

Pedestrian Master Plan

APPENDIX 6: PRIORITIZATION BEST PRACTICES

MEMORANDUM 1

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RE: **Prioritization Best Practices and Evaluation**
Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan Update
SvR Project No. 15004

PURPOSE

This memorandum identifies current national and international best practices for pedestrian project prioritization used by various cities often noted as “walkable cities” by various walking advocacy groups and/or media outlets. These best practices will inform how the current criteria for project and program prioritization in the Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan could be updated as part of the overall Pedestrian Master Plan update. SvR Design reviewed Pedestrian Master Plans (or similar documents) that have been developed in other cities since 2009 (when the existing Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted).

BACKGROUND

The intent of the existing Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan prioritization methodology was to create a data driven approach to identify high priority areas where investments should be made to improve conditions for pedestrians along corridors and at intersections. The existing strategy for prioritizing projects uses

three components—vibrancy (or demand), equity, and corridor function—to recommend areas of the City for implementation. By looking at the opportunities for improvement in these areas of highest priority, project lists were developed for use by City staff, private developers, and community and neighborhood organizations. The intent of the project list was to provide information for SDOT to better coordinate investments internally and with other departments, use data to support investment decisions and to identify various pedestrian needs city-wide. The detailed appendix describing the methodology and analysis used for project prioritization in the existing Pedestrian Master Plan is available online: http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/pedestrian_masterplan/docs/Methodology_Appendix040209_fixed.pdf

In 2009, Seattle was one of the few cities that used demographic data to consider health and equity in pedestrian project prioritization. These datasets were used in support of the 2009 goals of safety, equity and health as identified by the Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG). Safety, equity and health data used in the 2009 prioritization was informed by members of the PMPAG that brought specific expertise in those areas. The roster for the PMPAG can be found here: http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/pm_pmpag.htm

REVIEW OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

The attached table summarizes the SvR review of a variety of Pedestrian Master Plans (or similar documents) developed for cities across the United States and some international cities to identify

if and how prioritization methodologies are used to identify projects. SvR reviewed Plans from the following cities:

- New York City
- San Francisco
- Boston
- Philadelphia
- Chicago
- Sydney, Australia
- Vancouver, British Columbia

These cities were selected based on the following information:

- Often noted as a “walkable city” by various walking advocacy groups and/or media outlets including:
 - o Walk Friendly Communities <http://www.walkfriendly.org/communities/index.cfm>
 - o Governing Magazine <http://www.governing.com/gov-data/transportation-infrastructure/walk-to-work-cities-map.html>
 - o Smart Growth America <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/foot-traffic-ahead.pdf>
 - o Walkscore <https://www.walkscore.com/cities-and-neighborhoods/>
- Current Pedestrian Plans (or similar documents) have been created or revised since 2009 when the existing Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted.

In addition to reviewing the cities listed above, SvR reviewed current best practices regarding incorporating safety, health and equity into transportation policies and practices as identified by advocacy groups including:

- Advocacy Advance, a partnership of Alliance for Biking & Walking and The League of American Bicyclists: Active Transportation Equity – A scan of Existing Master Plans 2015 <http://www.advocacyadvance.org/docs/ActiveTransportationEquityScan.pdf>

- Policy Link and Prevention Institute: Health, Equitable Transportation Policy: Recommendations and Research 2010 - http://www.kintera.org/site/c.fhL0K6PELmF/b.5327643/k.BF0B/Transportation_RX.htm
- Victoria Transport Policy Institute: Evaluating Transportation Equity Guidance For Incorporating Distributional Impacts in Transportation Planning 2015 - <http://www.vtpi.org/equity.pdf>
- Smart Growth America and National Complete Streets Coalition: Dangerous by Design 2014 - <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/dangerous-by-design-2014/dangerous-by-design-2014.pdf>

FINDINGS

Criteria Directly Relates to Plan Goals and Policies

New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and San Francisco develop project lists that directly relate to the goals and policies of their respective plans. It was clear what information was used to create project lists and maps of prioritized projects and how the implementation would support the performance of the pedestrian plans over time. For example, all of the cities listed above had goals and policies around pedestrian safety and each of the project lists specifically identified projects that would support measuring safety over time.

