

NORTH PORTLAND IN MOTION



COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #3

When: March 1, 2022, 6 – 8 pm

Where: Virtual meeting over Zoom

Attendees:

Ally Holmqvist (Bicycle Advisory Committee)

Aaron Brown (Oregon Walks, St Johns)

Paul Buchanan (Portsmouth Neighborhood Association)

Jennie Cambier (University of Portland)

Nic Cota (Bike Loud, Overlook)

Kali Glenn-Haley (Resident, University Park)

Pat Jewett (Resident/NP Greenway, St Johns)

Liz Smith (St John's Boosters)

Lauren Smith Plinski (PCC)

Rebecca Small (Friends of Columbia Park, Kenton)

Beth Staus (Arbor Lodge Neighborhood Association)

Carol Tricoche, (St Johns Boosters)

Jennifer Vitello (Cathedral Park Neighborhood Association)

Absent:

Stephanie Blair (St Johns Center for Opportunity)

Jonna Lynn Bransford (Resident, University Park)

Jesse Neilson (Resident, Kenton)

Ryan Northam (Resident, Arbor Lodge)

Ethan Stuckmayer (Resident, St Johns)

Libby Winter (WTS, Arbor Lodge)

Brett Duesing (Resident, St Johns)

Staff and Consultant Team:

Mike Serritella, Zef Wagner, Maggie Derk, Corinne Montana, Mauricio LeClerc (PBOT); Jessica Pickul, Nicole Metildi (JLA Public Involvement)

MEETING SUMMARY

Jessica Pickul (JLA) opened the meeting. Mike Serritella (PBOT) reviewed the agenda, project timeline, and recent engagement efforts.

Project Updates

Mike provided several project updates since the last CAC meeting.

- PBOT is partnering with the Community Cycling Center to support outreach and youth engagement in New Columbia.
- Biketown has expanded throughout the N Portland peninsula and the project team will be working on adding stations in New Columbia and the N Fessenden Corridor.
- PBOT is partnering with PSU's Undergraduate Capstone Engineering Program for new neighborhood greenway development.
- PBOT submitted a grant application for Metro's Regional Trails Bond to build segments of the N Portland Greenway in St Johns and Cathedral Park.

Public Engagement Updates

- The online open house closed in early February and received close to 350 responses.
- There have been virtual workshops and focus groups with the Kenton neighborhood, BikeLoud N/NE, and the St Johns Boosters.

Comments and Questions

- CAG members shared in the chat function in Zoom that they would like to see a Biketown station at the Lombard/Ida Fred Meyer, Roosevelt High School or New Seasons.
- Someone raised a concern about conducting outreach with people who primarily use cars to get around (i.e., how do we make sure that PBOT reaches out to them and hears their concerns). By focusing on pedestrians, bicyclists, etc., people who use cars may feel alienated.

WORKSHOPS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Mike shared key takeaways and recommendations gathered from the virtual workshops and focus groups. PBOT has already begun to move forward with some of the recommendations.

St Johns Small Business Focus Group Takeaways

- Desire for support, programming, and investments in the plaza near N Lombard Street and N Philadelphia Avenue to make it a community space.
- More frequent, safer crossings to improve bike and pedestrian access throughout the area and business district.
- Unification and connection of the nodes and small businesses throughout the neighborhood.

BikeLoud N/NE Workshop Takeaways

- Update bike lanes and add more protection for cyclists.
- Update neighborhood greenways, improve visibility of networks, and close gaps within existing greenways.
- Improve wayfinding to help people navigate to community destinations.
- Invest in better connections over barriers such as I-5 and “the cut”.

ONLINE OPEN HOUSE #1

Maggie Derk (PBOT) gave an overview of the first online open house, which closed in early February. The online event was provided in English and Spanish languages, which included a comment map. The event was promoted with 25,000 postcards mailed to households and businesses, social media posts, an email campaign that reached over 1,200 people, canvassing at BIPOC businesses and community organizations, project website updates, and multiple online community meetings.

Over 1,300 unique visitors viewed the online open house. There were 349 responses to the survey and 543 comments on the interactive map. Participants submitted an average of 4 map comments.

Maggie explained that the team was putting the comments into a more user-friendly format and would share them with CAG members.

Participants in the online open house wrote in the open comment section that it was difficult to walk and bike in the areas due to:

- Speeding vehicles
- Unsafe crossings
- A lack of traffic calming measures such as speed bumps
- Deficient or unsafe lighting
- Unsafe conditions along the St Johns Bridge (which is not within PBOT's jurisdiction)
- Trash, debris, and stormwater issues
- Parked and abandoned cars creating visibility issues, and a desire for more enforcement in removal of vehicles.

