



Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

July 14, 2021

*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

July SPAB Meeting Minutes

Jennifer Lehman, Co-Chair
Emily Davis, Co-Chair
Ori Brian, Comms
Erin Fitzpatrick
Akshali Gandhi
Bianca Johnson
Han-Jung Ko (Koko)
Emily Mannetti
Esti Mintz
Hang Nguyen
Greyson Simon
Maria Sumner

Board Members Present: Jennifer Lehman, Emily Davis, Han-Jung Ko (Koko), Maria Sumner, Akshali Gandhi, Bianca Johnson, Ori Brian, Erin Fitzpatrick, Hang Nguyen, Greyson Simon

Non-Board Members:

Polly Membrino, SDOT
Brian Dougherty, SDOT
Jennifer Meulenberg, SDOT
Jonathan Lewis, SDOT
Susan McLaughlin, SDOT
Joanna Valencia, SDOT
Marilyn Firman, School Traffic
Safety Committee (STSC)

Mary Ellen Russell, STSC
Padraic Kelleher
Ray Warrick
Brian Townley
DC Morrison

Public Comment - No public comment

Board Business:

- May and June meeting minutes unanimously approved
- The August meeting will not be an in person meeting due to Governor's Proclamation requiring virtual/call in information
- Greyson: Dee Powers from Be Seattle will share their story about living unhoused and will also host a Q&A following the presentation
 - o Bianca: Are we able to provide compensation to the speaker?
 - o Greyson: Not planning on it since I'm not sure what the rules are.
 - o Emily: This would be a great meeting to invite City Council Members and other members of the public to attend.
 - o Polly will reach out to liaisons to invite Councilmembers to the August meeting.
- Ori: I have been posting meeting agendas and upcoming presentation notices to the Twitter account. It sounds like we want to advertise the next meeting more widely. Feel free to get in touch if you have other ideas for the Twitter account.

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*

- Vision Zero update: Polly will send out invites to those interested to meet with Allison.
- Emily: There are groups that wrote letters of support to lid I-5. There has been a feasibility study funded by the convention center, which found that this is a feasible idea. Is this something our board wants to support?
 - Possibly - Emily will gather more information and report back
- School Traffic Safety Committee intros:
 - Marilyn Firman: member of the School Traffic Safety Committee
 - Margaret McCauley: member of the School Traffic Safety Committee
 - Jennifer Meulenberg: SDOT liaison to the School Traffic Safety Committee
- Greyson: There were two pedestrian fatalities at the Columbia City light rail station. Neighbors are wondering if there are any pedestrian safety measures that SDOT is looking into. This seems like something that could be prevented and it would be good to be able to report back to the neighborhood on what steps are being taken. It seems that it is more
 - Emily: Maybe we need to talk to Sound Transit about this or write a letter or add it to a future agenda.
 - Erin: Track crossings have come up at my work since I work with blind and DeafBlind people. For stations where you need to cross a track, we requested and advised that there is some sort of gate that moves up and down, but they said that they could not do that because there is not a precedent from the Federal Highway Administration. This is frustrating because people can die because of this. I've also noticed that lights give priority to trains, but this hinders pedestrians and sometimes pedestrians have to wait for up to ten minutes. It's great for public transit, but the punishing factor encourages people to take risks to cross even when they shouldn't. I would like to see SDOT respond to this issue.
 - Emily: This is important and should be addressed in a future meeting.
 - Brian: I believe this is in Sound Transit's right of way, but it is also probably under joint jurisdiction and we can look into this.
 - Ori: If we are going to invite someone to our meeting, we should have a targeted discussion and not just receive information from the person.
 - Emily: Yes, it would be great to have a recommendation or letter for an action regarding this topic and not just learn about things.
 - Ori: This is potentially somewhere where we can make a bigger impact, especially if we can connect to specific agencies on these topics.
 - Jennifer: We should tailor our ask because this is timely and we should know more about what thoughts going into pedestrian improvements are for these new stations.
 - Emily: Great point because Northgate is opening soon.
 - Erin: This would be a good opportunity to hold people to acknowledge that this fatality happened and let people know that we are paying attention.

SDOT Safe Routes to School Presentation

- Ashley Rhead presents on School Streets, a program within Safe Routes to School (full presentation available on SPAB website).

