

Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG)
Monthly Meeting
SMT 4050/4060
November 30, 2007
8 – 10 am

Meeting Summary

Attendance (13)

James Bush, Rebecca Deehr, Celeste Gilman, Tony Gomez, Jean Healy, Rob Kaufman, Bea Kumasaka, Kate Martin, Paul Niebanck, Paulo Nunes-Ueno, Charles (Chas) Redmond, Jim Schultz, and BettyLou Valentine.

Benita Horn (facilitator) and Seattle City staff: Wayne Wentz, Susan Sánchez, Tracy Krawczyk, Barbara Gray, Megan Hoyt, Andrew Glass Hastings, Hannah McIntosh, Katherine Bush, Jodie Vice, Susan Mueller, Ben Hansen and Shane Dewald.

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

Public Comments

John Coney attended for PMPAG member Suzanne Anderson. His comments are recorded here. John requested that the Pedestrian Master Plan monitor and plan for the newly established King County Ferry District and increased foot traffic around potential new passenger-only ferries on Lake Washington and Elliot Bay.

Philip Bors, Active Living by Design, also commented.

Staff Report

Barbara Gray, PMP project manager, ceded her staff report time to Ben Hansen of SDOT's Street Maintenance division. Ben updated the group on the city's recently completed sidewalk and curb ramp inventory. The presentation is available at the Pedestrian Master Plan website at http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ped_masterplan.htm.

In response to questions, Ben also provided the following information.

- The definition of a sidewalk is the same throughout the city. Street edges were initially sorted into "improved" (any paved surface) or "unimproved." Improved edges were then sorted according to curb type and pavement type, among other factors.
- Work on cataloguing and mapping sidewalk condition and age will begin next year, starting in the urban villages and branching out from there. The sidewalk condition analysis was scheduled for 2008 in order to leave enough time to develop clear criteria for rating sidewalk condition that could provide a definitive guide for future investment.
- The 20% of ramps that were listed as ADA compliant are ramps that serve the direction of travel (rather than serving the whole corner on the diagonal) and that have a partner accessible ramp across the street. The ramps are placed as close to the corner as possible. Wayne Wentz, City Traffic Engineer, noted that this represents a marked difference from design philosophy in the 1970s (when many city ramps were constructed), which called for moving ramps entirely out of the line of travel to alert sight-impaired pedestrians to the edge of the sidewalk.

Background Data

PMPAG members each took a turn discussing the plan's data needs, with the goal of compiling a list of additional data needed. The relative merit of the group's involvement with the data was debated. Some members expressed appreciation that a robust data set was developing and patterns were already emerging. At the same time, some members voiced concern about becoming too data-focused. Specific comments included:

- While data is important, it is also valuable to de-emphasize original analysis and emphasize the experiential aspect of walking in the city. Understanding the needs of Seattle's pedestrians also comes through a more qualitative understanding of the environment. In that sense, going to a place can be more valuable than seeing it laid out on a map. Another way to get at the more experiential and anecdotal information will be through surveys, neighborhood walks and interviews of the city's walkers.
- Requests for a select number of larger maps can be passed to SDOT staff. In addition, PDFs of the maps will be posted on the website.
- In addition to absolute numbers, demographic data should be regularized with percentages.
- Much of the data presented, particularly the collision data, has a strong relationship to enforcement. The Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Chair (Celeste Gilman) met with representatives from the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and SDOT to discuss this issue and will continue to update the group on how best to collaborate with SPD.
- Finally, the Pedestrian Master Plan will also need to make a determination about how to use data as a benchmark and which data to use. For instance, there are different sources for mode split data, including the Census Journey to Work information, Commute Trip Reduction survey results, and the Puget Sound Regional Council's Household Travel Survey.

In addition, members noted the data sets below as ones that should be obtained if possible:

- Neighborhood design guideline areas
- Pedestrian overlays
- Location of existing street design concept plans
- Pedestrian crashes broken down by severity of crash
- Street trees
- Data and policy on sidewalk closures
- Pedestrian counts
- Catalogue of motorists' bad behavior such as exceeding the speed limit, failure to cede rights of way
- Catalogue of pedestrians' bad behavior
- List of where the Bicycle Master Plan referred items to the Pedestrian Master Plan
- Bus stop boardings and alightings
- Mid-block collisions separated from intersection collisions
- Collision data broken down by age group: 10 and under, 11-15, 16-21, 21-55, 55 and older
- Collision data broken down by responsible party
- Safe Routes to Schools routes
- Bike collisions
- Location of raised crosswalks
- Crosswalks at bus stops
- Date of designation of major truck routes
- Trip hazards
- Crime rates
- Pedestrian generators including retail uses such as grocery stores and bars
- Land use code information on retail floor plate size (gets at "collapsing of uses")
- Permitted parking spots per unit in new construction
- Car ownership rates

Scope of the Plan

In general, the group expressed satisfaction that their comments from the earlier version had been incorporated and indicated a readiness to move on. More specific points brought up in the conversation included:

- Opportunities for the PMPAG to influence and interact with the analysis phase will be continual.
- In the Existing Conditions Section, Tasks 7 and 8 are linked rather than following in clear sequential order.
- The terms used in the scope are still quite broad. We should ensure that we are continuing to focus on engineering throughout and that we use collision data whenever appropriate, not just as part of “security.”
- The toolbox should include strategies for communities to use to stimulate the growth of neighborhood commercial destinations. More broadly, including a whole range of tools for neighborhood groups would be useful.
- Tasks 9 and 10 are really the heart of the plan and will receive further definition.
- There is a need to be more explicit in our project goals and to make them measurable, and to link them to the city’s climate change goals. Breaking the goals down into smaller components might facilitate measuring them.

A few comments were also made which were not directly related to the scope of the plan. Concern was expressed that the inter-agency team is elusive, that the PMPAG needs to be conversing with higher level officials about planning strategy, and that cities continue to plan for young people who move away when they have children. In addition, while the public engagement strategy was not on the agenda, specific comments should still be sent to Barbara Gray for incorporation. Finally, the desire for the PMPAG to create a “parking lot” for ideas that come up in conversation that may not be applicable to the immediate conversation was expressed.

Consultant/PMPAG Involvement

Barbara Gray updated the group on the status of the selection process. Four teams have been selected for interviews, including teams led by Otak, SvR, Alta Planning + Design, and the Transpo Group. The teams will be provided interview questions prior to the interview. Interviews will last one hour. An interview panel has been established, with the PMPAG co-chairs as voting members. Other interested PMPAG members are welcome to observe the interviews.

The group made a few additional requests, including that they meet with the selected consultant once negotiations are underway, that a copy of the standard questions be distributed to the PMPAG, and that the scores from the initial SOQ review be made available.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Concluding Discussion

In the absence of additional public comment, the group continued to discuss outstanding items.

The accessibility training was discussed as incredibly valuable and illuminating. The appropriate people have been contacted at the Intiman regarding issues identified during the training on that site including front door accessibility, vegetation maintenance and the cross slope at the top of the ADA ramp. Barbara Gray will follow up on the restroom signage issue. SDOT staff will be participating in the training in early 2008 and will let the PMPAG know if there are additional spots available.

Two logistical items were also discussed. First, the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) meeting summaries are available on the SPAB website and Celeste Gilman, chair, will also send those out to the PMPAG when they are completed each month. Second, the group was reminded that neighborhood plan updates are beginning in 2008 and that walkability should be emphasized as a way to meet the sustainability goals in those plans.

Next Meeting

Date: Friday, December 28, 2007

Time: 8:00 – 10:00 am

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