



## Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

*Stewards of the  
Pedestrian Master Plan*

June 12, 2019

David Seater, Chair  
Jennifer Tippins, Secretary  
Andres Arjona  
Carol Catcahdoorian  
Patricia Chapman  
Andrea Clinkscales  
Koko Kim  
Bunnie Lee  
Beau Morton  
Chaitanya Sharma  
Manette Stamm (Get Engaged)  
Anna Zivarts

Attendees: Patricia, Chetan, David, Carol, Anna (left early), Bunnie, Koko, Andres

### May Minutes:

- Add Koko as attendee
- Patricia's comments:
  - 1st bullet asking Sam a question about SPAB role
  - 2nd bullet asking Sam about best way to communicate with SDOT
  - Patricia will email to Belen
- Carol:
  - 1st sentence under Sam from SDOT has extra period
  - 1st sentence of 2nd paragraph in VZ spells signalized the British way
- Approved amended minutes

### Public Comment

- Doug: Brought handout re: 1st quarter compliance with bike share. Respect to Anna & Rooted in Rights education. Sees no interest in SDOT about bike parking accessibility. Doesn't think they care, sees that someone is gaming the numbers with phony metrics. Someone has to tell SDOT to get serious about this. SDOT compliance audit counts the bikes that vendors park. Problem is whether bike riders park correctly. Did an insufficient job spot checking a handful of bikes. Not following the conditions of the permit to count obstructions. Says that picture shows a bike with only 4' clearance as being acceptable, which is not correct. Need to ask if SDOT is serious about this accessibility problem. SDOT has the power to impound obstructing bikes. Wonders if they have impounded any. Also concerned about the lack of compliance with helmet laws. Sends a bad message to kids. Challenge to hearing examiner about sidewalk cafes says it does not look at cumulative impacts on many changes on sidewalks over several years.
- Gordon: Ride for Safe Streets on Sunday. Everyone is invited. SNG launching Green Transportation Package to fund SR2S coordinator, sidewalk construction and repair funding, new signal policy.

*The Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board shall advise the City Council, the Mayor and all the offices of the city on matters related to pedestrians and the impacts which actions by the city may have upon the pedestrian environment; and shall have the opportunity to contribute to all aspects of the city's planning insofar as they relate to the pedestrian safety and access.*

*-City Council Resolution  
28791*

Rooted in Rights bikeshare parking video

- Watched w/o audio

#### PMP Implementation Plan Update - Belen

- 2019-2024 plan finally approved by the Mayor's Office
- David Burgesser happy to come in July to address questions and talk about this plan and the next iteration of the plan

#### Sidewalk Repair - Ross McFarland, Sidewalk Repair program manager

- Presentation will focus on how data from assessment it used, how program works
- Appreciates SPAB support of increased funding for the program, it helps!
- Safe & Interconnected SDOT values are a big part of this work
- Mayor's priorities of "getting back to the basics," sidewalk repair aligns with that
- Interested in feedback from SPAB about how to improve repair practices
- Sidewalk Safety Repair Program (SSRP) oversees sidewalk maintenance
- Separate from PMP, which builds new sidewalks and new connections
- Repairs can include full replacement or preventative maintenance (shims)
- Work with Urban Forestry group to maintain trees when repairing or replacing sidewalks. Removed trees are replaced 2:1
- Generally proactive approach, but also quickly address emergent issues
- 2 full-time staff, several work crews, beveling contractor
- Carol: Brought up example of sidewalk that was only partially repaired via shims, still had a low, broken spot that caused a fall. Opposite side of street was closed for construction. Will send photos, asks about how beveling contractors are used / where they're sent.
- Ross: Generally contractors are sent to a particular neighborhood or section of the city. SDOT crews follow up with shims / replacement afterward. Will investigate this particular problem after getting photos.
- Interns assessed all 34,000+ blocks of sidewalks and found many (tens of thousands) problems. Most are uplifts.
- Levy specifies 5 - 10 block equivalent repairs per year, but increased funding in 2019 means 10 - 16 block equivalents will be done. Ahead of schedule so far, but concrete crews will be focusing on curb ramps for the rest of the year to comply with the consent decree. Ross asking for sidewalk repairs near locations that are getting new ramps to take advantage of crews already being there. On track for 5,000 spot repairs
- 2018 had a big bump in Levy funding, smaller in 2019. Other funds from REET and Council-allocated general funds

