

# Focus Group with Neighborhood Leaders

## PBOT Neighborhood Streets Program

September 21, 2017

---

### Participants

Ryan Bass: Bridlemile NA  
Clair Cardner: DRAC SW  
Dave Ganslein: Sumner NA  
Jerry Grossnickle: Forest Park NA  
Steve Lewis: Rose City Park NA  
Bob Price: Roseway NA  
Nancy Seton: SW Hills Residential League  
Laura Young: Cully NA  
Eric Wilhelm: Hillsdale NA

### QUESTION 1: Project selection factors

*Project selection criteria include effectiveness (how big of an impact will the project have, and how important is the project for completing gaps in the City's transportation and stormwater infrastructure), and efficiency (or, project readiness). This means that the initial round of improvements would be focused on areas of the City that have already adopted local neighborhood street plans, including: Cully, Division-Midway, and Tryon-Stephens. **What do you think about this approach?***

- General support for equity and safety to be key factors in the decision-making process.
  - Recognition of the relatively low amount of funding, and a desire to stretch those funds as far as possible.
  - There was significant concerns about pedestrian safety
  - Neighborhoods that do not have much transit equity should be included in project selection factors.
  - Pedestrian and bike safety should also be considered.
  - Would rather Neighborhood Plans not be considered so heavily.
  - There are many neighborhoods that have needs that are equal to Tryon Stephens that do not have neighborhood plans.
  - East Portland also has high proportion of underserved people. They are reliant on transit, but do not have access to it. There are apartments there and a higher density of people who could be served.
  - Equity lens is a hard nut to crack. Development that generates LTIC is not necessarily happening in neighborhoods that are underserved. There needs to be some way to divvy funds up so that neighborhoods all get their fair share. But the neighborhoods where development is occurring will have increased density, which means that focusing on them could serve more people.
  - There is a lot of ability to leverage funds if the street improvement program does not target street improvements to standards. The federal government is really interested in supporting active transportation needs.
  - The City should have been upfront about the fact that this was not an equity driven program from the beginning.
-

- The \$2.5 million of projected revenue from the LTIC might be optimistic and it's not nearly enough. Perhaps a better strategy is to find critical pedestrian connections where lives are at stake.
- On the equity front, people who need to travel across the city to work should be considered, so connections to major transit corridors should be a priority.
- In southwest, arterials without proper sidewalks come up. The City of Portland could do something similar like in Beaverton with the Beaverton Hills Highway Project.
- It would be more cost-effective to partition and repurpose existing pavement into bike and pedestrian safe areas instead of paving and putting in sidewalks. Changing the design of the pavement can address safety issues.

## QUESTION 2: Cap on LTIC for developers

*As you heard in the presentation, the City is also considering putting a cap on the amount of the LTIC charged to developers. This is in response to complaints from a subset of developers who were hit with large assessments based on the current formula (typically corner lots, or properties with unusual frontages). While this could result in lower revenue for certain individual properties, it may also generate additional revenue by encouraging certain development projects to go forward that would otherwise not occur due to the amount of the LTIC.*

### **What do you think about the proposed LTIC cap?**

- Participants were very interested in the development of alternative standards.
- A cap might be relative to the project that the developer is doing. Some smaller projects are shut down by the LTIC if they have a large amount of frontage.
- Don't have a lot of sympathy for developers, because they have the option to find a bid for less.
- A lot of residents on unimproved streets do not want the existing standards.
- Did not see any standards in presentation that neighborhood would want.
- Neighborhood wants to keep their trees and have less impermeable road covering. Would like more standards to choose from that cost less.
- The Capitol Highway design that PBOT originally proposed had little side streets that were a block and a half long that only went to the houses and the highway. They would be putting a large landing pad of asphalt off of Capitol Hwy.
- Neighborhood does not want to pay for what the City is proposing. The types of improvements they want are not an option.

