

City of Portland  
**Pedestrian Advisory Committee**



**AGENDA**

**August 16, 2016**

**6:00 – 8:00 PM**

**Portland Building, Broadway Room (9<sup>th</sup> Floor)**

**6:00-6:15 Greetings & Introductions**

- Hot topics

Bureau Advisory Committee – Director Treat wants the PAC to send a member to this group. This committee will be more robust than the budget committee and hopes to bring some new faces in to mix. The goal of this committee is to have a group that is actively engaged in conversations the bureau is having and not handed materials at the door like other committees. Arlene Kimura applied, but she is likely representing East Portland neighborhoods. This will be a 2 to 3 hour commitment each month and meetings will be at the end of the day (approx. 4-6PM). Elaine is willing to take on this role if no one else wants to. Eve is also interested depending on when the meeting is. Rebecca will forward the email from Director Treat to the PAC.

Michelle – PBOT was notified on 8/15 by ODOT that the city received a TGM grant for the updated pedestrian master plan. Now PBOT will be thinking about what the product is for phase one and strategize how the committee will oversee the production of this document. The design portion will be an additional part that won't be included in this go-around. There hasn't been an update to the pedestrian master plan since 1998.

Roger – Some projects that weren't in contention for the RFF got funded by the gas tax. Capitol Highway now has funding and Steve Szigethy is the project manager. There was a field trip out there with about 3 dozen residents from SW Portland, along with a BES worker. People were supportive of a walkway on one side of the street, bike facilities on both sides, traffic calming, and intersection improvements. Roger would like to have Steve to one of the PAC meetings soon so that the PAC can weigh in on the design process.

**6:15-6:20 Public Comment**

- Scott King, City of Portland resident

Scott King – Retired Transportation Planner at the Port and Washington Co. (Metro before it was Metro) – Reason he is here is to recommend the pedestrian design guidelines to be updated regarding storm water managements swales. His son was walking at night and crashed into a bio-swale because he thought it was only a landscape feature (swale was in the furniture zone and difficult to discern at night). King's son broke his arm in 3 spots and now has a permanent physical disability. Some of these swales are not easy to see. Even the BES storm water manual recognizes that there are potential safety and liability issues.

Q: What do we do?

A: Talk to the commissioner and look at these swales from a safety point of view. From a policy perspective in transportation the city is silent and there has already been one serious injury. There is a tripping danger to pedestrians. Fences have been used in some parts of town and this might be one way to mitigate risk. Also, BES has not considered the safety issue from the street side.

Michelle: This is something that shouldn't wait until the update of the pedestrian master plan, since these designs are governed by the City's standard plans and specifications, and not by the Pedestrian Design Guide. Also, the update to the Pedestrian Design Guide will not be part of the Phase 1 update to the Ped Plan, and may be a few years down the road. Suggest we talk to Nicole Blanchard, the PBOT staff liaison to BES about this issue.

Roger: It's also important to note that multiuse paths means these storm water swales get mixed with designs for different modes and this needs to be considered during the design process.

#### **6:20-6:30 Regional Flex Funds Projects, PBOT staff (Shoshana Cohen or Mark Lear)**

Mark – PBOT has eliminated three of the projects and there are still seven being considered. The good news is that the three lowest projects are being taken off the list because it is still at 200%. PBOT is looking for a letter of support that they can present to council on 8/17 at 10:30AM. After Council the list of projects will go to Metro.

This letter won't happen by tomorrow morning, so the PAC will write an email to Council that recommends these projects for RFF funding. The BAC has already agreed to write a letter and the PAC voted to do the same for when this goes to Metro.

*PBOT staff will review the final list of projects we will be submitting to Metro at the end of August for Active Transportation grants. This list was developed with feedback from the PAC, as well as feedback from other stakeholders.*

#### **6:30-6:45 Safe Accommodations for Pedestrians and Bicyclists Around Work zones, Faith Winegarden, PBOT Temporary Street Use Permitting Manager**

Faith – Oregon walks, along with other groups, is was concerned about the safety of bikers and pedestrians going around construction sites, so these project was enacted. The new policy mandates that the closure of bike lanes or sidewalks are treated the same as a road closure for automobiles. The policy sets forth that sidewalk closures are a last resort. Council already adopted this resolution for the summer of 2016.

