

## **Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG) Meeting #12**

Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
40<sup>th</sup> Floor, Conference Room 4050/4060  
March 28, 2008 8:00 – 10:00 am

### **Meeting Summary**

---

#### **Attendance**

Bea Kumasaka, BettyLou Valentine, Brian Johnston, Celeste Gilman, Charles Redmond, James Bush, Jim Schultz, Jean Healy, Kate Martin, Michale McGinn, Paul Niebanck, Preston Tinsley, Rebecca Deehr, Richard Staudt, Rob Kaufman, Sean Ardussi, Suzanne Anderson, Tony Gomez

Staff: Barbara Gray, Katherine Bush, Wayne Wentz, Heather Marx, Michael Quinn, Susan Mueller, Tracy Krawczyk, Traci Ratzliff, Dan Eder, Jodie Vice, and Benita Horn (facilitator)

The meeting was facilitated by Co-Chairs, Rebecca Deehr. Paulo Nunes-Ueno was out of town.

#### **Public Comment**

Bettylou Valentine

#### **Staff Report**

Barbara Gray distributed a hard copy of the SDOT Staff Report that covered updates on several topics including, an update on SDOT's pedestrian safety program for elementary schools, an update on the status of the Walking Preference Survey and a recognition of the work that Bettylou and Jean have accomplished to help make the walking preference survey available to seniors and people with limited vision. The full staff report is posted on the PMPAG website at:

[www.seattle.gov/transportation/pm\\_agendas.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/pm_agendas.htm)

Barbara also introduced the newest PMPAG member, Sean Ardussi. Sean is a member of the Bicycle Advisory and will share lessons learned from the Bike Master Plan.

#### **Pedestrian Safety and Education Campaign Update**

Progress is being made on the Pedestrian Safety and Education Campaign. The consultant is nearing completion of the eight assigned tasks including a review of local and national campaign best practices. The next step is for city staff and Council to review the findings compiled by the consultant team. The PMPAG will get a more detailed summary of the findings at the May or June PMPAG meeting.

It was asked if the elementary school work that SDOT has underway is the same as the Pedestrian Safety and Education Campaign. These are two separate projects.

It was asked if it is possible to keep PMPAG members in the loop by sitting in on meetings. There has been limited number of meetings thus far. If more meetings arise, they will be accessible to the PMPAG if appropriate.

#### **Goals Discussion**

The SPAB went through a process that helped them determine and communicate their vision for the Pedestrian Master Plan without inappropriately inserting itself in the PMPAG and SDOT's work. Based on that exercise, the SPAB encourages the development of a Pedestrian Master Plan that has the following characteristics:

1. A strongly rooted plan: Direct and powerful connection between "A Pedestrian City" and a Sustainable world
2. A powerful plan: Key part of our city's overall design strategy
3. A lively plan: Celebrates our best and current pedestrian environments
4. A directive plan: Clear authority and accountability
5. A forward-looking plan: Ideals and goals translate into tangible results

PMPAG members were led through a similar exercise. Each PMPAG member received a sheet of paper and asked to answer the following questions:

1. What shall we aspire to (given that this is a pedestrian moment)?  
Write a short phrase or words that matter most.
  - a. What do we want to be proud of?
  - b. How do we want Seattle to be seen?
2. What do we need to get going now (2-3years) to exemplify what we are trying to?

PMPAG members submitted their responses to Paul who will draft the first draft of the vision statement. Kate Martin, Michael McGinn and Rebecca Deehr volunteered to assist Paul in this effort. Paul will present the draft vision statement to the Pedestrian Safety Committee meeting on Tuesday April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Panel Presentation and Discussion: Enforcement**

#### ***Captain Fred Hill, Seattle Police Department***

Captain Hill manages the Traffic Division. In addition to enforcing traffic laws, his unit investigates accidents, directs traffic for sporting and other special events, and manages other traffic concerns. Capt. Hill is concerned about pedestrian/vehicle collisions. SPD Issues over 100,000 citations annually. Data suggests that drivers are cautious when they drive close to home but are less so as they get farther away from where they live. Capt. Hill would like to put a police officer on every corner, but realizes that this is unlikely. One of his current issues is that he has officers that work long hours (often 16 hour shifts).

SPD continues to work with SDOT to increase patrols in high accident areas including Rainier Avenue South, 1st Avenue South, and Aurora where vehicles have been known to travel up to 80 miles per hour. SPD has found that new technology is helping including the use of Lidar detectors and red light cameras. When people know that they will be caught and fined for breaking laws, they are less likely to make illegal actions. Increasing the fines may help but more importantly, it is that drivers know that they will get caught. Of course, there are some people, where no amount of citations will change their behavior.

