

# PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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## Advisory Shoulders and Bike Lanes: Online Open House Public Comments, Questions, & Responses

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### Introduction

The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) has installed [advisory shoulders or bike lanes](#) at three locations in Portland in 2022. Advisory shoulders and bike lanes are low-cost, low-impact treatment for narrow streets with lower speeds and volumes of traffic. We fully expect advisory bike lanes to make streets safer and more accessible for people walking, biking, and rolling.

In response to community interest and concerns, PBOT held an online open house about advisory shoulders and bike lanes on December 1, 2022. We shared information about advisory bike lanes and gathered questions and comments from participants.

This memo documents public comments and questions from the online open house about advisory shoulders and bike lanes. Additional feedback from email and phone conversations with community members is included. Where appropriate, responses to questions and comments have been provided.

**Visit the project website here to learn more:**

[www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/ABL](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/ABL)

**Access the online open house recording here:**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Thmyq\\_5OL8E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Thmyq_5OL8E)



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## Summary of Public Comments

Note: "Additional Support" represents expressed support of comment from another online open house participant.

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>I am encouraged by this concept. How will it work in hilly areas like Southwest Portland when it's dark and rainy, especially when considering oncoming headlights?</b></p>	<p>It will be important to evaluate the appropriate conditions to use advisory lanes. We already know that low speeds and low traffic volumes are essential. We'll also need to consider adequate street lighting as well adequate sight distance.</p> <p>Advisory lanes and shoulders have been used in multiple cities across multiple years and under all the conditions noted above (darkness, rain, etc.). The advisory lanes provide more awareness about street users, compared to existing conditions where people are already walking and bicycling in the street in the dark.</p>	2
<p><b>At SW Talbot Road, there is some significant queuing at the four-way-stop with SW Patton Road. It seems like this treatment could be a problem at the PM peak.</b></p>	<p>The limits of this planned project do not extend to Patton. Only the segment to the east of this, Fairmount to Fairmount (Fairmount is a loop) is proposed.</p>	
<p><b>Advisory lanes seem to violate the Oregon law that prohibits driving in bicycle lanes (ORS 811.440).</b></p>	<p>ORS 811.300 addresses the need for drivers to move right for oncoming traffic. The duty of care that all drivers must take in ensuring that there are not cyclists in the bike lane before entering into that bike lane, assuming they needed to avoid oncoming vehicular traffic, would also apply. These are concomitant duties; they are not necessarily exclusive of one another. This specific design is consistent with advisory bike lane design in the US, Canada, and other parts of the world, and we have approval from the Federal Highway Administration to implement this treatment. We have no indication that the design will increase the risk of crashes, with published research concluding it typically reduces crash risk.</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>I live on NE San Rafael Street. I disagree that the street is low volume. I would like to see the data. I hear cars honking horns all the time and believe it's because there is confusion about whether the street is one-way or two-way.</b></p> <p><b>Not everyone can ride a bike.</b></p>	<p>Traffic volumes on San Rafael are below 5000 cars per day, which is our threshold for using advisory lanes. Toward the west end (near 114th) daily traffic volumes have ranged between 1200-1500 going back to 2014. Peak hour traffic volumes at the west side of 122nd are about 400 (2017) indicating daily traffic of approximately 4000 near that intersection. Recent measurements east of 122nd indicate daily traffic volumes up to 5000 cars per day. That's the area where the roadway is wider, and we were able to stripe buffered bike lanes and two standard width vehicle lanes for automobiles. East of 132nd traffic volumes were recently measured at just under 3000 cars per day (near 134th in 2022), with lower volumes further east (less than 2500 cars/day near 140th). City traffic volume and speed counts are available from <a href="#">this website</a>.</p> <p>Two-way signs will be posted for each installation. We understand that not everybody is going to ride a bike. Even those who do ride bikes don't do so for every trip. All our designs continue to accommodate two-way traffic. People can still drive their cars to every address in the city. Our city goal is to create conditions that encourage and allow for increased: pedestrian, bicycle and transit use as alternatives to driving. Our experience has been that creating good conditions for biking results in more biking and less driving. We heard some reports of that from others who attended the public meeting and we've seen evidence of that across the many years Portland has been building bikeways.</p>	
<p><b>I use the NE 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue advisory lane regularly. I see an issue, especially with biking southbound: people pulling out into 53<sup>rd</sup> from Hoyt Street (west leg) go into the roadway due to limited sight distance. This limits cycling space because of people driving in the center lane on the left and pulling out on the right. I feel it is less safe with current treatment.</b></p>	<p>We've heard this complaint about this specific location and will look at ways we can mitigate this issue.</p> <p>Protected bicycle lanes are our preferred treatment when we want separation between people biking and driving. Advisory lanes are a tool when we have neither available width nor available funding to provide protected lanes. We recognized that while not everybody will feel comfortable operating on them, many will.</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p>Seeing it and riding it diluted the panic I felt when I first read about them. Riding is similar to the experience of riding the streets to Pip's Donuts on Fremont at 47th with the parked cars narrowing all side streets to the south down to one lane.</p> <p>Traffic was a constant trickle - low, but not as low as a neighborhood street. The noise level was also low, even for the bigger vehicles/trucks. The speed was the most surprising. Calm, slow speeds.</p> <p>My thoughts on ABL's: very positive given the right applications that we discussed and saw on Saturday - low traffic, slower traffic, and not too terribly much density.</p>		