- SDOT is committed to 6 core values: equity, safety, mobility, sustainability, livability, and excellence
- School streets re-opened during the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2021 on short notice
 - This included two daily start times and two daily end times
 - There was no general education bus service during this time
 - An existing permit for a fee allows timed street closures next to schools, but not many students chose to engage in this program
- School streets close 1-2 blocks adjacent to school
 - Streets are open to people walking and biking
 - Open to local access, delivery drivers, waste pickup, emergency vehicles, etc.
 - Closed to thru traffic
- School Streets help to:
 - Provide social distancing space
 - Reduce traffic congestion
 - Organize drop-off/pick-up activity
 - Improve air quality directly next to school
 - Improve safety
 - Encourage walking and biking
- School Streets are on non-arterial streets and streets with no public bus routes
- 9 public schools participated in spring 2021, out of approximately 100 schools
 - This included schools that are high priority schools for the Safe Routes to School program based on existing inequities
- Some schools have done street closures without permits, which is not endorsed by SDOT, but some of those schools have been encouraged to get involved with an official School Street
- School Streets application process:
 - Fill out a form on SDOT website or contact Ashley Rhead
 - Transportation Operations Division (TOD) reviews the request and approves it or sets up a meeting to discuss
 - TOD creates a traffic control plan to indicate where and which types of barricades to place at the School Street
 - Third party sets up barricades and SDOT provides flyers and mails postcards to notify neighbors
 - Process can be as short as 1 day
- Schools identify the streets to be closed based on their needs and circulation
- SDOT manages the street closure and takes liability
- Overall, schools have had a great experience with School Streets and said that it improved the smooth operation of school arrival and departure
 - Less successful with the one Option school that participated, which has students coming from farther away and is more likely to have families that drive
- There will be a permanent option in Fall 2021, which will start with temporary barricades and engage with families and neighbors
 - The closure will likely apply only on school days from 7am-4pm
- Ask for SPAB/STSC—help get the word out about this new program

- 7 schools are participating so far, but SDOT would like to have all schools where this would be successful to participate
- Questions or comments? Contact Ashley at Ashley.Rhead@seattle.gov
- Q&A
 - Jennifer: You mentioned that there would be permanent options, but that they would not be 24/7. How does this work?
 - Ashley: The schools will not need to bring the signs in and out. There will be a large sign with the hours to indicate when the street is a School Street. We want these to be self-enforcing with the same hours that includes time before all schools start and after all schools end, so that all streets will be School Streets at the same hours
 - Akshali: It seems that there are a lot of exceptions for through traffic. How is this enforced and how does someone know if they are in the program for being dropped off at school or if a parent is dropping off a student with mobility needs? How do you enforce this and monitor this?
 - Ashley: School Streets are not enforced. They are by school request only and self-enforced. The school needs to provide the buy-in and work with SDOT to communicate with parents about who is and is not allowed to go into the School Street. If a school is finding that there isn't good compliance then it might not be a good idea to move forward with the permanent option. There are some schools, such as Lowell Elementary School, that have a lot of students with special needs or students in low-income programs and the schools will communicate with those drivers to make sure that they know that they are allowed to drive in. There is a learning curve and that is something the schools need to take on in terms of communicating to school communities.
 - Akshali: In general, what have you noticed about walking and biking rates to school? In the Seattle Public School district has this declined over time or increased over time? Are there general insights that you can share with the boards?
 - Ashley: We have some information on our website about how kids get to school. The last year that we have good data is from 2018. As of 2018, 1 in 5 elementary school students walked or biked to school, about half arrived by cars and about a third arrived by school bus. School busing has decreased overtime because the school district changed the rules requiring students to attend the school that they live closest to, so there is less of a need for busing. Walking has generally increased over the last 15 years and biking has been about the same over time. The Safe Routes to School Program did a Racial Equity Analysis in 2018 and 2019 and the survey asked how students got to school each day for a week. This data shows higher rates of walking, with about a quarter of all students walking across age groups. This also showed that white students were more likely to walk to school compared to students of color. This data is also available in the Racial Equity Analysis report on the SRTS website.

- Maria: Why was the School Street less successful at the Option school?
 - Ashley: The City changed from allowing anyone choosing any school they wanted to go to and shifted to an attendance based program, which means that students generally need to attend their neighborhood assigned school. However, Option schools allow students from other parts of the district to apply to attend. These schools usually have special programs like STEM or Arts that some families might want to opt into. For these schools, many students may be coming from farther away in the city to attend and are less likely to walk or bike. The School Street was considered less successful because the parents were not supportive and the program lasted about a week.
- Maria: Why doesn't the City implement School Streets wherever it works and then if it's not working decide on a case by case basis to not have School Streets where they aren't working?
 - Ashley: Having the option to choose the School Street often makes schools more receptive and parents are more likely to support the program. If it is something that the City is doing everywhere, they may not be as in favor of the program since they did not opt in. The principal and PTA supporting and choosing this can lead to the School Street being more successful.
 - Ashley: Viewlands Elementary School wanted to do a School Street, but instead there was a partial closure at a major intersection because families nearby would have normally had school buses, but more students were walking because they didn't have school bus access. The traffic volumes were higher than normal on residential streets, so SDOT did a partial closure for about a month and a half near the end of the school year, which came from a PTA request.
- Emily: Were there schools that requested the School Street that SDOT could not implement? Are there budget concerns that you could not implement them for all schools?
 - Ashley: We did have schools that changed their mind, but otherwise all schools that requested School Streets were approved by SDOT. The budget would likely allow for all schools that wanted School Streets to have them because it is fairly low cost to implement.
- Akshali: Where did parents drop off if they weren't able to drive into the School Street? Did more students walk to school?
 - Ashley: The last time Whittier participated in a Hands Up Tally was 2013 and at the time they had about 40% of students walking which is above average. Based on my observation with the School Street, lots of families and students were walking to school. For those who drove, they parked a block or two away because it is a residential street and then the students walked the rest of the way to school. It is common for parents to park nearby and then walk with their child the rest of the way to school. Some students have a drop off zone, like Emerson Elementary School and Roxhill Elementary School. At these schools,

