

City of Portland
Pedestrian Advisory Committee



Meeting Notes | Tuesday, May 16, 2023
6:00 – 8:00 PM

6:00-6:10 – Welcome & Public Comment (10 min)

Lajune: I'm interested in 3-year report and how bike and peds can play nicely together, especially at unsignalized intersections in bike priority areas.

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

- Vision Zero moment: Sin the last PAC meeting (4/18), two people were killed in car crashes (one pedestrian using a wheelchair and one driver) and one pedestrian suffered life-threatening injuries.
- Co-chair selection: Tabitha nominated herself. The committee voted and the motion carried.
- Summer Bike Counts: The city is gearing up for our 2023 summer bike counts right now. If PAC members, attendees, or others would like to sign-up to volunteer they can do so on the bike count website, portland.gov/bicycle-counts
 - o Committee member question: Do we know why there has been a downward trend in biking?
 - There are a lot of theories and PBOT is actively exploring what it might be able to do to address some of the potential causes. We have also worked with a research firm to do more local surveying on bicycle attitudes to better understand causes though that information is not yet public information.
 - o Committee member question: Do we do pedestrian counts or similar to track trends?
 - As a city, no. There is census commute data that includes walking and some data from various organizations about walking in downtown. Census commute data does show a decline in walking. PedPDX also calls for developing regular pedestrian counting systems and practices (Action 9.2) but no progress has been made on that particular action yet.
- Rebecca Sanders: Increasingly seeing newer EVs comprise larger percentage of fleet. Cars are getting larger in part to support more weight of batteries. All research and progress we've made on safety has been based on a fleet of sedans and smaller cars and that equation is in flux right now.
 - o Other committee members also recognize the change and importance of addressing it and the impact it has on perceptions of safety/fear.

- Another committee member notes a larger percentage of heavily tinted windows which limits the ability to see the driver and know if they have seen you as a pedestrian or person biking.
- Larger cars also increase road maintenance costs.

6:30-7:00 – Multnomah County Pedestrian Injuries report (30 min)

Brendon Haggerty (Multnomah County Health Department)

- In April, Multnomah County released their [special emphasis report on pedestrian injuries](#). The report examines the magnitude, causes, age distribution, and race/ethnicity of pedestrian who were killed and injured across the county in 2021.
- Healthy Homes & Communities Manager Brendon Haggerty notes this is part of an effort to understand how neighborhoods impact our health. There is a national trend of rising pedestrian fatalities, including in Multnomah County. The number of pedestrians being hit by cars is increasing but so is the share of all injuries that are from pedestrians. For the first time, Oregon made the top 20 most dangerous states for pedestrians in Smart Growth America's 2022 Dangerous by Design report. One in three pedestrians injured were experiencing houselessness
- The trend is going the wrong way, racial disparities exist and are getting worse, and pedestrian deaths are a leading cause of death in Multnomah County (#3). Other leading causes can be prevented with more physical activity. Safer roadways will help us get more physical activity.
- See presentation for additional details.
- [2023 Heat Vulnerability Index](#) is another tool related to pedestrian safety from Multnomah County that examines vulnerability to heat by census tract related to three components:
 - *Sensitivity* to heat and illness, which is biological (age, underlying conditions, etc.)
 - *Exposure* to extreme heat and the elements of our built environments which regulate temperature, which is related to the urban heat island
 - *Adaptive Capacity* when experiencing extreme heat and for reducing the risk of harm, related to resources availability and ability to cope.

Committee questions/comments

- Committee members agreed with sentiment that putting a cost on human life—quantifying the financial cost of people getting killed by people driving—is strange/uncomfortable, but it's how countermeasures are selected and funded. It also has large healthcare costs and if someone is grieving over a friend/relative being killed by a driver, the bills can be a secondary trauma.
- Committee member: It doesn't look like there is any information for pedestrians with a disability as a category. As an advocate working for safety, particularly for disabled pedestrians I don't even know where to be asking that that information was included.
 - Brendon: It is likely that the number of injuries among people with disabilities would be too small to do a statistical analysis (like racial/ethnic categories beyond white, black and Hispanic) but an analysis including multiple years of data could potentially be done in the future to address that short coming.
- Committee member: Does health department have theories as to why Multnomah County is doing worse than the nation?
 - Brendon: His personal view is that the number of unhoused folks is a big part of it—unhoused, unsheltered folks have much higher exposure to traffic than housed people.

