

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

May 13, 2015 Minutes

Attendees:

Members: David Amiton, David Goldberg, Joanne Donohue, Lorena Kaplan, April Kelley, Jeffrey Linn, Catherine Morrison, Gordon Padelford, Bevin Wong

Public Attendees: Tom Noble, Adam Dodge, Jacqueline Sorgen, Jacob Struikma

Other Attendees and presenters: Maria Koengeter (SDOT), Nicole Freedman (SDOT), Ian Macek (SDOT), Michelle Marx (SDOT), Tracey Krawczyk (SDOT), Kevin O'Neill (SDOT), Howard Wu (SDOT)

Nicole Freedman intro:

Nicole has just arrived from the city of Boston where she worked on their bike programs. She is the new Chief of Active Transportation & Partnerships and will be doing everything related to bikes and pedestrians. A lot will be on program, community and encouragement side. Part of what she's doing now is coming up with an action plan. We know where we're going to go, just figuring out the best way to get there. Welcome to Seattle, Nicole.

Public Comment:

- Tom: In Wallingford, new cycle tracks are coming along. Wondering if our board is participating in the planning? On 45th and E Greenlake Way. There's a meeting on the 17th about it. SDOT is going to have a walk around.
A: Jeffrey is planning to go to the walk around. There's some discrepancy around whether there are bicycles on parallel streets, not 45th. Maybe between Woodland Park and Phinney something is proposed. Action: Howard to find out more information about the project happening there and follow-up with Tom.
- The Mayor just put more money in the pot. A lot of the projects are built as bike and pedestrian improvements, but most are built as bike forward. Do you think SPAB has ability to influence to the plan?
A: Not a lot, but we are welcome to provide feedback.
- A project on Beacon and 14th; SDOT just completed a project. I thought they did a good job and wanted to thank SDOT for that.

New agenda item: Letter of support requested

Tracey Kruchex, SDOT

- Last year SPAB wrote a letter of support for non-motorized improvements in Northgate. Program is called TIGER. We asked for \$15 million last year, didn't get it, but were in the top 15% in the nation. We're going back out for it this year.
- In addition to set of improvements in Northgate, we're adding bike share city wide. I'm here to see if the board would be willing and interested in adding a letter of support?
- David G: New twist this year is the addition of bike share to the plan. Is that envisioned to line up with improvements that would make biking more appealing? A: Handout has list of planned improvements.
- Gordon: I thought Art said most of these were already funded through Sound Transit? A: We have a funding partnership with Sound Transit. They've set aside \$10M for pedestrian and bike improvements in Northgate area. \$5M would go towards bridge and \$5M will go to other improvements. City is funding other improvements and that's what we're adding to the grant to make us competitive.
- If you're interested in writing the letter, we can have someone help write it. Last year's was very specific and thoughtful, which was helpful.
- David A: Conflict of interest, I'm on the bike share board and work for an employer who is submitting a grant application, but what are the additional costs for e-bikes for stations and what not. It seems risky because they're ~\$10k/bike. A: Next frontier is e-bikes. I think we'll be the first to roll it out nationwide. There are four options for stations and how they work. We'll probably only outfit the stations at 30% e-bikes. We don't know the technology quite yet.
- David G: Innovation is a plus with TIGER. Our letter would probably focus on the pedestrian access of it. Thank you for your time.

April minutes:

Approved.

Madison BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)

Maria Koengeter, SDOT

- This corridor was identified in the 2012 master plan as a priority corridor. Reaffirmed through Move Seattle.
- Currently in project definition study phase (developing 2 design options).

