

Portland City Council Meeting
Wednesday, April 17, 2024 - 2:00 p.m.
Verbal Testimony

Agenda Item	Name
319	Lynn Felton
319	Lily Burnett
319	David Stein
319	Kiel Johnson

Written Testimony - Agenda Item 319

Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
319	Terry Parker			Yes	04/15/24 8:10 AM
319	Anonymous	Oppose	Our city has allowed streets to get more dangerous. Less enforcement of traffic laws by police leave dangerous drivers on the road. Everyday I see vehicles with no plates driven by drug addicts in my neighborhood. It's no doubt people are continuing to get hit and dying.	No	04/15/24 2:46 PM
319	Sarah Risser	Support with changes	There is no question that Portland's Vision Zero Program has been an abject failure. Given its abysmal track record, it is reasonable to conclude that it will continue to be a failure. I am under the very strong impression that Portland's Vision Zero program exists to signal a desire for zero road fatalities and, by doing so, allow leaders to evade the hard work that is needed to realize its goal. When initiated in 2015, the program's intended to reduce road fatalities in Portland to ZERO by 2025. And here we are. With Vision Zero in place we have only seen road fatalities rise. I am deeply concerned that city leaders are not doing everything within their power to understand why this program has failed so spectacularly and address those reasons directly. In the most recent email from PBOT, Mayor Wheeler is quoted: "This year's report is a stark reminder of the urgent work that lies ahead." I beg to differ. This year's report is a stark and horrific reminder that the program as it now functions does not work. The reasons for its failure need to be clarified and addressed very directly. At an absolute minimum the city of Portland needs to ensure that Vision Zero is fully funded. Budgets are moral documents. Lives are being lost needlessly and violently. Vision Zero demands robust funding. Moreover, ensuring our roads are safe goes well beyond doing the right thing, it makes economic sense and will almost certainly guarantee a net savings to the city with less money spend on emergency response; less money spent on police response. Livable & safe cities are vibrant economic cities. Livable & safe cities encourage people to travel by bike, foot, or public transit reducing the wear and tear on roads that has proven so exorbitantly expensive. Vision Zero should be a city-wide STANDARD that all departments both reinforce and uphold. Road fatalities are already 50% higher than they were at this time in 2023. I wonder where they will be in 2025.	No	04/16/24 5:58 PM
319	Ben Seigel	Support	<p>I am dismayed that the council has not been more aggressive at addressing careless and dangerous drivers and the numerous vehicles parked and operating on our roads without plates - I don't mean expired tags, I mean no license plates at all.</p> <p>Every day we watch people break the law with no consequence. I recognize PBOT and PPD are short staffed, but there must be some creative ways to deal with these issues.</p> <p>Has the council looked at other cities' approaches? Where is the urgency on this matter as traffic deaths increase?</p>	No	04/16/24 9:50 PM

Vision Zero Testimony, Portland City Council Agenda Item #319, April 17, 2024

To Members of the Portland City Council,

Much of what PBOT is doing with Vision Zero appears to be a waste of tax dollars. Corraling motorists seems to be the agenda. This spending spree is one of several reasons why PBOT is \$32m in the hole.

Street Reconfigurations:

Road diets and lane reconfigurations that reduce motor vehicle infrastructure all too often create more traffic congestion thereby increasing fuel consumption and emissions along with creating more cut through traffic in residential neighborhoods. The increased congestion frustrates drivers who then are more likely to be involved in a crash that could involve injuries and/or fatalities.

Moreover, some of Portland's reconfigured intersections have signals for through traffic, signals for left turns, signals for right turns, signals for transit, signals for bicyclists, signals for pedestrians and signage galore often coupled with long wait times. All this combined can be confusing to drivers, especially if they are unfamiliar with a specific street or intersection. Think SE Division Street. A TriMet Lift driver told me she hates to drive on Division for that very reason. All this confusion can easily lead to more crashes and fatalities. A recipe for a KISS system is in order: "Keep It Simple Stupid!"

Public Engagement with PBOT:

Since the pandemic, PBOT's public engagement process has become completely broken, even to point of being corrupt. Today what is being called public engagement as it applies to geographic neighborhoods is checking off the box with a dog and pony show where public comments are taken on a dump of information related to the decisions PBOT has already made, often with a large percentage of the planning and design work already completed. Specifically, changes planned for 82nd Avenue are now being handled in this manner. Be it a federal, state or locally funded project, the motorists that pay the taxes into these funding mechanisms have also become secondary to the special interests of alternative mode users who directly contribute nothing monetarily towards adding the infrastructure they lobby for. For motorists, it is an out-and-out challenge to even have PBOT truly listen to and positively respond to what drivers have to say.

