

Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: September 2, 2015 / 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Chair: Kristi Rennebohm Franz
Vice-chairs: Adam Bartz and Merlin Rainwater
Recorder: Lara Normand
Location: Seattle City Hall, Room L280

Minutes Distribution List:

See Attachment A

Members Present: Kristi Rennebohm Franz, Adam Bartz, Merlin Rainwater, Lara Normand, Leah Curtiss, Phyllis Porter, Don Brubeck, Steve Kennedy, Riley Kimball

Members Absent: Michael Wong, Jeff Aken

Guests:

Nicole Freedman, SDOT Active Transportation Director, Travis Merrigan of SE Seattle, Sam Woods (SDOT), Adam Dodge of SE Seattle, Nick Floros of West Seattle, Tom Fucoloro (Seattle Bike Blog), Jim Curtin (SDOT), Kevin O’Neill (SDOT), Gabriela Vega (SDOT)

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

6:00 pm: Chair Kristi Rennebohm Franz called the meeting to order.

INTRODUCTIONS

New SBAB members Phyllis Porter and Riley Kimball have been appointed by the Mayor and will be confirmed by council soon. SBAB leadership is working with CM Rasmussen’s aide Anthony Auriemma to get that processed. The new Get Engaged member has not yet been announced.

Phyllis Porter thanked everyone, saying it is an honor for her to be here, as it was a longtime goal of hers to join SBAB. She is heavily involved with Rainier Valley Greenways and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Vice president of Rainier Riders Cycling Club, on the board of Second Cycle Club in Tacoma, and serves as the Sharrow Chair of Black Girls Do Bike in Seattle. She is here to learn and do everything she can to help the City of Seattle.

Member Riley Kimball is coming on as a full 2-year member following his first-year role as Get Engaged Member, for which he has received exceptional praise. Beginning this year he is enrolled in a 2-year Master’s of Transportation Engineering degree program at the UW. He announced that he has been in talks with Car2Go in the hopes of getting bike racks installed on the cars, similar to Portland.

Starting today, the new SBAB leadership team consists of Kristi Rennebohm Franz (Chair), Adam Bartz and Merlin Rainwater (Vice-chairs), and Don Brubeck (Secretary).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Travis Merrigan lives in SE Seattle and Commutes to NW Seattle. He thanks everyone for working toward better bike facilities. Southeast Seattle, however, lags behind other parts of the city. There is no efficient, safe north-south access between Rainier Beach and Dearborn that allows residents of this area get downtown by bike. This means lack of connectivity to the center of economic opportunity for many low income or immigrant families. The section between Dearborn and Walker is of particular concern. The northern 1.5 miles of the chosen N-S Greenway route is much too hilly and steep for families with children or new riders. A protected bike lane (PBL) along Rainier Avenue is the obvious choice.

Adam Dodge, also of SE Seattle, seconded Travis. He underscored that the North-South Greenway is NOT a substitute for having a direct and protected route along Rainier Avenue.

PRESENTATIONS

Rainier Avenue South Safety Corridor Project

Time: 6:08

Presenters: Jim Curtin, SDOT

Purpose: Update on Rainier Ave Safety Corridor design

Project represents a very high priority for SDOT and for the City, demonstrated by the very quick turn-around timeline for implementation:

- Nov 2014 – Rainier Ave Corridor Safety Study began
- March 2015 -- Design alternatives presented
- July 30 2015 – Announcement of pilot project scope/design
- August 4 -- Pilot project substantially complete: 1-mile stretch between S. Alaska and S. Kenny Street

Existing Conditions

- Over 2,000 vehicles per day going over 10 mph over the speed limit
- Average of 1 crash per day along a 4-mile stretch
- Highest crash corridor in City of Seattle (including arterials Lake City Way and Aurora Avenue)
- Average time to clear crash incidents 47 minutes (increasing commute times for other drivers)

Analysis

- Study involved collecting an immense amount of data, including traffic volume, speed, turning movement counts
- Transit travel times for Route 7 bus from King County
- Project team created a traffic model that reflected existing conditions, allowing SDOT to model different scenarios from design proposals, based on peak travel periods to ascertain worst case scenarios.