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>I know that this is an experiment, but I wonder how PBOT has the authority to do so. I see people daily who fail to yield when driving, creating danger and making them drive off the road to avoid it. Signs are too small and not educational enough. There aren't any bikes, ever. We need sidewalks, not this. We're ignoring the bike lanes because there are so many cars. These stripes don't change the use of the road, they just make it more dangerous. This feels like a huge overreach from PBOT, a waste of taxpayer money, and a misuse of power. It feels like PBOT doesn't care because they aren't personally affected by these decisions.</b></p>	<p>Data from multiple cities across North America, as well as the experience of cities around the world, is that providing advisory bicycle lanes either reduces—or has no effect on—traffic crashes, car speeds, and car volumes.</p> <p>We agree that we need sidewalks and ideally better bicycle facilities. But, we do not have the funding to build sidewalks and our preferred bicycle facilities in all the places they are needed in the near future.</p>	
<p><b>We need to make our streets safer and increase livability.</b></p>		
<p><b>How many of the traffic deaths are on major highways where bikes are not allowed? I'd like to see that data broken out please.</b></p>	<p>The locations of people killed on Portland streets in 2021 were shown the on the slide shown at the presentation. They were mostly on city streets. <a href="#">This map</a> shows the locations of all traffic fatalities in Portland going back to 2010.</p> <p>The overwhelming majority are on city streets.</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>I'd like to hear about the rationale for limiting advisory bicycle lanes to low speed streets. I'd like to see advisory lanes on streets like NW Skyline Boulevard, which have a higher speed but not enough width for ordinary bicycle lanes.</b></p>	<p>This is based on federal guidance, the experience of other cities around the world, and engineering judgment. It is possible that advisory lanes have been successfully employed on higher-speed, (very) low-volume rural roadways in other countries. However, for the time being we will stick with low-speed roadways.</p>	
<p><b>Will any of these designs include physical obstacles to enforce the paint? The European examples seem to frequently have a pinch point with curbs and steel bollards to force cars to take turns at that spot.</b></p>	<p>At present we have no plans to include physical obstacles. Because people driving necessarily must go into the bicycle lanes to navigate with oncoming traffic, obstacles would work against that.</p>	
<p><b>People are confused and think this is a one-way road. While I appreciate addressing climate change, not all of us can ride bikes. It isn't feasible to get where I need to go on a bike as a single mother.</b></p>	<p>We understand that not everybody is going to ride a bike. Even those who do ride bikes don't do so for every trip. All of our designs continue to accommodate two-way traffic. Two-way signs are included in all projects thus far (San Rafael has taken a bit longer to get these installed). People can still drive their cars to every address in the city. Our City goal is to create conditions that encourage and allow for increased: pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use as alternatives to driving. Our experience has been that creating good conditions for biking results in more biking and less driving. We heard some reports of that from others who attended the public meeting and we've seen evidence of that across the many years Portland has been building bikeways.</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>I am an enthusiastic supporter, though I was initially skeptical of the treatment. After experiencing them on San Rafael, I am a big supporter. Advisory bike lane seem like they work and work well. Previously I would not have ridden with my four-year-old son on San Rafael but would now. We need a citywide advisory bike lane plan to improve equity by using this treatment citywide. Is that planned?</b></p>	<p>The Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030 identified approximately 28 miles of corridors that would be good candidates for advisory lanes. Five additional locations are currently planned for implementation by 2024. Based on the results of this test and further outreach, we may look for opportunities for additional implementation.</p>	
<p><b>I am a single mother with two kids. I moved to Portland from Minneapolis because of its bike-friendliness. I bike with my kids to WinCo. I use side roads rather than 122nd. People don't walk because there aren't sidewalks. It's scary to walk on these roads. I feel safer biking than walking. We should prioritize sidewalks with bike lanes raised off the curb level. Then, everybody would feel safer.</b></p>	<p>Our preferred treatment for bikes is to have protected or sidewalk-level bicycle lanes. Our preferred treatment for pedestrians is sidewalks. However, both are very expensive. The advisory lane is a low-cost tool that we can use while waiting for full funding for a complete street.</p>	