Additionally, the cities used lack of pedestrian infrastructure along corridors and across intersections and pedestrian crash information to identify potential project locations. Frequency and/or severity of pedestrian crashes were used to rank the potential projects. The existing Seattle Pedestrian Plan prioritization methodology does not as clearly align with the plan goals and policies.

Chicago developed a map of high priority (top 25th percentile) pedestrian areas that would be used to make prioritize a variety of future projects such as streetscapes, pedestrian education campaigns or Safe Routes to Schools. San Francisco uses a three step strategy to get to a project list that focuses on high pedestrian activity, poor pedestrian environment, neighborhood commercial and tourist corridors.

Seattle's Equity Analysis is Cited as a Best Practice

Several of the plans and papers reviewed reference Seattle for the use of the health and equity criteria and health datasets. Chicago uses a similar set of equity data compared to Seattle in the prioritization outlined in the Chicago Pedestrian Plan. Based on our review of the other cities, Seattle continues to be a leader using the best practice of incorporating health and equity into project prioritization.

The papers prepared by advocacy organizations recommend that pedestrian infrastructure investments should be equitable. This means that there should be geographic equity as well as social or demographic equity. These papers summarize findings identifying that communities that have historically not been involved in planning processes are the communities where investments are most often needed to create safer, healthier communities through improving the built environment. Many communities find that there is a correlation between low income populations with poor health and lack of safe and comfortable pedestrian facilities. Cities that want to improve lives within all communities recognize that investments in pedestrian infrastructure can produce positive health outcomes for people living in these areas that have been historically underserved.

Data Driven Prioritizations Support Funding Requests

Some cities only outlined action items to create a methodology and criteria for project prioritization once datasets were available. Some cities

including San Francisco and New York used their pedestrian master plans to get support for data collection of existing pedestrian facilities before completing the prioritization. Chicago had data sets which allowed them to develop a methodology to identify prioritized projects that could be mapped and listed. For these cities, the project lists were identified and presented to elected officials to support funding requests for programs and implementation. San Francisco identifies (with maps and lists) projects within each supervisorial district. This is something that Seattle may consider as a result of newly formed council districts.

Conditions of Existing Facilities

Philadelphia and Chicago use data sets that include information on the conditions of existing pedestrian facilities. Condition information can be used to identify facilities that may not be comfortable, safe or accessible and should be listed as potential projects. Seattle has a sidewalk inventory, conducted in 2009, but it does not identify sidewalk condition. It identifies the presence, type and width of the sidewalk, and whether there is a landscape buffer or not (as well as buffer width).

NEXT STEPS

SDOT will review the findings of this memorandum and continue to evaluate the current prioritization methodology based on the identified best practices. Additionally, SDOT will ensure that the prioritization methodology is consistent with the current goals and objectives established in Move Seattle, Vision Zero, Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan Update, internal SDOT objectives, and the need for the methodology to be transparent and understandable by the public and staff within SDOT and other city departments. This information will also help inform an upcoming workshop with the Pedestrian Advisory Board on the Pedestrian Master Plan prioritization framework which will occur in July.

REVIEW OF PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN (OR SIMILAR DOCUMENT) PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

