

City of Portland
Pedestrian Advisory Committee



February 19, 2019
6:00 – 7:40 PM
City Hall, Pettygrove Room

Committee Members:	Alternate Members:
Brenda Martin* Elaine O'Keefe* Brian Landoe Mark Person + Patricia Jewett * Evelyn Ferreira * Matthew Hall + Kenzie Woods * Josh Channell * Tiel Jackson * Josh Roll * Ashley Schofield * Elka Grisham * Zoe Klingmann * Marcella Crowson *	Don Baack Kelly Reid * James (Jim) Fairchild * Kevin Glenn*

** Indicates committee members in attendance // + Indicates committee member excused*

Staff Present: Michelle Marx, Kerry Aszklar

Special Guests and Speakers: Megan Channell (ODOT); Caitlin Reff (PBOT); Katie Mangle (Alta Planning + Design)

Community members: Doug Klotz, Michael Espinoza, Clint Culpepper, Robin Denbury, Josh Linden, Alexandra Zimmermann, Aaron Brown, Marian Rhys, Jonathan Maus

6:00-7:00: I-5 Rose Quarter Environmental Analysis (60 min)

Megan Channell (ODOT); Caitlin Reff (PBOT); Katie Mangle (Alta Planning + Design)

Project staff will brief the PAC on the content of the Environmental Analysis released in February for public comment. Project staff will walk the PAC through the pedestrian-specific elements proposed by the project and analyzed and reported on in the Environmental Analysis, as well as the impacts and mitigations identified in the report.

Key questions/issues for the PAC:

The PAC is invited to provide official comment during the 45-day public review period.

Caitlin Reff (PBOT) noted that Commissioner Eudaly made a recent blog post about the project and encouraged folks to take a look.

Megan Channell (ODOT) begins presentation.

Timeline for comment period: 45 days, open until April 1st. Comments will go to [Federal Highway Administration](#) (FHWA) and then move forward to [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA) design decision. Construction to begin in 2023.

Presentation went over a brief history of the project:

- Proposal in 1980's was to make more lanes and ramps, but that wasn't feasible
- More than 70 options have been evaluated

Presentation covered a brief history of the area:

- In the 1950's, before Interstate 5 was built, Albina was vibrant community
- When I-5 was built, highway disconnected the community

Currently:

- Vancouver and Williams one of busiest bikeways in city, and the project managers are looking to leverage this project to help all that activity
- As project carries forward, project managers are making sure all elements are included. As a result, there are two new proposed crossings in the project:
 - o The Hancock-Dixon crossing
 - o The NE Clackamas connection (only for pedestrians and bicycles)

Environmental assessment phase

- Over 50 public events from mid-2017.
- Environmental assessment (EA) is out for public comment now. This phase is required if a project involves federal money or a federal highway. The purpose of the EA is to evaluate positive or negative impacts. The EA evaluates two alternatives: a "no-build" and "build" alternatives; both alternatives look at impacts out to the year 2045.
- Right now, the EA looks at the project footprint, not any detailed design elements.
- A variety of environmental study topics – today's presentation focuses on pedestrian impacts from the project.
 - o From cars: Reduce congestion and crashes
 - o From transit:
 - MAX not impacted
 - Slight bus delay from signals created
 - Streetcar travel times would decrease
 - o On air quality:
 - Expected to be slightly better as result of increased fuel efficiency and electric vehicles as well as less idling
 - o On noise:
 - Noise levels exceed national standards and are expected to worsen with and without the projects
 - There is expected to be a slight increase of noise with the project; as a result, two sound walls are proposed: Harriet Tubman Middle and residential areas near I-5

Presentation transitions to Katie Mangle, Alta Planning + Design

- Coming from NE Portland onto N. Vancouver Ave. (going south) – to Broadway bridge: there will be a new connection at N. Hancock St. and N. Dixon St., and other option is Vancouver to Williams connection
- Crossing standards: project will help meet city standards for spaced crossings
- Katie pointed out that area is a pedestrian district

Also looked at LTS – Level of Traffic Stress for pedestrians

- A lot of factors were examined, including volume and speed of traffic, road classification, signalizations, number of lanes, amongst other factors – many of these factors are not changing
- Many LTS measurements will stay the same; however, two location changes of LTS – ramps – make things worse
 - o Note: Level of Traffic Stress is measured on a scale from 1-4; 1 is the best, 4 the worst.

