

BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Remote via Zoom

October 10, 2023 | 6:00 – 8:00 PM

BAC Members Present: Ally Holmqvist (Chair), Joseph Perez (Vice-Chair), Carol Hasenberg, Jacinta Higgins, William Hsu, Lucy Kennedy-Wong, Alon Raab, Katherine Sheie, David Stein, Valeria Tapia, David Therrattil, David Weymann, Max Woodbury, Nina Yonezawa

BAC Members Absent: Cameron Bennett, Claire Bach, Jim Middaugh, Korrin Weldon

PBOT Staff Present: April Bertelsen, Sean Doyle, Roger Geller, Kristin Hull, Denver Igarta, Art Pearce, Shaylee Robanske, William Roberts, Mike Seritella, Clay Veka, Millicent Williams

Invited presenters: Maritza Arango, OPAL; Abby Griffith, OPAL

Other Attendees: Aaron Kuehn, CE, Chris Corral, Dave McQuery, David Bining, Eric Wilhelm, Erik Dant, Frank Stevens, Hami Ramani, Janet Loughrey, Joe Cortright, Joe DeBlasio, Jonathan Maus, Kevin Machiz, Lise Ferguson, MaryJo Andersen, Melissa Kostelecky, Morgan Lee, Nic Cota, Peter Laciano, Robert Galanakis, Robert Quinn, Sarah Risser, Sharron Fuchs, Taylor Griggs, Tim McCann

Meeting Materials:

Meeting website: <https://www.portland.gov/transportation/bicycle-committee/events/2023/10/10/portland-bicycle-advisory-committee-october-2023>

Agenda: <https://www.portland.gov/transportation/bicycle-committee/documents/agenda-october-2023-meeting-portlands-bicycle-advisory/download>

Jamboard: <https://jamboard.google.com/d/12tSgltZ-2TU43UfBmHJsawksmS3jt6myNQVdQ0N7V40/edit?usp=sharing>

RTP Letter:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1k3pTl1egvsjZRbjNYAdhCmPom9jzx53TYQ53KpbNBr8/edit>

NW/SW Broadway Letter: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jLTs3idCYgi7a-afCwQQ3yNHo62YLO85vHVk7I4Pug/edit>

OPAL presentation: <https://www.portland.gov/transportation/bicycle-committee/documents/opal-presentation-10-2023-bac-meeting/download>

(below verbatim text from Zoom transcript service)

MEETING NOTES

Announcements

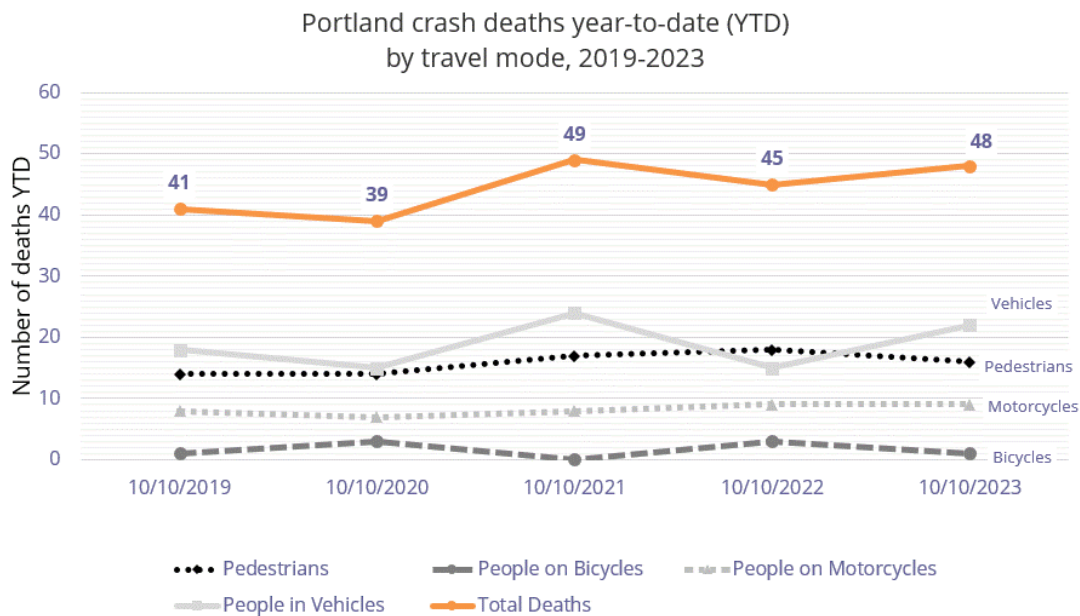
- [Vision Zero Update](#)

