PedPDX: Portland’s Citywide Pedestrian Plan

Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, September 26th, 2018 5:30-7:30 PM

Multnomah County Central Library (801 SW 10th Ave)

**I. Welcome & Introductions.**

The meeting begins with a round of introductions, with attendees and CAC members sharing a highlight from the summer.

**II. Project status & schedule overview**

Michelle Marx (PBOT) & Francesca Patricolo (PBOT)

Michelle begins with a quick overview of what topics will be covered in the meeting and general upcoming project highlights including a timeline for when a draft plan will be ready for public review. During the month of October, the PedPDX team will apply the prioritization criteria to the refined network, develop an outline for the draft plan, and further develop a ‘pedestrian toolbox’. In November, a draft will be written, to be shared more broadly in December.

Francesca provides a summary of district coalition specific outreach on prioritization network.

The outreach focused on vetting/refining the neighborhood walkways designation with key stakeholders who knew best about where people walk in their neighborhood. Francesca thanks those who participated. Francesca shares that staff is currently reviewing maps with the lens of figuring out how to incorporate as much feedback as possible. Neighborhood specific summaries will be developed and shared with stakeholders.

**III. How will be address needs within the Pedestrian Priority Network?**

Michelle Marx (PBOT) & Francesca Patricolo (PBOT)

The PedPDX team presented the citywide safety, equity and demand methodologies at the previous PedPDX CAC meeting in late spring. Since then, PBOT has received a lot of great feedback. The team highlights key messages they’ve heard and how this has informed their approach to prioritization.

* With regards to “safety” scoring/prioritization:
  + Staff heard that a finer grade scoring definition was needed with the regards to speed and number of travel lanes. Prioritization methodology is being updated to reflect this input.
  + The PedPDX Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended increasing the weight given for systemic safety risk factors. This suggestion received mixed feedback from CAC, leading PBOT staff to recommend weighting risk factors at 60% and collision history at 40%.
  + The CAC asked for fewer safety points to be assignment to off-street trails. However, when the prioritization was applied broadly to the network as a whole, off-street trails needed a point value to account for the safety benefits of being separated from motor vehicles (risk factors & crash history). Additionally, trails meeting high equity and high demand scores found themselves in higher levels of prioritization overall.
* With regards to equity prioritization, the CAC suggestion that affordable housing should be considered in prioritization will be reflected in the implementation strategy.
* With regards to whether criteria should be weighted evening, since PBOT staff did not hear clarity from TAC/CAC and since weighted test applications did not yield different outcomes, the recommendation is to weight all criteria evenly

Michelle outlines the connection between PedPDX and the Transportation System Plan (TSP). PedPDX will update TSP classifications – this will be one of the may guides that will identify/select large projects from within the TSP for implementation. She also shares that PedPDX prioritization will be guiding the Pedestrian Network Completion Program.

Question & Answer:

* **Question:** These other plans, are they going to be contributing parts to our plan as they work through theirs? Or will they be handing over funds to areas of overlap?
  + **Response:** I’ll use Vision Zero as an example. They have their own plan, priorities, and funding sources. That’s not to say that we don’t have overlapping needs. As we scope our work, we work together to develop funds and share resources to get projects implemented. When we talk about periodization, it’s guidance for us, but not the only way – we also look for projects that overlap with other investment priorities that can be built more quickly. Just because something is a Tier I, it doesn’t mean it will be propitiated over a Tier III – depends on funding.
* **Question:** Does that (prioritization) work with other bureaus as well?
  + **Response:** Absolutely, if the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) is working on a priority street, we will collaborate with them to make sure we are making the most efficient use of city resources.
* **Question:** Does PedPDX have a dedicated funding stream?
  + **Response:** Yes.
* **Question:** As we work towards developing the toolkit in this meeting, would it apply to just PedPDX or to other plans?
  + **Response**: It could be used by other and all plans. PedPDX is two things; a network with identified priorities and needs, but also a toolkit. For example, all programs will be implementing parking setbacks. One more example – influence of our prioritization with regards to Southwest in Motion (SWIM). SWIM projects and PedPDX projects can (and do) overlap with one another.