<p><b>My neighbor who rides her bike daily just texted me and said, "I am terrified to ride on San Rafael now. I rode it at least 3 times a week prior to the new situation".</b></p>	<p>We will be collecting data on usage for all project sites.</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>What are the traffic volumes on San Rafael from 122 to 148th? Why are we doing advisory bike lanes in this place? If you repave from 122nd to 148th, how much would that cover? This is an experimental process, so we need data to back up what PBOT wants to do.</b></p>	<p>Recent measurements east of 122nd indicate daily traffic volumes up to 5000 cars per day. That's the area where the roadway is wider, and we were able to stripe buffered bike lanes. East of 132<sup>nd</sup>, traffic volumes were recently measured at just under 3000 cars per day (near 134th in 2022), with lower volumes further east (less than 2500 cars/day near 140th). City traffic volume and speed counts are available at <a href="#">this website</a>.</p>	
<p><b>As a neighborhood collector, San Rafael needs sidewalks. I am not opposing these lanes, but I need more information.</b></p>	<p>We agree. Sidewalks are a preferred treatment. We don't have the budget to build sidewalks on all streets in the foreseeable future.</p>	
<p><b>I live past 122<sup>nd</sup> on San Rafael. It's a busy street, and two-way traffic is a necessity. People drive in the bike lane often. Cars don't move over, and I've experienced lots of near misses. I didn't feel unsafe on that street before this treatment, but now I do. With kids, schedules don't allow us to bike. I am concerned that we're trying to reduce VMT and stop driving. It isn't an option for everyone. We should look at electrification and support getting people where they need to go. I see people all the time with strollers or dogs; we can't expect people to go into a street to fight cars and bikes. There should be sidewalks. Sidewalks should be used.</b></p>	<p>This design continues to allow for two-way traffic. In the section of NE San Rafael from 111th to 122nd, people must necessarily drive in the bike lane when navigating oncoming traffic. In the section from 122nd to 132nd, there are two standard width travel lanes that allow oncoming vehicles to pass each other without leaving the lane. We agree that sidewalks are preferred for people walking. However, we do not have budget to provide sidewalks in the short term on all streets where they are needed.</p> <p>We understand that not everybody is going to ride a bike. Even those who do ride bikes don't do so for every trip. All our designs continue to accommodate two-way traffic. People can still drive their cars to every address in the city. Our city goal is to create conditions that encourage and allow for increased: walking, bicycle and transit use as alternatives to driving. Our experience has been that creating good conditions for biking results in more biking and less driving. We heard some reports of that from others who attended the public meeting and we've seen evidence of that across the many years Portland has been building bikeways.</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p>I live between Halsey and San Rafael, on 140th. It is my route when I travel to PCC. It's my commute route. Prior to this treatment, I had a lot of conflicts with cars, often dealing with angry drivers and honking. This has been a big improvement for me personally, knowing these advisory lanes are here. Thank you for this treatment and for this work. This transition may be difficult, due to the car-centric nature of the neighborhood; the neighborhood lacks infrastructure, it feels unsafe overall. That lack of safety is keeping people from biking. We want to bike more, but the infrastructure needs improvement. I recognize the importance of reducing car use. This change won't be easy, but we need to find something that works.</p>		
<p><b>We observed on December 01, 2022 vehicle danger in east and west direction on 148th at San Rafael during peak use hours. For example, at 2:51p there were 3 autos in one direction opposing 4 vehicles coming in another direction. Very dangerous situation. Similar situation observed at 5:18pm today. We are opposed to advisory bike lanes on San Rafael and Sacramento.</b></p>	<p>No changes were made to the lane widths or operations on NE San Rafael from 132nd to 148th that would change people's driving behavior. We will monitor interactions and crash reports. We expect a period of adjustment.</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>Ubiquitous messages about biking here is due to lack of accessible infrastructure. Biking can be accessible for folks of varying identities and ages; Look at Amsterdam. Watch "Not Just Bikes" on YouTube. We can achieve what is there; some people will have to drive, but this mode shift will help those drivers get where they need to go. Climate change isn't going away, and transportation is currently a major contributor. Even electric cars are unsafe and pollute the environment. We massively subsidize cars due to free parking; we can privatize this cost and pay for better infrastructure.</b></p>		2
<p><b>Sorry, but we live in a wet environment, and people are not going to stop using cars especially in east county!!!</b></p>		
<p><b>I live in inner Southeast, and a lot of friends have been displaced due to affordability. They used to bike, but they don't feel comfortable doing it living in the outer neighborhoods they can afford. I was encouraged about the treatment on San Rafael, and I am excited to see the data.</b></p>		