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- Peak periods (4:30-5:30 pm) peak periods have as much as 1100 vehicles per hour passing through; studied what would happen when those volumes were reduced to one lane of travel

Design Features

- Rechannelization -- reduction to single travel lane in each direction with middle turn lane
- Resignalization -- queue jump for buses at some intersections + longer pedestrian crossing times
- Reduction in speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph – reduction in speed means character of business district is similar to travel on a state highway that passes through a small town
- Parking sizes and quantities actually increased – a fog line through Columbia City helps delineate travel lane

Early Results

- Feels quieter and calmer - remember that this used to be a State Highway
- Pilot project is feeding us info that will be fed into the traffic model for future improvements. So far travel times are almost exactly what the model predicted, including bus times.
- Collecting data on neighboring streets study traffic diversions – so SDOT can take measures to mitigate those patterns
- Business groups have been overwhelming in support of the project, as well as a lot of residents.

Looking forward to 2016

- Study will continue on Rainier, looking at how to include bike/transit facilities. This will include more community feedback sessions, and some internal design meetings. There is actually a lot of ROW space to work with. The pilot project data will give us good info to proceed.
- In 2016 SDOT will start implementing engineering changes working from south to north. There are some great ideas around the cluster of schools near Henderson – we're looking at how to make that crossing safer for pedestrians and bikes
- Coordination with the N-S Greenway and Accessible Mount Baker (AMB) projects: AMB is going to open up some great doors for Rainier. Decoupling the two arterials has huge ramifications for available ROW, which means reduced traffic volumes on Rainier and reduced travel times moving northward to Dearborn.
- Accessible Mount Baker also makes use of unused capacity on MLK (which was designed with concrete pavement to handle higher speeds and more freight). However, Vision Zero also identifies this corridor as needing its own Safety Corridor Project.

SBAB: How has enforcement been improved along the corridor?

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A: We have been in contact with Captain Greening, Commander of SPD Traffic Enforcement Unit. SPD has really increased enforcement in the area, especially of the left turn prohibition at S. Edmunds.

SBAB: How big is the problem of people using bus lanes or center turn lane for illegal passing?

A: That definitely happens. At least we are not seeing buildings getting crashed into, and what we are seeing are mostly low speed crashes.

SBAB: How can we push harder to have a Protected Bike Lane (PBL) on Rainier Avenue? What is the next step?

A: The Leadership at SDOT and City Hall heard loud and clear that a PBL is wanted. Our goal is to present some more well thought out concepts in 2016. Advise SBAB to keep doing what you're doing – offering feedback and staying involved. It was good to hear from CM Harrell that he wanted a PBL – and the Get Well Card on the face of the damaged salon was great.

SBAB: It is wonderful to see you so happy. While we are disappointed that there is no PBL in the current design, we trust you to carry this project forward, take our comments into consideration and keep improving the design.

A: The main reason for no PBL through the center of Columbia City in the short term was the existing, beautiful brick curb bulbs. They presented a huge design challenge at this stage.

SBAB: Please note that connectivity to points northward is of utmost concern to us.

Travis Merrigan (from audience) provided Jim with his written comments/study of grade changes in the Rainier Valley .

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Rennebohm Franz (KRF) summarized some of the recent work that has been taking place outside of SBAB's monthly meetings.

Construction Management

- KRF met with Brian De Place and Liz Sheldon of SDOT. SDOT has increased the number of construction site inspectors. At a previous Bike Board meeting, Former SBAB Member Ester Sandoval advised doing this as an important step in improving safety.
- KRF followed up with Scott Redmond from Sellen Construction. He would like to be involved in a dialogue with SBAB and SDOT to understand how they can do things better.
- An initial list of concerns was conveyed to Scott. KRF asked SBAB members to contribute further thoughts in writing and/or form a working group around this issue.

