

City of Portland
Pedestrian Advisory Committee



December 17, 2019
6:00 – 8:30 PM
City Hall, Pettygrove Room

Committee Members:	Alternate Members:
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 Mark Person

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

Staff Present: Gena Gastaldi, Owen Slyman, Shreya Jain, David Backes

Special Guests and Speakers: Jen Bachman (ODOT), Mark Lear (PBOT)

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

No public comment.

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

Four PAC members are retiring from the committee. Recruitment to fill five committee seats is now open. The application can be accessed at www.PortlandOregon.gov/Civic/Apply and is due January 20th.

A PAC member submitted a proposal for a sidewalk maintenance strategy, including a public information campaign, an equitable enforcement program, and assistance for low-income or physically challenged property owners.

Another member proposed starting PAC meetings by reading the names of people who have died on roads in the prior month. The PAC voted to approve this. Another PAC member proposed writing a quarterly letter recognizing people who have died on city streets. The PAC voted in favor of putting this on next month's agenda.

The PAC discussed feedback from the Rose Lane pilot projects, identifying a good amount of public support with ongoing questions about bicycles and bike lanes.

Members desired a push to be aggressive but recognized that the City must follow the existing lane reduction policies. A member mentioned a possible push to ask City Council for exceptions in lane reduction policy in the case of Rose Lanes. Gena Gastaldi mentioned that the Rose Lane survey garnered approximately 2200 responses, 66 percent of which supported or strongly supported Rose Lanes. A PAC member asked whether the survey was available in languages other than English. Gastaldi answered that the survey was available in several languages and that translation services were available at open houses.

6:30-7:25: N Lombard (55 min)

Jen Bachman, ODOT; Shelli Romero, ODOT

Jen Bachman, ODOT project manager, and Shelli Romero, ODOT area manager, presented to the PAC on the ongoing N Lombard project, a 1.4-mile-long safety project stretching from N Fiske to N Boston. Bachman met with the PAC last March; the project is now in the advanced design stage. Addressing comments from PAC incl. comments from PAC's letter.

Bachman mentioned the existing road conditions include four 10.5' lanes and sidewalks/curb ramps in varying condition. Bachman noted that left turns along Lombard create conflict and crashes, with a crash occurring about every 9 days. About half of these crashes are injurious. Bachman added that the main project focus is reconfiguring the roadway by adding a center turn lane, resulting in one travel lane in each direction and a buffered bike lane on each side. This reconfiguration would also eliminate on-street parking. Bachman noted that this does not result in a 50% traffic flow reduction; ODOT expects capacity will be reduced, but not nearly 50%.

In addition, Bachman described the project's inclusion of new paving, upgraded traffic signals and signs, upgraded ADA ramps, rapid flashing beacons with pedestrian islands, a mountable traffic barrier, and further coordination with TriMet.

Bachman added that the stretch of Lombard between Peninsular and Greeley is the bottleneck in the area. ODOT found that queuing would get much worse if they open internal crosswalks, as the PAC had suggested, and so the project currently does not plan to include these crosswalks.

A PAC member asked whether ODOT's modeling included the City's 2040 mode shift goals, adding they found it important to use the 2040 model for how Lombard should work and look. Bachman answered that ODOT traffic analysis used the Metro model that accounts for land use and development changes, adding that a reduction to 3 lanes alone makes Lombard a much more crossable street. Bachman is considering performing before-and-after pedestrian crossing studies to see how pedestrian volumes respond to the proposed changes.

Another PAC member commented that the walk between marked crossings is exceedingly long, wondering if a pedestrian scramble could be a potential option for ODOT to explore. Bachman answered that there would not be a pedestrian scramble as the plan currently holds, and that the pedestrian phase would align with East-West traffic, but that she would check with ODOT's traffic group to look into the possibility of a scrambled crossing.

A member mentioned that the models being used are antiquated and put cars first, emphasizing the need for models that better reflect pedestrian needs and experience. The member noted that current models will never reach mode split, safety, or environmental goals. They added that they support a before-and-after evaluation and want to ensure there is funding for ODOT to follow up on the results of that evaluation.

