**Minutes**

**SMILE Transportation Committee Meeting**

6:00 PM, 11/15/23 at the SMILE Station

In attendance: Grant Huling (Chair), Doug Bridge, Max Schwarz, Judi Davis, Andrew Holtz, Elaine O’Keefe, Juliana James.

Introductions were made, including brief statements about Committee members’ areas of interest or concern within Sellwood-Moreland. Grant quickly went over some housekeeping items:

The Transportation Committee will have a table at the SMILE Station on Decemberville (December 2nd), handing out free reflective tags, reflective tape, and gallon bags of sidewalk salt. Samples were available for committee members present.

Grant put out a request for a Committee Secretary. This person would be responsible for taking attendance, taking notes, and producing minutes. (No takers – please email transportation-chair@sellwood.org if interested.)

Grant noted that on Friday, he would be having a meeting with Mike McGinn, executive director of America Walks, a pedestrian advocacy organization. Elaine suggested the Committee also reach out to Oregon Walks (no relation). The goal in both cases is to find useful neighborhood-level actions. Portland committed to Vision Zero in 2016 so at a policy level the city is fully aligned with pedestrian safety.

Grant O’Connell of TriMet was the Committee’s guest, speaking at the SMILE meeting on October 18th about Forward Together, a bus route update that will affect Sellwood-Moreland (positively). Grant O. asked that SMILE follow up with any additional feedback about the routes. Grant H. asked if anyone present had feedback to provide (there was none), and said that if he did not receive more word in the next week, he would let Grant O. know there were no additional notes.

Grant provided updates on several projects underway, with several members providing feedback throughout:

**Llewellyn Elementary Bike Racks:** Grant noted that the Transportation Committee had coordinated with Llewellyn Elementary Principal Pam Gwynn to set up installation of 13 free PBOT bike racks at the school.

**Llewellyn Elementary Pedestrian Safety Study:** Tina Osterink, a Llewellyn parent and the Chair of SMILE’s Stewardship of Natural Amenities Committee, was recently hit by a car during drop-off.She could not attend the meeting, but Grant provided an update on an effort Tina is leading, alongside Pam Gwynn, to improve pedestrian safety around the elementary school. With Abra McNair, SMILE’s PBOT contact at Safe Routes to School for the 14th & Bybee project recently promoted (but staying on the project), our Safe Routes contact for this newly launched safety study is Gui Fonseca. Grant noted that the decision was to launch this as its own study, as it will look holistically at the effects that, for example, changing 14th to a one-way street would have on surrounding streets. Gui has been responsive thus far.

**13th Ave Traffic Investigation Team Ticket:** Judi D. and Doug B., who created the petition for pedestrian improvements along 13th Ave, were in attendance. Grant provided an update, following his 45-minute meeting with Rick Nys (PBOT Traffic Investigation Team) and Art Pearce (PBOT Policy, Planning & Projects Group Director) and subsequent check-in with Judi and Doug. The request remains in PBOT’s queue. PBOT indicated that, contrary to Grant’s earlier advice, the Bureau does appreciate “amateur engineering” suggestions, since a lot of useful data about how residents experience an area is embedded in residents’ suggested solutions. The Traffic Investigation Team will only observe 13th Ave for part of a morning or afternoon. After checking in with Judi and Doug, Grant requested that PBOT focus their improvements on painting new crosswalks and adding signage and painted curbs to prevent cars from parking right up to the corners of streets intersecting 13th.  More engineered improvements like a light-up crossing are welcome, but only if their implementation would not slow down other improvements.

**17th Ave & Linn St:** During their meeting, Rick Nys told Grant that a second, non-contiguous location could be added along 13th Ave in the queue, so PBOT could observe and make recommendations on the same day they observe 13th Ave. Grant explained that he reached out to Amber McNair of PBOT’s Safe Routes to School with a list of three locations that residents had brought to the Transportation Committee (17th & Linn, Umatilla along Sellwood Middle School, and 16th & Bybee), asking her which would be best handled through Safe Routes instead of the Traffic Investigation Team. Based on Amber’s detailed response, Grant asked Rick that 17th & Linn be added to the ticket. Islands have been added in recent years, but residents have still complained about speeding up 17th Ave. That area is a transition point into Sellwood-Moreland, and there is a daycare and pediatric dentist’s office on that first southern block.

**PBOT Invitation for January:** Elaine O. suggested inviting a PBOT representative to the next Transportation Committee meeting in January, to provide an update on the Traffic Investigations Team ticket for 13th Ave/17th & Linn. She said it might help advance the improvements to get more eyes from the community on it. Grant agreed, adding that more community commentary would probably be welcomed by PBOT. Judi suggested it be Rick Nys, and Grant agreed, saying he would invite Rick.

**PBOT Stable Funding Letter:** During his meeting with Rick Nys and Art Pearce, Grant asked what issues PBOT was confronting. Their top concern was the variability of PBOT’s funding, which will result in layoffs beginning with the fiscal year in July 2024. Specifically, the Traffic Investigation Team that Rick is a part of, and which is SMILE’s point of contact when the Transportation Committee reaches out to the City about problem spots, may not exist as of July. Grant told Rick and Art that he would be glad to draft a letter to City Council supporting reforms to achieve more regular, reliable funding at PBOT. After having mailed his draft letter to the Transportation Committee listserv earlier in the week, Grant shared printouts and the group discussed whether the Committee should endorse or modify the letter (with Grant to subsequently present the letter for SMILE board approval). Elaine’s question focused the debate: “What is the ask?” Members debated whether the letter was too broad, and too early, to have an effect, or whether there is use in expressing support for the principle of stabilized funding. Ultimately, the group fleshed out the list of persons to copy on the letter (adding our state representatives) and added a sentence to ensure the letter would not be “insulting,” insofar as it had failed to acknowledge that the letter’s recipients were already well aware of this funding dilemma. At the November 15th SMILE board meeting, the board unanimously voted to approve the letter as modified in committee.

Members acknowledged that with the number of transportation items to discuss (some of which, like nascent plans to paint intersections at Sellwood Middle School and/or 16th & Bybee, could not be addressed at this meeting due to time constraints), the Committee might want to meet monthly instead of every other month. For now, the current schedule is being maintained. Meeting adjourned.

*Draft*

*Minutes approval to be voted on by attendees of the next SMILE Transportation*

*Committee Meeting, occurring January 17, 2023 at the SMILE Station from 6:00*

*to 7:00 PM.*