

Minutes

SMILE Transportation Committee Meeting 5/15/24, 6:00-7:10 PM at the SMILE Station

In attendance: Amy Casanova, Judi Davis, Brandon Namm, Elaine O'Keefe, Grant Hulling (Chair)

The group voted to approve minutes from the 4/16/24 meeting, without modification.

VisionZero “Slow Down” Signs Distributed: Amy Casanova distributed yard signs to attendees who had signed PBOT’s pledge to follow basic safe driving practices. Grant said he would keep the additional signs at his house and connect via email to ensure the additional signatories receive them. These orange yard signs are being distributed for free as part of the City’s commitment to VisionZero, a global program to reduce pedestrian traffic deaths.

SE 13th Ave PBOT Traffic Safety Investigation Ticket Update: Grant shared the news, previously included in an email to the listserv, that PBOT Traffic Operations Supervisor Rick Nys informed Judi Davis and him two weeks prior that the request for a traffic safety investigation along SE 13th Ave, prompted by Ms. Davis’ petition and later supported by the Committee, has now “left the queue” and has had a staff assigned to the project. For the next step a PBOT team will visit and observe the site before making recommendations for safety improvements, which, based on discussions, will likely include painting additional curbs for *No Parking* and adding at least one crosswalk. PBOT may recommend costlier improvements, but a second layer of engineering and funding allocation would be required before that would be implemented.

The group discussed and deemed no action necessary at this time, although the timeline for PBOT’s visit remains unclear.

Including SE Milwaukie Ave on PBOT Traffic Safety Investigation Ticket: Amy Casanova, a longtime Portlander who recently moved to SE Milwaukie Ave near SE Insley Ave, remarked on the issue of speeding traffic along that section of Milwaukie. She said she had written to TriMet about speeding buses and was dismissed, being told that TriMet GPS records showed there was no issue. The group discussed the problems with speeding in that area and there was agreement that it is an issue, with the lack of cars parked one side, the proximity to the 45 MPH SE McLoughlin Blvd, and the sense of “leaving” and “entering,” but not being within, a neighborhood, being contributing factors. Elaine said that “the problem is us,” in the sense that anyone, while behind the wheel of a car, can drive unsafely when the roadway enables it, and there was general agreement with that idea.

Grant said that the Committee’s 2023 discussions with Rick Nys and Art Pearce of PBOT led him to learn that it was no issue, from PBOT’s perspective, for an additional, non-contiguous part of roadway in Sellwood-Moreland to be added to the 13th Ave “ticket.” Grant noted that, after he had discussed

different problem stretches with Safe Routes to School Project Manager Abra McNair (learning which stretches would not be good candidates for Safe Routes), he had in Fall 2023 requested that Rick Nys add SE 17th Ave, near SE Linn St, to the ticket.

Grant said he would write to Rick to request that this stretch of SE Milwaukie Ave be added to the ticket. He noted there was no guarantee that PBOT would agree to do so, but he was optimistic based on previous discussions, which had given him the impression that from PBOT's zoomed out perspective, these pieces of Sellwood-Moreland are essentially one area. He said he would copy Amy, as well as petition originator Judi, on the email. There was some further discussion to hone in on the language to use on the request. The southbound McLoughlin offramp will be noted as a problem; after leaving that highway, one immediately enters a 25 MPH zone, but there are no speed limit signs or other clear indicators that one is now in a neighborhood for two further blocks south. The group agreed that the speed limit should also ideally be reduced to 20 MPH in that area, since it reduces to 20 MPH shortly later to the south, and cars entering the neighborhood will be at a stop sign.

Replacement Barrier for 13th & Umatilla: Brandon Namm, who lives on Umatilla, noted that a movable PBOT barrier on the east side of SE 13th Ave & SE Umatilla St., which has been present for over a year, was moved. He said he has requested a replacement as it is a useful traffic calming addition. No one present was aware of any sign that PBOT had intentionally moved it.

