PORTLAND FREIGHT COMMITTEE AGENDA

Meeting No. 270

IMPORTANT: *This was an in-person meeting, while still providing a hybrid option for those unable to attend in person.*

WHEN: Thursday, June 4th, 2026 @ 8:30 AM

WHERE:

a. **In-person option:** Portland Building – Room 216
b. **Virtual option:** Register as an attendee https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Qx5ej5VoSaiTX4LMHhhXGQ

8:30 AM **Welcome and Introductions**

Jana Jarvis / All

8:35 AM **Hot Topics, Points of Interest**

Jana Jarvis / All

PFC members report on current activities from their respective industry and agencies.

- **Bob Short:** I want to take a moment to thank ODOT for creating two auxiliary lanes on Highway 217, which has been a major improvement to traffic congestion.
- **Michelle Sprague:** First, the City is replacing the glass around the elevators on the Bob Stacey crossing with shatterproof glass. Also, the Willamette Week article about the Clinton Street rail crossing study mentions the cost estimates of different projects, but these estimates have been made before the study has been completed.
- **Shelli Romero:** The cost estimate has gone up considerably for the Burgard Bridge Resiliency and Multimodal Enhancement Project. I will be meeting with PBOT to talk about where that funding is going to come from.

- **Bill Burgel:** I have spoken to Millicent (Williams) to let her know that the time is now to address the Clinton Street rail crossing. The City should file a complaint while the federal government is in the process of approving the merger of Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern. If we file a complaint now, we can influence the merger decision. I also asked for assurance that the upcoming rail crossing study is more than a simple "study," but something actionable. For example, for a similar project in Spokane they identified funding opportunities for each crossing. I want to see a foundation that can be built upon.
- **Corky Collier:** Is the study only for the Central Eastside? **(Yes).** After the City finishes the study of the Central East Side, let's go back to the Kenton line.
- **Jana Jarvis:** Do we know how much does a crossing cost?
- **Bill Burgel:** A project like that used to cost about $40 million, but it is probably double now. Aaron (Hunt), has PBOT reached out to you regarding the Union Pacific/Norfolk merger? **(No).**
- **Pia Welch:** As I recall, there have been a larger number of studies on this corridor already. Is there not already enough information to build off of?
- **Bill Burgel:** A Metro corridor mobility study showed a path forward, but PBOT did not act on it.
- **Corky Collier:** My understanding is that the point of this study is to combine the information that already exists with more engineering, come up with a priority list, and tee that list up for construction. Also, I believe that the federal administration has a grade separation funding program that could be of use here.
- **Aaron Hunt:** Rail Crossing Elimination grants and CRISI (Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety Improvement) grants were recently announced. Those buckets are substantial and Union Pacific has spoken to the City about them, especially regarding the crossing on 12th, but those conversations didn't go anywhere.
- **Sorin Garber:** I am saying this because Aaron is not, but Seattle was already able to complete their studies and move forward with a grant request to build things.
- **Michelle Sprague:** Was there ever a plan to improve the crossing when they were planning the FX2?
- **Bill Burgel:** I worked with the CEIC to develop the FX2 reroute along MLK. There was a plan, but TriMet did not act on it because at the time the trains were shorter and did not block 8th Ave, only 7th Ave. Now things have changed.
- **Bob Short:** New topic. There is a massive pothole between the St. Johns bridge and Linnton. It is hard to see and hard to avoid. Also, is the Interstate Bridge moving forward?
- **Shelli Romero**: I will look into (the pothole) as Highway 30 is ODOT's jurisdiction.

- **Jana Jarvis:** The bridge itself is moving forward, but the interchanges on north and south side will not be a part of what is going to get built at this time.
- **Corky Collier:** Mayor Anne (McEnerny-Ogle) has done a really great job breaking down the cost estimates and shows that the cost increase, especially construction costs, is largely due to inflation. Also, I would love to have the designs for the bike crossing at Chimney Park to come to this committee.
- **Mark Lear shares that this is a Portland Parks project.**
- **Corky Collier:** I am worried that Parks may accidentally overlook the need for the bridge to be high enough to accommodate trucks, which is something that has happened in the past.
- **Jana Jarvis:** The last hot topic is the governor's freight committee. The goal is to have a draft report of how ODOT should address its funding crisis. I now have a list of who will be on my subcommittee, will meet four to six times this summer. The final report will be published in December.

