



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

November 16, 2023

Portland City Council
City Hall
1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Portland City Council,

The Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) is concerned that the complex, variable, and use-restricted nature of funding for the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) undercuts the reliability of basic services provided by the Bureau. We see this as a neighborhood issue. With the Bureau's budget shortfall, it is very possible that when SMILE picks up the phone to alert the PBOT Traffic Investigations Team to a pedestrian safety issue in Sellwood-Moreland, there will be no one on the other end of the line, starting July 1, 2024.

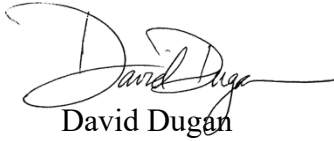
In the Transportation Operating Fund Financial Forecast (2017-2022), PBOT drolly observed its "highly dynamic funding environment." A drop in downtown parking volumes, the expiration of a temporary tax, or the failure to secure a federal grant will have an outsized effect on a Bureau in which 75% of dollars are use-restricted. One revenue source slips and a program with years of momentum can be shuttered, its staff eliminated, and the city left poorer in both infrastructure and human assets. As reflected in the concept of the risk premium, there is higher value to a more reliable dollar.

PBOT provides core infrastructure and would benefit from a revenue structure resembling a utility's in terms of stability, simplicity, and cross-Bureau fungibility of dollars. SMILE is not requesting an increase in gross PBOT funding per se. We are requesting that the City of Portland, in collaboration with other entities funding PBOT, work to restructure the Bureau's funding to achieve greater reliability, to ensure the uninterrupted provision of services.

SMILE understands that Council and PBOT have been studying the issue, and that such reforms will be no small task, but know that on principle you have our support for reform to stabilize the experience of PBOT services at the neighborhood level.

This letter was approved unanimously by the SMILE Board of Directors on November 15, 2023.
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Dugan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Dugan
President, Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League

CC:

Kate Lieber, Oregon State Senate

Kathleen Taylor, Oregon State Senate

Dan Rayfield, Oregon State House of Representatives

Mark Gamba, Oregon State House of Representatives

Art Pearce, PBOT