

Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG)
Monthly Meeting
SMT 4050/4060
July 27, 2007
8 – 10 am

Meeting Summary

Attendance

Ana Brown, James Bush, Rebecca Deehr, Celeste Gilman, Tony Gomez, Jean Healy, Tom Im, Kirste Johnson, Brian Johnston, Rob Kaufman, Bea Kumasaka, Kate Martin, Fiona McCargo, Michael McGinn, Paul Niebanck, Paulo Nunes-Ueno, Charles (Chas) Redmond, Richard Staudt, and BettyLou Valentine.

John Coney (observer for Suzanne Anderson), Councilmember Jan Drago, Councilmember Nick Licata, Benita Horn (facilitator) and Seattle City staff: Susan Sánchez, Susan Mueller, Barbara Gray, Katherine Bush, Hannah McIntosh, Jodie Vice, Casey Hanewall, and Barbara Clemons.

Meeting Facilitation and Agenda

Benita Horn, group facilitator, explained her role and asked if there were additional items the group wanted to see on the agenda. The following items were proposed:

- An update on the letter to Mayor Nickels on the Neighborhood Street Fund program.
- A review of the PMPAG's relationship to the Seattle City Council, the InterDepartmental Team (IDT) and to the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT).
- A discussion of the group's work schedule and the process for the development of the Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Updates from each representative's agency or community group.

After confirming that the letter on the Neighborhood Street Fund program had already been sent to Mayor Nickels, the group agreed that the additional agenda items would be addressed within the structure of the agenda as already proposed. Updates from represented organizations will be included on future agendas.

PMPAG – Role and Authority

Councilmember Jan Drago next addressed the group, explaining that she was at the committee meeting to speak to the exact role and authority of the PMPAG. She added that clarification on the group's role and authority was asked for at the July 24, 2007, Council Special Committee for Pedestrian Safety meeting and that she wanted to address her comments on the topic to the full group.

Councilmember Drago referenced Council Resolution #30951 to clarify that the role of this ad hoc advisory group is to advise the City on the development of the Pedestrian Master Plan. Specifically, she reminded the group that they will help the City:

- articulate key problems
- develop principal goals
- identify the steps the City should be taking to get to where it needs to go

She further clarified that the PMPAG will neither write the Pedestrian Master Plan nor be involved with or responsible for plan implementation. The PMPAG's duties will end once the plan is developed. Finally, she summarized the duties of the other entities involved in the development and implementation of the plan. The consultant will gather data, crunch numbers, and write the plan. SDOT will lead the process and plan development and, with the IDT, will educate the PMPAG, provide technical expertise,

and inform the group on the feasibility of proposed ideas. SDOT and other City departments are also tasked with implementation. The City Council will have final say on the plan.

Councilmember Nick Licata next spoke. He complimented Councilmember Drago on her excellent summary and re-affirmed that the PMPAG would meet for a limited period of time. He encouraged the group to set aside time on future agendas for updates from members and a briefing from the Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Group and to form a subcommittee to work on the planning process. He commended the creation and maintenance of the project website and encouraged staff to provide meeting notes and agendas as early as possible. Finally, Councilmember Licata indicated that there will be a short amount of time available on each Council Special Committee for Pedestrian Safety agenda for PMPAG members to speak.

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) – Role and Charge

Celeste Gilman, new Chair of the SPAB and new PMPAG member, reminded the group that the SPAB has been working on pedestrian advocacy issues for many years and offered the support and past experience of the SPAB to the group. She also reminded the group that the SPAB, as an ongoing body, will continue to monitor the implementation of the plan after the PMPAG has disbanded.

Issue Update: Pedestrian Master Plans – Lessons Learned from Other Cities

Jodie Vice, former Chair of the SPAB and former PMPAG member, gave a short presentation to the group on pedestrian master plans done in Denver, CO; Washington, DC; Oakland, CA; San Francisco, CA; and London. Her presentation summarized the work completed by the SPAB members, during their 2006 board retreat, to identify best practices from other pedestrian master plans completed by other jurisdictions.

Discussion – Project Scope

The following reactions to the proposed draft project scope were offered (they are recorded in more detail than other portions of the meeting to help the scheduling subcommittee with their work before the August meeting):

- The planning process should be mapped out.
- Safety should be prioritized over walking – an inventory of all school zones is a good place to begin the safety discussion.
- The process should begin with problem definition.
- The issue is not just safety, but also the kind of city we are building. The land use code does not support providing walking destinations.
- A safe walking environment and an aesthetic walking environment are often the same thing.
- Throughout the process, we need to pay attention to the needs of under-represented populations, including the isolated and vulnerable.
- Driver education and testing and enforcement of existing laws all need to be a large component of the plan.
- The PMPAG needs to work closely with city departments and use them as a resource.
- Safety and walking go together. It would be a shame to increase safety by decreasing the number of people walking.
- Knowledge, Attitude, Behavior (KAB) studies will be crucial. Most people are not aware of pedestrian laws and understanding what people do and do not know will help us understand why people don't walk.
- When lots of people are walking somewhere, it draws other walkers. We don't want to discourage walking because the pedestrian environment isn't perfect.
- The process needs to include barriers research.
- Specific walking encouragement techniques will set the plan apart from other city's plans.
- We need to separate tools for solving the problem from problem definition.

