



Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.

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

January 28, 2010

Mayor Adams, Commissioner-in-Charge of Transportation
City Commissioners Nick Fish, Amanda Fritz, Randy Leonard and Dan Saltzman
1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland OR 97204

RE: Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030

The Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI) Board of Directors is very supportive of Portland's strategies for promoting a high quality of life in our neighborhoods. As noted in our November 4, 2009 comment letter, the 2030 Bike Plan is an excellent opportunity to create "complete streets" and active transportation corridors that include safer and more accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities, especially on SW Portland collector and arterial streets. Please accept this letter of endorsement for the Bicycle Plan for 2030. Several suggested improvements to the plan are offered for your consideration.

We sincerely appreciate the changes that Portland's Bureau of Transportation has made to the 2030 Bicycle Plan as a result of our earlier comment letter. In particular, the final draft offers a change in strategy to improve crucial strategic connections: Instead of dividing the projects into tiers, the revised draft creates the "80 %" strategy to create a low-stress network, including trails, and the "world class" strategy to create safe and comfortable access to main streets and commercial areas. We offer the following additional comments on the final draft to clarify improvements that we believe are needed to achieve these strategies.

Implementation Strategy:

SWNI supports the creation of project number 8331 in Appendix A (p. A-37, also detailed in Item 5.1.E and classified as an immediate priority) that would provide interim improvements, such as uphill bike lanes and widened shoulders on the hilly streets of SW Portland.

1. We recognize that interim improvements on busy collectors will not achieve the 80 % strategy's goal of safe low stress routes, but believe this approach may be the most feasible immediate approach in SW Portland due to topographic constraints and necessary storm water management requirements.
2. We support innovative designs that accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians where appropriate, such as walkable bike paths or widened shoulders on the less busy streets. Limited funding may require alternatives to full city standards to accomplish more miles of facilities at less cost. Often the greatest gains can come from removing small, but impenetrable, barriers to the larger system.

3. We request that the City provide ample opportunity for Neighborhood Associations and Coalition Offices to be involved in planning of specific projects prior to implementation.

Policies and Objectives:

SWNI endorses the amended policy in Appendix B, objective Item 6.23 (E) (page B-5): "Ensure that the health, social, economic and environmental benefits of bicycling are accessible to all Portlanders regardless of race, ethnicity, age, economic status, geographical location or language spoken."

1. The Portland Plan Background Report Infrastructure Map # 3-3 (Improved and Unimproved Streets) shows that SW Portland has a high density of substandard and unpaved streets. Cyclists in SW Portland currently rely mainly on bike lanes on busy arterial streets. Our narrow collectors present great challenges with many bikeway and pedestrian facility gaps and few alternative routes.
2. The most important issue for SWNI is that our pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure be brought up to meet a minimum standard for safety and accessibility to transit, local schools, business and employment locations. SW Portland lags behind many other parts of the city, and yet the plan's vision is for all Portlanders to have equal access to the benefits of biking. Priority should be given to creating at least some access in areas in Portland that currently have virtually no facilities over enhancing the route system in areas that already have some sort of network.
3. We recommend creating a "Southwest Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Implementation Action Plan" that has specific goals, stated timelines, performance measures and a public input process similar to the plan for East Portland in 5.1 E. Both East and SW Portland share some of the same facilities issues: streets that are not fully improved, street system gaps and heavy reliance on bike lanes on busy arterial streets. We are willing to assist with drafting this plan.

SWNI also endorses the following amended policies in Appendix B:

6.23 G: "Increase the number of multi-modal trips that include bicycling for at least one trip segment by improving and simplifying connections and transfers to transit"

6.26 E: "Provide and maintain public bicycle parking at high demand locations (such as) neighborhood business nodes, cultural and recreational destinations, transit nodes and employment centers".

Complete Streets and Active Transportation Corridors:

SWNI thanks the Bureau of Transportation for designating Barbur Boulevard, Capitol Highway and Multnomah Boulevard as major city bikeways. Our neighborhoods look forward to cooperating with each appropriate bureau or agency to complete the gaps in both bicycle and pedestrian facilities on these important thoroughfares.

