

Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting
City Hall, Lovejoy Room
6-8:00pm | June 11th, 2019

BAC Members Present: Rithy Khut, Elliot Akwai-Scott, David Stein, Clint Culpepper, Phil Richman, Catherine Gould, Reza Farhoodi, Iain MacKenzie, Alexandra Zimmerman, Christopher Achterman

BAC Members Absent: Sarah Iannarone, Alexa Jakusovsky

PBOT Staff Present: Roger Geller, Owen Slyman, Zef Wagner, Nick Falbo, Peter Hurley, Kristin Hull

Other Attendees: Eric Wilhelm, Luke Norman, Keith Liden, Marshall Runkel.

Guest Presenters: Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, Zef Wagner (PBOT), Nick Falbo (PBOT)

I. A Conversation with Commissioner Eudaly

Commissioner Eudaly visited the Bicycle Advisory Committee to field questions and engage in conversation. A member asked if the Commissioner was familiar with the role bicycle transportation has in minimizing car use in Portland. Commissioner Eudaly responded by saying she has had a long history of being a bicyclist and a bike advocate and strongly supports seeing car use minimized while acknowledging that not everyone can ride a bike. Commissioner Eudaly mentioned she does not have a strong background in traffic or transportation and is excited to work with Chris Warner, the new PBOT director, to help answer these larger questions of traffic and transportation to advance innovative bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit plans.

A member asked the Commissioner whether there were any updates to the I-5 Rose Quarter project. Commissioner Eudaly responded that it is a challenging situation and conversation, but she is somewhat pleased with the concessions made by ODOT, including a community meeting, an extension on the comment period, an executive advisory committee, and a community advisory committee. The Commissioner stated she is not opposed to re-engineering the I-5 exchange, but it is not a priority for the City; it is one set by the rest of the state for Portland, as many use I-5 to commute to and through the city.

Commissioner Eudaly said she was in favor of calling for an EIS, but it does not look like that is happening. She noted that the current biggest question is Harriet Tubman school, and how the project's pollution and noise would impact it. Finally, the Commissioner stated that without a highway project, money for the surface improvements would go away.

A member then asked the Commissioner about potentially reforming the Parking Services Group to be more receptive toward repurposing parking spaces to things like bike lanes, curb extensions, and bus stop ADA access. Commissioner Eudaly responded that she is for all those things. The committee discussed the upcoming vision clearance guidelines for intersections, as Portland's guidelines are more lenient than those of the state. The Commissioner noted her top priorities are safety, equity, and climate, and making intersections safer is part of that.

A member asked the Commissioner where she ranks climate change as a priority. Commissioner Eudaly responded that it is an extremely high priority, and that we have to get people out of their cars while making non-single-occupancy vehicle systems safe, accessible, and attractive. She added that climate change will not be solved only by the City, and so she is working with regional partners to push a climate change agenda. However, Portland has to lead the way.

A BAC member asked about the recently-released Fixing Our Streets audit, which found 2/3 of projects to be behind schedule. The member was interested in learning how the Bicycle Advisory Committee can we help PBOT accelerate project delivery. Commissioner Eudaly responded that this question would be better asked to Chris Warner, but that she is helping to give green lights to projects that are languishing. She noted her history as a helpful factor in giving projects a push, as happened with the Central City in Motion project. The Commissioner said the biggest thing she could ask for right now is strong vocal support for projects. Another BAC member suggested improvements to PBOT staffing, as they believed it needs to be bolstered. Commissioner Eudaly noted that the Willamette Week would be publishing an article on Wednesday, June 12th about the "red bus lane" transit priority project for further reading.

A member asked if it was possible to find a way to get things on the ground faster. Commissioner Eudaly stated that PBOT is making progress by coordinating with other bureaus such as the Bureau of Environmental Services. Another member asked about the possibility of upgrading blocks as part of private development projects. The Commissioner

noted this suggestion and added that improving things in a piece-by-piece fashion will be faster than a larger-scale project.

A BAC member brought up the concern that Fixing Our Streets funding is tied directly to the consumption of gasoline, and that when we do hit a recession, projects may disappear as tax revenues drop. The member would rather see projects tied to a more stable funding source. Commissioner Eudaly said that the City is still looking to renew Fixing Our Streets while recognizing that it will have diminishing returns. She is looking to other revenue sources, but she is not ready to discuss that yet. Another BAC member felt that PBOT pushes back too strongly against removing parking, as it generates revenue. The Commissioner noted that she is currently working on a project that may come to fruition that would take away parking and add food courts along a major corridor.

The committee asked about city regulations for Transportation Network Companies (TNCs). A member noted that regulations on Uber were implemented quickly, leading to rideshare drivers picking up and dropping off riders in bike lanes and actively encouraging more miles driven. The committee asked Commissioner Eudaly for her thoughts on reviewing rules and regulations, to which she responded that she is not much of a fan of the sharing economy and is finishing an op-ed that will soon run in the Oregonian. Commissioner Eudaly is focused on killing the bill in Salem that would preempt Portland's regulatory controls. She does not like that we cannot tell the public how many TNCs are on the road. A BAC member asked if the Commissioner would support a higher surcharge on rideshare trips comparable to Chicago and New York. The Commissioner said she would not commit to a specific number, but she has no problem with increasing the surcharge. She noted that right now, the surcharge is 50 cents, and it funds a variety of things including PDX WAV, which provides equitable access for people with disabilities. The Commissioner indicated her strong support for PDX WAV and warned against limiting the surcharge to 10 cents, which the bill in Salem would do.

