

City of Portland
Pedestrian Advisory Committee



November 15, 2022
6:00 – 8:00 PM
Meeting Notes

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

- Trees for life Oregon: I recall that the idea for curb extensions with trees arose from a lot of public comment on Ped Design Guide. There are many low trees neighborhoods that have narrow planting strips, so I'm very glad to see you're doing this pilot. I would like to ask PBOT to consider human health along with traditional concepts of safety. This project brings up issue of environmental justice in distribution of trees, which is urgent because of climate change.

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

- Vision zero update: there have been two pedestrian deaths since the October PAC meeting. Overall, there's been a slight decline in pedestrian fatalities compared to last year, but last year was also the highest fatal injury toll in 20 years, so not a great benchmark.
- World Day of Remembrance is November 20. Oregon & SW Washington Families for Safe Streets is organizing a vigil and walk on SE 122nd and Powell and is planned for families. [People can register online for the event.](#)

6:20-7:05 – I-5 Rose Quarter (45 min)

Rose Gerber & Steve Katko (ODOT); Dru van Hengel (Nelson\Nygaard); Caitlin Reff (PBOT)

- This presentation is a courtesy briefing to provide an update on the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project and provide an opportunity for the PAC to provide feedback on the Supplemental Environmental Assessment, which will be open for public comment from Nov. 15 until Jan. 4.
- The purpose of the Hybrid 3 (H3) alternative is to improve safety and shift from an auto focused to a more people friendly area.
- The construction of I-5 decimated the heart of Portland's black community in Albina. H3 maximizes the size of the highway cover and developable land to reconnect the local street grid and support up to 3-story buildings.
- See presentation for additional details.

Questions from PAC members:

- How is ODOT addressing the design of highway off ramps/terminals to protect people walking and biking?
 - This is very important, but it's a bit early in the process to have specifics. Signaling and phasing at the off-ramp intersections will be important. The project team knows these

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streets will be part of the local street grid and will do the best they can to ensure they are safe.

- There was \$10 million for active transportation in the project. Where is the overall budget at?
 - The total cost is \$1.18-\$1.58 billion. The cost increased with the switch to the proposed Hybrid 3 design. Oregon House Bill 2017 provided partial funding, and ODOT is pursuing \$100 million from the federal Reconnecting Communities Pilot grant program. It will take multiple sources to fully fund the project.
- What is the ability of the highway cap to support trees with regards to soil depth, underground infrastructure, and other similar constraints?
 - The presenters were not sure but will consult with their landscape architect and then reach out with an answer.
- What lessons has ODOT learned from this Rose Quarter highway planning process that resulted in a project that fell so far short from community expectations?
 - ODOT: we learned a lot about how to conduct community engagement and what equity really means in involving the community in project design, how a project can benefit a diverse workforce, and how we can work differently. The community pushing us for a more community-centric design pushed us to be a more community-centric agency.
- How is ODOT planning to make Broadway/Weidler less car-centric? As it is we are handing the next generation a less and less sustainable climate.
 - ODOT: That will largely be driven by the city's plans for Broadway and Weidler. ODOT will also be looking at the anticipated future needs for all modes.
 - PBOT has been working with the project team to make sure we are reducing lanes and redistributing space. It's an ongoing process looking at how traffic is being received and redistributed.
- Based on the couple street cross-sections in the presentation, will additional right of way need to be acquired to support those designs?
 - Yes. There will be a need for acquisition to fit the streetcar and several vehicle travel lanes.
- How do we provide additional comments if we have them?
 - There is no Portland City Council action required at this time so it doesn't make sense to have the PAC make any kind of formal recommendation to city council. But the project team is interested in hearing from the PAC and will work with Gena Gastaldi to make that happen. There is also an [online open house for the supplemental environmental assessment](#) where people can submit comments until Jan. 4, 2023. And there is a [virtual public hearing](#) on the evening of Dec. 15, 2022, where people can provide verbal comments.
- How much weight does the Albina Community Advisory group have in the project?
 - Up to this point they have been a key advisor in the design of the project. The team meets with them monthly, along with the community oversight advisory committee (composed mostly of construction and business interests). It is significant with regards to restorative justice. They are holding the project team's feet to the fire. The Albina Advisory group has repeatedly said that they want young people's voices elevated in the design, so ODOT has begun more youth focused outreach.