**IV. Prioritizing in Southwest Portland**

Michelle Marx (PBOT) & Francesca Patricolo (PBOT)

In May, PBOT shared a map of preliminary results based on our prioritization. This result in an absence of Tier 1 & Tier 2 streets in Southwest Portland. Concurrently with Southwest in Motion, PBOT staff learned more about real concerns that exist in Southwest. CAC members first convened a meeting to share their concerns and PBOT is working to address them.

CAC members share SWIM context and express appreciation PBOT’s willingness to collaborate. Members share insights and challenges related to the proposed prioritization methodology and how accurately is able to reflect the granularity of low-income housing and safety concerns throughout Southwest Portland. A CAC member highlights the importance of addressing ADA accessibility throughout the pedestrian network in Southwest.

PBOT staff highlight that throughout the additional engagement process they learned more about the pockets of poverty and refugee communities living in Southwest Portland. This is only compounded by the issue that Southwest contains some of the least developed pedestrian infrastructure in the City of Portland.

Francesnca notes that the safety factors PedPDX uses for crash and risk factors might not show up in Southwest since there is such little pedestrian infrastructure that these conditions might now show up. Michelle walks through the various methods PBOT staff applied in accounting for the unique challenges faced by Southwest Portland. Those considerations are summarized below:

* *What if PBOT weighted affordable housing?*
  + When you consider affordable housing citywide, it lowers priority in SW (Central City, North PDX, and Eastside will be outweighing the small amount). With regards to implementation, PBOT is going to look at the location of affordable housing in our implementation strategies.
* **Question:** Is this just officially designated affordable housing? Or market-rate housing that is affordable.
  + **Response:** I don’t believe so. Data is from the housing bureau, so it would be properties related to that bureau.
* *What if PBOT weighted concentrations of youth and elderly Portlanders?*
  + This did not further prioritize Southwest Portland; looking at low-income gets more directly at prioritizing areas with lower-income youth.
* *What if PBOT weighted areas with higher concentrations of people with disabilities?*
  + Data is unreliable from the Census. Data with other sources and proxies (i.e. TriMet Lift data). PBOT staff talked about this issue with the Office of Equity and Human Rights – they have been working to get money for research and get better data. The moment PBOT has access to reliable/high quality data, they will use it! (but we do not have it right now).
* *What if PBOT weighted areas based on the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability’s ‘displacement vulnerability index”?*
  + Though work on developing this index is ongoing, it does not further prioritize Southwest Portland over other parts of the city.

Other metrics were considered including areas with higher housing cost burden, areas with higher proportions of people renting, and school’s with higher rate of students receiving free and reduced lunch (a key indictor of poverty). However, all of these metrics either had 1) unreliable or not regularly updated data and/or 2) did not elevate SW prioritization.

What was decided on being the best approach was assigning additional points for overlapping projects identified in the SWIM area plan. This would be a method of addressing geographic equity gaps – an approach that recognizes all the community outreach efforts that have happened in SW. and catches areas that are not necessarily revealed through looking at city-wide data sets.

Francesca provides an overview of SWIM-related outreach including engagement with OHSU patients, members of the Jewish community who must walk for religious reasons, international students at PCC, Portlanders living at a Home Forward Site, people with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, and older adults living at Terwilliger Plaza.

* **Question:** Is the SWIM data crowdsourced or data based?
  + **Response:** It’s both – pulled projects from TSP; but there was a huge online crowdsource engagement; neighborhood engagement, CAC, etc. – Highly leveraged from the community engagement related to the SWIM process.
* **Comment:** I didn’t realize you had gone to so many community sectors and I appreciate that.
* **Comment:** I see folks in the religious community walking... For me it was the weight of a 20-year plan, I know there are children, youth living in the community and they would be disenfranchised in the plan. I realize that they might not be built in the first couple years, but to keep in mind that with a 20-year time frame.

Michelle asks CAC members to go around the room and share their support and/or concerns about using SWIM methodology to prioritize projects in Southwest Portland as part of PedPDX.

