

Memorandum

To: June Reyes, Coordinator II, Portland Clean Energy Fund, Mika Barrett, Coordinator II, Portland Clean Energy Fund

From: Zef Wagner, Senior Transportation Planner, PBOT and Julia Reed, Senior Transportation Planner, PBOT

Date: 04/19/2023

Subject: Proposed Use of PCEF Funding for 82nd Ave Corridor Tree Planting

Background

BPS recently developed draft proposals for the five-year PCEF Climate Investment Plan, including programming a \$10 million allocation for the 82nd Ave corridor. Within this category of funding, the proposal includes a range of \$2 million to \$6 million that would be allocated to PBOT for tree planting in the public right-of-way along 82nd Avenue and on intersecting side streets, including widening curb-tight sidewalks where possible to create space for planting trees in the furnishing zone.

The purpose of this memo is to communicate and clarify the benefits PBOT could deliver to frontline communities to address the absence of tree canopy along public sidewalk corridors and immediately adjacent to 82nd Avenue. This memo is also intended to clarify that funding from PCEF would provide significant benefits to community that are not part of the funded 82nd Ave transportation projects currently underway.

This memo outlines:

1. the proposed use of funds,
2. the approximate quantification of the amount of sidewalk widening and tree planting PBOT could deliver, and
3. demonstrates of the additionality of these funds compared to existing projects

Funded Projects on 82nd Ave

There are several funded transportation projects in various stages of planning and design on 82nd Avenue. These include a signing and striping project, a lighting project, a signal timing project, a pedestrian crossings project, and a major maintenance project, which all together have been under the umbrella term of “Critical Fixes.” These are primarily funded by \$80 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act funding that must be obligated by the end of 2024 with construction complete by the end of the 2026 calendar year. Because of the very fast timeline for a project of this scale, these funds will be spent constructing the most “critical fixes” focusing on safety improvements with proven track records of saving lives, including crossings and lighting, Americans with Disabilities (ADA) improvements to fix corner ramps

along the corridor, required under terms of an ODOT settlement, as well as repaving and traffic signal rebuilds on some sections of the corridor to address the most urgent maintenance needs.

While these projects will include tree-planted medians in some areas, as well as very limited “strategic sidewalk widening” in areas where extra right-of-way already exists or can be easily acquired from willing sellers, these improvements will not be able to address sidewalk widening or tree canopy needs for the vast majority of the corridor.

Beginning in 2027, PBOT is scheduled to receive approximately \$66 million of ODOT funding to complete a second stage of safety and maintenance investment along the corridor to address decades of deferred maintenance. Together with community, PBOT staff have begun a community planning process to establish a new vision for the corridor, called Building a Better 82nd. This community planning process will result in a programming plan for the future of the second stage of safety and maintenance funding. Nearly \$50 million, or 75% of the \$66 million in the second stage of funding is legally committed to additional ADA curb ramp upgrades, roadway repaving as documented in the City’s jurisdictional transfer agreement for 82nd Avenue.

While sidewalk widening and tree planting are [documented community priorities](#) and desirable in many ways, they are not as critical to addressing the significant safety or maintenance needs along 82nd Avenue. In partnership with TriMet and Metro, PBOT is in the early stages of planning a [Bus Rapid Transit project](#) in collaboration, and we anticipate needing anywhere from \$15 million to \$30 million for PBOT’s share of local match toward a federal transit grant. Therefore, very little, if any, of the remaining funding is likely to be used for sidewalk widening and tree planting along 82nd Ave or intersecting streets, especially in places that require right-of-way acquisition. The federal and state transportation funding allocated to 82nd Avenue is therefore restricted and must be used to address critical safety and maintenance needs. Those needs do not include significant sidewalk widening and tree planting, which demonstrates that PCEF funding would be “additional” to existing programs and would represent a clear public benefit to the community.

Proposed Use of PCEF Funding

There are two main scenarios in which PCEF funding could be used to widen sidewalks and plant trees along 82nd Ave:

Tree Planting in New Furnishing Zones where Sufficient Right-of-way Exists

Some properties along 82nd Ave have in the past dedicated sufficient right-of-way for a full sidewalk with furnishing zone, but the sidewalk was never required to be widened and is currently a roughly 7-foot curb-tight sidewalk. In these locations, PCEF funding could pay for sidewalk widening, typically from a 7-foot curb-tight sidewalk to a 12-foot

or wider full sidewalk with furnishing zone and could also pay for the tree planting once the sidewalk is widened. Roughly six trees could be planted per typical 200-foot blockface, or eight trees if planted along 200 linear feet of a longer blockface. Approximate cost for a 200-foot block in this scenario is \$341,000, and this scenario applies to roughly 10% of curb-tight sidewalks along the corridor.

Tree Planting in New Furnishing Zones where Sufficient Right-of-way Does Not Exist

Most properties along 82nd Ave have a roughly 7-foot curb-tight sidewalk in front of them with no room to plant trees. In these locations, PCEF funding could pay for both right-of-way acquisition and sidewalk widening, typically from a 7-foot curb-tight sidewalk to a 12-foot or wider full sidewalk with furnishing zone and could also pay for the tree planting once the sidewalk is widened. This project type would require somewhat more time and would cost more due to right-of-way acquisition. Roughly six trees could be planted per typical 200-foot blockface, or eight trees if planted along 200 linear feet of a longer blockface. Approximate cost for a 200-foot block in this scenario is \$405,000, and this scenario applies to roughly 90% of curb-tight sidewalks along the corridor.

