



APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
July 3, 2008**

**Seattle
Design
Commission**

Convened: 8:30am
Adjourned: 2:30pm

Greg Nickels
Mayor

Karen Kiest
Chair

Tasha Atchison

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Mary Johnston

Juanita LaFond

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Darrell Vange

Darby Watson

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

Pedestrian Master Plan
Mayor's Office Briefing
DPD Director's Update
Alaska Way Viaduct - South End

Design Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair
Tasha Atchison
Brendan Connolly
Mary Johnston
Juanita LaFond
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato
Darrell Vange
Darby Watson

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Ian Macek



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3 July 2008

Project: Pedestrian Master Plan

Phase: Briefing

Last Reviews: 2/7/2008, 6/7/2007

Presenters: Barbara Gray, SDOT
Jennifer Wieland, SDOT

Attendees: Vaughn Bell, SDOT
Riisa Conklin, DPD Planning Intern
Rebecca Herzfeld, Council Central Staff

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR169 /RS0606)

SUMMARY

The Commission made the following comments on the Pedestrian Master Plan briefing:

- **Encouraged by the comprehensive outreach.**
- **Interested in driver education and behavior modification, including both enforcement and education.**
- **Excited about the traffic safety corridor program.**
- **Concerned but encouraged by the breadth and scope of the project. The Commission supports subdocuments directed towards specific agencies, including action packages for policy, regulations, and education and specific actionable recommendations. Recommend an implementation strategy that focuses on small portions that can be accomplished sooner rather than later.**
- **Excited to see the enormous collection of information from the pedestrian perspective and the value it has to many people and programs.**
- **Interested to see how coordination will happen with neighborhood planning**
- **Interested to see additional press coverage as an outcome of this project**
- **Encourage the team to look to the Green Building Program or SDOT Art Plan as examples of how the program can continue after the recommendations are made.**
- **Encourage engaging engineers about innovative materials and solutions.**
- **Take maintenance concerns into account and have flexibility in standards for pilot projects or take advantage of new ideas.**
- **Encourage the team to explore features that could be incorporated within walking surfaces to assist people with disabilities.**
- **Look forward to a successful Pedestrian Master Plan.**

Project Presentation

Project Background

SDOT has convened the Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG) to consult on development of the plan. With input from the PMPAG, goals for the plan have been established. The overarching goal is to make Seattle the most walkable city in the nation, and four specific goals supplement this:

1. Safety: Reduce number and severity of crashes
2. Equity: Engage all people and ensure equal investment

3. Vibrancy: Create a lively pedestrian environment, and
4. Health: Promote walking

The final plan will focus on places people walk as well as nodes and connections. It will ultimately identify specific projects and implementation strategies as well as development of a prioritization process for future improvements.

The project team has taken a number of steps to collect a broad range of public input. Public engagement activities have included: connecting with specific groups to distribute a walking preferences survey in nine languages, partnering with the Department of Neighborhoods to ensure a balanced response from a variety of stakeholders, and contacting organizations that work with non-English speakers for assistance with outreach. More than 500 surveys have been received to date, and these are being tracked by zipcode and mapped in GIS to determine what areas of the city are responding. SDOT has also hosted roundtable discussions with youth, immigrants/refugees, accessibility representatives, and business owners; several additional roundtables are planned for the summer. The roundtables provide an opportunity for small groups to discuss pedestrian issues around the 5 Es: engineering, education, encouragement, evaluation, and enforcement.

The State of the Pedestrian Environment Report was completed in June and provides a snapshot of existing walking conditions, focused on physical infrastructure. The report identifies the benefits of walking as well as challenges and constraints to walking in Seattle.

Seattle is considered a national leader regarding pedestrian policies and facilities; however, there are still challenges to address in order to make Seattle the most walkable city in the nation. For example, enforcement and signalization have been recognized as challenges in the past, and SDOT hopes that these issues can be addressed through the Pedestrian Master Plan. The plan will also highlight the safety benefits of providing pedestrian lighting and the health benefits of providing convenient walking facilities.

Infrastructure opportunities and challenges include the importance of stairways as part of the pedestrian network, the value of buffers between the sidewalk and moving traffic, bridging neighborhoods that have been divided by highway construction, and mitigating sidewalk closures from construction zones.

The team is currently developing a toolbox of strategies and solutions that will explore programs, tools, techniques, and best practices covering many aspects of the pedestrian environment, including enforcement, design, land use, funding, and environmental concerns.

Commissioners' Comments

- The West Seattle group came to talk about their wayfinding and trails program. How are those groups being incorporated into the Master Plan?

- They are part of the network—or are the network for West Seattle. We still need to look at how a program in one part of the city can be integrated into the entire network and the connections that are required to make this happen.
- Is the signage resonating with what you will be coding?
 - We do have some wayfinding signs in parts of the city, and we will see more of them this summer/fall. There are some consistent elements across the signage, but wayfinding signs can still be distinct for each neighborhood.
- In Japan the sidewalks have tactile warning bumps down the center. It does help organize the conflict between pedestrian and bicyclists. Is that something the plan will be looking at?
 - We have had discussions about these types of sidewalk treatments with the PMPAG. The streetcar has done this type of banding. Also, Mercer designs had black banding at the 80% contrast. Copenhagen similarly had the banding, but not the contrast.
- Support the orange flags that assist pedestrians at certain intersections. Do pedestrians have the right-of-way at other intersections?
 - It is State law that pedestrians have the right-of-way at any intersection.
- What role will the plan have in driver education?
 - We are planning a safety education campaign that focuses on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. We may also work with the State to change portions of the driver education process. In addition, two pedestrian assessment actions have been completed in conjunction with the police department.
 - Bicycle education is also an important aspect of driver education.
- Marked crosswalks could be used as an opportunity to educate non-pedestrians that pedestrians have the right-of-way.
- Traffic calming device where the bump is painted on and seems 3-D to visually cause drivers to slow down.
- Reinforcing the rules is important, and remembering that it is not just individual intersections, but the entire network.
 - The Rainier Traffic Safety Corridor Program uses both enforcement and education, and has been successful. Enforcement is more effective when done as part of a broader program.
- Bus driver education is also an important aspect.
- Concerned by breadth and scope of the exercise. If the goal is to have a Master Plan the Council can approve, everything on the task list can't be accomplished by the end of the year. Encourage producing sub-documents that can go to the appropriate agencies.
 - The team has been making changes in prioritization methods and will think about developing project/action lists. We have a lot more work to go and don't want to create one large document to hand to people. In both the short and the long term, we will work with the appropriate agencies to move forward. The plan will be created online, in order to make the document as usable and accessible as possible.

- Where there will be a component that can be given to the neighborhoods when working on their plans?
 - The document is pulling from plans that have identified specific projects as well as working with the neighborhoods to establish their priorities.
- Finally collecting pedestrian information that doesn't exist in the city.
- Is there someone on your team that is coordinating with state agencies?
 - We have worked with Paula Reeves with WSDOT and will continue to work with her and others. The State's non-motorized plan talks at a high level about statewide facilities.
- Vetting things in the press is important, and creating/providing clear graphics can make projects more exciting.
 - We plan to capitalize on the Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Conference in September, as well as Walk to School month in October.
- Green Building Team and SDOT Arts Plan are examples where the goals are kept alive after the planning process through activities. Also important to look at how others organize themselves and make things happen.
- With increasing material costs, it may be time to engage engineers about other material types and methods.
 - SDOT and SPU have implemented pilot projects with alternative drainage and materials. However, there is little that is standardized, and private development builds a lot of the sidewalk infrastructure. We are working on an alternative list and will be setting up some type of standardization.