II. Northwest in Motion (Presenter: Zef Wagner, PBOT)

Zef Wagner from PBOT presented on the Northwest in Motion project, which incorporates larger-scale improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit in Northwest Portland. One of the top priorities is to upgrade greenways and allowing the greenways to work well together. As an example, NW Johnson is a greenway with high motor vehicle volumes. Northwest in Motion seeks to augment Johnson with enhanced crossings and diverters concentrated near the freeway and in the Pearl District. Currently, PBOT is thinking of this as a five-year program, part of which involves looking at two-year traffic

patterns and coming back with a Northwest in Motion update later. The project is currently putting together a 5-year package of funding.

A BAC member was glad to hear about the potential for reserve funding but noted that the experience of riding on a greenway is not reflected in the data, asking how the experiential factors of greenway bicycling would be considered. Wagner responded that the public outreach behind the project helps provide this qualitative information.

Wagner noted that NW Marshall is similar to NW Johnson, and that the rails have been removed where Marshall meets 15th Avenue. Northwest in Motion proposes to remove the rails where all greenways cross NW 15th Ave.

The Pettygrove greenway plan proposes to shift most of the greenway from Overton to Pettygrove, as Overton is a major emergency response route as well as a major route to Naito for cars. This would include some diversion around the freeway to address traffic issues there as well as removing some on-street parking. A BAC member asked how it would be possible to get Legacy Hospital to incentivize employees to take alternative transit. Wagner responded that on the margins, this greenway will discourage some from driving as it will be more difficult to get to the freeway, but he agreed that we need other incentives, too. Another BAC member inquired about crossing improvements where Pettygrove is missing crossing icons, which, Wagner then explained, would be included in the crossing enhancements. The member also asked about Fire Bureau approval, which Wagner said has not been explicitly given, but the Fire Bureau has indicated willingness.

As NW Raleigh has become a natural main street with more traffic, Northwest in Motion includes a greenway along NW Savier, maintaining 3-block bikeway spacing and providing access to Thurman. This connection is already used by some commuters.

Wagner also talked about the 24th Ave. neighborhood greenway, which currently has high PM traffic volumes and requires some diversion. Many commuters already use the route to go north and south. Northwest in Motion also includes transit islands separating movements along NW 18th & 19th.

As for the Glisan/Everett couplet, the project proposes no significant bike improvements. Wagner explained that some people are opposed to keeping the existing bike lane on NW Everett. PBOT is interested in creating an evaluation system by which PBOT could revisit the provision of bike lanes on NW Everett once the Flanders greenway is

open to see how it affects use of Everett. He expects to set a high bar, but a bar nonetheless, at which the bicycle lane on Everett could be removed and repurposed to another use.

A BAC member noted that crossing 21st and 23rd is difficult and asked about improvements where greenways cross these streets. Wagner described curb extensions and marked crosswalks, among other facilities, that would improve visibility and crossing distance.

Another BAC member asked about the implementation of policies like No Turn on Red, which Wagner responded were included in the recommendations section, and that PBOT would be open to trying pilot projects in a pedestrian-heavy area.

The committee asked about the timeline on a letter or feedback. Wagner said the most helpful thing right now would be individual feedback through the online open house.

The committee brought up their issues with cyclist harassment and safety issues, wishing to bring that discussion to the table. Members suggested the implementation of real guidance and enforcement to address this, as well as a better use of PDXreporter in cases where cyclists may not feel comfortable calling 911 but still want action to be taken.

III. Southwest in Motion (Presenter: Nick Falbo, PBOT)

Nick Falbo from PBOT presented on the Southwest in Motion project, a planning and prioritization project focused on larger-scale improvements for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit access in Southwest Portland. Falbo noted the project was closer to East Portland in Motion in terms of the scale and diversity of projects, and that SW Portland is a unique, challenging area with poor geography and existing streets. Southwest in Motion involves short-term refinement, prioritization and implementation strategies, incorporating a long list of short-term walking/biking projects. Falbo noted the target for non-single occupancy mode share is 70%. Current mode splits in Southwest Portland indicate that the area is halfway to that target.

Falbo noted that many projects invest in light rail access, which is very important to the future of a growing area. The existing walking and biking networks are poor, and most streets are 2-lane roads without sidewalk infrastructure. Falbo told the committee that Southwest has reached “peak car,” with the number of people driving having not budged for several years. However, the shares of other modes have increased.

A major goal of Southwest in Motion involves connecting town centers and neighborhoods with walking/biking routes, incorporating standard facility types like greenways, bike lanes, and sidewalk infill as well as innovative facility types like shared streets and advisory shoulders.

Falbo described a number of featured bikeway projects. The Capitol Highway Circulation project, for example, involves multiple bikeways intersecting and using bike signals to make better connections with other bike lanes on different streets. A BAC member asked if this would involve improving sightlines; Falbo responded that the project would incorporate making the bike signals visible.

Falbo also talked about the road enhancement opportunities included in Southwest in Motion. The project is looking to incorporate safer shoulders in collaboration with BES, collector traffic calming with the support of Portland Fire and Rescue and advisory shoulders, an experimental facility type. Falbo also talked about partnerships with SWTrails and Portland Pathways. Falbo noted that the draft incorporates policy recommendations and is publicly available for review.

A BAC member asked if any projects were connected to the Southwest Corridor Shared Investment Strategy. Falbo said that they were. Another member asked what the BAC can do, to which Falbo responded the members can support the project, especially supporting finding reliable funding.

Another member asked if there was any Safe Routes to School funding available at 35th; Falbo said that PBOT is currently looking to fast-track the crosswalk there. The committee stated a desire for more specificity in implementation and is planning on drafting a letter and reviewing it during the July meeting. A member asked what percentage of funding for Southwest in Motion is missing; Falbo noted that there are sources dedicated to Southwest, but it is difficult to put a number to it. Funding can be fickle.

Meeting adjourned.