Challenges related to public transit included:

- Need for more frequent transit
- Direct transit to Downtown from the peninsula.
- Trash, debris, and flooding near transit stops
- Need for more transit options in the St Johns area
- Transit lines frequently mentioned: 35, 16, and 4
- Bus stops mentioned: stops along Lombard, served by line 75

Community destinations that were hard to access included the following:

- Areas in St Johns
- Willamette Cove/N Portland Greenway
- Columbia Park
- Arbor Lodge Park
- Downtown Kenton and Kenton Park
- Greeley Cycle Path
- Charles Gordon Community Center

Online Open House Presentation Comments and Questions

Jessica asked the CAG if there were any questions or surprises related to the feedback received.

- **How do these responses compare to previous 'In Motion' projects? Did you get the number of responses you were hoping for?** *We are happy with the number of responses. We are on the right track and there was a good number of people who visited the open house, especially when compared to pre-Covid open houses. While we received many English responses, we did not receive any responses in Spanish. This shows us that we need to do more relationship and trust-building outreach.*
- **Are the responses affected by how commuting has been shifted due to people working from home during the pandemic? Things have changed over the past two years and people may be commuting differently.** *There were concerns about riding the bus due to the pandemic. There were more comments related to wanting more transit options to destinations vs. commuting. We're trying to focus on all the reasons why, and ways people travel, instead of focusing on commutes. People are using sidewalks and facilities for many reasons, so we are changing the way we're talking about it.*

- **Do the transit responses include New Columbia? There is a big transit dependent population in that area.** *We have not done cross-sectional neighborhood cuts and analysis of the responses but will be doing that in the next project phase. From talking to folks in that area, we know that access to Lombard Transit Center and Downtown is a huge priority, and we will factor that into the plan.*

Next Steps for the Project

Mike explained how the team will use the information and analysis from community engagement to create and refine ideas over the next 6 months to a year. The team will synthesize and integrate city-wide transportation projects and plans while integrating public needs and feedback.

Transportation Policy and Plans

Mike explained that city-wide transportation policy and street level classifications are captured in the City of Portland's Transportation System Plan (TSP). The plan provides policy guidance about how we work through tradeoffs, prioritize decisions, and set goals for our projects and programs.

The project team will also do a full scan of individual modal plans and other city policies to identify needs, opportunities, and design guidance. Development of related plans also included robust public engagement processes and help us understand people's core values.

Sidewalk Gaps

The Ped PDX plan from 2019 helps identify all sidewalk gaps noted from the community and helps prioritize which areas to focus on through an equitable and accessible lens. It identifies all crossing gaps in North Portland, which helps to understand which gaps should be upgraded based upon community needs.

Vision Zero

Vision Zero helps identify where crashes are occurring and sheds light on where persistent safety problems are within our transportation system. Vision Zero is Portland's transportation safety commitment to the vision of a transportation system free of injuries and death. It looks at infrastructure, education, and encouragement programs to help people get where they need to go without being harmed.

There was a question about what a "Vision Zero crash" is. A Vision Zero crash is one that involves a pedestrian, bicyclist, or person in a vehicle related crash that results in serious injury or fatality. A crash involving property doesn't necessarily indicate a systemic safety issue, so they are not included.

Reaffirm Priorities with the Community

Community identified needs play a huge role in identifying specific project elements and prioritizing projects for implementation. This allows us to identify issues in micro locations which we may not otherwise know about.

What makes a North Portland in Motion Project?

Mike explained that projects included with North Portland in Motion should meet 3 core needs:

1. Addresses community identified priorities
2. Is supportive of PBOT's transportation policies
3. Able to be delivered in the near-term by PBOT

'In Motion' projects are focused on ways to work with the community to develop a planning process and deliver on that within the next 5 to 10 years. Projects are focused on meeting the urgent needs of the community. We can also influence projects outside of the scope, such as those that are in TriMet or ODOT's jurisdiction, by highlighting issues in those areas. The goal is to be clear about projects that can be delivered on while documenting lists for projects outside of our scope, so future work and advocacy can realize those bigger, long-term needs.

Early, broad project or program ideas will include rough ideas for further discussion within the community. Then, we focus in on specific areas, discuss with the community, and get ready for project delivery. This includes:

- A location and extent
- A problem definition
- And general project description rooted in policy and community identified need

Mike gave an example of what this might look like using N Portsmouth Avenue so that CAG members might know what to expect from an In Motion project in early stages.

