

Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: February 4, 2015 / 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Co-chairs: Kristi Rennebohm Franz and Jeff Aken
Recorder: Leah Curtiss
Location: Seattle City Hall, Room L280

Minutes Distribution List:

See Attachment A

Members Present:

Jeff Aken, Adam Bartz, Don Brubeck, Leah Curtiss, Steve Kennedy, Riley Kimball, Lara Normand, Kristi Rennebohm Franz, Merlin Rainwater, Ester Sandoval

Members Absent:

Clint Loper, Michael Wong

Guests:

Wesley King, Jean Amick, Forrest Baum, Tom Fucoloro, Brian Estes, Phyllis Porter, Dina Winkel, Gordon Padelford, Maria Koengeter (SDOT), Sara Walton (SDOT), Emily Ehlers (SDOT), Sam Woods (SDOT), Gordon Werner

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Jeff Aken called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jean Amick of the Montlake neighborhood submitted a letter with photographs and a public comment sheet. She is concerned about two areas near bridges that make it unsafe for bicyclists and pedestrians: 1) The hedge at the corner of Shelby and Montlake Blvd blocks sightlines and old curb cuts do not align with marked crossing; 2) At the University Bridge, bicyclists need a safe way to exit from the pedestrian walkway, similar to the Fremont Bridge; She is also concerned about plans to widen the sidewalk east of Montlake Bridge to only 10'. FHWA standards for shared use paths with heavy volumes indicate 12'-14' width needed.

Michael Archambault commented on the Madison BRT plan on behalf of Central Area Greenways. They do not see any of the alternatives providing a parallel route or transforming Madison into a "complete street." Of the alternatives shown, they support the Union PBL. They ask that special attention be given to the crossings at 12th/Union/Madison, 18th & Madison, and 24th & Madison. Gordon Werner also submitted a comment sheet in support of the Union St. alternative.

Forrest Baum thanked SBAB and SDOT for listening to their concerns on Roosevelt, and especially to SDOT for acting on some of those concerns such as extending the PBL northward to 65th, and finding a way to implement sidewalk improvements. Their group would like to see traffic flow studied during implementation of Roosevelt project.

Gordon Padelford of Seattle Neighborhood Greenways submitted written comments asking that Roosevelt be studied to compare performance between a 1-lane off-peak vs. 2-lanes peak traffic volumes; requesting that University Bridge approaches are greatly improved; the Madison BRT routes do not constitute a parallel route – this is not possible with a diagonal arterial – two routes are needed, but the Union PBL is preferred if only one is going to be built. Also, parks need to be accessible to get to and through: need policies that support lighting on trails.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SBAB co-chair Kristi Rennebohm Franz announced that SDOT has requested a letter from SBAB by the 16th of February regarding the SR520 plan – she'll be putting together a draft describing how the Bike Board supports the plan.

Phyllis Porter, Rainier Valley Greenways (audience) announced the upcoming Youth Bike Summit, and thanked the Bike Board for their letter of welcome and support for the attendees.

PRESENTATIONS

Madison Bus Rapid Transit Corridor Project

Time: 6:20

Presenters: Sara Walton and Maria Koengeter, SDOT

Purpose: Gather input on the two revised route options east of Broadway, intended to provide a parallel route along the BRT corridor, which will mesh better with the BMP

Goals of the project:

- Faster, more reliable transit
- Better rider experience
- Develop bicycling alternatives to Madison
- Advance streetscape and public space (complete streets requirement)

Current Phase includes:

- An analysis of two concepts
- 10% design, engineering and cost estimates
- Development of an implementation plan including the bicycle component (safe connection from waterfront to MLK)

Broadway to MLK is one of 3 segments. The two alternatives for this segment include:

- Eastward along Denny to 21st to Thomas to 24th
- Union to 27th to Arthur Place

In December, a bike tour was conducted as part of the route development. The tour analysis revealed a need for revisions - the advanced design will be a part of the BMP Network. Evaluation criteria for the two route alternatives included:

- Safety
- Pavement Condition
- Accessibility
- Topography

- Route continuity
- Current Bicycle usage
- Community support

Next Steps:

- Early spring notification of final selected route
- April Open House on Technical Analysis of BRT and Bike Routes

Questions, Answers and Comments:

Q: Which route has highest demand?

Comment: Priority to make Madison bus/bike/ped friendly (a complete street). Denny route contains a planned segment at Denny and Thomas with a crossing at 23rd and Thomas. Intersection with 12th will need a signal, similarly 19th needs work.

Comment: Madison Avenue is unfriendly to all ages and abilities; no riding in traffic; it is unsafe to ride a lot of the street. SDOT is encouraged to use big picture thinking to make Madison a 'waterfront to waterfront' street. Similarly, intersection treatment is critically important for non-motorized transit.

