

March 12, 2018

Rian Windsheimer, Manager
ODOT Region 1
123 NW Flanders St.
Portland, OR 97209



Dear Rian:

Thank you for meeting with Matt Grumm and me on March 8 and offering the opportunity for The Street Trust to request that ODOT review its requirement for the Portland Bureau of Transportation to remove bike facilities on Southeast 26th Avenue.

Maintain Safety

The Street Trust requests this review because removing the bicycle facilities on SE 26th will make it less safe. A large body of research demonstrates that even a 3' bike lane creates safer conditions. The bike lanes on SE 26th narrow to 3' only within 130' of the intersection with Southeast Powell Boulevard. Otherwise, they meet American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials standards for a 4' minimum bike lane. The bike boxes provide important visibility for cyclists and also reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians.

These facilities are successful at keeping cyclists safe. PBOT reports that there has been one bicycle crash on the corridor for roughly 1.3 million entering bicycles. This is a very good rate. The Powell Boulevard Safety Project will further enhance safety. It would be consistent with these investments to maintain the bike facilities on SE 26th.

Approval Criteria and Data

ODOT imposed the requirement to remove the SE 26th bike lanes not because of deficiencies at SE 26th, but in order to approve the City's request for a flashing beacon crossing at SE Powell & 28th. At the time of the request for ODOT's approval, PBOT was not able to demonstrate that the SE 28th crossing met the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) pedestrian volume warrant. ODOT relied on the roadway network warrant instead. Under the roadway warrant, SE 26th and SE 28th could not both be major crossings — therefore, SE 26th was sacrificed. I appreciate that ODOT used this strategy to satisfy the MUTCD and approve the SE 28th crossing.

Fortunately, PBOT is now able to demonstrate that the SE 28th crossing does in fact meet the pedestrian warrant. Just two months after the SE 28th crossing was installed, PBOT counted 91 peak-hour pedestrian and bike crossings at SE 28th. MUTCD 4C.01.15 and 4C.01.16 both provide for bike crossings

to be counted as pedestrians for the purpose of meeting the pedestrian warrant. The pedestrian volume warrant for roadways with motor vehicle approach speed >35 mph [85%] is 93 (MUCTD Figure 4C-08). Both you and your PIO have described PBOT's counts inconclusive. It seems reasonable that the pedestrian volume has grown since the SE 20's bikeway has become better known. If ODOT requires a new count to reach this conclusion, PBOT is willing to provide it.

Additional Measures

ODOT would like to see more bikes use the SE 28th crossing rather than SE 26th because it is safer by virtue of the low traffic volumes. The Street Trust would support signage that would make cyclists on SE 26th aware of the low-stress greenway on SE 28th. We would support changing SE 26th's designation as a bikeway. We oppose pushing cyclists from SE 26th to SE 28th by making them less safe on SE 26th. SE 26th is a direct route to important destinations, including a high school and thriving commercial node. Bikes have a right to use SE 26th and will continue to use SE 26th. Let's maintain the roadway design that keeps them as safe as possible.

Conclusion

- Removing bike facilities on SE 26th will make it less safe.
- There is information (pedestrian counts) that was not available at the time ODOT imposed the requirement to remove the SE 26th bike facilities.
- There is a clear path through the requirements of the MUTCD for ODOT to affirm roadway designs that provide for the safety of cyclists and pedestrians on both SE 26th and SE 28th.
- Maintaining the bike facilities on SE 26th, including the bike boxes at Powell, furthers the intent of ODOT's Powell Boulevard Safety Project.

Again, thank you for inviting this request for ODOT to review its requirement. This is a great opportunity for ODOT to demonstrate its commitment to the safety of all modes. I look forward to ODOT's response. Should ODOT decide to maintain its requirement that PBOT remove the SE 26th bike facilities, I ask that ODOT's response provide its reasoning.

Sincerely,



Jillian Detweiler
Executive Director

C: Matt Grumm, Senior Policy Director, Commissioner Dan Saltman
Leah Treat, Director, Portland Bureau of Transportation
The Street Trust Board of Directors