The group took a 5-minute break before coming back for questions and discussion.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Jessica facilitated a discussion to help set the strategy and direction for potential projects and programs for North Portland in Motion. Mike reminded the group that it is important to break priorities apart and figure out what should be prioritized in the North Portland in Motion, considering limited resources.

Below is a summary of the question prompts and discussion. Each question was presented as a scale where participants could place a "dot" to show which of the two options on the scale they prioritize and how much. View the results of the activity [here](#).

1. What do you think would encourage more people to choose walking?

Most participants chose that they would **prefer to focus on building more frequent and safer crossings** vs. focusing on improvements to the pedestrian environment. Participants shared the following:

- Friends of Trees could help with tree plantings, while **PBOT could focus on improving infrastructure** through North Portland in Motion.
- While lighting, wayfinding, and trees are important, making it **safer to cross Lombard** and other high crash corridors is a matter of life or death for some people.
- **Focus on crosswalks first** and then other things (like improvements to the pedestrian environment).
- **Lighting is a top safety concerns concern**, especially for elderly or disabled people walking at night.
- Someone mentioned working with Walking While Black and that **safe crossings are more important than trees or wayfinding**. *Zef mentioned that PBOT evaluates or adds lighting when they improve a crossing.*
- Walking down **Lombard near Columbia Park feels safer now** because the cars aren't next to you.
- Garbage and fear of assault make walking feel unsafe or unpleasant.

- **Crossings may give people a false sense of safety**, especially if pedestrians do not look at traffic before crossing the street. Adding crosswalks doesn't necessarily mean people will stop for pedestrians or that pedestrians will look before crossing the street.

2. What types of bike facilities should North Portland in Motion prioritize?

The group **leaned more toward protected bike lanes** over neighborhood greenways. Participants shared the following:

- Someone was curious **how protected bike lanes impact the community** itself (i.e., what would be minimally invasive and impactful there?). *Neighborhood greenways utilize speed bumps and traffic diverters to keep cars on busier streets.*
- Neighborhood greenways are great but **protected bike lanes provide direct business access for bikers**. Greenways can sometimes prevent direct access and it feels like they're "placating" drivers. Protected bike lanes may get more bicyclists on the road.
- Bicyclists must cross higher traffic areas coming from Cathedral Park. **Protection is the missing piece**. Would adding greenways mean adding diverters? *PBOT usually approaches greenways by upgrading existing ones with new diversion and traffic calming measures.*
- **Protected bike lanes help people feel safe** while biking and are sometimes the deciding factor on whether people decide travel by bike or not. The protected lanes on Rosa Parks were mentioned.
- Zef pointed out that protected **bike lanes and greenways could potentially work together**.
- Participants noted that they see **people on Fessenden drive in-between the speed bumps**, which increased the likelihood that cars will swipe each other. Cars also go into the bike lane to avoid speed bumps.
- Several participants mentioned that they **like diverters in greenways**.
- Desire to make **Willamette Boulevard's** bike facility separated. **Fessenden** could also use a protected bike lane.

3. Should we prioritize projects that make improvements to the existing transportation facilities network or focus our attention on new facilities?

The group **leaned more toward upgrading existing networks**, with one outlier who wanted to focus on expanding the network with new facilities. Participants shared the following:

- Someone asked if this project would have an impact on the **Lombard bike lane**, or if that was within ODOT's jurisdiction. *Mike noted that PBOT works closely with ODOT and would like to find a way to upgrade that facility. We should focus on PBOT roads because the best we can do for Lombard is to make recommendations to ODOT.*
- Someone who was between "upgrade existing networks" and "expand with new facilities" said that when new facilities are built, use increases. They feel **coverage is good but would like to see upgrades**.
- Upgrading existing networks needs to happen first, but **if we see an area not being used because it was poorly placed, we should take that into consideration**. Deciding what needs to be upgraded or expanded would be helped by looking at the data. *Mike commented that whenever PBOT does a basic maintenance project on an existing facility, they look for ways to upgrade it to PBOT standards. Zef*

added that part of the data analysis would be to look at each street in context and see what facilities are needed.

4. What do you think would be the most effective way to support more walking and biking in North Portland?

Most of the group **leaned toward building new physical infrastructure**, with one person wanting to develop new supportive programs. Participants shared the following:

- Some commented that no amount of supportive programming will increase bicycling in North Portland without physical infrastructure. It is important to **make sure the infrastructure is safe first**.
- People could be **educated about how to use and interact with new facilities while PBOT builds new infrastructure**. This will help get people ready for new facilities.
- “If you build it, they will come.” A participant would like PBOT to build infrastructure first and then create programs that support it.
- Desire for **safer bike parking**.
- A participant expressed that North Portland’s streets are significantly safer than other parts of the city, like East Portland, and new programs, particularly those around transit and culturally competent bike programming, go a long way for the folks that aren’t in the community

5. Unsafe vehicle behavior is a major problem throughout the peninsula. Where should PBOT invest in traffic calming first?

