

Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting
City Hall, Lovejoy Room
6:00-8:00 PM | December 11, 2018

BAC Members Present: Rithy Khut, Elliot Akwai-Scott, Clint Culpepper, Catherine Gould, Iain MacKenzie, David Stein

BAC Members Absent: Christopher Achterman, Maria Erb, Reza Farhoodi, Sarah Iannarone, Alexa Jakusovszky, Phil Richman, Alexandra Zimmerman

PBOT Staff Present: Roger Geller, Corrine Montana

Guests: Luke Norman, Rina Jimmerson, Marvin C. Rambo, Emily Guise, Matt Ferris-Smith, Jonathan Maus

Presenters: Aaron Brown and Chris Smith, No More Freeway Expansions

I. Introductions/Announcements

- Chris Smith: The Bicycle Parking Code will be coming to the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission in late January 2019 (tentative schedule of a briefing on 1/8, a hearing on 1/22 and a work session on 2/12).
- David Stein: The Southwest in Motion (SWIM) [online open house](#) is currently live.

II. No More Freeway Expansions discusses I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project
Presentation by Aaron Brown and Chris Smith

Aaron, former Board President of Oregon Walks, begins by stating he will be making three asks of this committee. Also states that BAC purview includes more than just consideration of bicycle facilities associated with this project because of the opportunity cost this project presents.

Chris then provided background:

In 2010 there was a debate/political battle over the Columbia River Crossing (CRC). Following the defeat of that project the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) began working with Portland on a coordinated land use-transportation plan that resulted in the Inner North/Northeast Quadrant Plan. That plan was formally adopted into the City's Comprehensive Plan several months ago.

The project lay dormant until the passage by the Oregon Legislature of House Bill 2017 (HB 2017), which provided funding for the I-5/Rose Quarter.

Chris noted that the project was sold to downstate Republicans in the Oregon Legislature as a congestion relief project, claiming that it would fix the bottlenecks downstate producers experience when getting their goods to the Port of Portland. However, in this region ODOT does not promote the project as “congestion relief” but instead as a “safety project.”

In support of that narrative ODOT testified at City Council about two deaths on this section of freeway. They neglected to mention that the two deaths were people walking across the freeway—something that would not be addressed (and cannot be addressed) by the widening.

ODOT has also been promoting the surface improvements as a selling point to the city.

The project comes with a big opportunity cost. Chris argued that the funding could instead improve the condition of ODOT’s 82nd Avenue, where people are being regularly injured and killed, and is in support of a jurisdictional transfer; could fund most of the bikeways identified in the Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030, and could construct several times over all the regional Safe Routes To School projects. He stated that this is a “stupid thing to spend \$500 million on given all the other needs.”

He also stated that this is not the only “stupid project” in the region, citing the project to add lanes to I-205, to widen OR-217 and the re-emergence of the CRC. He believes that the project has a “weak selling proposition” especially in the face of the UN’s climate report indicating that the world has 12 years to stave off a 1.5 degree Celsius rise in temperature.

Aaron talked about the “freeway industrial complex”, describing it as “well-heeled private entities” that have convinced the state legislature to fund these huge projects. He also noted that bicycle-pedestrian projects employ more people per dollar spent than the large freeway projects.

He noted that stopping freeway expansions across the region could lead to a political change and result in how we think about transportation investments.

Aaron then discussed how ODOT’s own consultants have reported that congestion will not change with the widening. He also noted that ODOT says we should not be talking about widening and decongestion charges at the same time. There are also numerous scholarly and popular articles discussing induced demand, supporting the idea that you cannot build your way out of congestion.

He showed a video detailing the increased toxic air loading at the Harriet Tubman School as the freeway will be pushed closer to the school and will carry more traffic. He contended that because of induced demand the additional traffic will be as congested as traffic is today and that will create additional toxic loading at the school.

He presented three asks to the committee:

1. Ask the project to extend the public comment period to 90 days
2. Take a formal vote opposing the project and communicate that to all relevant agencies and groups
3. Formally oppose the project as part of the Environmental Assessment public comment once the comment period opens

Aaron also expressed concern about the re-designed freeway on-ramps and their generous turn radii. He thought this "suburbanizing" street design would result in faster moving automobiles in the area.

Questions and comments:

Question (Iain): Asked about the size of the retaining wall, its proximity to Tubman school and the need for tiebacks to hold it in place and wondered if the school district would provide access under its property for those tiebacks. Has PPS agreed to proposed changes? Can the school be forced to comply?

Response: The school is unenthusiastic. The issue raised is also complicated by the presence of tie downs used by the school to secure their building to their property. Not sure how that will resolve. A detailed plan is not in place yet.

Question (Rithy): In terms of letter to extend comment period, which legislators are on board?

