

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, December 12, 2007

Meeting called to order at 6:04 P.M.

SPAB Members Present: Celeste Gilman, Chair; Ben Smith, Vice-Chair; Paul Niebanck, Mark Bandy, Howard Wu, Mary Lou Siebert, Petaki Cobell, Tom Williams, members.

Also present: Jim Curtin, SDOT liaison to SPAB, and Naomi Wilson (liaison from the City's Bike Board).

Presenters: From SDOT, Samantha Woods, (Neighborhood Street Fund).

November's minutes: As these were sent out late, Celeste deferred approval until the January meeting.

Neighborhood Street Fund (Large Projects), presented by Samantha Woods, SDOT.

Ms. Woods distributed several documents, including criteria for project selection, and discussed the revised processes that govern the dissemination of this money. There are effectively two programs: one for small projects that is administered by the district council process largely as before, and another for large projects which is administered by SDOT, but which also incorporates a project review team (the "Large Project Review Team") that is made up of representatives from the various district councils. Discussion focused on the latter.

Ms. Woods said that SDOT was heartened by the high number of people who attended the community open houses (around 500). These gave people the opportunity to comment on and rank the projects in their area. In addition to the open houses, Ms. Woods said that around 700 people also submitted selections to SDOT via the Web. In general, Ms. Woods, said, the public and SDOT gave high rankings to many of the same projects. SDOT was also pleased by the "quite...good geographic distribution (of the selected projects)."

Paul asked how the project selection criteria were determined. Ms. Woods replied that one key criterion was how many pedestrians a project would serve, citing local business district sidewalk improvements as an example. Paul wondered why certain projects funded here rather than in the "regular city budget" since this was largely "new" money from the "Bridging the Gap" levy approved in 2006.

Mark said that the criteria favored to more projects on arterials, noting that arterials adjacent to neighborhood commercial zoning would receive 35 points, a relatively high weighting compared to the 10 points given to a school. He also pointed out that a number of the projects were for repairs, and questioned why those should receive priority over projects that put in sidewalks where there were none previously. Ms. Woods replied that "(SDOT) deferred to the Large Project Review Team" on that question.

As the exact weighing of the “geographic equity” criterion wasn’t specified on the draft document Ms. Woods provided, Celeste asked if it was “heavily weighted.” Ms. Woods said it was. Celeste replied, “That doesn’t necessarily jibe with pedestrian facility needs.”

Celeste then asked Ms. Woods to share how the process could be improved. Ms. Woods demurred, saying that nothing she would say has been vetted and that she would be “on the spot.”

Mark asked if traffic signal additions were considered. Ms. Woods said that if a signal was warranted, SDOT would do it anyway.

Celeste asked what were the next steps for the selected projects. Ms. Woods said there would be scope development, followed by meetings with applicants and the community councils. All projects must be designed by the end of 2008. The 30% design milestone is expected to be reached by May.

#### SPAB 2008 Work Plan Development, continued.

Celeste passed out a spreadsheet showing projects identified so far. Board members made a few additions: U-District transportation plan, Colman Dock, Rapid Ride, King County Ferries, SR-520, Safe and Healthy Streets (Downtown Seattle Assn.), Signage for Bus Tunnel, Streetcar network planning, and Project Evaluations/Audits.

Celeste felt that as a result of board members’ meetings with city officials, we now had a much better idea of what was going on than before. But we can’t do everything. So she asked people to state their preferences:

Ben: The transit-pedestrian connection/transition (e.g Link); Capitol Hill light rail station; closures of pedestrian right-of-ways for construction.

Paul: Pedestrian Master Plan (and anything else to do with planning); driver training initiatives; justice issues (e.g. for those “marginalized” or “institutionalized”)

Howard: Design issues, in particular how streetscapes and buildings work together; signage; neighborhood plans (including working with neighborhood groups and local chambers of commerce).

Tom: Bridging the Gap; City Budget, Safe & Healthy Streets (DSA); Cascade/South Lake Union issues; CTR (policy/planning).

Mary Lou: Pedestrian Safety Campaign; U-District transportation plan.

Petaki: Health/safety outreach, including safety on both busses and streets; removing barriers.

Mark: Urban Mobility; Central Waterfront/Viaduct; sidewalk policy issues (e.g. more money from impact fees). He also suggested that the Pedestrian Master Plan work be divided into smaller portions.

Celeste: Pedestrian Master Plan; Pedestrian Safety Campaign, including working with SPD; build and strengthen the organization of the board; climate change.

Celeste added that she'll get T's and Chris' projects and will then create a summary.

#### Pedestrian "marketing".

Howard suggested walking tours.

Naomi talked about the possibilities of creating a "synergy" to potentially utilize the visibility of the public health system to create and publicize safe and effective walking programs. She also talked about "health walks" in conjunction with community farmers' markets.

Petaki discussed creating a "walking kit" with maps and a pedometer that could be distributed at neighborhood events; she also said we could perhaps sponsor an event at the Women's Commission.

Mark suggested we could possibly piggyback on a Feet First! event.

Ben asked which events SDOT attends; Jim said one example was the U-District Street Fair.

In the same vein, Howard mentioned that the Pro Bike/Walk conference would be in Seattle in September 2008.

#### Upcoming Agenda Items.

Celeste was hopeful that Sound Transit would be available to give a presentation at January's meeting. In lieu of that, SDOT could be asked to discuss how sidewalk projects were prioritized.

In February, Paul may update the board on Pedestrian Master Plan, but will discuss the timing of this with Celeste.

Other potential items: Ben suggested asking new City Councilmembers Harrell and Burgess to come to one of our meetings.

#### Other issues.

Howard said that the design of the Bellevue side of 520 was quite nice. Mark said that the Seattle side was basically back to the drawing board, with even a tunnel being mooted.

Meanwhile, the Governor has committed to getting the project off the ground, saying that it's important to Microsoft. However, with the solid defeat of Prop. 1, funding will be an issue.

Howard said that there is a new design for the south end of the viaduct. It's improved; there are more bikeways and a few pathways that weren't there earlier, along with more green space. Mark mentioned that he's trying to convince the designers to not force pedestrians to cross the "tail track." Design is scheduled to be done by May, with bids in October.

Next meeting: January 9, 2008.