

City of Portland
Pedestrian Advisory Committee



January 17, 2023
6:00 – 8:00 PM

6:00-6:10 - Public Comment (10 min)

- The parking protected bike lane along NW/SW Broadway is detrimental to hotels. People accessing the hotel from their cars know there won't be cars but may not realize bikes use the bike lane in between parked vehicles and the sidewalk. (Commenter was not officially representing the hotel interests.)

6:10-6:30 - Hot Topics/ Updates and Announcements/Committee Business (20 min)

- FYI: Due to a procurement issue, the e-scooter pilot program will remain in place until the RFP can be redone and rereleased.
- Vision Zero update
 - There have been four traffic fatalities on Portland's roads since the last PAC meeting.
 - U.S. Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (OR-1) and her husband were [struck by car](#) while walking in Northwest last week. Both survived, with the congresswoman suffering a concussion. The circumstances are similar to a crash that Tiel Jackson experienced years ago.
 - Portlander John Baker was also [hit and injured by a driver](#) at high speed while he was biking late last year. Baker was critically injured; the driver did not stop. There is a gofundme to support him.
 - There were 127 pedestrian fatalities in Oregon in 2022. The low point was 39 pedestrian deaths (about 10 years ago).
 - PAC co-chair Rebecca Sanders received an unsolicited email that said pedestrians are responsible for their own safety, yet many pedestrians are injured or killed on the roads while doing nothing wrong.
 - Co-chair Tiel Jackson: We're not trained to do system thinking, but rather focus a lot on personal responsibility. Responsibility needs to be weighed against the ability to do harm—a car (and driver) can do much more harm to a pedestrian than a pedestrian can to a car or its driver.
 - More info can be found on [PBOT's Vision Zero Dashboard](#).
- New Member Introductions
 - Molly Campbell is a nurse researcher (health equity and public policy) and travels primarily by foot, bike, and transit. She has not owned a car for many years.

- Devin Harness is a middle school counselor with Portland Public Schools and has been in Portland for 22 years. He lives in Northeast and owns a car, but bikes around Portland.
- Ken Hanes grew up in Southern California steeped in car culture but has lived car-free since 1995. Years ago he developed some health conditions that makes it hard/painful to be in moving vehicles (cars, buses, light rail, etc.) so walking is important to him. Ken lives in a very walkable area of Northwest but sees very few other places in the city that have the same level of walkability.

6:30-7:05 – I-5 Rose Quarter Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) Debrief (35 min)

Caitlin Reff, Art Pearce (PBOT)

PBOT staff attended the PAC meeting to provide a debrief on the Rose Quarter SEA public comment process and respond to questions.

- Caitlin Reff (PBOT, Major Projects Manager):
 - It is very important to PBOT to have feedback from all the modal committees. The process was meant to elevate committee feedback by submitting it as a package with the city's comments. But recognizes the process didn't go super smoothly and is here to hear the committee's feedback on the process.
 - There was a very short timeframe for feedback given the timing of the comment period over the holidays, but felt it was very important to have ODOT briefing the committees in the November/December timeframe.
- Committee comments/questions:
 - Part of how we continue to have traffic fatalities at such high rates is because of obstacles in the bureaucratic process. Time hasn't been taken to reach out and engage with diverse community.
 - Rushing a process can contribute to harm. **What is the role of the PAC? Does PAC feedback even matter?**
 - It was a lot of dense information to digest (the SEA presentation during the December PAC meeting) but the committee was then expected provide concise feedback in a week. **What was the rush?**
 - Recognizing that the timeline is driven by ODOT the Federal government, **what does PBOTs role working with ODOT look like in the future?**
 - My issue with this process was that we weren't included earlier in the discussion about Rose Quarter. The advisory committee(s) for I5-RQ (not just ODOT) should have come to present to the PAC as well.
 - I would add a question about the PBOT manager asking for revisions to the letter. We met on December 20 and needed the letter returned by December 27 and the message seemed to be 'If we want pedestrian improvements we need to play nice with ODOT.' **Is that the normal process?**
 - Some PAC members weren't able to participate at all in the feedback because they were out on holiday/with family during the 7 days the PAC had to write and approve a letter. Generally, the PAC has a month, forms a subcommittee that assembles letter, and then the PAC votes during the next meeting.
- Art Pearce (PBOT, Policy, Planning & Projects Group Director):
 - The PAC's feedback is very valuable, and Art has a lot of admiration for members contributing their free time to this cause. There are projects that PBOT has a lot of agency over, but there are a few other projects driven by ODOT (or TriMet, Metro, the Port, etc.) where the city serves as an influencer but has less control. The PAC