Staging of construction

- Will result in more separation of people from vehicles
- There will be mitigation measures during construction

Design intersections for pedestrian safety:

- Will follow City of Portland best practices
- The moving of ramp terminals will be good for pedestrians
- Removing N. Flint Ave. will remove connections, but additional connection will be created at N. Hancock St. and N. Dixon St., and at the proposed N. Clackamas Bridge

Presentation transitions back to Megan Channell (ODOT)

Next steps of the project include creating committees, such as a community advisory committee, an urban design committee, a DBE and workforce opportunity committee, and hosting urban design charrettes.

PAC Comments and Questions

Josh R: asked about the overall budget and potential cost for bike/ped elements. Channell: the project is between \$450-500M, and the majority of funding is through House Bill 2017 through a bonding effort. \$420M is from HB2017. A cost breakdown will be preparing breakdown in 2020 to legislature of each project elements; there is no ball park figure yet. Distribution between highway and local street projects is 50/50.

Kevin Glenn expressed concern about the intersection on Williams. It is the same level of stress but will affect more people. Channell responded, saying the decision to move that I-5 on-ramp was because it helps with merging and weaving on the highway. Coupled with a multiuse path, there is more space for pedestrians to wait. Will have designated pedestrian phase knowing that it will be a stressful intersection. Caitlin Reff of PBOT added that it could be mitigated through signal timing and phasing.

Tiel expressed concern about Hancock Dixon grade – 9-10% grade is not usable. The project is also losing Flint St. That grade is difficult to walk up and down, and hard for a person with mobility device. What alternatives are there? Reff replied that ways to reduce and minimize that grade have been examined. Studies have been done and there are more opportunities to look at the design. Also, there are alternative routes. She added that the bridge is 200 feet long – not super long, but still significant. Tiel followed up, asked why is it proposed if we don't think it will be used? Reff: we wanted a restored connection.

Kenzie asked who will be keeping track of the construction mitigation process for pedestrians? Channell replied, the design team and others will have environmental compliance measures in the NEPA process. There will be a dedicated process and team to make sure that it will be moved forward, and there will be temporary traffic plan for walking and biking. There is more work to be done for work packages. Katie Mangle of Alta Planning + Design added that the NEPA process is challenging, but it goes with teeth and enforcement. This isn't fully developed, but it will be. Channell added that the community advisory group will be a part of this.

Josh R. brought up how the environmental assessment has safety as a prominent theme. However, fatal crashes have dropped. Channell added that there are not many fatal crashes, but more crashes and swipes. She added that Broadway/Weidler are part of high crash corridor network in Portland.

Josh R. brought up the role of value pricing in the project. Channell replied, value pricing is one tool of many to manage system. There's lots of work to be done to examine it. There was an initial feasibility study done, and a section was identified to move forward with study. The exact termini and value still are yet to be determined; it's too speculative right now. And also, it is separate from this project. She said there are several different ways to manage system. This project addresses merging and weaving. Congestion pricing addresses larger issues.

Elaine expressed curiosity about how much of the catalyst of project is tied up to more efficient movement of freight. Channell replied, yes, freight is important. This portion of I-5 carries the most freight through the city to our region. Also this section of I-5 is in the top 50 freight bottlenecks in US. Yes, the plan is intended to help freight move through and to help commuters. We're trying to improve it for everyone. Elaine added, I just encourage you to talk about it more forthrightly. Freight is important to consider as a piece of transportation system.

Tiel asked if improving the Russell Street underpass was looked at. Channell said no, it is out of the scope of the project. Tiel suggested that it may be better than the Hancock Dixon bridge.

