petition to [action]

Petition summary and background	We say no to removing trees and widening Sears Rd. see attached
Action petitioned for	We the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to Reject project #128. Reject project #129

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Fink/Moore		78497 SEAR RD		2-10-2019
ROBERT KEFEI		78571 SEAR RD		2-10-2019
Michael-Ritter	Michael W. Ritter	78561 B. RD		2-10-2019
JOE RAADE		78597 SEARS RD		2-10-19
Lynn Raade		78597 Sears Rd		2-10-19
Jim E Edwards		78596 Sears Rd		2/10/2019
Bernie S. Edwards	Bernie S. Edwards	78598 Sears Rd		2/10/19
Steven Lee		31034 Gowdy Wike Rd		2/10/19
Harlene M Smith	Harlene M Smith	78631 Sears Rd		2-10-19
Cathy E. Chase		78631 Sears Rd.		2-10-19
Ronald S. Chase	Ronald S. Chase	78631 Sears Rd.		2-10-19
Melissa Wells	Melissa Wells	78621 Sears Rd.		

Petition to [action]

Petition summary and background	We say no to removal of trees and widening Sears Rd.
Action petitioned for	We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to Reject project # 128. Reject project # 129

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Krista Ritter	Krista Bull	78631 Sears Rd.		2-10-19
Don Smith	Don Smith	78651 Sears Rd		2/10/19
John Crabtree	John Crabtree	78631 Sears Rd		2-10-19
Gloria Trullinger	Gloria Trullinger	78651 Sears Rd		2-10-19
GARY TRUINGER	[Signature]	78651 SEARS RD	LET'S TRY A SPEED LIMIT	2-10-19
Luke Brill	[Signature]	33349 AJ Place		2-10-19
CBru	Carrie Brill	33349 AJ Place		2/10/19
T MESSINA	[Signature]	78652 SEAR RD		2-10-19
John Watson	John Watson	78654 Sears Rd		2/10/19
Pam Watson	Pamela Watson	78654 Sears Rd	Lower Speed limit!!!	2-10-19
Lynn Nord	[Signature]	78752 Sears Rd	you WANT THE HOUSE? YARD you ALREADY TOOK OUR FRONT	2-10-19
BEVERLY NORD	Beverly Nord	78752 Sears Rd	Speed LIMIT	2-10-19


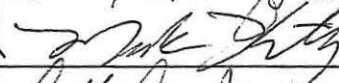
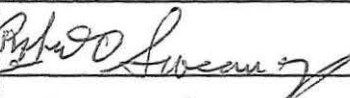
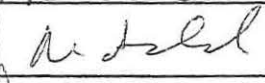
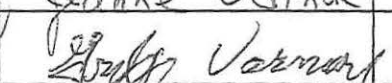
Petition to [action]

Petition summary and background	We say no to removing trees and widening Sears Rd.
Action petitioned for	We the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to Reject Project # 128 & Reject project # 129

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Bill DENNIS	<i>Bill Dennis</i>	78741 SEARS RD		2/10/19
Billy J DENNIS	<i>Billy J Dennis</i>	78741 Sears Rd		2/10/19
Andre W Dennis	<i>Andre W Dennis</i>	78741 SEARS RD		2/10/19
MIKE DENNIS	<i>Mike Dennis</i>	78741 SEARS RD		2/10/19
Robbin Poetzl	<i>Robbin Poetzl</i>	78771 Sears Rd.		2/10/19
James Poetzl	<i>[Signature]</i>	78777 SEARS RD		2/10/19
<i>[Signature]</i>	Chris Travis	78783 SEARS RD		2/10/19
MEZ COLLINS	<i>mez Collins</i>	78844 SEARS		2-10-19
Donald Seablon	<i>Donald Seablon</i>	78842 SEARS Rd		2-10-19
Shelley Seablon	<i>Shelley Seablon</i>	78842 SEARS Rd		2-10-19
Carol Clark	<i>Carol Clark</i>	79023 SEARS		2/10
Andrew S. Clark	<i>Andrew S. Clark</i>	79023 SEARS Rd.		2/10

Petition to [action]

Petition summary and background	we say 'no' to the removal of trees and the widening of sears Road
Action petitioned for	We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to [action item(s) for which you are] Reject project # 128 . Reject project # 129