Llewellyn Elementary Safe Drop Off Fall Implementation: Grant summarized a set of drop off recommendations that PBOT's Safe Routes to School delivered to Llewellyn Elementary School and the Transportation Committee in recent weeks (attached). One new crosswalk is now planned to be painted across SE 14th Ave at SE Henry Street. The rest of what Safe Routes provided consists of an annotated map with suggested drop off traffic flow routes and guidance for Llewellyn Elementary to better enforce less chaotic drop-offs. Grant noted that the current Principal Pamela Gwynn will be leaving Llewellyn at the end of this school year and that the Transportation Committee should be sure to reach out to her replacement in August, so that these recommendations, which will require staff and/or volunteer coordination can be put into place in the next school year. Additionally, SMILE Stewardship of Natural Amenities Committee Chair and Llewellyn parent Tina Osterink, who led the project, has said that next year her child will age out of Llewellyn, so her involvement can't be relied on to the same degree.

Tacoma Cut-Through Traffic Letter Next Steps: One month earlier, SMILE delivered the Transportation Committee-drafted letter to PBOT leadership requesting PBOT resume the Tacoma Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Project (attached). Grant noted that no response has yet been received and asked the group how the Committee should proceed. There was consensus that Grant, on behalf of the Committee, should send an email to the individual letter recipients, checking in, asking for a status update ("even if PBOT's message is 'drop dead,'" per Elaine), and offering to answer any questions or meet.

Portland Public Plaza Project: Grant Huling and Elaine O’Keefe, both members of the SMILE Board, shared that at the May SMILE Board meeting, Ruth Kaser, Vikki DeGaa, and Mark Lakeman presented on a proposed project to bring a new plaza space to Sellwood-Moreland. The intention is to fund it through an AARP grant (application due in January 2025), and to also utilize PBOT’s Street Plaza Program, if the chosen location ends up being in a public right of way. The location may end up being in a parking lot or another private location. Grant said that he volunteered to be in the Plaza Project Committee, which meets for the first time on 6/6, due to his interest in placemaking, and the likelihood that the project may involve PBOT and deeper engagement by the Transportation Committee.

Street Mural: The group discussed the idea for a street mural, tentatively at SE 16th Ave and SE Umatilla St, and tentatively planned for a Fall 2024 execution with the involvement of Sellwood Middle School. First steps have not yet been taken and there is not yet a project leader. Brandon Namm, who lives at that intersection, said he would rather wait and hear what will come of the Tacoma Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Project Phase II before dedicating time to managing a mural. Elaine suggested that this project continue separate from the plaza project. Grant agreed and said that he thought it should also proceed regardless of PBOT’s response to the letter, noting that PBOT won’t consider a mural to be a form of traffic calming. Grant said he would email Sellwood Middle School Principal Jeandré Carbone to lay the groundwork for the school’s potential involvement in the coming school year.

Removing 17th Ave Centerlines: Elaine O’Keefe brought up a stalled project from years prior: a request from SMILE that PBOT remove, or at least stop annually re-painting, the yellow centerlines on SE 17th Ave. Elaine noted that per PBOT’s traffic engineering guidance, the street does not warrant these center lines, which she said reduce the residential character of the street and encourage speeding. She said Transportation Committee minutes from previous years should include the earlier letter. Grant thanked her for bringing this up again and said it was something the Transportation Committee should again bring to PBOT’s attention. The item will be returned to in future meetings.

Draft

Minutes approval to be voted on by attendees of the next SMILE Transportation Committee Meeting, occurring Thursday, June 20, 2024 from 6:00 to 7:00 PM, via Zoom.

ATTACHMENT A
PBOT Safe Routes to School Team
Llewellyn Elementary School Circulation Guidance (4/19/24)

Llewellyn Elementary School Circulation:

Hello, Llewellyn Elementary families and friends! We would like to thank you for taking the time to look at our circulation map provided by PBOT's Safe Routes to School team. After observing your traffic circulation patterns during arrival, we have some suggestions that can help mitigate congestions and improve pedestrian safety around the school. If you find yourself stuck in traffic on SE 14th Avenue, or having to navigate around the school bus, the following suggestions along with the blue directional arrows on this map might help:

