

Dear Transportation Commissioner Hardesty, Mayor Wheeler, and Commissioners Mapps, Rubio, and Ryan:

The Bureau and Budget Advisory Committee (BBAC) for the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) presents the following recommendations for PBOT's FY 2022-2023 budget priorities. As a collection of Portland residents from a broad range of personal and professional backgrounds, BBAC supports investments that promote transportation justice, safety, and climate action.

The past year presented enormous challenges for Portland, as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact all parts of society. However, 2021 also represented an opportunity for the City to meet these monumental challenges with bold new ideas and a firm determination to move beyond failed paradigms of the past, with the recognition that this period of recovery must lead us to a more just and sustainable future. While the City has made progress in several transportation areas – and is considering additional improvements – BBAC believes the **City needs to go much further to enact the sort of forward-looking policies, projects, and programs that are necessary.**

We face multiple and intersecting crises: a record number of Portland residents killed by motor vehicle traffic violence, a continued rise in transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, and a systematic and growing shortfall in transportation revenue (from sources that are still largely derived from fossil fuels and unsustainable transportation behavior). BBAC recognizes PBOT's projected deficit of \$26 million over the next 5 years demands immediate action to stabilize the budget over the near term. However, we urge Council to keep the City's larger goals in mind, and address PBOT's budget and revenue challenges in a manner that renews our city's commitment to these three areas:

- **Climate Action:** Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and working toward a carbon- neutral transportation system
- **Safety:** Designing streets to protect our most vulnerable users and make them safe for all.
- **Equity:** Correcting the harmful legacies of racism, displacement, and marginalization that led to underinvestment in communities of color.

This means: **(1)** addressing PBOT's projected FY 2022-2023 budget deficit through new revenue, not programmatic or project-related cuts; **(2)** enacting policies and funding projects that shift transportation behavior in an equitable manner; and **(3)** developing long-term revenue sources that are sustainable, not reliant on fossil fuels, and that incentivize walking, bicycling, and public transportation. BBAC's full set of recommendations for the FY 2022-2023 budget are below:

Recommendation: Approve New Transportation Revenue to Cover Short-Term Deficit

BBAC urges Council to **approve new sources** of revenue and **expand existing sources** of revenue for PBOT's FY 2022-2023 budget. Specific recommendations include:

- Apply a climate and equity surcharge for parking in Central City
- Increase parking meter rates to adjust for inflation
- Increase parking permit fees to allow for program cost-recovery

Given the scale of our ongoing challenges, BBAC does not support further reductions to general transportation revenue (GTR)-dependent programs and projects. During the FY 2021-2022 budget cycle, PBOT reduced these program areas by nearly \$9 million. BBAC urges Council to recognize that

our current challenges demand new investments, not further cuts. For this reason, we support new and expanded revenue sources to address PBOT's short-term deficit.

Recommendation: Implement the Recommendations from the Pricing for Equitable Mobility Task Force

BBAC supports the work of the Pricing for Equitable Mobility Task Force (POEM). We urge Council to **approve and fund** PBOT's forthcoming plan to implement POEM recommendations. In particular, BBAC supports urgent approval of the following policies:

- Implement fees on urban delivery
- Implement dynamic, demand-based parking pricing
- Modify existing fee structure on private for-hire transportation
- Implement fees on privately owned, off-street parking lots
- Require employers to offer flexible commuter benefits program

BBAC also supports other POEM recommendations, such as a road usage charge (RUC) based on vehicle miles traveled. RUC programs have tremendous potential to advance several important goals: shifting trips to non-motor vehicle modes, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, creating a more equitable and sustainable revenue source, among others. Altogether, POEM's full package of equitable pricing policies will help manage demand, change transportation behavior, influence more sustainable land use practices, and reduce transportation-related GHG emissions. Council should recognize this opportunity and act on POEM recommendations with a sense of urgency.

Recommendation: Implement High Visibility, Low Cost Projects

To address our current and future transportation challenges, the City will need to make significant and structural changes that require large investments – and may incur resistance in some areas. However, the City can lay the groundwork for this future by implementing **high visibility, low cost projects** that demonstrate the value of transformed public space.

BBAC urges Council to **fund and implement** several high visibility, low cost projects. Recommended examples include:

- Pedestrianized plazas
- Projects on the [Small Capital Programs](#) list

These inexpensive projects accomplish several goals: (1) improving safety; (2) encouraging active modes of transportation; and (3) generating favorable public opinion for non-auto uses of public space. Moreover, they can help Portland residents visualize a future that we need to move toward. This may facilitate greater willingness to support these future investments through new revenue mechanisms.

Recommendation: Support PBOT with Capital Set Aside, Cannabis Fund, and American Rescue Plan Act

Given ongoing revenue challenges, the rising cost of materials and construction, and the urgency to make progress on the City's transportation goals, **BBAC strongly urges Council to provide PBOT with funds from the City's Capital Set Aside program, the Cannabis Fund, and the federal American Rescue Plan Act.** With access to these funds, PBOT will be able to make progress in several critical areas:

- ADA-compliant sidewalks, curb ramps, and audible push buttons
- Shovel-ready projects, critical infrastructure replacement, and climate resiliency

- Vision Zero projects and programming
- Healthy Business and Community Spaces programs

We recognize the competing interests for these citywide funds, but we urge Council to understand that transportation investments – particularly in the areas listed above – influence all parts of society and can magnify the impact of limited City resources. **In other words, there is an extremely high return on investment for the projects and programs listed above.** They improve safety, community and public health, economic and climate resilience, equitable access, and the local economy as a whole.

BBAC's recommendations reflect our view that City investments must pursue transportation justice. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis must not derail our collective efforts. We urge Council to help PBOT access new and sustainable revenue and to continue investing in programs that actively address climate change, roadway safety, and equitable access to services and mobility options.

Respectfully,

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