This year SPD will focus on the speed zones around schools and playgrounds. SPD will lease a speed van for this work. It is important to note that many of the speed zone violators near schools are often faculty and parents.

In addition to enforcement, there needs to be a focus on education. An increasing number of people are driving distracted because they are reading and texting which is putting pedestrians at risk. Capt. Hill desires an environment that encourages walking but does believe that jaywalking is an issue, especially at mid-block locations where even alert drivers do not expect to encounter people crossing the street.

***Wayne Wentz, SDOT, Director of Traffic***

The Traffic Management Division of SDOT operates and regulates the city's streets and walkways and addresses many inquiries from citizens. The biggest tool available in the Traffic Management Division is engineering. Guided by a national study, SDOT removed, improved and relocated many crosswalks. At least half of the new signals installed have been installed to meet pedestrian needs. SDOT gets pushback from citizens that are unhappy with impacts of these projects because they may slow traffic or increase cut-through traffic on neighborhoods streets. SDOT constantly is working to balance the competing needs and uses of the streets.

With SDOT's Safe Routes to School program, the department is working to make streets safer for the most vulnerable population, by installing sidewalks on at least one side of the street near elementary schools.

SDOT and SPD work closely together to address safety concerns at specific locations. The two departments share expertise, and try to identify solutions. In situation where engineering techniques have not solved the problem, SDOT will look to SPD to suggest enforcement measures, or ask officers to provide feedback from their direct work in the field. An example;e of this is determining locations to install red light cameras..

***The following questions were asked:***

To answer the question, has SDOT considered adding lights for speed impediments, Wayne, stated that SDOT is obliged by City, State and Federal Law for certain practices. It is unlikely that SDOT act in contradiction of the law. However, citizenry can try to change the laws. Engineers have tried to install lights as speed impediments in the past. This was problematic because when you install a signal where there is no engineering need, safe conditions and anarchy are created. Captain Hill mentioned that a majority of drivers are compliant with speed limit and right-of-way laws.

Could SDOT design the light timing to keep peoples speeds low? Wayne responded by stating that this exactly what how SDOT determines traffic light timing, traffic flow and other factors are considered.

How many police officers are employed SPD? Capt. Hill responded, of the 1300 sworn personnel, 600 are uniformed personnel (first responders) that work 24/7. There are competing needs for police officers. Officers are often drawn to other call like domestic violence, or theft.

How can the City balance the number of jaywalking citations with pedestrian collision data? Capt. Hill responded, SPD issues 3000 failure to yield citations per year. It is challenge logistically to pursue failure to yield violators because the officer will likely need to make a u-turn and turn on sirens which may increase harm. On the other hand, people will often jaywalk

very close to police officers. Also, the courts have ruled that the driver needs to be within in a close distance of the pedestrian to be prosecuted for failure to yield as opposed to once pedestrians enter the street.

Can SDOT install speed signs with radar on arterials that come off freeways? According to Wayne, SDOT is a supporter on speed reduction signs. Installation that have been done have been where citizens have requested them. This can be an important element of the Pedestrian Master Plan.

A comment was made that there is a lot ingrained in national standards and the courts that seem favor the automobile. There seems to be inequity between physics and laws in regard to pedestrians.

SDOT continues to put in parking spots within 20 feet of crosswalks. Why does the City install parking close to the intersections? According to Wayne, it is not SDOT's practice to install parking spaces abutting intersections, unless there is a signal or an all-way stop because these treatments provide balance. In the case of T-intersections, SDOT has historically marked only one side as a crosswalk and install parking on the other. The practice of engineering allows professional engineers, to use judgement in these situations.

In response to a question about consequences for repeat speeders, Capt. Hill reiterated that most drivers obey traffic laws.. Because speeding is not a felony, there are limits to what can be done. In the case of running red lights, red-light cameras do appear to be effective at deterring this dangerous practice.

Wayne made the following comment when asked about the distance needed for a driver to see a white cane. It is a matter of drivers being attentive and respectful to all pedestrians, especially blind and disabled. The laws say that people using white canes have the right-of-way at all times.

### **PMPAG Self-Assessment**

Benita Horn provided a summary of the PMPAG self-assessment. The following three themes were discovered in the 15-40 minutes interviews conducted with PMPAG members:

1. Group formation is evolving and our work is progressing
2. PMPAG meetings could make better use of our time as a group
3. We need clarity of the roles, possible outcomes, and actions we [PMPAG] can take.

### **Public Comment**

No Public Comment

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.