

City of Portland
Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Tuesday, March 20, 2012
Meeting Notes

Committee Members:

David Aulwes
Roger Averbeck*
Don Baack*
Carolyn Briggs*
Betsy Clapp
Marianne Fitzgerald
Daniel Friedman
Rebecca Hamilton*
Erin Kelley*

Doug Klotz (vice chair)*
Rod Merrick*
Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara
Ellison Pearson
Marian Rhys*
David Sale
Rich Staley
Darla Sturdy

**Indicates a committee member in attendance*

Bureau of Transportation Staff

April Bertelsen, Pedestrian Coordinator; Chloe Ritter, Staff Assistant; Shoshana Oppenheim, PBOT

Guests:

Sue Stahl, WPC Board; Morgan Tracy, BPS; Crista Gardner, Metro; Milena Malone; Todd Borkowitz

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm

Introductions

Thanks to Rebecca for the Mayoral Forum.

Street By Street Initiative

Shoshonah Oppenheim (PBOT) introduced the "Street by Street Initiative" and asked for a PAC representative on the project's Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Through this project, PBOT is analyzing alternative street design opportunities to encourage development of unimproved streets and support mobility. The focus is to provide a range of development opportunities that support walking and biking trips on lower traffic streets while concentrating on connecting people with where they want to go.

Shoshonah said that some local / residential streets are not at city standards and asked how the City could address these low traffic streets. PBOT is creating a SAC with a broad range of interested citizens, including bike interests, the disability commission, neighborhoods, and others. Roger and Don on the PAC have volunteered representing neighborhoods, so Shoshonah would like someone to specifically represent the PAC.

- April said Rod and David might be interested, depending on who's available for meetings.
- Meetings are April 9, 1:30 at Belmont Library, **or** April 19th, 3:30, SE Uplift. Then there will be recurring meetings for the next four months, probably 1 ½ hours each time. At this point just that first meeting is scheduled; the next several meeting times will be decided by the group.

- Carolyn asked if the interests of blind or low-vision pedestrians will be included. Shoshonah replied that Nicolas Johnson, a Commissioner on the Commission on Disability will be included.
- Sue asked what the purpose of project is. Shoshonah replied that it is to provide a range of development options for local streets. Currently city streets have a pretty strict design for improving streets, but there may be a broader approach to take with the lowest volume streets. Sue lives in SW Portland on an unimproved road and said the major issue is drainage. Shoshonah said this will likely be an issue in some areas. In addition to the SAC, there is a Technical Committee to look at these kinds of issues.
- Roger asked who will maintain these streets once a developer builds it. Shoshonah replied that this will be an ongoing issue. Currently this program does not have funding with it.
- April said there are currently some criteria for determining how streets are treated. As ideas get narrowed down, there may be more or different criteria. Shoshonah added that criteria may vary “street by street” based on drainage or other issues.
- Don asked what the budget is for this project. Shoshonah said it’s currently just staff time, budgeted as a high-priority project for the mayor. It will likely be a 3-4 month process.
- Roger asked how this project worked with the neighborhood greenway program. Shoshonah replied that it incorporates aspects of the 2030 Bike Plan and other plans, such as pedestrian districts. These other plans are used as a screen for what streets might be appropriate for alternative designs. (For example, you may not want shared space in pedestrian districts).
- Doug asked if the project will listen to neighbors who want a “rustic” character on their street. Shoshonah said that the people who usually say this are referring to their own streets, so they’d definitely be listened to, but it will be one of several factors depending on each street’s circumstances.
- Rod asked if features proposed by this project will be incorporated into the Pedestrian Design Guide. April said it’s too early to decide that.
- This project’s main staff person is Christine Leon in Development Services. These ideas may be incorporated in standards or guidelines. Don wondered if this will be used to give developers options instead of waivers.

