

Agenda Item 986

TESTIMONY

2:00 PM TIME CERTAIN

**EXTEND STREET CLOSURE PROGRAM**  
**OLD TOWN/CHINATOWN**

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, **PRINT** YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

NAME (print)	ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE	Email
✓ <i>JOE WALSH</i>		
✓ LISA FRISCH		<i>Portland Business Alliance</i>
<del><i>Karen Bowler</i></del>	<del><i>18 NW 3rd Ave.</i></del>	
✓ <i>DAN LENZEN</i>		
✓ <i>J.E. ISAAC</i>		
✓ <i>Karen Bowler</i>		
✓ <i>Steve Entistle SR</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>

Good afternoon, Mayor Hales and Commissioners. My name is Lisa Frisch and I am the Downtown Retail Program director for the Portland Business Alliance and Downtown Clean and Safe. I am here to support the Old Town Chinatown Community Association in their efforts to foster a vibrant neighborhood.

You've just heard testimony from members of the Old Town Community supporting the extension of the Entertainment District street closure project and the Third Avenue restriping plan. I want to reiterate that this is a success story.

When we were here two years ago, there was considerable conflict with residents and entertainment based businesses in the neighborhood. The city had proposed formalizing street closures in the nightlife area, closing the area to cars to allow for safe pedestrian passage as well as visibility for the police to spot any trouble that may occur.

The project was met with concern from both residents and longstanding businesses in the neighborhood. The nightclubs were worried about the very real threat the street closure could have to the survival of their businesses in the district. But the nightclubs took this challenge as a call to action on their part to ensure patrons were engaging in safe and responsible behavior in the district; they organized a Hospitality Committee, developed standards and best practices, and have engaged in self-policing to improve their operations and reaffirm their commitment to being good neighbors in Old Town / Chinatown.

For the last two years, the committee has been working closely with partners including the Police Bureau and Portland Bureau of Transportation on enhancing the environment for pedestrians during the day as well Friday and Saturday evenings. Enhancements suggested by this committee include adding new crosswalks on Third Avenue and Davis streets, supporting the development of an active Ankeny Plaza, modifying the street closure to open Davis Street to allow for access to the Smart Park garage, creating taxi pick up zones in the closure area for their patrons, and the overall Third Avenue restriping plan detailed here today.

The initial restriping pilot project developed by Better Blocks PDX seemed focused on restricting automobile access, much to the chagrin of longstanding neighborhood businesses that rely on auto traffic to bring their customers into the district. We applaud PBOT's efforts to develop a comprehensive plan that accommodates existing automobile traffic and retains much needed on-street short-term parking for customers in the area. The width of the street allowed for a bike lane to be added and should not negatively affect capacity levels in the neighborhood.

It is not easy for a project to be able to satisfy the needs of varied interests and I would like to again thank committee members and PBOT representatives for truly making this work for all Portlanders. Both the ongoing street closure project and the restriping plan support the ongoing vibrancy of the Old Town / Chinatown neighborhood and the city's adopted five year plan in Old Town / Chinatown to spur market rate housing, retail and restaurant development. Thank you.