



Transportation Planning and Development Program
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Multnomah County Bicycle and Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Board Room, Multnomah Building, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, OR

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Andrew Holtz
Briana Orr
Michael Rubenstein
Jerry Zelada
Joel Huffman
Gary Purvine
Carolyn Briggs
Jeff Grover

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Martha Berndt
Jim Couch
Art Graves
Rory Renfro
Susan Watt
Ryan Farncomb
Greg Olson

STAFF: Kate McQuillan (Transportation Planner), Joanna Valencia (Transportation Planning and Development Manager), Ae-young Lee (Engineering), Michael Grimmert (Bridge Operations), and MaryJo Andersen (SRTS Coordinator)

Guest: Rithy Khut

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm. There was a quorum of members present. Kate facilitated the meeting, and pointed out the agenda had a slight revision to add a last-minute topic for the Multnomah County Road Rules update.

2. Multnomah County Road Rules Update

Joanna Valencia, manager of the Transportation Planning and Development program, provided a quick overview of the proposed changes to the Multnomah County Road Rules. The Road Rules are one of two primary documents that County transportation staff use for

implementation (the other document is the Multnomah County Design and Construction Manual). The Road Rules provide the administrative code that govern how County roads are used and developed.

Joanna provided a handout that outlines all the proposed amendments to the Road Rules, most of which are considered house-keeping edits. Two changes Joanna wanted to highlight to the Committee are: (1) New development setbacks from future development next to the County's Willamette River Bridges; and (2) new language for managing stormwater run-off for a proposed development to levels from the Lewis and Clark era.

The public comment period ends on February 23rd, 2018. Any Committee member or member of the public can call Joanna or Kate to discuss questions or concerns with the proposed changes to the Road Rules.

BPCAC Committee members were particularly supportive of the proposed development setback along the Willamette River Bridges which serve as key connections in downtown Portland's bicycle and pedestrian network.

MOTION: Andrew moved to support the specific Road Rules amendment that would create the development setbacks on the County's Willamette River Bridges to help preserve future right of way needs that would benefit bicycle and pedestrian safety. A.J. Zelada seconded the motion.

APPROVAL: Approved with no opposition or abstentions.

3. Approve January 2018 Meeting Minutes

There were no edits to the draft January 2018 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Joel Huffman moved to approve the January 2018 meeting minutes. Andrew Holtz seconded the motion.

APPROVAL: January 2018 meeting minutes were approved.

4. Public Comment

Brianna Orr shared that the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) has an upcoming open house on Monday, February 19th about the Enhanced Transit Corridor work they have been doing with TriMet. There is also an online open house for those who are interested.

Andrew Holtz shared that PBOT is also taking public comment on "Southwest in Motion", or SWIM, to help prioritize bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the SW Portland neighborhoods. This has potential implications for the County's Sellwood Bridge project because cyclists frequently use the private road in the Riverview Cemetery to access SW Portland and the Bridge. However there is increased pressure to develop a new bicycle route

that is not on a private road but can provide the same access between the SW neighborhoods and the Sellwood Bridge.

5. Staff Report

Kate shared that County staff submitted the NE 223rd bicycle and pedestrian improvement project for the Regional Flexible Funds Allocation (RFFA) dollars earmarked for project development of active transportation projects. Also, the County is hosting an open house on Monday, February 28 2018 for three of the County's major capital projects: NE 238th Drive, Arata Road, and Sandy Blvd. And lastly, Kate shared that Metro has submitted the land use applications to construct visitor improvements to a new nature park in the West Hills. Kate passed around a sign up sheet for anyone who would like to be added to the "Interested Parties" mailing list.

6. BPCAC Member Stories

Thank you, Carolyn, for sharing your story this month.

7. Willamette River Bridges Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Options

Michael Grimmett, supervisor of the Bridge Operations program, presented a few proposals to the BPCAC on how to make alerts for bridge lifts more accessible to the travelling public. Michael reviewed the memo he prepared outline possible improvements, which will be attached to the final meeting minutes. County staff are working to have bridge lift recorded warnings translated into five languages: Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Somali. In addition to the language translation, Michael and his team are proposing to make safety improvements to benefit pedestrians and cyclists with varying mobility and sight issues when bridge decks are about to be raised for passing river traffic.

Michael reminded Committee members that when it comes to bridges lifts, river traffic has right of way according to federal laws. The one exemption for river traffic right of way is during the vehicle peak travel times. However Fleet Week (during the Rose Festival) and when water levels are 12-feet or higher are the exceptions to the exemption. At a minimum, the Willamette River Bridges are raised every 8 hours whether or not there is river traffic to keep the working components in good condition.

