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Steve Novick Commissioner **Leah Treat** Director

April 14, 2016

SW Trails PDX
6495 SW Burlingame Place
Portland, OR 97239

Dear Don and SW Trails PDX Board,

Thank you for your thoughtful note regarding Portland Sunday Parkways. It's always a pleasure to hear that neighborhoods are eager to participate in a successful PBOT program. That being said, this interest has not been without its own set of unique challenges. In particular, PBOT has struggled to craft and implement a Sunday Parkways program for southwest neighborhoods that meets our program goals and invites neighborhood participation, while also providing a parkway route that cyclists, pedestrians and other modal users can safely and reasonably access. While we've yet to resolve the practical concerns and limitations of implementing a Sunday Parkways in a southwest neighborhood, PBOT remains committed to researching and securing an option that benefits citywide stakeholders, program volunteers and partners, as well as southwest neighbors.

Sunday Parkways was designed to showcase neighborhood bike and walk networks throughout the city. As you are aware, there are significant barriers to implementing Sunday Parkways in southwest.

- **Topography:** Hills are a staple part of the profile in southwest. More specifically, the designated Neighborhood Greenways in southwest are significantly steeper than the streets and routes that Sunday Parkways has used in other locations in previous years.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** The lack of curbs and fully improved streets, composed of gravel and uneven paving surfaces, would likely mean families who are not already avid cyclists or walkers would spend more time navigating the hills and terrain than enjoying the spirit and comradery created during the day's events.
- **Lack of Connectivity:** With limited options available for alternate detour routes, detouring motor vehicle traffic is difficult. Adding to this challenge is the fact that participants are uncomfortable sharing streets with moving vehicles.
- **Volunteer Experience:** Lack of connectivity has also proven to be a strenuous experience for our program volunteers. For example, residents and others driving during a Sunday Parkways event will frequently rely on one particular route in order to reach their intended destination.



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As a result, residents and others get quite frustrated with our volunteer staff when they are directed to utilize alternate routes that they are either unfamiliar with or would prefer not to use.

Sunday Parkways relies extensively on volunteer staff. In order to retain this dedicated corps, Sunday Parkways must ensure their experience is meaningful, safe and reasonably free of conflict. Unfortunately, given the ongoing difficulties experienced by volunteer staff at previous southwest events, we cannot guarantee the latter.

- **Program Participation:** Participant numbers in southwest, even on the sunniest of days, have been the lowest of any event hosted by Sunday Parkways in the eight years of its operation. This low participation number impacts how our sponsors and vendors support the program. More to the point; with fewer participants in attendance vendors worry they'll see less money in their pockets, and our sponsors worry they won't get the visibility they need or expect for their minimum commitment of \$1,500 - per event. Unfortunately, this has led to fewer season-wide sponsors and fewer vendors willing to sign up with events scheduled for southwest.

Rest assured that there are also benefits to hosting Sunday Parkways in southwest, including the robust walking network and the fact that many routes are signed and promoted.

To that end, I wanted to share some interesting and relevant information with you that I hope you will consider further. As part of a Regional Transportation Options Metro grant PBOT received, we have begun focusing efforts to improve walkability in three geographic neighborhoods: Cully, Jade District and New Columbia. In fact, Oregon Walks will be piloting a walking event in the Cully neighborhood this year as part of this grant. The results of this pilot effort could be used as a model for implementing similar walkway programs in southwest and other neighborhoods across the city.

Please know that PBOT is committed to continuing to work with our interested stakeholders to explore programs that would include SW neighborhoods in upcoming seasons.

Again, my thanks for your correspondence and willingness to work with PBOT on ways to expand and grow the Sunday Parkways program. Please follow up with Linda Ginenthal at linda.ginenthal@portlandoregon.gov or (503) 823-5266 if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Leah Treat