## QUESTION 3: Maintaining dirt and gravel unpaved streets through City program

*Throughout the community involvement process, we heard frequently about a desire to manage dirt/gravel roads in a way that makes them safe for pedestrians to use, limits stormwater runoff issues, and makes it safer for car travel. Residents on these dirt/gravel streets told many stories of their collective attempts to address maintenance and also many said they could be patient in waiting for street improvements if only the current condition of the road was not creating additional safety concerns for the neighborhood. Historically, the City has not maintained roads that do not meet City standards, so this would be a new approach to addressing the problem. **What do you think about this new element to addressing the problem of unimproved streets? Do you have ideas about how we could make the program better respond to your neighborhood needs?***

- Strong support for grade and gravel program, as it is a cost-effective approach to have a bigger impact on a larger number of streets, as opposed to capital improvements which are expensive and will only affect a very small subset of folks any time soon.

- Very interested in this proposal.
- Most of the neighborhoods would prefer having uniform grading and graveling as opposed to one street paved. Having just one street paved, creates cut through traffic and other traffic issues on the one paved street.
- This would be the one thing that the neighborhood would want.
- My neighborhood would support the grading and graveling.
- Residents would support PBOT if they did the maintenance on a more frequent basis. If they quit building the huge “imperial” streets, then the money would go further.
- The maintenance should not come out of LTIC, but maintaining the gravel roads makes a lot of sense.
- Informal and formal neighborhood collectors may need paving.
- Only busy and high traffic pedestrian streets need sidewalks.
- Pedestrian safety should be rolled into the gravel and grading program.
- The connectivity is really the issue, so what would these funds be used for?
- Neighborhood would like to see smaller streets prioritized.
- There are also those that are not City maintained and are paved that are not getting fixed. It seems weird that taxpayers cannot get their streets fixed.
- Livable Streets Portland in the Streets Program that has low cost strategies for pedestrian safety (wood piles etc.).
- There should also be some way to address additional cut through from the new congestion charges.
- 

### **Other Hopes and Concerns**

- Pedestrian safety improvements.
- City should prioritize sidewalks and pedestrian safety on these busier streets.
- Unimproved streets are dangerous.
- Pedestrian issues should be prioritized.
- Walking and connections are important to the neighborhood.
- City should prioritize life over maintenance.
- Heard from neighbors that they do not care about sidewalks and curbs, but just want something that they can use.
- There are plenty of streets that are difficult for pedestrians. Especially the busier streets. There are some scary pedestrian issues on some of those streets.
- There are a lot of stormwater issues.
- Stormwater is important in certain areas.
- There are hills in the neighborhood, which creates challenges with drainage.
- There are mud issues.
- City should prioritize people who have water running into their yards.
- There are broad issues with building streets to full standards. Developers should pay more attention to storm water management. Stormwater management is why these streets are so expensive.
- Worried that LTIC money might be siphoned away from neighborhoods that contribute it.
- Supported LTIC at first because thought it was for pedestrian improvements. Still believe that it should be this way. This is a loss for the neighborhood and community. The money should not go to improving neighborhood streets, but for improving pedestrian safety.

- LTIC does not provide enough money. Would support a property tax that addresses all streets at once.
- There is not enough money to touch the level of need.
- People in annexed neighborhoods have been paying taxes for decades, just like everyone else.
- Would like to see alternative standards developed.
- PBOT is not doing a good job filling the potholes.
- Have seen children going to school on 66th Ave (in Cully), a horrendous gravel road. It would take a dump truck to fill the potholes on 66th Ave.
- Most of the school children get driven to school and it generates a lot of traffic. There are issues with cut through traffic. There is nothing on the streets to discourage it.
- There is an increase in cut through traffic on very poor streets as a result new traffic management / light signal changes on nearby arterials.
- People in neighborhood are interested in having the street flat and paved, but do not care about anything else.
- Neighborhood objects to curbs. They have tried to keep PBOT from putting in curbs, but PBOT has not listened.
- Neighbors all know locally what the problems are and how to fix them. The challenge is getting PBOT to listen.