- This assumes investment from federal funds to deliver the full project. 2/3 of the way through a yearlong planning project. Preferred alternative determined this fall is the goal.
- Why Madison? Bus service is slow and unreliable. Route 11 & 12 currently don't meet Metros guideline. Travel time is unreliable. Bus service is crowded. Corridor is rapidly developing. Over 35 planned, permitted or under construction projects within 2 blocks. Neighborhood has a high rate of no car households. Pedestrians have varying conditions. Long crossing distances, steep grades, quality, etc. Seeing increased traffic for both bikes and pedestrians in the corridor.
- This is a transit driven project, but a complete streets project.
- Why BRT? They're imagining a full BRT corridor with full-features. From waterfront to 23rd or MLK. Interested in knowing which they should pursue. Project will decrease transit times by ~6.3 minutes and increase auto travel time slightly. Transit reliability will be improved, increased capacity/ridership.
- Guest: Why are travel times different on east and westbound? A: time of day and intersections. Different volumes.
- Seeking input around key decisions:
 - 1. Have center or side bus BRT?**
 - Side running puts load zones on sidewalks, could mean an opportunity to widen sidewalks. Center running has increased reliability for transit, highly visible stations, but sometimes take up more space and restricts left turns. Project includes improvements within 1 block of each station as part of it.
 - David G: What are the cost differences? Does that alter what we can do for pedestrians because we could run out of money? A: Slightly higher costs for center running option. It will depend on unique design at each station. Hard to say one way or the other for which supports pedestrian environments.
 - Jeffrey: In your analysis, you had center running and side running times about equal. But you mentioned before that center running BRT lanes are superior. So how is that modeled? A: The difference that isn't showing up in the models is the pedestrian volumes. Model is not as sensitive to pedestrian volumes. We'd expect long term for the center running BRT to maintain.
 - Gordon: How does either option effect how much time you have to cross the street? A: We put in a longer green for priority signaling. We don't specifically look at changes to pedestrian crossing times in this. We are looking at 12th and Union intersections to try and make that a more comfortable crossing.
 - Joanne: If you go with the center running. What happens to the sidewalks if they're not in great shape? A: We tried to site stations around where we expect potential redevelopments. It's hard to build in this corridor, wider sidewalks. We're trying to recognize that if we're only able to build transit amenity, we expect private development to take on pedestrian improvements.
 - David A: East of Broadway vs west because of the trajectory. Wondering if the distinction has any bearing on center vs side. A: Crossings are longer because of angle. It doesn't seem to have an impact. Either could work.
 - Gordon: What's the purpose of 10' and 11-12' on the other side? A: I don't know.
 - April: I wonder for such a short segment if it decreases ridership? I'd give up and walk, but always look behind me to see if a bus comes. A: I think your experience speaks to the reliability of the service to come.
 - April: Seems like a more integrated approach to be curb side. A: We did not see a noticeable difference in the ridership in the study.
 - David G: What about safety comparison between the two? A: There are treatments you can do to deter mid-block walking to discourage. Frequency and reliability of service helps. You know there will be another one coming.
 - David G: No empirical research into it? A: I'm not familiar.
 - 2. Spring Street vs. Marion Street eastbound in downtown**
 - Asking for input on stop options in the downtown terminus and station in the vicinity of I-5, either east or west.
 - 3. Eastern end of service: 23rd Ave or MLK Way**
 - Did a survey last January. Pretty good support to take it all the way to MLK, but has additional costs.
 - 4. Parallel bike facility**
 - On Union there's a protected bike lane: two, one-way or one two-way. Seeking input on which.
- 85% of riders would have stop within one block with stop changes.
- Next steps: Looking to decide this summer and then moving forward on federal grant process. Planned opening in 2019. In addition to feedback tonight, they have a survey online.
- Lorena: Are part of your follow-up to look at national research on ridership and reducing safety? A: Yes. Much of BRT that meets this requirement is out of this country, but we can look.
- Guest: Only enhanced driver license office is on 2nd and Spring and I cannot get to it because of the steepness of the hill. It's the only one in the city. A: Noted, thank you.
- Guest: Sidewalks are very bad, uneven, and not straight. I think it should be looked at, the on/off ramps for I-5, no bridge at Marion. A lot of new development is not set back, outside sidewalk. A: Noted, thank you.
- April: I'll put a plug in for going to MLK. The hill is a barrier. A: thank you.
- Jeffrey: I'm curious about the tree pits. If there's a grate on the tree pit, is that ok? A: Well we don't usually have them. They're usually just dirt, so no I don't consider it sidewalk.