7:20-8:00 – Trees in the Curb Zone Pilot Project (45 min)

Gena Gastaldi (PBOT)

Gena presented on a new, innovative pilot program that PBOT just launched to provide additional space for trees in the right of way.

- PBOT was awarded a \$500,000 grant from the Bureau of Environmental Services' "Percent for Green" fund. The goal of the project is to develop a framework for trees in the curb zone that can be replicated and scaled across the city, and with this pilot, to construct tree space in the curb/parking zone.
- PedPDX—Portland's pedestrian plan—and the Pedestrian Design Guide direct the city to explore [trees in the curb zone](#).
- The pilot will be in east Portland, where streets often lack trees and narrow, curb tight sidewalks can be extremely hot in the summers.
- See the presentation for additional details on the pilot.

Questions and comments from PAC members:

- Please do data collection before and after. There are so many benefits that street trees provide but they can be hard to quantify when an entire street is being reconstructed. This pilot will provide an opportunity to isolate the impact of trees.
- I'm 90 percent on board with this project but have some trepidation about not building wider sidewalks. Will these trees preclude sidewalk expansion when there is a future (re)development opportunity?
 - PBOT is being thoughtful and intentional about this pilot and that is one of the considerations as we move forward.
- Forty-four (44) is a lot of trees, which is great. But lighting is important for safety. It seems there are conflicting priorities here between need for street calming and street lighting. PBOT should rethink how street lighting is done so lighting and trees can coexist better.
- I like the idea of offering yard trees to people across the street from the new curb zone trees, but who will be responsible for those? Will it be the homeowner?
 - If a tree is in a private yard the homeowner is responsible for its care and maintenance. We will be working with the community to make sure homeowners are aware and the community is engaged. There is a long engagement period for that reason.
- This is very cool and new. I second the idea of evaluation to help other cities around the state do this. What's the funding source?
 - A "Percent for Green" grant from the Bureau of Environmental Services for \$500,000 plus a PBOT match of 50,000.
- Josh: that works out to \$12,000 per tree. I recognize this includes other infrastructure and not just trees, but is there any chance of helping individuals self-fund something like this?
 - When we come out of this pilot, we'll have a proof of concept to work through design challenges, legal challenges, utility constraints, materials, etc. But this pilot gives us the ability to work through issues thoughtfully. After, we'd like to scale this which could potentially involve adding curb zone trees as a new development design option, etc. Self-funding could potentially be a thing down the road.
- Self-funding can be inequitable, concentrating trees in wealthier neighborhoods where people can afford it and where most trees already are. How do we address that inequity? Could there be a 1:1 match/requirement so when one self-funds trees in the curb zone they have to fund another in a low-tree neighborhood?
 - Once we have developed a framework for trees in the curb zone with this pilot, we hope that will bring down the cost per tree.
- What size trees will be used? Larger trees can hold more carbon, and manage more water.

- We haven't gotten that far in the planning process yet. This is a brand-new pilot that is in the very early stages of planning. There are two urban forestry people on the project team, including a tree inspector who will be in charge of selecting trees.
- Community member comment and question: Driveways won't be allowed on the north side of SE Duke St when redevelopment happens, so there will be more space for more trees. Will we be able to place trees like this intentionally on greenways, like chicaning them down the road?
 - We are not far enough along in the project yet to address that, but PBOT is very collaborative, and we will be exploring potential nexuses between our healthy businesses (outdoor business seating) and greenways programs.
- We have built a lot of things in concrete that we shouldn't have. This is a ray of hope that we can do stuff to help mitigate those mistakes. We may not be able to tear up all the curbs and rebuilt our streets, but we can do this.