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>I am on the Tigard Transportation Advisory Committee and with Bike Loud PDX. "Motherload" move: watch it. We have a cargo bike, my child and I. We have put tons of miles on it. Southwest in Motion's Capitol Hill Road treatment is not listed as a potential project. Why not?</b></p>	<p>There are dozens of streets in Portland where the Transportation System Plan and other plans call for advisory lanes or shoulders. Currently, PBOT is only tackling a handful. The project website will have updated information: <a href="http://www.portland.gov/transportation/ABL">www.portland.gov/transportation/ABL</a></p>	
<p><b>I was disappointed how this came about. I got a mailer regarding it, and then they're putting striping down. No input from the neighborhood. I live off San Rafael and 136th. I do a lot of driving because of my work; PBOT wants to get folks out of cars. Not all of us can do it. Older folks can't ride bikes. If you had done a meeting, folks would have been against what is going on here. This idea is absurd. I grew up in Oregon, Portland in general is not a place I admire anymore. Too many new people, too many new ideas that we don't need. We don't need a bike lane on every street in Portland.</b></p>	<p>We apologize for the lack of adequate notice. However, the community feedback still shaped how the NE San Rafael project was implemented. The advisory lanes planned for NE San Rafael from 132nd to 148th were put on hold until further evaluation and community engagement takes place. As mentioned at the open house, going forward with any new installations we will provide notification at least six months in advance of installation; provide opportunities to provide feedback and shape project outcomes; and information on how existing advisory shoulders and bike lanes are working in Portland.</p>	2
<p><b>Happy to see criteria for traffic volumes and speeds. Are there criteria for sight distance, especially in hilly areas like SW Portland?</b></p>	<p>Sight distance will be evaluated for all locations with horizontal or vertical curvature, or other sight distance obstructions. SW Talbot Road in particular will be evaluated. Sight distance will meet AASHTO Green Book design guidance. Where adequate sight distance is not available, a standard two-lane section with centerline will be used.</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>Induced demand. If you design streets for high speeds, people will drive faster. If you design them for slow speeds, people will drive slower. This treatment offers too much space and too few physical obstacles. I don't want to be the only obstacle in the street. Not everyone can drive, just like not everyone can ride a bike. In Southwest, we have a lot of blind corners and crests, and we need physical obstacles. Stop signs, or something else.</b></p>	<p>Additional traffic calming can be deployed with advisory lanes and shoulders. For example, on NE San Rafael from 111th to 122nd, there are speed bumps in addition to the recently installed advisory shoulders.</p>	
<p><b>Wait to pave shoulders, and/or install sidewalks and protected bike lanes when funding is available versus creating dangerous situations for the people that live in the community.</b></p>	<p>The data does not indicate this to be a dangerous situation in the multiple cities where it has been used. While our preference is for a "complete street" with sidewalks and protected bicycle lanes, the wait to achieve that could be decades or longer. We are seeking to provide as much immediate benefit for as many people as we can.</p>	
<p><b>I am a representative of Oregon Walks. We do not believe that paint is safety fundamentally. So, we hope this is just an interim solution. We support more permanent protected infrastructure that supports safe pedestrian movement. Thank you for allowing us to comment.</b></p>	<p>Our preference is complete street infrastructure. This is a low-cost treatment that we can afford that has been demonstrated elsewhere to provide benefit to vulnerable roadway users in the interim until the permanent features like sidewalks can be installed.</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>The data from PBOT shows only one bike accident in ten years. How and why did PBOT decide to change San Rafael? It makes no sense!</b></p>	<p>PBOT is charged with creating conditions that make bicycling safe and comfortable. Ridership is generally very low when there are not bikeways that are safe and comfortable. We take a pro-active approach and create the conditions that would allow somebody interested in bicycling to be encouraged to do so. As noted in the presentation, bicycle use in what are now bicycle-friendly neighborhoods in Portland increased from approximately 1% before bikeway networks to 20% in the highest use neighborhoods after bikeway networks were built. We expect bicycle use to increase with the addition of safe places to ride.</p>	
<p><b>When are the bike ICONS that were put in erroneously by the contractor be removed from San Rafael at 148th???</b></p>	<p>Staff is working on removing the bike stencil markings and arrows on the edge of NE San Rafael Street from 138th to 148th. There is not a schedule yet for their removal. The two shared lane markings (also known as sharrows) on NE San Rafael St just west of the intersection of NE 148th will remain, as they are appropriate markings creating awareness for people driving and bicycling. The shared lane markings do not change street operations.</p>	
<p><b>I saw people using the advisory bike lanes and lots of users which is good. Interested in the data. Assessing the neighboring properties and streets will increase those funds.</b></p>		
<p><b>What cities specifically have had success with this plan?</b></p>	<p>These are some of the US cities that have used advisory lanes: Boulder, CO • San Francisco, CA • Port Townsend, WA • Hailey, ID • Sandpoint, ID • Chicago, IL • Bloomington, IN • Cambridge, MA • Somerville, MA • Minneapolis, MN • Edina, MN • Mankato, MN • Scarborough, ME • Yarmouth, ME • Grand Rapids, MI • Hanover, NH • Alexandria, VA • Burlington, VT</p> <p>Additional information is available in these two reports: "<a href="#">Safety Considerations for All Road Users on Edge Lane Roads</a>" and "<a href="#">Advisory Bike Lanes in North America</a>"</p>	

