

NORTH PORTLAND IN MOTION



COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #2

When: October 26, 2021, 6-7:30p

Where: Virtual meeting over Zoom

Attendees:

Stephanie Blair (St Johns Center for Opportunity)
Jonna Lynn Bransford (Resident, University Park)
Ally Holmqvist (Bicycle Advisory Committee)
Aaron Brown (Oregon Walks, St Johns)
Paul Buchanan (Portsmouth Neighborhood Association)
Jennie Cambie (University of Portland)
Nic Coti (Bike Loud, Overlook)
Kali Glenn-Haley (Resident, University Park)
Pat Jewett (Resident/NP Greenway, St Johns)
Jesse Neilson (Resident, Kenton)
Ryan Northam (Resident, Arbor Lodge)
Liz Smith (St John's Boosters)

Lauren Smith Plinski (PCC)
Rebecca Small (Friends of Columbia Park, Kenton)
Beth Staus (Arbor Lodge Neighborhood Association)
Ethan Stuckmayer (Resident, St Johns)
Jennifer Vitello (Cathedral Park Neighborhood Association)
Libby Winter (WTS, Arbor Lodge)
Brett Duesing (Resident, St Johns)
Nic Cota (Bike Loud, Overlook)

Absent: Carol Tricoche (St Johns Boosters)

Staff and Consultant Team:

Mike Serritella, Zef Wagner, Maggie Derk (PBOT); Jessica Pickul, Nicole Metildi (JLA Public Involvement)

MEETING SUMMARY

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jessica Pickul (JLA) opened the meeting, reviewed the agenda, and asked everyone to introduce themselves. She shared that there would be time for public comment at 6:30.

Mike Serritella (PBOT) quickly reviewed the purpose North Portland in Motion, which is to understand needs, barriers, and opportunities throughout the North Portland peninsula and identify near term investments, projects, and programs, resulting in improved access to important places, improved safety, and support of active transportation and transit use.

Mike also reviewed the project study area, which focuses on residential and commercial areas of north Portland that are west of Interstate 5 and are defined by both natural and human-made edges, including rivers, bluffs, highways, railroads, and industrial areas.

Project goals include:

- Creating a good process that centers the needs and barriers of North Portlanders.
- Developing lists of projects that could be on the ground in 5-10 years.

- Identifying longer term strategic moves to improve conditions for walking, biking, and transit.

Mike explained that the project will be successful if there is a group of people to come back to after the planning process and PBOT could share project ideas and implementations with this group for feedback.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Mike gave a high-level overview of the Existing Conditions Atlas, which will be released in November alongside the fall Online Open House. The draft of the full report will also be shared when ready. The overview included:

PEOPLE AND PLACES

The demographics of North Portland are like the City of Portland, but there is much variation between neighborhoods within the area. There is a **larger share of renters, people of color, and poverty**, and it is **more diverse**, with a higher Black and Latino population. There is a **wide range of income**, with the highest being in the Overlook neighborhood. Portsmouth is one of the most diverse areas, but also has the lowest household income. There are more **Spanish speakers** in North Portland, which is something to consider when translating project materials.

Most of the peninsula has some degree of **displacement risk**, especially the areas north of Lombard and in the St. Johns neighborhood. PBOT referred to Dr. Lisa Bates' research and the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's (BPS) **Gentrification Displacement Risk Index** and will continue to reflect on how displacement risk factors into the project's process and how investments can be made in North Portland through the North Portland in Motion plan.

The North Portland in Motion study area is large and with many important places for community members. These places were grouped into three categories:

- **Places of community, learning, and health**, such as community centers, libraries, grocery stores, and schools where people can come together to connect and learn.
- **Places of recreation and nature**, such as parks and natural areas.
- **Places of commerce, activation, and connection** include Cathedral Park, the waterfront, Kenton main street areas, Interstate corridor, and commercial and multifamily nodes throughout.