- E.g. 2019 had \$2.28m in Levy funds, but extra REET and \$2m from school cameras brings total to \$5.7m (vs. \$3.7m in 2018). Group has capacity and projects to use all funding allocated.
- To fully repair all known problems would cost \$500m - \$1.3b, full replacement \$5.6b
- $\$500m / \$5.7m / \text{year} = 100$  years to complete all repairs at low end of budget
- In the past, prioritization was complaint driven
- 2017 assessment allowed a prioritization model to be built (uses severity, density, usage)
- Additional factors: SDOT tree causing the problem, ADA ramp construction partnering, leveraging other projects (paving) to include sidewalk repair, geographic and social justice distribution (complaint based model helps neighborhoods who know how / are able to make the requests). Still thinks it's important to use Find It Fix It to identify new or recurring issues.
- When shims are made in response to complaints the crews spend a lot of time driving from place to place to build one shim. This year starting a proactive program with city divided into grids, each gets shims on 4-5 year cycle. Pilot program. A ramp up in the amount of work but crews can likely handle it due to increased efficiency. Generally doing customer reported shims only in that year's grid, but can go outside for particularly severe problems
- Repair Responsibility: Looking for SPAB input on how the City should approach this, ideas about cost sharing, responsibility.
- Council approval to assess repair costs on adjacent property owners. Has not been used, significant overhead, "not much appetite to do" in Council
- Joint liability means that City often ends up paying full cost of repairs
- Scope of a "safety repair" is unclear, could span from small shims to complete repair
- WA Supreme Court decision found Tacoma ordinance that put full responsibility on property owners was unconstitutional
- Guidance from MRSC advises removing provisions that put responsibility on property owners. In the long run there will be a need to revise the code.
- SMC 15.72 was written in the 1920s, Supreme Court decision was 1994
- Decision did not give guidance on what cities should do, only what they shouldn't, leading to unclear liability / responsibility
- Examples from other cities
  - Denver: Cost-sharing and income-based repayment program

- Bloomington: Cost-sharing based on Block Grants and condition ratings
- NYC: Prioritize based on land use, severity, ped volumes
- Carol: Project in Philadelphia that assessed 20 cities for repair responsibility, cost distribution, etc. Will find out if she's able to share with SPAB / Ross
- Looking for ongoing input and advice from SPAB
- Additional reading materials sent to list by Belen
- Carol: Read street tree and sidewalk operating program a few years ago. Assumption that trees are the priority and that sidewalk should be secondary. Planting trees the right way can eliminate negative effects on sidewalk. Wonders to what extent program is operating.
- Ross: Exists as a guidance document to SSRP and Urban Forestry. Once a sidewalk is removed the full extent of root system becomes more apparent, can then assess if tree can remain. Trees and sidewalks are one of the greatest issues in Seattle with regards to uplifts and accessibility. Wants to build safe accessible sidewalks while maintaining tree canopy.
- Bunnie: Interested in turnaround times for repairs, particularly when property owner is liable. Is there value in letting owners resolve on their own vs. City repairing and billing? Can that cause repairs to happen faster?
- Ross: Typically send notices when there are claims, litigation, or severe injuries (partly because of staffing limits to contact every owner in the city). Rely on first letter to cause repairs, no means to escalate. Doesn't see anything wrong in SDOT doing repair and then assessing the property, but difficult to get Council to approve. Without cost-sharing there is an equity concern and impact to fixed-income property owners (e.g. \$10k bill). Wants to dive into this area more to find a good approach to hold property owners responsible when damage is their fault.
- Bunnie: Do we have data on turnaround times for city vs. property owner repairs?
- Ross: Not for tracking time between sending notice and property owners getting permit and doing repairs. Hard to measure turnaround time for City projects (e.g. we now know about all problems and fixing them all would take 100+ years). Typically complaints are resolved in a few months for a full repair. Bevels and shims are faster. Beveling contractor finishes a grid within a few months. Hopeful that proactive shim program will have similar results.
- Bunnie: Still sounds nebulous, but cost sharing could help address

