

Bicycle Advisory Committee

Remote via Zoom

March 8, 2022 | 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Introductions/Announcements 6:00 – 6:10

- BAC recruitment just ended and all 81 applicants were invited to this meeting

Public Comment 6:10 – 6:20

- Is there an uptick in public transportation? Is Metro doing anything to incentivize ridership?
 - Roger Geller: There are some projects focusing on transit and evaluations going on now. Ridership has come back in some areas and not in others. It is forecasted that the numbers will take several years to return back to pre-COVID numbers.
- Folks are concerned about their safety on the MAX. Want a campaign to make it safer.
- What is the policy to sweeping bike lanes?
 - RG: Bike lanes are swept regularly (6 nights/week) but only one sweeper that can maneuver in smaller bike lane spaces from protected bike lanes. Maintenance Operations is working with us to come in and present. There is also a request system.
 - Public: Have we considered some part-time operator positions?
 - David Stein: Issue of funding
- Question about the deployment of speed light and red-light cameras
 - *Updated answer post-meeting:* there is currently no update to the red-light camera roll out
- Ask for 2030 bike plan update
 - RG: 2019 was a progress report that addressed 240 odd action items. There is no other plan update nor required update now. Question for the BAC – would that be helpful?
 - Public: how can we get progress information?
 - RG: 2019 progress report is one of the only public facing documents that discusses miles of bike lanes, what type, status of action items, etc.
- Bike Portland reported that Metro suddenly has \$71 million that are not earmarked for highways and there are exiting plans and projects. If not all the money is received, are any of the bicycle projects more important?
 - RG: Regional funds is a program run every 3 years asking for a project for regional flexible funds and all of the local jurisdictions within the Metro region apply for more projects than there is money for, so we identify certain projects as high and low tier. We will get some but not all.
 - DS: The projects that were submitted by PBOT presented to the BAC, so we were able to provide feedback on content of the project, as well as prioritization, to some degree.
 - Ally Holmqvist: We also wrote a letter in support for the project to provide additional support
- Does the BAC give input at a time that it can influence?
 - DS: Depends, but we try to be proactive about it
- Seems as though BAC letters of support are one of the most powerful tools. To whom are the letters addressed and how are they taken into consideration

- RG: Depends on the project. Can go to Metro, City Council, senior management at PBOT, sent down to appropriate staff to address.
- DS: Anyone can write these letters and if they get approved by full membership of the BAC, they can be sent on. There is no review process inside the City, but there is outside the City. One of the most powerful tools – sent 7 letters last year and got responses to 2 or 3.

Committee Chair and Vice-Chair Welcome 6:20 – 6:35

- BAC Chair, David Stein, and Co-Chair, Ally Holmqvist presented. They discussed the purpose of the BAC, welcomed participants who have applied, and gave insight into next steps.
- Overall goal of BAC to advise City Council and all departments of the city regarding projects and policies around use of the bicycle. Areas of responsibility include bikeway policy, implementation, education, equity, and community input and feedback.
- Highlighted how each individual experiences the city differently. The role of the Chair is to encourage full and safe participation and assist in building consensus.
- Feedback is super important and is generally provided in 3 ways: directly through questions/observations/formal comments, letter writing, and testimony.
- Reiterated the positive impact of all applicants and interest in bettering the bicycle community, as well as the hope that those who are selected this round stay involved. Want to expand BAC in inclusivity, diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as removing barriers to access including, but not limited to, public participation, ways to get involved, etc.
- There are many other committees to participate in – both as a BAC liaison and/or to continue community service. There are also many other amazing bicycle groups around Portland doing amazing things to better the City.

Jamboard | Likes

- I like all the new paths and the dividing lanes. I notice a danger the white stick dividers have created on SE 45th the sticks are too close to the intersection, forcing a car to veer into the oncoming lane to make a right turn.
- wealth and safety. People in my bubble do not feel safe cycling, "they are easy target", bike lanes litter with garbage and other blockades, bad pavement, bike theft. Some of comments for stopping using all types of bikes.
- Roger's presentation + the data shared was really impactful.
- Appreciate income and age data being shown along with % that bike.
- Cycling as a commuter tool has decreased but cycling as recreation activity has skyrocketed. How do we engaged and bring the recreational user into the "commute on bike", "go out into town on bike" community/style?

Jamboard | Concerns

- The Greenways are very far from being the safe and accessible network for cyclists of all ages/abilities that they are billed as by PBOT. To truly make the greenways attractive to parents, kids, and families, we need to lower the speed limit from 20mph to 15mph, and put regular diverters (like very 3-4 blocks) on all greenways, to reduce through traffic.