Most of the peninsula is zoned as formerly **single dwelling** with nodes of **commercial and multi-family dwellings**. The peninsula itself is surrounded by heavy industrial use areas and natural areas. Separate from zoning are **Comprehensive Plan designations**, which describe how we want the peninsula to grow long term. One exception is the Cathedral Park Waterfront, which has been designated as a **mixed-use urban center**. The area may have some challenges due to the topography, which the North Portland in Motion project can explore how to address as the project progresses.

CLIMATE AND RESILIENCY

Mike showed a map of the **peninsula liquefaction risk zones**. Liquefaction occurs during major seismic events such as an earthquake. The groundwater and earth blend together, which has major impacts on the built environment. Most of the project study area is relatively low risk, but the areas surrounding the peninsula and the Cathedral Park area are considered high risk.

Other Climate and Resiliency points that Mike noted:

- None of the bridge structures connecting St. Johns to rest of Portland are seismically resilient.
- After one of the hottest summers on record, PBOT is looking at tree canopy and how to mitigate urban heat island effects in the area.

TRANSPORTATION

Mike continued by going over transportation areas of focus throughout the peninsula, including:

- **Pedestrian networks:** PBOT has developed maps that show areas where the Pedestrian Master Plan has identified **crossing gaps**, or areas where the **marked crossings are too far from one another to meet current the guidelines** of 800 feet. There were many **sidewalk gaps** on the perimeter of the project study area and on high priority major streets such as Ida, Willis, Columbia, as well as places along the waterfront. Crossing gaps are prioritized through demand (where people walk the most), safety, and equity. Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) may be able to close the gaps on Lombard, which is the highest priority area on the peninsula.
- **Bicycle Networks:** The approximately 31-mile Bicycle Network has many gaps in Cathedral Park and the University Park area, as well as large gaps in the low-stress network for those of all ages and abilities. There are many opportunities to expand this greenway.
- **Transit Networks:** The project area is served by three frequent service lines and several less frequent service lines. There are transit “hot spots” near Max transfer lines and high ridership levels in downtown St. Johns, Fessenden, New Columbia, and in the Mid-Peninsula area.
- **Street Surfaces:** Many streets are not paved, especially in Cathedral Park and St. John’s locations.
- **Alleys** are located in high density areas, and these are relevant because of access considerations.
- **Traffic Volumes:** North Portland doesn’t have large multi-lane arterials other than Columbia Blvd. It does have wider streets which will allow for more space allocation for people biking, walking, and rolling. Traffic volumes tend to cluster on major arterials such as Lombard and Columbia Blvd. Traffic calming measures can be used to address issues.
- **Vision Zero:** Speed is a factor in crash severity. From 2014-18 there were 192 crashes and 9 people killed in the study area. 75 were pedestrian crashes, with 6 people killed. These are most severe on Interstate and Lombard. There were also 75 bike crashes, with one person killed.
- **Where People Work:** Pre-pandemic, people tended to work on Swan Island, the Columbia corridor, the downtown area, Lloyd center, and hospitals.
 - **4.1% walk to work**
 - **7% bike to work**
 - **12.2% take transit to work**
 - **60.3% drive alone to work**, which is higher than the city average.
- **During COVID, one of highest retention ridership spots was in the New Columbia area.** This shows us that people in this area need public transit for their basic daily needs.
- Some areas where people work are not currently served well by public transit, so it is important to use the North Portland in Motion plan to implement transportation projects that can help reduce carbon emissions.

Public Comment

No members of the public attended the meeting and there were no public comments received during this meeting. The time was reallocated to the CAG to discuss Existing Conditions.