SW Barbur Concept Plan

Morgan Tracy (Bureau of Planning and Sustainability) provided an overview of the SW Barbur Concept Plan, including highlights of the needs, opportunities and constraints along SW Barbur and the process for developing land use alternatives. He explained what the Barbur Concept Plan is and how it fits in with the SW Corridor Plan. The Barbur Plan has three main focal points: a long-term vision, potential nodes or station areas, and alternative scenarios in response to Metro’s SW Corridor Plan and High Capacity Transit plans. This is part of several jurisdictional plans (Tigard, Tualatin, Sherwood, ODOT, TriMet, etc).

- Roger asked about the geographic extent of the Barbur Plan, which does not include downtown Portland, compared to the SW Corridor Plan, which does. Morgan explained the Barbur Concept Plan will focused on land use. Many other studies had already been done north of I-405; but the SW Corridor plan must consider the

transportation issues in the downtown area. The SW Corridor plan is much broader in both geography and scope (housing, transit, etc.).

- Morgan said the Barbur Plan was focused on “Leading with Land Use” to inform “Mobility Corridors” – that is, the land use and destinations inform transit connections.
- Sue commented that while the Barbur plan considered mode shares, the corridor does not have sufficient bike and pedestrian facilities, so there won’t be much walking or biking. Morgan agreed and said they’re trying to understand future demand.

Morgan reviewed the existing conditions study. Traffic volumes range from 15,000 – 40,000 cars per day, depending on where you are. (The heaviest traffic is near I-5 and Bridgeport Village.) For comparison, I-5 has 100,000 – 140,000 cars per day. There are high numbers of crashes at Terwilliger and at Capitol Hwy. Tree canopy is good within a ½ mile of Barbur’s centerline, though tree counts directly on the street are not as high.

- Don commented that he’d like to see tree canopy endangered by ivy in the area inventoried by the study and protected from the ivy.

Demographics (within ½ mile of the street) indicate that population growth is similar to the region and income is a little higher (though the ½ mile buffer picks up areas like OHSU and South Waterfront). The area is increasingly ethnically diverse. There are more jobs than people, but there are also higher retail and office vacancy rates than the city average. In general the corridor lacks sidewalks and signalized crossings are far apart.

In addition to a corridor wide study, the project has focus areas that provide place-making opportunities. These places tend to have a 15 min walk-shed with good connectivity, more activity and more traffic, along with other features. The focus areas are still to be vetted.

- Doug clarified that the plan is trying to make existing activity centers better but is not really trying to improve other areas. Morgan replied that from a market standpoint, it may be better to work on the focus areas, rather than distributing investments across the corridor.
- Rod asked whether the space between focus areas will be addressed. Morgan replied that they’ll discuss this in the open house. Some are interested in making Barbur a “main street” all the way down, and some focus groups have discussed “doing no harm” to other areas. But what will happen between focus areas is still unclear.

Several “Urban Design Prototypes” exist to develop Barbur as a Main Street.

- a. Barbur as the Main Street would require slower traffic.
 - b. A Main Street perpendicular to Barbur would maintain the travel purpose of Barbur and bring activity near the street.
 - c. A Main Street Parallel to Barbur would be one block off. It may not work as well – for example, in Tigard this kind of street is just bypassed.
 - d. A Main Street as a parallel slip lane (like a frontage road) would keep shopping and parking off of Barbur. Wilsonville has a similar example on Willamette Street.
- Rod noted that lots of areas in the Urban Design prototypes were shown as parking. Morgan responded that parking lots offer two potential benefits – first, they can be reused in the future, and second, there are a lot of concerns about spillover parking

from high-intensity uses. The presence of HCT, if it is built will likely impact this look.

- Rod commented that in addition to incorporating on-street parking, the City could consider parking garages or encourage high priced parking instead of free parking. Carolyn added that the burden could be shifted to the developer.
- Morgan said that zoning codes do not include parking requirement minimums. Fregonese and Associates (consultants on this project) have included parking as a variable in Return on investment (ROI) studies.
- Don said he thinks Rod is 20 years ahead of where we are now. In the near-term, the economic situation can't support structured parking or even multi-story structures.
- Morgan is happy to take these ideas as there is a need to throw even unpopular ideas up and look at them.
- April noted that sometimes phasing works (for example, the market only supports surface parking now, but in the future transit could support infill).

