

Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

May 10, 2011

BAC Members Present:

Matthew Arnold, Committee Chairperson; Robert Pickett, Committee Vice-Chairperson; Andrew Haliburton; Anne Duston; Tom Ralley; Roger Averbeck; Chris Beanes; Suzanne Veaudry Casaus; Tigue Howe; Heather McCarey; Mark Ginsberg; Ian Stude; Alison Graves; Rob Sadowsky; Carla Danley; Yonit Sharaby

BAC Members Absent:

Keith Liden; Shamus Lynsky; Shayna Rehberg; Kathryn Sofich

City staff:

Roger Geller, PBOT; Lt. Eric Schober, Portland Police; Cary Watters, Commissioner Fritz's office; Nick Falbo, PBOT

Guests:

Carl Larson; Russ Willis; Chase Ballew; Katja Dillmann; Marvin Rambo; Nancy Schaumberg; Judy Roumpf; Morgan Hieggelke; Haydun Lundeen; Frank Clark; Adam Jones; Mitchell Schurley; Kate Christoferson; Chris Smith

Announcements

Thank you to everyone who attended Alice Awards.

The Morrison Bridge path has had some issues with the safety and compliance. The county is looking to make improvements for curb visibility on the east side, as well as changes to promote proper compliance with the west side ramp.

Distort attorney, Michael Schrunk will be replaced by **Rod Underhill**, who is a bicycle racer, and bicycle supporter. This is a good thing for the bicycle community.

Rob Sadowsky of the BTA announced The Susie Forest Susie Tree Planting event on May 12th.

The first Sunday Parkways of 2011 will take place May 22nd in East Portland. Everyone is encouraged to volunteer.

June 1st the city is going to hold a public meeting to talk about the cities proposed RFF projects. PBOT is going to release a formal list next week. June 1st, 6-8pm, The Portland Building, 2nd floor, Room B

The Portland Society, a group of women passionate about business and cycling, will be holding a fundraiser Gala on May 26th at Madison's in SE. Tickets are affordable; secretary of state Kate Brown will be speaking. Portlandsociety.org/gala

Maplewood Elementary is engaging in a bicycle safety class in SW Portland and volunteers are needed. Contact Roger Averbeck (roger.averbeck@gmail.com) if interested.

Webinars from the Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) covering a variety of active transportation topics are available, and offer a great way to learn.

<http://www.walkinginfo.org/training/pbic/webinars.cfm?webinars>

Heather McCarey will serve on the Advisory Committee for the Sullivan's Gulch Trail Project representing the BAC.

Alison Graves from the Community Cycling Center announced a few activities, events:

- Summer Bike Camp registration is open, there are a few spots left
- A movie about the Holiday Bike Drive event will screen at the Hollywood Theater, Thursday, June 9 · 7:00pm - 9:00pm
- They will kickoff a new campaign, built on the *I ride* campaign
 - Putting *I ride* portraits on bus benches, with the tag line that "bikes take you places", to emphasize the who, how, and why of bike riding.
 - As a part of this campaign, there will be a bike ride starting at the shop on June 16th.

May is walk and bike month for many schools in Portland and Oregon. There will be a massive Bike Train on Ma 27th. There are two good locations to join in if you'd like to learn how Bike Trains and Neighborhood greenways work:

- 8:15 AM – NE 24th & Going
- 8:30 AM - NE Concord & Killingsworth

Notes from the BAC Retreat are not yet available, sorry for the delay and thanks for your patience. One of the big questions coming out of that event was how do we proceed with bike plan 2030 implementation?

Bike share announcement: Boston has just signed a contract for their bike share program called Hubway.

Robert, Roger and Mathew have been looking at online collaboration tools for some better online collaboration among BAC members and are seeking someone to organize and administer the tools. Rob Sadowski volunteered to set something up for the committee.

The BAC seeks a SAC member for a new project kicking off in St. Johns off Portland rd/Fessenden/Columbia Blvd. area. Chris Beanes volunteered.

Robert Picket has accepted a job with the State department as a Foreign Service officer. The Vice chair position will be vacant at the next meeting, think about if you would like to be a candidate for this position.

A couple other items: Lloyd district, and enforcement, these will be discussed at the back half of the meeting.