People who have died in traffic crashes since the last BAC meeting on Sept. 12:

- At 9:10 p.m. on Saturday, September 16, **person driving a vehicle struck and killed a pedestrian** at SE 82nd Avenue and Crystal Springs Boulevard (near the Springwater Corridor Trail and Johnson Creek intersection). The driver was traveling southbound on SE 82nd Avenue crashed into the pedestrian crossing SE 82nd Avenue at the

intersection. This intersection has unmarked crosswalks. This crash occurred during nighttime (dusk to dawn). When officers arrived at the scene of the crash, the pedestrian had life threatening injuries; they were transported to an area hospital where they died from their injuries.

- At 5:57 a.m. on Tuesday, September 19, **someone driving struck and killed Jason Ruhmshottel, a person riding a bicycle**, on N Portland Road south of Marine Drive (between Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area and Heron Lakes Golf Club). The crash occurred during nighttime (dusk to dawn).
- At 11:14 p.m. on Thursday, October 5, **a driver, Jeremy Clement, died in a single vehicle crash** at SE 52nd Avenue and Harney Drive (near Errol Heights City Park). According to initial reports, factors in this deadly crash include speed and intoxication. The crash occurred during nighttime (dusk to dawn).



- Hot Topics:
No hot topics

PBOT Director Millicent Williams

Following is a transcript of Director Williams’ remarks, edited for clarity.

“I do want to start by acknowledging the Broadway bike lane conversation that we have been having over the past several weeks. And I want to acknowledge that the way that I approached what I would call problem solving on that corridor was unfortunate in that it did not acknowledge the ways that we would typically engage in problem solving at the Bureau, specifically as it relates to, the modification of existing [facilities].

“I have had the opportunity to be reflective on what happened. I have been able to be thoughtful about the impacts of those decisions and do want to make sure that I'm moving forward in a way that conforms with your expectations, but actually exceeds those in that the way that I choose to

lead and the way that I manage is hopefully in folks view with integrity with full transparency. I try not to do things in secret. I don't think that solves any problems. I do want to make sure that if you find the ways that I've engaged and made decisions to be objectionable that we're able to have a conversation about that.

"We had a, I guess, a one sided conversation leading up to even today, in some ways, but I'm not an unreasonable person. I am a pragmatic person and pragmatic leader, but hope to be able to combine the pragmatism with the optimism that I also have about how we can advance our initiatives here in the city.

"So again, my apologies to you as a committee. For any slight that you might have felt that I made for the missteps and the mistakes, and we hopefully will be able to work together as we continue to advance initiatives here in the city.

"My focus as Bureau Director is ensuring that we do our due diligence. And that our projects and programs are serving the community to the best of their ability. My approach is to push staff to ask hard questions and to make sure that we leave no stone unturned as we address the many issues we face regarding safety and mobility in the right of way. This is the crucial work of PBOT and I remain committed to PBOT's vision, policies, and plans.

"Many of the interests of this committee align with PBOT's: making bicycling safer in Portland, and in doing so, growing the community of people biking in the city. This is more than an aspiration. It's right there in our city goals around reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving public health and safety, and keeping it easy to get around Portland with a growing population. As PBOT's director, and with your help, my intent is to lead this bureau in a positive direction, a direction dictated by our policies.

"As you know, for the past 7 years, bicycle use in Portland has been moving in the wrong direction. One of my challenges is to work with you and the staff to figure out how to reverse that trend and achieve the world-class cycling conditions of which I know we're capable.

"All of that said in this pivotal moment, my greatest focus as director is on our historic budget crisis. As you are already familiar with, we face a 32 million dollar shortfall in our general transportation revenues or GTR. Put another way, we must cut roughly one third of our discretionary budget to balance our books. And we can probably get into it later, but when I speak of our discretionary budget, that does not speak to the whole budget of the Bureau, which is 500 million, but there is a hundred million that is considered discretionary. That is what we are going to be focusing on, as it relates to making potential cuts.

"As we shared 2 weeks ago during a city council work session without additional funding for PBOT this year, we will have to make dramatic and extremely impactful cuts to staff in service across the organization. I highlighted in that conversation and as I will say again tonight, none of these cuts that have been proposed are good cuts. For example, we have a strong capital improvement program with over 200 million dollars in projects. Almost all of which include important and necessary bike improvements. However, we would have to significantly reduce the work we do on quick builds as well as the education and programming which is so important. This isn't something we want or

whatever dream we would do, given our track record as leaders in promoting biking and other forms of active transportation.

