

City of Portland  
**Pedestrian Advisory Committee**



**NOTES**

**Tuesday, March 15th, 2016**

**6:00 – 8:00 PM**

**Portland Building, 1120 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Hawthorne Room (8<sup>th</sup> Floor)**

<b>Committee Members:</b>	<b>Alternate Members:</b>
Roger Averbeck*	Brian Landoe*
Rebecca Hamilton*	Don Baack
Arlene Kimura	Gena Gastaldi*
Anthony Buczek	Jason McNeil
Chase Ballew*	Lise Marie Ferguson*
David Crout*	Mark Person
Eve Nilenders*	Nicole A. Grant
Doug Klotz*	
Scott Kocher*	
Rod Merrick	
Suzanne Stahl	
Brenda Martin*	
Mandia Gonzales*	
Elaine O'Keefe*	

*\* Indicates committee members in attendance*

*Staff Present: Alexis Gabriel, Kevin Donohue*

*Special Guests and Speakers: Wendy Cawley & Matt Ferris-Smith, PBOT*

## **Greetings & Introductions**

### **Vision Zero Update**

Roger: PAC has been participating with (starting last year) Vision Zero. Last meeting was 2/25 and the next meeting is 5/12. The meetings are well staffed and in April there will be a presentation by PBOT staff at the PAC. Mission statement says that, "Working together, we will take equitable and data-driven actions that will eliminate deaths and serious injuries for all who share Portland streets by 2025". The handout passed out discusses the equitable and data-driven approach that Vision Zero is taking. There is a general agreement amongst the group that there needs to be more discussion of walking in Vision Zero. Roger also explained high crash networks, and pedestrian high crash network diagrams.

### **Chain Email v. Google Docs**

Rebecca: How well do the long email chains work? Should we switch to Google Docs?

A lot of support for Google Docs, but there needs to be some educational materials and tutorials to get those not familiar with the website up to speed. With Google Docs there is potential to build a database where all the PAC files are stored. Google Docs will allow multiple people to edit the letters and eliminate the long email chains that can be overwhelming. Overall, most believe Google Docs will work if the transition is inclusionary.

### **Speaker Suggestions**

Trial period this month where people throw out a list of potential speakers, guests, projects, etc. The ultimate verdict was that PAC input heavily influences speaker choices.

### **Hot Topics**

Role of Alternates – There are almost no guidelines in the booklet. There was discussion about alternates being assigned by absent members to vote in their place. Additional concern was expressed about reaching a quorum when members are missing from the meeting.

### **Tree Code – Request for PAC Feedback (Alexis Gabriel, PBOT)**

Tree code is supposed to provide a cohesive policy for planting and removing trees. At the council meeting last Wednesday (3/9) someone proposed that all city bureaus would have to pay mitigation costs for removing big trees, but PBOT opposed when it's in the right-of-way. PBOT is a supporter of preserving and growing the city's canopy. PBOT adds around 200 trees to the

canopy annually and plants trees during frontage development. In Title 11 BDS stated that the public right-of-way is meant to allow citizens mobility, access, and safety. Previous mitigation required PBOT to plant 2" trees for removing a 36" tree and PBOT received credit for the tree without additional costs. With the new proposal, a 36" tree equals 36 2" trees or approximately \$10,800. This means PBOT will pay \$300 for every additional inch of a tree. With Vision Zero PBOT is trying to provide safe transportation facilities for the city's residents. Sidewalks are vital to Vision Zero and prevent the risk posed to pedestrians by vehicular traffic. The proposed mitigation would be very expensive for PBOT and cause further stress on an already limited budget. PBOT attempts to preserve trees whenever possible, but the linear nature of transportation projects makes avoiding tree or tree roots often difficult.

Q: Can we get around the inch for inch mitigation? A: Inch for inch is comparable to the price for designing a solution. Tree removal shouldn't be cheap and maintaining the price ensures that higher quality solutions result.

