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Portland Bureau of Transportation  
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CC:  
John Mermin, Metro  
Lake McTighe, Metro  
Peter Hurley, Portland Bureau of Transportation  
Marty Stockton, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
North Tabor Neighborhood Association  
Rose City Park Neighborhood Association

April 28, 2014

Dear Mr. Pearce,

As board members and residents of North Tabor Neighborhood Association, we are writing to express support for the NE 60th & Glisan LRT Station Area project to be advanced on the financially constrained list as part of Metro's Regional Active Transportation Plan.

It is our understanding is that if funded, this \$7.5 million dollar project would make numerous pedestrian-related improvements near the NE 60th Avenue MAX station area in Portland as defined in the Transportation Plan of the Eastside MAX Station Area Communities Project.

Below are the reasons for why we believe the NE 60th & Glisan LRT Station ("LTR Station") Area should be advanced to the financially constrained list:

**Safety - Addresses an existing deficiency or hazard by improving pedestrian, bicycle, and/or vehicular safety. Reduces fatalities and injuries (safety) and/or reduces collisions and other non-recurrent congestion (improves travel time reliability).** For North Tabor residents living in "the pocket" (North of Glisan Street and East of 60th Avenue), there are few safe routes to enter or leave the area on foot or by bicycle. Many families that go to Normandale Park must walk along gravel on NE Oregon Street toward 60th Avenue. It is not a safe or desirable feeling to hope that their children are safe as cars speed through the neighborhood to enter the I-84 on-ramp. Many residents walk to the MAX station to get to work, and the same safety hazards are present for them who must share the street with cars as they walk along NE Oregon Street. By funding this project as part of the RTP, families and commuters on foot would encounter less safety hazards in their everyday lives.

New and safe crossings of 60th Avenue north of the LTR and Glisan Street east of the 60th Avenue traffic light will help slow down traffic as they approach these dangerous intersections. A robust crossing at 62nd Avenue (or to a lesser extent 63rd) will create a visual and physical pinch point for morning traffic coming down the hill and decrease future crash risk at the 60th Avenue and Glisan Street traffic light which is the busiest intersection in the area. Speeding approaching the light has been documented as an on-going problem. As this is the local node for freeway access, one crash at commute time creates gridlock. Having a safer traffic light would help improve the reliability of the morning and evening commutes.

As a neighborhood without any public schools, having safe routes to schools is a neighborhood priority. In the area in question, the only route to access Mount Tabor Middle School currently is 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This street has substandard sidewalks south of Glisan Street and crosses the two most dangerous intersections in the neighborhood (60<sup>th</sup> and Glisan and Burnside). An active transportation corridor from the LTR station through “The Pocket” north past Glisan Street to the Davis-Everett Greenway would give this region safe access to our neighborhood's east-west safety corridor. This improvement would also leverage the 50's bikeway being built this spring that will give us safe access to both our High Schools and Glencoe Elementary for the first time. This active transportation corridor based on 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue is a critical link in our quest to give everyone safe school access.

## **Connectivity/Built Environment -Supports a high level of street connectivity for all modes and improvement of the built environment, especially in areas where deficiencies exist.**

The area near the LTR station has potential for supporting all modes of street connectivity. Funding this project as part of the RTP would address a number of deficiencies in the existing built environment in the following areas:

### **Bicycle Improvements**

- Bicycle improvements along 60th Avenue between Hassalo and Oregon Streets.
- Adding bicycle boulevards along 1) Hassalo street between 57th and 60th Avenues connecting bicyclists to the 50s bikeway and the Hancock-Tillamook Bike Boulevard; and 2) Oregon Street between 60th - 63rd Avenues as well as 3) 62nd Avenue from Oregon to Davis streets to connect the 60th Avenue station to the rest of Portland's bikeway system 4) the 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Bike Boulevard should be extended south to Mount Tabor Park via Scott Drive ending at the NE Entrance at 69<sup>th</sup> Avenue including crossing improvements at Burnside, Stark and Belmont streets. This would create a seamless active transportation corridor between the Region's Largest park and the LTR station including the Blue, Green and Red MAX lines via the easiest grade possible, safely separated from the heavily used 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- A crossing improvement at 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Davis Street and to support a safe route to Mount Table Middle School and for the 50's bikeway access.

### **Pedestrian Improvements**

- Making street improvements in various locations along the above proposed bike boulevards so that there are ADA compliant sidewalks for pedestrians to use in their travels.
- Widening of the sidewalk along NE 60th Avenue between I-84 and Halsey.
- Improving a pedestrian crossing on 62nd Avenue at Glisan Street to connect bicyclists to Mt Tabor area.
- Sidewalk improvements south of Glisan Street on 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Davis Street.

