

City of Portland  
**Pedestrian Advisory Committee**



**NOTES**

**November 28, 2017**

**6:00 – 8:00 PM**

**Portland City Hall, Rose Room (3rd Floor)**

<b>Committee Members:</b>	<b>Alternate Members:</b>
Roger Averbeck* Rebecca Hamilton* Arlene Kimura+ Anthony Buczek Chase Ballew* David Crout* Eve Nilenders* Doug Klotz* Scott Kocher* Rod Merrick* Brian Landoe Brenda Martin* Elaine O'Keefe* Mark Person*	Don Baack Suzanne Stahl Gena Gastaldi

*\* Indicates committee members in attendance, + Indicates excused absence*

*PBOT Staff Present: Denver Igarta, Shoshana Cohen, Rich Newlands, Daniel Soebbing*



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## 6:03-6:15: Greetings, Introductions, and Hot Topics

- *Roger Averbek* opened the meeting.
- *Roger* thanked the guests that showed interest in joining the PAC.
- *Roger* marked the passing of Suzanne Stahl, a long time PAC member.
- *Denver Igarra* noted that she was a strong crusader for Portland Citizens with disabilities.
- *Denver* explained that Michelle Marx was ill, and was not able to make it to the PAC meeting.
- PAC recruitment is under way. Applications will be accepted through the end of the week.
- So far, over 100 applications have been received.
- *Roger* noted that the subcommittee that reviews the applications does not make appointments to the PAC. They only make recommendations to the director of PBOT, who makes the appointments.
- *Roger* raised the topic of the proposed change to the vacated block of Madison between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave that runs through the Portland Art Museum.
- The director of PAM sent a letter to the BAC and the PAC requesting support for the amended plan, which proposes to keep the pathway open for longer hours, but which would still include an enclosure around the path.
- *Roger* attended the most recent meeting of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, at which the director of PAM presented.
- *Roger* noted that no drawings or plans were presented at the BAC.
- *Doug Klotz* proposed that the committees just resend the letter that they sent in April in opposition to the plan. He did not feel that the changes to the proposal address the majority of the concerns of the respective committees.
- *Elaine O'Keefe*: I can see the points that were made by PAM. But we can't take a position on this because we have insufficient information.
- Is the pathway always open?
- *Roger*: There is no physical barrier that stops you from walking through. There is no door that is locked.
- *Roger*: We did not deliberate or reach consensus at the BAC meeting, but we did decide in conjunction with the BAC chairs to decide offline.
- *Elaine*: My opinion is that we shouldn't oppose the idea of any kind of design, but that we should encourage PAM to come back to us with a more complete plan.
- *Brenda Martin*: Why can't the City wait to vacate the street until we know more about what is being proposed there?
- *Elaine*: They probably don't want to spend a lot of money to do the design without any assurance that they can go forward.
- *Rebecca Hamilton*: We could suggest that a member of the BAC or PAC be put on the design committee so that we can have some say in how it is done. I think this can be done without closing off access.
- *Roger*: I got a letter from Arlene Kimura, PAC Member, who said that she was prepared to support the updated proposal from PAM.
- *Doug*: This will go before council on December 7<sup>th</sup>



