

# Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee

*Working to Make Bicycling a Part of Daily Life in Portland*

1120 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 800  
Portland OR 97204



August 20, 2019

Portland City Council  
Portland City Hall  
1221 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204

RE: Southwest in Motion Plan

Dear Commissioners,

The Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) has had an opportunity to discuss the April 2019 draft of the Southwest in Motion plan with the project manager, Nick Falbo. In addition, the committee had a brief opportunity to review the final draft of the Southwest in Motion Plan (SWIM) dated August 2019. The committee has three basic comments for your consideration as you formally review the plan.

## **1. Adopt the SWIM Plan and Recommended TSP Amendments**

SW Portland residents have worked diligently with PBOT staff to create a modest but strategically sound plan, focused on key improvements that will provide a safer and more convenient active transportation system for SW Portland residents. Despite recent city investments, the active transportation infrastructure in SW Portland remains largely deficient. Rural roads that were expected to accommodate urban transportation needs have proven to be grossly inadequate for this task.

SWIM focuses on a practical short-term improvement strategy that can make a big difference. In particular, the City should directly address the following areas of need:

- Connect existing improvements to provide a safer and more functional network
- Provide access in and around community centers and to transit
- Utilize a blend of traditional and new innovative design treatments
- Balance short-term priorities with reasonable funding expectations
- Make the most of available funding and leverage transportation investments

## **2. Strengthen the Implementation Strategy and Funding Commitment**

The BAC finds that the implementation portion of the plan needs to be strengthened if it is to be effective. Chapter 8 Implementation & Monitoring Success states “Continued community advocacy for projects will be instrumental to the success of this plan.” Other than indicating that PBOT will attempt to “maximize funding opportunities” and advance a few major projects that are already in the works, the City’s implementation role is vague. This relatively generic approach to implementation is not found in the other In Motion and community plans, which tend to be much more specific about actions to be taken and by which party.

The “top priority: don’t miss opportunities” policy recommendation (Chapter 7, page 52) states that “Regardless of the individual project priorities identified in this plan, PBOT should work to implement the

Transportation System Plan and other plans when project opportunities arise. PBOT should prepare itself with appropriate funding to respond productively to development proposals, repaving projects, shared opportunities and partner bureau projects.” However, Chapter 8 makes no mention about how PBOT will “prepare itself with appropriate funding to respond.”

This plan should more clearly describe how the City will work with and assist SW residents in reaching SWIM’s active transportation objectives. Specific actions are needed (with PBOT taking lead) to implement the plan in a timely and cost-effective manner including:

- Clarify what is meant by “short-term refinement” in the introduction (page D)—5 years, 10 years, or a different period of time?
- Compare the identified project costs, the amount of potential funding, and what this means for completion of projects identified in the plan
- Provide an estimate for plan completion, given the estimated project costs and available funding
- Describe the specific action or actions PBOT will take to implement the “top priority: don’t miss opportunities” policy recommendation on page 52
- Commit to updates of the SWIM plan on a regular basis, to keep it current and relevant

Finally, a method for monitoring performance is described in Chapter 8 (page 58). While this is an essential component of successful plan implementation, the plan only says that reporting **should** be done at least every two years.” This should be amended to use the word “shall.”

### 3. Coordinate SWIM with SW Corridor

The City should fully coordinate SWIM and SW Corridor for the mutual benefit of both projects, especially considering the low density and auto-centric character of SW Corridor. Construction of the SWIM projects located within the corridor, in combination with active transportation improvements considered in the SW Corridor DEIS and upcoming planning work, will be critical to the success of the proposed MAX line. The city should aggressively look for funding to support the SW Corridor and SWIM projects, including the anticipated regional transportation measure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Zimmermann  
Chair, Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee  
David Stein  
Vice Chair, Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee

cc: Nick Falbo  
SWIM Project