



Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

March 11, 2020

*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

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To: Councilmember Alex Pedersen, SDOT Director Sam Zimbabwe
cc: Summer Jawson - SDOT

Re: Thomas Street Redefined

At our February 12th meeting, the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) learned about the “Thomas Street Redefined” project, which would rebuild Thomas Street in the South Lake Union from 5th Ave to Dexter. The proposed design for the corridor features a wide 36-foot space on the north side of the street to accommodate a 6-foot sidewalk, a 12-foot multimodal lane for people walking, rolling, and biking, and a total of 18 feet for landscaping and street furniture. On the other side of an 18-foot two-way travel lane, the south side of the street has an 8-foot sidewalk buffered from the street by 4 feet of landscaping. The design also includes a diverter at 7th Ave and a protected intersection at Dexter to prevent drivers from using Thomas as a through street, and a large, car-free plaza in the right-of-way just east of the the 5th Ave entrance to Seattle Center.

The design for the corridor has been evolving since 2013, when it began as a concept plan for a “green street” intended to give priority to pedestrians and open space over other transportation uses. The 2018 “Streets Illustrated” plan updated this design to include protection for bike lanes in the corridor, while attendees at a 2019 design charette emphasized the importance of a bold, all ages and abilities design that prioritized the needs and comfort of people walking, rolling, biking, and getting to transit.

Much like the rest of the South Lake Union neighborhood, Thomas Street is undergoing a significant amount of development. Along with planned changes at the city-owned Seattle City Light Broad Street substation, this creates an opportunity to implement the proposed design while the street is already being rebuilt.

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*

We also heard public comments from several attendees in support of the design, representing 29 different groups, community organizations, and businesses in the area.

SPAB supports the proposed changes for Thomas Street as well. We enjoy seeing the emphasis given to making the street comfortable for pedestrians, with wide spaces for walking and rolling and limited space for cars (while still maintaining access for deliveries and drop-offs). The plaza at 5th Avenue is a great way to connect the corridor to Seattle Center and the planned skate park in the former Broad Street right-of-way. We hope to see investments like this made in the rest of the corridor from Elliot to Eastlake, as well as in other, historically disadvantaged parts of the city where safety and accessibility remain pressing issues.

Sincerely,

David Seater

Chair, on behalf of the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board