

Minutes

SMILE Transportation Committee Meeting 4/16/24, 6:00-7:15 PM via Zoom

In attendance: Grant Huling (Chair), Brandon Namm, Judi Davis, Elaine O'Keefe, Max Schwarz, Doug Bridge (arrived midway).

There were no minutes from the March meeting to review.

TriMet Route 40: Grant informed the group that the TriMet Board of Directors voted to approve a budget that includes the new Route 40 bus route through Sellwood-Moreland. The Transportation Committee had previously written a letter, sent to and unanimously approved by the SMILE Board, in favor of route's inclusion in the new fiscal year budget. The letter is attached.

Letter to PBOT - Tacoma Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Project Phase II: The committee members discussed a draft letter to PBOT that Grant had distributed to both the Transportation Committee listserv and the SMILE Board several days prior. Grant's hope was for the Transportation Committee to revise the letter before he presented it for approval at the SMILE Board meeting taking place at 7:30 PM. Grant gave a brief introduction to the letter, in particular the history of how the Committee came to take the approach of drafting a letter from SMILE requesting a follow up to the Tacoma Street NEighborhood Traffic Management Project (Phase I of which was completed in Fall 2019, with speed bumps installed on side streets near the Sellwood Bridge entrance), after having earlier considered a petition-led approach.

Max said he liked the letter. Elaine said that she thought the letter had an excellent tone, in approaching PBOT respectfully, and framing it as a continuation of Phase I, with a tweaked scope for Phase II.

Brandon, who lives on Umatilla, said he appreciated the language leaving open-ended regarding which particular approach would be taken, leaving it to future public feedback events. The Committee had previously discussed the question of diverters (i.e. interventions moving cars onto alternate routes) vs. traffic calming (i.e. interventions slowing down cars), with some disagreement, and concern about the potential of disagreement in the wider community over different methods. Elaine said diverters were proposed five years ago and were strongly opposed by residents who believed their particular street would experience more traffic as a result of redirection. Brandon said he would be curious to see what had been proposed. Elaine said she was not sure but that it may be on Sellwood.org among old minutes.

Elaine said she thinks the first strategic goal is to get PBOT to the table. That would be a huge win. Grant said he agreed, which is why the letter is agnostic on methods. Grant cautioned that PBOT may not be responsive, and that additional pressure, like a petition, may well be needed. He saw this as a precondition for success down the road. The attendees voted unanimously in favor of approving the letter

as written. Later that evening it was presented to the SMILE Board, which voted unanimously to approve. Physical and emailed copies have been distributed; the letter is attached.

VisionZero “Slow Down” Yard Signs: Grant told the group that PBOT is again offering free yard signs with messages like “Slow Down.” This is being done in collaboration with VisionZero, a global project to encourage transportation policies that work towards zero pedestrian deaths. The City of Portland has endorsed VisionZero since 2016. Any individual can go to the downtown PBOT office to pick up one free sign; groups of signs are available, but a pledge (stating that one will drive attentively, soberly, at a good speed, etc.) has to be signed by one individual per sign provided. Grant, Elaine, Max, Doug, Judi, and several spouses of attendees agreed to sign the pledge virtually. Thirteen signs have been procured for the Committee and will be handed out at the next meeting, taking place at the SMILE Station on May 15th.

Street Mural: Grant introduced a topic that some previous attendees had shown interest in: the Transportation Committee potentially leading a project to paint a street mural somewhere in Sellwood-Moreland. One potential intersection discussed earlier was SE 16th Ave & SE Umatilla St, which had the benefit of being located at a corner of Sellwood Middle School, on the cut-through traffic-prone Umatilla St., and at the house of Committee member Brandon.

Grant laid out what the process would have to look like. Mark Lakeman, who led Share-It Square, a mural and plaza-style installation on Sherritt St., was mentioned as an important resource the Committee should speak with to learn about the logistical demands of speaking to stakeholder neighbors, coordinating paint team, etc. Judi said she would want to be on an email list for interested Committee members. Elaine said it would be crucial to have a dedicated project manager. Doug, who works in education, said that at this point in the school year, it would be too late to involve a school. The attendees agreed that this project was shaping up to be one for the fall. Grant said he would reach out to Mark Lakeman, Sellwood Middle School Principal Jeandr  Carbone, and Brandon Namm (who had to leave the meeting early).

13th Ave Petition: Doug Bridge and Judi Davis brought up their 13th Ave pedestrian safety petition, asking what more the Traffic Committee can do to advance it. This was submitted to PBOT in April 2023, with SMILE as a signatory. As a result, PBOT’s Rick Nys created a ticket for a Traffic Safety Investigation Team to come out and assess the street. Grant had met with Rick and his boss Art Pearce to discuss the petition and PBOT’s processes in general, and had had several follow-up emails with them. Judi asked what the Traffic Committee can do to get PBOT to move on the petition. Grant said that he doesn’t believe SMILE can ever “get” PBOT to do something, and that he thinks we ultimately have to wait while the ticket sits in a queue. He said his concern was tactically how to reengage on this without burning bridges with PBOT or being counterproductive. Elaine said she thought there was little downside to just touching base with PBOT and, while at it, sending them the petitions signatures to ensure they went into record.

Doug, who joined the meeting midway, asked if the 13th Ave petition could be folded into the Tacoma Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Project Phase II letter that was approved earlier in the meeting. Grant said he thought the scope was too different from the Tacoma Street cut-through traffic scope of the new letter. Elaine said that because the City had already committed to the Tacoma Street Project, referencing a planned Phase II, there was a logic to proceeding there and that it could water down communications to try to complain to PBOT about “everything” going on across the neighborhood.

Grant said he would write a letter as Traffic Committee Chair, copying the listserv. Elaine recommended that it be a cover letter to the attached signatures, saying the Committee wanted to ensure they went into the record, noting it had been a year, and asking for an update. This proved unnecessary as one week later, Rick Nys wrote to provide an update that he was able to assign a team to the 13th Ave investigation, meaning it can be expected to move forward.

ATTACHMENT A
Letter to TriMet (2/21/24)
Support for Route 40



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

February 21, 2024

TriMet Board of Directors
4012 SE 17th Ave
Portland, OR 97202

Dear TriMet board members,

The Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) has followed the progression of Forward Together with interest and is grateful for Senior Planner Grant O'Connell's efforts in communicating to our community about the initiative.

The SMILE Board would like to express our support for the inclusion of Route 40 as proposed, which we understand will stop every 30 minutes between 5:30 AM and 12:30 AM, seven days a week. This will be a great boon to our residents. We understand that Route 40's extension Eastward to SE 82nd Ave has been excluded from TriMet's Proposed 2024-25 service changes, but we hope that an extension could be added in a future year. We also hope that a service upgrade to every 15 minutes along SE Milwaukie Ave and SE Bybee Blvd, originally communicated, will see the light of day.

Thank you for your work in improving the region.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Dugan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

David Dugan
President, Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League

ATTACHMENT B
Letter to PBOT (4/23/24)
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:

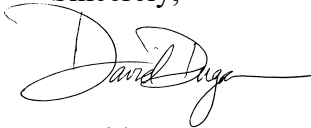
1. Address streets further from the entrance of the Sellwood Bridge. Commuters coming to and from Clackamas utilize the entire east-west length of Tacoma Street through Sellwood-Moreland. When they avoid congestion by cutting through residential side

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 black ink, appearing to read "David Dugan", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

David Dugan
President, Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League

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