

BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE RETREAT

9:00 A.M.-3:30 P.M. FEBRUARY 22, 2025

Intro/Welcome

Jim Middaugh, BAC Chair, provided some opening comments.

- There is a lot going on in the world right now. It's easy to feel low, and I know some City Councilors are feeling that way right now. As city leaders, they can/should point us in the right direction.
- We have hope in this room. And would like to end the day with a renewed commitment to helping Council see the promise of cycling.
- Someone from BAC has been invited to Council on Monday to talk about the committee. We should decide who will go and what to share to help council focus on the positive.

Ice breaker activity

History of biking

Roger Geller gave a presentation with some history about biking in Portland.

See the presentation for details.

- Design, advocacy, leadership, and policy are the four things that helped advance bicycling in Portland.
- In 1976, the city budget for biking was \$40,000 per year, exactly 1% of revenues from the state gas tax the city was required to invest in non-auto modes. It was not a lot, but it was something.
- State policy provided some funding and started moving things. Then Earl Blumenauer came along. That was the advantage of the old commissioner form of government: if you wanted to do something different, you could do it overnight.
- Blumenauer started the BAC. He recognized there was no expertise in building bike infrastructure in government. The people on the committee could provide expertise and goad the city to act.
- Evolution of greenways shows how design, advocacy, leadership, and policy.
- The first bike plan was adopted under Earl Blumenauer. In 1996 we didn't have guidance for bike boulevards. At the time, 3,000 ADT (average daily traffic) was the threshold for stripping a bike lane. By default, any street with less than 3,000 vehicles was a shared street. The first bike boulevards in the city were SE Ankeny, SE Lincoln/Harrison, and SE Clinton. Lincoln/Clinton were done almost by accident. SE Division was meant to carry most traffic, but Clinton and Lincoln were getting a lot,

which they weren't designed for. Diverters were installed to address the issue, and it was very controversial in 1989/90. The project managers were getting death threats and were so scarred by the experience they vowed never to do another diverter.

- 5' bike lanes were *the* facility in the 90s—planned by people who biked.
- Sam Adams came to office and wanted to make conditions better. There was tremendous controversy around bike lanes, even if it just required lane narrowing, not reducing lanes. Greenways were easy. After the bike plan of 2030 we built a bunch of greenways.
- Bike Boulevards as they were then known, were rebranded as Neighborhood Greenways—a term of art that built a broader constituency.
- The result of BikeLoud complaining about conditions on greenways was the Neighborhood Greenway assessment report that dropped speed from 25 to 20 mph on greenways, limited ADT to 1000 (or 2,000 sometimes), and emphasized on crossing treatments.
- Since 2011 the city has been trying to get control over speed limits. It used to be done through the state. To change the limit from 25 to 20, a request had to go to the state speed board with a bunch of data. It was a time-consuming process and often wasn't successful. In 2011, the legislature allowed 5 mph reductions on street that were marked for bikes (like sharrows), had residential uses, and had less than 2,000 ADT. Suddenly most greenways could be 20mph.
- From 2016 to 2020 there was more emphasis on building buffered bike lanes that could help attract people who were “interested but concerned,” about biking based on a growing understanding of who we're trying to serve. AKA 8 to 80, or All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bike infrastructure.

Bike Improvements: Infrastructure 101

See presentation for details.

Anti-problem activity

BAC members were divided into groups and tasked with coming up with as many ways as possible to make biking terrible. Small groups discussed, chose the five funniest or most insightful ideas, and then shared them with full group. Sometimes to make things better we need to take a different perspective, which may spark insights.

- Eliminate enforcement
- Tolls
- Potholes
- Scarlet V for people biking
- Deem bike advocacy terrorism
- Scan required license to go through intersections
- Ban helmets for those under 12

- Biking is only allowed on freeways (no shoulders)
- All bike are 300lbs
- Dog poop everywhere and no fenders
- Friends think I'm a dork
 - That idea hits on the social aspect—changing behavior is social. Scarlet V hits on the same point.
- Heart attack when you touch the pedals
- Bike delivers an electric shock when running stop sign
- Clown outfits for cyclists
- Only unicyclists on road
- Google maps sends you to dangerous streets
- Damage caps on personal injury
- Must pay for license and yearly eye exams.
- Bike seat heights that hurt your knees
- Spikes
- Eliminate BAC and Roger's job
- Every other vehicle is an autonomous truck
- Give drivers points for hitting cyclists
- Can't fix your own bike
- Only one size bike

City Structure/Charter

Portland is established by charter—fundamentally it's about keeping people safe. City regulates buildings to protect life safety. City provides drinking water and takes care of wastewater. Also provides for parks and rec. And they build roads, but only local roads (not federal highways or state highways) and they have to fit in regional/state/federal frameworks. Because the city is a general purpose government, the city can say something is an issue of community concern and manage it—that's how they can establish bureaus about civic life and other issues. Promotion efforts are another example of a city concern—the convention center helps promote the city, etc. But fundamentally the government's purpose is about health and safety.