- Many pedestrian plans don't address the sustainability issue. If we jump ahead to 2020, we will need to see more people walking. In the meantime, there are many people whose only transportation options are transit and walking. The plan needs to meet their needs.
- Visits with parent-teacher associations confirm that the more people there are walking, the safer the pedestrian environment is perceived to be. Unmarked crosswalks that are well-used are perceived as safer than well-marked but unused ones.
- We can't ignore the relationship between access to good walking environments and race and ethnicity.
- The problem is that people feel unsafe walking, but we don't always know the reasons. Part of our discussion needs to be learning and understanding why people don't want to walk.
- The problem is a lack of integration between walking and transit.
- We know that crashes are occurring near transit. Bus stops are pedestrian magnets. A survey asking questions about close calls near bus stops and the reasons they occurred would be useful.
- We also know that it is not generally children who are being killed. Fatalities tend to involve people over 24 who are hurrying across streets.
- We can't discount the aesthetic of the walking experience. Trees, people, activities and destinations provide value to everyone.
- The interagency team should include Sound Transit, Metro, and the City's urban design professionals.
- Design is crucial for people with disabilities. Narrowness and dips in sidewalks are a huge problem. Walk lights should be in predictable places so people know where to look, and curb ramps need to be a high-contrast color.
- We need to examine how to scale our neighborhoods that were built after the widespread use of the car back down to a human size.
- The status of pedestrians needs to be elevated. They should not be stigmatized.
- By trying to increase pedestrian safety in this country we've separated cars and pedestrians so much that there is no eye contact or interaction between the two. There is some good research coming out of Europe we can reference on making cars interact with and be aware of pedestrians.
- Maintenance needs to be a focus of the plan.
- Construction impacts are another issue – they feel temporary, but construction in this city is ongoing.
- A good starting point would be to look at and resolve conflicts between the Comprehensive Plan, the City transit plans, the neighborhood plans, the Bicycle Master Plan and freight plans. For example, the new sculpture park has a lot more people walking to it, but it is hard to access because of conflicts between the Comprehensive Plan and other plans.
- Suggest that a small group outline a schedule for the PMPAG meetings for the next 12-16 months. The schedule should not be rigid, and should allow for changes.

The discussion ended with the group deciding that an ad hoc subcommittee would be formed to develop a meeting topic schedule. The group agreed that the subcommittee would work in conjunction with City staff to develop the schedule and would dissolve after the August meeting. Volunteers for the scheduling subcommittee were:

- Chas Redmond
- Rebecca Deehr
- Paulo Nunes-Ueno
- Kate Martin

PMPAG Discussion – Group Structure

Benita introduced the group to a variety of different ways to organize. Conversation around organization and structure included the following points:

- It is valuable to have a non-PMPAG meeting facilitator to keep the group to the agenda and move conversation forward.
- A formal structure for taking decisions will be important and is recommended. However, strong facilitation and a light system of formal governance are preferred.
- When selecting a chair or chairs, it will be important for the group to choose representatives who will be good spokespeople for the whole PMPAG. For example, the chair(s) will need to be able to subsume their own opinions and speak for the whole group. In addition, it will be important that the spokespeople have good reputations in the community.
- No matter what the ultimate governance structure, the PMPAG should rely heavily on City staff supporting the Pedestrian Master Plan process and should not duplicate staff work.

After conversation, the group decided to convene an ad hoc subcommittee to bring a governance proposal to the PMPAG at the August meeting. Volunteers for the subcommittee were:

- Rebecca Deehr
- Paulo Nunes-Ueno
- Kate Martin
- Michael McGinn
- James Bush

Because the scheduling subcommittee and governance proposal subcommittee shared the bulk of their members the two groups were combined to include:

- Rebecca Deehr
- Paulo Nunes-Ueno
- Kate Martin
- Michael McGinn
- James Bush
- Chas Redmond

PMPAG members who were not present also have the opportunity to participate. The group clarified that the subcommittee will disband once its two duties are complete at the August meeting.

The following elements were all suggested as potential components of a governance/organization structure:

- A non-PMPAG meeting facilitator to run the meetings and help set agendas.
- A steering committee to guide the meeting topic schedule and help set agendas.
- Meeting conveners to help set the agenda and guide the group process when formal decisions are taken.
- A chair or co-chairs to help set the agenda and guide the group process when formal decisions are taken.
- A system (perhaps Roberts Rules of Order) for taking formal decisions as a group.

Business

It was decided that the accessibility training scheduled for the August meeting will be postponed. There was interest in continuing to go through the training as a group, but perhaps not during regular PMPAG meeting hours. The group will meet on August 24th at the SMT, Floor 40, Room 4050/4060 unless otherwise notified.

Public Comment

Public comments were made by John Coney (observer for Suzanne Anderson) and Andrea Okomski (Pedestrian InRoads). A PMPAG member expressed the desire to see a public comment period at the beginning and end of each meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 AM.

Action Items

PMPAG schedule subcommittee:

1. Work with City staff to develop schedule for meetings over next 12-18 months.
2. Work with City staff and facilitator to develop agenda for August 24th meeting.

PMPAG governance structure subcommittee (same members as schedule subcommittee):

1. Work with City staff to develop governance proposal.
2. Present governance proposal at August 24th meeting.
3. Include PMPAG members who were not present at the July 27, 2007 meeting.

SDOT:

1. Work with subcommittee to develop schedule for meetings over next 12-18 months.
2. Work with subcommittee and facilitator to develop agenda for August 24th meeting.
3. Work with subcommittee to develop governance proposal.