

## Minutes

### **SMILE Transportation Committee Meeting 7/17/24, 6:00-7:00 PM at the SMILE Station**

In attendance: Grant Huling (Chair), Max Schwarz, Ruth Kaser, Vikki DeGaa, Brandon Namm, Andrew Holtz

**4th of July Closure of Sellwood Boulevard:** With a whiteboard map out, discussion began of an item not on the agenda: closure of Sellwood Boulevard for the Fourth of July. Vikki DeGaa stated that it was completely full of pedestrians watching fireworks, but cars still attempted to pass. She said she had made initial contact with PBOT to ask about requested a closure, as has happened in previous years. Grant encouraged her to continue and said that SMILE could be signatory of the permit if an organization was required. Vikki would be requesting closure of an “interior” stretch from driveway to driveway, i.e. no driveway access would be lost for the 7/4/25 closure.

**Permanent Closure of Sellwood Boulevard:** Max Schwarz kicked off a group discussion about potential benefits that could come from a permanent closure of Sellwood Boulevard to car traffic, or conversion into a one-way car line with a dedicated advisory bike lane.. The consensus was that the street functions acceptably as-is and such a major change will not be pursued by the Committee at this time.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the 6/20/24 meeting were approved.

**Public Plaza Project Update:** Ruth Kaser and Vikka DeGaa provided an update on a project they are leading to close a section of street in Sellwood-Moreland for purposes of a PBOT-sanctioned public plaza. The group is a part of the Transportation Committee and its membership, in addition to Ruth and Vikki, consists of Mark Lakeman, and SMILE Board members Grant Huling, Zach Duffly, and Elizabeth Milner.

A location has not yet been permitted by PBOT, even on a temporary basis, although the plaza group has identified a few candidates: 13th & Lexington, 13th & Tenino, and Milwaukie & Glenwood. Ruth and Vikki talked about next steps in terms of outreach. Grant said he did not think that any kind of proactive publicizing was needed at this early point, given the transparency of the process (see: Committee minutes), and the fact that most affected stakeholders would be contacted. Additionally, the plan is for a temporary 1-to-3-month closure to test an area, during which time public input will be solicited. PBOT had said it will only give out such temporary permits, as soon as their development is finished. More permanent permits will be made available in the future. Grant recommended Ruth and Vikki go ahead and speak with nearby businesses.

*Update: The owners of the Cloud Cap Games shop near 13th & Lexington said that they would not want a plaza there, as parking access is crucial in their experience. Although the nearest neighbor to the Milwaukie and Glenwood plaza, Westmoreland Cleaners, was not spoken with, Ruth and Vikki heard strongly and consistently from other neighboring businesses that maintaining Glenwood for commercial trucks is necessary. The plaza group held a meeting with the owner of the Limelight on August 6th, and it*

*was agreed that a site one block to the North, at SE Milwaukie Ave & SE Claybourne St., will be the one requested of PBOT. A meeting with the plaza group and PBOT permitters is scheduled for September 25th.*

**Crosswalks at SE 17th Ave & Marion/Clatsop/Sherrett:** Brandon Namm stated that he would like to see crosswalks added on SE 17th at three consecutive cross streets: Marion St., Clatsop St., and Sherrett St. (ideally all three). Grant said that this should fold right in with the scope of the Transportation Committee's existing Safety Assessment ticket with PBOT for two commercial strips in Sellwood-Moreland: SE 13th Ave and the southernmost part of SE 17th Ave. Andrew Holz and Max led some additional discussion of the nearby intersection of 17th & Ochoco to the south, which PBOT has been slow to improve, presumably because it is a complex, tri-modal (bus, car, and bike) intersection. This would not directly affect the three intersections in question here.

**Reedway Update:** Grant said that although he had followed up with previous guest William Henderson about potentially continuing efforts to build a Reedway (or thereabouts) foot crossing, no progress had yet been made. Grant said the next step could be for him to request a simple statement from the SMILE board approving of it (as last happened in 2017), with neighboring Associations and SEUL being asked as well. On hold for lack of manpower at the moment.

**Tacoma Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Project study locations:** Grant showed the list of locations that the Transportation Committee had provided to PBOT for traffic speed/volume studies, and asked for any modifications. It was agreed that the intersection to the north of 19th & Tacoma should be added in place of Milwaukie & Miller, as it is much higher-volume and Miller is a narrower one-way. These traffic studies are a somewhat anticlimactic next step after the SMILE board requested a "Phase II" of the Tacoma Street Neighborhood Traffic Management Project; PBOT Project Manager Rick Nys has warned Grant that there is no funding available for traffic calming measures following the study, and that, in fact there is currently no traffic calming program within PBOT. However, the study should at least help legitimize and focus future improvements when funding becomes available. Grant noted another PBOT-admitted weakness of the study, which is that it only looks at average speed, and does not account for the possibility of a small minority of extreme speeders who don't raise the average much but who affect livability.

**Removing Stripe from SE 17th Ave:** Grant brought up an issue raised by absent committee member Elaine O'Keefe: that SE 17th Ave, around the latitude of Westmoreland Park, has a double yellow stripe painted, but, according to Elaine's research, it should not. Years ago, the SMILE Board approved a letter requesting PBOT stop repainting the line, in the interest of discouraging speeding. Grant said that the next step would be for him to dig through SMILE Board minutes to find what was previously communicated, and that, even in the absence of that, the SMILE Transportation Committee could draft a new request.