Existing Conditions Comments and Questions

Jessica invited CAG members to ask questions about the Existing Conditions Atlas. Their questions are as follows:

- **ODOT controls Lombard St – how does that factor into North Portland in Motion’s effort to identify crossings on Lombard?** Mike replied: *ODOT’s multimodal safety project on Lombard will not address all crossing gaps. PBOT is in close contact with ODOT and a representative is on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the North Portland in Motion project. Though it’s not PBOT’s road, if there are community prioritized crossings on Lombard that PBOT can improve, we will push for that. While PBOT’s planning efforts inform ODOT’s efforts, it can be challenging to get PBOT’s recommendations incorporated into ODOT projects without designated funding.*
- **How can we get ODOT to make the improvements that neighbors desire?** Zef replied that there is a representative from ODOT on the TAC, and we should try our hardest to take feedback we receive from the CAG and public to ODOT.
- A member was concerned about **industrial areas impacting the air quality of the Kenton neighborhood** and wanted to know how these areas were impacting water quality and the watershed. *Mike replied that the same question was asked by the Technical Advisory Group, and this is something that can be added to the Existing Conditions Atlas.*
- One member advocated for the **Columbia Neighborhood** and increasing access to St. Johns, building more bus shelters, and adding more buses to downtown.
- **Is the St. Johns bridge within the study area?** *While ODOT owns the facility, vehicles, pedestrians, and bikes use the bridge to get to the study area, making the bridge a part of the local network. If there are things identified by the community related to the bridge as a huge priority, they can be advocated for.*
- **How can the CAG influence changes on ODOT facilities?** *There are opportunities to design the plan to fit the community needs, and if ODOT-controlled areas become a big part of addressing those needs, PBOT can write a section of the North Portland in Motion making recommendations to ODOT.*
- **Curb ramps are very important. Are they something we can add to the scope of this project?** *Yes, curb ramps are something PBOT implements programmatically throughout the city. Zef also shared that there is a “ramps by request” program for people to request curb ramps in specific places.*

Jessica acknowledged that there were many important questions in the chat, but that the CAG needed to move on to the group activity. CAG members were invited to send follow up questions to Mike following the meeting.

GROUP ACTIVITY: NEEDS + OPPORTUNITIES

Jessica introduced the group activity, which consisted of CAG members identifying **needs, challenges, and safety issues** on a map of the North Portland peninsula. Jessica posed the following prompting questions:

- Where is it challenging or feel unsafe to walk today?
- Where is it challenging or feel unsafe to ride a bike today?

- Are there transit stop locations that could be improved?
- Are there destinations that are challenging to get to in the project area?

Mike added that in future meetings, we will discuss solutions and project development. Right now, the goal is to **focus on what the barriers and needs are**. Zef added that if we jump to solutions, we begin to focus on just one solution instead of a range of solutions.


Group 1

Instructions: Using the below map, identify places or areas that are hard to get to or are a barrier to getting around in North Portland using **red post-it notes**. You might have to zoom in on the map to see where you want to place it! You can also refer to the biking, pedestrian, and transit network maps to the right to help identify areas that create issues for getting around in North Portland.

For issues your group identifies that may not meet the below criteria for being a NoPIM project, put those in the box below the map.


Keep in mind that NoPIM projects generally:

- Can be completed in 5-10 years
- Are on land that is under City control so that minimal coordination with TriMet, ODOT, or Metro is needed.
- Will only use City resources to complete the project




For Reference


Existing Pedestrian Network



Existing Biking Network



Existing Transit Network



BIG ideas and issues that may be out of scope for NoPIM

- Busy streets such as Portsmouth, Willamette, Lombard, and Willis lack safe crossings
- Parks need better access and wayfinding
- There is a lack of neighborhood greenway connections between New Columbia and Columbia Park
- East/west greenways on Ainsworth in Kenton are difficult
- Need for traffic calming measures on neighborhood streets in Kenton and Arbor Lodge
- Access to commercial areas is difficult
- Interstate is a scary place to bike (i.e., bike lanes are disappearing)
- Explore possibilities to make wider roads narrower
- Transit service to downtown takes too long
- Lombard transit center feels unsafe