8:55 AM **Freight Update**

Jana Jarvis, Oregon Trucking Association

Jana will provide an overview of the trucking industry in Portland and Oregon.

- **Jana Jarvis (presenting chart of trucking volume):** Trucking has been in a volume recession for the past three or four years. There was a lot of freight activity during the pandemic, 2020-22, but freight volume dropped in 2023. A lot of new freight vehicles arrived on the scene during the pandemic. Since then a number of smaller and even larger companies with 1,000 trucks have had to close their doors. This includes companies that have been around for 50 years. There is a lot of turmoil in the industry.
- **Jana Jarvis:** Oregon is a manufacturing state historically, and nearly 80% of our communities are serviced only by truck, not rail.
    - 1 out of every 16 jobs in Oregon are in the trucking industry, or 107,000 jobs. Many of the workers in this industry are making six-figure salaries. The industry average salary is about $65,000. Nationally, the average salary for the industry is $75,000.
- **Kristine Kennedy:** Three of our drivers make six figures, and they are able to work locally and keep a work life balance.
- **Jana Jarvis:** The trucking industry in Oregon has been overpaying taxes since 2019, ranging from 3%-33%. This has led to $700 million in excess payments. Oregon is far and away the most expensive state to do business in in the trucking industry.
- **Bob Short:** Is this because of the decline in the gas tax?

- **Jana Jarvis:** This is the result of a miscalculation by the state legislature. ODOT's annual spending is significantly lower than in other states our size. $727 million in Oregon, compared to $2.5 billion in Oklahoma.
    - We are the most expensive state to business in, mostly due to fees and taxes. The VMT fee stands out. A typical truck pays $38,000 in taxes in Oregon, while the national average is closer to $20,000. Washington is at $22,000 and Idaho at $19,000.
    - ODOT's funding issues are very real, but it is not because the trucking industry is not paying it's fair share.
- **Mark Lear:** Unlike Oregon, other states can turn to other sources of revenue for roads and highways. Oregon's constitution prevents it.
- **Jana Jarvis:** Oregon does not put general funds into its transportation system. Washington funds transportation in part through sales tax revenue. As we look at different sources of funding for ODOT, do we want to make sure that it is added to the state highway trust fund?
- **Aaron Hunt:** Jana, do you have any slides ranking these same states by job health and economic health? I bet there is a correlation between that and transportation investment.
- **Michelle Sprague (commenting on slide showing the transportation investments of different states):** Connecticut stands out.
- **Jana Jarvis:** Connecticut recently added a diesel VMT tax to invest in bridges.
- **Kristine Kennedy:** Considering how much lower Arizona's taxes are, it is remarkable how great Arizona's infrastructure is.
- **Jana Jarvis:** Oregon has three of the top 100 highway bottlenecks in the nation. The West Coast corridor has 14 of the top 100 bottlenecks in the nation. This is why I go to sleep thinking about the Rose Quarter and wake up thinking about the Rose Quarter. If you are passing through Portland, you are going to use I-205. I-5 is used by trucks that are a part of the local economy.
- **Jana Jarvis (presenting slide revealing the "Top 10" issues facing trucking):** Truck Parking is something Oregon is going to have to start thinking about more seriously. Right now, there is only 1 truck parking space per 11 drivers. I have been working with ODOT on improving the availability of truck parking.
- **Michelle Sprague:** We have trucks parking overnight in some of the neighborhoods.
- **Jana Jarvis:** There has been some discussion of creating a parking space reservation system or at least improving communications so truckers can call ahead about space availability.