Faith - Problems: Closures leave people traveling in less than ideal conditions to navigate around/ through, and detours that involve crossing streets or going out of direction; sidewalk closures with detours that are inconvenient – people may choose a more dangerous route; disruptions to a bike lane that put people biking in a compromised position.

Faith - Solutions: Safe and convenient walking and bike routes next to jobsites – might use on-street auto parking and auto travel lanes; contractors are responding to the impact they have on people walking and biking by including required accommodation in their work plans; provide walkways adjacent to jobsites whenever practical; provide walkways with ramps for people with disabilities.

Faith – Document handed out showing what PBOT has put together regarding these types of situations.

Q: Does this apply to apartment buildings or residential development? Can you put something on the sidewalk or in the parking spaces? Debris get left on the street when construction is happening.

A: It really applies to any project that's being done.

Q: Compared to other cities, there isn't as much scaffolding. A lot of cases where the work vehicle might be parked in front of a site all day. Are things like scaffolding and covered walkways much more expensive? Moving into the street seems to be the regular these days. We've been building in Portland this way since we started encouraging developers. Can we actually get these types of treatments to happen?

A: On Broadway there is a container walkway that provides shelter for pedestrians. There are so many consideration and possibilities for helping bicyclists and pedestrians navigate around construction sites.

Q: Question about enforcement. In some of the lower volume streets advanced signage would make a world of difference. If they signed it at the intersection that would help. Large debris dumpsters are a problem. Who's going to enforce this and how?

A: If a permit has been granted, they'll have a traffic control plan that will be planned out. For enforcement, we have hired another inspector and we're working on a more streamlined work order to make sure that people are following their traffic control plan.

Q: Who do we call if there is a safety issue?

A: 503-823-SAFE, or email Faith Winegarden with pictures.

C: Sight distance is a problem when people are trying to cross. Construction zones can be visually distracting and people don't usually see traffic control signs. People ignore these signs and do all sorts of things, so there's a hope that the city does a good job providing adequate signage.

Faith – Three traffic engineers working on this just to review temporary traffic control.

C: One PAC member has noticed a world of difference since this was implemented.

C: With regular land use or construction going on, there has to be signs about erosion. Maybe there should be signs that PBOT can put up for people with concerns about traffic control.

R: There is going to be a Portland reporter connection to this project so that it's quick and easy for people to report a concern in a construction zone. Also, traffic engineers are working on providing safe and practical solutions for these situations.

*Recognizing Portland's current rapid growth and the temporary street use permitting required to accommodate that increased development, PBOT is taking a close look at the requirements for work zone accommodations around construction sites for pedestrians and cyclists. Active transportation road users have expressed concerns with the mobility and safety around construction sites. Pedestrians are often detoured across the street and bicyclists are often forced into the path of vehicles, or averted to streets that lack proper safety. Hearing the concerns and recognizing the challenges of navigating around work zones, PBOT has instituted a resolution brought forward to City Council regarding the policy on this issue. The policy supports and guides the use of the public right of way when performing private development and maintaining public infrastructure.*

*The policy states that the closure of a sidewalk or cycle lane shall be deemed the last resort in the absence of other practicable routing or accommodation options needed to assure pedestrian and cyclist safety.*

**6:45-7:10 – Pedestrian Advocacy and Construction Work Zones**, Noel Mickelberry, Oregon Walks

Noel – Recently gave a presentation at City Council. Lots of comments and concerns about this happening all the time. Oregon Walks has been working on this for a while because it puts safety first. It's hard to balance safety and traffic issues. Oregon Walks heard about this, but didn't have any data. This led to a social media, crowdsourcing campaign to hear about people's troubles in work zones. Vision Zero Work Zones maps became a place to host all this newly acquired data and 169 unique locations were identified. There were a lot of examples of people being forced to cross in the middle of intersections and Oregon Walks was especially interested as to how these forced crossings related to high crash corridors. As the city began developing this policy Oregon Walks started to see a lot of good examples of conditions improving. This had a lot to do with city staff talking about these issues and making it known that people were complaining about this. Oregon Walks incorporated this when they started working with ODOT and has been integrated on both the city and state level.

