

City of Portland  
**Pedestrian Advisory Committee**



**September 17, 2019**

**6:00 – 8:30 PM**

**City Hall, Pettygrove Room**

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

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

*Staff Present: Michael Serritella, Owen Slyman*

*Special Guests and Speakers: Kim Ellis (Metro), Mike Pullen (Multnomah County), Jeff Heilman (Parametrix)*

**6:00-6:10: Public Comment (10 min)**

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) received a letter from a citizen discussing the speed and noise of skateboards riding on sidewalks. Members agreed that the letter shows need for public education regarding sidewalk riding for all modes of transportation and added that skateboarders generally choose other facilities when possible. The committee voted unanimously in favor of sending a response letter.

**6:10-6:30: Hot Topics/Project Status and Updates/Announcements/Committee Business (20 min)**

The PAC received a letter through Oregon Walks, addressing Mayor Wheeler & Commissioner Eudaly regarding overgrown plants on sidewalks. The PAC concurred that overgrown foliage is often an obstacle for pedestrians and people who use wheelchairs in navigating Portland streets and added that they would like to see greater education and enforcement on this issue.

A PAC member mentioned that Oregon Walks, a local pedestrian advocacy nonprofit, has an open call to serve on one of their committees.

The PAC briefly discussed current PBOT efforts to look at retroactive parking setbacks and to generally improve visibility at intersections for pedestrians and drivers.

Another PAC member shared a letter that had been circulating around their neighborhood, bringing up a traffic study showing frequent speeding along NE Prescott and high traffic volumes and petitioning Commissioner Eudaly to implement traffic calming measures on Prescott. Another member noted that Commissioner Eudaly's office is aware and there may be some future action on the issue.

A PAC member who attended the Railvolution conference in Vancouver, B.C. noted a lot of advocacy against displacement caused by expensive, mass transit-triggered development as well as discussion of strategies for mitigation and prevention. They shared another takeaway, too: Portland needs to think of the Willamette as an asset and means of transportation rather than a barrier. Finally, the member noted the growing popularity of reflective gear in Portland as it was far less common where the conference took place.

The PAC reviewed a few key upcoming dates from PBOT staff. Southwest in Motion, a plan for active transportation investments in Southwest Portland, is going before City Council on Wednesday, September 25 at 2 pm; this will be streamed online as well, for those who wish to watch it. The next day,

9/26, is an opportunity to provide in-person comment on the projects submitted to Metro to compete for Regional Flexible Funding. Comments can also be submitted online until October 7<sup>th</sup> through an [online survey](#).

A draft plan for the Northwest in Motion plan will be ready for public review in mid-October. If interested, members of the public can sign up for the mailing list on the [project website](#).

Finally, the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) recently received a state TGM Planning Grant to perform a study with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) focused on land use and transportation investments in Brentwood-Darlington and the surrounding neighborhoods.

A PAC member shared that Friday, 9/20, is the date of the Global Climate Strike, beginning 10 am at City Hall.

Another member mentioned that [PedPDX](#), PBOT's citywide plan for pedestrian investment, recently won two [IAP2](#) awards, including Project of the Year, and that Portland also received a Platinum designation from walk-friendly cities. A member noted that this makes Portland the first "double-platinum" city, for receiving platinum designations in both bicycling and walking.

#### **6:30-7:35: Metro/ODOT Mobility Policy Update (65 min)**

*Kim Ellis, Metro*

Kim Ellis, transportation planner at Metro, presented on the updates to Metro and ODOT's Regional Mobility Policy. Currently, Metro and ODOT are developing work and engagement plans, which includes mapping out the relevant issues and objectives and updating how the region defines mobility and measures success. The project recommends amendments to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Oregon Highway Plan Policy 1F for the Portland area.

Ellis explained that the current mobility policy focuses on the volume-to-capacity ratio, also known as Level of Service. This metric has existed since the 1950s, when it was used to set up the interstate system; it is currently used at the system plan level (for example, Metro's Regional Transportation Plan and PBOT's Transportation System Plan) to identify different options. Another part of the mobility policy update involves regulating plan amendments: using transportation thresholds defined in the Oregon Highway Plan for state-owned roads and local codes for city- and county-owned roads.

A PAC member noted that volume-to-capacity ratio accounts for number of vehicles rather than number of users, which can limit density and can constrain what can be done with the right-of-way. Ellis expressed that Metro is pursuing a more multi-modal policy.

Ellis noted that many cities and counties cannot afford the mobility policy standards standards in place, especially on throughways and arterials. Metro is shifting focus away from vehicles. On the 2-

year timeline, the process is currently in the scoping, policy analysis, and best practices research stage. Metro and ODOT will then develop and test policy approaches with case studies in 2020, after which the Metro council will act on recommendations. This encompasses the first step: updating the regional mobility policy; then comes incorporating the policy through an Oregon Highway Plan amendment or update; then those policies are incorporated through Regional Transportation Plan and Functional Plan updates. Finally, those policies will be implemented through Transportation System Plans and other local ordinances, and state and local standards will be updated as well.