Evelyn asked what would have to happen to make the project not more forward. Channell gave encouragement for folks to make comments and participate in the engagement.

Elaine commented that the environmental assessment document is difficult for civilians to read and suggested that appendices are labeled.

Marcella commented that the plan seems to put drivers and freight at the top of a modal hierarchy, and the project is trying to dress up project for bikes and peds. She asked if this was accurate to say. Channell replied, yes, if you look at years of planning. She also said that the City of Portland has walking at the top of its modal hierarchy, and that the project is unusual in that it uses federal dollars to leverage improvements for pedestrians and bikes. Marcella brought up the 9-10% grade of the proposed bridge, and a past response that if it's too steep, users can find an alternative route. She commented, that piece makes it hard to credibly accept that that was a top priority.

Evelyn brought up her question again, asking what specifically it would take to stop or for reconsideration of the project to happen. Channell replied that NEPA and the feds review the record of public comment; there is no threshold of number of comments – it depends on type and scope of

projects. She said that comments will be responded to, and that an updated final environmental assessment is coming late spring time.

Josh R. asked where the funding for this project came from. Channell replied that most is from gas tax and bonding on gas tax, and federal dollars. Josh asked if interest on the bond was considered. Channell said she did not know.

Kenzie commented that the PAC needs to more fully understand process, such as what NEPA is, an EA vs. and EIS, and what ability the public has to influence this project. She asked what happens to our comments when we contribute? Not meant to reflect the presenters or the presentation.

Brenda asked about the process of creating the committees. Channell replied that they're in the infancy phase, and working with the city. There will be an application process. Michelle mentioned that the committees will be subject to Oregon Public Meeting Law.

7:00-7:20: Public Comment (20 min)

Doug Klotz commented that the designs of the project so far, such as the sidewalks and turning radii, do not create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Clint Culpepper said this project does not correct any errs in the past regarding the Albina community, and the project further cements that it will never be a neighborhood again. He said the talk about equity in this presentation ignores what was there before.

Jonathan Maus asked, will this project be back at city council? Reff replied, it is not currently planned to.

Aaron Brown commented that he is looking forward to presenting at the next March meeting on behalf of the No More Freeways PDX organization. He said the organization is going through the statistics and commented that what is promised goes against decades of studies.

Robin Denbury requested the PAC to put on future agenda issue of A-frame signage enforcement

PAC member agreement about the need to address impediments in the sidewalk (not just A-frame signs but also broken sidewalks, tree limbs, etc).

End of Public Comment period.

7:20-7:40: Hot Topics/Project Status and Updates/Announcements/Committee Business (20 min)

- Status of City changes to Boards and Committees – Michelle continues to try to find answers and is talking with the city attorney regarding the change of status of the PAC.
 - Josh expressed concern about the logistics of the PAC drafting a letter of support for the NE 122nd Ave project, and that the PAC needs clarity on how to operate via city rules.
- Upcoming PAC agendas – Michelle outlined agendas through May, and is trying to reschedule the Commissioner for the May meeting.
- PedPDX Update: Public review draft to be released March 4! PAC briefing scheduled for April.

Tiel asked if the PAC will have input to decisions regarding the second e-scooter pilot. Michelle did not know, and will keep everyone posted.

Pat shared that the work on Fessenden in North Portland is beginning after a long process.

After Hot Topics, the Committee continued the discussion on the I-5 Rose Quarter project. Elaine commented that this project is still vague. Kenzie asked what the PAC should focus on when evaluating the project. Michelle pointed to the active transportation section and safety section for the PAC to read and comment on. Zoe said it's important to put our concern on record. We're advising PBOT, not ODOT. Marcella expressed concern about when it goes over budget and the pedestrian projects go on the chopping block. Pat asked if there was interest in doing walk-abouts. Tiel expressed skepticism about other expressed concerns and the highway covers. Evelyn said this project feels like gaslighting, and suggested that the PAC start collecting their thoughts to prepare for a written letter.