



## Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.

7688 SW Capitol Highway, Portland, OR 97219 (503) 823-4592

May 26, 2011

Jason Tell  
Region 1 Manager  
Oregon Dept. of Transportation  
123 NW Flanders Street  
Portland, OR 97209

RE: Safety Improvements on Newbury and Vermont Bridge Structures

Dear Mr. Tell:

Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI) formally requests interim safety improvements on the Newbury and Vermont bridge structures on SW Barbur Boulevard. The existing sidewalks on the bridges are too narrow to safely and comfortably accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists, and there are no bicycle lanes on the bridges.

In our letter to you dated October 30, 2008 regarding Comments on the Draft 2010-2013 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), we requested that all proposed projects on Hwy 99W address safety of bicyclists and pedestrians; be consistent with the goals of the Oregon Transportation Plan for mobility, accessibility, sustainability, safety and security; and be consistent with the goals of the Oregon Highway Plan for traffic safety and travel alternatives. We specifically requested that the Vermont and Newbury Viaduct projects (bridge #01983 and #01984) need not only deck overlays but also need to be restriped to allow bicyclists to travel safely along this busy bike route.

We have learned that the STIP project has been postponed, but we still need improvements that will accommodate the increasing bicycle traffic on Barbur more safely while not jeopardizing the safety of the pedestrians that currently walk in this section. We recommend that you initiate a stakeholder process that considers public input in the final design. Relatively low cost interim improvements can be made immediately—the sidewalks could be widened to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists within the existing structure with reflective paint and railings to ensure safety. We also recommend bike lane pavement markings (green thermoplastic) across the Capitol Hwy westbound exit. These improvements would encourage more people to walk and bike along this active transportation route. In the interest of safety, we cannot wait until the long term Southwest Corridor High Capacity Transit Plan is completed and implemented; these interim improvements are urgently needed now.

Thank you for your consideration of these important safety improvements.

Sincerely,

Brian Russell, President

cc: Tom Miller, Director, Portland Bureau of Transportation