- For parents/caregivers traveling **north** to Llewellyn:
 - Avoid driving on SE 14th Avenue between SE Henry and SE Tolman
 - If you turn onto SE Henry to get to the school from SE Milwaukie Avenue, try turning onto SE Duke Street instead. This will allow you to exit via SE Henry Street avoiding the "red zone"
 - If you find yourself driving up SE Henry on your way to school, make a left-hand turn onto SE 15th and go around the block to keep traffic flowing **clockwise** around this block
- For parents/caregivers traveling **south** to Llewellyn:
 - Avoid driving on SE 14th Avenue between SE Henry and SE Tolman
 - If you turn onto SE Toman to get to school from SE Milwaukie Avenue, try turning onto SE Carlton instead. This will allow you to exit via SE Tolman avoiding the "red zone"
 - If you find yourself driving up SE Tolman on your way to school, make a right-hand turn onto SE 15th and go around the block to keep traffic flowing **counterclockwise** around this block
- For parents/caregivers who like walking their student to the door:
 - We suggest using one of the **green "Park and Walk"** locations on our map. Doing so will allow you to avoid parking on SE 14th which will be busy during peak hours and make for an easy exit after you have dropped off or picked up your student

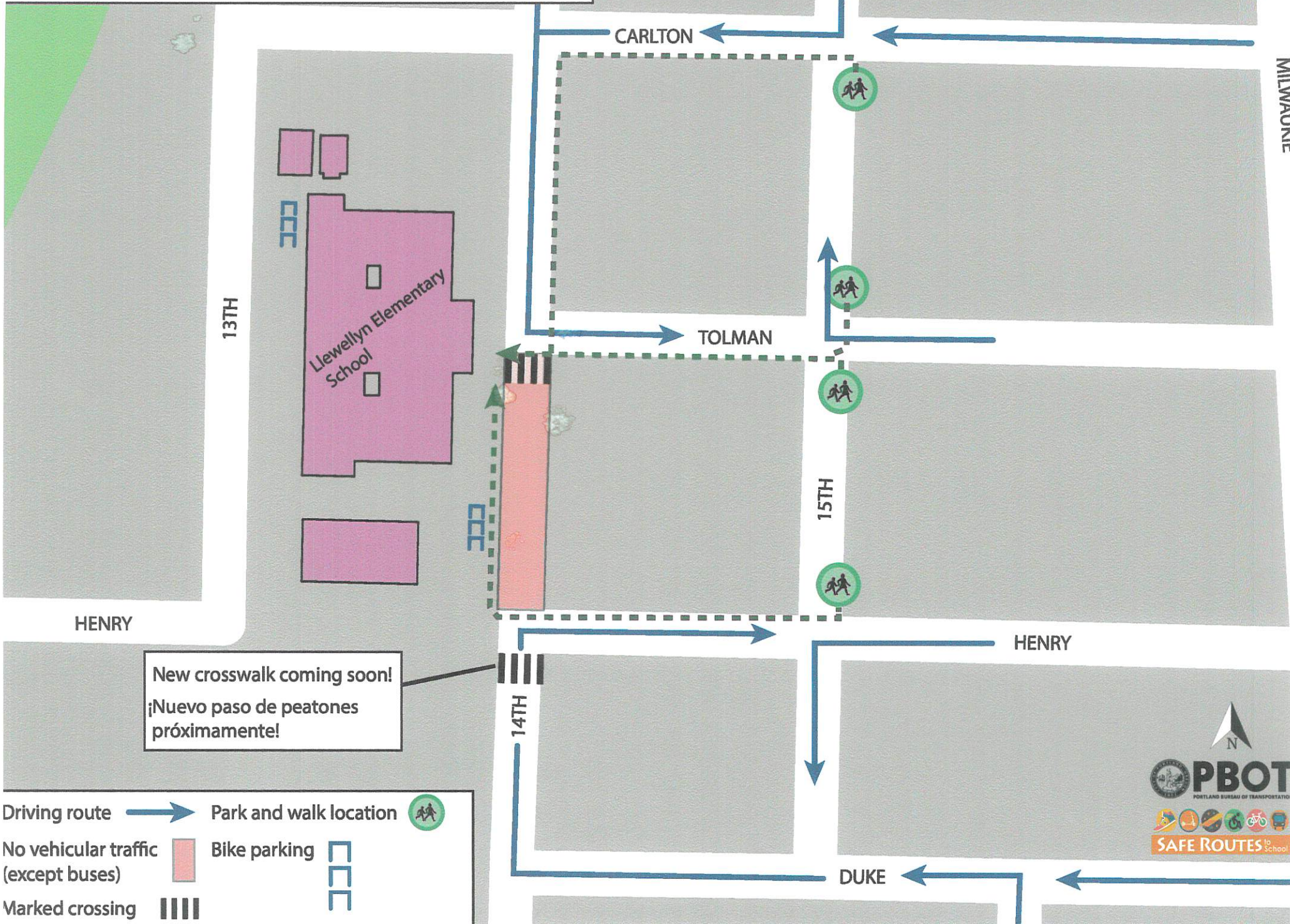
Thank you,

-PBOT Safe Routes to School Team





Llewellyn Elementary School Traffic Circulation Map



New crosswalk coming soon!
 ¡Nuevo paso de peatones próximamente!

Driving route		Park and walk location	
No vehicular traffic (except buses)		Bike parking	
Marked crossing			



ATTACHMENT B
Letter to PBOT
Tacoma Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Project Phase II



SELLWOOD MORELAND IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE
8210 SE 13th AVENUE, PORTLAND, OR 97202
503-234-3570

April 23, 2024

Director Millicent Williams
Portland Bureau of Transportation
1120 SW 5th Ave #100
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Director Williams,

In 2017, the Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) requested that the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) look into ways to eliminate or mitigate the impacts of continued cut-through traffic originating at the newly reopened Sellwood Bridge. We are grateful for the resulting Tacoma Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Project, Phase I of which was completed Fall 2019 and which resulted in the installation of speed bumps on six sections of residential street near the entrance to the Sellwood Bridge.

