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Steve Novick Commissioner **Leah Treat** Director

Memorandum

To: Planning and Sustainability Commissioners
 From: Zef Wagner, Portland Bureau of Transportation
 Date: 03/31/2016
 Subject: NE 7th and 9th Ave Bikeway Classifications in TSP Proposed Draft

Background

Over the last six months, PBOT and Commissioner Novick have received letters from several organizations advocating for traffic calming and diversion to reduce cut-through traffic and improve conditions for bicycling on NE 7th Ave from Broadway to Sumner, with a particular focus on the segment from Broadway to Fremont where the traffic volumes are highest. These organizations include the Irvington Community Association, Eliot Neighborhood Association, King Neighborhood Association, the Broadway-Weidler Alliance, and the Bicycle Transportation Alliance.

The advocates listed above argue that NE 7th Ave is carrying high traffic volumes despite being classified as a local street, and that this causes safety and livability concerns. Furthermore, they argue this is a well-used bike route and has been identified in City plans as a future neighborhood greenway, but that the route does not meet our standards for traffic speeds and volumes. The advocates are asking the City to prioritize establishment of a neighborhood greenway on 7th rather than on 9th, which is also shown in the Bike Plan and is currently shown in the TSP Major Projects List Recommended Draft.

To respond to this issue, Cevero Gonzalez in PBOT communications helped convene a community meeting on the topic on Monday, March 14th. The meeting was attended by roughly 50 people, mostly residents of the three adjacent neighborhoods. The audience feedback was generally in favor of a neighborhood greenway on NE 7th Ave, though some concern was expressed about traffic impact to MLK, 8th, and 9th Avenues and people stressed that improvements or mitigations would be needed on those streets as well.

Since the community meeting, a number of residents along NE 8th and 9th Avenues have been writing letters in opposition to the idea of diverters on 7th, expressing strong concern about potential cut-through traffic on their smaller, quieter neighborhood streets. They tend to acknowledge that 7th has too much traffic, but object to the City taking measures that may increase traffic on those adjacent streets.



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Public Testimony on TSP Proposed Draft

A high volume of public testimony was submitted on the issue of 7th vs 9th. Many supporters of 7th request that 7th be upgraded from a City Bikeway to a Major City Bikeway and extended north from Skidmore to Sumner, with 9th Ave downgraded from Major City Bikeway to City Bikeway. Many supporters of 9th ask that the PSC retain the bicycle classifications as proposed. Much of the testimony does not mention bicycle classifications at all, instead focusing on the benefits or drawbacks of a neighborhood greenway with diverters on one street or the other.