- Jeffrey: Is design of the BRT, looking forward to conversion to a street car? A: Not on this corridor because of the grades.

PMP Update: Policy framework, Assessment report

Michelle Marx & Ian Macek, SDOT

- Last time we went over performance measures and started to look at policy framework. Recommended changes to policy framework: Vision needed to be more action oriented, so adjusted. PMP Goals: Health goal changed “get more people walking to improve health and increase mobility.” And objective #6 is now flipped to raising awareness of the importance of walking.
- David G: We’re working our way towards performance measures for each of these, right? A: yes.
- Guest: How does this connect to safe routes to school? A: That program is guided by the PMP guidelines.
- Further discussion now that we’re including connectivity, how do we measure and prioritize? There’s an option to include connectivity into existing objectives 1, 2. We have connectivity measures and objectives in Move Seattle: Looking at percentage of destinations with adjacent sidewalks, providing sidewalk connectivity along high capacity transit routes.
- Guest: What do you mean by connectivity? Consistent sidewalks, or things that are blocking a current sidewalk, but makes it unusable? A: Focus should not just be on the presence or lack of infrastructure. It should be on providing, maintaining, enforcing, etc.
- David G: I’d like us to be aspirational about the quality of the walking environment. If we’re dodging all sorts of things on sidewalks, it’s not adequate as a sidewalk. A: good point.
- Lorena: I don’t know if equity includes social justice? Are we looking at one person’s ability to reach social services along a corridor?
- David G: I don’t know if the goal there gets there. Everyone gets the same quality of sidewalks no matter where or what.
- Catherine: Does everyone have the same opportunity to thrive? Example of food desert mapping that’s been done.
- Joanne: No accident that in SE Seattle, it’s the people living with the most modest means.
- David G: I think that’s what it’s trying to get at, but not saying it well. Could be worth looking into and saying it directly.
- Kevin O’Neill: Update to an existing plan. Important to note, when the PMP defines equity it uses very specific measures and data. We’ll update it for this year. The PMP really tried to define what equity means. Pretty core part of the master plan.
- Michelle: Might make sense to circle back after we look at equity indicators.
- David G: You’re suggesting that we consider these things when we update the PMP? A: Idea here is to be clear and transparent that all pedestrian improvements are not controlled by PMP implementation plan. There’s a whole universe of pedestrian programs that the PMP touches. Of the 181 new sidewalks built between 2009-2014, PMP implementation was 1/3.
- April: Is it code now that new development has to include sidewalks? A: If they’re disturbing the frontage, then yes they have to provide a new plan.
- Gordon: Even single family? A: I thought so. Push back so Michelle is looking into and will follow-up.
- April: I was looking at Lake City for example, to me there’s not enough happening for such a dense area. As part of Move Seattle, there’s not enough going on for pedestrians. But there are other opportunities for improvements.
- Guest: How do the sidewalk numbers rate up to other modes? We should be looking at that? A: Looking for comparable statistics.
- Gordon: What are routes to schools? A: It could be improvements like curb cuts along the routes, or traffic calming, education, enforcement, etc. It’s very dependent on the school.
- Guest: Member of the NW district council, routes also included traffic lights and photo cameras.
- David G: Do you know why the production of new sidewalks dropped so consistently? A: I don’t know why. The early stuff I think with the SE and light rail.
- Gordon: It may have been a front loading of cash they had? A: I can ask and let you know.
- David A: It’d be interesting to know what the number was before 09.
- Guest: Can we talk about curb ramps? I’ve been seeing more and more diagonal ramps in the last 6 months to a year on new construction in the north area. Makes it very confusing, and puts you into traffic. Three out of four corners are done correctly but the fourth is not. A: Michael Shaw mentioned that we wouldn’t be doing that anymore. Michelle made note of the location and will ask Michael about it. He’ll be providing input to the PMP and hopefully providing stronger guidance.
- Catherine: On 80th between Linden and Greenwood are done correctly, they just finished and are nice.
- David G: Do you have numbers for intersection crossings improvements? A: It gets a lot trickier. Not yet, but working on it. Struggling with some of the data and how to measure accurately the performance measures from the previous PMP. Working on cleaning it up and it’s coming.