Comment: It is odd that alternate routes deviating from Madison are in consideration - the street itself needs to be safe because of its broad and citywide destinations (i.e., First Hill hospital corridor).

Comment: Without a protected bike lane (PBL) on Madison, bikes have no real estate. Does an option exist to integrate bikes on bus transit?

SDOT: Would changing curbs help? Sidewalks are still very narrow.

Q: Are the lanes “bus only”, meaning bikes are prohibited from bus lanes?

A: No. The bus lanes are for bikes and buses. The City will not prohibit bikes on Madison.

Comment: Consider keeping two bus routes. How about a trolley that links waterfronts?

Comment: Both options have merit and disadvantage – grade and intersection challenges, just as other diagonals such as Rainier. Union option might see more use.

Comment: The two routes don't serve the same areas. Both are needed -- but if this project will only fund one route, it should be the Protected Bike Lanes on the Union route. The Denny route would be easier to do with smaller funding options later. Union really needs the PBL's to be valid.

Bikes in Parks

Time: 7:00 pm

Presenter: David Graves, Senior Planner Seattle Parks and Recreation Dept

Purpose: A conversation with SBAB about Bike Policy in Parks (ongoing discussion from 2013).

- 2013 letter regarding bike policy in parks points to the need to accommodate bicycle use as a recreational activity – not just a form of transportation
- The Cheasty Mountain Bike facility is a 3-year pilot project that will inform the revision of the Bikes in Parks Policy, following implementation and evaluation – including an environmental review process.
- The newly-formed Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) has identified dollars to work on Greenways that connect to parks. Focus will be on addressing how welcoming the park is to non-motorized visitors. Parks will look at adding welcome kiosks, bike racks, signage, etc. in order for visitors to know how to navigate through the park
- 2015 will see no funding (collection period) – 2016 is when funds will be available.
- Examples: Parks is working with Emily Ehlers on the 12th Ave NE connection to Greenlake and Cowen Park. Also, the East-West Greenway in the Rainier Valley starts at John C. Little Park and ends at Martha Washington Park on Lake Washington.
- Multi-use trails such as Chief Sealth, Burke-Gilman, and the Centennial are also important connectors.
- There is an old maintenance agreement between Parks and SDOT that is in need of updating. Parks is coordinating with SDOT on SDOT's Multi-use Trail Plan process which is just beginning. One of the outcomes of this plan will be a new draft maintenance agreement that will address how we jointly maintain approximately 40 miles of multi-use trails, some of which are in Parks and some of which are in street right-of-way

Q: Current Bikes in Parks policy is 20 years old. Will we have the opportunity to advise Parks before the 3-year pilot period is up?

A: The Board Of Park Commissioners decided to hold off on taking any action on the existing bicycle policy until they had an opportunity to review the Cheasty pilot during its 3-year period. We would advise that a working group be put in place that will work parallel to the pilot process, rather than waiting for the 3-year period to be up. In the meantime bike users can continue to use park facilities – though as a point of clarification, current park policy allows bikes on hard surface paths that are 60" or wider.

Comment: There are big opportunities to utilize park land to bypass Highland Park Drive.

Comment: Currently BikeShare is not allowed on Parks property. We would like to see Pronto Bikeshare have access to parks.

A: Voter initiative 42 prohibits use of park property for non-park usage. We get that it's an issue.

Q: Lack of lights on trails - is this a general policy?

A: Yes, it's a general policy. We don't have lights on any of our trails on our property.

Comment: Re: access to parks by bikeshare - Pronto has a 30 minute limit on trips; for example, Seattle Center would be easily accessible by bike from Myrtle Edwards.

Q: Recommend a working plan and a new configuration for parks policy that addresses the optimal ways that bikes pass through parks. How can SBAB help?

A: Parks Dept. is about to appoint a new superintendent, which may mean a revision of bike policy is in order to look at how bikes move to, through and from parks.

Q: What is expected level of collaboration with Mr. Kubly (SDOT director)?

A: Money focused on Greenways bodes well for policy update and ongoing cooperation between SBAB, SDOT and Parks.

Comment: Seattle is shooting itself in the foot by not allowing Bikeshare parking in parks. We need to change it as we go into summer, making it easier for tourists to explore our city.

Comment: Bike parking at Jefferson needs revision as bike parking requires transporting bikes up flights of stairs. Need more inclusion by placing bike racks near sports/play fields and community centers.

Q: Cheasty Pilot Project still a hot button issue. Was pilot project optimal?

A: The project represents a fairly contentious site that hasn't been without its struggles but it also presents a learning opportunity.

