

PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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Jo Ann Hardesty Commissioner **Chris Warner** Director

May 2, 2022

To the Beverly Cleary School and Grant Park Community,

Thank you for your continued dedication to improving community safety. The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) is similarly dedicated to safe streets where serious injury crashes and fatalities are eliminated. Over the last few years PBOT staff have heard from residents and school community members that several intersections along NE 33rd Ave are unsafe. Staff have made multiple site visits to these intersections, undertaken analysis, reviewed data, and designed and installed intersection improvements.

In 2019, PBOT staff installed several safety measures at NE 33rd Ave and US Grant Pl in response to neighborhood concerns, including high visibility crosswalks, pedestrian head start beacons that provide more time for people walking across the street, and traffic calming treatments that slow turning vehicles.

Several additional improvements are awaiting construction. These improvements are expected to be implemented upon completion of the NE 33rd Ave paving project this June. These include:

- Intersection visibility improvements at NE 33rd Ave and NE Hancock St and NE 33rd Ave and NE US Grant Pl.
- Bike box installation at NE US Grant Pl at NE 33rd and right turn restrictions on red from NE US Grant Pl to NE 33rd Ave to reduce turn conflicts for people walking and bicycling.
- Traffic restrictions at NE Hancock and NE 33rd to eliminate the majority of potential pedestrian and vehicle conflicts. This includes plastic curbing and posts on NE 33rd Ave that will prohibit auto traffic on Hancock from turning left or continuing straight at 33rd; bicyclists will still be able to continue east and west on Hancock across 33rd Avenue. Additionally, southbound traffic will be prohibited from turning left to go east on Hancock. Northbound traffic will still be able to turn left onto Hancock to access the school and businesses.

In addition to these improvements, the Grant Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) requested that PBOT remove the signal box controller on the southeast corner of NE 33rd and Hancock. The resources required to implement that change are significant. PBOT staff implemented changes with known safety impacts. Slowing turning vehicles, enhanced crosswalk markings, and pedestrian head starts all have demonstrated track records of reducing crashes and increasing safety. Based on the latest crash records, there were no crashes at the intersection attributed to the signal control box blocking visibility.

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GPNA also requested that PBOT consider a pedestrian activated signal at NE Thompson and NE 33rd. Based on the current traffic operations of NE 33rd as well as the crash history and pedestrian demand at the NE Thompson intersection, the current infrastructure meets traffic conditions and safety needs. If conditions change, staff can reevaluate existing infrastructure. And, lastly, GPNA suggested that the northbound lane reduction be shifted south. PBOT has modeled this proposed change and determined that there would be significant delay to northbound traffic with queuing almost reaching the freeway off-ramp. This long queue is concerning to ODOT as it could impact operation of the off-ramp. Additionally, the large increase in delay for northbound drivers could result in undesirable consequences such as cut-through traffic on local streets. For these reasons we will not be able to shift the lane reduction south of Broadway at this time.

The city's traffic safety needs are many and we must appoint our resources to the areas of highest need and risk. We share your concerns around safe school and neighborhood access. We balance those concerns by using a data-informed approach to invest resources appropriately. We pledge to continue to engage with community to work towards our shared vision of a safe, accessible city for all.

Thank you again for your dedication to safety for Portland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Warner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chris Warner, Director
Portland Bureau of Transportation