

The purpose of a public involvement process is to allow citizens to contribute perspectives only they can have - from day-to-day experiences which inform us about conditions in our communities not obvious to city officials and staff.

Imagine that PBOT staff listened to those experiences and conditions - about our high percentage of vulnerable individuals [almost ½ of the people north of the corridor] and the difficulty of crossing at the curve, to mention just a couple.

Imagine the community was able to discuss these with PBOT engineers who are supposed to take a broad array of factors into account when determining street treatments.

Imagine that a good-faith public involvement process resulted in a good, and *firm*, plan for safety improvements along the corridor. Imagine that the community was pleased with the outcome.

Now, forget all that, because none of it happened.

The public involvement process was a sham, until the community made it be more.

PBOT staff dragged the community of St Johns through a 23-month, and counting, process. I am convinced that PBOT staff never had any interest in truly hearing the community. Why? Because from the outset the freight part of the plan was paramount - as shown by the fact that the PBOT employees consisted of a Project Manager and the Freight Coordinator. But, PBOT was required to make some improvements on Fessenden / St. Louis. *PBOT staff came in and basically told us what they were going to do.* Then they fought most of the elements the community saw the need for, for almost 17 months.

PBOT never even wanted to get the freight trucks off the corridor. They always spoke in terms of "mitigation" or, as in the application for funding: "... improvements for this project will *reduce the incentive* for using the local street system for non-local freight use."

There was a disagreement as to where the pedestrian signal on the west side of the curve should go. The community thought N. Seneca. PBOT, N. Smith [with no reasons]. I said, let the community decide at the upcoming Open House. People would be using post-its to tag problem locations along the corridor. We got the raw data from the event. I counted up all mentions of Smith and Seneca. Twice as many people said Seneca was a problem as Smith. Yet the Project Manager questioned my count. Why? Who knows, but *he clearly had not analyzed the data.*

So much for the public involvement process.

We had a rally with 50 people on Oct 20. A woman came up to me to say how she had lost trust in the city. Even when we get the signals, in many ways the community and the city lost. What should have been a six-month process took almost 2 years - and counting. Wasted time, wasted energy, wasted money.

And a huge loss of trust in the city by people in St Johns.

We're still waiting for confirmation from Leah Treat that we will have the pedestrian signals and that they will be installed in 2018 along with the rest of the changes - as originally planned!

City of Portland Public Involvement Principles

Adopted by the City of Portland, Oregon on August 4, 2010



Preamble

Portland City government works best when community members and government work as partners. Effective public involvement is essential to achieve and sustain this partnership and the civic health of our city. This:

- ❖ Ensures better City decisions that more effectively respond to the needs and priorities of the community.
- ❖ Engages community members and community resources as part of the solution.
- ❖ Engages the broader diversity of the community—especially people who have not been engaged in the past.
- ❖ Increases public understanding of and support for public policies and programs.
- ❖ Increases the legitimacy and accountability of government actions.

Nov 15, 2017

Throughout our interactions with PBOT, PBOT staff sought to stonewall community input and slow the process down in the hopes that the community would be worn down. It only made us more determined.

And, when PBOT came back to the community 4 years later saying that key treatments that were fought so hard for would be eliminated they perhaps thought those who had been most involved would by this time be disengaged from the process. That was not the case.

For all of these reasons—and more—a public involvement process that should have taken 6 months took 23 months. The insensitivity and contempt with which the community was treated—the misrepresentations, avoidance of accountability for claims made, double-talk; the lack of any meaningful or good-faith approach to public involvement, the community time involved that never should have been necessary to achieve the goal—for all of these reasons the City of Portland has let down St Johns and most importantly lost its trust.

For the hundreds of hours of PBOT staff time that were wasted in stonewalling and slowing down the process; for the pretense of a real public-involvement process and for PBOT's unwillingness to seriously consider the perspectives of the community. And, for, most likely, agreeing to the plan in 2013 with the idea of eliminating key parts of it down the line—the City should investigate what happened.

If it can be shown that PBOT staff knowingly stalled and undercut the Stakeholder Committee process, had an agenda for the community that was set early on negating in PBOT staff minds even the need for a Stakeholder Committee beyond it being a rubber stamp—then the actions of PBOT staff were, at the least unethical and at most, fraudulent and abusive.

Taking a salary while impeding a key city mandate – that of having a neighborhood be thoughtful co-creators of a plan that will have fundamental effects on that community—is to take a salary for NOT doing one's job. Taking a salary while you are wasting the time of community members is NOT doing one's job.

The process of the creation of the St Johns Truck Strategy, Phase II, Plan should be investigated by the office of the City Auditor. No community should have to, again, go what we went through. No public servant should be able to abuse a community as this Project Manager did. In fact, PBOT is on the Auditor schedule for Audits in Fiscal Year 2017-2018. The St Johns Truck Strategy, Phase II, Plan, public involvement process should be examined as part of it.

Nothing less than the public's trust in its city is at stake.

Donna Cohen

dcohen@hevanet.com

Example of ignoring requests for information to substantiate claims

PBOT changes to St Johns Truck Strategy, Phase II, Plan. June 21, 2017

St Johns Truck Strategy Phase II

Design Scope of Work, 30% Design

N St Louis/ Fessenden: Lombard to Columbia Way

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Changes from 2013 Design Recommendation

N Midway: changed from curb extension to median, eliminate **RFB- not warranted (per federal guidelines)**.

N Burr: eliminated- curb extensions would require modifications to existing pedestrian signal which would trigger removal of the signal (per federal guidelines).

N Charleston: eliminate **HAWK signal- not warranted (per federal guidelines)**.

Enlarged Font and Bolding added

We repeatedly asked for documentation about the so-called changes to the "federal guidelines" but received no response:



Tue 7/25/2017 4:52 PM

D Cohen <dcohen@hevanet.com>

"Changes" to guidelines for pedestrian signals

To: 'Newlands, Rich'; 'Haines, Mark'

Cc: 'Barbara Quinn'; 'Shamus Lynsky'; lizuka@comcast.net; 'Curt Schneider'; 'Travis Parker'; 'Scott Bricker'

Rich, you have referred to changes to guidelines for these devices. You will need to be very specific as to what these changes are.

Document names and page/section numbers, etc. etc.

It is not sufficient to say a general statement, especially when there were no such impediments in 2013. If something has changed, you should be able to give us specifics.

Thanks.

Donna

We contacted the Federal Highway Administration to ask about changes:

Note the complete contradiction with the statement above "**RFB- not warranted (per federal guidelines)**."

"The general conditions for the use of **RRFBs** in the IA-11 memorandum **do not include any warranting criteria**, so the decision regarding whether to enhance a pedestrian warning sign at a crosswalk with an RRFB is based solely on engineering judgment."



Thu 7/13/2017 7:30 AM

Friedman, Bruce (FHWA) <Bruce.Friedman@dot.gov>

RE: Questions about MUTCD and related

To: D Cohen

Cc: MUTCDTEAM; Fortey, Nick (FHWA)

Bruce E. Friedman, P.E.
Transportation Specialist, MUTCD Team
Office of Operations
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Nov 15, 2017 Donna Cohen

Example of misrepresentation

While the community was being told we would not get the signals—and, while we were told on more than one occasion this past summer that PBOT had not promised them, the Project Manager was emailing colleagues the exact opposite:

From: Newlands, Rich
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2017 3:59 PM
To: Pearce, Art; Williams, Millicent; Wardrip, Lewis; Koonce, Peter; Layden, Dan
CC: Haines, Mark; Okimoto, Lisa
Subject: FW: St Johns Truck Strategy- design scope of work

Art, et al,

The St Johns Neighborhood Association is requesting a clarification of a commitment we made several years ago regarding the second phase of the St Johns Truck Strategy. This specifically relates to two signal elements of the final recommendation for the traffic calming sub-project on N St Louis/ Fessenden- a HAWK signal at N Fessenden/ Charleston, and RFBs at two other locations.

Community claims an incomplete warrant analysis for the HAWK signal -

Example of lack of opportunity to present these factors to the PBOT traffic engineer

The community has always contended that PBOT did an incomplete analysis for the HAWK signal at the curve. No materials we have been given, or received via the records request, ever mentioned any of the numerous additional factors that should have been considered—in spite of most of them appearing in transportation literature used otherwise by PBOT—e.g. Rpt 562.

More from Federal Highway Administration:

"Please keep in mind that the various warrants in Chapter 4C are only intended to be one portion of a traffic control signal warrant study. Other factors... The bottom line is that the traffic engineer needs to determine from **all available data** and observations whether the location would operate better with or without a traffic control signal."

Bolding added



Tue 7/11/2017 4:05 PM

D. Cohen <dcohen@hymanet.com>

RE: Can you send...

To: "Newlands, Rich"; "Shamus Lynskey"

Cc: "Bertrand Gertler"; "Carl Schneider"; "Lisa"; "Haines, Mark"; "Clinton Jackson"

We should be having these conversations with a traffic engineer.

This reminds me of when we were told a sight-line measurement and then were able to, on the spot, check it with the traffic engineer, who agreed what was said was measurement for a straight road, not a curve.

We need to bring in the experts.

Donna

Donna L Cohen, MEd, MLIS
Portland, Oregon

Nov 15, 2017 Donna Cohen

Moore-Love, Karla

From: D Cohen <dcohen@hevanet.com>
Sent: Friday, August 25, 2017 8:35 AM
To: Moore-Love, Karla
Subject: Hi - slot in October?

Hi Karla,

I'm wondering if you have a slot available for Oct 4? It will be about the same issue – the timing of the Fessenden / St Louis pedestrian signals in the St Johns Truck Strategy, Phases II, Plan.

Fingers crossed this gets settled by then, but at the moment, they will not give us a timeline.

Thanks a lot.
Donna

Donna L Cohen, MEd, MLIS
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Civics for Adults Workshops: To Enhance Civic Knowledge and Inspire Political Engagement

Keep up-to-date: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Civics-for-Adults-1490728887922036/> and/or let me know if you want to be on the Civics email list.

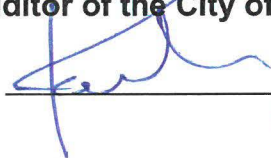
Request of Donna Cohen to address Council regarding timing of the
Fessenden /St Louis pedestrian signals in the St Johns Truck
Strategy, Phase II, Plan (Communication)

NOV 15 2017

PLACED ON FILE

Filed NOV 06 2017

MARY HULL CABALLERO
Auditor of the City of Portland

By  Deputy

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Eudaly		
Wheeler		