"In reality the cuts we've had to take to our budget in recent years have already affected these areas of work. It is in no uncertain terms [that] without stable sustainable funding not tied to fossil fuels it becomes increasingly more challenging to make progress on our goals. We need your ongoing help and support to show city leaders what transportation funding means to you. Your voice matters and I encourage you all to fully participate in conversations around funding.

"When I accepted this position, I knew the headwinds would be strong. We are at a time of historic change in Portland. In addition to our budget crisis, our new charter and new form of government is upon us. Plus, we still have an ever-growing maintenance backlog--to date, 4 billion dollars.

"I recognize that these first 2 and a half months have been rockier than any of us would have liked. But I hope you will see me as a willing partner and leader going forward. And I look forward to more conversations like these. And as I shared with Ally and Joe and several others who have had the opportunity to connect with over the past several weeks, I look forward to going a bike ride with you sometime soon. Those conclude my comments and I'm happy to entertain the questions."

Questions and Answers

Alon Raab: What is the plan moving forward on Broadway? What is the potential to use PCEF funding for transportation?

A: "If you see any changes it will only be improvements to ensure the safety of all of the folks who are using that particular corridor." SW 4th is an example of what Broadway could look like and it will require additional investment.

"You won't see a departure from us creating the space, the protected space for bikes on Broadway as much as you'll see continuous improvement in the way that the corridor is treated.... There's a series of actions that are underway right now: platforms in front of the hotels, improving the markings for the bike lanes to provide more clarity and signal modifications. "As an additional step, we're going to make sure that we're reengaging all of the stakeholders...users and property owners along that corridor to make sure that we're really clear about the plans that we intend to, ensure that we're incorporating as we make improvements along the corridor. Next steps will be looking at how we can harden the separation between cars and bikes... That's really important for us. We recognize that will require additional investment....but we will not be reversing as much as we're advancing with intentionality around making sure that the facility looks like what we would want for a world class facility to look and operates in a way that the a world class facility should operate."

PCEF is administered by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. "There are a number of line items that speak directly to transportation and we have developed a programmatic framework for how we would make sure that those funds were not just spent in the ways that, benefit community in the ways that are intended, but that the transportation bureau has the opportunity to ensure that any investments that are made really do work in concert."

There will need to be a great deal of coordination. We need to work to not just fill PBOT's budget gaps but be thoughtful and intentional about pulling together a plan that ensures we're moving the

dial as it relates to climate and that we're thoughtful about infrastructure that supports cycling and that we're making investments that would create the opportunity especially for low income users to have access to the tools that would make, cycling something that would be reasonable.

David Stein: At Council Work Session about PBOT's budget, Commissioner Gonzalez asked about how people driving are subsidizing bike infrastructure and you answered "yes." Linking together \$4 billion maintenance backlog and traffic fatalities have been high. Part of the reason we need the bike infrastructure is because of cars and, by extension, the people driving are inherently dangerous. So, how is it that drivers are subsidizing our bike infrastructure?

A: Motorists are subsidizing the 100 million dollars of discretionary funds because that budget is made up of gas taxes and parking revenue. 60% Gas tax, 40% parking revenue. So when I say that the GTR is supported by motorists. That's what that means.

Challenge is to shift the way PBOT is funded so that it there is not the dependence on fossil fuel revenues.

David Stein: Thank you. I have a quick follow-up. Are you concerned about the narrative that you're laying out that drivers are effectively paying for our infrastructure when you say that drivers are subsidizing bicyclists then that would also mean by extension pedestrians, too?

A: That is a concern. I hear it often. People do have some sense of entitlement around whether or not we should be creating spaces for everyone to use. Our responsibility as a bureau is to make sure that we're creating the opportunity for all users to use the system safely. As we look at the modal hierarchy, we recognize pedestrians are at the top of that hierarchy. And then, bicycles, buses and then cars and then other forms of transportation.

It's our opportunity and challenge to make sure that people do see that the investments that are made just like if we pay taxes and it goes to support schools and you don't have children in schools, it doesn't mean that you don't pay the tax to support the school.

But the narratives that we hear, are all over the place. Sometimes we hear concerns about investment in bikes facilities. Sometimes we hear concern about investments in roadways for cars to use. We hear both sides of that argument. We have the opportunity and the challenge at the Bureau to balance that, to make sure that we are creating safe spaces for all users.