comments tonight validates many of Art's frustrations with the process. Challenges with the letter were partly a result of the process and ODOT's timeline. But there is a value in participating in this process; Art has seen better outcomes from PBOT participating in the process instead of withdrawing.

- Caitlin Reff:
 - The intended effect of including modal committee comments was to help validate and strengthen the city position and perspective. The PAC has a lot of expertise and perspectives that are very valuable.
 - This is the first time the project has been back to committees since the new version (Hybrid 3) and the city reengaged in the planning process. There will be other opportunities to comment on the project in the future—this was just related to the Supplemental Environmental Assessment. There will be more opportunity to refine the design in the future.
 - The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) sets the timeline. They determined it would be a 50 day comment period. PBOT had advocated for a delay because the project hadn't come to the committees yet, but the Federal Transit Administration (an agency within FHWA) determined the 50 day comment period would be sufficient. PBOT strives to have presentations before public comment periods and then again during comment period.
 - The Historic Albina Advisory board is one community group advising ODOT, and the idea of having some HAA come and present is appreciated.
 - When the PAC was asked to revise some language in the letter, the intent was not to control what the committee says. But we also understand that was the impact. The city has just reengaged in the project after two years.
- PAC Co-chair Rebecca Sanders: The interaction with ODOT is what's sticky. The PAC was considering citing ODOT's own policies around pedestrian safety back at them. Currently, states are actually allowed (by the federal government) to plan for more traffic fatalities in the future. We don't see the kind of passion and outrage over rising fatalities that one might expect from transportation decision makers—a notable exception being the National Transportation Safety Board [Chair Jennifer Homendy's keynote speech](#) at the 2023 Transportation Research Board conference. What do we do as the PAC recognizing we're preaching to the choir (at PBOT) and then there's ODOT—we're not their committee? Give me the name of a city and I can tell you where the most fatalities happen: it's on state-owned roads.
 - Staff response: Part of the function is the PAC and PBOT is trying to make ODOT make their facilities better. It's a continual process trying to push the state to do better. The city tries to move as aggressively as it can to change roads in our control.
- Caitlin Reff: Part of the agreement between stakeholders convened by the Governor was to have some potential packages out by the end of 2023. The timeline was driven in part by that deadline.
 - Michelle DuBerry: The timeline for the project is less important than getting it right. My toddler was killed 12 years ago on an ODOT facility and we're sick of hearing we need to play nice and be good partners. It's not working.
- Caitlin Reff: There will be other opportunities to comment. And comments can also be submitted at any time. From the [project website](#): "Call us at 503-470-3127 or email us at i5rosequarter@odot.oregon.gov with any questions or comments. We make every effort to respond to inquiries within five business days."

In plazas, PBOT takes more of an active role in shaping them rather than just the businesses.

7:05-7:35 – Long-Term Healthy Businesses Program Development (30 min)

Nick Falbo, Sarah Figliozzi (PBOT)

PBOT staff presented on efforts to formalize the successful Healthy Businesses Permit Program, a program to let businesses use right-of-way for expanded customer and community use. The program development work includes the creation of street seating design guidelines, application processes and program rules. The effort will also develop a public street plaza program to guide creation of larger community-use areas within the right-of-way.