SBAB: Is there a single phone number to call or text as we see things that need fixing?

A: Yes, and Brian wants this to be separate from the Find It Fix It app – and wants SBAB feedback on all related concerns – especially smaller projects outside of the center city that are

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less well-documented. His email is: brian.deplace@seattle.gov and his phone number is: (206) 233-3855. SBAB member Kimball offered to set up a shared document for board feedback.

SBAB: I've noticed construction trucks taking over bike lanes – do they need a permit to do that? They seem to do it with impunity.

A: Yes, a permit is needed.

SBAB: Need to have signage posted blocks before lane closing, well in advance.

SBAB: As an architect, note that we also need some leeway and understanding of contractors' needs, to allow them to build the kind of walkable, bikeable, transit-rich city we want to live in. It's challenging build dense urban projects to the edge of the ROW.

SBAB: Understood, but construction trucks should not be allowed in bike lanes without provision or warning.

SBAB: The City does want to set a higher standard – and that type of communication is a huge piece. Much of it has to do with training of construction managers, as well as SPD officers monitoring a given site.

Other Business:

KRF noted that the 24th Avenue Bridge is closing as part of the SR520 project. Would like to have Lyle Bicknell of DPD back to SBAB for an update. SBAB needs to monitor what's happening in that area and play an advisory role with regard to WSDOT and SDOT activity.

PRESENTATIONS, continued

Freight Master Plan

Time: 6:57

Presenter: Gabriela Vega, SDOT

Purpose: Status of Freight Master Plan development

The Freight Master Plan sits next to the other modal plans, all under the umbrella of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan.

A Freight Master Plan Advisory Committee (FMPAC) has been formed only for duration of the Freight Master Plan (FMP) development, after which it will be dissolved.

The FMPAC includes representatives from various industry and community stakeholder groups, including SBAB member Brubeck, for a total of 19 members. Eight meetings have been held so far. SDOT expects to complete draft FMP by end of 2015.

Tasks within scope of project

- Public outreach / stakeholder engagement
- Updated map freight network. Current map is outdated, and the network no longer serves what is happening in Seattle

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- Documenting Existing Conditions
- Developing a Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy

Policy Framework: vision and goals

- Goals: it is very important for Seattle to remain competitive and provide jobs in the industrial sector
- Proposed vision statement (draft): A vibrant city and thriving economy connecting people and products within Seattle and to regional and international markets.
- Themes that inform prioritization include Economy, Safety, Mobility, State of Good Repair, Equity and Environment
- Challenge is to determine what freight improvements are needed to have an efficient system over a 20-year planning horizon, and what is the strategy to implement these improvements?
- Safety is a very high priority. The FMPAC has expressed concerns about predictability of movement, and they support separation of bike facilities with protected bike lanes for that reason.

Deliverables

- *Supply Chain Infographic* -- Shows how goods and services travel from point of origin to the consumer, with a northwest context.
- *Existing Conditions Map* -- Existing major truck routes have been in place for a long time, consisting of 142 miles of roads with one classification ("major truck street"). Certain city streets are designated oversized load routes, used at off peak hours for wide and tall loads like large cranes or house-moving.
- *2035 Truck flow map* – may be the first in the nation – shows truck counts on arterials, separate from SR99 and I-5.
 - Will lead to revisions in the map of major truck streets.
 - Will create districts for analysis
 - Incorporates data on goods movement to retail, wholesale and manufacturing.
 - Data taken every four years contributes to this map -- cycle to be reduced to 2 years for better accuracy
- *Draft Truck Street Designation* – development of a tiered system of truck streets, evaluated based on land use, functional classification, truck volume, physical roadway characteristics and connectivity

Next steps:

- Currently in design guideline stage
- Open House Sept 28th Ballard Public Library; October 6th in Georgetown at South Seattle Community College
- Draft document by end of December
- January 2016 release draft for public review

SBAB: Regarding previous comment - truck drivers also want to be able to see people on bikes, and to have the ability to stay out of their way. They want bikes to be outside of their turning movements and for there to be predictability of movement for both modes of travel.