### **Note on Previous Active Transportation Concept Study - Crossing at 63rd and Glisan**

As with all projects, if funding is awarded to this project, there will need to be an updated study to assess changing conditions. As a result of the recent lane reductions on Glisan Street, a crossing at 62nd Avenue is now possible. As a neighborhood, we feel that 62nd Avenue would be the preferred route over 63rd Avenue since it lines up directly with points south to Belmont Street and allows for a more direct connection to Mount Tabor Park via Scott Drive. Mount Tabor Park is a regional asset for recreation activity. Placing the crossing at 62nd Avenue would also slow down morning traffic approaching the Glisan traffic light at 60th Avenue and be more convenient to those accessing the commercial corridor ending at 61st Avenue. The intersection at 62nd Avenue is more off-set than 63rd Avenue making automobile crossings more dangerous, hence improving the 62nd Avenue crossing would lower future crash risk. Additionally, since we understand that in summer 2014, there will be funds to place a crosswalk at 65th Avenue and Glisan Street, we feel that the placement of another crossing under this project would best suited at 62nd Avenue. [Please click here](#) to view a google map that geographically depicts this recommendation. We have similar problems with speeding westbound on Burnside and

Stark due to the down hill topography. A Greenway treatment on 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue with improved crossings would improve safety for all modes of travel at each of these intersections.

**Health - How much does the project increase physical activity (i.e. walk, bike, non park & ride transit) and reduce exposure to harmful pollutants?** The US Surgeon General recommends that all Americans engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day, yet nearly half of the population does not meet the guideline. Funding this project as part of the RTP would expand opportunities for residents to meet the Surgeon General's daily physical activity recommendations. North Tabor families living in "the pocket" could more safely walk with ease to the nearest park (Normandale) so that their children can more easily have a place to play. Residents walking from South of Glisan or near Halsey could more safely travel along 60th Avenue to reach the LTR station as part of their daily commute. Children in North Tabor would be able walk or bike on a safe route to school (Glencoe or Mt. Tabor) if there was a crosswalk at 62nd Avenue and Glisan Street. People would be more inclined to commute to work or to the MAX station by bicycle if bike boulevards and crossings were added within the radius of the station in both neighborhoods. Extending this greenway corridor connection south to Mount Tabor park would give the entire region safe access during high volume events such as concerts in the Park or other regional activities without automobile use.

## **Community Support**

**Has a high level of community support within the district.** This project has a considerable amount of community support from North Tabor residents and businesses.

### **Transportation Survey**

In March 2013, North Tabor Neighborhood Association conducted an online survey with community members, where over 40 residents gave input on what kinds of transportation-related improvements they wanted to see in the future. There was a lot of feedback supporting the LRT Station project, including the following comments: follow up with the Improvement Plan to create complete streets that include sidewalks and bike boulevards nearby the LTR station area; connect a greenway in "the pocket" on 62nd Avenue across Glisan Street to Mt. Tabor; create a safe way for cyclists to reach the MAX station; develop a safe route to neighborhood schools that are located south of Burnside Street; and improve pedestrian crossing at 60th Avenue and Glisan Street.

### **Comprehensive Plan Letter**

In early 2014, the North Tabor Neighborhood Association board, community members, local businesses and Montavilla Neighborhood Association signed on to a letter to the City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability supporting zoning changes through the Comprehensive Plan. The letter commented that transportation-related improvements--such as what is proposed in this project for the MAX station--need to accompany increased density in order to ensure pedestrian safety.

### **TGM Funding Request from Rose City Park Neighborhood Association**

Rose City Park Neighborhood Association (RCPNA) recently submitted a proposal for TGM grant funding to study 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Halsey and Glisan Streets to consider how safety can be improved in this area. North Tabor Neighborhood Association and RCPNA have collaboratively worked together in the past several months to confirm a shared vision about enhancing the area surrounding the LTR station for residents in both neighborhoods.

**Efficient Use of Resources - Increases both the efficiency and effectiveness of the system by wise application of available financial, capital, and human resources.** The radius around the LTR station has often been described as an underperforming area since it is in a central location yet it lacks bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure and other nearby amenities. If this project was funded as part of

the RTP, it would be a wise application of resources because it would be adding improvements to enhance the use of existing infrastructure.

**Access** - *How much will the project increase the number of people and/or quality of access to jobs, housing and other daily needs within a designated center or corridor?* If funded as part of the RTP, this project would support increased quality of access to: a safer route for children to walk or bike to Glencoe Elementary and Mt. Tabor Middle schools; Normandale and Mt. Tabor parks; employment and health-related services at Providence Hospital; and the light industry employment zone located directly North of the MAX station.

**Equity** - *How much do transportation disadvantaged people benefit from the project?* Communities across Portland, including people in our neighborhood, are experiencing upward rental pressure. As the city grows, the future cost of living will also increase. Developing a safe, active transportation network radiating from the LRT station will provide residents of North Tabor and other surrounding neighborhoods a variety of safe transportation options that are not reliant on automobile ownership.

**Multimodal/Balance** - *Addresses an area wide need with a multimodal approach.* North Tabor has a highly conductive mass transportation system including the LRT station and multiple bus routes. Our neighborhood also has an auto focused freeway and a commuting corridor, but lacks a complete active transportation network. The sidewalk infill and bikeway projects would help alleviate this disparity in transportation modes.

Thank you in advance for your attention and your consideration in reviewing these reasons for why this project should be advanced to the federally constrained list. We look forward to continuing the conversation with PBOT and Metro as the RTP community input process continues.

Sincerely,

North Tabor Neighborhood Association