Playing a vocal part in this roll is PBOT's Bicycle Advisory Committee which appears to have a direct pipeline of information about upcoming transportation projects continually being pumped into the committee, either by a mole and/or PBOT spokespeople. Filtered information is then broadcast through bike advocacy websites such as BikePortland and BikeLoudPDX calling out the troops so bike activists can rattle cages to get what they want, most often at the expense of motorists.

Neighborhoods and the motoring public no longer have a meaningful up front voice in the planning process. Not directly delivering the same information about upcoming projects coupled with genuine public engagement opportunities for neighborhoods and motorists is a form of discrimination. This often creates negative, hostile and toxic livability issues in neighborhoods (such as with NE 72nd Drive through Rose City Golf Course), and often times destructive safety issues for drivers such as when lanes on thoroughfares are narrowed to less than the full width of large trucks inclusive of the mirrors.

Choice of Mode:

People make their choice of transport mode for various reasons. A mobility impaired person or a senior citizen that doesn't have the stamina to walk long distances may totally depend on their car to get around while a young whipper snapper or an exercise advocate may choose a bicycle. Mode choice also has a lot to do with convenience. For instance, if a person has to make a transfer to get where they are going on transit, they may drive instead. Additionally, more and more people no longer feel safe on transit, especially using light rail. The goal to have 25% of the trips made in Portland be by bike is pie in the sky.

Motor Vehicle Choice:

Most people and families choose their motor vehicles to fit their needs. Do they need seating capacity for family members, lots of cargo space and/or off road capabilities? Do they utilize the vehicle for just inner city travel, commuting to and from where ever, mostly for long distance highway travel and/or a combination of uses? Due to the weight of lithium batteries, EVs weigh 30 percent more than gasoline powered cars. Research studies have discovered EV tires cause as much as 1,850 times more particulate pollution than filtered gasoline engine exhausts. **Attempting to dictate the type and size of vehicles people in Portland drive is nothing less than progressive socialism.**

Enforcement of traffic laws on bicycling:

From my own observations, nine out of ten bicyclists ignore and/or simply flaunt traffic laws. This is especially true at intersections with traffic control devices such as traffic signals and stop signs. A few years ago, PPB conducted sting operations, mostly at intersections where bicyclists were known to disregard the law. Bicyclists were consistently cited for not following the rules. Today there is zero enforcement aimed at bicycling even though the need for this kind of enforcement still exists.

Street Lighting:

When the street lights in Portland were changed from sodium vapor lighting to the current pathetic LED lighting, it was as if the streets went dark. This cutoff LED lighting is often called shadow lighting because without drop down lenses that spread the light, the street is lit up under the light fixtures themselves with blotchy shadows in between the fixtures. This poor LED lighting is likely a contributing factor for many crashes. To create safer streets, PBOT needs to take a step backwards and reintroduce brighter lighting with drop down lenses that spread the light over the entire streetscape, and/or adopt the much brighter high intensity and warm color lighting that ODOT utilizes on I-84.

Economic Impact:

History clearly demonstrates higher rates of personal mobility (such as driving) significantly contributes to greater economic productivity which in turn generates family wage jobs. Automotive technicians can make 100k or more a year while bicycle mechanics in Portland make between 26k and 47k a year. Guess who needs rent subsidies in addition to being subsidized for the infrastructure they utilize. Nearly 10% of Oregon jobs are directly tied to the auto industry. Motor vehicle usage keeps the economy humming. Reducing motor vehicle travel can have negative implications on the economy.

Policy for Creating an Equitable Infrastructure Fee Structure:

"Ensure the costs of constructing and providing public facilities and services are equitably shared by those who benefit from the provision of those facilities and services." (PORTLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Policy 8.28) PBOT is not following this overarching City policy when motorists paid taxes and fees continue to be sponged off to subsidize the alternative transport modes. Per a City Club study that took place nearly a decade ago, one two-axle transit bus does as much damage to the roadways as 1200 cars. Pre-pandemic TriMet made 223 trips a day on 82nd Avenue. It would have taken 267,600 cars in a 24 hour period traveling the entire length of the street to do the same amount of roadway wear and tear. Add the weight of batteries and electric buses will do even more damage. Today's transit fares only cover about 19% of the operating costs.