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SDOT (Kevin O’Neill): When we were developing the Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) we went to Freight Advisory Board group 4 times for feedback. SDOT used an overlay of Bicycle Network map and Freight routes to demonstrate where the limited conflicts occurred. Where there is overlap between the routes, the Freight Board preferred to see facilities separated.

SDOT: Design guidelines have been shared with other planning groups. We want to see these goals merged with ROW improvement manual changes.

SDOT (Nicole Freedman): We should always be thinking of implementing multiple levels of safety measures, such as mandatory sideguard rules, signage on sides of trucks to keep people away from blind spots, and mirror placement guidelines. UW Transportation researchers are working on this.

SBAB: Would like to see deployment of smaller vehicles for delivery – for example UPS is using smaller trucks in other cities – other businesses using cargo bikes and smaller vehicles that match the character of the surrounding neighborhood. SBAB recommends increasing use of cargo bikes for deliveries in congested areas, for example downtown.

A: We have documented this trend. We know that most people think of major trucks – and stakeholders have already started to make investments in response. The downtown Target store already uses smaller trucks, and their loading zone is designed for these vehicles. It is an important consideration, but be aware that the market is adjusting even faster than we can respond.

SDOT: Note that Commercial Vehicle Driver’s Licenses require a lot of training – and as we go toward smaller vehicles, then anyone can drive a truck if it’s small enough. Then it becomes harder to regulate the safety of those driving. Also note that smaller vehicles mean more vehicles to deliver same amount of goods.

SBAB: Suggestion that it is safer for people on bikes to have drivers with the Commercial Vehicle licenses with training than not.

SBAB: FMPAC members are suggesting for more nighttime deliveries be encouraged.

A: One of the obstacles is the noise ordinance that prevents late night deliveries. It has been overcome in NYC but it is still a challenge for Seattle.

SBAB: How do we spread the responsibilities out where bike routes overlap with freight? It’s important to have signage that clarifies that all modes share the right of way.

SBAB: The idea of predictability of movement should not only apply to bikes and pedestrians – but freight drivers as well. As we move toward Vision Zero we need to make sure freight is brought into that equation.

SBAB: It is easy enough for anyone to put their hazards on and block a bike lane – but if there is signage that explains that this is illegal that would help.

Seattle Comprehensive Plan

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Time: 7:31

Presenter: Kevin O'Neill

Purpose: Explanation of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan update and how it relates to current transportation and multi-modal planning

Introduction

- Growth Management Act (GMA) – adopted in 1990 – requires jurisdictions to do 20-year plans. Comp Plan encompasses elements such as growth strategies, land use, housing, transportation, economic development and the environment among many others.
- Purpose of the plan is to provide a blueprint for how the city will grow over the next 20 years. Need to accommodate 70,000 households, 120K more people and 115K more jobs in that timeframe.
- The first Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1994, established a strategy of focusing growth in Urban Centers; also established Major Industrial Centers and Urban Villages
- The Comp plan is adopted by ordinance, and it has to be certified by the Puget Sound Regional Council and reviewed by the state. If it is not certified then Seattle is not eligible for state and federal funding.
- The Comp Plan is an overarching umbrella plan that guides everything: modal plans (including Bicycle Master Plan), area plans, operational plans, the climate action plan.
- The City is required to update its Comp Plan every 8-10 years (last update done in 2004), and City is obligated to provide infrastructure to accommodate projected growth.
- Draft plan for public review was released in July of 2015. [Link to online comment portal here;
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cityplanning/completenesslist/comprehensiveplan/documents/default.htm>]

Transportation Element components

- Integrating land use and transportation
- ROW allocation – making the best use of the streets we have
- Transportation Options
- Has been silent on SAFETY in past – introduced a new element in this version
- Measuring Level of Service (LOS) – what is it and how do we measure it?

