

Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG) Meeting #14

Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Avenue

40th Floor Conference room 4050/4060

June 27, 2008 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Summary

Attendance

Bea Kumasaka, BettyLou Valentine, Brian Johnston, Celeste Gilman, Chas Redmond, James Bush, Kate Martin, Paul Niebanck, Paulo Nunes-Ueno, Randy Earl, Rebecca Deehr, Richard Staudt, Rob Kaufman, Sean Ardussi, Suzanne Anderson, Tony Gomez

Staff: Barbara Gray, Tracy Krawczyk, Susan Mueller, Megan Hoyt, Krista Bunch, Traci Ratzliff, Liz Ellis, Sgt. Don Smith, Kadie Bell, Amy Shuman, Margaret Casey, Lisa Quinn, Amalia Leighton, John Hoffman (Seattle Design Commission)

The meeting was facilitated by Co-Chairs Rebecca Deehr and Paulo Nunes-Ueno.

Public Comment

No public comment.

PMPAG Ideas, Issues, and Concerns

The following announcements and comments were made by PMPAG members:

- Kate described her experience with a recent SEPA appeal. She identified the need to educate the Hearing Examiners about pedestrian safety issues. She suggested that the plan should examine the existing SEPA checklist and do a more comprehensive job defining human habitat issues, including pedestrian safety.
- Rebecca noted that in Japan and many places in Europe, Health Impact Assessments (HIA) are required of projects as part of environmental assessments.
- Paulo noted that we mitigate for cars and level of service.
- Paul talked about his very recent experience in trying to cross the streets in First Hill during a street repaving project. He emphasized the need to evaluate how the detours and closures are really affecting pedestrians. He was forced into the street on more than one occasion. There are lessons to be learned from this, which must be taken seriously.
- Paulo agreed with Paul and would like to see the permitting process changed to better take into account pedestrian access—full access should be preserved.
- Richard noted that the School District has polled all schools on the issues of pedestrian access—excessive speed, inadequately marked crosswalks, lack of crossing guards, and vegetation blocking drivers' views were noted as challenges.
- Sgt. Smith talked about the challenges SPD has faced with the crossing guard program.

Staff Report

Barbara Gray distributed a hard copy of the SDOT staff report that covered updates on several topics including: redesign of the sidewalk café permitting process, July 1 ban on handheld cell phones, deployment of a camera-equipped van to catch school-zone speeders, Burke-Gilman safety improvements, traffic calming treatments in Jackson Place, and the status of staff-led stakeholder

involvement efforts. The full staff report is posted on the PMPAG website at: www.seattle.gov/transportation/pm_agendas.htm.

Barbara announced that Jennifer Wieland, a new member of the Policy and Planning team at SDOT, is the new main point of contact for the PMPAG. Also, Barbara reminded the group of the September Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Conference; she needs to know who is interested in attending as soon as possible, in order to secure day passes.

PMPAG Meeting Schedule

Possible revisions to the PMPAG meeting schedule were discussed. Paul stated that he was appointed to the PMPAG with the understanding that his commitment would be for 18 months/meetings. The current schedule would take members beyond that 18 meeting commitment. Paul proposed that meetings be suspended for the summer and resume in the fall.

Paul moved that the group meet in July, October, November, January, February, and March with a second from Chas.

The proposal was discussed, and the group determined that this schedule would work with development of the plan. A friendly amendment was proposed by Chas that the group skip the July meeting and meet in September instead; the amendment was accepted. The PMPAG voted on the amended motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

PMPAG meetings will be held in September, October, and November 2008, and January, February, and March 2009. The PMPAG Steering Committee will continue to meet the first and third Mondays of the month at 12:00 noon in the Boards and Commissions Room, L2, City Hall. SDOT will resend the Steering Committee schedule. Becca will send a list of agenda items. PMPAG members are all encouraged to attend the Steering Committee meetings.

Refined Plan Goals and Possible Ways to Measure Performance

The group had a fruitful discussion regarding goals and performance measures, making a number of comments and suggestions.

- Paulo: Most level of service (LOS) measurements are for cars, so the biggest impact would be to develop LOS measures for pedestrians.
- Kate: Agrees with Paulo and wants to make sure that the problem statement or obstacle for each toolbox section is defined.
- Becca: State of the Pedestrian Environment Report lists obstacles.
- Chas: Need to state why we are trying to measure performance.
- Celeste: Numbers of crashes need to be put into perspective. Should be in terms of number of people walking. Include signs around construction zones that provide people with a number to call and let the City know about issues: "How's my construction zone?"
 - This is an ongoing issue. Who can someone call if there are problems?
- Paulo: Add a new goal for "continuous improvement."
- Chas: Objects to using the word "crashes." Need to track raw numbers over a long period of time.
 - Barbara noted that the number of crashes is one indicator of problems in an area, not the only factor.
- Paulo: Need a methodology for tracking LOS for pedestrians. Measure volume: How do we know how many people are using the intersection?

- Barbara noted that the consultant team will do some pedestrian counts as part of the Space Syntax work to define exposure rates.
- Paulo: Would like the Steering Committee to focus on LOS tools and construction mitigation.
 - Barbara proposes that the group focus first on the enforcement and education toolbox pieces.
- Kate: Maintenance of the pedestrian environment is a major issue. It is the property owners who are responsible for sidewalks in front of their homes, but there is a lack of enforcement by the City. Need to find a way to sustain without Bridging the Gap funding.
- Tony: Equity is important. Need to get resources into communities that have been historically underserved. Also, an oversight body should be formed (Seattle/King County) to help influence policy and work on these issues, similar to the former Puget Sound Pedestrian Safety Coalition.
- Sean: Need to articulate how we will quantify and use performance measures to establish LOS, with an eye on the big picture.
- Brian: Important to understand how the Pedestrian Master Plan will be used at the policy level. Walkability is an overarching goal—maybe it should be pulled out?
- BettyLou: Interested in safety. Keep in mind that we are not starting from ground zero—work has been done, and is being done.
- Randy: Encouraged by what he is seeing, but worried the group is trying to create the “perfect” plan.
- Bea: Impressed with the group’s input.
- James: Echo Brian’s comment on walkability. It is really the overarching goal.
- Paul: Need to keep thinking 20-30 years ahead, keep prioritizing. Really admires the work being done.
- Suzanne: Feels like we are making a difference and serving an important role.
- BettyLou: We need to focus on how to get a mind shift around these issues (e.g., the difference in attitudes around smoking today vs. 15-20 years ago).

Draft Outline of the Toolbox of Strategies and Solutions

Extended discussion of the Toolbox was moved to the next PMPAG Steering Committee meeting on July 7, 2008. A reminder about the meeting (as well as any necessary information) will be sent to the entire group.

- Kate: Need to expand some of the toolbox categories—Laws and Enforcement, Education and Outreach, and Transit (needs to be separate).
- Rob: Need bus driver safety training.
- Richard: Need incentives and giveaways. Is there political will for congestion pricing in Seattle? Neighborhood parking revenue needs to stay in the neighborhood.
- Paulo: The funding section needs to include both a capital and operating budget and funding.
- Chas: Bring in bus drivers.

PMPAG Comment Summaries

Please sign-up for topics in which you are interested; the summaries will be discussed at upcoming Steering Committee meetings.

Next Meeting: September 26, 2008