- Greenways do not feel safe to me. How can we report unsafe stretches? Or overall improve slow car speeds on these streets?
- I am concerned with biking at night. Often cars slow and intimidate me. I notice they do not have any plates.
- I get concerned about crossing busy large arterial streets like N Lombard is bad enough. I also am concerned about the types of people driving fast coming from suburban areas.
- I see many People of color biking in SE Portland. It is a vital transportation for them to work. Car ownership in Portland is very expensive.
- Just some general feedback: Breakout rooms are most productive when there is a clear prompt or set of discussion questions.

Jamboard | Questions

- What percent of PBOT's budget gets spent on motor vehicles vs bicycling?
- Is there a study of where people are moving from? Trying to understand the behavior of newcomers to the city and the mentality to driving?
- BAC Resignation. Will steps be taken to handle the committee differently?
- How is all this data collection done? There are lots of stats but I am wondering where it gets reported, how it gets reported, who is responsible for managing that data? Is it reliable? Just curious about how it is done.
- What are the city's plans for increasing bike parking around the city?
- Are there plans to update the data in Roger's presentation? Referencing data ending in 2014 and 2011.
- The network is larger, but is it significantly safer and does it well maintained and attractive? Have driving speeds and driver numbers on Greenways increased over the last decades?
- Agree with this comment. Even GPS software route drivers to Greenways that are bike focus, then you see more car there, makes it feel less safe for most.

Bicycle Coordinator presentation and discussion 6:35 – 7:15

- PBOT Bicycle Coordinator Roger Geller presented. Discussed the importance of BAC applications and the goal of empowering applicants' interests into effective participation in order to help the city achieve its goals using bicycle transportation as a tool.
- Presented City's policies and how they have led to greater biking conditions and help make driving less attractive. Continued into the Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Strategy for people moving (aka the Green Transportation Hierarchy).
- PBOT's Bike Plan led to the creation of the bike lane network. The 3 main points for the 2030 bike plan was to produce safe, comfortable, and attractive bikeways that can serve all types and ages of users. There is now about 23 miles of protected bike lanes and PBOT has been focusing to make intersections safer – which still remains a focus for us.
- Starting 2020, we had focused on the East side and make facility improvements. Wanted to invest in area that we have traditionally under invested.
- Some challenges we are facing: making bicycling for more than inner city white males, addressing the notion that bicycles are a harbinger of gentrification, helping Portland residents adjust to change. There is not good data on this, but the Oregon Household Activity survey (last

available dataset is from 2011) presented that nonwhite households walk, bike, and use transit at higher rates than white households.

- Biking rates have dropped, which we are looking to change. It's possible that our network isn't as apparent to new people coming to Portland, especially Neighborhood Greenways. Current bikeways are better than they have ever been but potentially might not be able to withstand current annual growth.

Discussion

- How well intersected are our BAC goals with other city goals for housing density, zoning, public school education, etc.?
 - RG: Portland has become important/successful because our planners recognized land-use transportation connection. Bicycle is a vehicle of short trips – we talk about conditions that making bicycling more attractive than most groups of 3 miles or less. However, unsure what PPS school setting criteria is.
- Many questions about e-bikes, how that would factor into policies and also project-to-project
 - RG: E-bikes will probably attract a lot of people to biking. They will also require us to think about how we design facilities with faster speeds, will need more width. E-bikes will change the cycling culture.

Jamboard | Likes

- Excellent introductory presentation Roger!!!

Jamboard | Concerns

- Comp plan policy 9.6: has transit superseded bicycling for the City? Esp. given equity concerns.
- Legend for "Bicycle network: intersections" (p. 24) does not differentiate between orange and yellow circles. If the yellow are bike signals, what are the orange ones?
- Does BAC leverage PSU and other academic concerns for updated data collection and analysis?

Jamboard | Questions

- What is the source of the bike use data?
- Where do we find printed maps of TSP classifications of bike facilities? It would be great to take around on BikeLoud rides

Breakout Rooms 7:15 – 7:35

- Meeting attendees were assigned to breakout groups with either a BAC member or a PBOT employee to discuss the meeting materials and presentations.

Jamboard | Likes

Jamboard | Concerns

- "safe and comfortable" is kind of a fuzzy concept, how do we measure it? survey? are there other metrics?
- Small gaps in the bike network can create big barriers for interested riders
- why should people join the committee if it doesn't have any pull?

- how do we get more transparency on responses from PBOT/the city if our recommendations are rejected?
- Accountability- at the City, in investments, in priorities, for drivers
- Difference between reality and what is on the ground (2030 Bike Plan, Green Transportation Hierarchy)
- Claimed priorities and goals for bike projects go out the window when there isn't enough money or room for cars. e.g. None of the plans says when to remove a car turn lane.

