



HOSFORD-ABERNETHY
NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

August 5, 2016

Dear Planning and Sustainability Commissioners and Staff,

The Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood District (HAND) Board would like to submit the following testimony regarding the Central City 2035 Plan Proposed Draft.

SE 11th and 12th Avenues

We want to thank PSC staff for incorporating our recommendations for SE 11th and 12th Avenues into the Proposed Draft. We believe the traffic access street designation is much more appropriate for these roads, which are beautiful tree-lined streets that feature a growing number of residences and neighborhood gathering spots such as cafes and pubs. We want to see SE 11th and 12th become a transition between the Central Eastside Industrial District and the residential neighborhoods to the east; currently the streets are instead a divide between the two areas, due to the heavy traffic volumes, high vehicle speeds, poor crossing options, and extremely low driver compliance with Oregon crosswalk law. The introduction of bicycle facilities as per the new major city bikeway designation on SE 11th and 12th, in conjunction with the crossing improvements in project **20176 (11th/12th Ave Multimodal Safety Improvements)**, will help realize this vision for a more people-oriented SE 11th and 12th. As such, we in HAND strongly support the changes that were made to the Discussion Draft regarding SE 11th and 12th, and encourage a very-near-future implementation of better crossings, dedicated bicycle facilities, and a reduction of the posted speed limit. We look forward to conversations with the Central Eastside Industrial District personnel as well as adjoining neighborhoods about how the bike lanes can be created in a way that best works for all uses.

Access across the Orange Line MAX and Union Pacific Freight Tracks

We were disappointed to see that project **20185, the Gideon Street Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge**, has been listed with an estimated timeframe of 11-20 years. This bridge is one of the most crucial transportation needs in our neighborhood today, for safety, access, and congestion reasons. To reiterate our testimony for the Discussion Draft:

The Union Pacific Railroad and MAX Orange Line tracks are a major obstacle to the flow of traffic both north- and south-bound on SE Milwaukie/11th/12th Avenues and on SE 8th Avenue, as well as east- and west-bound traffic on SE Division Street. The UPRR trains are long, often slow-moving, and increasingly frequent. Add an additional MAX or Amtrak passage immediately before or after a UPRR train, and **the north/south flow of traffic can easily be stopped for 45 minutes or more.** The process of “building trains” in Brooklyn Yards sometimes involves the movement of a locomotive out of the rail yards to a point close enough to the crossings that the signals and crossing arms are activated, even with no visible train present. These false-alarm impediments to traffic are expected to increase in frequency, according to sources at UPRR, which will undoubtedly also increase risky road-user behaviors, such as driving/walking/cycling around the crossing



HOSFORD-ABERNETHY
NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

arms. Another issue is that SE 11th Avenue frequently fills with waiting traffic for many blocks north of Division Street, and as turn lanes from Division Street onto SE 11th Avenue fill up with this idling traffic, we also see east-west streets become congested for blocks. There is no effective way out of the traffic once one is entrapped. The movement of all traffic at a major intersection in the Central City comes to a halt, affecting access of emergency vehicles, public transit, personal and business travel, nearby businesses, and movement of freight. **This is completely contrary to the streets' designations as a major truck street, major city bikeway, primary ER route, transit access street, city walkway, and traffic access street.** Even usually patient Portland drivers experience frayed nerves and tempers; risky behaviors ensue (incidents of pedestrians and bicyclists climbing through the couplings of slow-moving or temporarily halted trains have been reported multiple times during a single delay; there are less-frequent but equally-appalling accounts of vehicles driving onto the sidewalk to make a U-turn, then driving the wrong way up SE 11th to attempt a detour around the crossing). **It has become apparent that the only definitive solution is a grade-separated crossing.**

While the ultimate solution is a grade-separated crossing that provides all modes of street traffic with a route above or below the rails, we recognize that such a project will have to wait for funding and design. A speedy implementation of **Project 20185, the Gideon Street Bridge**, would at least provide pedestrians and cyclists with a way to cross the tracks during a long freight-related delay, and would make the new Clinton Street MAX station and Tilikum Crossing more reliable additions to our transportation network for the residences and businesses north of the freight tracks (who are reporting using the MAX less than they would like to out of concern over getting "trapped" on the wrong side of the tracks). This bridge would also better connect the Brooklyn neighborhood and forthcoming Clinton Triangle development to the south of the tracks with the residents, businesses, and job centers to the north.

The Gideon Street Bridge was a promised part of the Orange Line construction project, during which an existing pedestrian bridge at SE 16th had been demolished. The Gideon Street Bridge was eliminated from the project list during recalibration after expected federal funding was decreased to fifty percent, but as the Orange Line project actually finished under budget. We implore you to advocate for use of those excess funds, toward the construction of the Gideon Street Bridge as promised, and or to find funds to ensure that the bridge is completed as quickly as possible. 11-20 years is an unacceptable timeline for a bridge of this level of importance that was supposed to have been in place and operational a year ago.

Other Projects

We also recognize the following projects as important to Hosford-Abernethy neighborhood residents' transportation needs, and we support them (pending approval from the Central Eastside Industrial Council, and the Buckman, Kerns, and Brooklyn neighborhoods). Projects are listed in project number order.

20050: Southern Triangle Access Improvements -- SE Powell Blvd

(HAND agrees with the needs outlined in 20050, however traffic calming must be provided on SE 11th and 12th Avenues before or in conjunction with improved access.)

20173: SE 9th Ave Crossing Improvements -- 9th Ave, SE (at Hawthorne, Madison, Belmont, Morrison, Stark, Sandy)

20177: SE Harrison Neighborhood Greenway -- SE Harrison St (7th - Ladd Circle)

20180: Hawthorne-Clay Ramp Signal -- Hawthorne Viaduct

20181: SE Hawthorne Bikeway & Transit Improvements -- Hawthorne Blvd, SE (Grand - 12th)



HOSFORD-ABERNETHY
NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

20182: SE Clay / Mill Circulation Improvements -- Clay/MLK and Mill/MLK
20183: SE Clay Corridor Improvements -- Clay St, SE (Water - Grand)

The Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood District (HAND) Board thanks the Planning and Sustainability Commission for their consideration of these projects that would significantly enhance the safety, livability, and in many cases the increased use of transportation in all forms alternative to the automobile.

Very best regards,

Susan E. Pearce, HAND Chair