Ellis explained that Metro and ODOT have been engaging in scoping engagement activities to gather different perspectives and have found broad support for the proposed approach and objectives, including climate goals, housing affordability, equity, and public health. She added that this work should strive for the simplicity of data for needs and availability that the Level of Service policy achieves. Sample measures of success Metro and ODOT are considering including Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), mode share, throughput of people and goods, trip length, safety, duration of congestion, access to jobs/destinations/options, travel time/reliability, vehicle hours traveled, and system completeness, among others. For evaluation, the agencies are conducting background and best practices research to better understand the lay of the land, which will feed into the development of criteria.

In 2021, Ellis noted that the focus will be on learning from that background research and developing recommendations for the Regional Transportation Plan and the Oregon highway plan and creating an action plan for implementation. Currently, the agencies are relying on existing committees for feedback as well as hosting technical expert panels and a community leaders forum. Ellis added that the ultimate decision-makers will be the Metro Council and Metro's Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation.

Ellis asked the PAC if they thought anything was missed in the policy objectives and which performance measures are the most important to consider. One PAC member commented that they felt the project objectives to be very performance-oriented and wondered whether there was any scope for a needs assessment; for example, whether a low usage of bicycles on a given route was due to poor infrastructure instead of measuring bicycle ridership as a static number. The member added that they would also like to see more explicit equity goals in the objectives as well as a measure that evaluates the fit of a given policy or project to the need of the community it affects. Ellis responded that a needs assessment is part of the RTP update and cited transit reliability as an example.

A PAC member emphasized the need to incorporate safety measures into mobility, given that there could be a highly-mobile corridor that is not safe for pedestrians, and added that transit accessibility should be evaluated as well. Another member noted that they would like to see the connectivity of the networks highlighted.

Another member asked about the possibility to include state-wide performance measures; Ellis noted that these measures will be regional, not state-wide. A member commented that they would want to be sure the updated safety goals prioritize vulnerable users.

A PAC member asked whether the update sets an emissions reduction target, and if any measures would address emissions as a metric. Ellis responded that there is no specific number tied to emissions reduction, but that Metro and ODOT are considering using proxies for emissions reduction, such as VMT reduction. A member commented that it may be important to measure VMT and emissions reductions separately as the popularity of electric vehicles grows. A member added that Metro and ODOT should also remember the source of energy for Oregon's electric vehicle charging, as it sometimes comes from California and Utah, and they should consider whether these sources are linked to other statewide energy goals.

Another member noted that they'd like to see the plan address the relationship between regional plans and city plans, for example, a bike lane crossing Rosa Parks that narrows when crossing a highway due to different jurisdictional standards.

A PAC member asked at what level of detail the updates apply. Ellis answered that the region has made recommendations, but there have not been changes to the highway design manual, which is a document approved by the state engineer. Part of the RMP update is increasing transparency.

A member asked how active and involved Tri-Met and other transit agencies are in the policy updates. Ellis responded that Tri-Net and SMART are both very engaged in the RMP update, with members serving on technical committees and taking part in stakeholder interviews.

#### **7:35-8:20: Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge (45 min)**

*Mike Pullen, Multnomah County; Jeff Heilman, Parametrix; Patrick Sweeney, PBOT*

Mike Pullen from Multnomah County, Jeff Heilman from Parametrix, and Patrick Sweeney from PBOT presented on the current status of the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge project, a project owned by Multnomah County and led by PBOT. Currently, the project is in the community outreach phase. Pullen explained that the region is highly susceptible to seismic activity in the Cascadia Subduction Zone, and that the last major earthquake occurred 317 years ago, exceeding 75% of intervals between major quakes to strike Oregon over the last 10,000 years. The project involves either retrofitting or replacing the Burnside Bridge to remain fully operational and accessible post-earthquake, as Burnside is a regionally-recognized lifeline route.

Pullen shared that the project has narrowed down to 4 final alternatives, but that particular decision will not be made this year. Multnomah County wants the Burnside Bridge to be usable the day of an earthquake, as the Tillikum Crossing would need its approaches rebuilt before it would be usable. A stable bridge would strongly support the region's ability to recover post-quake, but Multnomah County and PBOT are seeking to make the bridge safer for bicyclists and pedestrians regardless of seismic activity.

Pullen noted that a feasibility study was completed last year, screening every possible option. Next comes the environmental review phase, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA),

after which a preferred alternative will be selected, designed, and constructed. Multnomah County estimates construction would be finished in 10 years.

Potential funding sources for the bridge include an increased county vehicle registration fee to help fund the planning, design, and construction phases, the regional Metro T2020 transportation bond measure to help fund the construction phase, and state and federal funding for construction phase. Pullen explained that the Multnomah County Vehicle Registration Fee is currently the lowest of the 3 metro counties at \$19 per vehicle per year; a proposed raise to \$56 per vehicle per year will be voted on by the County board on 11/7/19 and would become effective on 1/1/2021, with funding dedicated to bridges that cross the Willamette river.

As decisions approach, Multnomah County is reaching out for community input; involved groups include a community task force, which develops recommendations that are rolled up to decisionmakers, and well as around 10 working groups, which consist of agency-involved individuals, that send technical and policy advice to the community task force.