- parents queue up to walk drop off, but otherwise we encourage parents to park within a few blocks and then walk the rest of the way.
- Greyson: Have the schools been approached initially about this program or is it something they have to find out about themselves?
 - Ashley: All principals received this information from the district, but principals receive lots of communications and may not have seen this new option. The media and some community councils have spread the word about this program, but 9/100 schools participating is good but could be a lot better. Getting the word out through your own organizations or networks would be helpful to get the information from lots of different sources.
 - Greyson: You had a list of things that would prevent schools from implementing the School Streets in the presentation. Is it possible that schools may not be reaching out because they think they may not be qualified? Have you done pre-screening to see which schools would be good candidates?
 - Ashley: This is a next step that we have discussed where we would proactively reach out to schools to see if they are interested since they are good candidates.
 - Bianca: Thinking about mobility and how cumbersome it is for parents to drop students off in specific spots. Is there an idea to create a network for parents to have drop off spots if the school is on an arterial road?
 - Ashley: Most elementary schools are on residential streets, but middle schools and high schools are more likely to be on arterials. In terms of networks, Neighborhood Greenways were intended to be routes to school as well and a lot of schools are on Neighborhood Greenways or Stay Healthy Streets. Closing one block helps with safety, but does not necessarily create a route for students to walk or bike. We are interested in understanding how schools are using Stay Healthy Street routes that they are on and if it would make sense to create something like Stay Healthy Street routes to schools. That could be a next phase, but we are not quite there yet.
 - Ori: It sounds like some schools have adopted school streets because of asks from their PTAs. Is there any plan to connect directly with PTAs in addition to school administration or would you just encourage people in their networks to reach out?
 - Ashley: Information did go out to all PTAs, but that is something we could do again. It is important to reach back out to PTAs and also recognize that there are a lot of schools that don't have PTAs. One of the reasons we started the School Streets program is because there is very little asked of schools to participate compared to the previous permit program. We will reach out to PTAs and work with the school district to get the information to principals as well. Having the stamp of approval from the district makes it more likely that schools will participate in this. Outside groups such as SPAB and STSC can help spread the word to their networks at different schools. People impacted

by School Streets are not the adjacent neighbors, but the larger community that drives through the School Streets, so it is helpful to have support from the larger community.

- Emily: Did you coordinate with the Seattle Neighborhood Greenways? I know that the Central Greenways group is connected to Bailey Gatzert and safety issues there.
 - Ashley: I have connected with them on a lot of things, but not School Streets yet, so this is a good reminder.
- Koko: In some neighborhoods there are more traffic collisions compared to other areas with other schools. Do you have this data and is it possible to reach out to schools that have more collisions nearby?
 - Ashley: The data that we have is from collisions where there was a police report written. Fortunately, we do not have many collisions reported involving children. What is more commonly seen is mid-block collisions where students are not dropped off at the intersection and cross mid-block, but this is still not common or reported in Seattle. School Streets help prevent this by having a closed street for students to walk through.
- Akshali: Does Seattle have school zone speed limits?
 - Ashley: Yes, all schools have 20 mph school zones.
- Margaret (STSC): We can present on School Traffic Safety Committee or talk about what we do.
- Emily: We are here to advise the Mayor and City Council and act as stewards of the Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Margaret: We are also a City commission. We work with the school district, the city, King County Metro (which provides busing to students) and the Seattle Police Department. We work with all of these entities.
- Mary Ellen: I've been on the committee for a few years and we advise on things that SDOT proposes for schools, but sometimes even basic improvements aren't completed if there isn't precedent. We want to make sure that we can help basic things are implemented for safety and make sure there is a standard for this.
- Emily: There are a lot of overlap here on goals that we have. Do others on SPAB have thoughts?
- Jennie, SDOT: More information that School Traffic Safety Committee does includes reviewing plans, and working with SDOT and schools. Here is a blurb with more information: The City of Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee aims to bring together Seattle Public Schools, the City, and parents to improve safe routes to school. This volunteer board of 11 members represents Seattle Public Schools (SPS), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Police Department (SPD), King County Metro, pedestrian advocates, bicycle advocates, and parents.
- What We Do: The committee recommends new school crosswalk locations, crossing guard assignments, criteria for placement of crossing guards, and traffic circulation plans for schools.