- **Sorin Garber:** Where is the discussion about moving freight from a fuel tax to a mileage tax?
- **Jana Jarvis:** Transportation has traditionally been a user-pays system, but when you get into VMT fees, with discounts for certain communities, you are building a new kind of system.
- **Tim Collins:** Is there much interface between the state trucking industry and Daimler?
- **Jana Jarvis:** Yes, there is. Daimler is one of the largest truck producers in the country and they are very involved in policy discussions.
- **Corky Collier:** We could lose Daimler. They have an East Coast base. They haven't threatened to leave, but that is something we need to be aware of.

9:20 AM **ODOT Region 1 Update**

Shelli Romero, Area Manager – Central (Portland), ODOT

ODOT will provide an update on their summer construction map and present on of all their upcoming construction activities.

- **Shelli Romero:** The Rose Quarter, Abernethy Bridge, Boone Bridge, and I-84 Eastbound are all going to experience closures and impacts this summer.
- **Bill Burgel:** Are the improvements to the St. John's bridge seismic-related?
- **Shelli Romero:** They are not. Those improvements are to replace old concrete.
- **Corky Collier:** I've noticed that there are some ADA ramps on Lombard that are being replaced after only ten years of installing the existing ADA ramps.
- **Jana Jarvis**: In defense of ODOT, the ADA standards set by the federal government have changed and there has been a lawsuit involving the attorney general.
- **Shelli Romero:** One of the challenges is that the federal government has changed the standards multiple times, but ODOT is currently working with PBOT to establish a design standard.
- **Mark Lear:** PBOT is trying to do a better job improving maintenance efficiency and communicating that story to the public. There is probably room for improvement in both areas.
- **Kristine Kennedy (commenting on Highway 30 project):** A couple of years ago there was a project on the east side of the St. Johns Bridge, but it was not so bad thanks to a well-placed traffic light. This project might create problems around taking a right to travel onto Bridge Avenue, which will tempt drivers but is technically not allowed.
- **Shelli Romero:** That is good to know. I will look into this.

9:45 AM **Transportation System Plan Update**

Francesca Jones & Zef Wagner, Senior City Transportation Planners, PBOT

PBOT staff will give an update on the 2045 Transportation System Plan (TSP).

- **Jana Jarvis:** Please send out the required performance measures from the TSP presentation.
- **Michelle Sprague:** If projects are fiscally constrained, how does that impact performance?
- **Francesca Jones:** We are more looking at project evaluation criteria, not performance measures. Is there anything else this committee would like us to consider for performance measures?
- **Jana Jarvis:** I think this would be a good conversation for this committee. Do we want to meet in July this year to talk about this subject? Or do we want to skip July like we did last year?
- **Bob Short and Bill Burgel support meeting in July. Others agree.**
- **Jana Jarvis:** Then we will meet on July 2nd. We will review Francesca's documents beforehand so we can share our thoughts with the TSP team.
- **Tim Collins:** How does PBOT think about grant competitiveness for constrained projects?
- **Mark Lear (who agrees to come to the July committee meeting):** This is a huge part of what the TSP should help us do. It should help shape our grant strategy and serve as a justification for some of the forecasts we have. Mark agrees to come to the committee in July.
- **Zef Wagner: T**he main goal is to create a well-rounded group of projects so when grant opportunities come up, we have a project well suited to it.

Questions about these minutes or other questions about the Portland Freight Committee please contact:

- Russ Brooks, Russ.Brooks@portlandoregon.gov, or Henry Miller, henry.miller@portlandoregon.gov
- Also, visit the Portland Freight Committee website at: **https://www.portland.gov/transportation/freight-committee**

In-person and virtual* attendees:

- Marie Dodds
- Sam Brockman
- Kristine Kennedy
- Sorin Garber
- Bob Short
- Corky Collier
- Shelli Romero
- Jana Jarvis
- Mark Lear
- Francesca Jones
- Bill Burgel
- Michelle Sprague
- Tim Collins
- Caleb Winter
- Johan Hellman*
- Aaron Hunt*
- Kryn Sausedo*
- Pia Welch*
- Tanya Hartnett*