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March 10, 2015

Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

Andre Baugh, Chair

Submitted via email: tsp@portlandoregon.gov

RE: City Club Comments on Updated Transportation System Plan

Dear Chair Baugh and Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed update of the Transportation System Plan (TSP) and its connection to the Comprehensive Plan. The City Club of Portland's Bicycle Transportation Advocacy Committee appreciates your efforts to ensure that the TSP and the Comprehensive Plan are aligned and lead Portland toward an affordable, safer, more equitable, and more sustainable City.

This update of the TSP is the first opportunity to fully integrate the 2030 Bicycle Plan (adopted in 2010) into overall transportation planning for the City. The committee is supportive of this integration and believes that the strategic and integrated approach will be needed as projects are designed and implemented.

As mentioned in our November 2014 comments on the Comprehensive Plan Proposed Draft to the Commission, we support a strong link between land use and transportation. We appreciate in particular that the Comprehensive Plan draft explicitly recognizes the role of streets as both public spaces and transportation links for all users, and we appreciate its emphasis on a "safe, comfortable, and accessible" bicycle network for "people of all ages and abilities," especially its explicit links to important Centers and Corridors throughout the city's land use hierarchy.

We believe that this link would be strengthened if the terminology for various streets in the TSP and the Comprehensive Plan could be both more congruent and simplified. The growing number of terms for streets is confusing to the public and has a strong potential to result in conflict during the design stage of project development.

The Committee is particularly pleased to see that in this draft of the TSP the language around safety (Vision Zero) had been strengthened. Building a truly multimodal and equitable city requires a strong focus on reducing the number and severity of crashes. Vision Zero is where we must start.

We continue to support the inclusion of the multimodal Transportation Hierarchy in the TSP. This important policy tool will help prioritize the work of PBOT and other city agencies by directly addressing the city's goals related to transportation, equity, climate and prosperity.

The Committee strongly supports the inclusion of the Bicycle and Pedestrian System Completion Programs as high priority projects in the constrained funding scenario. These programs should be given the highest priority as they will do the most to make new bicyclists comfortable with using the bike network, filling gaps and making key links to connect people to the places they need to go.

We understand that PBOT has undertaken an assessment of Neighborhood Greenways. We hope to see the results of that assessment show up as projects in the System Completion Program and also as new standards for future Neighborhood Greenways. If we want more people to ride bikes for more trips, we must correct past experiments that failed and standardize treatments so that riders will have predictable patterns when they try out bicycling. We support the same kind of assessment for other bike facilities in Portland in order to standardize other parts of the bike network. Standardized pavement markings, push buttons and traffic control devices are a key part of making the system fully functional and inviting to new and existing bike riders.



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The Committee supports the TSP Project Selection Criteria as a transparent and effective means of creating the Constrained and Unconstrained Project lists. We are particularly pleased to see health and equity highlighted in the criteria PBOT has used to prioritize projects, alongside cost effectiveness, economic benefit, neighborhood access and other factors. In addition to the overall criteria, we see a need to be strategic in sequencing the projects. We must look for opportunities to advance critical links to give more people access to the expanding bike system. As an example, the new separated bike facilities associated with the Milwaukie Light Rail project have greatly improved bicycle safety and attractiveness in inner Southeast Portland. If Holgate Viaduct bike facilities were prioritized, a large area of Southeast Portland would suddenly have a much more accessible bicycle route to downtown Portland and the Central Eastside.

Finally, as projects are selected for early implementation, we urge the Commission and PBOT to focus on serving the short trips suitable for most bicyclists, as called for in the 2030 Bicycle Plan. This will increase the number of bicycle users by encouraging the interested but concerned potential riders to try out the bike network for shopping and visiting trips.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment once again on the Comprehensive Plan process. We look forward to following your progress moving toward adoption of the Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Beebe
Chair, Bicycle Transportation Advocacy Committee
City Club of Portland