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Subject: TSP Testimony

On Behalf of Eliot Neighborhood Association Land Use Committee

Mike Warwick, Vice-Chair

535 NE Thompson St

As the Chair of the Eliot Land Use Committee, I submitted testimony to early drafts of the Comp Plan. At that time, I scolded Staff and City leaders for removing the MLK streetcar from the long term plan. Its omission has been the subject of additional letters from other Albina neighborhoods and the NE Coalition of Neighborhoods. The theme that runs through all of these is that light rail and streetcar are deployed by the City to catalyze redevelopment and wealth creation in adjacent neighborhoods. Omitting historically poor and black areas of the city was and is, unconscionable. Those responsible deserve to be shamed, be they Staff, Management or Council. Inner NE neighborhoods have suffered a long history of alternately being abused or and neglected as a direct result of City policies. Deploying streetcar as an element of economic revitalization was expected by this community to be a step to address that legacy. Deletion of it, and/or reprioritization of other routes before it, was, and still is, seen as discrimination against this community.

Among inner NE neighborhoods, the Eliot neighborhood has borne the brunt of the City's abusive policies, a litany too long and painful to recite, but one that I am certain the City knows well. Eliot was Portland's original "streetcar neighborhood." It continues to preserve the largest remnant of that history within the Eliot Historic Conservation District, as is evident from the density of residential development along the street and the near absence of driveways. The addition of streetcar to MLK would both celebrate and help preserve that part of Portland's vanishing history. Accordingly, we are pleased that a streetcar proposal for MLK has reappeared. It is our expectation, along with that of many of our Albina neighbors, that it be returned to its former priority as the "next" route and that it be developed as a true streetcar line, not bus rapid transit or some lower quality substitute as some have suggested.