

Sounding Board Meeting #3

Summary

November 17, 2015 2:00 PM-4:30 PM

Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Ave, Room 3832

Sounding Board member attendees

Member Name	Interest Represented	Attendance
Cara Bertron	IDEA Space at the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDpda)	Present
Don Blakeney	Downtown Seattle Association	Present
David Blandford	Visit Seattle/Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau	Present
Tim Hillis	Charlie's Produce; Freight Advisory Board	Absent
Steve Kennedy	Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board	Present
Lyn Krizanich	Clise Properties	Present
Hayden Lingerfelt	Hotel Representative	Absent
Ron Machòn	Towne Park valet services	Absent
Kristi Rennebohm Franz	Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board	Present
Greg Smith	Urban Visions Sustainable Real Estate	Absent
Leslie Smith	Alliance of Pioneer Square	Present
Mike Rimoin (alternate for Jessica Szelag)	Commute Seattle	Present

Staff attendees

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

- Dawn Schellenberg
- Sam Woods

Toole Design Group

- Kenneth Loen

Envirolssues

- Lauren Stensland
- Sara Colling
- Sophie Cottle

Note: This document is a summary of issues and actions in this meeting. It is intended to be an overview of the discussion, rather than a transcription.

Welcome and introductions

Dawn Schellenberg, SDOT Communications Lead, welcomed the Sounding Board members and walked the group through the agenda.

Presentation and discussion

Dawn started the presentation with SDOT's mission and values. She presented the project vision map which depicts the project goal of creating a north-south spines and east-west connections to develop a Center City protected bike lane network. She reviewed some of the work outreach the team has done since the last Sounding Board Meeting, including the Chinatown–International District Bike Rodeo, Commute Seattle's Light Up Your Ride event, and the Vancouver, BC study trip.

- Steve Kennedy, Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board, commented that on the Vancouver tour, the group learned that many businesses were fearful of potential loss of revenue, access, deliver issues, etc. Overall, after the protected bike lanes were built, most businesses shifted from fear to acceptance.
- Kristi Rennebohm Franz, Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board, commented that it was encouraging on the Vancouver tour to hear businesses along the protected bike lane routes say they found that having hundreds of bicyclists riding by their businesses led to more customers than a few cars parked in front.
- Steve added that in Vancouver people were initially concerned about parking, but the City responded by showing parking garage availability using signs.
 - Leslie Smith, Alliance of Pioneer Square, noted that SDOT does not have current or accurate parking numbers for off-street parking, especially because so many developments are replacing old parking structures. It is important to not make statements before fact checking so that credibility with stakeholders is not lost.

Dawn noted that a lunch and learn about the trip is currently being scheduled for SDOT employees in December, with the help of Commute Seattle and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways.

Technical analysis of 7th, 8th, and 9th avenues

Sam Woods, Project Manager, presented the technical analysis for protected bike lane concepts on 7th, 8th, and 9th avenues. She noted that one of the goals in this area is to make a connection between the Amazon-funded protected bike lane on 7th Ave and the planned Pike/Pine multi-modal corridor. This corridor connects people from Capitol Hill. The streets studied change between one-way and two-way at certain blocks, which adds to the complexity. She added that this area is already well-used by people biking, partially because it is a rather flat area and vehicle volumes are relatively low in comparison to other downtown streets. The area has several large parking garages and driveways, which make the protected bike lane location more complex. Sam explained that the team analyzed nine concepts and found three that were most feasible. She asked for feedback on the three concepts throughout her presentation.

- **Two-way protected bike lane concept on east side of 7th Ave between Westlake Ave and Pike St:**

This concept includes a two-way protected bike lane, two through lanes, and a parking lane. Sam noted the only way to make this concept work is to convert the two block two-way section between Olive Way and Pike St to one-way southbound. Sam explained that a garage exiting onto 7th Ave crossing over a two-way protected bike lane can be complex, but noted that crossing a protected bike lane on a one-way street is easier than on a two-way street.

