

February 24, 2025
BikeBusPDX

City Hall
Council Chambers
2nd Floor – 1221 SW Fourth Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Re: Resolution request for “Bike Bus Friendly” Neighborhood Greenway Pilot

Dear Transportation and Infrastructure Committee,

We, the undersigned members of Bike Bus PDX, along with support from a growing number of citizens and community organizations across the city, are **writing to request that the City Council pass a Resolution for a “Bike Bus Friendly” Neighborhood Greenway Pilot.**

Our request builds upon ongoing collaboration with PBOT and commitments from the prior City Council to enhance the safety of active transportation routes for students and families. It also coincides with our partnership with PBOT to create a Bike Bus Wayfinding Pilot that includes route selection, signage and process formalization to provide cohesive signage and increase driver awareness of Bike Buses across the city.

As leaders in the Bike Bus movement, our request for a “Bike Bus Friendly” Neighborhood Greenway Pilot is grounded in the understanding that Neighborhood Greenways are intended to be low-stress streets prioritizing walking, biking, and rolling for all ages and abilities and are utilized by many of our Portland Bike Buses. However, **excessive vehicle volumes make these routes unsafe, particularly for children participating in Bike Buses.** High traffic increases conflicts, worsens air quality, and threatens the momentum of the Bike Bus movement—a program that directly supports Portland’s Vision Zero, climate action, and livability goals.

This Resolution instructs PBOT to implement a “Bike Bus Friendly” Neighborhood Greenway Pilot, **by installing diverters to reduce vehicle traffic to less than 500 vehicles per day (≤ 500 Average Daily Traffic, ADT) on twenty-five (25) Neighborhood Greenways with active Bike Bus or Walking School Bus routes prior to the start of the 2025-26 school year.**

For your consideration:

Student and Family Safety. Bike Bus routes serve thousands of students and families throughout Portland. Our proposed limits will significantly reduce the risks posed by cut-through traffic and speeding vehicles that currently share the same space as children biking and walking to school.

Equity and Accessibility. Many Title 1 schools rely on active transportation initiatives to ensure equitable access to safe, healthy, and affordable travel options. Students riding on Bike Buses in historically underserved communities will benefit alongside schools in more well-resourced areas. Reducing traffic on these routes is a meaningful step toward transportation equity.

Community Livability. Neighborhood Greenways were designed to foster livable streets and encourage local connectivity. When properly designed and maintained, Neighborhood Greenways provide a calmer, more predictable environment that supports families, children, those with disabilities, and older adults in choosing active transportation. High volumes of vehicle traffic undermine these objectives, creating unsafe environments that deter walking and biking. Reduced vehicle volumes increase safety, reduce noise, and contribute positively to overall livability and travel options for vulnerable road users.

Alignment with City Goals. Limiting traffic on Bike Bus routes aligns with Portland's 2030 Bike Plan, Climate Emergency Work Plan, Vision Zero Action Plan, and the Safe Routes to School Program objectives by prioritizing sustainable active transportation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Ongoing Safety Risks. The increasing flow of vehicles on Neighborhood Greenways beyond the recommended threshold poses a persistent safety risk, undermining our shared transportation goals. Of particular concern is the recent decision to remove the popular Slow Streets concrete barriers from Neighborhood Greenways. Each removal heightens the danger for vulnerable road users, reducing the effectiveness of safety measures when additional protections are already needed. *On a Neighborhood Greenway in North Portland, a family biking with a 6- and 10-year-old was forced to pull over suddenly as two drivers raced side by side through an intersection where a barrier had recently been removed.* Incidents like this highlight the urgent need for reinforced safety infrastructure, not its removal.

"Similar to cycle tracks, **local streets with diverters to reduce motor vehicle traffic were found to have very low risk**, probably because they reduce motor vehicle volumes. Traffic slowing devices (eg, traffic circles, curb extensions and speed bumps or humps) are also considered 'traffic calming' measures and were implemented to slow traffic on local streets, but were not found to have a significant benefit. One study found that motor vehicles may speed up immediately after a traffic-slowing device."

Harris MA, Reynolds CCO, Winters M, et al. [Comparing the effects of infrastructure on bicycling injury at intersections and non-intersections using a case–crossover design](#). Injury Prevention 2013;19:303-310.

Additional Details.

