

NORTH PORTLAND IN MOTION

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #4



When: May 24, 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)

Jonna Lynn Bransford (Resident, University Park)

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)

Stephanie Blair (St Johns Center for Opportunity)

Libby Winter (WTS, Arbor Lodge)

Absent:

Jesse Neilson (Resident, Kenton)

Ryan Northam (Resident, Arbor Lodge)

Ethan Stuckmayer (Resident, St Johns)

Brett Duesing (Resident, St Johns)

Staff and Consultant Team:

Mike Serritella, Zef Wagner, Corinne McQueen, Laurel Priest (PBOT); Jessica Pickul, Alice Hodge (JLA Public Involvement)

Meeting Purpose: Review and discuss desired project outcomes from North Portland in Motion project; gather input on initial project concepts and confirm if they can reach desired outcomes; inform the committee how their input will inform next steps on project development.

MEETING SUMMARY

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jessica Pickul (JLA) opened the meeting and the group introduced themselves. Mike Serritella and Corrine McQueen (PBOT) reviewed the agenda, gave a brief project update, and shared upcoming engagement opportunities.

Project updates included:

- Biketown has expanded throughout North Portland peninsula.
- New tables and umbrellas were placed in St. Johns Plaza in May.

- A focus group meeting was held with some members of Our Village Gardens in New Columbia in April. Participants shared concerns about speeding, changes to Willamette Blvd, parking, cut through traffic, and secure bike parking.
- A workshop focused on wayfinding (directional signs) with Spanish speaking residents of New Columbia will be held in June.
- A Public Involvement Summary of what has been done so far will come out in June.
- We'll have free giveaways and project swag (buttons, magnets, etc.) that will be given at upcoming events to help draw folks in and engage the community.
- Upcoming Pedalpalooza bike rides: July 30 for a University Park/Portsmouth and New Columbia ride; August 6 for a Kenton, Arbor Lodge, and Overlook ride; August 13 for a St. Johns ride.

PROJECT IDEAS OVERVIEW

Mike introduced the project types and project outcomes for North Portland in Motion and emphasized that PBOT is working to identify projects that are responsive to community identified priorities, align with PBOT's transportation goals and policies, and can be delivered in the near term by PBOT.

When generating project ideas, PBOT also considered the feedback this group shared at the last Community Advisory Group meeting, where members shared how they would prioritize different types of projects and community identified priorities. These include addressing high driving speeds, reckless driver behavior, creating more accessible biking paths, and addressing transit travel time and station quality.

Mike then shared North Portland in Motion's draft project outcomes and asked the group if these are the right outcomes:

- **Improve access for people walking and biking to community destinations** like schools, parks, community centers, natural areas, and business districts.
- **Improve safety for all by** designing for safer vehicle speeds, adding more frequent crossings on busier streets, and building biking routes that are safer, more comfortable, and more accessible.
- **Establish a complete and accessible network** of all-ages friendly routes for biking that connect every neighborhood in the peninsula.
- **Improve access to transit** by investing in bus stops and providing accessible crossings to the busiest bus stops.
- **Identify major future projects and initiatives** to address critical transportation projects in North Portland.

Informed by these outcomes, PBOT has developed an initial project list that addresses:

- **Crossing Gaps:** PBOT analyzed every busy street in North Portland for long distances between safe crossings with the goal of closing crossing gaps through the project area.
- **Vehicle speeds and volumes:** PBOT conducted speed and volume counts on the busy streets in North Portland and found excessive vehicles speeds on many streets, confirming the need to reduce illegal speeding throughout the peninsula.
- **Existing bikeway network:** While North Portland currently has over 31 miles of bikeways, much of the network relies on narrow striped bike lanes on busier streets that don't meet PBOT's current guidance.

- **Low-stress bikeways:** Assessed where there were gaps in the current network and opportunities to create more low-stress bikeways.
- **Neighborhood greenways:** PBOT analyzed the current greenway network and found that North Portland in Motion can establish a peninsula-wide network to connect every school, neighborhood, and community destination with a better connected greenway network. This network is intended to complement a network of protected bike lanes.