Response: Two school board members oppose the expansion. City Councilors have expressed support for extending the comment period. Jo Ann Hardesty has publicly opposed the project. BAC can critique surface improvements as that is one of the bases upon which Mayor Wheeler supports the project.

Question (David): Prior to comment period, how much would it benefit us to write a letter to City Council?

Response: Comment period will start around January and if BAC wants to write a letter to express concerns, No More Freeway Expansions would be willing to support with the short timeframe. It is helpful to get attention from elected officials ahead of the comment period and even more crucial during the comment period.

Question (Elliot): What design issues are apparent with the project as it is proposed?

Response: With the shift to two-way Williams facility and new ramp, will it feel like a comfortable bicycle facility? Flint Ave Bridge is going away. PBOT bike count shows a substantial number of cyclists going south and over the current bridge. Top five to ten morning commute facilities.

Question: Has the construction phase been planned or discussed?

Response: No details have been released. There will be impacts on local traffic for all modes.

Question: With Metro 2020 bond measure, if this is tied in, would we lose out on other benefits we want?

Response: For this project, we have not seen a finance plan. Los Angeles County passed Measure M in 2016. 71% of people countywide voted for a plan with 85% of funds going to transit. We need groups to step forward to oppose the freeway expansion project and focus funds on active transportation. We need to bring together groups who would be impacted by the project and are passionate about a variety of related issues.

Question (Rithy): Have you reached out to Senator Frederick and Representative Sanchez?

We have and we will continue. People are coming on board and we need to spread the message that no city has solved congestion by expanding freeways. In 2020, there will be opportunities to ask deeper questions about this project but the comment period is our immediate opportunity to raise concerns.

Question to BAC (Rithy): Letters to Senator Frederick, Representative Sanchez and Commissioner Eudaly and include ODOT Region 1 and Governor's Office. What does the committee think? OTC or Governor have the authority to change comment period timeline.

Letter needs to be done before the holidays. Catie can draft letter and send this weekend.

Question for Roger (Rithy): Has the BAC historically taken actions to oppose projects like this one?

Response: Roger will go back and take a look at what's been done.

Catie: Wants to present directly to City Council. Should the BAC schedule a time with Commissioner Eudaly's and Mayor Wheeler's offices?

Response: Public comment period extension is where we need to focus. Chris and Aaron offer support.

BAC formed a sub-committee to draft a response to the project and address No More Freeway Expansions asks. Those who will serve on the sub-committee are: Elliot Akwai-Scott, Catie Gould, David Stein, Iain MacKenzie and Clint Culpepper.

III. Transportation System Plan Programs

Presentation by Roger Geller

Roger presented a list of submitted projects to the committee for their evaluation. Below is the result of that evaluation. All responses divided into four tiers for those projects of a dollar amount that could be supported by the TSP program and into three tiers for those projects with too big of a price tag for the TSP program.

Green = Tier 1
Yellow = Tier 2
Orange = Tier 3
Red = Tier 4

IV. Committee Business

Rithy presented a question and suggestion regarding BAC conduct and professionalism. He expressed appreciation for the dialogue and engagement from members but also acknowledged the need to be professional and welcoming, particularly with guests who may not be familiar with the BAC's culture.

Roger announced that the Office of Community & Civic

Project	BAC Member Ranking					
	Clint	Iain	Catie	David	Elliot	Rithy
Protected intersections at freeway on-ramps and other heavy right turns	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Extend SE Morrison Bikeway	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green
Hawthorne Bridge bicycle lane connections in SW Portland	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
92nd Avenue bicycle lanes	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Yellow	Red
N Interstate Avenue improvements	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Yellow
Protected bicycle lanes on NE Glisan Street; 22nd - 32nd	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange	Green
Increase density of shared lane markings on neighborhood greenways	Green	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Red
SE 45th / Springwater Connection to 20s bikeway	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
SE 45th repaving	Yellow	Orange	Green	Yellow	Red	Red
N Columbia: Burgard to Lombard pathway connection	Red	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
Buffered / Protected lanes on NE Glisan (32nd to 47th)	Orange	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Orange	Red
Broadway-Hoyt	Red	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green
Advisory Bicycle Lanes SE 2nd/3rd	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Yellow
SW Primrose Connection	Red	Red	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Red
Extension of 2nd Avenue protected bicycle lane	Orange	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red
Buffered / Protected lanes on E Burnside (71st - 90th)	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Halsey Street Overcrossing	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange
SW Terwilliger Improvements	Green	Orange	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
12 Intersections	Orange	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
Signalized crossing of SE Water at Caruthers	Green	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Extension of 3rd Avenue buffered lane and conversion to protected lane	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange

Life is updating requirements for City committees. There are about 100 committees and roughly 1,000 volunteers serving as members. Some new requirements will include Conflict of Interest disclosure and equity training. In addition, quorum will be required for decision making and committees will no longer have alternates but instead all will be full members.