

February 19, 2015

Commissioner Steve Novick
City of Portland
1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Commissioner Novick:

As a Portland resident and actively engaged citizen, I value the opportunity to lend my boots-on-the-ground knowledge to public decisions. In my recent review of the Transportation System Plan, I noted that a vital North-South connector in Southwest Portland is missing from the plan and/or potentially ill conceived. Although I understand newly proposed projects are not being added at this time, I respectfully submit the following comments to you in hopes of informing the TSP.

Currently the updated TSP lists project **#90006 Inner SW 35th (Pedestrian/Bike Improvements)** from Vermont Avenue to Barbur Blvd. Although project #90006 would serve as a North-South connector and would benefit me personally as I live along this route, I am writing to you today to **recommend an alternative route that would utilize SW 30th->SW Hume->SW 31st (for the section between Capitol Hwy and Barbur Blvd).**

SW 30th->SW Hume->SW 31st would better serve the public good by:

- Providing active transportation options for a more inclusive population;
- Meeting pedestrian and cyclist safety demands along a route with high vehicular traffic; and
- Connecting high density, workforce, and senior housing to vital services as well as improve access to recreation and business districts.

Inclusive Access to Active Transportation

Project #90006 as conceived along SW 35th includes numerous steep grades that would limit use by diverse populations. One section is so steep that it includes railroad tie stairs along a public easement. This route would exclude our seniors, those with disabilities, as well as caregivers with young children, and even adults such as myself who could not bike this route because of the steep incline. The alternative route of SW 30th->Hume->SW 31st provides the flattest route between Multnomah Village and Barbur Blvd. and would encourage active transportation options for more people.

Improved Safety

According to recent traffic counts, project #90006 along SW 35th has very low traffic volumes and, therefore, may not warrant the high cost-benefit ratio of bike and pedestrian improvements. However, in looking at recent traffic counts of the alternative route along SW 30th->SW Hume->SW 31st, the traffic volume is significantly higher between 5,000-10,000 trips daily putting this route in the same category as Capitol Hwy. These high traffic volumes demonstrate the need to improve safety for both pedestrians and cyclists along this route especially around areas with poor line of sight and a dangerously blind corner at SW 31st and Hume.

In addition, this alternative route would leverage numerous safety improvements at key intersections. At SW 31st and Barbur Blvd., improvements include a traffic light, marked crosswalks, a Tri-Met bus shelter, as well as sidewalks constructed during recent development outlined below. In addition, North-South bicycle and pedestrian improvements along this alternative route would provide a connection to the new Multnomah Blvd bikeway and sidewalks.

Vital Connection to Services

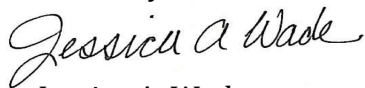
Since the last TSP was published, the Multnomah Neighborhood has seen an increase in population primarily incurred via in-fill development as well as higher density housing complexes such as the Headwaters Apartments. Headwaters and other higher-density housing options are located along the alternative route and are clustered at Multnomah Blvd/SW 30th as well as Barbur Blvd/SW 31st. There currently exists no safe route to access social, recreational or businesses services on foot or by bike for these residents of our community. These areas of high-density, workforce and senior housing and the people who live here deserve a safe North-South connection to transit, businesses, and the vital social services located within Multnomah Village including Neighborhood House's food pantry, the Multnomah Senior Center, the Meals on Wheels dining room, and the Southwest Community Health Center.

In addition, by making bicycle and pedestrian improvements along SW 30th ->SW Hume-> SW 31st, families would be able to access two recreational features at either end of this alternative route including Spring Garden Park recently funded for improvements in 2016 and the enrichment opportunities housed at the Multnomah Arts Center.

In conclusion, as the City of Portland upholds the concept of complete neighborhoods, providing bicycle and pedestrian improvements along SW 30th -> SW Hume-> SW 31st between Capitol Hwy and Barbur Blvd. would put the Multnomah Neighborhood one step closer to achieving that goal. This alternative route would link two business districts, provide vital connections between high-density housing and social services and recreational opportunities, and do so along the least topographically challenging route that would be the most inclusive of our diverse residents.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of these recommendations on how best to leverage existing safety improvements and the limited resources for transportation projects.

Sincerely,



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cc: Leah Treat, Director, Portland Bureau of Transportation
Planning & Sustainability Commission