Mike reviewed the project outcomes again and asked the group if anything is missing and asked for initial feedback. Below is a summary of the discussion:

- Participants were generally excited about the projects.
- One participant expressed concern about **traveler experience (i.e., accessibility, comfort) for transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists**. While diverters can make things less accessible, they can help make bike lanes or sidewalks more comfortable to use. *Mike responded that there are a lot of opportunities to include more ways to address "experience" when projects are in the development phase.*
- **How will equity be applied to these projects and how will these projects and PBOT invest in underrepresented communities in the peninsula?** *Mike responded that the project team will apply equity and access criteria when prioritizing North Portland in Motion projects. Project prioritization and determining which projects are most essential is the next phase of the North Portland in Motion project. That is when project evaluation criteria will be applied.*
- Participants asked for **more plain language to explain the projects**. Mike agreed and suggested that the team could use more images in the future to explain what projects will look like.

PROJECT TYPES

Mike provided a high-level overview of the five project types and acknowledged that the language could be more plain language. All the projects play a role in creating a holistic approach the peninsula. Each type is equally important.

Busy streets carry more drivers, public transit, and emergency responders. **Neighborhood Complete Streets** would include projects focused on reducing the overall speeding on the streets and improving the safety and comfort of people walking and biking along these streets. Example locations: N Portsmouth, N Smith, and N Willis.

Neighborhood Greenways are low speed and low volume shared neighborhood streets with bike stencils on them that connect people to important community destinations like schools, parks, commercial areas. N Delaware, N Ainsworth, and N Burr/Buchanan Ave are examples of a greenway street.

Critical Connections bridge major barriers connecting North Portland neighborhoods to each other and the rest of the City of Portland. These connections need to be extra safe for bikes, pedestrians, etc. This project is specifically looking at I-5 and railroad crossings.

Plazas and Public Spaces are hubs of community, connection, information exchange, and activation. This project type grew out of the pandemic and growing awareness that every neighborhood needs a space where people can gather and connect. Example locations: Plaza in St. Johns, mobility hub in New Columbia, and

improvements in Downtown Kenton around the MAX station or business district. A CAG member suggested that the space for St. John's Farmer's Market could use improvement.

Active Transportation Corridors run the length of the peninsula and emphasize safety and mobility. Projects could include adding protected bike lanes. Example locations: N Willamette Blvd and N Interstate Ave.

PROJECT SUB-AREAS

PBOT has broken up the peninsula into three areas: Upper (St. Johns and Cathedral Park), Mid (Portsmouth, University Park, and New Columbia) and Inner (Kenton, Arbor Lodge and Overlook). The funding and project goals stay the same, but this helps the project team better communicate the projects with the public.

There are over 40 total projects:

- 15 Neighborhood Complete Streets
- 20 Neighborhood Greenways
- 5 Critical Connections
- 3 Plazas and Public Spaces
- 2 Active Transportation Corridors

Mike provided an overview of projects that fall outside the scope of this project, future projects, and plan recommendations which include ODOT recommendations. While these projects are not in the five-year implementation plan of North Portland in Motion, they are important. These projects include N Columbia Corridor (PBOT), N Lombard Corridor (ODOT), N Killingsworth Main Street, Bridges over the Railroad Cut, and St. Johns Multimodal Access (ODOT).

A participant mentioned that the Parks Bureau just applied for Metro funding and are now taking public comments on projects, including the North Portland Greenway Trail. Zef shared the link to comment: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-flexible-funding-transportation/2025-27-rffa>. Someone asked if the trail includes a Metro partnership due to the Willamette Cove effort. Zef responded that he doesn't think so and that intended for segments further to the north.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

The group split into two small breakout groups, where a facilitator and notetaker asked a series of questions and placed sticky notes on a map of North Portland in Motion project ideas. Each group focused on a different area in North Portland. Below is a summary of what the groups discussed:

Group 1 Report Out: Upper and Mid-Peninsula Ideas

- Discussed the difference between a neighborhood greenway and a neighborhood complete street.
- Willamette Blvd is a large priority, especially extending the greenway north.
- Questions about the plaza in St Johns: What is possible?; Who owns it?; What work is going to happen?
- Greenway connections that connect to schools like Roosevelt High School.
- What can we do to make transit better? How can we push for transit priorities?
- A participant commented that the group needed more time to talk about the neighborhood complete streets and critical connections.