How much of city funding federal?

- There is a federal system that allocates money to regions and locals. The state also has its own gas taxes that it allocates to counties and cities. If a city wants to get federal funds, they have to have a transportation system plan that is consistent with the regional plan, which is consistent with the state.
- The City of Portland has public utility right-of-way. City gets revenue by charging AT&T, NW Natural, and others to access that right-of-way. Those fees were originally

set to pay for roads, but over time that fund has been tapped for other uses and none of that money goes to PBOT.

- The city has a gas tax which generate millions over 5 years. The city uses those fund to paint crosswalks, for example, but to build the SW 4th project with local funds would take all the gas tax revenue. But with federal funds, they city can apply and use some of the gas tax fund to leverage larger federal grants.

While planning this retreat we got lots of questions about discretionary uses of money. We could go way into the weeds, but at the end of the day, city council has power to spend money on what it wants to do, if there is political will. Our job is to compel leadership to support biking. Despite the city's budget woes, there is a large source of funding—the Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF)—which has goals that align with PBOT and biking: reducing greenhouse gases.

Lunch Break

Bike Improvements: Non-infrastructure

See presentation for details.

Taking-action group exercise

Each BAC member was given a piece of paper and given a few minutes to write down answer to the question “what will the BAC do to increase cycling in Portland?” BAC members then split into four groups to share their ideas and agree on 6 to 9 ideas to bring back to the full group. Those ideas had to 5-7 words and written in large letters on an individual piece of paper.

Collectively, the BAC members came up with:

- Activate rider awareness and education
- Advocate for cycling incentives
- Advocate for traffic enforcement
- Ask Council to Attend BAC
- BAC bike mentorship program (choose bike decision tree)
- BAC hosted bike rides
- BAC Monday Parkways (lead bike rides once per week)
- BAC Motto/slogan/mission/guiding light
- Bike lanes NW Portland
- Car free super block neighborhoods
- Educate/encourage council to act (Political will)
- Engage City Leaders
- Engage with friends, family, community,
- Help place folks into bike jobs