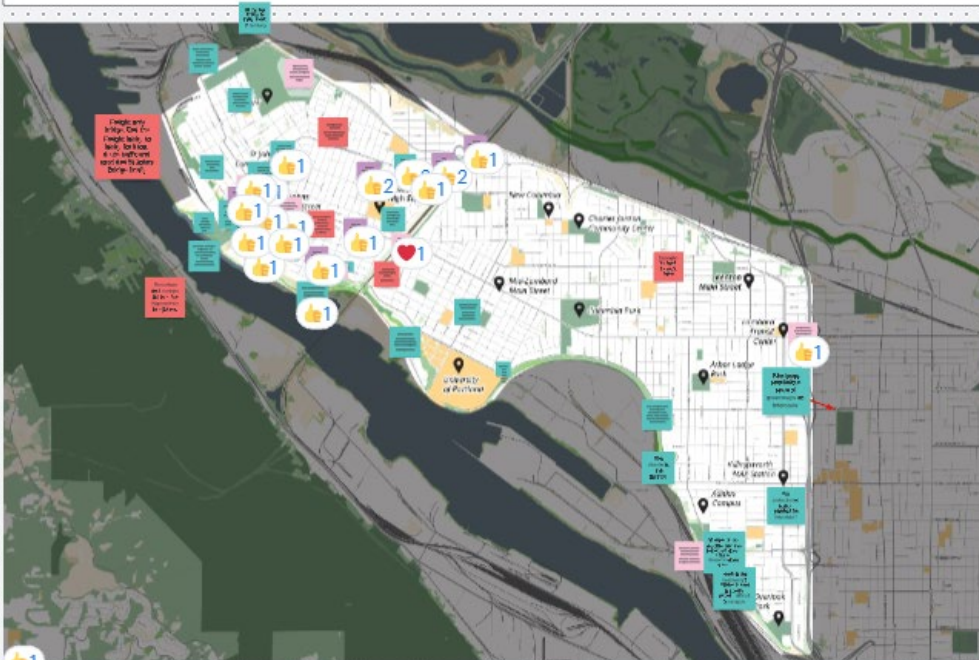
Group 2

Instructions: Using the below map, identify places or areas that are hard to get to or are a barrier to getting around in North Portland using **red post-it notes**. You might have to zoom in on the map to see where you want to place it!! You can also refer to the biking, pedestrian, and transit network maps to the right to help identify areas that create issues for getting around in North Portland.

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BIG ideas and issues that may be out of scope for NoPIM



For Reference

Existing Pedestrian Network



Existing Biking Network



Existing Transit Network



The **St. Johns and Cathedral Park** group, facilitated by Mike, shared issues related to:

- Unsafe crossings on Willamette Blvd, particularly near Cathedral Coffee and Edgewater
- Multiple sidewalk and crossing gaps
- Bus turnaround and traffic volume cause issues in St. Johns
- Crossing areas on Lombard near Roosevelt High School are unsafe
- The lack of crossing or ADA/bike accessibility near Columbia and Fesseden
- Traffic around busy parks

Note: During the meeting and over the course of a week, CAG members added over 100 comments to the project area map. PBOT staff are reviewing all comments for consideration of potential project ideas for the next CAG meeting.

WRAP UP, NEXT MEETING + NEXT STEPS

Mike **thanked everyone for sharing their thoughts on the map**. He also mentioned that we will plan to have future meetings last two hours.

The public online open house will launch in mid-November and will run through December. The public review of the **Existing Conditions Atlas will run into early January. Feedback on the Existing Conditions Atlas will be analyzed and synthesized into an Existing Issues and Opportunities Report.** There will be focus groups and stakeholder interviews over the next few months. Mike said that PBOT may need help from CAG members to make connections.

The **next CAG meeting will be held in January.** Bimonthly or semimonthly project updates will be shared via email. Over the next year, PBOT will synthesize public feedback with the intention of bringing the North Portland in Motion plan to City Council in 2023.

Zef invited members to email him or Mike with questions or to discuss issues as they come up. Mike also offered to do presentations with CAG members' organizations. Jessica said that the map activity will remain open and asked the group to add comments to the map by Friday.

Jessica wrapped up the meeting and thanked everyone for participating.