Q: How will this affect space geographically? Will this move money away from places without street trees to places with street trees and sidewalks? A: No, whether there are trees or not does not factor into PBOT's decision making.

Q: How does BDS plan to use this tree code money? A: The money goes to the Urban Forestry and Park Bureau. The money enters a general pot/ program for Urban Forestry.

Comments:

- It's important to think about community outreach and the importance of these trees to communities.
- I am opposed to PBOT's stance. Incorporate the trees into the design. Also, mitigation should be more than 2 trees – it should be planting 50 trees.
- "Maintenance or replacements of sidewalks or curbs, removal of tree litter, or other minor inconveniences do not constitute extraordinary circumstances" (Tree Code). I am offended by this sentence from the Tree Code. As a pedestrian, we need to keep our streets accessible. Most of the time it's because of street trees that the sidewalk is not accessible. It's a big issue for people with mobility issues, old and young. I believe the City should encourage property owners to maintain their sidewalks. The Tree code is working against pedestrians.
- I lived in SW where we have a lot of trees, collectors, and places without sidewalks. This will definitely come into play when sidewalks get built in SW, so this code needs to be more connected to project design and cost estimates. The value of trees in managing storm water is enormous. Before removing trees much further technical work is needed.

- Placing a flashing beacon would solve the problem involving the lack of visibility that lead to tree removal on NE MLK.
- In general, trees should not be removed and alternative solutions should be considered. Removing trees should reflect the social cost of trees.

## **Pedestrian Crossings (Wendy Cawley & Matt Ferris-Smith, PBOT)**

There were too many pedestrian crashes between 2005 and 2014. There were 90 pedestrian deaths, 42 related to alcohol, and 286 serious/ life threatening accidents. These can be contributed to driver and pedestrian errors. With a lot of feedback, PBOT has started looking at crosswalk placement in greater detail. Three reports used for this study include MUTCD, Zegeer (as traffic volumes increase so do crashes at marked crosswalks), and NCHRP Report 562. Design considerations take into consideration that some intersections are different than others.

Q: Do people trust crosswalks and do they provide a false sense of safety? A: A crosswalk on roads with higher speeds sees higher levels of accidents, so we can make the assumption that they do provide a false sense of security. Language from old website page that is not representative of how PBOT discusses crosswalks now.

Installation guidelines flow chart (Available soon on the PBOT website):

Q: How do we measure pedestrian traffic? A: Data collection folks survey areas of interest. Q2: What about midblock crossing?

Q: What triggers the beginning of the flow chart? A: Can come from all directions including resident reports or systemic improvements. Crash data can be used to determine higher priority intersections that might require a rapid flash beacon.

Q: What type of role are we seeing by private institutions in the investment with public institutions? A: Some developers are starting to contribute to investment and get designated crossings.

Q: What's the difference between distracted walking and a blind person crossing a street? In both situations the driver should be looking out for people crossing the intersection.

Q: Do the aforementioned studies for this presentation take into consideration safety or some quantifiable fiscal measure? A: The delay of pedestrian and cars is actually what is taken into account.

Comment: We need to think about speed and the level of enforcement at crosswalks.

Q: Where do you start? A: Use systemic corridor reviews to look at locations with high crashes.

Q: Is the city looking at the best places to put these crosswalks where they'll actually be used? A: The city used to be more reactive, but now it's more systemic when analyzing intersections.

Comments:

- Each year there are a number of requests that don't receive any attention.
- One committee member asked for speed reductions on three different occasions and they were granted all the changes after writing concerned letters. There needs to be a tutorial for neighborhoods involving how to get a crosswalk installed.
- Right now the language on the PBOT website talks about crosswalk security, but this goes against the study used in the presentation and methodology. There's a need to change the language on the website.
- Another problem involves closed crosswalks where there are double left turns and these are a remnant of a different time. Nowadays the city won't just mark a crosswalk without doing research.