BTA Bicycle Light Survey

Carl Larson, BTA

Carl Larson from the BTA presented the results of the BTA volunteer-led bicycle light survey. Carl is here to seek opinions from the BAC, and to ask the committee to support a recommendation that the survey become a city-supported program.

The project was led by Matteo Luccio, BTA volunteer. He pursued this project, designed the count sheets, and made it all happen. Laura Koch with the CCC was a valuable partner in the count effort. The project involved 50 volunteers, 25 locations, and was done over 3 nights in March.

Results:

- 9 in 10 have a front light
- 8 in 10 had an *adequate* front light.

Q: Thanks for your work on this. Do you have a sense of what it would cost to run this project on an annual basis?

A: We spent overall between 30 and 50 hours of our time. The work is in wrangling volunteers, organizing a session of volunteer training, and then tallying numbers. You don't need to do the counting yourselves, and the results were mailed in. There was some cost with printing and postage, but it was a pretty affordable project.

Rob Sadowsky clarified that the BTA is happy to help find volunteers in the future, but they are not in a position to administer the program themselves.

Roger Averback commented that as a volunteer for the counts, he would encourage support for this proposal.

Q: Could this count effort be folded into the annual counts and be done at the same time?

A: The times of the bike count (4-6 pm in the summer) are not well suited for counting lights. Also, our count was focused on the share of light usage, not the absolute counts, so it may be a little different methodology.

Roger Geller asked, "What do I do with this data? What does it do for me?"

A: What do you do with the helmet data?

Roger Geller: I'm not sure if we'd include the helmet data today if we were to design the process again today, though the helmet data has been useful to demonstrate that helmet use is increasing so there's no need for an adult mandatory helmet law.

A: We feel light use is a measurement the city should be interested in. It would also be useful for targeting the 'see and be seen' campaign, and to judge the programs effectiveness.

Q: Are there any other cities that do light counts?

A: Not that we've seen. It would be another way for Portland to innovate.

Q: I think this campaign is really important. I noticed that most locations were within 2 miles of downtown, which may bias the results. It would be interesting to see differences in usage across the city.

A: I agree. Other areas to explore would be summer evening counts which may show a different result for the fair weather cyclist.

A BAC member commented that from an enforcement standpoint, I'd say geographic location about usage would help target police enforcement.

Allison Graves reminded the committee that the CCC also has a bike light program, targeted to the communities where we run programs.

Q: to Roger Geller, is this under the duties of PBOT? Or is it more appropriate for non profits?

A: I think you could make an argument that it could be a task for PBOT, or a non profit, or even the police bureau.

Another member commented that they like the idea of understanding differences between neighborhoods, but not the idea of using it to target enforcement in certain communities, unless it's a very friendly "here is a light" kind of enforcement.

Mathew asked Carl to prepare a list of ideas for where they see the survey going in the future. How could it be improved, how is the data useful, what could the benefits be? We will distribute this information among the committee and well vote at the next meeting.

Bicycle Safety

Presentation by Laurelhurst Students (PC.bikes5@gmail.com)

Several Laurelhurst middle school students, as part of a Project Citizen effort, explored measures to increase the safety of people riding bicycles and presented their project and recommendations to the BAC.

The project explored the question "What would we do to make it safer to travel by bike?" They prepared 3 alternatives, and selected a preferred alternative to move forward:

Alternative A: Raise the bike helmet requirements to 21 years old

Alternative B: Adjust the policy to require a rear light, rather than just a reflector

Alternative C: Coat bike lanes in green thermoplastic to make them more visible through intersections. This was the preferred alternative.

They acknowledged that this would be the most expensive solution, but it would be limited to focused intersections. According to their calculations it would cost \$2500/ intersection, including labor.

Q: Thank you for coming. You mentioned earlier that some of the people in your age range aren't so interested in wearing helmets. Why not? Was it the cool factor? What would make people in your age range make you wear a helmet?

A: It is the cool factor, but also the idea that they will be safe on the neighborhood streets, and that helmets are only needed on busy street.

Q: I find it interesting that two of your alternatives put the cost on the rider, and this one was put on the City.

A: We just selected this based on the one that would be the most effective.

