

Laborers' Local 483

Fighting for Portland's Future

Executive Board

Richard Beetle
Business Manager

Ben Nelson
Secretary-Treasurer

Scott Gibson
President

Kevin Stampfle
Vice-President

Farrell Richartz
Recording Secretary

Wesley Buccholz
At-large

Mike Murphy
At-large

Portland City Council
1221 SW 4th Ave.
Portland, OR 97204

January 6, 2011

Dear City Council,

Though we represent different constituencies, as members of the Transportation Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), we share the goal of keeping Portland moving. We believe Portland deserves a safe, equitable, multi-modal transportation network that can accommodate the needs of business, pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and workers. Towards that end, we work in the BAC to balance our immediate needs and our long-term vision within the constraints of Bureau resources.

Over the last decade, the bureau's operational budget has been shrinking, making our shared task more difficult. The BAC's executive summary to the budget recommendation for FY 11-12 warned:

"Current resource allocations are totally inadequate to meet Bureau needs and are unsustainable in the long-run unless additional revenue streams (e.g., street maintenance fees) are created."

In absence of Council action on solutions to the growing deficit, PBOT is in crisis. This year's BAC has been tasked with recommending a budget that in *one* fiscal year would slash the PBOT operating budget by \$16 million- as much as the Bureau lost cumulatively over a period of *ten* years. During this economic crisis, massive cuts are not a solution, in fact, they exacerbate the problem by increasing costs in the long-run.

After years of cutbacks the bureau's deferred maintenance level is approaching \$800 million dollars. A cut of this magnitude will drastically reduce PBOT's maintenance capacity and increase the City's future liability. For every dollar PBOT spends to pave city streets now, it would cost up to five dollars to rebuild the same streets if left unrepaired. How will the City meet the expectations of residents and businesses with shrinking revenues and growing costs? We simply cannot afford to let Portland's assets crumble. The work must be done, and it must be funded securely.

PBOT's current revenue shortfall is not a surprise. It is the product of an out-dated funding model based on revenue sources, like gas-tax receipts, that contradict our green goals and are expected to remain at low levels indefinitely. Portland is on the cutting edge of the new green economy, and this budget crisis is an opportunity to create a sustainable funding model for the transportation infrastructure of the future. **We call on City Council to use this opportunity to work with PBOT and Portland's transportation stakeholders to find an alternative funding model that meets our 21st century needs.**

1125 SE Madison, Suite 206, Portland, OR 972214

Phone: (503)239-5676

Fax: (503)239-5741

URL: www.liuna483.org