



Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

David Seater, Chair
Anna Zivarts, Vice Chair
Jennifer Tippins, Secretary
Patricia Chapman
Carol Kachadoorian
Koko Kim
Bunnie Lee
Beau Morton
Chaitanya Sharma
Emily Meltzer (Get Engaged)

October 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: David Seater, Anna Zivarts, Patricia Chapman, Koko Kim, Bunnie Lee, Beau Morton, Chetan Sharma, Emily Meltzer

September Minutes

- Patricia: Minutes are very sparse, would vote no
- Yes: David, Anna, Koko, Bunnie, Beau, Chetan, Emily
- No: Patricia
- September minutes are approved

Public Comment

- Doug MacDonald: Huge disappointment in the budget. Increase of \$75m. Principally for peds the sidewalk maintenance program will shrink. Capital increase seems almost entirely due to ADA consent decree. Ped budget is terrible.
- Doug MacDonald: Bike Share: SDOT has not told us anything about experiences from other cities, what is working and what is not. Should reflect Mayor Durkan's commitment to learn from other cities. Auckland is using Portland as an example, don't know if Seattle is. Threats to pedestrians and clutter on sidewalks have been biggest issues. E-scooters should not be ridden on sidewalks. Clutter has to stop with aggressive enforcement. Can learn from elsewhere and Durkan should be leading, but it's being left to citizens.

Adaptive Signals Update - Adiam Emery (SDOT Transportation Operations)

- Apologies for not delivering a signal policy by the end of the year, lost in transition from Mark Bandy.
- Wants to build bridges / relationship with all the modal boards to come up with a comprehensive policy that supports all of the plans.
- We all have the same goal: reducing the number of SOVs. Bikes and peds should be able to travel safely, transit move reliably, freight and goods move through our environment.
- SDOT didn't select Mercer as the first adaptive signal corridor, it was selected by Council. Was not an ideal environment to do first.
- Can arrange a tour of the Transportation Operations Center
- Signals have been very car centric for a long time, working on better integrating pedestrians and bikes

The Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board shall advise the City Council, the Mayor and all the offices of the city on matters related to pedestrians and the impacts which actions by the city may have upon the pedestrian environment; and shall have the opportunity to contribute to all aspects of the city's planning insofar as they relate to the pedestrian safety and access.

*~City Council Resolution
28791*

- Testing a bike detector in Ballard (58th & 8th?) that uses infrared to identify a bike and give a signal accordingly
- UW MICMA project includes ped and bike mobility
- Testing camera technology that helps count peds and do passive detection, allows system to prioritize for pedestrian. Testing at Link station at Husky Stadium to prioritize surges of pedestrians around events. Once proven to work it can be incorporated into other corridors.
- Bike mobility is app-based and opt-in, additive to the passive detection. Bikes can activate a signal for a green, they also receive an acknowledgement that they've been detected and that the light will turn green. Also gives SDOT bike travel times and routes so that the development team can know where to build new facilities.
- Accessible pedestrian signals for people with disabilities
- Green wave for emergency vehicles to flush cars out of the way
- "We've learned a lot on Mercer"
- Technology made it challenging to prioritize multimodal needs
- Worked with vendor to maintain adaptive element while improving for peds
- Peds don't need to push the button to walk parallel to Mercer, but do in order to cross
- Approval to create a committee for signal ops with 2 members from each modal board + others. 1 year pilot, define and shape technology and policy outcomes. Waiting for approval from the Mayor's Office before discussing frequency of meetings, topics, recruitment, etc.
- Beau: Passive ped detections have been tested in CA and AZ. Do you know the cities?
- Adiam: Will get back to you
- Chetan: Many pilots going. Is the plan to keep rolling out or wait until pilots are done?
- Adiam: Putting together a policy for pushbutton. Will move forward with adaptive once the Council proviso is lifted, but that doesn't mean it will look like Mercer. Will be communicating pushbutton policy once the committee is put together. Once policy is approved we'll populate it in corridors where appropriate (ROI, cost benefit, etc.)
- Chetan: Goal is reducing the number of SOVs. Difference between goal and technology. Previous SPAB letter pointed out that traffic numbers show more vehicles on Mercer, but more *people* crossing north south. Concern about what is being counted, feels that proviso should not be lifted until people are being counted.