- Leslie commented that one-way streets are more efficient through lanes, but make it much harder to reach destinations, because people driving have to circle blocks to arrive.
 - Sam explained that the traffic volumes on 7th, 8th, and 9th avenues are much lower than on 4th and 5th avenues. She acknowledged that much of the traffic in the area is probably local circulation, aimed at getting to large office buildings, and that little transit travels through this corridor.
- Kristi requested that landmarks be added to the presentation maps for clarity.

- **One-way couplet eastbound on 7th Ave and westbound on 8th Ave between Westlake Ave and Pike St concept:**

On 7th Ave, this concept includes a one-way protected bike lane, a through lane, a left turn lane, and a parking lane. It would not require conversion of existing vehicle traffic flow on 7th Ave. On 8th Ave, it includes a one-way protected bike lane, two through lanes, and either a left turn lane, or a parking lane, depending on the location. Several driveways exit onto 7th and 8th avenues in this area.

- David Blandford, Visit Seattle/Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau, commented that the Convention Center additional facility will be built on 8th Ave and Pine St, where the King County Metro Transit station area is today. A hotel has also been proposed on 8th Ave and Howell St.
 - Kenneth Loen, Toole Design Group, noted that the Convention Center facility parking garage would exit onto Terry Ave.
- Don Blakeney, Downtown Seattle Association, asked if the Convention Center Project would require closing Olive Way for several years.
 - Dawn responded that she was not aware of this plan, but would find out.
- Mike Rimoin, Commute Seattle, commented that this concept would make getting to Capitol Hill inconvenient because it would require bicyclists to go several blocks out of their way to get to their destination. It might lead people to continue along the most direct route even if it does not have a protected bike lane.
- Kristi commented that traveling on Olive Way currently is not an option for all ages and abilities, given the speed and habits of drivers attempting to get to the freeway.
- Lyn Krizanich, Clise Properties, explained that the Denny Triangle Neighborhood put together a task group to look into these concepts. Overall, the group is in favor of protected bike lanes. However, the group is concerned about congestion and the narrowness of 7th Ave. She noted that the group does not think 7th Ave is an appropriate street for a protected bike lane, as it presents many significant

challenges. She presented Sam and Dawn with a copy of the group's findings and a concept to use Bell or Blanchard, and Dawn agreed to share it with the Sounding Board.

- Sam thanked Lyn for the information. She noted that every street presents challenges similar to those on 7th, and there are no streets that have zero complications. The project is evaluating how to best accommodate all users, and see which tradeoffs are better than others.
- Kristi commented that the connection to Pike/Pine is critical to ensure that this project does not just serve the Center City area, but also connects to neighborhoods.
- Don asked if the Pike/Pine multi-modal project, the Center City Mobility Plan, and the Bell Street pedestrian street idea are all communicating with each other, and how they relate to the Center City Bike Network.
 - Sam responded that the SDOT teams are all communicating and are working closely where there is overlap between projects. The projects are on different timelines, and the Center City Bike Network will provide input to the Center City Mobility Plan.
- Leslie asked where the streetcar will travel.
 - Sam responded that the streetcar will travel east/west on Stewart St.
- **8th Ave and 9th Ave one-way couplet concept between Westlake Ave and Pike St:**

Sam explained that this concept would include the same 8th Ave layout as the previous concept, but 9th Ave would include a one-way protected bike lane, one to two through lanes (depending on the location), and a bus layover or right turn lane (depending on the location). She noted that of the three options, this option is the least intuitive and obvious bike route, and would likely lead many bicyclists to continue using 7th Ave, despite the protected bike lane on 9th Ave.