Generally the Committee was supportive and excited to see the improvements proposed by Michael and his team. Several Committee members suggested that distracted pedestrians and cyclists may be at greater risk than those with sight or mobility impairments. The Committee brainstormed various designs or improvements that could be used to help improve the visibility of bridge lift warnings for not just sight-impaired persons but also distracted pedestrians and cyclists.

Specific questions and comments from the BPCAC include:

- Flashing, strobing lights could be effective in getting distracted persons' attention.
- Classic yellow caution signs may be more applicable for people who are not from the United States as it is a more universal symbol.

- A countdown timer for when the bridge lift begins would be informational for pedestrians and cyclists. Staff noted that the County requires 1-hour notice for lifts on all bridges except for Hawthorne (which is staffed 24/7).
- Is it possible to share information about scheduled bridge lifts ahead of time? Staff responded that it would be very difficult as river traffic is hard to predict and changes frequently.
- Consider adding reflective material on pavement with flashing lights on guardrails or balustrades.
- Similar to the flashing warnings that vehicles get prior to getting on the bridge, could there be a flashing warning for pedestrians and cyclists a couple of blocks from the bridge?

8. Cochran Road Culvert Replacement Project

Ae-young Lee, a County engineer and project manager, shared the latest designs for the Cochran Road Culvert Replacement Project scheduled to begin construction in the summer of 2019. Through several environmental planning efforts the last ten years, the Cochran Road project was identified as a priority need to improve the fish passage for salmonid species in prime watershed habitat. The project is funded by Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grant Programs as well as support from several local government, non-profit, academic, and federal partners. The new culvert will actually be a bridge so that the stream underneath can have a natural meandering flow.

Currently, the roadbed over the culvert is 25-feet wide however the future replacement bridge will be 46-feet wide. Despite the larger width, the travel lane configuration will stay the same but will include 11-foot shoulders. The primary comments from the BPCAC include:

- Request for a buffer between the travel lanes and the paved shoulder – either with physical buffers like candle sticks or even a painted buffer.
- There is some concern that wider shoulders may encourage faster speeds which is already an issue at this location being at the bottom of a hill.
- Several BPCAC members noted that despite the steep grade, SE Cochran Road is a popular cycling route for cyclists traveling east across the Sandy River, or south to the Orient/Oxbow area.
- A couple BPCAC members emphasized the need for temporary bicycle and pedestrian facilities during the construction closure. The grade and out of direction travel to turn around for both pedestrians and cyclists would be quite the burden.

Ae-young asked for feedback on how best to notify the area's residents and the frequent road users of the road closure that will occur for 2-4 months next summer. One BPCAC member from the Corbett area suggested adding signage to Kerslake Road as many Corbett locals prefer to drive Kerslake Road and then Cochran Road into the cities to avoid congestion on SE Stark Street. One member shared that the County did a great job notifying neighbors and businesses with the Stark Street closure during the summer of 2016.

9. Letter from BPCAC re: Historic Columbia River Highway (HCRH) Pilot

The BPCAC had a robust discussion about the latest draft of the letter of support for a temporary “pilot” project on the Historic Columbia River Highway (HCRH) when the road reopens this spring. Committee members who are Corbett residents expressed frustration at how quickly this process is happening when changes to HCRH have been so slow to occur in the past. A Committee member also expressed concern about the pilot's proposal for one-way traffic to both impact emergency vehicles as well as the historical designation of the highway.

Out of respect for the Corbett residents' concerns, the BPCAC sought to clarify that the proposal for one-way traffic on HCRH is a short-term initiative, and that any changes made to HCRH upon reopening be thoroughly assessed by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and its partners prior to it becoming a permanent change to HCRH.

MOTION: AJ Zelada moved approve and send the latest draft of the letter from the BPCAC to Commissioner Stegmann to advocate for one-way traffic pilot on Historic Columbia River Highway. Brianna Orr seconded the motion.

APPROVAL: The BPCAC approved the motion. Five (5) votes in favor; Two (2) votes opposed (Jeff Grover and Carolyn Briggs); and one (1) abstention (Gary Purvine).

POST-APPROVAL DISCUSSION: The BPCAC asked that County staff disclose the vote to Commissioner Stegmann to be fully transparent that not every Committee member approves of the letter. Kate shared that County staff intends to brief the Commissioner in person in the week following this meeting and that staff would like to tell the Commissioner about the Committee's letter in person before sending off the letter. Kate will be sure the Commissioner knows about the split vote from the Committee.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 8:47pm.

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Meeting minutes written and submitted by:

Kate McQuillan

The next BPCAC meeting is scheduled for: Wednesday, March 14, 2018