* **Comment**: I support bonus points for overlapping projects; I appreciate the work that you all went through to examine other equity methodologies. If we keep focusing on the walkability of our city, it’ll capture the needs of our most vulnerable populations.
* **Comment:** Based on my understanding (recaps plan) – Did talking with people on the group raise up projects that didn’t come up with the prioritization methodologies.
  + **Response**: Talking to people makes such a big difference, people told us things we would never know by looking at a map.
* **Comment**: If some of that info got fed into this proposal, then I support it.
* **Comment:** Based on census methodology, really poor and really rich people cancel each other out and make those people invisible. Safety and Demand are tied – where it is difficult/unsafe to walk, people won’t’ do it.
* **Comment:** I Support looking at SWIM projects as an overlay – I’m never a pedestrian in SW because it’s terrifying – this feels sound to me. I like that we addressed the perception that SW is just rich people driving in cars.
* **Comment**: You think East Portland is bad, but SW really is a nightmare (in some instances). A lot of it has to do with the hills and wide roads on the hills. It makes it really terrifying. I think that we do need to look at that. Also, areas where people don’t walk at all – I imagine there are a lot of areas like that. Coming up with solutions is going to be challenging – I look forward to getting to know SW a little better. See for myself some of the problems. One of the areas I haven’t spent much time because it’s a chore to walk there.
* **Comment:** When I first moved to Southwest, I called the city and said, “we need a sidewalk to get to the grocery store” and he said, “you moved to the wrong part of town!”. I’m wondering how you all work the improvements; the MAX is coming o SW and there’s a discussion about what the alignment should be. I’m wondering how you keep up with that – and keep the focus on walkability.
  + **Response:** We keep up with that – I get pulled into those projects and I’m in charge of making them walkability. The MAX will be building sidewalks.
* **Comment:** I do appreciate the work that you’ve done, and I do appreciate how you’ve listened to us.
* **Comment:** I’m concerned that outsiders might not understand why these decisions were made. I just want to be sure that other areas of the city are not overlooked for the same reasons.
  + **Response:** That is great point. A member from our PedPDX CAC is also on Northwest in Motion (NWIM) community advisory committee. In an area that is already very built, how to do we make it better to walk (lists NW specific things). That process is happening now, we continue to do these plans (deeper dives). What we’re saying in this plan, is that Safety, Equity, and Demand methodology did not work well for SW and this is how we account for it.
* **Comment:** I really appreciate staff time and analysis that went into this.
* **Comment:** I support the proposal as well – I do echo some prior sentiment. Is there something we can learn or take form the SW that we can apply to other parts of the city? Data does not always tell the story, which we learned today.
* **Comment:** Overall, I do not *not* support it. I’m not positive there aren’t issues that could be problematic later.
* **Comment:** I have some concerns with this methodology – I feel it’s important to do apples/apples comparisons moving forward. I really appreciate that PedPDX is an adaptive, evolving plan – but SWIM is a short term 5-year plan. Seeing the other funding streams that can build SW Portland. To divert from this methodology is a mistake moving forward.
* **Comment:** I concur with the previous comment a little bit. Perhaps I don’t really understand how the equity concerns are specifically different from other parts of city. Is we have good methodologies, it should work citywide. One of the specifics is trying to capture streets that are so dangerous that nobody walks there, but I feel we captured that with the revised safety methodology. I think it could be opening a big can of worms… I definitely have some reservations.
* **Comment:** I agree with the concerns that have been voiced. If there are gaps/issues that were found in SW through these other methodologies, who’s to say there are no other gaps in the other neighborhoods as well? I also agree that form the outside there’s going to be a big question about why SW gets special treatment.
* **Comment:** I support the proposal – I’ve been a part of many prioritization exercises and have done a lot research about equity research. Back in the day, it was all ‘backroom deals’; then everything as “ data driven”. There might be a sweet spot between the people and data driven approaches. Anytime you aggregate data, it doesn’t reflect individual people’s needs. If you’re trying to get equitable, there’s a chance that the data you have privilege some groups and leaves other groups out.
* **Comment:** I don’t support the bonus points. Safety doesn’t show up in SW; Demand is somewhat arbitrary of a measurement. SW doesn’t really show up in terms of demand either. I love that you’ve exhausted the equity dimension, and perhaps you should do the same. A few suggestions: 1) Looking at gaps in the infrastructure (actually looking at what the quality of infrastructure is) – this could highlight problems in SW. I don’t support, not because I don’t support investing in SW – but rather I don’t think the bonus points methodology really gets at what’s being missed in SW.

**V. Toolbox brainstorming**

PedPDX CAC group activity

*PBOT Staff and PedPDX CAC members begin to engage in a brainstorming activity to support the development of the PedPDX Pedestrian Toolbox.*