Noel - Areas that have been brought up include: Ensuring adequate funding for inspections. Making sure accessibility – lighting, ramps, signage – is held to the highest priority. Holding all city bureaus to the same standard. It's not really on PBOT to maintain checks and balances for everyone else.

Q: Any construction companies that were good partners?

A: There were a few companies that were tagged on Twitter and retweeted our tweets. These companies deserve to be recognized and it should be known that they are doing the right thing. Positive promotion can do wonders at getting the word out.

Q: Is there any additional fee for the temporary street use permit or temporary pedestrian path plan?

A: We're considering this. The cost is to them more expensive to put in a pedestrian walkway than changing how they approach their site.

Q: I would image that a big challenge is that they have to come to you for a permit and traffic management plan. This probably goes through BDS and that there is someone there deciding whether it warrants PBOT review. What's the threshold for criteria to have someone take a look at it? How much happening at the neighborhood street level? How can you make requests if it isn't sent to you?

A: We started at the pre-application meeting and said that people need to talk before they start building. No discussion about how the right-of-way will fit into the construction plan. Even at the pre-application meeting it's difficult because it's the developer and not the contractor. There are certain contractors that we've started working with and this will help streamline the process.

Noel – Events coming up include Oregon Walkways, Open Streets Summit, Cully Camina. There is a need for volunteers at the Cully event. Also, in October there will be an event called Walktober.

Q: In situations where they're not required to have bike or pedestrian access, are there certain elements in the toolkit to make this safer?

A: It depends on what the traffic engineer will allow. There are restrictions about where you can put those. There will need to be appropriate decision and forethought for where signage goes to let people know construction is happening and that their route will be affected.

Q: Would shorter closures be one way to incentivize this? The trades are unpredictable, but minimizing the duration of closure could make a huge difference.

A: Duration, length, and the time of day are some of the considerations taken into account. It costs money to reconfigure a fence or create barricades.

C: We got a grant to update the Ped Master Plan and hopefully this can make it onto the plans and projects list.

C: Longevity of the projects is another important component. Sidewalks are usually the first thing to close during construction and the last thing to reopen.

Q: What can we do to work together more? How do we make walking as marketable as biking?

Q: With WTF being a success are there other things on the advocacy agenda?

A: Oregon Walks has limited capacity, but we've been sitting on the city's Vision Zero plan and seeing its completion will be a big part of this effort.

C: The pedestrian system is not valued the same way as other modes. We're always focused on building new and don't fix the old. Pedestrian facilities are in horrible condition and are a problem for the less than 100% able-bodied. The PAC would like to see Portland do more about enforcement and creating awareness for property owners. Tree code and pedestrian planning often come into conflict with one another.

Michelle – In Portland, we're very lucky that there is very little hesitation to notify a property owner when we have a complaint about sidewalk maintenance and the city will pursue a lean. Portland will pursue a lean, unlike some cities, but it's still complaint-driven. Some neighborhoods may be disproportionately addressed (potential equity issues to consider).

Note: The policy states that the closure of a sidewalk or cycle lane shall be deemed the last resort in the absence of other practicable routing or accommodation options needed to assure pedestrian and cyclist safety.

*We'll discuss the recent crowdsourcing advocacy efforts Oregon Walks led in support of policy change around pedestrian and bike access in work zones. In addition, we will cover information on our general advocacy work and events coming up that PAC members might be interested in participating in.*

**7:10-7:45 – Q&A/Discussion with Presenters**