



Southeast Uplift
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April 25, 2018

Commissioner Dan Saltzman
City Hall, 1221 SW 4th Ave, Room 230
Portland, OR 97204

Director Leah Treat, PBOT
1120 SW 5th Ave, Suite 800
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Commissioner Saltzman and Director Treat,

The board of SE Uplift is very concerned about the safety ramifications of the ODOT request to remove the bike lanes on SE 26th as they approach SE Powell. The SE Uplift board and the SE Uplift Land Use and Transportation Committee both voted unanimously to take action on this significant safety issue.

We are contacting you to express our concern about the removal of these bike lanes, and to express agreement with the position of BikeLoudPDX, an organization working towards creating safer streets through cycling advocacy. Both BikeLoudPDX and SE Uplift request that PBOT retains the bike lanes on SE 26th at Powell. However, if PBOT is required to remove them then, a new route on SE 21st Ave needs to be built FIRST.

As an organization we recognize the substandard width of the 3-4 foot bike lanes on SE 26th. When the safety benefits of modernization are prioritized, if these bike lanes cannot be brought up to modern standards then SE 21st between SE Gladstone and SE Division must be constructed first. This is project number 70081 in the TSP. It is already slated for a 1-10 year timeline and can be attached to the replacement of the SE 21st Ave and SE Powell traffic light that ODOT is undertaking. SE 21st provides a flat and direct alternative to the employment zones of the Brooklyn Railyards and points west. It connects directly to the Lafayette and coming Gideon Street overpasses plus the modernized greenways of SE Clinton and SE Lincoln-Harrison. Once built to modern safety standards, this route would be a superior safety choice for area commuters, thus providing a viable alternative to SE 26th.

The new SE 28th crossing at Powell is a successful bikeway for those heading to Cleveland High School or points north and east. However these are not primary destinations for many commuters. The steep slopes and indirect route on SE 28th to SE Clinton or SE Lincoln is not viable for commuters heading to the employment zones of the central eastside or points downtown. Commuters will take the path of least resistance, and SE 26th has functioned as a commuter route for over a generation. It is fast, flat and direct. Thus, the successful new crossing of SE Powell at SE 28th will not provide enough benefits to change behavior of cyclists accustomed to the SE 26th route. Without an alternative in place prior to removal of the SE 26th bike lanes, commuters will continue to use SE 26th making a dangerous situation worse.

Vision Zero requires that above all we do no harm, and removing the functionality of SE 26th bike lanes without providing a viable alternative will create a dangerous situation. Thus we direct PBOT to delay this decision until a safe alternative is fully constructed.

For further information or questions, please feel free to contact us, either through SE Uplift or using the info below.

Thank you for your time and work,



Reuben Deumling
SE Uplift Co-Chair



Terry Dublinski-Milton
SE Uplift Co-Chair
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cc: Jessica Horning, ODOT
Art Pearce, PBOT
Roger Geller, PBOT
Emily Guise, BikeLoudPDX Co-Chair
Catie Gould, BikeLoudPDX Co-Chair, BAC to City Council

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