 - Leslie asked if there is a plan to remove the bus layover lane. She commented that layover lanes can negatively impacts neighborhoods, traffic, retail, and revenue.
 - Sam responded that SDOT is working with Metro, who is evaluating location options.
 - In response to a comment suggesting Olive Way as a potential protected bike lane route connecting to Capitol Hill, Kristi asked if it would be possible to move the protected bike lane from Pike/Pine onto Olive Way.
 - Lyn responded that Olive Way is highly congested with cars, buses and pedestrians and a protected bike lane on Olive Way is not a safe route given this congestion. Olive Way is a critically important route to I-5.

Dawn and Sam opened the floor for discussion of the three options for this corridor.

- Mike commented that a network connecting 2nd or 4th avenues to 7th, 8th, or 9th via Bell or Blanchard could create an easy connection to Capitol Hill.

- Kenneth noted that wayfinding signage would help alleviate confusion about how to get to key locations.
- Steve commented that evaluating the connection to 4th/5th and 2nd avenues is critical. He asked why people would use this corridor over 4th/5th or 2nd avenues and did not think it would serve as a connection to all of downtown.
 - Sam responded that the goal of this corridor is to connect the Amazon-built protected bike lane on 7th Ave to Pike/Pine. Bell St could be a connection to 4th/5th avenues.
 - Kenneth added that the heat map he presented at the first Sounding Board meeting indicated that there are significant origin/destination pairs within the Denny Triangle and Belltown area, and many people traveling to office buildings in this area.
 - Sam also noted that as the area continues to develop, there will be more demand. The Center City Mobility Plan may identify 4th Ave as a transit corridor. The Center City Bike Network project will include facilities that will be built in the near-term, and others that will take longer to complete.
- Kristi commented that not everyone traveling from Capitol Hill is headed for Downtown, and that this corridor will be very valuable as people travel from Capitol Hill to South Lake Union.
- Kristi commented that several downtown parking garages do not have audio cues indicating that a car is exiting. She asked for best practices for parking garages in terms of signaling for pedestrians, cars, and bicyclists. She asked if blinking lights alerting bicyclists of an upcoming driveway are feasible.
 - Sam responded that the team can look into best practices, and added that the blinking lights create liability issues in the event of a light malfunction.
 - Mike commented that in other cities, bike lanes have rumble strips when approaching a driveway.
- Steve asked if Lenora St is still being considered as an east/west connection.
 - Dawn responded that it was being considered, but transit may increase on Lenora and Blanchard as a part of the Center City Mobility Plan, so other options are being considered as alternatives.
- Mike commented that when biking from downtown to Capitol Hill or other areas, some people opt to take the bus up the hill. This involves understanding where bus stops are located in relationship to bike routes.
- Lyn asked for confirmation that the first concept would require changing the two-way section of 7th Ave to one-way.
 - Sam responded that it would require this change, and agreed to research the history of the one-way/two-way operational needs of 7th Ave.
- Kristi asked if there are cost differences between the three options.
 - Sam responded that work on 9th Ave will likely be most expensive because it would involve the most civil work. She noted, however, that the cost is not the ultimate determinant of the corridor selected.
- Leslie asked if it is better to have a one-way protected bike lane pair on the same corridor than a one-way couplet on one corridor.

- Sam responded that having a one-way pair on the same corridor is better because it helps all users become more accustomed to the traffic pattern, creating a more predictable street.
- Leslie commented that in her experience in Pioneer Square, it is easier to get neighborhood support when the bike lane disturbs only one street rather than two.
- Mike asked if the two-way protected bike lane on 7th Ave would involve competing pedestrian signals.
 - Kenneth responded there would be separated signaling, similar to what is in place on 2nd Ave.
- Kristi asked if there is any indication that this corridor would become a recreational route for visitors. Integrating bike parking and other bike facilities could be very helpful.
 - David responded that it is a possibility. The new Convention Center facility will allow for large groups and conventions of over 6,000 people to visit Seattle and use this area. He noted that now is a good time for the Center City Bike Network team to get in contact with the Convention Center expansion team, and agreed to help set up a meeting.