Commented [NM1]: Mural here: <https://app.mural.co/t/poem9329/m/poem9329/1653432610194/34b611a2243dae9d617c11550013413d80bdd637?sender=88157e05-4741-4240-840a-20567ea82fac>

Group 2 Report Out: Mid and Inner-Peninsula Ideas

- Overall, nothing is missing. Participants felt that the proposed network was good and that building out a network in North Portland is a good thing.
- Participants were excited about Interstate Ave project and improvements to bike lanes.
- Discussed the parking permit program in the interstate corridor for commuter parking.
- Participants expressed interest in the Kenton Plaza idea and would like more details. They also noted that there may be more plaza opportunities at N Denver and N Lombard (i.e., the slip lane), and at an empty property off of Rosa Parks and N Denver.
- Potential new aquatic center would be well served by the network and presents a possible plaza opportunity.
- A bikeway network near the Columbia Park Annex would serve this area well.
- General support for the Chautauqua, Woolsey, Willis projects.
- Questions about prioritization, the next phase of this project, and how PBOT will apply equity and safety when selecting projects for the final North Portland in Motion plan.

GROUP DISCUSSION

After the breakout group report out, Jessica opened the meeting for a broader group discussion. Below is a summary of what was discussed.

Mike mentioned that **complete streets** is an intentionally broad project type that can encompass a wide variety of projects, allowing “complete streets” to respond more to the context and needs of a street. How wide a street is will determine how the street is developed. Complete streets usually carry transit, need space for bus stops and have the highest number of crashes involving pedestrians. This could mean PBOT adds safe crossings and calming measures. The “complete street” designation means that this street is important and there are opportunities to make it more accessible, safe, and useful for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and drivers. Zef added that PBOT usually has more funding options for complete streets because complete streets can be developed in a variety of ways.

A participant noted that they are excited about the improvements associated with “complete streets” and would like to see ways to **prioritize time savings for buses and public transit**. This could mean better stops so that buses aren’t stopping more or adding additional service (PBOT would need to advocate to TriMet for this).

Zef explained the dashed line along Willamette Blvd (AT.1), which denotes a project to create protected bike lanes that would involve removing parking along Willamette Blvd. As a federally funded project, construction is currently expected to begin in 2026. Because it’s a **critical connection, there is the option to implement this project earlier and create a bike facility sooner than 2026**. If PBOT implemented it earlier, it could move forward by summer 2023 or early 2024. However, due to limited funds, it’s more of a question about whether PBOT should prioritize spending on this project now (within the context of the North Portland in Motion plan) or wait for federal funding. Participants would like to know **what would be given up by pushing this project forward now** rather than waiting for federal funding (i.e., a neighborhood greenway, less complete streets, etc.)

Participant questions:

- **Is land banking for plazas an option within the scope of this project?** *St Johns plaza was vacated right of way. Permanent street closure is not off the table for public space but would need a trial period. PBOT doesn't typically purchase land for non-transportation or public space needs.*
- **What projects cross the railroad and head west?** *Projects that cross the cut are critical connections and protected bike lanes over the Railroad Cut.*
- **What is the goldenrod color in the map?** *These lines denote safety projects where the width of the street will affect any future design and development. These could involve upgrading existing bike lanes, adding crossings and traffic calming measures. PBOT will think more about how to explain the diversity of projects within this category before going to public.*

Some participants had trouble understanding projects along the minor streets in the map. Mike acknowledged the team can improve the project descriptions to be written in plain language.

WRAP UP, NEXT MEETING + NEXT STEPS

Mike shared next steps for the project through September, which included sharing a Public Engagement Report in mid-June, launching a public online open house in July to share project ideas and prioritization exercises, and holding small pop-up events in July and August. The next CAG meeting will be in early September.

Mike invited CAG members to come to the following upcoming community events and help staff them with PBOT:

- July 30: Community event at New Columbia and first Pedalpalooza ride in New Columbia, Portsmouth and University Park
- August 6: Pedalpalooza ride in Kenton
- August 13: Pedalpalooza in St. Johns and Cathedral Park
- Throughout September: Walks with Oregon Walks

Jessica mentioned that PBOT would be happy to advertise any events CAG members are organizing themselves within this group. Jessica and Mike may follow-up with key questions between now and the September CAG meeting.

Jessica wrapped up the meeting and thanked everyone for participating.