Q: One of my goals is to get more kids to commute to school by bike. Which of your alternatives would be the most useful for increasing bike usage at your school?

A: Colored lanes would be the most effective.

A: Once you get to middle school, you've got more before and after school activities, and it's hard to get up early enough to ride a bike.

Q: Would the colored intersection need to be near your school?

A: yes. Currently I use a crosswalk when I cross busy intersections.

A: I have to go through 3 different big intersections; I usually wait at the sidewalk and walk my bike across.

Q: Did you choose any particular intersections that needed the coloring?

A: We did identify the intersections, but mid project, the intersections were fixed.

Comment from Roger Geller: I want to commend you on the level of sophistication in your analysis. You hit on some of the biggest topics under discussion in all of the bike cities around the world.

Comment: Two of the alternatives are state laws, and one is city law. If you wanted to, you could take the other alternatives up with the state legislature.

Committee Discussion: The Portland Plan

The Portland Plan has published draft strategies that are open for public comment. The focus of this discussion was to formulate a position by the Advisory Committee. You can find relevant documents on the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's Portland Plan website:

<http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/>

We spent a lot of time working on the Bike Plan for 2030, to explore how to build Portland around cycling. While our plan sees bicycling as a vital part of the cities transportation network and community, the Portland Plan drafts seems to view bicycling as an amenity, and more of a recreational activity.

The committee had an open discussion to gather their thoughts on the issues, and hopefully conclude around a focused message to send to BPS. The following issues, concerns, and ideas were raised during discussion:

- We should remember that the words on the paper are secondary, if the city has the feeling that there isn't public support for it, it won't necessarily happen.

- Keep in mind that the Bike Plan has been passed by City Council, and the Portland Plan has not. This gives us a leg up.
- This is also an opportunity to see divisions across lines. If the business leaders are all lining up against biking, it will be a problem for us.
- These are really difficult nuanced discussions, and its not going to be as easy as writing a letter.
- It's not clear what role the Portland plan will play in the city. It's being forwarded as a document that informs future investment decisions, and leads the direction for the comprehensive plan. It is supposed to give clear direction for where the future is supposed to go. The document should be a guide to future planners to see bicycling in a good light. I'm not sure if the Portland plan presents this vision clearly, but I don't think it does.
- I think the heart of the Portland plan is in the right place, but it's not quite where we need it to be. It is a big process, and the staff working on it is not necessarily as informed as they should be about bike issues, they see bicycling as an outcome, not as a transformative tool.

The current draft for healthy connected neighborhoods does not adequately address bicycling.

Our goal should be to get the *green transportation hierarchy* into the comprehensive plan.

The central city plan is kind of a microcosm of how the larger Portland Plan will play out. We expect to see 50 percent more trips into the central city, but were not going expand the road capacity. Everyone here recognizes that bikes need to play a big role on this. The business owners don't see this yet, but they will need to.

Q: Can't we just copy paste the bike plan?

A: yes, that's still on the table. But the BPS is primarily a land use planning group.

- Bicycling is an experiential activity. We spend an hour or more on the streets everyday, interacting with the public realm.
- We should be hesitant to denigrate ways in which bicycling is already addressed in the plan. We shouldn't bad mouth the idea of people doing recreational cycling on the weekends, or on spreading cycling infrastructure equitably across the region. These are good things and we don't want to make enemies.
- We don't have many people on our side. We may have "seen the light", but others have not. We need to be nuanced in how we approach this. What I'd like to see the committee work on is understanding what are the things getting the way of that support? I think the issues of safety, and the behaviors of cyclists are big barriers.
- The healthy communities idea was hatched by BPS and BES, not by transportation. The current area hubs are very focused on the commercial centers. I feel it deals with the

hubs, but not the connecting neighborhoods, and we need the connections. We need to work together with the pedestrian interests, were on the same team.