CITY / NAME OF PLAN	DATE OF PLAN	PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA INCLUDED	LINK TO DOCUMENT(S)
US CITIES			
<p>NEW YORK CITY The New York City Pedestrian Safety Study & Action Plan</p>	<p>August 2010</p>	<p>RECOMMENDS A DATA DRIVEN PRIORITIZATION This plan outlines that NYC should create a ranking of potential project to prioritize investments. The criteria will focus on improving pedestrian safety by identifying crash locations and populations identified by age, health, race/ethnicity, education level and foreign born populations.</p> <p>Projects are identified by corridor and intersections based on criteria rankings and high numbers of crashes involving pedestrians.</p>	<p>PDF of the Plan http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/nyc_ped_safety_study_action_plan.pdf</p>
<p>SAN FRANCISCO Walk First 2010</p>	<p>August 2010</p>	<p>USES A DATA DRIVEN PRIORITIZATION Prioritization strategies as identified in Walk First Phase 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest where people walk • Tap into Economic Potential • Target Physical Deficiencies <p>These three investments strategies were evaluated and compared based on the following four categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Population • Stewardship • Safety • Efficiency <p>Corridor and intersection projects are identified based greatest need as identified from the data above. San Francisco considered funding and supervisorial district boundaries when developing the project lists.</p>	<p>Walk First http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=2568</p> <p>Walk First Streetscape Prioritization http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/files/Citywide/WalkFirst/phase3/Final_Document_v5AA.pdf</p> <p>GOOD INFOGRAPHICS TO SUMMARIZE EVALUATION METRICS</p>

CITY / NAME OF PLAN	DATE OF PLAN	PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA INCLUDED	LINK TO DOCUMENT(S)
US CITIES			
BOSTON Complete Streets Plan	2014	<p>DOES NOT INCLUDE A DATA DRIVEN PRIORITIZATION It is not clear how the current projects were considering the goals and policies of the Complete Streets Plan.</p> <p>Policy language suggests that the plan embraces innovation to address climate change and healthy living as part implementing street projects.</p>	<p>Complete Streets Website http://bostoncompletestreets.org/about/</p>
PHILADELPHIA Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan	2012	<p>DOES NOT INCLUDE A DATA DRIVEN PRIORITIZATION Prioritized corridors and intersections for pedestrian improvement projects that aim to reduce barriers by increasing pedestrian safety, convenience, and overall comfort as described in Chapter 6.</p> <p>Using the 2010 Sidewalk inventory, Philadelphia used the presence of sidewalks as well as the condition of sidewalks to inform the recommendations shown in Appendix D of the plan.</p>	<p>PDF of the Plan http://phila2035.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/bikePedfinal2.pdf</p> <p>Philadelphia Plan Website http://www.phila.gov/cityplanning/plans/pages/PedestrianandBicyclePlan.aspx</p>
CHICAGO Pedestrian Plan	2011	<p>USES A DATA DRIVEN PRIORITIZATION As part of the Pedestrian Plan development, Chicago created a data driven analysis (described in the Implementation section) to identify high priority areas. Citywide datasets were organized into five categories based on the goals of the Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Connectivity • Livability • Health • Equity <p>High priority areas fell within the top 25th percentile of the citywide results.</p>	<p>PDF of the Plan http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/pdf/PlanDesign_SamplePlans_Local_ChicagoPed2011.pdf</p> <p>Chicago Pedestrian Plan Website http://chicagopedestrianplan.org/</p>

CITY / NAME OF PLAN	DATE OF PLAN	PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA INCLUDED	LINK TO DOCUMENT(S)
INTERNATIONAL CITIES			
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA Walking Strategy and Action Plan	April 2015	<p>DOES NOT INCLUDE A DATA DRIVEN PRIORITIZATION</p> <p>The plan does not include a prioritized project list but does identify policies and targets from improving the pedestrian environment related to ten minute walksheds, the livable green network (a primary walking network) and key walking routes to the city center.</p>	<p>PDF of Plan http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/233320/Walking-Strategy_FINAL-for-web.pdf</p> <p>Walking Website http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/towards-2030/transport-and-access/walking-strategy#page-element-dload</p>
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA Transportation 2040	October 2012	<p>DOES NOT INCLUDE A DATA DRIVEN PRIORITIZATION</p> <p>Since the Transportation 2040 Plan is a multi-modal planning documents, projects were prioritized that would improve conditions for all modes not just walking. Projects were identified based on the multiple benefits. It appears that maps of the various projects based on modes were overlaid on each other to identify corridors and intersections for improvements.</p>	<p>PDF of Plan http://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/transportation-2040.aspx</p> <p>Walking Website http://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/walking.aspx</p>