- Adiam: Should be a dedicated bus lane wherever there is a bus. A bike lane 2-way with buffer so that people can shift modes. Need dedicated facility to move people, operations support that right of way.
- Chetan: Wider sidewalks aren't helpful if peds still have to wait a long time to cross.
- Adiam: That's why we're making a policy. Doesn't make sense to have a "no pushbutton" policy throughout the city. Allocation of right of way is what will drive us to meet our goals.
- Anna: Are we building towards the city that exists or the one that we need for our climate future. In NYC signals are predictable and understandable. Concerned about policy that isn't predictable. Detriment to the ped experience. Hard to believe that City values the ped experience when projects like Mercer happen or adaptive signals will roll out even before ped pilots are done. Operation *in addition* to street space allocation makes a difference.
- Adiam: Operation that advances cars is also advancing transit, and freight. I have to consider everyone.
- Anna: Seems like desire is to focus on existing number of cars.
- Adiam: Allocation of right of way will take away a lot of capacity from SOVs, shift it into bus lanes and protected bike lanes.
- Anna: That's great, can we do both?
- Adiam: Idling cars in congestion has environmental impacts too. A balanced outcome is a challenge, want to drive it from a policy perspective. Getting rid of push-buttons doesn't work in freight areas (SODO) or along MLK (Link).
- Anna: People will cross where they feel comfortable. Induced demand for pedestrians too.
- Adiam: Those are the kind of things we want to hear. Where is that concern coming from? Is it the wait time? Having to push a button? That's why we're looking at this.
- Anna: Wonky question about Acyclica. Reads people's WiFi (if on), are peds and bikes counted too?
- Adiam: They have an algorithm to filter out slow movement, time between readers. Have asked the vendor to try to measure along a walkable path but it wasn't reliable enough.
- Anna: Too bad the data is being collected but can't be used.
- Adiam: Every company that comes in I ask how it can be used for bike/ped

- Koko: People use Google Maps more than a GPS. Do you collaborate with them? Sometimes the directions are not very pedestrian friendly, can be bad for driving too. Are there ways to integrate?
- Adiam: Your pain is my pain too. Tried continuously to work with them. Only thing so far is an API for them to ingest for incidents, active construction, bridge openings. Pushing to work with them. "If it's not replicable throughout the nation, they're not going to do it." Google asked a few months ago to create an "urban lab" but nothing has happened with that yet.
- Anna: Equity question, related to the bike app. How does this serve people who don't have smartphones? Nationally many people on bikes aren't rich white men.
- Adiam: It's additive
- Anna: So tech guys can go through lights faster?
- Adiam: It's a pilot to see if it's something we want to incorporate or not. The system won't only be compliant by the app. People can opt in, there are other ways to detect
- Anna: Won't that be biased / limited?
- Adiam: Yes, but it's worth a try.
- Anna: Who is going to see value and who isn't? Trip planning and time estimates are usually consistent, doesn't see a lot of value in that.
- Adiam: There will be an equity element. Will be reviewing. If it's not suitable to integrate it dies.
- Beau: What qualifies as a "surge" for passive detection?
- Adiam: That TBD, part of the discovery.
- Beau: But it's something that SDOT can determine? Different from other cities.
- Adiam: Could give an extended walk, longer clearance, can be designed to fit the need. We want to make sure the technology works. Challenge is that you don't know where pedestrians are going when waiting at a corner.
- Anna: Is it being tested on peds with different body shapes? Walkers? Chairs? Rain?
- Adiam: That's why we're testing it here.
- Anna: Concerned that it's happening regardless of whether the pedestrian part is working.
- Adiam: The ped signal will be driven by the pushbutton policy that's drafted and we'll be sharing with you soon.
- Anna: In general there's a set standard.
- Adiam: We want to make sure the matrix for peds is added into this thing.