- Mary Ellen: It is challenging to gather information from schools, but there is a lot of information that principals receive. We lobbied with Seattle Neighborhood Greenways to get a new Active Transportation Coordinator position who is inside Seattle Public Schools. That person is being hired now, so we are looking forward to that. We've also been working with the Capital Projects group, which is doing a review of plans and we were seeing things on the plans that are the same as some of the problems we've had at other schools. We worked with them to write a best practices guide and schools officially adopted it. This is going out to all design teams at the start of the process, so some goals include having parents dropping off students a few blocks away as a standard. We are looking forward to seeing some of these issues not be replicated in new schools.
- Marilyn: We are lucky to have professionals from the schools, buses, and citizens to help work on these issues. We had a police officer helping, but he is not in the group anymore even though he was very helpful.
- Emily: We would like to stay in touch and continue to work together.
- Mary Ellen: We would like some more information about your planning process, including milestones and when reports are issued. We hope a few of you might come to one of our meetings in the next couple of months.
- Emily: We can get that info from Polly and try to get at least one person to show up to your meeting.

Modal Integration and POAG Update—Susan McLaughlin and Jonathan Lewis

- Presentation: Update on the Modal Integration Policy Framework—full presentation available on SPAB website
 - Discuss background, Complete Streets policy, and next steps
- The policy relates to the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan and overlapping the modal plans including the Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, etc.
 - Looking at all of these plans, we are trying to see if we can fit all of these competing interests within our roads and right of way.
 - The update process starts in 2022
- The City Council passed, and SDOT implemented, the Complete Streets ordinance in 2007. Seattle was one of the first cities in the country to mandate this on all capital projects at SDOT, meaning that in the design process, we look at all opportunities to make investments that accommodate multiple users.
- To implement Complete Streets, a multi-disciplinary staff team completes an assessment of existing conditions and considers improvement opportunities for all travel modes
 - If staff team does not agree on the recommendations are elevated to Division Directors on the Complete Streets Steering Committee
- Desired outcomes from the Modal Integration Policy Framework
 - Policy direction that can be applied in complete streets process to determine how to best accommodate travel modes when the street is not wide enough for all to safely operate
 - Optimize public right-of-way allocation by balancing competing interests

- o Formalize a consistent and transparent approach for interpreting our plans and policies
 - o Identify opportunities for future policy and plan development
- The team met with Policy and Operations Advisory Group which included members of all modal boards
- What we heard
 - o Pedestrian safety and access is critical
 - o Climate change and equity need to be prioritized when considering ROW allocation
 - o Other priorities (see slides)
- Policy statements include:
 - o In urban villages and centers, we prioritize pedestrians
 - o In manufacturing and industrial centers, we prioritize goods movement
 - o Between urban villages and centers, we prioritize transit
 - o Citywide, at critical connections, we prioritize the bicycle network
 - o In these situations, we are only talking about scenarios where there is competing interest for allocating space in the right-of-way and we have to choose modes based on limited space
 - o We learned that it is easiest to move bike lanes around compared to other modes except when dealing with bridges and steep slopes
- Next steps for the policy framework
 - o Prepare additional policy guidance for deployment of transit lanes and freight lanes
 - o Create additional project development tools
 - Modal plan constraints map
 - Info to support community conversations
 - Guidance to make curb space/flex zone changes
 - Critical Bicycle Connections map
 - o Integrate our modal plans into a citywide transportation plan
 - Identify a People Streets and Public Spaces network to prioritize the creation, improvement, management of public spaces in the ROW
 - o Advance equitable investment in public spaces and qualitative sidewalk improvements
 - We want to be intentional about our public space investments in areas that do not have walkable and enjoyable streetscapes
 - o Allow development of funding mechanisms
 - o Legitimize and fund community place priorities through city processes
 - o Support economic development, mobility, and communities
 - o We want to be intentional about our public space investments in areas that do not have walkable and enjoyable streetscapes
- Future citywide transportation plan
 - o Engage in community conversations around mobility and public space needs
 - o Operationalize our values and achieve department commitments on transportation, equity, safety, and climate action
 - o Leverage Comprehensive Plan update process starting next year

- o Prepare for future transportation funding package

Public Comment

- DC Morrison: I am wondering how the public can be involved in advocating for how public money can be spent for transportation issues.
 - o Jonathan: We'll have a broad engagement strategy and there will be opportunities for people to get involved in 2022 and 2023

Meeting adjourned at 8:06pm.