

Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee

Working to Make Bicycling a Part of Daily Life in Portland

1001 SW 5th Avenue, Room 1300
Portland OR 97204



December 15, 2023

Art Pearce, Group Director
Portland Bureau of Transportation, Policy, Planning and Projects

Dear Mr. Pearce,

Thank you again for attending the Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) meetings in November and December. We very much appreciate you taking the time to talk with us and to address some of our concerns about the decision to remove buffered bicycle lanes on NE 33rd Ave recently installed from Holman Street to Columbia Boulevard.

As you know, the Bicycle Advisory Committee advises the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) as well as City Council and other bureaus on all biking-related matters and therefore has a role in bicycle planning and implementation activities. As such, it is imperative that PBOT sees the BAC as a partner in working to increase bicycle ridership, increase mode share, reduce crashes, improve the climate and promote bicycle infrastructure projects. **We are writing to ask you four (4) questions on how we can better fulfill the important role we play for the City.**

(1) What can we do to make our concerns a priority for PBOT staff and leadership?

As outlined in our charter, the main way that our committee communicates our feedback to the Bureaus and Council is through letters. While they are a helpful tool, these letters are time consuming to thoughtfully coordinate and prepare. Though we work hard month after month to complete our charge and communicate our advice through these letters, we are often unsure of how the feedback provided in these letters directly influences projects and processes at PBOT. Late last year, the Bureau recognized this and committed to providing a response to every letter sent by the BAC in an effort to demonstrate respect for this work and increase two-way communication and transparency. However, while we have sent 11 letters and signed onto several more since that commitment, we have only received responses to about a third to date.

One example of a letter currently awaiting a response regards the five-year paving list. Repaving projects are a significant opportunity to add bike lanes, or improve bike lanes at relatively low cost. For that reason, after reviewing the 2023-27 Maintenance Operations Paving list¹, we provided feedback on our priorities for the 2024 repaving year in an April 2023 letter to PBOT leadership². We were told that the 2023 cycle repaving projects were already moving forward to add or improve bike lanes and that our input was not needed for 2023, but was needed for projects starting in 2024. While we recently learned of the bike lane installation and subsequent removal decision following the 2023 repaving of NE 33rd Ave, it is not clear to us whether the other 2023 bicycle paving projects were completed (and how they were completed). There has yet to be follow up with the committee related to implementation of the 2023 MO Paving List. It is also not clear to the BAC at this time whether our 2024 priorities were taken into account and will be acted upon as part of the next program cycle.

¹ www.portland.gov/transportation/bicycle-committee/documents/5-year-paving-list-presentation/download

² www.portland.gov/transportation/bicycle-committee/documents/letter-recommendations-5-year-paving-list/download

In other words - there is significant room for improving two-way communication so that BAC members can trust that their feedback is being meaningfully considered and genuinely makes a difference in projects and processes. **(2) In the short-term, we ask your support in providing a review of the 2023 paving work completed and an update on the current five-year (2024-2028) paving list, specifically related to our identified priorities, and the schedule for 2024 planned paving activities, at our next BAC meeting on January 9, 2024.**

We are especially interested in the 2024 paving projects on NE Weidler, NE Broadway, NE Halsey, SE 52nd, and NE 122nd as detailed in our April 2023 letter. **(3) In the long-term, we ask your support in working together to outline a standard procedure for engaging the BAC in bicycle-related projects and programs to create certainty and consistency around the milestones and decisions that the BAC should be included in and advise on.**

We think that one way that our committee could be more proactive in engaging in these conversations with the Bureau is through project tracking. While many individual bicycle projects and programs have great websites that are chock full of information, these aren't always up to date and they don't cover all of the numerous activities of the department. Some are located on portland.gov and some are located on portlandoregon.gov but we don't understand the rationale. It would be far more helpful to have a comprehensive project tracking list and regular progress reports so that the BAC could access all of this information in one place and easily note updates - something that we think could also be a major asset for the public as well and provide more clarity and transparency around process and public notification.

(4) To this end, we respectfully ask that you create a simple tracker or spreadsheet (like the example below), to monitor major milestones of bicycle infrastructure projects, especially the status of striping plans and public notification. Please also include more than one column for BAC notification and participation, throughout the project. We request that this information be updated on a weekly basis so

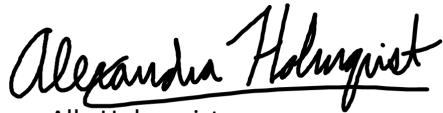
Master Bicycle Project Tracker - Overview Report													
Project ID	Street or Quarter Section	From	To	Fiscal Year	Start Date	Project Status	Proposed Bicycling Changes	Proposed Car Lane Changes	Striping Plan Status	Striping Notes	Proposed Cross Section	Public Notice Status	Current Issues
	NE Roadway	11th	24th	2024		proposed	add buffers, diag parking	remove travel lane	signed	-	18-10-10-8-3-7	complete	none
	NE Reedway	15th	20th	2024		moving forward	add buffer	narrow lanes	signed	-	8-10-10-2-6	notice issued	-
	SE 25th	Flavor	Duchess	2024		moving forward	protected bike lane	remove parking	in design	-	7-3-8-10-10-3-8	required	
	NE Halprin	119th	132nd	2024		proposed	add buffers to bike lane	remove parking			8-5-10-10-10-10-5-8	required	
	NE 221	Glitter	Roadway	2024		proposed	add buffers to bike lane				8-5-10-10-10-10-5-8		
Key													
	process is completed												
	process is underway												
	process has not been initiated												

that the BAC may request a briefing by the project manager or traffic engineer at BAC meetings. This would provide us with the mechanism we need to best execute the role we play in advising bicycle planning and implementation activities. We look forward to reviewing this tracker with you while it is in draft status and also reviewing with Roger Geller on a more regular basis to stay informed and up to date on pre-design, design, and striping plans approved by the PBOT Traffic Engineer and City Engineer that are issued for construction.

We do want to also express our sincere appreciation for the improvements that were completed on NE 33rd, such as a bicycle-friendly path from Mason to Skidmore, bike racks at 5010 NE 33rd Ave, the ladder crosswalks at NE Ainsworth, and many new ADA ramps, all of which were installed earlier this year as part of the MO repaving project. We appreciate that the City is taking action on its goals to grow bicycle ridership, increase mode share, reduce crashes, and improve the climate. Our hope in making these asks and requests is that we can better provide advice to support PBOT planners and engineers in their efforts, and that we can better work together in leveraging the potential of repaving projects - and other projects - to maximize benefits for people bicycling.

We look forward to your response to this letter and future conversations around these important questions and themes. We hope that you will return to the BAC frequently with suggestions and more information that support our responsibilities to advise City Council and City Bureaus on all matters of bicycle Policy, Implementation, Education & Equity and Community Input/Feedback.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and all that you do for Portland. This is the way. :)



Ally Holmqvist
Chairperson
Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee



Joseph Perez
Vice Chairperson
Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee

“In 2030 Portland is a clean, thriving city where bicycling is a main pillar of the transportation system and more than a quarter of all trips are made on bicycles because bicycling is prioritized.”