Another member mentioned that a couplet may be a worthwhile reconfiguration, similar to the Couch couplet, adding that the crossing still feels unsafe even with the proposed 3-lane configuration. A second member added that they would love for the PAC to meet with traffic analysts to understand how the modeling works and accounts for city goals.

Mark Lear from PBOT noted that Metro is currently evaluating urban design standards and will be presenting them to JPAC.

A PAC member asked whether air quality factored into plans for Lombard. Bachman answered that it was not part of project development.

Another member emphasized that this area is a business district and mentioned they look forward to hearing back on the possibility of a scrambled crossing as it might be a good pilot project.

Bachman noted the PAC's previous proposal for 10' lane widths, mentioning that this width would be outside the bounds of what ODOT is willing to go down to. The project cannot use travel lanes less than 12', given the freight presence along Lombard.

Bachman added that planned bike lane buffers were increased to 2', in response to the PAC's desire for wider bike lanes. The PAC had also expressed interest in increased separation between vehicles and pedestrians on the sidewalk, which Bachman mentioned is not a clear change ODOT can make.

Bachman mentioned that ODOT is adding median islands with RRFBs at two locations along the corridor. She added that ODOT needs the Mobility Advisory Committee to sign off on the project, and pushing for median islands may prevent the project entirely.

A PAC member asked about the connection between mountable curbs and freight; Bachman responded that Lombard is one of the few surface streets for freight as well as an oversize freight route.

At Newman & Washburne, Bachman mentioned that ODOT's pedestrian studies did not warrant rapid flashing beacons, and that it would be against ODOT policy to mark a crosswalk as this would mean closing the other crosswalk. Bachman added that the bus stop at Newman is being consolidated, so there is less need for a crossing. ODOT is also weighing the possibility that median islands would be an impediment for emergency and maintenance vehicles.

A PAC member expressed concern that pedestrians may have to run for buses without internal crosswalks, which creates a dangerous scenario if vehicles are turning. They added that there are other ways to look at a 2040 scenario than the worst-case scenario, encouraging another look at crosswalks, particularly regarding bus stop consolidation.

David Backes from PBOT mentioned that city staff are also concerned about conflict between drivers and pedestrians along Lombard; the tentative approach involves putting in video cameras to record activity and analyzing how the reconfiguration works. Backes added that there are no great transfer options. The proposal is probably the least bad configuration, but a rapid flashing beacon may be warranted in the future.

A member asked about the condition of the corridor's sidewalks. Bachman answered that ODOT will be installing ADA ramps along the corridor, but as ODOT only owns curb-to-curb, they will not be touching sidewalks beyond curb ramps and spot improvements at bus stops. Backes added that PBOT will be conducting sidewalk cleanup along a stretch of this area before ODOT construction happens, including new street trees, sidewalk cracking and buckling, and power-washing.

Another member asked whether there is capacity for items to be added to the project later if safety goals are not met, especially in the Peninsular-Greeley area. Bachman responded that ODOT will continue to monitor each location on its own merits and look for patterns. The member added that they would prefer that the data be used proactively, rather than reactively.

Another member asked whether there was any possibility that the project design would be looked at again for potential changes. Bachman answered that she would bring the questions about scrambled crossings to the ODOT traffic group, but the overall project budget is set.

A member responded that they were frustrated to hear that the project budget was a constraint as PBOT offered to pay for two crossings. Bachman answered that the outcomes of ODOT's study did not merit a rapid flashing beacon, so this will not happen.

Another PAC member asked how many people ODOT estimates crossing the street in 2040, and whether this was part of ODOT's analysis. Bachman added that she did not know; this was a factor more specific to pedestrian studies. She noted that right now, trucks are going through Columbia Blvd, using Lombard when Columbia is unavailable. Once Columbia is improved, Bachman added, this may have effects on Lombard.