- Anna: Not yet a way to count peds?
- Adiam: No, not until we test it.
- Chetan: What is the motivation to expand the program before we can.
- Adiam: Efficiency. Testing is happening at UW. If surge works where else can we apply it?
- Chetan: NACTO standards say that adaptive signals aren't effective in urban environments. Seems odd to move forward when problems are already known (from Mercer). Should make sure that things are working before going on to the next corridor. What is the motivation?
- Adiam: Our system is constrained to the maximum, we don't have ROW like New York or other cities. Benefits emergency responders, transit.
- Chetan: There's no transit E-W on Mercer
- Adiam: Mercer was not ideal, transit was the most challenging thing. The policy will look like a completely different thing. Policy is coming to you in January.
- Anna: UW project. Are there dedicated bus lanes that can be used by emergency vehicles? Will there be benefit?
- Adiam: Some on 15th, coming on 43rd, Pacific. Maybe more?
- Anna: Sees apative signals on MLK, makes sense for the train. Seems less helpful for places without dedicated ROW.
- Koko: Bus lanes on Pacific, end near the bridge. One more connecting to the light rail.
- David: Why do people not get a walk with a parallel green?
- Adiam: Push button has a balancing need. Moving transit and freight. Done with a lower number of pedestrians crossing and lower cross streets. Revisiting that, guidance going forward. Driving it to needs instead of everywhere, which will be better.
- Anna: Some lights are ped activated and change right away. Figuring out the timing for people to wait and standardizing is needed. 90 second wait means you miss a bus, so people dash across the street.
- Adiam: When there's a string of signals we move a platoon down the street. Recommends SPAB take the workshop to better understand. Frequent buses shouldn't be stopped at every intersection.
- Anna: Can the light be given every time rather than being push button activated?
- Adiam: That could be part of the policy. We also double/half cycle. There's a lot to talk about. Department wants to work with SPAB and other board to

come up with a policy to serve everyone. Did not intend to leave anyone out of earlier workshop. Let us know.

Board Business

- Belen is starting a new role (managing ORCA Opportunity) for at least 6 months, this is her last meeting. Brian Dougherty taking over
- Please resend curriculum feedback, include Brian
 - Glossary of terms
 - Ped board goals - summarize retreat notes TODO for David
 - Resources and links for quick references
- Scooter share survey feedback deadline is Friday, send ASAP
- Please work on the annual report, have done by the end of the year
- Recruitment strategy
 - Usually launches in November, through January
 - Last year: Analyzed who is currently on the Board (district, self-identified demos), compared to City demos, targeted under-represented groups. Difficult to get people from far South and North. Identifies languages that are needed. Social media blasts at the beginning and end.
 - Anna: Barriers around weeknight meetings, unpaid time. Call-in is nice but audio quality is very poor.
 - Belen: Looked into it, no progress yet.
 - Anna: How about the Equity workgroup?
 - Belen: Can distribute recruitment materials through them. Could suggest including that boards & commissions members should be paid. Can currently give Metro bus passes. Kids welcome but can't provide childcare. Hoping that a recommendation from the Equity group will include paying members.
 - Patricia: Speakerphones aren't that expensive. Recruitment needs to emphasize time commitment, we seem to have trouble with attendance.
 - Belen: Andres started an internship with the City and so isn't able to serve anymore.
 - Patricia: Only find out about people leaving via the letterhead. Need to address commitment in the recruitment process. Call in should only be a backup / for emergencies.
 - Belen: We can explore that, including in the interview questions. Bylaws are minimum 6, hopefully 9, ideally 12 meetings.