Center City Mobility Plan

Candida Lorenzana, SDOT Transit and Mobility, shared information on the newly announced Center City Mobility Plan. She noted that the plan is still in development and may evolve as a consultant is hired. Growth in housing and jobs, temporary construction impacts, and changing mobility needs and opportunities are all driving the need for a comprehensive mobility plan. The plan established a long-term goal for 2035. The short-term portion of the plan works to increase vibrancy and walkability of Center City. The plan will also address the end of joint bus-rail transit tunnel operations. The plan will cover several regional urban centers: Downtown, First Hill, Capitol Hill, South Lake Union, and Uptown.

The Center City Mobility Plan will integrate with all of the City's modal plans. This includes working to incorporate Sound Transit 2 and Sound Transit 3 (as it develops). Move Seattle is a 10-year vision that will be incorporated into the Center City Mobility Plan. The Metro Long Range Plan is currently under development and will provide input into the Mobility Plan. The Center City Bike Network is important input for near- and long-term planning.

The team has issued an RFQ to have a consultant on board in January 2016. The first piece to be completed is the end of joint bus-rail operations and the development of a policy framework by June 2016. The goal is to have a draft of the long-range vision by mid-2017.

Candida opened the floor for discussion of the Center City Mobility Plan.

- Dawn asked how people can get involved in the planning process.
 - Candida responded that the long-term plan will include a project advisory committee. The near-term work will be targeted to a small group of stakeholders.
- Dawn asked if the priority framework feeds into the 2016 decisions or into the long-term decisions.

- Candida responded that it fits into both the short- and long-term decisions.
- Leslie expressed concern about the plan to have 600 buses a day on Alaskan Way.
- Steve asked if SDOT is attempting to make decisions on where to put protected bike lanes without knowing where buses will go once they come out of the tunnel.
 - Sam responded that some streets have already been identified as future transit streets. The timing and phasing of the buses transitioning out of the tunnel and the start of light rail is critical. The 10% network will be complete in spring 2016, and will provide input into the Mobility Plan.
- Kristi asked if the Mobility Plan calls for more meetings with the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board and the Transit Advisory Board.
 - Candida responded the team has not yet determined how it will coordinate with the City's advisory boards.
- Kristi commented that the NACTO 2016 convention will be held in Seattle, and asked how the Center City Bike Network will be a part of that.
 - Dawn responded that upgrades to 2nd Ave will be completed in time for the convention.
- Leslie expressed concern that the Center City Bike Network will be put on hold by the Center City Mobility Plan.
 - Dawn responded that construction of some parts of the network are scheduled for 2016.
- Kristi asked where the Center City Mobility Plan came from.
 - Candida responded that the plan came from a desire to have a vision for what 2035 will look like, including several smaller projects in the Center City.
- Cara Bertron, Seattle Chinatown-International District Preservation and Development Authority, expressed concern that the speed of the project would prevent public input.
 - Candida responded that the long-range plan is intended to be a longer process that will allow for public input.
- Leslie commented that there are many other projects happening simultaneously, such as the replacement of all water mains in Pioneer Square. This kind of work requires coordination between many agencies and the Center City Mobility Plan will help with that coordination.

Next steps

Dawn explained that a walking tour with 7th Ave stakeholders and additional workshops are planned for the next few weeks. A Sounding Board workshop will be held in January, in advance of the second public open house. The team would like Sounding Board feedback on what look to be the most promising routes before presenting the information at the public open house.

Following the open house and online outreach opportunities, the team will apply the evaluation criteria and incorporate public input. Steve asked if a matrix could be created to show how each street rates under the evaluation criteria. Sam responded that creating one a matrix every block would be difficult, but agreed that it would be a good exercise to test the criteria by doing a simple evaluation of 7th, 8th,

and 9th avenues. She asked the Sounding Board to participate in this exercise after Thanksgiving.

Lauren Stensland, EnviroIssues, thanked everyone for their participation, and adjourned the meeting.