- Joanne: You have the same trend lines on this report, declining from 2009-2014. A: Bridge the Gap funding became available in 2007. There's some momentum at the beginning. City made agreement to make the improvements at the beginning.
- David G: Do findings of intercept survey feed back into something? A: I can check back to see. Initially we partnered with Office of Economic Development. We were trying to help neighborhood business districts. We partnered with 6 neighborhoods where using car to access by residents did not exceed 50%.
- David G: If there are already survey instruments we can glom onto, that would be great. Do you feel safer? Do you like the infrastructure? Get more of a sense of how people are feeling about the pedestrian environment as one of the feedback mechanisms. A: We're crafting our feedback mechanism now. David: I'd like it to be part of the performance measures. A: Ok.
- Guest: Does that influence decisions? A: Yes, at both project and neighborhood level.
- David G: Did we get a date on the doodle? A: Essentially no. Howard will go back to the poll and put in some of the times and then will resend the doodle.

Seattle 2035 Update

Kevin O'Neill, SDOT

- Broad overview that I hope we have time to allow for more substantive discussion in June.
- David G: Comprehensive plan is important because everything we do has to fit into it.
- Growth target between 2012-2035; accommodate 120k people and 115k jobs. Since 1994, 80% of city growth has been accommodated by identified urban villages.
- Seattle 2035 update is the major comprehensive plan we do every 8-10 years. For this update, we're doing an environmental impact statement which will analyze 4 options. They'll think about how we accommodate the growth.
 - Option 1: No action, continue as we are.
 - Option 2: Urban centers focused; over 50% of growth will be channeled into six urban villages.
 - Option 3: Guide more growth to all urban villages and centers that are served by light rail, also includes adding an urban village at 135th and I-5.
 - Option 4: Looks at any area that has certain transit frequency characteristics.
- EIS (environmental impact study) is out, comment period open through mid-June. May 27 there's a public meeting.
- DPD did an equity analysis of the four alternatives to supplement the EIS. They created a displacement and an access to opportunity index. Never been done in Seattle before, but this time around there's a real focus on equity for the comprehensive plan.
- Public review draft of the 2035 plan comes out in July. Public comment will be open through September. Interested in diving deeper with the SPAB after that. Mayor will release plan in late 2015; City Council to approve mid-2016.
- David G: SDOT has been doing some right of way analysis. I've asked Kevin to brief us on that on Friday at 2pm to walk us through where they're at now. We'll boil it down and have some input. If anyone is interested, you're welcome to join.
- Guest: Question about Northgate park and ride, transit center, etc. it is very car focused. How does that equate? A: Sound Transit is for the first time, adding \$10M for bike and pedestrian improvements and the city is matching that. It's not perfect, but better than where we started.
- Lorena: I don't see anywhere on these two drafts any mention of crime rate implications. As different populations get displaced, we need to be considering that. A: That's exactly the type of comments we're looking for.

Move Seattle update

Howard Wu, SDOT

- Increase of \$32M for walking additions; all as a result of 5k survey respondents and 8k comments.
- Households are not paying more; it will be spread amongst new residents.
- New projects: Fauntleroy and Mt. Baker. Decrease amount of money to paving projects.
- Overall: pedestrian concerns were predominant in feedback throughout the city.
- April: The number of new sidewalks proposed is less than what's occurred in last five years. A: No, the Move Seattle levy is more than doubling. That number was including all sidewalks, not just PMP
- June 2 public hearing in front of council. Voting June 23.

Action Items:

- Take Madison BRT survey (closed May 24 but link was sent following the meeting).
- Respond to PMP workshop doodle and invitations.

8:12 Adjourn