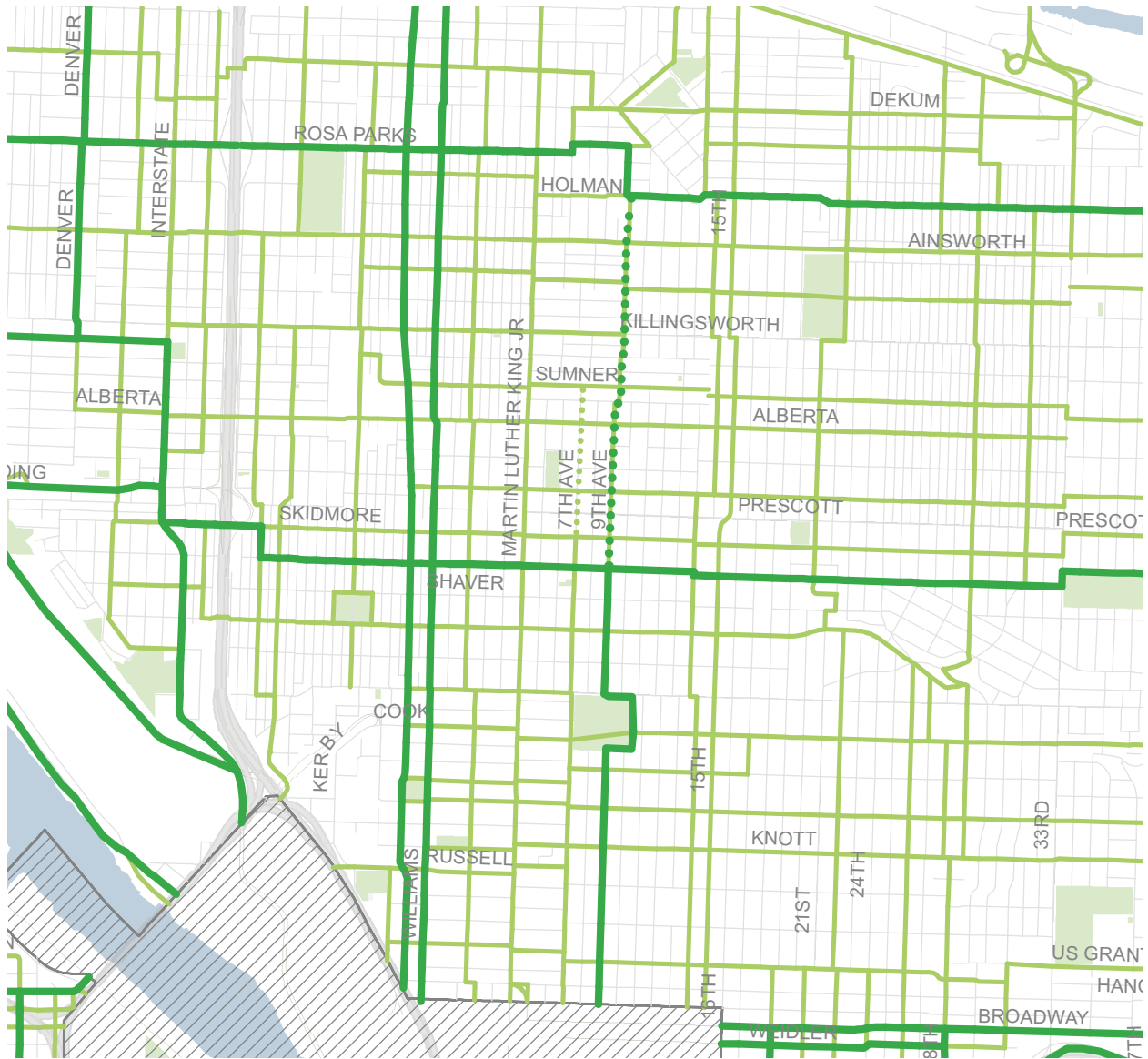
Below is a summary of testimony received:

- Support for neighborhood greenway on NE 7th Ave
 - 3 neighborhood associations (Eliot, Irvington, King)
 - 42 individuals
- Support for neighborhood greenway on NE 9th Ave and/or opposition to diverters on NE 7th Ave
 - 23 individuals
 - One letter with petition signed by 74 individuals
 - 9 of these are duplicates who already submitted individual testimony

Staff Response

The potential project in question is not funded or scoped in any detail. To properly study the effects of various diverter treatments on traffic patterns in the area in question, PBOT would need to do a detailed traffic analysis. PBOT would also need to conduct a full public process to assess various options and weigh the benefits and impacts to residents and businesses in the area as well as to the wider transportation system. All of this work would require funding for a project, which we do not have at this time. PBOT does consider the NE 7th/9th Neighborhood Greenway to be a high priority and is looking into funding opportunities, but as is typical with most neighborhood greenway projects we would prefer to have the flexibility to determine the exact alignment during the project design phase after funding is obtained. For this reason, we recommend maintaining existing Bicycle Classifications and extending the City Bikeway classification on NE 7th Ave north to Sumner St. We also would like to clarify the intent to develop a north-south Major City Bikeway within the 7th/9th corridor all the way north to Holman, so we recommend extending the Major City Bikeway Classification on NE 9th Ave from Mason to Holman.

PBOT staff recommends that the PSC amend the Proposed Draft of the TSP to add a City Bikeway classification to NE 7th Ave from Skidmore St to Sumner, and upgrade NE 9th Ave from City Bikeway to Major City Bikeway from Mason to Holman (see map on next page).



Bicycle Classification

- Major City Bikeway
- City Bikeway
- Local Service Bikeway

Proposed Amendments

- Major City Bikeway
- City Bikeway