- Anna: What about video chat? Skype?
- Bunnie: Could we use a second laptop for conferencing?
- Belen: Can explore that. Don't know if laptops support video chat.
- Anna: Structurally it's hard to take notes and participate. In other groups there are others taking notes. Maybe an automated voice to text solution. Frees up someone during the meeting.
- Brian: Could move to a room in SMT that has more technology available.
- If you need a Metro bus ticket, email Brian (for now, expect new liaison next month)
- Web page has been rebuilt, check it out!

Annual report:

- Send David ideas
- Patricia: Include copies of all the correspondence we've sent, build around that. Field trip summary.
- Chetan: Something about adaptive signals, can draft based on letter
- Emily: Happy to help with editing

2020 Budget:

- Opportunity to comment on the budget
- Anna: My org is focusing on the new sidewalk construction budget. \$4m is nowhere near what is needed but more than there has been. Don't want to see further cuts. Curious about sidewalk maintenance numbers Doug raised.
- David: Council approved a resolution to develop sidewalk maintenance policy
- Patricia: \$16.7m from Mercer megablock sale. Shouldn't use for streetcar operations, invest in capital. Should push for that. Put more money into sidewalks and pedestrians.
- Anna: Some is going to the Highland Park roundabout. Doesn't know if that is good for pedestrians.
- Patricia: Should write a letter asking for more money
- Beau: Advocacy to change the red light camera funding change that was made last year, funds moved into general fund, should be moved back.
- David/Anna: That is happening.
- Chetan: Worth noting that sidewalk budget is being decreased.
- Board voted to send a letter restating these concerns.
- Anna: Council approved a resolution asking for a draft signal policy by December, final by Spring.

Scooter Share:

- Patricia: Had taken position that SPAB's mission is to advise the city about impacts on the ped environment (quoted from letterhead). Some discussion about the role of the committee. Main position is that we should support continuation of current policy not allowing scooters to be ridden or parked on sidewalks, out of concern for pedestrian safety. Bellwether for this committee, this is one of the biggest things on our term on the board. Read many articles about the unpleasantness of scooters on sidewalks. As an elderly person, doesn't think it's safe. Allowing scooters is going in the wrong direction. Suggests that we are being derelict in our duty to not take a position.
- David: Agrees we should respond, have the rest of the night tonight
- Chetan: Asking clarifying questions about allowing scooters on sidewalks or everywhere
- Patricia: Only on sidewalks, not taking a position on scooters being ridden in the street. We're the pedestrian advisory board. Our job is to advise on a good and safe pedestrian environment.
- Anna: Rooted in Rights has been working on an educational video with Lime about Portland, where riding on the sidewalks is illegal. Impression is that the scooter companies don't want them on the sidewalk either. Concerned about the enforcement and how it's done, as well as places where it isn't safe to ride in the street. Doesn't see scooter riders (or potential riders) as someone who is not a pedestrian. There is overlap in the needs.
- Chetan: 40k traffic deaths in the US every year, 4x other countries, curious to know how many are due to bikes and scooters. Thinks we spend too much time focusing on that rather than aggressive driving.
- Patricia: Agreed, thinks our job is to promote a walkable and safe ped environment, would also like to spend more time on car dangers.
- Bunnie: Scooters and bike are top-of-mind right now, controversial topic unlike the "acknowledged as a given" of cars.
- Patricia: Fewer people will want to walk on sidewalks. I will drive rather than walk on a sidewalk that feels unsafe. Our job is to advise on that.
- Koko: Each of these opinions has value. If we urge against scooters on the sidewalk it doesn't mean we don't care about cars or infrastructure. Our goal is to keep the pedestrians safe. We don't have to limit ourselves to one or the other. Doug has shown us that cities everywhere have banned riding on sidewalks. Seems that some allow, but many ban.

