

Bicycle Advisory Committee Meeting

6-8:00pm | May 12th, 2020

BAC Members Present: Alexandra Zimmerman, David Stein, Christopher Achterman, Kerry Aszklar, Ellen Ballantine, Clint Culpepper, Victor Duong, Reza Farhoodi, Catherine Gould, Kelly Hansen, Ally Holmqvist, Sarah Iannarone, Rithy Khut, Iain MacKenzie, Phil Richman, Katherine Sheie, Nicholas Swanson, Yashar Vasef, Korrin Weldon

BAC Members Absent: Alexa Jakusovsky

Other Attendees: Jamey Duhamel (Commissioner Eudaly's Office), Dave Sanders (Portland Police)

Introductions/Announcements (6:00-6:10)

Roger Geller mentioned that the traffic report referenced in April's BAC meeting is not yet available but will be uploaded to the BAC website when ready.

Portland Freight Plan Update (6:10-6:55)

Stephanie Lonsdale, PBOT planning intern, presented to the BAC on urban delivery. Lonsdale mentioned that 75% of Americans shop online, and especially during COVID, Americans are purchasing staples more and more frequently through online vendors. Free shipping requires more delivery trucks, and increased numbers of delivery vehicles on streets leads to issues in dense urban areas.

Lonsdale listed frequent stops, narrow streets, and lack of loading zones as some of the most important urban delivery issues. She added that the frequency of deliveries has increased, with each vehicle transporting smaller numbers of goods at a given time. To combat last-mile delivery costs, companies are testing drones, parcel lockers, e-bike deliveries, and off-hour deliveries; however, she added, 90% of deliveries are still made by trucks. Lonsdale noted that by 2022, many large retailers will offer same-day delivery in major metropolitan areas. Finding better data is critical in order to understand and include freight mobility in planning.

Francesca Patricolo, PBOT planner, presented to the BAC on the 2040 Freight Plan. She explained that it aims to follow the second major goal of PBOT's Strategic Plan: moving people and goods. Patricolo mentioned that an internal technical advisory committee will help guide the Freight Plan.

Patricolo mentioned PBOT is looking to tell the story of Portland's freight system and how it contributes to the city, a story informed by traffic modeling in the present and future. She added that the Freight Plan will also be informed by a review of existing policies, plans, and programs, which will help define freight goals, needs, conflicts, and opportunities. The Freight Plan team will develop a prioritization framework and an implementation strategy for shorter- and longer-term solutions, though Patricolo noted the update is just beginning.

Bob Hillier, PBOT Freight Coordinator, presented an analysis of e-commerce in the region. He mentioned that about a year ago, PBOT hired a consultant to identify retail e-commerce trends, which included a series of interviews with area stakeholders on their e-commerce needs. Retail e-commerce is growing at a faster rate than general retail sales; over the past seven years, e-commerce retail sales have grown 175 percent, from \$165 billion to \$453 billion, compared to the 29 percent increase in retail sales in general.

Hillier mentioned that the growth in e-commerce has created the need for twelve additional commercial flights per day, and in the region alone, Amazon distribution centers account for 3 million square feet of industrial commercial space. The vacancy rate for industrial warehouse space has decreased dramatically over past few years, as the demand for industrial land is driven by freight distribution facilities and fulfillment centers. In addition, consumers have an increased expectation of next-day or even same-day deliveries, the costs of which are not often seen by the consumers themselves. Hillier added that the supply chain has been modified, with more drivers and expanded hours. The overall amount of long-haul trucking has decreased while there has been a 20 percent increase in short-haul last-mile delivery.

A BAC member asked whether PBOT was looking at streets being pedestrian-unfriendly because of businesses' delivery and loading access needs. Hillier answered that PBOT is looking at that issue in the 2040 Freight Plan, but also in its street design principles, where a key goal is not to introduce conflict. He noted that there is much more competition for public right-of-way space, and PBOT does not want to infringe on pedestrian movement.

Another member commented that parking in bike lanes affects vulnerable road users' safety, asking what incentives could help delivery drivers drop off safely. Hillier responded that this is a relatively common issue that comes down to how right-of-way space is allocated. Patricolo added that PBOT will be collecting feedback about strategies for protecting vulnerable road users, prioritizing Vision Zero goals.

A member commented that food delivery is becoming more and more profitable and will continue after COVID, creating the same problems seen with ride hailing like parking in bike lanes. They proposed a similar type of tax as the city would pursue with ride-sharing services.

