

A Joint Letter from the
Bicycle Advisory Committee & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
1120 SW 5th Avenue, Room 800, Portland OR 97204

April 19, 2017

Planning and Sustainability Commission
1900 SW 4th Avenue,
Portland, OR 97201-5380

Dear Katherine Schultz and Members of the Planning and Sustainability Commission,

As members of the City's Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) and Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), we have reviewed the proposed amendment to Ordinance No. 127882, regarding the vacation of SW Madison St. between SW 10th Ave. and SW Park Ave. and would like to express our opposition. The purpose of the PAC and BAC is to advise the City's decision makers on matters related to walking and bicycling, respectively, and we consist of a wide cross-section of Portlanders who come from every area of the City as well as a broad spectrum of interests and professional backgrounds. As is our duty as modal committees, we have discussed the matter after a presentation by J.S. May, Chief Advancement Officer, Portland Art Museum, and we continue to be deeply concerned about the proposed vacation. Our major areas of concern are:

- The amendment diminishes the usefulness and network connectivity for people who walk and bike along SW Madison utilizing the vacation between SW 11th Avenue and SW 10th Avenue adjacent to the YMCA.
- The presence of small, walkable (and publicly-accessible) blocks are critical to a pedestrian-oriented city, especially downtown where the standard block size is 200x200 feet.
- The proposed creation of a superblock, even with the described access, fails to live up to the city's adopted goals of a walkable city.
- Public access to this block has been incrementally eroded over the years, and the proposal is an unacceptable further limitation of public access.
- The renderings and proposed language regarding the new Rothko Pavilion creates the appearance of a private building entrance blocking a vacated street, which will create the perception that only paying Museum customers will be able to use this connection, and that all other individuals not using the Museum should walk around the building.
- Allowing this exception to the city's street vacation policy will set precedent and prompt future requests that would further compromise Portland's renowned pedestrian and bicycle network.

As stated above, the proposed superblock runs counter to various policies within the Transportation System Plan (TSP). The policies that support our opposition to the Ordinance include Policy 9.14, Policy 9.17 and 9.18, which provide guidance for the city to create a street system that integrates transportation and public spaces, and

encourages walking as the most attractive mode by creating a more complete network of pedestrian facilities. By altering the language for vacating of SW Madison, the Portland Art Museum (PAM) proposal will potentially reduce public access hours by an additional four to eight hours per day (from 7 AM - 11 PM to Museum hours, which are generally 10 AM - 5 PM) and possibly exclude users of the space that are not utilizing it as pedestrian access, patronizing Museum offerings (e.g., gift shop, café, etc.), or attending the Museum. This proposal would create obstacles and the appearance of a private building entrance for individuals who use Madison to travel between the Eliot Tower and midblock Portland Streetcar station on SW 10th Ave. and the Oregon Historical Society, Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, and park blocks.

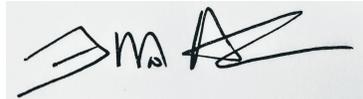
Further, we believe that PAM and their architects have a unique opportunity to meet the policy goal of Policy 9.46 within the proposed Central City Plan for 2035. PAM and their partners have the opportunity to add diversity to the urban experience and expand open space functions in the right-of-way by tying in unique opportunities for the public to engage in art. By maintaining unfettered access throughout the day, no other location in the Central City can provide this experience where the Right-of-Way can be directly intertwined with the cultural and artistic urban experiences. We are confident that the excellent design team at Vinci Hamp Architects can design a Rothko Pavilion that will allow continuous access. Using examples of the The Chazen Museum of Art in Madison, Wisconsin, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington D.C., and Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, we feel confident that Vinci Hamp Architects can design a building that meets both the requirements of continuous access while connecting both museum spaces, ultimately creating a space that meets the goals of the Portland Art Museum, the City of Portland Transportation System Plan, the Central City Plan for 2035, and most importantly, people who walk and bike along SW Madison Avenue.

Thank you for your consideration,

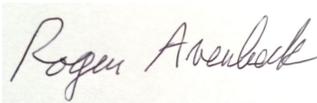
Respectfully submitted on behalf of Portland's Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Bicycle Advisory Committee,



Rithy Khut, Chair
Bicycle Advisory Committee



Elliot Akwai-Scott, Vice-Chair
Bicycle Advisory Committee



Roger Averbeck, Co-Chair
Pedestrian Advisory Committee



Anthony Buczek, Co-Chair
Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Note: This letter was submitted as testimony to City Council on Apr 16, 2017

Cc:
Roger Geller, City of Portland Bureau of Transportation
Michelle Marx, City of Portland Bureau of Transportation