- Chetan: Size of ROW in Seattle is much smaller than other cities (e.g. D.C.) so we have less safe bike infrastructure.
- Koko: We can make a statement about both.
- Chetan: Hypothetical situation about a cop forcing a scooter rider onto a busy street, where no improvements have been made. It's a broader issue. If we advocate for this without also advocating for better bike infrastructure we're causing a problem.
- Koko: Other cities require people to walk their bikes on the sidewalk. You don't have to ride a bike. You can walk the bike if you don't feel safe. Pedestrians don't have another choice.
- Chetan: Different understanding of the magnitude of the problem of a bike or scooter riding past you on the sidewalk. It's one thing to feel unsafe and it's another to *be* unsafe. Would like to see data. Example of Burke Gilman. Letter would need to be couched in bigger policy issues that need to be addressed.
- Koko: Do we need to focus only on e-scooters?
- Patricia: That's what I proposed. For bikes, the city historically *has* allowed them but scooters weren't allowed. Can't put the genie back in the bottle. Police department is so limited that there won't be enforcement.
- David: That's why enforcement would be biased or selective
- Patricia: Social norms
- David: Why would we allow one but not the other?
- Patricia: We have an extremely active and vocal bike lobby. City isn't going to take them off any time soon. "I don't like bikes on sidewalks, I don't feel safe." Told a story at an earlier meeting about Belltown. Sidewalk is crowded. Saw a bike blocking the whole sidewalk. 88 year old volunteer friend is not afraid of cars, *is* afraid of bicycles on sidewalks. Hears the same from many other elderly people. City is asking us. We can't answer them.
- Anna: We don't seem to have consensus.
- Annie: We keep trying to discuss in broad strokes citywide. Should get more granular, e.g. rules for downtown core should be different than other less constrained areas. Should consider relative danger of riding in the street. Consider level of pedestrian foot traffic where people need to be protected.
- Patricia: More dangerous downtown, less in residential areas where there are fewer people walking.
- Anna: How does that work practically?
- Bunnie: Signage around the periphery, "This is an urban village, no e-scooters or bikes on the sidewalk."

- Chetan: In a residential area you'd probably ride a scooter in the road. The reason you ride on the sidewalk is because the streets are dangerous. A total ban might make more sense than banning only in urban centers.
- Anna: Saw recent article where someone got jail time for bumping another person's leg with a scooter, in the same city a driver killed someone and did not. Consider the capacity to kill/injure someone versus perceived threat and concern about something that is new.
- Koko: Seems weird to not make a statement just because we have no data. Irresponsible. Shouldn't not have an opinion just because there's no data. Fatalities are one factor, whether people feel safe is another.
- Chetan: Feels odd to say we shouldn't use data.
- Koko: Not saying that, it's a factor and we should consider others like subjective feelings.
- Chetan: Would say that subjective feelings aren't relevant
- Koko: Public opinions are always subjective
- Anna: I hate crossing Rainier, it's terrifying. We should also write a letter asking to ban cars in Seattle.
- Koko: That's why they're trying to make improvements to make people feel safe.
- Chetan: What is going into the letter.
- Koko: Whether e-scooters should be on sidewalks
- Patricia: City is developing a pilot program for scooter share, has asked for opinion of modal boards and others. One question is whether scooters should be allowed on sidewalks. We should lay out our opinion that they should not. Sees us as advocates for pedestrians, doesn't think everyone on the board agrees. We need to make sidewalks safe and pleasant. Thinks SPAB would be way out of step to say we should allow scooters on sidewalks. Talked to many people and only one person on SPAB has said it's a good idea. We're one voice, City may not even value our opinion. This is a pilot program to see what works. Also thinks scooters should not be parked on sidewalks. Motion to oppose the riding and parking of scooter share on sidewalk.
- Koko: Second.
- Favor: 3 - Patricia, Bunnie, Koko
- Opposed: 4 - David, Anna, Chetan, Beau
- Koko: Suggests each of us does a random public survey so that we're not each speaking only to our own experiences
- Anna: Interested in hearing a compromise