



BIKE LOUD PDX

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September 12, 2018

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners Eudaly, Fritz, Fish, Saltzman:

It is that sad time of year when the temporary Better Naito is removed by the city, leaving residents and visitors with fewer options to get around downtown without a car. Throughout the four years of implementation community members who bike, walk, and roll have spoken loudly in support of the safe and convenient path Better Naito provides, and 2018 is no different. Better Naito is a critical link in the active transportation network and should remain installed year round.

Spending time and resources each year to remove and re-install Better Naito is a poor use of our limited transportation funds. The \$350,000 approved by City Council in 2017 gets chipped away at each year at the expense of maintenance or other projects. It is counter-intuitive that at the same time we are seeking major investments to improve our active transportation network in the downtown core that we are spending funding to remove part of that network each fall.

In the 2017 implementation of Better Naito people were [twice as likely](#) to bicycle on Naito than the Waterfront path. With an estimated 2,587 users a day, the protected lane served up to a third of road users at peak travel times. The [2017 Bicycle Count](#) observed even higher use, with two locations on Naito at SW Ankeny and SW Salmon counting 3,000-4,000+ users per day making it *by far* the most heavily used bicycle facility in the Central City. By 2035, we are planning on 80% of commute trips to or from the district being made outside of Single Occupancy Vehicles (as adopted by the [Central City 2035 Plan](#).) We will not be able to create these shifts in how Portlanders get around if we continue to remove the most popular Central City bike route each year.

BikeLoudPDX urges the City of Portland to keep Better Naito installed year round until a permanent design can be implemented. Better Naito adds capacity to the street, accommodating 94% more users than today's design. A year round installation would provide real data on winter usage and travel impacts to all modes that can be used to inform a decision on the permanent design.

Better Naito was envisioned and implemented by community volunteers who wanted to create a people-centered space next to our treasured waterfront park. Public feedback about Naito has been [strongly positive](#). We all benefit when more of us can access and choose modes of active transportation downtown, which reduces carbon emissions, noise, congestion, and air pollution. We understand that construction from the Burnside Bridge will temporarily impact Naito, but any temporary construction closure would be preferable to downgrading this route to an unprotected, narrow bicycle lane--and no sidewalk at all--until next summer.

Sincerely,

Catie Gould
Emily Guise
Co-chairs BikeLoudPDX