- **Scope:** Resolution establishes a "Bike Bus Friendly" Neighborhood Greenway Pilot directing PBOT to implement diverters to reduce Neighborhood Greenway Average Daily Traffic (ADT) to ≤500 on (25) routes with Bike Bus or Walking School Bus activity to ensure safe and comfortable student travel.
- **Diverters:** Modal filters (diverters) are a cost-effective, proven intervention that create safer corridors for children commuting to school by making these streets less attractive to cut-through drivers.
- **Urgency:** Installing diverters prior to the start of the 2025-26 school year provides increased safety to existing Bike Bus riders and would encourage new riders at a time when students are forming new commuting habits.
- **Implementation:** As a true pilot, the program should prioritize real-world testing over prolonged pre-implementation studies, ensuring timely execution within budget constraints. The Pilot is the Process. This pilot must utilize an action-based planning process to be successful in protecting children who are riding their bikes now. PBOT is fortunate to have existing studies showing the efficacy of diverters for reducing vehicle volumes per day, and increasing safety.
- **Budget:** We seek insight into available funding sources, including Fixing Our Streets 3, which has funds allocated for traffic calming measures such as diverters.

- **Pilot Assessment:** PBOT has the systems to monitor traffic volumes, speeds, and mode share to evaluate program impacts on ADT on Greenways, perception of safety, and active transportation increases.
- **Post-Pilot:** PBOT should present findings to the City Council Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and participating Bike Bus PDX pilot schools by Spring of next year with the intention of refining and expanding the pilot to more schools in 2026-27, and actively enhancing safety for Bike Bus and Walking Bus routes at all schools within its service area in a timely manner.

By limiting traffic volumes and speed on Neighborhood Greenways, we can further ensure that children, families, and community members have safe, reliable routes to school and work, fostering a healthier, more connected Portland.

We respectfully urge the City Council to prioritize this resolution and direct PBOT to implement the pilot program without delay. Our community stands ready to collaborate on this initiative to advance safety and equity for all Portlanders.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response and are happy to meet with Council members and PBOT staff to discuss next steps.

Sincerely,

BikeBusPDX Council Advocacy Committee Members:

Sam Balto, Alameda and Vernon Bike Bus
 Liz Dome, Abernethy Bike Bus
 Emily Essley, Creston Bike Bus
 Jessica Fletcher, James John Bike Bus
 Rob Galanakis, Glencoe Bike Bus
 Lauren McCune, Abernethy Bike Bus
 Jake Milligan, Abernethy Bike Bus
 RJ Sheperd, Lent Bike Bus
 Catie Tam, Woodstock Bike Bus

Please contact us for a full list of Bike Buses, PTAs, Neighborhood Associations, and other signatories to this letter.

cc: Roger Geller, City of Portland Bike Coordinator, Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)

Encl: City of Vancouver Transportation Guidelines for All Ages and Abilities Cycling Routes (1), Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030 - 2019 Progress Report - page 3 (1)

Transportation Design Guidelines:

All Ages and Abilities Cycling Routes



Version 1.1
March, 2017

Overview:

The City of Vancouver has a vision to make cycling safe, convenient, comfortable and fun for all ages and abilities (AAA), including families with children, seniors, and new riders. An inviting and connected network of low stress “AAA” routes will provide a wide spectrum of the population the option to cycle for most short trips.

This guideline provides 10 “general rules” to consider when designing or designating a route “AAA”. It is intended as a living document that will be updated and supplemented periodically as we learn from local projects, research, and other leading cities.



Image: Chris and Melissa Bruntlett

Rule #1:

Build the types of cycling facilities that feel comfortable for all



Many types of traditional bike facilities only appeal to people who are comfortable riding in traffic. However, bikeways on quiet streets, protected bike lanes, and off-street pathways appeal to people who are interested in cycling but concerned for their safety.²

The general approaches to creating AAA cycling routes on city streets are:

- Ensuring low motor vehicle speeds and volumes on local streets, or
- Providing physical separation on busy streets

Rule #2:

Target motor vehicle volume below 500/day (below 50/peak hour)

Local Street Bikeway

Reducing the number of interactions between motor vehicles and people cycling can improve safety and comfort. At a volume below 500 vehicles per day, most people cycling will encounter less than one motor vehicle per block in the peak hour.

Considerations:

- On routes with more than 500 vehicles/day (more than 50/hr), consider additional traffic calming or diversion to bring volumes down to the target value.
- Routes with up to 1,000 vehicles/day (100/hr) may be considered AAA after carefully considering speed, parking turnover, and passing opportunities.
- On routes where low motor vehicle volumes are not possible to achieve, separation of bikes from vehicles is needed.

- 1** Adopt a **strong policy framework** that supports bicycling and gives City staff the tools they need to advocate for better bike projects and programs
- 2** Build a **dense and cohesive bikeway network** that attracts users of all ages and abilities by building the highest quality bike facilities possible
- 3** Implement **encouragement and education programs** that break down barriers to bicycling