Given the above costs, rough estimates for how much sidewalk widening and tree planting could be delivered with different levels of PCEF funding in the proposal are included below:

- \$2 million of PCEF funding could pay for approximately 1,000 linear feet (equivalent to five 200-foot blocks) of sidewalk widening and tree planting along 82nd Ave, totaling 30 to 40 new street trees.
- \$4 million of PCEF funding could pay for approximately 2,000 linear feet (equivalent to ten 200-foot blocks) of sidewalk widening and tree planting along 82nd Ave, totaling 60 to 80 new street trees.
- \$6 million of PCEF funding could pay for approximately 3,000 linear feet (equivalent to fifteen 200-foot blocks) of sidewalk widening and tree planting along 82nd Ave, totaling 90 to 120 new trees.

Community Powered and Responsive to Community Priorities

Locations to prioritize these investments will be determined through work with frontline communities through several forums, including:

1. The [82nd Avenue Community Coalition](#): a broad coalition of community members and representatives from Community Based Organizations (CBOs) with connections to issues of importance to 82nd Avenue Communities. CBOs members in the 82nd Avenue Community Coalition include APANO, Verde, Unite Oregon, and Oregon Walks.
2. [PBOT's Building a Better 82nd Avenue Community Advisory Group](#) (CAG): a group of 18 community members with diverse connections to 82nd Avenue

3. Summer/Fall 2023 **Public Community Workshops** jointly convened by PBOT, TriMet, and Metro for the purpose of collecting community feedback on options for future investment in safety, transit, and other community priorities for 82nd Avenue.
4. Portland State University students from the Master of Urban and Regional Planning Workshop program are currently developing a broader **tree canopy investment strategy for the corridor** as part of their capstone masters project. Their work, which will complete in June 2023 includes analysis and public involvement to determine priorities for sidewalk widening and tree planting along 82nd Avenue. Their work includes comparing alternative scenarios of investment in terms of cost per tree, equity benefits, business impacts, etc. For use of PCEF funding in particular, a strong equity lens will be applied to prioritize tree canopy investments to benefit and strengthen frontline communities.

We will work with the community groups organized as part of the city planning work for 82nd Avenue to develop site selection criteria and confirm community priorities regarding priority locations for tree planting along 82nd Avenue.

When the engagement and decision-making partnership with 82nd Avenue communities is completed, PBOT would include detailed PCEF funding investment recommendations in the Building a Better 82nd Ave Plan that will go to City Council for adoption later in the first half of 2024. In fall 2024, PBOT would begin design for PCEF funded sidewalk widening and tree planting project, aiming for right-of-way process completion in 2025 and construction in 2026.

Utilization of D/M/W/ESB/SDVBE Subcontractors and Workforce Training

As part of the City of Portland, PBOT promotes the utilization of Disadvantaged, Minority-Owned, Women-Owned, Emerging Small Businesses, Service Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises (D/M/W/ESB/SDVBE) contractors and subcontractors.

Efforts to contract with companies with D/M/W/ESB/SDVBE certification will include a goal of 20% of construction costs for D/M/W/ESB/SDVBE subcontractors with an aspirational goal of a further 14% D/M/WBE utilization. Contractors will be required to provide disclosure forms for first-tier subcontractors or sub consultants. Contractors would be required to report on their continued utilization of D/M/W/ESB/SDVBE subcontractors during the life of the contract.

In addition, PCEF investments in a street tree planting expansion program delivered by PBOT would include the following workforce training utilization goals:

- A minimum of 20% of the labor hours per trade are worked by state-registered apprentices, and
- A goal of meeting an 18% minority and 9% female goal (both journey and apprentice level workers)

Conclusion

Tree planting in public right-of-way along 82nd Ave is a promising use of a PCEF funding, giving PBOT the resources needed to efficiently deliver meaningful tree canopy and sidewalk corridor benefits along this very tree-deficient corridor heavily impacted by the urban heat island effect. PBOT has the unique ability among City agencies to purchase needed public right-of-way to allow widening of narrow sidewalks and creation of space to plant street trees which will shade pedestrians, reduce the urban heat island effect, and sequester carbon.

While this does represent a higher cost per tree than planting trees only in places where space exists, the latter approach would be highly inequitable, since many areas with high concentrations of low-income households and communities of color also have a lack of available space for trees in the right-of-way and have experienced some of the worst urban heat island effects. Spending more per tree through this PBOT proposal is a more equitable approach since it would create space for trees in high-equity-need areas that most need them.

An allocation of \$6 million from the PCEF program would allow PBOT to widen approximately 3,000 linear feet of sidewalk and plant 90 to 120 new street trees, benefitting the community for generations to come. We urge BPS and the PCEF Committee to approve the full \$6 million for street tree planting as identified as the upper range in the draft Climate Investment Plan allowing 82nd Avenue communities to realize the myriad of tree canopy benefits in the decades to come.