- *Rod Merrick*: The criteria that we set out has been met. The access through the site that we requested has been agreed to. I think we can agree to the proposal that they have put forward without seeing the final design.
- *Doug*: It is too easy for the museum to close of access and change the agreement unilaterally if they are granted the right to build doors that close off the passage.
- *Roger*: We will take all of these points into consideration. I have heard both approval for the conditions that have been proposed, as well as opposition. I will work with the BAC chairs to draft another joint letter, which you will be given a chance to review.
- *Eve Nilenders*: I was contacted by a student in PSU's Transportation program. She is studying an intersection at Mill St. that is scheduled to undergo sewer work. The area lacks pedestrian facilities. It is a chance for us to weigh in as a committee in support of this project.
- I live 5 blocks from the area, so I will benefit from this project, though I would not be a part of the LID.
- *Denver*: I got an email from Andrew Aebi, who administrates LIDs for PBOT. He has looked at an unpaved section of the street, which could be a good candidate for paving and improvement.
- *Eve*: 80<sup>th</sup> has been slated to be a part of the 70s greenway. So, there would be significant public benefit.
- *Roger*: What is being proposed in the project?
- *Denver*: I don't have the entire plans for the project. There is an unpaved block, but I don't know which it is, off hand.
- *Eve*: I think there are 3 unpaved blocks. That is still a question for Andrew.
- *Rebecca*: I've been following this for a while, because it was one of my students that originally proposed this project. As it is, a lake forms in this area that is greater than the depth of a bicycle tire.
- This project would be similar to one that was done on 47<sup>th</sup> recently, which was also completed under the supervision of Andrew.
- I plan to testify in favor of this project as a "freewheeling citizen." I want to encourage PBOT to keep looking for these kinds of projects. The coordination of projects between bureaus is something that they should continue to pursue.
- *Elaine*: This sounds like a great project. I agree that the City should continue to do more inter-bureau projects. My only question is about funding. Is this near a safe route to school? Is it on a project list? Like Better Naito, I urge caution when elevating projects to the top of the list that haven't previously been vetted through a public process.
- *Eve*: I can say that there is a Jade and Montavilla connected centers. But this is not part of that project because it is not in a center, it is a connection between centers. The nearest signalized intersections are a thousand feet away.
- *Denver*: We are currently updating the Safe Routes to School network. The project is going to happen at BES. What currently happens is often BES will leave streets slightly torn up after completing projects. These are good opportunities to coordinate our efforts between bureaus.
- *Eve and Rebecca agreed to draft a letter supporting the 80<sup>th</sup> and Mill project.*
- *Guest*: We had a community meeting in St Johns to talk about a crossing over Columbia to a school.



- *Guest:* I remember the Goat Blocks. We requested that a pedestrian pathway be included, but it was never built. There is an entrance to a parking garage that would preclude a crossing there. We should keep this in mind when considering the PAM proposal.

**6:40-7:18: PBOT Strategic Investment Strategy (Shoshana Cohen, Mark Lear, PBOT)**

- *Shoshana Cohen:* PBOT is getting new funding through the 2017 transportation bill. We are trying to prioritize projects and programs so that we can allocate those funds as efficiently as possible.
- *Rod Merrick:* What kind of an increase in budget over last year are we talking about?
- *Shoshana:* About \$15 million per year in discretionary funding.
- We have many planning documents within the bureau that prioritize different types of projects. But within those plans we are trying to emphasize 3 specific things: Managing our assets, planning for growth, and safety.
- *Rod:* What are community needs?
- *Shoshana:* There are things like street sweeping and general maintenance that don't show up in the TSP, but are things that we as a bureau feel that we should focus some of our efforts on.
- *Eve:* Why was Halsey selected as a prioritized project? It seems to be an outlier in terms of equity.
- *Shoshana:* I believe that Halsey is identified as a Vision Zero project, it is a borderline equity area, and it is near a MAX station.
- *Doug:* When Vision Zero was passed, the goal was to eliminate traffic deaths in 7 years. I'm disappointed to see that it is being balanced with many different goals. If the City is truly focused on eliminating all traffic deaths, then it can be the only priority.
- *Shoshana:* We can't realistically stop paving streets completely and just focus on Vision Zero safety projects. If we tried to do that, we might run afoul of the State Legislature.
- We have been driving to push the safety to the fore of conversations about priorities at the State level, and we could use your help to advance that conversation.
- *Roger:* I think you need to adjust the formula that is only allocating \$3 Million to a basket of projects.
- *Shoshana:* We welcome your feedback on our prioritization process.

**7:15-7:50: St Johns Truck Strategy and Barbur Demonstration Project (Rich Newlands, PBOT Project Manager)**

- *Rich Newlands:* I have been here previously to talk about the St. Johns truck strategy. It was controversial then. It continues to be controversial.
- The strategy is to get trucks to go around the neighborhood, on a long, circuitous route, rather than straight through the neighborhood.
- There is a combination of carrot and stick approaches to achieve this goal.
- During the public involvement process, there was a dispute between the committee and the results of the engineering studies. Ultimately, the Commissioner decided to recommend more intense traffic calming treatments than were deemed necessary by the engineering report.
- *Roger:* In 2012, the PAC did a field trip to St. Johns to learn about the project.