- Safe streets initiative was launched during the pandemic. The more visible interventions were healthy businesses that supported business needs for outdoor space
- Now we're in an era of economic recovery and reinvestments. The conversations about the program are changing. Outdoor seating isn't as essential as it was early in the pandemic yet there is a lot of public support for plazas and their continued use/presence.
- The city's placemaking goals were adopted in 2017 as part of the Livable Streets Strategy and they have and will guide the further development of the program.
- The healthy business permit has been supporting businesses and adding activity to city streets and want to make sure the program is promoting good urban design and allows more diverse participation. As we implement rules in the future, we don't want to make it less attractive for people to continue to participate.
 - The main applicant is typically a business/restaurant owner. They're not architects or designers and the process needs to be accessible to them.
 - Rules will address seasonal challenges to make them thrive year-round, not just survive until warmer weather returns.
 - Sitting will be addressed so use of the public right-of-way doesn't compromise visibility, safety, and community support.
- [See the presentation slides for additional information](#)
- PAC Questions/Comments:
 - Q: What are the standards related to?
 - A: Standards deal with physical things like height, transparency, materials. Standards may include some uses, like no smoking. Standards are largely focused on safety.
 - Q: Who benefits? Restaurant owners get a free expansion which benefits people who can afford to eat at restaurants. How do we make sure everyone benefits? Where are we putting these? Could we have standards about where they're located?
 - A: We're exploring public seating requirements and subsidies for businesses that need it. We're also trying to find good partners around the city.
 - A: The city has a system of neighborhood and commercial centers all over the city that could be used to site plazas.
 - Comment: embed the equity index in the process
 - Q: With seating, do the standards including maintenance? Who is responsible for that?
 - A: Maintenance agreements are something we do with permitting and that will be addressed that as we move forward.
 - Q: Will there be standards around roof color/materials? Light colored roofs reflect a lot of heat and very hot summers kill people in Portland.
 - A: We are looking at material requirements, and have made a note to see how that might be incorporated.

- Q (from a member of the public): As the program advances, can we have some sort of inclusion for places that don't have business districts/centers or where business districts are on ODOT facilities (Ex: Portsmouth)?
 - A: The origin of this program was very focused on businesses, so that's the history there. As we move forward, we want to continue to work with businesses and open it up to more community spaces.
- Q: Many business owners mistakenly see car access as essential to their business. Are we waiting for every business to agree that they want a plaza or will there be piloting to show how it works? (I.e. Business owner wants may be at odds with what the public wants).
 - A: Some businesses are scaling back on their outdoor uses which has been driven by businesses.
 - A: Appreciate the suggestion of piloting to show a vision
- The program will be brought back to the PAC as development progresses and we have more specific ideas to respond and again as we prepare to go to city council.

7:35-8:00 – New Member Onboarding (25 min)

Gena Gastaldi (PBOT)

Gena provided an overview of materials regarding PBOT, the Transportation System Plan, PBOT project design/delivery process, PedPDX, and the PAC's role in these activities.

- PedPDX is the city's pedestrian plan. A 3-year status report on PedPDX is due out early this year. The plan was adopted in 2019 contains 67 actions to make Portland more walkable. As a sneak peak:
 - two actions are considered complete, 43 are in progress, and 22 have no action to report.
 - Since 2019, 17 miles of sidewalks have been built, of which 12 miles were top tier priority sidewalk gaps.
 - Since 2019, 2,084 crossings have been installed, restreipped, or improved to meet city standards.
- These numbers demonstrate that high level of need for pedestrian improvements.
- Visit pedpdx.com to explore the plan in more detail.
- PAC Questions:
 - What is the role of the PAC regarding PedPDX?
 - Co-Chair Tiel Jackson: One role is holding PBOT accountable. It's recommended that PAC members are familiar with the plan at a high level.
 - From the PAC bylaws: "The purpose of the Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) is to advise the Mayor and City Council and all departments of the City on all matters that encourage and enhance walking as a means of transportation, recreation, wellness, and environmental enhancement. In this context walking includes the use of medically approved devices that provide a similar level of mobility."
 - PAC members (and the public) can find more information and [resources](#) on the [Pedestrian Advisory Committee's webpage](#).
- Co-chair Rebecca Sanders: New members are joining PAC at a time when the committee structure and process is under review. A subsequent PAC meetings will provide and update, but in the meantime you can find more information about this evaluation on the [PBOT Modal Committee Evaluation website](#).