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Teresa Kintigh		79117 Sears Rd		2/10/19
Mark Kintigh		79117 Sear Rd		2/10/19
Jff Rounsaville Michelle Rounsaville	Jff Rounsaville Michelle Rounsaville	78538 Cedar Park Rd.	Property boundary Sears Rd.	2-10-19
Nichelle Lane Michelle Rounsaville	Nichelle Rounsaville	78538 Cedar Park Rd	Reduce Speed Limit	2-10-19
Jourda Crabbe	Lorinda Crabbe	75780 Booth Kelly ^{camp}	Property boundary	2-10-19
Harjinder Singh tor	HARSINDER S. TOR	33399 Row-River Road	Sears Road	2/10/19
Ruberto Swearingen		78503 Sears Rd	Slow county Trucks	2-11-19
Darlene Swearingen	Darlene Swearingen	78503 Sears Rd		2-11-19
Mike Arnold		78487 Sears Rd.		2-11-19
Sherry Arnold	Sherry Arnold	78487 Sears Rd		2/11/19
Jeanne Varman	Jeanne Varman	78808 Sears Rd		2/11/19
Griff Varman		78808 Sears Rd		2/11/19

February 11, 2019

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to voice our concerns regarding the removal of trees along Sears Road. I think we can all agree that we would like Sears Road to be safe to travel, however, we definitely disagree about how to accomplish this.

As I understand it, the objective to remove fixed objects (trees and later possibly power poles) in order to widen the road so that drivers will have greater opportunity to self-correct if they are driving too quickly or erratically seems counter-productive to the original goal of traffic safety. The fact of the matter is that Sears Road has too many dangerous curves to be driven at 55 mph even if the road is widened. Why would we want to encourage traffic to drive even faster?

Instead of incurring the cost of tree removal and later, road widening, which probably would not cut down on accidents, but may in fact, create more, why can't we post a safe speed limit for the road from Row River to the Saginaw exit? If the posted speed was 35 or 40 mph, I believe that would create a deterrent to all the drivers who race along Sears Road from the Saginaw exit to Row River Rd. They may choose, instead, to travel more quickly down I-5 to the Cottage Grove exit, bypassing Sears Road all together.

I believe it would also improve traffic safety if the road itself were repainted and the dangerous corners delineated so they are easily recognized while driving at night or in the fog.

I think most of the residents along Sears Road would agree that tree removal and widening the road would not improve traffic safety, but may even create more of a traffic hazard by creating an environment where speeding is encouraged. We would, instead, ask that you work to give us a safe posted speed limit and better roadway delineation in order to create a safer driving experience along Sears Road. We, our beautiful 100 year old trees, and property lines thank you!

Robbin Poetzl

78777 Sears Road

Cottage Grove, OR 97424

541-206-4400

Becky Taylor,

After attending your last meeting held in Cottage Grove, I realized your concerns about the tree adjoining the road. My home at 78420 Sears Road sits substantially below the grade of the road and the trees on the west side of Sears road provide a buffer to protect my home from cars leaving the roadway and injuring or killing my family members.

Your staff said that a guardrail placed where the trees are now would protect my home. If this is the case, I strongly recommend leaving the trees in place and simply placing the guardrail between the roadway and the trees in question thus protecting the errant vehicles from hitting trees. This design would not only protect autos hitting trees but save the substantial cost of their removal.

I would also like to reiterate that pedestrian and bicyclist crossing Row River Bridge by Killion's Market is more dangerous than Sears road. It really needs a sign that can flash alerting drivers that either a pedestrian or bicyclist are on bridge. And, a guardrail mounted on top of the concrete wall. It's a scary situation crossing that bridge by foot or bicycle.