A member mentioned that policies like Vision Zero, the Climate Action Plan, equity and human rights should be driving the policy agenda and right-of-way discussions instead of consumer demand. They added that we should be very explicit that consumer demand comes because we have made these things cheap and convenient. The member expressed concern about specific public engagement, stating that the Portland Freight Committee has an outsized weight in decisions. They added that there needs to be parity between the modal committees and would encourage PBOT to think about the world 20 years from now rather than where it is today. Patricolo responded that the Freight Plan is framed with policy, plan, and program review that will shape it; it involves looking at the Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic Plan, and the Transportation System Plan to develop a framework for shaping planning goals and objectives. She added that PBOT is asking for feedback for new ways of community engagement.

Another member commented that a variety of driving education methods should be included in the 2040 Freight Plan. They added that they would like to hear about prioritizing deliveries on specific days, rather than 7 days a week. They would like to always include discussion of reducing single-occupancy vehicle traffic, as freight delays have been reduced during COVID for this reason.

A member asked whether PBOT has looked at reducing the number of last-mile delivery vehicles. Hillier answered that in short, it has not; the project team met with stakeholders and found that companies are choosing to use a greater number of smaller trucks, which do not require CDL-licensed drivers, as opposed to fewer larger trucks, which would require CDL-licensed drivers. He added that the Freight Plan would look at this in detail. Patricolo added that she is looking into urban distribution hubs, which could improve the situation for Portland streets by looking at which vehicles are more appropriate for various delivery sizes.

A member added that they find the issue to be multiple individual deliveries, especially in denser areas. They proposed looking at putting some of the onus on the person receiving delivery, by having them fetch their delivery from a distribution hub rather than doorstep delivery. The member added that this would be a way to better facilitate batch deliveries.

Patricolo closed by mentioning that the Freight Plan will be looking for community advisory committee members over the next couple months, and that interested individuals should email 2040Freight@PortlandOregon.gov for more information.

Bicycle Theft (6:55-7:10)

Officer Sanders of the Portland Police presented to the BAC on bicycle theft. Officer Sanders is one of six officers assigned to the bicycle theft unit. Sanders explained bicycle theft is a \$10M problem per year, with approximately 10,000 bikes stolen annually. In 2020 to date, thefts are up 20 percent. Sanders mentioned that theft from bike storage areas is increasingly common, and secure storage rooms are being targeted. He added that bike theft is a barrier preventing more Portlanders from biking more regularly.

To combat this, Portland Police is launching a bait bike program and focusing on proper locking and bicycle registration. He noted that most people have not written down their bicycle's serial number or taken a picture of it, which makes a successful theft report much less likely. Sanders added that a bike is twice as likely to be recovered and returned if it is properly registered, mentioning that Portland Police's goal is to see 100,000 bikes registered in the city.

Sanders explained that many people do not register their bikes because they don't know about registration and have not been given tools to do so. People can register their bikes online at www.project529.com/portland, which takes less than 5 minutes. In addition, the City has purchased thousands of registration stickers, which are optional but help keep bikes secure. As for locking, Sanders explained people should not use cable locks; a U-Lock is the basic level of bike security he recommends, preferably one at least \$50.

Roger Geller asked why secure bike rooms are not succeeding. Sanders answered that the police have seen a lot of crowbars used to break in to bike rooms and recommends installing a full-length latch

guard on doors to protect them from being forced open. He added that peak times for theft are 2-4 am. He also explained that people may neglect to lock their bikes up inside these rooms, thinking them to be safe because the door is locked.

A member asked whether it is possible to register a bike at a shop before you leave with it. Sanders responded that it is very possible and only takes a couple seconds if it is integrated into the shop's point-of-sale system.

Another member asked what happens with unclaimed bikes, mentioning that Portland State University turns unclaimed bikes into long-term rental bikes available for students. Officer Sanders responded that some bikes are auctioned through govdeals.com, many are sent to Africa through a nonprofit, and other nonprofits are able to request bikes if they have a purpose for them.

A member asked about the numbers of offenders and repeat offenders as well as the penalties for stealing. Officer Sanders answered that it is hard to find the exact number, noting that bait bikes are usually stolen within 30 minutes. He added that there are no real consequences to deter behavior.

Transportation Impacts of COVID (7:10-7:25)

Cancelled.

Committee Discussion: Next Steps in COVID Response (7:25-7:55)

A member expressed that the City should continue to encourage working from home as a lot of businesses have proven it works for lots of employees.

Another member mentioned that they like the orange barrels that have gone up and recommended making a lot of them permanent. They added that their office is starting to have conversations about an eventual move back into the office, mentioning they are not keen to get back on the bus and that there will be more demand for cycling if handled correctly. The bad outcome would be if regular transit riders got back into cars instead. They wondered if paint and traffic cones could be put in like other cities to make cycling more comfortable for people who may not be regular cyclists already.