Jeff Heilman of Parametrix discussed the 4 alternatives currently on the table for the Burnside Bridge. Alternative 1 is an enhanced seismic retrofit of the existing structure, which would also include replacing the foundation over I-5 and the railroad line on the east side. Alternative 2 is a complete replacement of the existing structure with a raised fixed bridge, which Heilman noted would likely not be moving forward due to the required height and concerns with entry and exit alignment. Alternative 3 is also a complete replacement, but with a movable structure similar to the current configuration. This alternative would also create a 2-foot buffer between the bridge and the buildings that currently butt up against it to ensure greater seismic safety. Alternative 4 is similar to Alternative 3, but it would create a second bridge entrance where the current Couch couplet is.

Heilman discussed the second decision to be made: whether to erect a temporary bridge adjacent to the existing structure for use during construction. A temporary bridge would add about \$100M to the project cost and about 1 year to the timeline.

Mike Pullen told the PAC that an online open house and survey are running from September 3<sup>rd</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup>. Other community engagement has included briefings, tabling, multilingual outreach, a social media campaign, and news releases. Pullen shared a few key milestones for public input: during Fall 2019, the County will seek community input on refined alternatives and draft evaluation criteria; in Summer 2020, the County will solicit input on the Preferred Alternative; finally, in Winter 2021, the County will solicit input on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

A PAC member asked whether the County has looked at data from previous closures for construction, as well as the earthquake-readiness of the adjoining buildings. Pullen answered that the County has looked at other bridges' data and will continue to during the environmental impact assessment; it is estimated that no other bridge has been closed as long as the Burnside Bridge will likely be closed. Pullen added that while the County cannot compel building owners to improve their

properties' seismic readiness, the planned 2-foot gap between the bridge and its adjoining buildings should prevent those buildings from shaking the bridge with them. The member also questioned how crime reduction plays into the project, as it was presented as an evaluation criterion. Pullen responded that the west side of the Burnside Bridge has a history of crime, and a number of community task force stakeholders work there. Improved lighting, among other things, contributes to a feeling of personal safety.

Another PAC member asked how confident project staff are that the three non-fixed alternatives will be usable the day after an earthquake. Heilman answered that engineers are confident that all alternatives will be usable, but they will be expensive. There are some cost differences between the movable bridge structures as well; the bascule design will be just as secure but more expensive than the lift design.

A member asked why the fixed bridge was required to be 147' tall. Heilman noted that the height requirements were due to past cruise ship visits and existing marine law. Another member asked where the risk of liquefaction was the greatest; Heilman identified the greatest threat on the east side between the riverbank and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, adding that while the properties may liquefy, the bridge will not. Patrick Sweeney added that the bridge is being designed with both the Cascadia and Portland Hills faults in mind.

A PAC member asked about the impact of the 5-year construction plan with no temporary bridge on the fire station and social service agencies that regularly use the bridge, as well as Saturday Market. Pullen answered that the County will talk with Portland Fire and Rescue about temporary bridge vs no-bridge scenarios. He added that the executive director of Saturday Market sits on the community task force, and that the Saturday Market will have to move. Pullen also noted that the area social services agencies are the one group consistently advocating for a detour bridge, as the Burnside Bridge is currently a key route for people crossing the river to access social services. The County is considering the possibilities of either creating a shuttle service or finding another location for social services.

A member commented that access to the Burnside Bridge on the east side can be very awkward. Another member asked whether the project has a budget for community education or outreach regarding using the improved Burnside Bridge in case of emergency. Pullen answered that the County has done some work with Portland State University students to brainstorm potential identification ideas such as beacons or special paint.

A member asked whether there is a significant difference between the costs of a retrofit and replacement. Heilman answered that a retrofit used to be 20-30% cheaper, but that cost difference is getting smaller as a retrofit would also need new parts just to support heavy trucks, meaning an actual cost difference of around 5-10%. However, a retrofit would also be about a year faster to construct.

Another PAC member commented that this may be a good opportunity to pilot a ferry system or alternative method of crossing the river as well as an opportunity to better integrate the bridges with Waterfront Park.

The PAC unanimously voted to support dropping the high fixed bridge alternative as a potential option.

Pullen asked PAC members for their thoughts on access to Waterfront Park. Portland Parks and Recreation have presented mixed thoughts on potential options: they support more direct access but do not want to take up more park space with stairs and elevators, etc. Members noted that the lower deck of the Steel Bridge is a good model for integration, with seamless thoroughfare for bikes and pedestrians.

Pullen mentioned that project staff can come back next summer when more findings are available and solicit the PAC's input on the Preferred Alternative.

**8:20-8:30: Public Comment (10 min)**

No public comment.

***Meeting adjourned.***

*To help ensure equal access to City programs, services and activities, the City of Portland will provide translation, reasonably modify policies/procedures, and provide auxiliary aids/services/alternative formats to persons with disabilities. For accommodations, translations, complaints, and additional information, contact the Civil Rights Title VI & ADA Title II Program by email at [title6complaints@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:title6complaints@portlandoregon.gov), by telephone (503) 823-2559, by City TTY 503-823-6868, or use Oregon Relay Service: 711.*