Sincerely

Larry & Karen Thomas

78420 Sears Rd

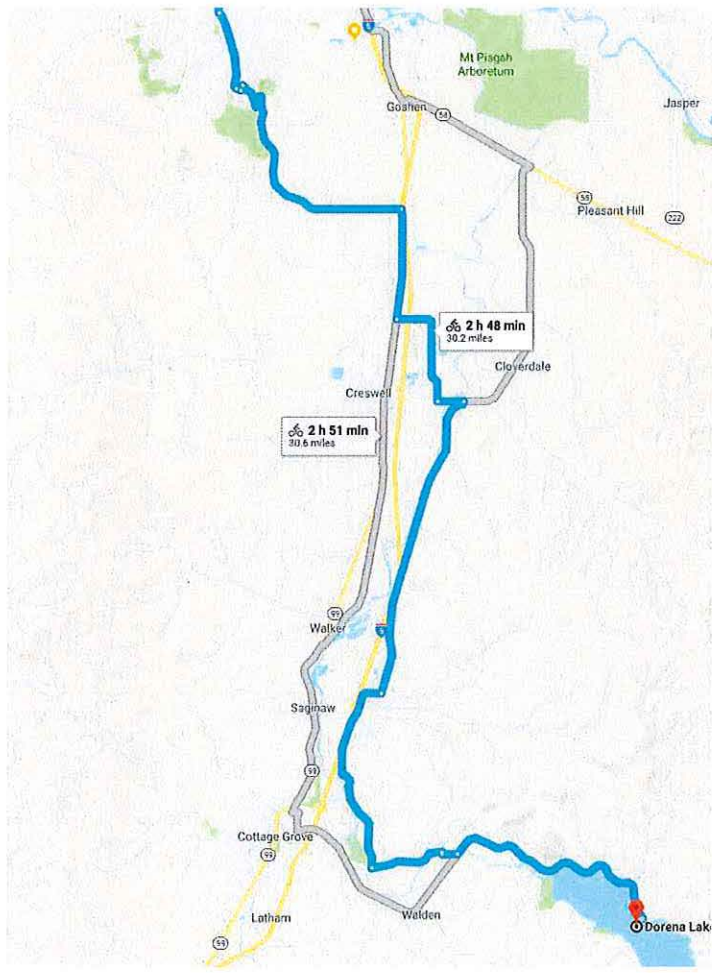
Email: yama-mama@msn.com

Testimony
Feb 12th 2019
ONE COPY ONLY

To: Lane County Commissioners
From: Robin Annika Mayall, 3703 Garden Ave, Springfield OR
Date: Feb 12, 2019
Subject: Fixed Object Removal Project for Sears Road

Thank you Commissioners for your time in considering Public testimony regarding the issue of fixed object removal along Sears Road. I have been a cyclist in Lane County for many decades. As such, I have enjoyed many long rides along our County's rural roads, logging several thousand miles in most years. I have also been troubled by the death or severe injuries of several good friends by motorists on our rural roads, one of which I unfortunately witnessed.

One of the most important things that I would like you as Commissioners to understand about Sears Road is that it is the only North-South throughway for bicycles from Eugene to Creswell and Cottage Grove, and it also connects us to the popular Row River Trail, to Dorena Lake, and destinations beyond. Highway 99, which is the only other option, is a cyclist's nightmare, and many of us literally fear for our lives for the two mile segment that we have to traverse before we can cut over to Sears Road, which is much less traveled by cars and safer for cyclists.



That being said, the most dangerous thing about Sears Road is the speed at which drivers use this rural lane, especially with its blind hills and corners. While I understand that there have been several traffic fatalities on this road from cars departing Sears Road and striking fixed objects, it seems that the cause of these roadway departures seems to be speed, intoxication, distracted driving, or some combination of the three. I believe it is unfair, and unwise to penalize the safety of residents, pedestrians, and cyclists for what is essentially a speed and law enforcement issue.

Additionally, the removal of the trees on Sears Road will make it a less attractive and less safe venue for cycling, just at a time when cycle tourism is being recognized as an economic driver

for our area. A study performed by The Outdoor Industry Foundation estimated that the nation's 60 million recreational bicyclists spend almost \$47 billion on meals, transportation, lodging, etc, and that the spill-over effects of all bicycling-related activities could be as large as \$133 billion, supporting 1.1 million jobs and generating \$17.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes.

Personally, I can't tell you how many dollars I've spent at the Creswell Bakery, Buster's Café, Dutch Bros, Dari Mart, and many other local businesses on days that I bike from Eugene to Cottage Grove, and since cyclists often travel in packs, there are many times that my dollars are multiplied by 5 – 10 of my friends.

Thus, in consideration of the safety and well being of our rural residents, pedestrians, and cyclists, and in the interest of the economic and tourist dollars brought into our rural towns by cyclists, I believe that the treatment of Sears Road should move in a completely different direction. Instead of removing objects and increasing speeds, we should be looking at ways to make this road safer and quieter for residents, and more attractive to area cyclists. This would involve some combination of law enforcement activity, speed calming treatments, and a re-designation of this road as a Scenic Bikeway, possibly even as an extension of the Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway, which currently ends in Eugene instead of bringing cyclists further into this beautiful area. I ask you to turn down the short-sighted plan for tree removal and instead look at the long-term potential for a beautiful scenic bikeway to add to our area's appeal.