Note: Several of the Comp Plan goals/policies relating to bikes came directly from the Bicycle Master Plan. Ex: prioritization framework from BMP informs how facilities decisions are made

ROW allocation section:

- Identifies policies and a framework for ROW allocation decisions
- Supports Move Seattle

- Describes ROW allocation process to internal and external audiences, i.e., how the transition zone has a lot of functions -- loading, parking, bike corral – which might change depending on time of day.
- Guides modal plan integration

Policies: What are the different functions that we have to accommodate within the ROW? Plan provides graphic illustration of multi-functional (complete) streets that are color-coded based on uses listed below:

- Mobility: People and goods
- Access for people: i.e., what's happening in the transition zone
- Access for commerce: loading for trucks
- Activation: food trucks, festival streets
- Greening: stormwater, street trees
- Storage: bus layover, overnight parking, etc.

Level of service (LOS)

- LOS measurements are performance measures required as by the GMA.
- Traditional equation used: traffic volume over capacity (V/C)
- Puget Sound Regional Council (certifying body) would like to see LOS measures for all modes
- Screenline methodology (traditional) allows for a high level of congestion
- Planning group wants to re-think how LOS is measured, and is looking at more of a performance based standard that focuses on modeshare (in keeping with other elements of Comp Plan, such as Climate Action Plan)

A shift in LOS measurement would facilitate asking for more mitigation that would help us move more people into other modes, such as:

- Bicycle parking & facilities
- Paid and/or reduced vehicle parking for residents and employees
- Transit passes & subsidies
- Pedestrian & bicycle access improvements
- Mix of uses
- Vanpool accommodation

Status of plan update:

- Public comment was going only until September, but DPD just extended the comment period to November 2015.
- Final EIS and Mayor's recommended plan get released in spring 2016.

SBAB: What is our next action - do we create a new working group around this topic?

SBAB: There is room for a lot of discussion here. A red flag is this focus on corridors as a definition of complete streets. I worry that adding Greenways parallel to arterials means we rule out future bike routes on that most direct and flat route.

A: Good comment. This was the purpose of the BMP and other modal plans. Where there is an identified need and associated route, the modal plan will take precedence over other considerations.

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SBAB: It is exciting that the City is looking at a different level of service (LOS) standard, but would like some time to better understand it and to discuss as a group what is best – the devil is in the details.

A: Agreed. The mode share LOS model is more aspirational, whereas in the past we have been looking at LOS in terms of “thou shalt not go beyond this V/C number,” which actually permits gridlock to occur.

SBAB: Perhaps we hold a focus group or workshop session instead of forming a working group? Not everyone can always make these special meetings, but this is important enough to dig into separately.

SBAB: Could you send us studies of what people are thinking across the country in terms of this LOS measurement?

A: Certainly – but be aware that whatever method of measurement the City comes up with needs to be simple enough and elegant enough to implement.

SBAB: What is the timeframe for SBAB giving input? Shall we shoot for the end of September for starters?

A: I suggest starting with taking a look at the draft plan. The LOS section is not well elaborated yet, but it will give you context. The ROW allocation section might also be useful. These are all pretty complex issues.

SDOT: Would a 2-hour timeframe work for a workshop? As part of this phase we will be briefing all of the advisory boards as we have done with SBAB. It might be good to bring together all the modal boards so that they can collaborate on this topic.

SBAB: That’s exactly what we want to do – in the interest of reducing redundancy.

SBAB UPDATES AND NEXT STEPS

SBAB to coordinate with SDOT on scheduling a workshop session on the Comprehensive Plan. Members who cannot make the meeting can funnel their written comments through SBAB Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- September represents a new year for SBAB. Chair Rennebohm Franz would like to organize more rides in the coming months, and build stronger, more regular communication with Council.
- Member Brubeck distributed SDOT streets and trails improvement pamphlets with public comment link.
- Summer Parkways: Saturday September 12, 2015, Central District (11 am-3 pm) and Saturday September 19, 2015, Ballard (11 am-3 pm)
- Member Porter: Walk-Run-Bike event to help cure Sickle Cell, September 19 at Seward Park

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MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm

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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