1. SWNI recognizes that a lot of planning is about to begin to incorporate high capacity transit within the Barbur corridor, but we do not want to postpone improvements that can be made now to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and fill in the gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The Barbur Active Transportation Corridor provides vital linkage between regions outside the city limits of Portland to the central city.
2. It is essential that planning for high capacity transit in the Barbur corridor includes safe access to transit and local businesses from our local neighborhoods.
3. Multi-modal improvements must include bike, pedestrian, transit and storm water management facilities. We encourage further research and innovation to assure that “green streets” also include the opportunity for “green transportation: bicycles and pedestrians”.
4. On SW collector streets, improved cooperation between the Bureau of Environmental Services and the Bureau of Transportation is needed to gain multiple benefits on all projects. We hope that recently or soon to be installed ditch to swale storm water facilities will not prevent interim bikeway improvements such as a widened shoulder or uphill climbing lane for cyclists.

The Regional and Portland Transportation Plans:

1. Several projects in Metro’s Regional Transportation Plan are significant to SW Portland, and were recently upgraded to federal priority / financially constrained status. Portions of Garden Home Road, Taylors Ferry Road and Vermont Street are slated for “world class” in the bicycle plan. They should be upgraded to the 80% bicycle strategy as funding becomes available to implement these projects. These streets are important connections between Burlingame and the Hillsdale Town Center; Multnomah Village and Garden Home Business Districts; Washington Square Regional Center and nearby employment centers.
2. There are several small but important connections in SW Portland that are included in the “world class” strategy, but should be considered as part of the 80% strategy:
 - The entire Slavin Road/Red Electric Trail connection should be part of the 80% strategy, including the portion between Barbur Boulevard and Terwilliger Boulevard. The Red Electric Trail is a federal priority in the Regional Transportation Plan and should be a high priority for the city as well.
 - Upper SW Dosch Road north of Boundary Street provides a critical north-south link to Patton and to the new / proposed segment of the Highway 26 bike path; an uphill shoulder is an appropriate interim treatment to include in project #8331. Please consider adding this street to the 80% strategy.
 - A complete north – south bikeway through Gabriel Park is needed to make the connection between Multnomah Village and the SW Community Center. Although interim improvements on SW 45th Avenue north of SW Caldw Street are welcomed, these will not create a low stress, safe and family

friendly bicycle route. A north - south route, along with improvements to the existing east - west route (aligned with SW Nevada Street) should be included in the 80% strategy. Gabriel Park needs a master transportation plan to address pedestrian, ADA and bicycle modes. We look forward to helping create that master plan.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Policies:

1. SW Neighborhoods, Inc. very much appreciates the bicycle plan's recognition in Part One, Item 1.3.5 that legislative clarification of where pedestrians may legally walk and related issues is necessary to minimize potential conflict between bicyclists and pedestrians in those areas where interim bicycle improvements are proposed, but no pedestrian facilities currently exist.
2. We strongly support a policy of concurrent development of facilities for both modes on streets that lack both pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and encourage this to be explicitly stated in each list of proposed projects or treatments. Interim bicycle path or shoulder improvements should be classified or labeled as combined or shared multiuse bicycle/pedestrian facilities rather than bike lanes.
3. We recommend that the City of Portland take the lead on introducing legislation to amend appropriate state law to clarify the respective rights of both pedestrians and bicyclists in these environments. We oppose giving bicyclists' rights over pedestrians on streets that have no pedestrian facilities, or that have shared facilities.

Endorsement of the 2030 Bicycle Plan:

Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. would like to thank Portland's Bureau of Transportation staff for their dedication and hard work in creating and revising the 2030 Bicycle Plan. The opportunities for adapting Portland's transportation system to fully accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in the years to come are critical in solving many of the region's growth problems, including reducing congestion and carbon dioxide emissions while maintaining our neighborhood livability and economic sustainability. We share your goal of creating a community where people have the choice to live without a car.

Please continue to involve SWNI and its 17 neighborhood associations in the process of designing and implementing the projects in the 2030 Bicycle Plan. We appreciate the opportunity to provide this endorsement and comments as the plan moves forward, and urge you to provide the funding to help the plan move forward.

Sincerely,



Brian Russell, President
Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.

CC: City Auditor LaVonne Griffin-Valade