The next Community Working Group meeting is April 5, where they will continue to brainstorm. Then there is the first public open house on May 3. Go to the website to see more information (<http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=55574&>), and April can send out information as well.

Southwest Corridor Plan

Crista Gardner (Metro) provided a more in-depth overview of the Southwest Corridor Plan, including highlights of the existing conditions study and discussions of the process for developing a wide range of alternatives. This plan is a comprehensive planning effort to create livable and sustainable communities along the corridor between Portland, Tigard and Sherwood through integrated community investments in land use and transportation. The plan's website is: <http://www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id/35309>.

The Southwest Corridor study area encompasses 11% of the geographic region of Metro. This comes from two planning efforts – the High Capacity Transit plan and Mobility Corridors (both are in the RTP). As Morgan said, it's a collaborative effort between several jurisdictions' land use plans and Metro's transportation and transit plans.

- Crista clarified that the corridor will include some multi-modal discussions, but local plans will be able to look more closely at small movements, such as access to transit.

This is the very beginning of this plan's process. Metro is still formulating opportunities, goals, and objectives from the existing conditions. This is a long-range plan. Short phase steps, e.g. defining strategies, should be completed in 2013. The whole process will probably take 5 or more years.

- Roger asked how future public input will work after the current local land use efforts wrap up. Crista replied that so far Metro is coordinating with other local public events. In future, they'll continue to do public events like that.
- Roger asked if Crista saw a possibility for formal input. She said it is currently formal at the local jurisdiction level. Each jurisdiction has some form of a CWG or CAC for land use. Roger said that he didn't see those as lasting long haul. Morgan agreed but said that the project does not have a refined plan for future public outreach.

Morgan gave a broad overview of existing conditions and next steps. Don said he's impressed with the details looked at in this project.

This city started historically as a RR corridor. Barbur was built in 1930s, I-5 in 1960s. The population of the study area is about 200,000, and this area has a higher number of seniors. The ethnic and income diversity has increased more recently as these populations move to suburbs. Health issues are about normal for region: about ½ are obese and about 1/10 have asthma (more common in lower income areas).

- Rod commented that many of these statistics might be less relevant at such a large geographic area. He asked how these broad statistics fit into a corridor context instead of “zones”. Crista replied that this corridor was chosen for high potential ridership in HCT).
- Regarding the good jobs-housing ratio, Roger commented that it would be interesting to overlay a population density map with an employment density map to see where jobs and housing didn’t overlap.
- Roger asked how the boundaries of this corridor were chosen. Crista said they were defined either by TAZs or Census Blocs to facilitate data collection.

Amenities and schools in this corridor include PCC and PSU (Lewis & Clark College is just outside the study area). Hot spots for community amenities (e.g. cafes, grocery stores, etc) include Washington Square, King City, Sherwood’s downtown, and Bridgeport, among others.

- Rod and Doug said these hot spots are not that walkable. Crista said on the next pass they will probably get more at these clusters. Doug suggested using “walk-score”.
- Sue asked if there were farm areas in this area. Crista noted that the federally protected Tualatin Refuge is in the study area.

The existing conditions found that 45% of the population lives near parks – that is, a 10-minute walk “as the crow flies”.

- Carolyn would like them to look at actual walking network distance.

The report also included Housing + Transportation costs. Households are considered to have a high “cost burden” if they spend more than 50% on both of these combined.

- Carolyn noted that sometimes housing costs are kept low at a high transportation cost in travel time.

The report states that there are concentrations of subsidized housing in Tigard, Tualatin, and near Washington Square. There are also many sidewalk gaps. Areas built before the 1980s have fewer sidewalks.