A member mentioned there is an opportunity for more innovative solutions given the lower volumes in many areas. They mentioned a buffered bike lane project that was installed during a resurfacing project, where a lot of initial concerns went away once the bike lane was implemented. They added that this is a good opportunity for quick build projects.

Jamey Duhamel from Commissioner Eudaly's office mentioned that the Commissioner directed PBOT to look at quick-build projects this summer, given lower traffic. The Commissioner's office is scheduling a briefing with PBOT staff to explore options.

A member mentioned that the Community Cycling Center received a federal grant for their Create a Commuter program. The unprecedented number of people losing jobs may lead to a surge in demand for bikes for people they are not financially accessible to. They mentioned there should be a consideration to subsidize economical mobility options.

Another member expressed uncertainty at how large a difference the first weekend of barricades had made. They were concerned about a rebound surge in traffic and were afraid the City would not move quickly enough, mentioning a potential program where people could install barricades on their own if they live along a Neighborhood Greenway.

A member noted that when they visited SW Illinois St, barricades were off on the side, which made it harder to get a bike onto the street. There was nothing in the middle of the road to inform drivers that it was a slow street.

Another member also expressed interest in seeing data on the barricade rollout; they added they were concerned about the lack of permanence of the diversion. They also expressed interest in seeing the future of Biketown, as it could be a tool to provide bike access to people who most need it.

A member added that there should be the capability for the bike share system to be free during emergencies, like current COVID conditions or a seismic event. They mentioned there should not be a cost barrier to anyone right now.

A member mentioned they would like to see a city-wide map of barricades and commercial corridors. They would like to know how the BAC can help the City in a more timely way. Geller responded that normally, capital projects have very long rollout times with plenty of opportunity to weigh in. Now, PBOT is trying to move quickly in a fluid environment. He mentioned that the most helpful thing for the BAC to produce right now are broad outlines of how PBOT should respond, how Portland should come out of this, how PBOT should be communicating, and what types of projects should go on the ground. He added it would be helpful for the BAC to craft a formal letter about how PBOT should respond, noting that what limits the BAC is public meeting requirements and providing advance notice.

The BAC moved to draft a letter and submit to City Council for the Slow Streets Initiative. The committee decided to hold their next meeting slightly earlier to outline a draft for the letter. The motion passed unanimously.

A committee member mentioned that the BAC should be meeting more regularly and expressing that bikes are a part of the emergency response and should be funded and prioritized as such. Geller mentioned that the BAC can call special sessions to meet more frequently.

Jamey Duhamel mentioned that the City is setting up a volunteer portal for the community to help keep barricades where they are supposed to be. She added that the Commissioner's office wants to have conversations with staff about ineffective barriers. Per the 2040 Freight Plan discussion, Duhamel mentioned that Commissioner Eudaly began the Pricing Options for Equitable Mobility Task Force last year to take up the question of how the public right-of-way is priced. She added that information about the Task Force is on PBOT's website, and people can tune into their meetings.

A member commented that more signage about slow streets could be beneficial as cars still tend to move very fast.

Geller asked if the BAC had seen members of their communities that are not regular bicyclists out and about. A member mentioned they had heard from coworkers and colleagues that are biking for

fresh air and exercise, maybe picking up takeout or groceries; however, they noted a lot of people are driving and feel safer doing so.

Another member noticed that people who would tend to bike are biking, drivers are driving, and both groups are excited by the lack of cars on the road. They mentioned they have not seen any real mode shift, and it seems like there is more room to encourage bicycle trips for people who have that choice.

A member added that a lot of people do not know that barricades are part of a larger program and have seen many people asking what they are for.

Another member asked how much outreach and signage was done in languages other than English. Geller responded that he will find out.

A member mentioned they have been noticing lots of kids on bikes in their neighborhood, and that anecdotally, a neighboring family who has been driving since their kids were born recently purchased e-bikes and have been consequently biking a lot in the past months.

Another member noted that in SW, kids have been biking every day, with a daily happy hour where kids from several families ride loops on an obstacle course neighbors put up. They noted there is a pent-up demand for bicycling right now, but most errands seem to still be done in cars. Some organizations encourage people to visit but only in cars. Long term, the member noted this could have negative impacts. Another member agreed that they have been seeing lots of folks do grocery trips in their cars.

Another member mentioned that signage is a little hard to find on slow streets, noting that they had seen more pedestrians than usual around Wilshire Park after dark on a Saturday night, especially pedestrians walking on streets. They hope that these streets encourage more bike usage.

A member mentioned that they heard from friends that bike shops are full, and it can take almost a week to get a time slot for an appointment.

Meeting Adjourned.