Some of the investments we're making in affordable housing can be seen as investments in traffic safety.

- Gena: In 2021, 70 percent of traffic fatalities in the City of Portland were people experiencing homelessness.
- Committee member comment: Seems like the more appropriate measure for pedestrians—rather than number of trips or length—would be pedestrian hours. Unhoused may not move a ton during every day, but they are exposed for many more hours.
- Committee member question: Do you have a sense of how the problem looks different in different kinds of areas—core city versus more rural areas for example?
 - Brandon: There's been a faster rate of increase in east count, but don't have data readily available. There are a lot fewer routes as for pedestrians, so to get almost anywhere you have to spend time on a large arterial.

7:00-7:25 – PedPDX Implementation (25 min)

Gena Gastaldi (PBOT)

PBOT's Pedestrian Realm Coordinator, Gena Gastaldi, will present the 3-Year Status Report on implementation of the city's pedestrian plan. Adopted in 2019 after two years of planning and community engagement, PedPDX provides a work plan for how to make Portland a safe, accessible, and attractive place to walk. This status report provides an update on the work done since the 2019 adoption of the pedestrian plan.

- See presentation for details
- PedPDX.com contains original plan information and links to status report and mapping tool.
- Status report website: <https://www.portland.gov/transportation/planning/pedpdx-status>
- PedPDX mapping tool: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/6b7f163f3afd449b8e32d39ffb1bbd7c/>

Committee member questions

- Do the actions or strategies shift over time to reflect new circumstances, like 82nd Ave being under local control may make some things more possible than they were.
 - Our modal plans are 20-year plans. The 3-year status report allows us a moment to reflect and evaluate progress. With 82nd Ave now in local control it allows us to do more to implement the plan and the standards within.
- Crossing spacing standards recommend marked crossings within 100 feet of transit stops, but if the crossing is right in front of the bus that can be dangerous.
 - Committee member response: As a mobility instructor with blind adults, I've always taught them to wait until the bus has gone by because you can't hear the traffic if the bus is right there. TriMet may have had signs on their buses in the past asking people to cross behind the vehicle or wait until it the bus has left.

7:25-7:50 – Committee Discussion (25 min)

Committee Members

Possible topics include Hollywood Transit Hub response, Modal Committee Evaluation, 82nd Ave medians, and other items.

- Committee member: For potential summer activities, scheduling sooner rather than later is better.
 - Gena – They will be on scheduled PAC nights

- Joint PAC/BAC tentatively in July. Annual walking meeting TBD.

7:50-8:00 – Public Comment (10 min)

- Lajune Thorson: At joint PAC/BAC it's important to discuss how both bikes and peds can interact safely. Will come with examples of specific areas and concerns.
 - Committee member: energy should focus on the double threat of cars/motor vehicles.
 - Committee member: There are some areas that are challenging, including Blumenauer Bridge, but there has been progress. Need to continue working to improve bike/ped interactions/mixing zones on projects.
- Catie Tam: I live in Woodstock with unpaved roads. I don't see those addresses in the 3-year status report. Gravel roads don't have sidewalks and people park on the side forcing you to walk in the middle.
 - Gena: I would have to go back to ped priority network to look at specific locations. Gravel roads are by nature lower volume and lower speeds, typically.
 - Denver Igarta (PBOT): Gravel roads tend to be local roads so they wouldn't show up in our priority network which focuses on higher order streets. Funding tends to go to streets with more ped activity. We do have other planning efforts underway that have to implement the priorities in PedPDX, like Lower Southeast Rising in Woodstock. There could also be a way to create pathways/MUPs as an alternative to paving/sidewalks.
- Catie Tam: Are there neighborhood resources or pathways that would allow us to make improvements ourselves?
 - Gena: email me. (gena.gastaldi@portlandoregon.gov)