As presented by PBOT at a March 2019 Open House at the SMILE Station, the project was intended to have a Phase II:

Approximately six months after installation of the Phase I speed bumps, PBOT will collect after data to assess changes in traffic conditions and patterns within the project area. A survey will also be initiated of local residents to help determine if additional street segments need to have speed bumps installed.

The COVID-19 pandemic and budget constraints intervened and Phase II was never initiated. However, cut-through traffic on residential streets by Sellwood Bridge commuters remains the overwhelming traffic issue reported by residents of our community, who regularly bring it to the SMILE Board and the SMILE Transportation Committee.

We are requesting that PBOT initiate Phase II of the Tacoma Street Neighborhood Transportation Management Project. Based on our years of discussion within the Sellwood-Moreland community, we are requesting that this Phase II be modified in two ways from its initial scope:

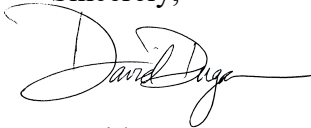
1. Address streets further from the entrance of the Sellwood Bridge. Commuters coming to and from Clackamas utilize the entire east-west length of Tacoma Street through Sellwood-Moreland. When they avoid congestion by cutting through residential side

streets, this effect is experienced along the length of Tacoma Street, for two or three blocks north and south of Tacoma. For example, cut-through traffic originating from Tacoma Street results in speeding commuters on Umatilla Street, which is a Neighborhood Greenway and which fronts Sellwood Middle School. Anecdotally, cut-through commuters seem to more frequently run stop signs bordering and along these streets.

2. Consider traffic-calming interventions beyond speed bumps. Problem streets often already have speed bumps that are not proving sufficient to calm cut-through traffic. Here, SMILE cannot speak on behalf of all affected stakeholders; a robust public feedback process will be required for PBOT to determine which traffic interventions are desired by those residents most affected.

This letter was approved unanimously by the SMILE Board of Directors on April 17, 2024.
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Dugan".

David Dugan
President, Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League

CC:
Commissioner-in-Charge Mingus Mapps
Policy, Planning and Projects Group Manager Art Pearce