QuickPoint! – Residents Say Portland is Not the City that Works

By Eric Fruits, Ph.D.

What if the self-proclaimed “City that Works” isn’t working? That’s what Portland residents are saying.

Last week the City of Portland published its most recent survey of city residents. Nearly 90 percent of those surveyed are dissatisfied with the city’s response to homelessness and almost two-thirds are dissatisfied with traffic congestion on their daily commutes.

This outrage comes after voters approved hundreds of millions of dollars for affordable housing projects and steep hikes in gas taxes to improve roads. Clearly, more money is not the answer: The more the city spends, the worse things get.

Council’s renter relocation payments, inclusionary zoning, and renter screening rules are shrinking the supply of affordable housing. While the city’s population is growing, it’s reducing its road infrastructure through road diets and replacing automobile lanes with dedicated bus and bike lanes.

Instead of punishing property owners for renting apartments, let’s loosen regulations on building and renting truly affordable housing. Instead of bringing traffic to a standstill, let’s add traffic lanes to foster a safe and speedy flow of auto and truck traffic. These aren’t radical ideas. In fact, these were Portland’s policies when it really was “The City that Worked.”

Eric Fruits, Ph.D. is Vice President of Research at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.