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### **Portland ranked 44 in Nation for Preventable Pedestrian Deaths, Report Shows**

*Willamette Pedestrian Coalition Urges Members of Congress to Support Increased Focus on Pedestrian Safety in Upcoming Federal Legislation*

**Portland, Ore.** — A newly released national report shows that, while Portland is ranked among the 10 least dangerous metropolitan area for pedestrians, transportation design and funding priorities continues to disenfranchise walking.

The report, *Dangerous by Design: Solving the Epidemic of Preventable Pedestrian Deaths (and Making Great Neighborhoods)*, ranks America's major metropolitan areas and states according to a Pedestrian Danger Index that assesses how safe they are for walking. An update of the 2004 *Mean Streets* report, *Dangerous by Design* was released by Transportation for America (T4America.org) and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership.

The report authors note that most pedestrian deaths are preventable, because they occur on streets that are designed to encourage speeding traffic and lack safe sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals and other protections. Fixing these problems is a matter of will on the part of state departments of transportation and local communities, and of shifting spending priorities, the report concludes.

The report also examined how states and localities are spending federal money that could be used to make the most dangerous streets safer. Findings show that Oregon spends less than 2% - only \$1.28 per person - on pedestrian facilities and safety.

"Although Portland is considered safer for pedestrians than most metropolitan regions in the country, the spate of recent collisions in Portland between pedestrians and motorists prove that we are still clearly not investing enough to protect our citizens from speeding traffic," said Steph Routh.

On Oct. 31, Benjamin Story was struck in a hit and run collision when on Highway 99E just north of Aurora. On Nov. 1, John Thomas Nelson was hit and critically injured on Highway 217, Lindsay Leonard was killed and Jessica Finlay suffered serious injuries while crossing in a marked crosswalk on 80<sup>th</sup> and SE Foster. On Nov. 2, Susan Ogilvy was struck while crossing Scholls Ferry Road near Beaverton Hillsdale Highway.

The intersection at Scholls Ferry Rd. and Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy, where Ms. Ogilvy was recently hit, is both congested and unsafe. Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway is one of SW Portland's primary transportation corridors along with I-5 and Sunset Highway. The "Dangerous by Design" study reflects the danger inherent in walking along or crossing these types of major roads. More than 56 percent of the 6,367 pedestrian deaths in the urban areas studied occurred on major roads, like Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy.

While walking conditions remain perilous across the country, many communities are working to make their streets safe and welcoming for people on foot or bicycle, the report shows. Communities across the country are beginning to reverse the dangerous legacy of 50 years of anti-pedestrian policies by

retrofitting or building new roads as “complete streets” that are safer for walking and bicycling as well as motorists.

Earlier this spring, the Portland Bureau of Transportation and TriMet worked with the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition, SE Uplift, Elders in Action, and Impact Northwest to approve a crosswalk at 46<sup>th</sup> & Belmont near a bus stop and facilities used by senior citizens. The intersection had previously played host to pedestrian enforcement actions and served as an ongoing neighborhood priority for improvement.

“Here in the Portland area, we could be saving lives and encouraging more residents to engage in healthy levels of activity by investing in sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic calming and other safety measures,” said Routh. “However, in many cases we are hampered by state and federal policies that continue to promote dangerous conditions.”

“As Congress prepares to rewrite the nation’s transportation law, this report is yet another wake-up call showing why it is so urgent to update our policies and spending priorities,” said James Corless, director of Transportation for America.

The Willamette Pedestrian Coalition applauds Congressman Earl Blumenauer for his continued leadership in prioritizing funding for walking, cycling and mass transit as transportation modes.

Under the current federal transportation bill, less than 1.5 percent of available funds nationally are directed toward pedestrian safety, although pedestrians account for nearly 12 percent of all traffic deaths and 9 percent of total trips. Between 2007 and 2008, more than 700 children under the age of 15 were killed walking.

Seven organizations served on the steering committee for this report, working closely with T4 America and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership. These organizations include the American Public Health Association, AARP, Smart Growth America, America Bikes, America Walks, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and the National Complete Streets Coalition.

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#### **ABOUT THE WILLAMETTE PEDESTRIAN COALITION:**

The Willamette Pedestrian Coalition (WPC) is a non-profit community-based membership organization in the greater Portland, Oregon area dedicated to promoting walking and making the conditions for walking safe and attractive. The WPC advocates for better laws, enhanced enforcement, more sidewalks and signed crosswalks, education programs, community improvements designed for pedestrians, and increased funding to support these activities. For more information about the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition, please visit [www.wpcwalks.org](http://www.wpcwalks.org).

#### **ABOUT TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA (T4AMERICA)**

Transportation for America is a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equal opportunity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century national transportation program. The coalition’s goal is to build a modernized infrastructure and healthy communities where people can live, work and play by aligning national, state and local transportation policies with an array of issues like economic opportunity, climate change, energy security, health, housing and community development. HYPERLINK "<http://www.t4america.org>" [www.t4america.org](http://www.t4america.org)