- I want to point out the importance of language. When we were first talking about 20 minute neighborhoods, it was about walking *and* biking. Now, it's being interpreted as a 20 minute walking neighborhood. I think it's very important that we get this concept right in the Portland plan.
- I think that what's missing is a better dialogue around access, and talking about walking and biking as a core component of accessibility in our city. I think the reliance on the automobile is going to go down. We have lots of people who ride bikes now by choice, but when we look to the cities that were emulating, the car ownership is lower. We need to talk about the issues of access in a way that is about equity.
- Metro is preparing materials for their Climate Smart Communities GHG reduction scenarios. There is a lack of discussion right now regarding bike issues. They're not getting that bicycling can be a key component to GHG reductions across the state.
- I want to underscore the suggestion to align with pedestrian issues. I also think we can align with the interest of housing. Why are we allowing new housing to be built across from the MAX that has garages?
- I'm really tied to the concept of the connection with businesses. I think there is a lot of mistrust between the city and the businesses. We need to continue with relationship building, and not isolate that group.
- It's important to remember that plans last a long time, but they are created in a single point in time. Today, JOBS are the big topic of the day, we need to recognize that.
- When we put bikes out there alone, they are bait. People pick up the bait. We need to think of inclusive language, like choice, mobility, access. Instead of pushing bikes. It's not about the bike.
- Other barriers we have to overcome: The idea that cars bring business and bikes don't. Also, The idea that the central city is about cars, and that maybe where bikes need to go is the outskirts. Part of this is driven by the issues of equity, and pushing for bikes in the outside, and the idea that because transit can't work out there, let's make bikes work out there.

There is also a big disbelief about the idea of Build it and they will come. They think it's just a shift in demographics.

There is also a fear, that in order to fit in more bike access, were going to have to take away from the car. There is very little support for that.

- It would help us to find businesses that value walking, biking, and transit. Different types of businesses, not just creative class jobs, but those do help. We need to be clear with our message that we won't accept anything short of the Bike plan for 2030, and that city council adopted that.
- When talking with businesses, use the language "How do we bring bicyclists customers two your business" Access is a big issue for them, businesses would rather lose a travel lane than a parking lane.
- Health will be a big issue, and it's a major theme in the Portland Plan. Sustainability is also a major theme in the Portland Plan.

I was surprised by all of the low hanging fruit here to fit in bicycling. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, but just stick new words in the right place.

- What we need to do is make friends now, and get them ready to mobilize in July.
- PBOT has been surgical in their comments to BPS, but we could be a bit bolder in our ideas, and reiterate that the bike plan 2030 is an adopted plan.

Mathew Arnold, along with Allison Graves will write up the letter for BPS regarding the Portland Plan.

Lloyd District Update

Heather McCarey presented an update from today on the three NE bikeways projects. They've all sort of blown up and become incredibly contentious.

- 12th avenue has the central eastside industrial council against infrastructure improvements, along with a full pullout from the stakeholder council.
- Holladay- Originally, people were OK with the removal of parking with the addition of a contraflow bike lane. But now all of a sudden, they need their parking. At the meeting today, PDC rep, Irene Bowers, showed up to say they would not support parking reduction.
- Vancouver/ Williams: There was no real agreement in the SAC. Lots of bickering. The stakeholders are saying there should be no change to any of the infrastructure.

This is a time we should take action. We need to get something going quickly on this. The concern is that these projects are ending because the conversations are ending – and people are literally leaving the table.

Comment: I wonder about if there were any rumblings about these issues earlier that we didn't hear about?

Q: What are the actual interests of the businesses?

A: They were not happy about how Couch and Burnside turned out. The only plan that they said they would support in the Lloyd district one that take bikes out completely, and puts them on the sidewalk.

Comment: I think the letter should be to compel the Mayor to stand his ground, and make the businesses participate in the process, and not circumvent that.

Comment: One thing the community might be able to offer, is to present these changes as a 'test'... It's just a test, with an offer to pull it up if it doesn't work.

Comment: These are three different projects, with three different sets of stakeholders. The CEIC in particular has a history with the city just rushing in and messing stuff up.

Enforcement Subcommittee

One of the conversation topics that frequently come up is that of bicyclist behavior. Roger, Rob and Mathew were having some conversations and what they'd like to do is get a small subcommittee together to discuss and look at safety and enforcement. They would work with PBOT, Mayors office, and the Police Bureau, to discuss what can be done.

Subcommittee: Mark G., Rob S., Suzanne V.C.

Adjourned at 8:15