

PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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Jo Ann Hardesty Commissioner **Chris Warner** Director

March 30, 2021

Planning and Sustainability Commissioners:

Thank you for your March 8, 2021 letter about PBOT's work to advance the goals in Portland's 2035 Transportation System Plan (TSP) and 2015 Climate Action Plan. PBOT shares your concern about rising transportation emissions and we remain committed to reducing transportation's contribution to climate change, achieving Vision Zero and shifting more trips away from private vehicles to biking, walking and public transit. We are also committed to doing it in a way that is equitable.

Since the last major TSP update, we have adopted and begun implementation of two major public transit and bicycling infrastructure initiatives, the Rose Lane project and Central City in Motion. Both are focused on tactical projects that we can deliver in the near term with limited capital funding.

In the past two years, we have also implemented roadway reorganizations to address some of our highest crash corridors (Foster, 102nd, Halsey/Weidler and Glisan); these projects have reallocated space to achieve safer conditions with a focus on people biking, walking or accessing public transit.

I am especially proud of the small capital improvement funds that we established with our last major TSP update dedicated to the bike, greenway, public transit and pedestrian systems. These flexible funds have allowed the Bureau to quickly and nimbly invest limited dollars with an outsized impact on the transportation system, often leveraging paving projects to improve public transit reliability, bike system connectivity or pedestrian safety. We would be glad to share an update on this work with you.

Most of PBOT's Capital Improvement Program from year to year focuses our scarce funding on projects that will improve safety and reduce carbon emissions. We were successful in shaping a regional transportation funding package last year that would have helped us make progress on those goals, but the measure did not pass. Clearly, infrastructure improvements are not keeping up with population growth. Transportation sector emissions continue to climb as a share of total emissions, reaching 43% of total emissions in Multnomah County in 2020. Our biking commute mode share grew from 5.8% in 2009 to a high of 7.2% in 2014 before declining to 5.2% in 2019.



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Vision Zero, too, remains an elusive goal. While we are continuing to invest in safety projects, 2020 saw a spike in traffic fatalities that mirrored a national increase. We look forward to discussing these trends at your April meeting, and sharing PBOT's multi-faceted approach to making Portland's streets safer.

We welcome input from the Planning and Sustainability Commission in helping shape transportation policy that meets City climate, equity and other sustainability goals. In response to your request, I am directing staff to engage the Commission in a conversation about how we can improve our policies and practices as we begin the next major update to our TSP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Warner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chris Warner, Director
Portland Bureau of Transportation