7:25-8:20: Fixing Our Streets 2 (55 min)

Mark Lear, PBOT

After initially presenting on Fixing Our Streets 2 in October, Mark Lear returned to the PAC to provide updates and answer additional questions.

A PAC member asked whether the split between safety and pavement is the same for Fixing Our Streets 2. Lear answered that the proposal is essentially consistent with that; however, some projects are not clearly in one group or the other.

The member responded that crash numbers appear to be getting worse, asking about potentially evaluating the effectiveness of projects that were built through Fixing Our Streets as an argument for more money for safety projects. Lear answered that it is relatively hard to get grants for maintenance projects; as important as safety is, alternative funding sources are easier to come by for safety projects than basic maintenance projects. Lear added that PBOT is performing some of the evaluation the member described, especially through PedPDX.

Another member mentioned that Fixing Our Streets 2 is a relatively short-term funding source that needs to be voted in. They added that PBOT should provide voters with specific items that would make the measure attractive. The member noted the importance of considering geographic diversity, too; people want to see improvements in their communities, even if those improvements are relatively small. Lear responded that paving is the number one thing that the public wants to see done, and on January 22nd, City Council will be receiving an update on Fixing Our Streets 1.

A PAC member mentioned that a specific Fixing Our Streets 1 success story would be meaningful to voters.

Lear added that Fixing Our Streets 2 identified \$1.5M for Northwest in Motion, North Portland in Motion, and Southwest in Motion, mostly low-cost pedestrian and bicycle improvements. FOS2 also includes \$4M for multimodal enhancements.

A PAC member asked whether there would be any speed reduction on cut-through routes in North Portland. Lear answered that this is something that could be open for community support.

Lear added that as part of Fixing Our Streets 2, PBOT will be changing the Heavy Vehicle Use Tax to capture the full percentage of revenue it was designed to, as it previously did not raise as much money as expected (\$8.5M of the expected \$10M).

A member asked whether the gas tax amount would remain the same. Lear responded that polling data did not support a tax greater than 10 cents, and support was lower for a longer-term tax as well.

A PAC member mentioned that they estimate it would a \$1 gas tax to meet the City's annual maintenance budget, emphasizing the importance of communicating the benefits of higher levels of gas taxes when polling. They added that there are also many policy-based changes that can improve infrastructure safety.

Lear responded that there are many groups identifying policy changes that could be big improvements. He recommended the PAC write a letter in support of Fixing Our Streets 2.

Gena Gastaldi clarified a few PBOT policy efforts. The City is piloting a No Right Turn on Red directive in the Central City. In addition, PBOT maintenance has a directive for no parking within 20' of all arterials as well as no parking within 20' of all marked crossings in the Brentwood-Darlington neighborhood. Gastaldi added that these programs are all low-cost.

A PAC member asked whether there was scope for street art and street plantings within the Fixing Our Streets 2 budget as they make walking much more attractive. Another member responded that they would advise being careful to just focus on basic services for the first few years until a permanent funding source is identified, emphasizing that there are not many other funding sources for maintenance efforts.

Another member asked by what percent Fixing Our Streets 1 passed. Lear responded that it passed with 52.7% of the total vote. The member asked whether it would be possible to implement a vehicle registration fee that would charge heavy vehicles more. Lear answered that Metro is also looking at an increased vehicle registration fee, and that some jurisdictions are looking at increasing vehicle registration fees based on vehicle cost.

A member asked about the possibility of incentivizing use of auto socks as opposed to chains or snow tires. Lear answered that the City is talking to ODOT for more information.

The PAC fielded a motion to write a letter in support of Fixing Our Streets 2, including the renewed Heavy Vehicle Use Tax. Lear suggested that letter be more general and that it include successes from Fixing Our Streets 1. A member added that the letter should encourage funding for street improvements, street art, and low-cost policy changes. The motion to write a letter passed. The PAC agreed to discuss the letter at their next meeting.

The PAC fielded another motion to have a member read the letter to City Council. The motion to read the letter passed.

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

No public comment.

Meeting adjourned.

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