Jamboard | Questions

- does PBOT work with PSU or other institutions to measure metrics over time?
- what is the City's current policy on live meetings with 3-dimensional people?
- how do we get better and more consistent data?
- Drop in ridership- why is that the case? how can we address that?
- How is PBOT engaging to encourage cycling and work with groups like BikeLoud, BikeFarm on a broader level (rather than project-level)?

Reconvene 7:35 – 8:00

- All breakout groups rejoined to report back about their discussions. It was led by a volunteer from each group.
- This meeting was unique, in which all applicants were invited to discuss. As a result, there was a lot of participation, which led to great feedback. The comments from BAC members and the public have been organized by topic.

Bikeway Network

- In some places there is a lack of cohesiveness to the bikeway network; small gaps/barriers in the bikeway network can introduce significant barriers to biking
- I see many People of color biking in SE Portland. It is a vital transportation for them to work. Car ownership in Portland is very expensive.
- The network is larger, but is it significantly safer and does it well maintained and attractive? Have driving speeds and driver numbers on Greenways increased over the last decades?

Greenways

- Greenways are great because they allow all stakeholders to get what they want. City doesn't have to build more bike lanes (and remove parking, etc). People who live on the street get a nice environment.
- Too many cars on the greenways in NW, especially on 24th.
- We need more diverters (+ a lot)
- People driving may not understand the street is a greenway. That's especially true on the cross-streets where people don't always behave safely.
- The Greenways are currently very far from providing the level of comfort & safety that they supposedly promise to parents/families/kids. This could be fairly easily/cheaply remedied with regular diverters.
- Even one of our relatively good new Greenways -- NW Flanders -- is practically unrideable in stretches because the pavement is treacherous. How could that project have possibly not

included a basic resurfacing? Looks good on a map but doesn't seem to actually center the bike rider's experience.

- Greenways are very far from being the safe and accessible network for cyclists of all ages/abilities that they are billed as by PBOT. To truly make the greenways attractive to parents, kids, and families, we need to lower the speed limit from 20mph to 15mph, and put regular diverters (like very 3-4 blocks) on all greenways, to reduce through traffic.
- Greenways do not feel safe to me. How can we report unsafe stretches? Or overall improve slow car speeds on these streets?
- GPS software route drivers to Greenways that are bike focus, then you see more car there, makes it feel less safe for most.

Protected lanes

- Need more of them.
- They need to be maintained better (sweeping)

City Approach

- Need more recent data [discussed OHAS data from 2011 as most comprehensive all-trip data available to us]
- Does BAC/PBOT have specific monthly/quarterly goals related to bicycling?
- There seems a disconnect between the reality on the ground and our priority framework [in response to discussion about Comprehensive Plan Policy 9.6; Transportation strategy for people movement]
- There doesn't seem to be a mechanism to hold the city accountable to its policies.
- How is PBOT doing engagement and encouragement on a broader level to support increased bicycling?
- "Safe and comfortable" is a fuzzy concept. Are there ways we can measure that?
- Does PBOT respond to BAC advice? I.e., when BAC sends a communication does it receive a response?
- How willing is the city to share data?
- Does the BAC provide input to PBOT at a time when it can influence decisions?
- Has there been any move away from an emphasis on "fully automated" vehicles since Policy 9.6 was adopted?
- What percent of restricted and unrestricted funds does PBOT apply to motor vehicles vs bicycling?
- If Portland has a policy that explicitly prioritizes people, bikes, & transit over ICE vehicles, then why are cars still given first priority in literally all street designs?
- Is one of the problems that this is an advisory committee but perhaps the political leaders hearing the advice don't have the political courage or ability to heed the committee's advice?
- It accounts for so much of the green plan, biking should be a commission.
- BAC Resignation. Will steps be taken to handle the committee differently?
- why should people join the committee if it doesn't have any pull?

Fear on the streets/safety

- In Portland cars dominate and people are afraid they're going to die

- “The confident and enthused cyclists have become afraid due to worse driving behavior”
- Noticing more drivers than their used to be. Especially on the greenways. There are more angry drivers. “I think about wanting to make it home without injury (when biking)” —from a lifelong Portland cyclist
- Concerns about safety of large roadways in EPDX
- Seem to be more cars and more dangerous driving behavior
- Lived experience contributes to sense of safety and how that lived experience can discourage biking
- We have to educate the public about biking and the paths, safe bikeways available. Portland is the closest a City can be to a European City where biking and walking are integrated into the City safely.

