

2257 NW RALEIGH ST.  
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September 21, 2021

Mayor Ted Wheeler  
Commissioner Joanne Hardesty  
Commissioner Mingus Mapps  
Commissioner Carmen Rubio  
Commissioner Dan Ryan  
1221 SW 4th Ave  
Portland OR 97204

Re: Net Meter Revenue Policy Update

Dear Mayor Ted Wheeler and Members of the Portland City Council:

We regret to inform you that the Pearl District Neighborhood Association does not support the Portland Bureau of Transportation's Net Meter Revenue policy update, primarily because it does not go far enough in serving the multimodal transportation needs of the neighborhoods located in the downtown meter district, including its sizable number of low-income residents and employees. Instead of merely recommending increased stakeholder engagement and delaying important decisions to some unknown later date, PBOT needs to finally place the Downtown Meter District on par with newer parking districts and dedicate a set-aside of locally-raised meter revenue toward projects and programs in the Pearl and other Central City neighborhoods west of the Willamette River that would help manage transportation demand, improve access and safety for people walking and biking, and increase the viability of alternatives to single-occupant vehicles. Examples of this include the Central City/Northwest in Motion plans and the successful Transportation Wallet used in other neighborhoods.

The Downtown Meter District is treated differently than every other parking district established in Portland, as revenue from this district primarily goes to PBOT's General Fund with zero funding allocated specifically to the neighborhoods within said district. Over the past several years, the PDNA has been closely involved in several planning efforts with the PBOT aimed at reforming the city's parking policies. These have included the Central City Parking Policy update in 2015 that brought changes in the City Code pertaining to the provision and administration of parking in the Central City, and the Parking Management Manual in 2018, which enabled demand-responsive pricing that would ensure adequate availability of on-street parking.

The Parking Management Manual also codified the process by which new parking management districts would be formed based on the model used in Northwest District, which established a parking stakeholder advisory committee tasked with prioritizing locally-serving transportation improvements that would be funded through 49 percent of the net meter revenue raised in that district. While the PMM excluded the Downtown Meter District from this arrangement, the PDNA supported the manual contingent on an assurance made by City staff to revisit the issue in a separate update to its net meter revenue policy that would potentially allow for revenue sharing towards investments that may not reach citywide priority status but are of local importance in downtown.

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These would have included the Transportation Wallet program, which is funded through parking permit surcharge revenue in Northwest and Central Eastside (there are no permits in the Downtown Meter District). Moreover, the Pearl District contains over 1400 units of regulated affordable housing, the occupants of which could take advantage of PBOT's Golden Transportation Wallet given free to low-income residents. Another idea raised that was unfortunately not explored further is whether PBOT could use parking or other revenue to buy bus revenue hours from TriMet to supplement off-peak (evening and weekend) transit in Portland, when service levels are often inadequate to meet the needs of transit users. This model has worked in cities like Seattle to prioritize frequency and span on corridors often used by late-night service employees that may not have a reliable transit option to get to or from their job.

Instead of using this process to harmonize parking management practices across the city and place the Downtown Meter District in parity with newer parking districts, PBOT has reneged on its commitment and chosen instead to maintain a two-tiered system whereas downtown neighborhoods are punished simply for being first. As the bureau struggles with funding challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic which cratered parking demand in downtown, it continues to overlook the most obvious solution to bolster its general fund, which is to mandate the establishment of new parking districts on numerous eastside commercial corridors that have continued to prosper during the pandemic and have long needed increased parking management (such as 28th Avenue, Mississippi, Alberta, Hawthorne, and Division). Instead of waiting for permission, PBOT needs to recognize that its general revenue must come from a diversity of locations and funding streams beyond parking in downtown, and the recommendations from the Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility task force provide a blueprint for a more sustainable agency funding model going forward.

The PDNA remains a willing and steadfast partner in implementing the parking policies of the Central City 2035 Plan and Parking Management Manual, and is committed to building the transportation system that allows Portland to reach its adopted mode share and climate action targets. But we are sincerely disappointed by the lack of tangible solutions documented in this effort, and without a concrete plan to implement local revenue sharing in downtown as seen in newer parking management districts, we simply cannot support the policy update as presented to you today.

Respectfully,

Reza Farhoodi  
Co-Chair, PDNA Planning and Transportation Committee

CC: Chris Warner, Dave Benson, Kristin Hull, Mauricio Leclerc, Chris Armes, Portland Bureau of Transportation