Comment: Excited about collaboration between SDOT and Parks - commends both for going above and beyond past. SBAB members are advised to read the letter from Parks Dept to Mayor Murray from 2013. The letter is aligned with SBAB goals for equity.

Roosevelt Way NE Protected Bike Lane

Time: 7:20

Presenter: Kyle Rowe, SDOT

Purpose: Update on progress of interim work and associated bike facilities; response to previous comments

Work plan includes:

- Interim protected bike lane (PBL) project north of 45th
- PBL to extend north to 65th, per SBAB comments
- Focus on intersection improvements, data gathering
- E Greenlake to Cowen bridge PBL - upgrades to existing facility
- 5-year plan continuing PBL to Burke Gilman trail from NE 40th with plans for completion in 2017

Interim steps:

- A PBL will be located between NE 43rd to NE 40th, without making changes to lane width
- Temporary relocation of a bus stop due to construction at Trader Joe's

- Integration of a bus stop at 42nd with dedicated curbed transit island at Group Health
- Putting plans in place for a permanent west side PBL South of 45th
- Cutting curb and creating a floating parking lane between NE 45th and 43rd, with plans to maintain parking lane on east side of Roosevelt (in response to stakeholder outreach for parking and loading zones)
- Plans are for an in-lane bus stop with bicycle facility, similar to Yesler and Broadway. These will be installed at all transit stops with the paving project; the transit stops are being consolidated with this project.

Intersection design considerations:

- Drainage
- Mix of multi-use lanes represent biggest constraints
- 2 through lanes
- Right and left turns permitted, no dedicated turn lanes
- 7 signalized, 15 un-signalized intersections
- Curb extends to street in places (bike stress in form of narrowing of street while in traffic)
- Channelize away from curb bulb

Q: Will plans accommodate all ages and abilities? Will there be signage to slow bikers down as they pass between bus island and curb?

A: Ramps designed to encourage cyclists to slow at this projected point of congestion. Bikes also have the option to merge into drive lane if they want to go faster.

Q: What does the bike lane buffer consist of?

A: Paint and post bollards, no physical curb/barriers. Also, projected tree removal will open sight lines for all users.

Q: What is speed limit on this stretch?

A: 30 mph.

Q/Comment: What about enforcement? As it narrows, speed limits should be lower.

Q: Will we expect motorists to see bikes at the transition to University Bridge?

Q: What is the impact of integration? Do bikes yield as soon as lane ends? Bike stress exists at the point of integration/sudden bike lane end onto a narrow bridge.

A: Currently PBL ends at an alley street at NE 40th – going to a shared lane -- but plans are in place to remove the pinch point at the median, and shift the left-turn lane to accommodate a full bike lane. The bridge still presents a constraint that can't be changed.

Q: Is a re-zone also pending?

A: Expect changes when permanent repaving occurs this fall. Modifications will be similar

to southbound Eastlake at C-curve.

Q: Updates on northbound lane conditions near the bridge?

A: Plans have not changed since last presentation. Design is still constrained by highway-style off ramps.

Q: Does an option exist to modify the turning radius (with all the dead space in form of pavement/curb barrier at that turn)?

Q: Would it be possible to close the lower off ramp loop to cars at 40th street?

Q: Back to transit island design – why raise bike lane?

A: Constraints from ADA requirements - 5' curb is less friendly to cyclists. Area is a known as a mixing zone: best fit for multi-modal requirements.

Q: Will cyclist warnings be present?

A: Not in the form of signage.

Comment: Words do not matter; nobody reads signage and/or warnings.

Q: Plans for warning lights at merge point northbound from bridge?

A: Plans are in place to monitor outcomes and make adjustments.

SBAB UPDATES AND NEXT STEPS

- Letter to SDOT on SR520 plan
- Upcoming SBAB retreat on Feb 19th - location TBD

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

ATTACHMENT A

Meeting Minutes Distribution List:

Edward Murray, Mayor, City of Seattle
Andrew Glass-Hastings, Transportation Advisor, Office of the Mayor
City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, Transportation Committee Chair
Scott Kubly, Acting Director, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
Goran Sparrman, Deputy Director, SDOT
Dongho Chang, City Traffic Engineer, SDOT
Emily Ehlers, SBAB Liaison, SDOT
Kevin O'Neill, Planning and Urban Design Manager, SDOT
Sam Woods, Manager, Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs, SDOT
Sara Zora, Transportation Analyst, SDOT
Diane Sugimura, Director, Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
Bernie Agor Matsuno, Director, Department of Neighborhoods (DoN)
Allie Gerlach, SDOT Communications
Meeting Presenters
City of Seattle Council Transportation Committee Members
City of Seattle Neighborhood District Coordinators
SBAB Members
Individual Meeting Attendees