The group **leaned more toward busier arterial and collector streets**, but a couple of people were in the middle or closer to neighborhood streets near parks and schools. Participants shared the following:

- Concern about **drag racing** (Greeley was mentioned)
- Cathedral Park and St Johns may not be as affected by or need traffic calming measures.
- While participants noted that most of the streets in St Johns are less affected by busy streets, this may not be the case for all of North Portland, aside from a few outliers. *Zef commented that PBOT hears a lot of concerns about local streets and that it is good to hear that, even though local streets can have major problems compared to busy streets, PBOT should focus more on the latter.*
- The **project should focus on busier streets** because Vision Zero shows that traffic fatalities happen on bigger, busier streets.
- **Woolsey and Edison streets** were mentioned as neighborhood streets that are currently busy and may need traffic calming measures.

6. How should we prioritize building new crossings through North Portland in Motion?

The **group leaned more towards closing gaps on busier corridors** than focusing on areas with higher pedestrian activity. Participants shared the following:

- Someone asked **how PedPDX** (which already has a vision for crosswalks within 100 feet of all transit stops) **fits in with this project and Vision Zero**. *Mike and Zef noted that PedPDX is a citywide pedestrian plan that handles our crossings, sidewalks, and ADA accessibility. It says we should have a crosswalk every 800 feet on an arterial street unless it’s in a pedestrian district such as Downtown, St Johns, or the Interstate corridor. It also says we should have a crossing 100 feet from every bus stop. Both plans and projects support one another. If we focus on closing gaps, we would need to close*

every gap on a street or major corridor according to PedPDX. If we focused on areas with higher pedestrian activity, we would be choosier and maybe focus on areas with more bus riders, schools, and parks.

- **Prioritize busier corridors because people jaywalk a lot in places like Lombard.** More crosswalks along corridor streets would be better.
- Those who would like to focus on areas with higher pedestrian activity mentioned **Downtown St Johns and Willamette Blvd.**
- A participant mentioned creating **crossings that lead to parks**, which could be phrased as a "safe routes to nature" network.

7. If additional service was added to North Portland, how should it be applied to the existing transit network?

Before everyone placed their markers on the scale, Mike noted that while TriMet is a separate organization, PBOT is working with them and sharing what they hear from the North Portland community.

The group **leaned more towards adding more frequent service on existing transit routes** than adjusting routes and/or adding new transit connections. Participants shared the following:

- It is **hard to get to the University of Portland by bus** and many people commute by car. The 44 bus line has proven unreliable and infrequent. Conversely, someone did mention that the 44 does get faster once you get out of North Portland.
- Someone wondered how an **express bus** would fit into the transit network (or how faster ways to get out of North Portland could be created). More frequent service may address this concern, but an express bus would be helpful if someone is travelling a longer distance. The 75 was mentioned as taking too long. Mike mentioned that ridership is low on the 16 Express bus from St. John's to Downtown.
- **Bus shelters need to be improved** to encourage ridership as they do not give a feeling of safety.
- There was a question about **circulator bus lines**. Two circulator buses might make sense for the shape of the peninsula.
- Adding **more frequent service is needed**. PBOT should think about where specific stops could go along different routes and prioritize Lombard (specifically lines 4 and 75). While TriMet is a separate organization, **PBOT could facilitate bus service by helping busses move through traffic** (i.e., skipping the light, etc.).
- Make transit frequency and schedules competitive to driving times.
- There was discussion about the re-routing of the 75 bus line. It currently goes up to Columbia instead of Dekum because of construction on the 33rd bridge.

Public Comment

Due to a disruptive start to the meeting, PBOT and Consultants were forced to start the meeting in a new Zoom meeting that was not advertised to the public. No members of the public attended the meeting and there were no public comments received during this meeting.

WRAP UP, NEXT MEETING + NEXT STEPS

Mike shared next steps for the project through May, which included early project and program development, community workshops, and a technical review by PBOT and Partner Bureaus and Agencies.

The project team will present early project concepts at the next CAG meeting, which will happen in May or June. There was interest in a North Portland in Motion Pedalpalooza bike ride in June.

Jessica wrapped up the meeting and thanked everyone for participating.