PBOT needs to end its negative bias towards the automobile along with the socialistic dependency and poaching of motorists paid taxes and fees to fund both transit and bicycle infrastructure, especially when the user beneficiaries continually bite the hands that feed them. Applying policy 8.28 must include transit riders paying for the damage buses do to the streets and all costs associated with Rose Lane projects, possibly with a surcharge on fares. Moreover, bicyclists need to start equitably paying their own way for all bicycle specific infrastructure, possibly with registration and license fees which would likely require legislative approval. What's more, with bicyclists being required to pay for the infrastructure utilized, they may demonstrate a little more respect for both traffic laws and motorists.

The Bottom Line:

PBOT is promoting Vision Zero as a safety tool, but utilizing it as an anti-car socialistic agenda that is costly to taxpayers, has negative consequences for the economy and has negative impacts on the environment primarily due to increased traffic congestion created by the reduction motor vehicle infrastructure. Vision Zero continues to be absent of views from behind the steering wheel. Also absent from Vision Zero is placing any responsibility on pedestrians and bicyclists as it applies to being law abiding and/or acceptance of any responsibility for their actions when common sense would be more obvious.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Parker
Portland

Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
319	Anonymous	Support with changes	As A community member who was born and raised here, watching the changes to our city, Vision Zero is a joke. Yes people are driving impaired, yes people are driving too fast, agreed. And those that are guilty of this should be punished accordingly. however, we also need to take responsibility for our own actions walking along the streets. We need to look both ways before crossing. We need to not have headphones in our ear while crossing major intersections and crossing outside of major intersections. We need to use the new crossings made available to us instead of running across 4 lanes of traffic randomly. There should be more education to people who are walking, rolling and biking around the city n how to better protect themselves and being aware of our surroundings. Educate people that are crossing without looking after dark and wearing all black clothing. pedestrians walk out in front of you to cross the street even when you are coming in with a greenlight, watched this just yesterday! everybody needs to be held accountable for their own actions. My mom used to say when it comes down to it if it's between you and a 2000 pound car who do you think is going to win look both ways and don't act stupid.	No	04/16/24 9:59 PM
319	Parkrose neighbor	Support with changes	I support Vision zero in 122nd. I have three kids that go to all the Parkrose schools and hope everyday they make it safely to school. Not only do people drive fast but they are obsessed with their phones. People are not paying attention! Solution I did not see on the safety list is, stopping a large diesel trucking company moving in right in the 6th deadliest street in Portland. That sentence alone should be enough said! Adding giant diesel trucks and there pollution will only add more problems for traffic and safety for our kids!	No	04/16/24 10:30 PM

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319	Robert Galanakis	Support with changes	<p>Deaths due to motor vehicles are one of the leading non-medical causes of death and injury in Portland and we're moving in the wrong direction.</p> <p>This is a crisis, but we're moving without any urgency. A PBOT signals engineer recently said to a friend, "why do it fast when you can take your time and do it right?" This is the position of a bureau that is utterly confused about how to reduce traffic deaths, paving its own way (literally) into oblivion instead of looking at other cities around the country and world that have fixed these problems.</p> <p>While PBOT is focused only the high-crash network, for good reason, all other roads remain dangerous and discouraging to navigate except by car. This defacto tax on walking and biking encourages more driving, congestion, and dangerous behavior. PBOT also needs to be focused on reducing VMTs broadly as a safety tool, since we know lower VMTs lower traffic deaths and injuries (plus having endless other benefits).</p> <p>PBOT needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End this "take our time and do it right" stance that is clearly not working. The results it produces are questionable, it cannot keep up with new problems, and it does not put them in a position to iterate on improvements. - Establish a handbook of interventions PBOT staff can make that require no traffic studies or layers of approval given a certain set of conditions (like on local traffic streets). This will massively reduce the latency between unsafe conditions reports and action. - Establish other triggers, such as the replacement of plastic wands automatically leading to concrete barrels. - Instead of the long process of: citizen reporting -> on-site inspection -> traffic study -> recommendation -> potential eventual implementation, send an engineer out to each report with paint and bollards and expect them to make actual changes on the ground, in real-time. These should be in addition to the handbook interventions mentioned above. - Work with community groups and allow them to make their own interventions from an approved list (such as roadway narrowing, crosswalk painting, traffic calming planters, daylighting). Then have an engineer follow up after the fact, or based on complaints/reports. Many of the reasons traffic engineers give to say 'no' to these (like marked crosswalks) are not backed up by evidence; and many effective interventions, like daylighting, are simple for citizens to implement themselves. <p>We don't have a Vision Zero right now- we have a 'Hope Zero' right now. I'm glad PBOT is looking to work across agencies to solve problems, but they also need to engage more with community groups, and understand the root of the inability to make progress is PBOT's own convoluted process that doesn't keep up with the urgency of the violence in our streets.</p>	No	04/17/24 10:30 AM