- Ross: Code authority (for cost sharing) and staffing issues (to manage) would be workable.
- Chetan: Interested in per-repair costs. What's typical?
- Ross: SDOT crew-delivered projects are \$50 - \$60 / square foot. Private contractors that a homeowner may contact might be lower (~\$30 / sqft)
- Chetan: Not going to bankrupt a homeowner on sidewalk repairs
- Ross: Probably not, but need to think about homeowner's situation. \$10k could be very burdensome (e.g. loan availability, rates). Believes there is some property owner responsibility, particularly when adjacent use could cause damage (e.g. heavy trucks). 100 year old sidewalks are degrading. Communications and awareness issue.
- Chetan: Interested in cap on the amount a homeowner is charged in a cost-sharing program
- Bunnie: Or income-based model
- Chetan: Big red chunk on condition map in Madison Park / CD
- Ross: Grades are a small problem, but there are a lot of mature trees in that area that may be causing most problems.
- Patricia: Assessing property owners definitely an equity issue and can create hardship. Could be different for commercial property owners. Consider an assessment of large properties or new commercial developments (sinking fund for future work) might not be a hardship.
- Patricia: \$5.7m in funding this year. Suggests SPAB write letter to Mayor and Council requesting that a larger amount be allocated. Should be able to find another million.
- David: We did do that last year, can do again
- Patricia: Happy to draft such a letter if it's not too late
- Ross: Prepping for 2020 budget now so not too late. Advocacy from SPAB partly led to \$2m from school camera program. Asks us to keep in mind that that money could go to Safe Routes to School or Vision Zero. Regarding future funding, need to keep in mind crew availability and capacity to spend the money. Council has to specifically approve staffing pockets.
- Koko: Talking about racial equity and socioeconomic status. Consider other characteristics, like older residents versus younger, physical health, when prioritizing repairs in addition to severity.
- Ross: Agrees. Prioritization model was developed before he started, it can be updated to more clearly use age, socio-economic status, etc.

- Carol: May have missed something. What triggers a letter to adjacent property owner that they're responsible vs. SDOT crews being assigned to do repairs.
- Ross: Previous notice manager retired and has not yet been replaced. Currently prioritizing notices to property owners for litigation, claims, and severe injuries. Try to take into account whether SDOT tree is causing the uplift. Additional money came from school cameras, so prioritizing repairs near schools or along school routes.
- Carol: A repair could already be on SDOT's list, but if there's a claim or injury then property owner may be noticed.
- Ross: Example of both. Repair along SR2S route that then had a claim. Sent notice to homeowner of their liability/responsibility.
- Patricia: Just to be clear, no property owners are currently being assessed.
- Ross: Correct. We send notice that repair is needed but in no case are we doing a repair and then assessing the property. No mechanisms to follow up on enforcement after notices.
- Doug: Important to leave discussion with clarity about costs, \$5k for repair vs. medical/damage after an injury (hundreds of thousands to millions). Policies for liability for injury are important. If owner cannot pay and City is even 1% responsible, full injury cost may come back to the City.

#### Safety Escort updates - Belen

- Some concerns from board members leaving after meetings
- Option: Self-organize pairs, doesn't always work for everyone
- Offer to use security team at SMT to escort people up to two blocks from SMT (e.g. to light rail, 3rd). Group would walk with Belen to SMT to meet escorts.
- Continuing to explore other options

#### New Member - Andres!

#### Patricia - E-scooter Program

- Would like to see SPAB address this issue
- Asking to have it on the agenda for the next meeting
- Implementation schedule is unclear, might be this Fall
- Considers it dangerous for pedestrians, especially disabled and elderly, also for riders
- Considers it appropriate for SPAB to take a position, derelict if not

- Would like it to be on the agenda even if SDOT doesn't come
- General agreement from the board
- Chetan: US has a lot of deaths due to cars, not bikes or scooters. Doesn't deny that these are safety risks but thinks that concerns are disproportionate.
- Patricia: Doesn't disagree, thinks our mission is to make Seattle the most walkable City and that scooters would harm that.
- Bunnie: Aimed at particular demographics
- Chetan: Would like to see that data
- Patricia: Last year City Council put scooters on hold, not sure what has happened in the last year. Studies? Research? Discussion? Not sure if SDOT will come. What has changed?
- Patricia: Would like to have a discussion about whether we should take a position opposing these on some or all sidewalks. If so, decide how/whom to address.

#### Co-chair nomination

- Still need one!
- Summary of role: Agenda coordination, SDOT meetings, recruitment / interviews

#### Field Trip

- Aim for August
- Soliciting ideas
- Belen: Simulation of living with disabilities (Lighthouse for the Blind)
- David: Visit projects that have presented, e.g. U District Square or Jackson Hub
- Patricia: Visit signals, e.g. adaptive or leading pedestrian intervals
- Carol: Visit schools to support SR2S coordinator
- Ross: If there's interest in watching crews work on sidewalk repair or urban forestry, he can coordinate schedules. Get an idea of what repair considerations are.

#### Sub-committee Updates

- Board dev: Hasn't met
- E-mobility Hasn't met
- Signal policy: Hasn't met, Carol will attend meeting of the adaptive signals group to learn about current discussions. Did not go due to schedule conflict at work.
- Sidewalk accessibility: Hasn't met