



Streets for Everyone Public Testimony Guide for N. Mountain Rehabilitation Project

An important opportunity is coming up in September to advocate for protected bike lanes in Ashland. We need your voice!

Purpose: This guide will help to prepare compelling and effective written or oral public testimony for the public hearing for North Mountain Avenue’s Rehabilitation Project.

What is the issue?

The N. Mountain Rehabilitation Project aims to install bi-directional concrete-barrier protected bike lanes. These protected bike lanes will improve safety among all street users and help to meet Ashland’s goals for climate change and Vision Zero, which is a “strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all” (visionzeronetwork.org). To install protected bike lanes, the city proposes to remove on-street parking on the west side from E. Main to Village Green on N. Mountain Avenue. This will create the space needed for protected bike lanes. Removal of parking tends to be controversial, and a public hearing has been set to allow residents on N. Mountain Avenue and the community at large to provide public input.

There is a risk that people who are the most vocal will be in favor of keeping parking along this street, which will result in maintaining the street as it is, without protected bike lanes.

A protected bike lane on N. Mountain Avenue is a critical component for a future biking network throughout Ashland, which will encompass many streets, and paths. This project will set a precedent for future street rehabilitation projects. To gain further understanding of the issue, meeting minutes from the Transportation Advisory Committee can be found here: <https://www.ashland.or.us/Agendas.asp?SectionID=-1&CCBID=225>.

Why is testifying important?

- It is essential to create policy change that will transform the transportation system so biking, walking, and rolling are practical and safe ways to get around Ashland for people of all ages and abilities.
- It brings attention to the issue and builds public support
- The [Transportation Advisory Committee](#) and Ashland City Council want citizen and advocacy group engagement to help them make decisions that are important for the community

Preparing Your Testimony: Below are details to help you to prepare an effective testimony.

1. Subject: Public hearing for removal of parking along N. Mountain Avenue

2. When and Where: 6 pm on 9/21/2023 at The Ashland City Council Chambers on 1175 E. Main St.
3. How: You may submit either written *or* oral testimony. Written testimony must be submitted to Scott Fleury at scott.fleury@ashland.or.us by 9/20/23. Oral testimony you would provide in person at the hearing on 9/21/2023.
4. Audience: Ashland's Transportation Advisory Committee, who will subsequently advise Ashland City Council on the removal of parking along N. Mountain Avenue in order to install a protected bike lane.

Messaging

In order for your efforts to have the desired impact, you need to have a cohesive message, with a common theme and push in the same direction. However, testimony is most effective when we each tell our story in our own unique voice.

Here are some talking points to consider for your written or oral testimony:

1. A protected bike lane on N. Mountain Ave will increase safety among all road users: pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders, wheelchair bound persons, and people on scooters, as well as motorists. (See <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190529113036.htm>)
2. This protected bike lane is essential to the prospective bike network in Ashland. The N. Mountain bike lane will connect to the central bike path, the future extension of the Bear Creek Greenway, and the bike/walk boulevard on B Street.
3. Many people want to bike but do not because they do not feel safe sharing the road with motorists. A protected bike lane would increase the number of people who bike.
4. Increasing the number of people who bike will increase overall public health while decreasing carbon emissions.
5. Talking about an accident or near-miss (where you were almost hit by a car) on N. Mountain or elsewhere in town is also effective.
6. Street infrastructure should be equitable and allow people to choose how they move about the city safely whether it is by foot, bike, scooter, or car.
7. This protected bike lane will allow children to get to school safely and gain confidence to get around town independently.

Submitting Written Testimony

Written testimony will be presented at the 9/21/23 TAC meeting. You must submit your written testimony to Scott Fleury, Public Works Director, at scott.fleury@ashland.or.us, by 9/20/23.

Delivering Oral Testimony

You will need to be present at the Ashland City Council Chambers on 9/21/23 at 6 pm for the public hearing. You will be asked to give your full name and address and then the chair will call on you to deliver your testimony. Because there may be many people present who wish to testify, please keep your testimony concise. Writing it out ahead of time is helpful.

Here is a general outline for your testimony:

- Identify yourself and state any applicable affiliations. If you feel you are a subject matter expert, be sure to state this – not just on street design, but you could be an avid cyclist, or a public health expert, or a climate change expert, or a concerned parent.
- Greet the Transportation Advisory Committee
- Clearly state your support for the removal of parking to install a protected bike lane
- Give one or more factual argument to support your position
- Tell your story or anecdotes. **Why is this important enough for you to show up?**
- Restate your position or ask
- Thank the Transportation Advisory Committee

Mistakes to avoid:

- Don't repeat other people
- Don't cram in too much
- Don't use jargon
- Don't argue or refer to opposing testimony
- Don't go overtime. Be respectful to other testifiers and the audience's time.