



August 2, 2016

Leah Treat, Director
Portland Bureau of Transportation
1120 SW Fifth Ave, Suite 800
Portland, OR 97204

Re: Letter of Support for Proposed Alley Improvement Project

Dear Ms. Treat,

Melinda Matson recently spoke at a Foster-Powell Neighborhood Association Meeting about the Beech-Failing Alley Project. Foster-Powell residents share her commitment to creating and maintaining safe, livable, healthy, pedestrian and environmentally-friendly spaces.

The Foster-Powell Neighborhood Association enthusiastically supports improvement efforts for alleys and other pedestrian shared roadways. We encourage the city to implement effective policies that would fund, promote and support successful projects, be it through the "Livable Streets" program or others.

Portland's population boom has resulted in more congestion on streets. Now more than ever, it is important to prioritize safe, green paths for local kids, pets, pedestrians and cyclists. In Foster-Powell, many streets regularly experience a high volume of speeding cars. The Foster-Powell neighborhood is bordered by three very busy streets: Foster Road, Powell Boulevard and 82nd Avenue. Improving our existing alleys could potentially provide much-needed alternatives to high-traffic streets.

Further, like many Portland neighborhoods, Foster-Powell suffers from a large amount of theft from residents' yards, garages and vehicles. This often takes place in alleys. Many of the fences that border alleys have been tagged with graffiti. Alleys are also a common place for dumping (abandoned shopping carts, furniture, household trash, etc.) and show evidence of drug use (discarded needles). If community members were to come together - with city support - and focus on improving alley spaces, it stands to reason that safer, more livable spaces would result.

It is essential that the proposed improvement projects would be within citizen's reach to implement and maintain. Potential barriers that may contribute to why a program would go unused by the community include:

- Some landlords have demonstrated low to no interest in making improvements to their property or to the surrounding infrastructure and

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/FosterPowellNeighborhood

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community. For neighborhoods with a mix of renters and homeowners, achieving buy-in from all properties would be unlikely.

- Requiring residents to pay for improvements would most certainly present issues with affordability. There is a wide range of incomes among Portland residents.

The City of Portland has the ability to assist neighborhoods overcome these potential barriers. Foster-Powell would support the City of Portland utilizing any of the following strategies to assist with alley improvement projects:

- Creating pilot improvement projects implemented and maintained from the city revolving funds
- Pooling miscellaneous funding in a grant program for qualifying improvements, with a clear application and implementation process for citizens
- Establishing right of way improvements acceptable for city maintenance
- Abatement or aid for right of way maintenance that proves to be a financial burden to adjacent owners
- Implementing clear incentives or requirements for multi-unit property owners or developers to absorb increased financial burdens of improvement and maintenance

Foster-Powell is also committed to ensuring that any construction materials associated with an alley improvement project minimize any negative impacts on the environment. To that end, our neighborhood fully supports green materials such as permeable pavers, which are the material of choice in other cities with green alley programming.

Foster-Powell is one of many Portland neighborhoods with opportunities for improvement. We are confident that alley improvement projects would make a meaningful difference in ensuring quality spaces for Portland residents. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Balla, Chair
The Foster-Powell Neighborhood Association
contact@fosterpowell.com

cc: Melinda Matson
Beech-Failing Alley Project
Boise Neighborhood, Portland, OR
593.490.1649