Ally Holmqvist: Shared with committee conversations with Director Williams about her concerns about driver misperceptions of how much they are being subsidized for roadway improvements. Discussed the need and opportunity to educate people about true costs and also addressing driver frustration about new designs and how to interact with them.

Millicent Williams: Mentioned that we're making significant changes in communities and it is important to effectively communicate that they create greater safety for all. Often, the conflicts are unclear and we have an opportunity and obligation to really help people to understand. So, we have an obligation to make sure that we're doing that companion education with community to make sure that they understand. Expressed her belief that greater understanding would lead to greater tolerance.

Joe Perez: Question about how the city can change its approach to climate change. 2nd question: How can you inspire other bureau directors and Portlanders in general to see the benefits of public transit, riding bicycles and walking?

A: "One of the ways that I hope to be able to inspire is by doing it myself. I am pleased that I'm able to ride a bike. I am very pleased that I have an e bike given the hills.... one of the ways that I hope to inspire is by leading by example. I show up, I do it. And, I talk about it. When I think about users who might consider transit. I'm able to talk about it because I use that as well. And, I walk a lot as well. So I have an option to do all 3 of those things to get to most of the places that I use.

"One of the things that the Bureau is challenged with doing is creating an ability in the system to ensure that the users of whatever mode are able to do so with relative ease. I'll jump to transit for just a moment. People don't necessarily want to use transit because they can get to wherever they are going just as fast in a car. There's the inability to be able to move as quickly as they would like. That's something that we know is a challenge and as the Bureau of Transportation we have an opportunity to work in partnership with our transit authority to be able to look at strategies to be able to move transit more quickly. Rose Lanes creates an opportunity for greater throughput. Not necessarily speed, but throughput so that people are able to use the system and depend on getting to and from where they need to go in the timely fashion.

"One of the things that I did this weekend was ride from my neighborhood in inner southeast to the Parkrose school district. So, 100 blocks and what I recognized is that part of the facilities were pretty scary. And I will be very honest and stating there's not a bike lane that I actually feel particularly safe in. It has nothing to do with the construction of the bike way. It has everything to do with the way that I physically show up in the world. There are also streets that I don't like to cross and there are also sidewalks that I'm not comfortable on. And just last night as I was getting out of my vehicle, after going grocery shopping, I was standing right by my car, really close and pulled the door in so that I could allow the car that was in the lane closest to my vehicle to pass without having to swerve out. Very aggressively--leaning on the horn. And I was making myself as small as I could. That is not a unique experience for me. And it is that much less safe for me. When I'm on a bicycle, especially if it's in the evening or if it's a rainy night. So. There are very few facilities that I actually feel safe in. But it's not because of the facility. It's because of everything else going that's going on in the world. But that doesn't mean that I still won't work.

"I want to address the other question which was, changing the way that they're done with the city around climate change Vision Zero and multi-modal goals. Reducing VMT is the most powerful tool that we have to achieve our climate, Visio Zero and multi-modal goals. The city's strategy has long been to build up and not out to create density and build multi-use developments so that more Portlanders can navigate the city with short trips that are walkable and bikeable. This also means having a high quality bikeway network and improving the way the transit functions as I just mentioned.

"We need to effectively convince people to bike rather than drive. Recognizing that we need to do that when that is reasonable but making bicycles and transit more attractive than driving continues

to be one of the best strategies we have for meeting the goals. But how we do that continues to be a challenge.

Carol Hasenberg: Asked about potential for tolling revenues to help fund PBOT in addition to relieving congestion.

A: Director Williams asked Art Pearce from PBOT to respond: The regional conversation around tolling and how to approach tolling is an important conversation to be tracking right now. The question we face is: Is there a way that we can use pricing both to generate revenue but also balance out demand on the travel corridors. This conversation is not yet done and it's having some challenges right now just with how hard it is to implement tolling. It continues to be one of the more viable long term tools that we have to really attend to system needs.

Follow discussions of RTACT: the Regional Technical Advisory Committee on Tolling. It's a conversation that's worth tracking. Even though it's not actively understood it has a potential to really be a big deal here in the Portland region.

Concluding remarks from Director Williams: "We have a lot of work that we can do together. We need to ensure that everyone is able to use the system safely. We'll be calling on you to help us in that funding conversation to advocate around what you'd like to make sure you see continue to happen. The list of [budget] cuts was a proposal; we have some opportunities to revisit all of it.