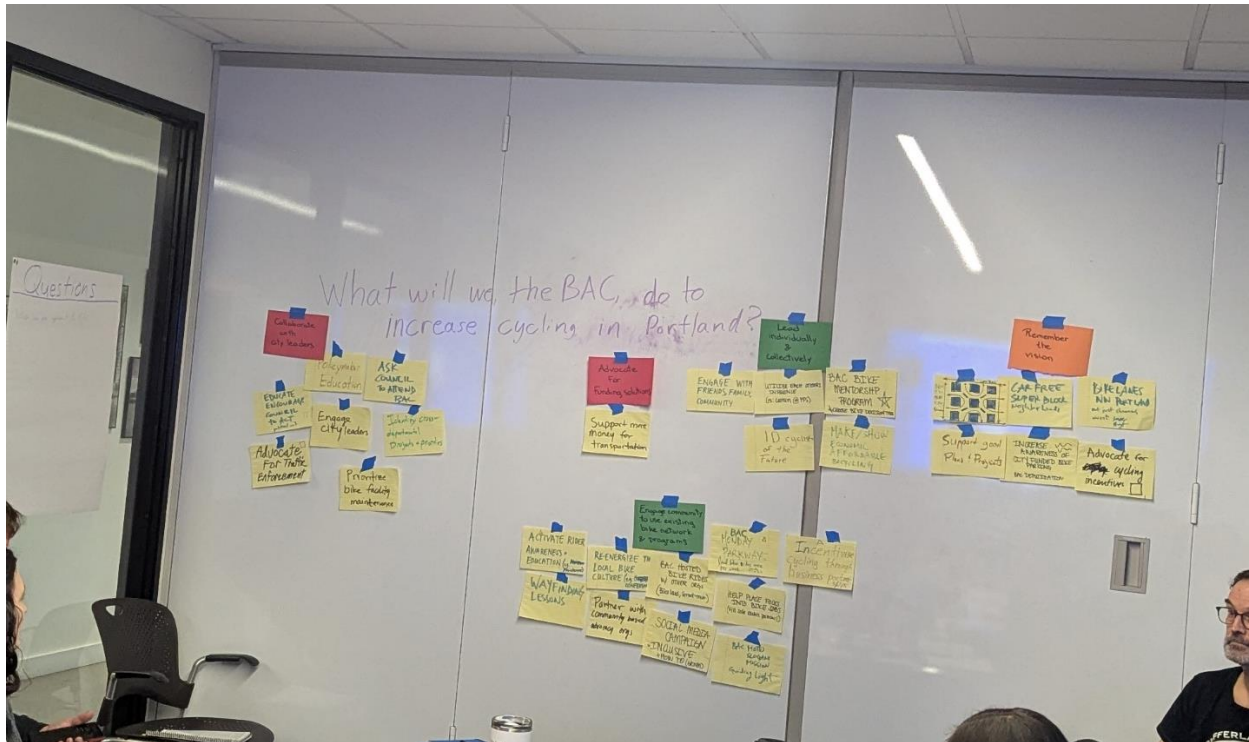
- Identify cross-department projects and priorities
- Incentivize cycling through business partnerships
- Increase awareness of city funded bike parking
- Make/show economic affordable bicycling
- Partner with community-based advocacy orgs
- Policymaker education
- Prioritize bike facility maintenance
- Re-energize the local bike culture
- Social media campaigns
- Support good plans and projects
- Support more money for transportation
- Utilize each other's influence (places of work)
- Wayfinding lessons

The BAC members grouped similar ideas. As new ideas were added, they groupings were adjusted as needed. Ultimately, the BAC named the groupings with a statement that answered the original question.

The bicycle advisory committee will...

- **Advocate for funding solutions**
 - Support more money for transportation
- **Collaborate with city leaders**
 - Policymaker education
 - Advocate for traffic enforcement
 - Prioritize bike facility maintenance
 - Engage city leaders
 - Identify cross-department projects and priorities
 - Ask Council to attend BAC
 - Educate / encourage council to act (Political will)
- **Engage community to use existing bike network and programs**
 - BAC Monday Parkways (lead bike rides once per week)
 - Incentivize cycling through business partnerships
 - Help place folks into bike jobs
 - Activate rider awareness and education
 - Reenergize the local bike culture
 - BAC hosted bike rides
 - Wayfinding lessons
 - Partner with community-based advocacy organizations
 - Social media campaigns
 - BAC motto / slogan / mission / guiding light

- **Lead individually & collectively**
 - Engage with friends, family, community
 - BAC bike mentorship program (choose bike decision tree)
 - Identify cyclists of the future
 - Make / Show economic affordability of bicycling
 - Utilize each other's influence (places of work)
- **Remember the vision**
 - Advocate for cycling incentives
 - Bike lanes NW Portland
 - Car free super block neighborhoods
 - Support good plans and projects
 - Increase awareness of city funded bike parking



The Bike Rack:

Questions BAC members wrote down during the retreat

- Q: When can you represent the BAC?
 - A: It is okay for members to identify themselves as a member of the BAC yet speak for yourselves. "I'm a member of the BAC but I'm speaking on behalf of

myself." No one should speak on behalf of the BAC unless referring to a letter the committee has formally adopted.

- Q: Where can we find the bikeway design guidelines?
- Q: How do we advocate for specific changes/improvements in our neighborhood?
- Q: How do we advocate for our personal gripes even if outside our neighborhood?
- Q: Could red paint be used to daylight corners?
- Q: How do we include more youth focused topics?
- Q: Could we work w/ PPB Central City Bike Squad? Instagram cross-over, Ride along, street patrol
- Q: Could we have a handout for events on what people can do to help?
- Q: Can the BAC get t-shirts, patches, hats, temporary tattoos, etc?

Resources:

- [NACTO Urban bikeway design guide](#)
- [NACTO Street design guide](#)
- *Building the Cycling City*, by Melissa & Chris Bruntlet
- [CROW Design Manual](#)
- "Not Just Bikes" YouTube channel
- "City Nerd" YouTube channel
- Road Guy Rob's video on roundabouts in Carmel, Indiana