

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

The undersigned members of the Bureau and Budget Advisory Committee (BBAC) for the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) present the following recommendations for PBOT's FY 2023-2024 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 more challenges for Portland and for the Bureau of Transportation. We face multiple and intersecting crises: a record number of Portland residents killed by motor vehicle traffic violence for the third consecutive year, a continued rise in transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions that runs counter to the City's Climate Action Plan, 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 \$64 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 to address PBOT's budget and revenue challenges in a manner that renews our city's commitment to a well maintained transportation system that helps people get where they need to go while also prioritizing 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 making them safe for all.
- **Equity:** Correcting the harmful legacies of racism, displacement, and marginalization that have led to underinvestment in historically and still oppressed marginalized communities which often include people of the global majority and communities of color.

This means: **(1)** addressing PBOT's projected FY 2024-28 five-year budget deficit through not only programmatic and project related reductions, but also new revenues; **(2)** enacting policies and funding projects that shift transportation behavior in an equitable manner; and **(3)** developing long-term revenue sources that are financially sustainable, not reliant on fossil fuels, and that incentivize walking, bicycling, and public transportation. BBAC's full set of recommendations for the FY 2023-24 budget are below:

### **Recommendation: Approve New Transportation Revenues to Cover Long-Term Deficit**

BBAC urges Council to **approve new sources** of revenue to balance PBOT's FY 2024-28 five-year forecast. PBOT continues to make significant programmatic reductions to address its structural deficit. Reductions over the last two years totaled 10.5% and a loss of 43.5 positions. The FY 2023-24 Requested Budget includes further reductions of

4.3% and 16 positions. Without the approval of new funding sources, the Bureau will be required to implement at least another 4.5% of programmatic reductions in FY 2024-25. The continual reduction of vital transportation programs is simply unsustainable and compromises the City's goals. Specific recommendations include:

- Continue to support the parking meter rate increase scheduled for July 2023 as directed by Resolution 37564 passed in February 2022. This increase supports \$4 million of current Transportation services that will otherwise be eliminated

- Although it is understood that the Bureau is required to make reductions in FY 2023-24 to balance its revenue forecast, BBAC opposes further disinvestment in programs and projects.
- BBAC urges the Council to recognize that our current challenges demand new investments, not further cuts. For this reason, we support new and expanded revenue sources to be developed over the coming year and address PBOT's long term deficit.

BBAC also recommends that Council and the Bureau explore new, nontraditional funding options, such as the Portland Clean Energy Fund set aside for Transportation Decarbonization, in order to find ways to enhance and fund current initiatives run, or overseen, by PBOT including BIKETOWN, Safe Routes to School Sunday Parkways, and Bike Network Completion Quick Build projects. These initiatives, among others, serve a key role in reaching our walking, biking, and transit mode share targets adopted in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan and critically needed to address the Council-declared Climate Emergency in 2020.

### **Recommendation: Support PBOT with General Fund and Cannabis Fund resources**

Given ongoing revenue challenges, the rising cost of addressing the houseless crisis, and the urgency to make progress on the City's transportation goals, **we strongly urge Council to provide PBOT with funds from the City's General Fund and Cannabis Fund.** 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 as required by the settlement agreed to by CREEC v City of Portland
- Shovel-ready projects, critical infrastructure maintenance and replacement, and climate resiliency
- Vision Zero projects and programming
- Derelict RV removal and houselessness campsite cleanup

We recognize the competing interests for these citywide funds and urge Council to understand that transportation investments influence all parts of society and have an outsized impact of limited City resources. **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.

These recommendations reflect our view that City investments must support a safer, well maintained, more climate-friendly, and more equitable transportation system. The ongoing revenue crisis within PBOT 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,

James P. Ellis - BBAC Co-Chair

Susan Johnson - BBAC Co-Chair

Jennifer B. Young

Josh Roll

David Stein

Audrey Zhao

Trevor Luu

Mariah Dula

Ted Labbe

Rambod Beham