

February 2, 2026

REVIEW DRAFT 2.17.26

Millicent Williams, Director  
PBOT  
1120 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1331  
Portland, OR 97204

RE: Bike Lane Hardening in SW Portland

Dear Ms. Williams,

The District 4 Land Use and Transportation Committee (LUTC) understands that PBOT intends to “harden” the existing buffered bike lanes on Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway between SW 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SW 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with design beginning in July 2026. The purpose of the project is to replace the bike lane wands with a curb separator between the bike lane and travel lanes at an estimated cost of \$490,000. According to PBOT staff, this is a “maintenance” activity to eliminate the cost of replacing wands that are destroyed. Although not currently scheduled, PBOT intends to make similar improvements on Capitol Highway between SW Valona and SW Stephenson at a preliminary cost of \$270,000. Finally, Bertha Boulevard, between Vermont and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, is to be improved in multiple ways, including hardened bike lanes.

**The D4 LUTC objects to these proposed expenditures of almost \$0.75 million for the following reasons:**

- **No practical value.** B-H Hwy., the proposed segment of Capitol Hwy., and Bertha Blvd. are among the lowest performing bike routes in all of SW Portland. This can be attributed largely to their lack of connectivity with the fractured bike network in SW. Any cyclist using these facilities must be confident riding on busy streets in the travel lane to reach and leave these bike lane segments. Providing an A+ bike facility on these isolated sections will not entice more cyclists to use them. Progress must be measured not by the miles of protected bike lanes but by the number of people traveling by bike.
- **This is not maintenance.** Converting them into physically separated facilities is an improvement project – not simple maintenance. If maintenance is an issue, the wands could simply be removed or just not replaced. If removed, there would continue to be very good, painted buffered bike lanes, which could again be swept with conventional equipment. Reliance on the small bike lane sweeper has resulted in infrequent sweeping and B-H and Capitol Hwys. are typically plagued by gravel, glass, leaves, and weeds.
- **Chronically inadequate funding.** Funding for capital projects to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety is severely constrained. For perspective, D4 can expect about \$2.3 million from FOS3 for the next 4 years. Other pots of funding are available, but the cost of the B-H Highway project will make it among the most expensive projects proposed in D4 and SW over the next four years.
- **Higher priority needs and lack of community support.** Given all the high-priority network and safety improvements, many of which have languished for decades, PBOT should not spend \$490,000 on this project followed by the Capitol Hwy. project totaling around \$757,000 and an undetermined amount for Bertha Blvd. when the bike lane hardening lacks community support and The BH Hwy. and Capitol Hwy. projects are not identified in the TSP or SWIM. Until bike routes are completed and not disjointed, it is premature to spend scarce funds for first-class facilities on random segments.

**Our request is to:**

1. **Review and evaluate these three projects with PBOT staff** and develop an acceptable approach for improving and maintaining these facilities at reduced cost and to redirect the remaining funds to improvements that support more pressing priorities in District 4 and identified in our adopted plans.
2. **Agree to an on-going collaborative project prioritization and selection process** compared to the current top-down approach where PBOT works internally with minimal opportunity for meaningful public input. This project prioritization should emphasize creating complete pedestrian and bicycle routes and networks rather than wonderful, but isolated, improvements that have limited practical value. We believe there are ways this could be done without being burdensome for PBOT.

We hope PBOT will work with District 4 to spend our scarce resources as effectively as possible. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nicole Tignor Zimmerman  
D4C Land Use and Transportation Co-Chair

cc: Mark Lear  
Art Pearce  
Others?