We are taking to heart the recommendations that the BAC, the PAC, the BBAC and other stakeholders have shared with us about what the priorities for us they'd like to see us focus on so know that we're doing that but it is a very challenging time. We really to make sure that we're working to protect not just the Bureau and the assets that we're responsible for managing and

Comments from the Jamboard:

	What people like	Concerns	Questions
BAC members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Director remains committed to PBOT vision, policy and goals The Director sharing sentiments about modal safety common to cyclists and pedestrians Willingness to meet and have open dialogue. Direct and specific answers to questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIBRARIES, STREET LIGHTING, STREET TREES, PARKS, POLICE & FIRE, FARMER'S MARKET, SUNDAY PARKWAYS PUBLIC SCHOOLS & SIDEWALKS ARE FREE TOO Simplification of funding sources. Yes, gas + parking counts for 100% of discretionary funding. But projects are funded from fed, state, metro grants, leveraged from GTR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is PBOT doing to shore up its deficits? What actions (besides cuts) are PBOT taking to prevent such a gaping future deficit? Does PBOT not have the ability to request more funding from the general budgets of local, district, and state governments? Aka a bigger piece of the pie? How does PBOT diversify its portfolio and revenue streams so that future budget crises are averted? Is PBOT meeting with other regional or national transportation bodies about how they are balancing and increasing budgets?

<p>Public attendees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate the recognition that for many bike riders & would-be bike riders, the infrastructure does not yet feel safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make drivers pay full price for the transportation network challenge. • Gas Taxes & Parking Fees are only a small portion of PBOT revenues, while many other streams make up the fund - bonds, streetcar, use permits, charges for services to other bureaus, STT. • I am concerned with perpetuating a misleading narrative that cars subsidize bikes/peds/transit etc, as it is false and it stokes anger from drivers towards these vulnerable users. • Driver honking if you're in the same space as a car, that's an infrastructure problem. Happens to people on bikes all the time, and PBOT should use more diverters. • Yes PBOT is dependent on car use to pay for their budgets, but will they ever plan for the true cost of each mile driven through our city? Even in terms of road wear? • Drivers need obstacles in the street that aren't people, to know how to slow down & keep their car in the correct lane. "No turn on red" signs need to be in the driver's face to work • I have heard Director Williams twice say that drivers subsidize cyclists. I'd like her to explain her thinking on this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can someone tell me where in any of our adopted plans it says we are supposed to "balance" road investments or safety outcomes? (as the director just said?) • Has PBOT considered expanding the on-street paid parking across PDX so that drivers pay for the space taken, that requires maintenance, and that is currently 100% free? • Discussion of comments about drivers subsidizing bike riders at recent budget meeting? • Someone should have ask her: Why did you go against advice of your own PBOT staff in choosing your plan for Broadway? • PBOT revenues from car use do not cover the expenditures of maintaining and constructing the car infrastructure, will PBOT cut these burdensome car-specific costs?
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Discussion with OPAL (Organizing People / Activating Leaders) Bus Riders Unite (BRU)

Maritza Arango (OPAL's Co-executive Director and Abby Griffith (BRU community organizer) came to discuss their work, their approach to advocacy of some of their current work. This is part of an information sharing exchange as BAC leadership will attend OPAL's meeting next month.

Maritza shared a video developed by OPAL, titled "Up With Riders Campaign Announcement": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifwPYjzAjV8>

Maritza and Abby then discussed their work, which is focused on community, environmental and racial justice. They have a youth environmental justice alliance. They have a developing project around housing justice. Maritza mentioned that as a person who bikes she is also interested in including biking in OPAL's work.

Abby discussed some of her efforts to organize bus riders and some of the issues they are working to address. Among them are fare increases

Committee Business

Consideration of commenting on Regional Transportation Plan

Committee voted 10-0-2 to advance draft letter to PBOT for consideration (Ally and Max abstaining)

Consideration of a communication regarding NW/SW Broadway bicycle lanes

Committee decided to re-write draft letter in consideration of new information.

Draft letter writing sub-committee

The following members agreed to serve on a draft letter writing sub-committee: David Weymann, Alon Rabb, David Stein, Joe Perez and Max Woodbury

Discussion of topics of recent relevance to bicycle transportation in Portland; where do we go from here?

Not considered at this meeting

Public Comment

Eric Wilhelm recommended that we develop more car-free streets to minimize infrastructure expenditures.

Kevin Machiz: He bicycles regularly with his 3-year old daughter where part of his commute takes him along SW/NW Broadway. He had been hit in the bicycle lane in 2019 when in its previous design despite wearing highly visible clothing and it being a bright, sunny day. It was a hit and run. He expressed disappointment that Director Williams wasn't available for public comment/questions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm