

PBOT

PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

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Chloe Eudaly Commissioner **Chris Warner** Interim Director

April 24, 2019

TO: Portland Bureau of Transportation Employees
FROM: Chris Warner, PBOT Interim Director
RE: **Accelerating citywide safety fixes in response to traffic fatalities**

Dear PBOT Colleagues –

The last two weeks have seen a terrible series of fatal crashes on our streets. Causes have varied from incident to incident, but we at PBOT need to reach out to the entire Portland community and urge everyone to do their part in eliminating life-ending and life-changing crashes.

Commissioner Eudaly has directed PBOT to implement specific safety improvements at NE Broadway and Grand in response to a fatal crash this past weekend. These changes were identified as part of the Central City in Motion project; I have asked staff to move them forward on an expedited timeline.

In addition to these intersection changes, I am also directing our teams to take other significant steps to support Portland's Vision Zero goal throughout the entire city to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on our streets.

These steps represent my commitment to address persistent, systemic traffic safety challenges that go beyond any one crash. Specific safety fixes PBOT will accelerate include:

- **Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPis)** will become our default practice at new or upgraded traffic signals on High Crash Network streets. A proven tool to improve pedestrian safety, LPis give people crossing the street a head start at a crosswalk, making them more visible to drivers and reducing potential conflicts. PBOT will add at least ten LPis each year to existing signals citywide.
- **Protected left turns** will become PBOT's default practice at new or upgraded traffic signals on High Crash Network streets. We will install at least three protected left turns each year at existing signals.
- **Left turn traffic calming**, originally slated to begin this summer, will start immediately. This treatment slows vehicle speeds through large intersections and protects pedestrians at high-conflict turns. It has shown promise in New York and we are excited to evaluate its impact here in Portland.



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While we are pursuing citywide safety fixes, I am establishing a **new crash response protocol**. After every fatal crash, PBOT will provide an immediate update with all available information to the Commissioner of Transportation. The bureau will then install prominent electronic Variable Message Signs (VMS) at the crash location to mark the tragic crash sites and raise awareness of the traveling public about specific dangers and the overall importance of driving safely in our city.

Often, fatal crashes signal the failure of our transportation system in specific locations. When they occur, I am instructing PBOT to conduct an emergency assessment of the site and to deploy a range of possible "rapid response" safety improvements. These include:

- Interim design changes
- Signal improvements
- Public education

The Commissioner has further instructed us to review similar incidents over the past 12 months with the same approach to see if we can make immediate improvements at those locations. Over a longer period of time, these strategies may be altered or improved based on more detailed crash reports and analysis. PBOT will also evaluate whether a larger capital project is – or should be – planned.

Thank you in advance for working across the bureau to make these new initiatives happen. Together we can fulfill our mission to make sure that all Portlanders can get from place to place safely.

As always, thank you for your work.

