

Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG)
Monthly Meeting
SMT 4050/4060
January 25, 2008
8 – 10 am

Meeting Summary

Attendance (16)

Suzanne Anderson, James Bush, Rebecca Deehr, Celeste Gilman, Tony Gomez, Jean Healy, Brian Johnston, Rob Kaufman, Kate Martin, Michael McGinn, Paul Niebanck, Paulo Nunes-Ueno, Charles (Chas) Redmond, Jim Schultz, Preston Tinsely and BettyLou Valentine.

Benita Horn (facilitator) and Seattle City staff: Susan Sánchez, Barbara Gray, Hannah McIntosh, Katherine Bush, Tracy Krawczyk, Susan Mueller and Traci Ratzliff.

PMPAG co-chairs Becca Deehr and Paulo Nunes-Ueno led the meeting.

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Staff Report

Barbara Gray, PMP project manager, presented the staff report. She informed the group that the meetings formed around discussing mobility issues for people with disabilities continue to take place. They are a productive forum to discuss specific design issues and get a first hand perspective from people with disabilities who navigate Seattle's streets each day.

In addition, Barbara updated the group on the Rainier Traffic Safety Corridor program and two subarea transportation plans SDOT is completing: the University Area Transportation Action Strategy and Southeast Transportation Study.

Traci Ratzliff, Seattle City Council central staff, also reminded the group that the Council Special Committee on Pedestrian Safety will have its next meeting on February 5. Councilmembers Jan Drago and Nick Licata continue to be on the committee, with the addition of new members Councilmembers Sally Clark and Tim Burgess.

Barbara concluded the staff report time by notifying the group that Steve Marquardt was leaving his spot on the advisory group and acknowledging his contribution. A representative for the wheelchair using community is being sought to replace him.

Citywide Pedestrian Safety Education and Enforcement Campaign Update

Traci Ratzliff and Becca Deehr gave an update on the Pedestrian Safety, Education, Awareness and Enforcement campaign. The campaign is just beginning with a research phase led by the Royer Group. In response to questions, Becca and Traci clarified that enforcement will be a component of the campaign and that the Seattle Police Department has been a willing participant in planning for the campaign.

Consultant report

Peg Staeheli, project manager for the Pedestrian Master Plan from SvR, briefed the group on the team she has pulled together to support the work. The team includes the Toole Design Group (a non-motorized planning and engineering firm based in Washington, D.C.), Bright Engineering, Liveable Streets, Inc., and Heffron Transportation (all transportation engineering firms), Mark Fenton (a national expert on walking) and Sue Nicol (a Seattle-based arborist and horticulturist). Marcie Wagoner, of Reed Wagoner, has also been engaged as a strategic advisor on public engagement issues.

In response to questions about the role of the PMPAG in relation to the consultant, Peg stated that the group should be listening and asking the tough questions before the broader public asks them. She stated that the broad levels of experience and varying backgrounds within the PMPAG are a huge asset.

The group discussed the timing of Peg and other members of the consultant team going to the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) in February. It was generally thought that a February meeting between the consultants and SPAB would be productive.

Report on Survey Tool and Neighborhood Walks

Hannah McIntosh, SDOT, gave a brief presentation on the status and context of the neighborhood walks tool. She reminded the group that the purpose of the tool is twofold: 1) to be a public engagement mechanism and 2) to be a “walking preference survey” that will capture information on people’s preferences and priorities for the walking environment around them. She also informed the group that the work group on January 24 had valuable suggestions, including:

- Ensure the tool has maximum flexibility to work for groups or individuals, walkers and non-walkers, people who are familiar with surveys and people who aren’t
- Include an introductory paragraph setting the tool in the context of the Pedestrian Master Plan
- Include a section that people can keep that has contact information for the Pedestrian Master Plan

Paulo Nunes-Ueno then asked the group to offer suggestions for the content of the form and for how the PMPAG can facilitate its dissemination. Feedback was grouped primarily into comments on the form’s format, the intended audience, the tool’s purpose, and potential questions and other content.

Comments on the format (professional design services will be employed for the final layout) included:

- The King County Council rule of thumb for surveys is 4 narrative questions or 6 “check box” questions
- A few simple, open-ended questions might be preferable to checkboxes
- We should avoid spending too much money and energy on this survey, when the PMPAG can be used as a cost-effective sounding board or focus group for many issues
- The survey should have the option to be used without a map and be kept simple, easy and short
- Space for open-ended questions should definitely be included
- Checkbox questions feel leading
- Using a map feels valuable, shouldn’t be totally discarded
- Some people are much more comfortable checking boxes, should leave that as an option but keep large comment areas
- Checkboxes and narrative questions are preferred, not just narrative questions
- Should use a format that translates into online use – for instance, maps will be difficult to draw online
- Printed survey should not be more than one page, double-sided
- If the goal of the survey is to be surprised by the answers, shouldn’t have checkboxes at all, that can be reserved for the data-gathering exercises like the KAB study

- Feels strongly that we should have checkboxes and open-ended questions, some people will do one and not the other

Comments on the intended audience and distribution included:

- Community councils should be involved
- There are many people who do not walk and it is very important to hear from them, as well
- We need to reach children and find a way to fit them in
- The city is full of isolated people – how can we find them and ask them about walking?
- Community council newsletters might mail survey out if given enough notice
- Should take advantage of opportunities to distribute and collect on the bus or at bus stops
- Reading level should be no higher than 6th grade, allowing younger people to participate
- Should not forget to use in conjunction with the design, building and development community
- Distribute to workplaces – people will do in groups at lunch
- Have already contact the Seattle Housing Authority Senior Coordinators and will follow up with them and SDOT staff on distribution and participation

Comments on the tool's purpose included:

- Part of this purpose will be gathering perceptions neighborhood by neighborhood – some neighborhood residents' perceptions of walkability don't align with infrastructure levels
- Worried that we are trying to do two things and will do neither well. First goal should be public engagement.

Comments on potential questions and other content included:

- Examples of simple, open-ended questions include: Do I feel encouraged to walk here? Why? Are there people who might not want to walk here? Why?
- Name and address should be asked for at end of survey if at all
- A name different from "Neighborhood Walks" is preferable, to ensure people know they don't have to walk
- Should be specific about what kinds of destinations people want, rather than just asking about quantity of walking destinations
- Should clarify difference between comfort and safety issues
- Should clarify between safety and security issues
- Call for involvement should be: "Would you like to help make Seattle a better walking city?"
- Should include question asking: "How often do you walk? All the time/Some/Just for pleasure/never"
- Distance should be measured in blocks and miles

- **The group was reminded that as "homework" everyone should send names of groups and individuals that would be ideal candidates to participate in or lead a neighborhood walk, as well as ideas for other distribution channels.**

Health Data from Public Health Seattle and King County

Amy Laurent, an epidemiologist from Seattle-King County Public Health, gave a presentation on new research on the relationship between public health and the built environment. The research indicates that strong correlations are emerging between these two factors. A PDF version of the full presentation is available at the Pedestrian Master Plan resources web page, at http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/pm_resources.htm.

In response to questions, Amy clarified the following:

- The "walkability index" was defined in research by Laurence Frank. The factors involved in the index were not part of the presentation.

- It is likely that Vashon Island has such high stroke death rates, despite positive health indicators because of the age of the population and relative distance from hospitals.
- The study was cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal.
- The type of qualitative research being proposed through the Pedestrian Master Plan is not duplicative and would be valuable.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

Date: Friday, February 22, 2008

Time: 8:00 – 10:00 am

Place: Seattle Municipal Tower, 40th Floor, Room 4050/4060