- In 2013, the PAC wrote a letter of support for this project, SWIM, the Barbur demo project, and Powell Rd. safety project. It is not always the case that projects for which we advocate result in projects on the ground.
- *Guest:* There isn't enough money allocated to put in a proposed HAWK signal, which may or may not be necessary. To build the HAWK, money will have to be taken from other projects.
- *Roger:* What is the cost for the 2 rapid flash beacons and the HAWK?
- *Rich:* Rapid flash beacons run around \$60,000 and HAWKs are around \$120,000, and additional money has to be allocated to build curb bulb outs.
- *Rod:* Why was the HAWK so contentious? What was it supposed to deliver and not deliver?
- *Rich:* The HAWK was seen by some committee members as being important because the intersection presented some unique circumstances. The City Engineer determined that the corner did not meet the definition of a blind corner. One member did not accept the recommendation of the City Engineer, and provided her own definitions of engineering rules which were in conflict with PBOT's understanding.
- The HAWK is a superior device to median refuge islands, but if we always build the best possible solution, we wouldn't be able to build much. We are frequently over building or under building.
- A group of people in the committee were of the opinion that St. Johns does not receive the level of funding that it deserves. This investment in a HAWK was viewed as helping to redress this historical situation.
- *Guest:* Vehicles travel at around 40 mph, and traffic volumes are high. But very few semi-trucks are driving through there. So just putting up signs that say, "no trucks" has solved the freight issue. But there still is the problem of high speed cars.
- *Rich:* The medians address safety. whether or not pedestrians area using a crossing. The HAWKs do nothing to calm traffic in the absence of pedestrians.
- *Chase Ballew:* What about the pavement condition? Are we going to have to go back a rip out these improvements in the future to repave?
- *Rich:* The pavement wasn't bad enough to warrant a paving project.
- *Chase:* Were you taking drainage into consideration, so that bikes aren't being forced to go through puddles.
- *Rich:* Yes, we are taking that into concern.
- *Guest:* I live in St. Johns, and previously I would not have walked at night in this area.
- *Scott Kocher:* Is there any reason that we shouldn't do these types of calming projects in all safety corridors?
- *Rich:* No. We just need the money. We often are presented with opportunities to just address one element on a corridor, such as bicycle facilities. In this case, we had access to federal funds that allowed us to do traffic calming on a scale that we haven't done in years.
- *Scott:* If it is a collector, rather than an arterial, would it qualify for 20 mph speeds?
- *Rich:* No, that's only available on local streets.
- *Denver:* That only applies to residential streets and neighborhood greenways.
- *Rich:* We can also do that on commercial corridors, but the street would have to have greater than 50% businesses lining the street for that to happen.
- *Scott:* I think the law applies to everything below an arterial level.
- *Doug:* The state views collector streets as arterials.



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- *Rebecca:* Is there anyone at PBOT that has talked about building a freight bridge to supplement the St. Johns bridge?
- *Rich:* At the time that this project was proposed, modeling didn't show that a new freight bridge would attract much freight traffic.
- *Rebecca:* When was that study done?
- *Rich:* About 2001.
- *Rod:* There is an unused rail tunnel through the west hills that could be repurposed to move freight trucks, keeping these vehicles off 26.
- *Rich:* We received a \$2 million federal grant to do bike lanes and crossings on SW Barbur. It didn't seem like a good idea to spend the money there because the SW Light Rail project will go through that area in the not too distant future.
- It was hoped that the SWIM project would have already produced a project list that could be used to prioritize projects that could replace this project. Metro has been pressuring us to finalize the list.
- *Roger:* It appears that 4 of the projects that were identified would come in under the \$2 million budget.
- This committee supported the Barbur demo project at the same time that the St. Johns project was supported. The St. Johns project got built, but nothing has been done in the SW, yet.
- There is still some uncertainty in the alignment of the SW Corridor project. If the alignment ends up on Barbur then it is true, the Barbur project would need to be ripped out. But if the rail line goes along I5, nothing will ever get built on Barbur, which is a state facility that has no bike or pedestrian facilities.
- *Rod:* Can you give us an update on the timing of the alignment decision?
- *Roger:* The alignment decision will be made in spring of 2018, prior to a public comment period. The final decision won't be made until the end of 2018.
- The decision on these projects will need to be made before the SW Corridor alignment is finally decided. This just shows that even if money is allocated for a project, you still need to keep advocating for it.

**Adjourn 8:01**



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