- Don mentioned that the City of Portland allows waivers to allow developers to not build sidewalks, which also affects this (unlike other cities in the region).
- Doug noted that because the study area goes all the way to W Burnside, the numbers may be somewhat skewed. Morgan replied that the planners were aware of this.
- Roger expressed concern that this might skew priorities towards central city investments. Crista replied that they will be looking at 30 focus areas in more detail.

Crista showed results from a SW Corridor Opt In survey, with the caveat that the results from these surveys are not scientific.

- Roger asked about the paratransit map (the LIFT and bus ramp deployments). He confirmed that there was a big concentration at PCC , along 72nd, near several high schools and other colleges, and near Costco.

Crista said the next steps will be to use the existing conditions results to identify goals, criteria, a needs assessment, and to inform the public.

- Doug commented that State Policy requires a reduction of VMT.
- Rod commented on the boulevard concept shown in the Barbur presentation. He suggested the City should look for more US examples of “flanking streets” (e.g. in DC).

Review and Approval of February Meeting Notes – January and February notes will be sent out before the next meeting to be reviewed for the April meeting.

Hot Topics, Points of Interest, Successes – PAC member and PBOT staff announcements and reporting, including but not limited to:

- Follow-up on the Feb. 22 City Council Hearing on the proposed right-of-way vacation at SW 46th Ave and Florida for St Luke’s Church:
 - April and Don went to this hearing. April presented the PAC letter and Commissioner Fish asked April to talk on behalf of PAC. Don also appeared to represent the PAC. April explained the PAC’s general opposition to street vacations, but also expressed their support for the east-west connection. Commissioner Fritz introduced an amendment proposed by April and others to establish the east-west connection in the language as a condition.
 - Don says a problem with the system is that the PAC comes in at the end of these issues. He also wondered if the connection will really be made years down the line when people have forgotten about the conditions. In general, he thinks PAC should be at the front end of the process to be more effective. He also noted that PBOT staff said there were no objections, though there were.
 - April said she is starting conversations about the PAC being inserted in process more and earlier, for example getting them notices of street vacations on a regular basis. Rod added that this street vacation was seen a couple years ago, and the PAC commented on it then. He said the PAC weren’t brought in too late on this project (though they weren’t officially invited).
 - Carolyn commented on the new or different standards for developing dirt streets. She asked if the PAC was giving up the right to have a consistent pedestrian network. April replied that this is in response to people who don’t think “one size fits all” and who want other options. Doug says it’s partly a cost factor. Carolyn said she didn’t think the public space standards should be impacted by individual homeowners. Rod said the flexible street standards were a legitimate request, but he felt the City should try to avoid a precedent for substandard streets simply to placate “NIMBYs”.
 - Don said there are some people in SW Portland who are concerned that they pay proportionally more taxes than people in other parts in the city. This causes a lot of frustration, and lots of LIDs are dying as people are not willing to pay more.
 - Roger said he approaches this from a safety perspective. He feels everyone deserves a basic level of service for safety, regardless of where they choose to live. Local streets are not such a big deal; the major roads are the problem.

- PAC letter regarding the New Seasons plan on N Williams
 - Don moves to adopt the letter, Carolyn seconded. The vote was unanimous with a minor modification from Erin (she asked April to spell out “TPZ” as “Through Pedestrian Zone”)
- With so many absent, can the PAC consider new members? April said the PAC is currently overfilled, though some may be leaving.
- Rod said the N/NE quadrant should present to the PAC again. He asked if the options are being narrowed down. Rod had heard that they need more design input. April said Lloyd Lindley had been brought in, and they are continuing to look at details.

Proposed Future Agenda Items:

- NE Cully Neighborhood Plan and Alternative Street Design Concepts
- Alternative designs for pedestrian facilities
- More on Sidewalk Infill Projects: Locations, Design and Alternatives
- Asset Management and Maintenance for Pedestrian Facilities
- *N/NE Quadrant & I-5 Freeway Broadway/Weidler interchange concepts Update (Maybe)*
- Crash Data and Reporting with Greg Raisman, PBOT

Meeting Adjourned at 9:06 pm