E-bikes (discussion pulled from chat)

- How do e-bikes fit in to the comprehensive plan? I'm seeing more and more people moving toward e-bikes for commuting and other trips.
- I have too and often they speed on bike paths.
- E-bikes are bicycles, where they factor in is with design decisions. Accounting for the differences in speed is a consideration for new bicycle facilities.
- Plus e-bikes are super fast some times, and liked to add the issue with e-bike batteries being toxic, too. After they are depleted.
- E-bikes are bikes. They make low-carbon transportation more accessible to more people who may not otherwise be able to complete such trips under their own power. Our infrastructure is more than capable of accounting for minor speed differences between riders.
- Neither here nor there but in response to some of the comments above I'm hoping as a cycling community & participants in this call we recognize that e-bike are bicycles, and yes there are certainly things to recognize and plan for the impact of with this, e-bikes aren't the problem and they are a great, accessible way for all types of people to spend more time on a bicycle and less in a car. E-cyclists are cyclists and I hope we don't focus on a hierarchy of cycling, especially all e-bikes sold within the US fit into the 3 tiered system and in fact cap out at a lower MPH that many folks hit without assistance.
- my class 1 e-bike prevents me from driving when I'm really not feeling like taking out my manual bike.
- E-bikes, and the encounters with traditional bikes, offer an excellent opportunity for education for riders. In particular the newer riders who are not aware of basic safety tips like using bells or voices to announce when overtaking another rider on a busy, high speed corridor.
- e-bikes are bikes, and that they provide mobility options for people who might not otherwise find biking attractive or possible, for example, like my aging parents & in-laws, and myself, who could no longer schlep 2 ever-growing kids around without an e-assist.
- I think it's worth it for us all to reframe how we think of e-bikes as not just an equity/accessibility (which is huge, and wonderful) but also anyone of any age & physical ability can and do ride e-bikes, that it's not just limited to a certain group of folks who might not otherwise “be able to” ride, it's a legitimate form of transportation and in many parts of the world is the standard use of bicycle.
- E-bike batteries (like cell phone batteries and power tool batteries) can be properly dropped off at Metro facilities and many other locations. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/tools-living/garbage-and-recycling/find-a-recycler>

- how could e-bikes influence making bike lanes wider, for all of us?
- “Acoustic” bike is my favorite term for non-electrics
- Fun industry fact. Pre-covid boom, the cycling industry was noting a drastic decrease in purchases in new bikes but a clear trend upward in e-bikes and in the last 4 years most cycling companies have noted a 25%+ increase in sales when all other categories were dropping. Keeping in mind the more people that ride bikes the more money that goes back into cycling infrastructure.
- Maybe e bikes help us consider longer trips than 3 miles for what is bikeable?
- E-bikes rule :)
- <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-21/u-s-e-bike-sales-outpaced-electric-cars-in-2021>
- E-bikes sales cutting into the e-car market
- What about scooters? They get lumped in with E-bikes in most discussions, but recent studies coming out of the UK indicate scooters are actually taking the place of walking.
- We moved to Portland less than two years ago precisely because of the bike infrastructure and because we wanted to be less reliant on our car. We also use a cargo e-bike to carry our two kids around. Without an electric assist we would not be able to bike as much.

Missed opportunity

- “Stagnation in mode share is surprising, especially since biking increased in many places during the pandemic.” Other cities (Paris, Strasbourg are two examples mentioned) showed strong political leadership.
- Wish that PDX had done what some European cities did during COVID to provide more protection for people walking and biking.

Historic context

- “Looking at historical picture from 100 years ago. Interesting that many of the issues are the same. White people could ride. Black people not. People bicycling were complaining about horses. People walking were complaining about bikes.” –from a researcher/professor and author

Uncategorized

- Where are all these people coming to Portland moving from? Are they coming from car-centered cities and not prone to biking in PDX? [in response to information indicating rapid growth in both population and driving alone to work 2014-2018]
- Desire to slow arterial streets and provide better crossings
- Support lowering speed limits but not clear people are abiding by that (especially in EPDX)
- It’s more comfortable biking adjacent to bus lanes than adjacent to travel lanes
- Has the BAC considered the impact to city streets if tolls are implemented on I-5 and I-205?
- People coming to Portland now might be different from people who came here 10 years ago. I know biking to work was part of the things I considered when deciding to move to Portland.
- How well intersected are BAC goals with other city goals for housing density, zoning, public school location, etc?

- We moved to Portland less than two years ago precisely because of the bike infrastructure and because we wanted to be less reliant on our car. We also use a cargo e-bike to carry our two kids around. Without an electric assist we would not be able to bike as much.
- We moved here in September from Boston, MA and so far have been driving more here than there though that's more due to less expansive public transit than bike infrastructure...
- Coming from Chicago- Driving and parking here is so much less painful here. Too easy to drive. AND, biking has vertical elements here versus the flat of Chicago.

Adjourn 8:00