Question or Comment	Response	Additional Support
<p><b>I know that there have been traffic fatalities in pedestrians crossing where they shouldn't. Have you taken into consideration the mental capacity of these fatalities who may not make wise, informed decisions?</b></p>	<p>People often cross where "they shouldn't" (i.e. on busy roadways without signals) in part because in some places walking to a signalized crossing might mean walking many blocks out of direction. We see this when crossing opportunities are few.</p> <p>We often do know about the state of impairment of people involved in crashes, including drivers, which is a significant contributing factor to crashes.</p>	
<p><b>There are many senior citizens who use these routes that are petrified to use this street now. This time of year, it gets darker earlier, which in a rainy climate makes things more dangerous. How are you going to educate the public, especially strangers to the area who are unaware of these changes, where they're supposed to drive safely with one lane for both directions of traffic, and what the line markings mean? There is NO WAY that people will be able to see and read the signs you have posted at each intersection. (It is very unnerving to swerve in and out of the painted lines while looking out for the infrequent cyclist. It's easier to avoid this street totally now.)</b></p>	<p>The data indicates that traffic speeds and crashes typically decrease or stay the same after advisory lanes are striped. There is also an expected hesitation and reluctance to use new designs. PBOT has produced educational materials for use of this treatment, in print, on informational "sandwich" boards, and on our website:</p> <p><a href="http://www.portland.gov/transportation/ABL">www.portland.gov/transportation/ABL</a></p>	