



## Meeting Information

**Date:** 09/17/2018 (Meeting 004, 3rd Quarter 2018)

**Time:** 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Location:** Seattle Municipal Tower, Rooms 4050/4060 (40<sup>th</sup> Floor)

**Facilitators:** SDOT ADA Program

## General: Committee Intent

The intent of the Pedestrian Access Advisory Committee (PAAC) meetings is to discuss potential accessibility issues or concerns within the Seattle public right-of-way for those living with disabilities. Finding solutions leading to better pedestrian access and prioritization for improvements is an important goal of the Committee. SDOT will strive to prioritize improvements based on Committee recommendations.

## Meeting Minutes

- I. Welcome and Introduction (10:00-10:10 am)
- II. SDOT APS Update (10:10-10:20 am)
  - *Thanks to discussions at the previous PAAC meeting, the SDOT ADA Program is moving forward with APS installations in priority areas. There are currently approximately 45 or 50 intersections that have requested for APS upgrades. APS upgrades include tactile and audible information to make crosswalks more accessible for some users.*
  - *In addition to discussions held at the last PAAC meeting, committee attendees were asked to provide their highest priorities for APS upgrades via email. As a result, the SDOT ADA Program has a list of the top ten locations that will be upgraded in the next 2 years. In addition to these specified upgrades, other SDOT Capital Projects will also be upgrading traffic signals to include APS as a part of these larger scopes of work. The ADA Program upgrades are specifically selected from requests that are provided by the public.*
  - *In 2019, APS priorities include: 2<sup>nd</sup> and Jackson, 4<sup>th</sup> and Jackson, Jackson and Maynard, NE 130<sup>th</sup> St and Lake City Way, and 145<sup>th</sup> and Lake City Way. It was noted that 145<sup>th</sup> and Lake City Way was expedited by SDOT and has been installed. This location had been on the request list for several years.*
  - *Question (unnamed): Are there curb ramps throughout the intersection at each of the locations requested?*
  - *Response (M. Shaw): Signalized intersections are typically located along busy arterials or other high ped and traffic volume areas. Most of these intersections should currently have curb ramps throughout.*
  - *Question (unnamed): Can you describe what is involved in an APS intersection (upgrade)?*

- *Response (M. Shaw): An Accessible Pedestrian Signal provides important information to pedestrians with low or no vision and can be particularly helpful for Deaf-Blind pedestrians. An APS signal has audible information, including a locator tone to help locate the push button and a message that indicates when the “walk” sign is on. There is also a raised, tactile arrow that points in the direction of the intended crossing. The button vibrates when the “walk” sign is on (referred to as a vibrotactile feature). It was noted that SDOT strives to locate push buttons in consistent and predictable locations, but that it is not always possible due to existing conditions or infrastructure in place at the corner.*
- *The APS priorities for 2020 include: Montlake Blvd NE and NE Pacific, Madison Ave and Summit St, Roosevelt Way NE and NE 65<sup>th</sup>, Broadway and Pike, and Broadway and Pine.*
- *The SDOT ADA Program aims to upgrade 5 to 10 intersections per year.*
- *Comment (D. Miller): The Montlake and Pacific location is located next to the new UW light rail station, and the intersection to the north would also need to be accessorized with APS because the northbound buses on Montlake stop there.*
- *Response (M. Shaw): If we are at the location installing APS, it may be possible to add the second intersection to help complete upgrades and to improve the accessible network in the area.*
- *Comment (S. Haber): To follow up on the University Station APS upgrades, King County Metro has been doing many presentations on the east side because there may be many buses transferring at Montlake. They have indicated that they are looking to make significant improvements in the area. I hope you are also connecting with King County Metro as they may have funding available to carry out these improvements more quickly.*
- *Response (M. Shaw): SDOT will discuss next week at a collaborative meeting between SDOT, King County Metro, and Sound Transit.*

III. The Taskar Center for Accessible Technology Presentation (Anat Caspi): Improving Pedestrian Access (10:20-10:50 am)

- *Anat Caspi, Director of the Taskar Center for Accessibility Technology at the University of Washington, presented on technology deployments and translation of research to help benefit populations living with disabilities, particularly individuals with mobility and speech impairments.*
- *Access Map is an ongoing project that began in 2015 to assist with transportation solutions for different Seattle/regional problems. The Access Map tool was developed to help identify accessible routes, accessible parking information, and street slopes to better plan access to the environment.*
- *Some of the initial actions of the Access Map project included data gathering of existing curb ramp information and an identification of construction sites that may impact access.*
- *The Access Map tool is working to plan routes for people with varying abilities; the level of data currently available may make routing possibilities for the tool difficult.*
- *The Open Sidewalks project was created to create a data standard so that cities can collect information that is relative to routing programs. While there is ample information*

- available for roadways and car navigation, there is still little information available for pedestrian routes.*
- *Anat demonstrated the Access Map on the screen. Sidewalks are identified on the map with colors that represent different sidewalk conditions identified in the legend. Colors may change due to user preferences or abilities (e.g. steepness of sidewalk slope).*
  - *Question (unnamed): Will fully blind people be able to access this information?*
  - *Response (A. Caspi): The project is working to include information that is voiceover readable, including pop ups that contain information about sidewalks, streets, etc.*
  - *Question (unnamed): Is this address-based? If I put in a particular address or location, will it go to that area?*
  - *Response (A. Caspi): There is a geolocator that allows you to type in the address where you can begin your route. You can also select a location by clicking on the map.*
  - *Question (unnamed): Does this only include information about (sidewalk) slopes, or is there any information about the quality of the surface?*
  - *Response (A. Caspi): Attempts have been made to incorporate data from SDOT's sidewalk assessment. It was found that there were inconsistencies in the dataset that was sampled.*
  - *Comment (Scott Bass): When there is construction or rain and the sidewalk falls out, it can be dangerous with sink holes and other sidewalk issues.*
  - *More work is needed to improve the data. With help from people on the ground, we can collect input from people to incorporate information and improve the sidewalk data. This can enhance our ability to navigate in the environment.*
  - *Question (unnamed): Is there additional information on whether a crosswalk is marked or if there is a traffic light or other pedestrian safety features?*
  - *Response (A. Caspi): Currently, the crossing information available is relative to curb ramps and whether a crosswalk is marked.*
  - *Question (Steve Lewis): Is there information critical to navigation that indicates not only the steepness of the slope, but also the direction of the slope?*
  - *Response (A. Caspi): Access Map has incorporated arrows to indicate the direction of the slope, yes.*
  - *Comment (Holly Delcambre): It would be good to have information on the direction of the curb ramps; some ramps don't go directly into the crosswalk, but are off to the side, which is a major concern to people who are blind.*
  - *Response (A. Caspi): The information is not currently available from the opendata.gov website.*
  - *Also available is data on access downtown Seattle, more specifically access to indoor public elevators. When planning a route, you can choose your route preferences or tolerances (e.g. route slope limits). Along the route planned, a user may want to access an indoor environment; an example was shown selecting an indoor route for elevator access. The tool provides information on the available hours of the indoor environment that is open to the public.*
  - *Comment (unnamed): It was suggested that information be provided on the location of tactile crosswalk signals. The location of these very important to Deaf-Blind and others, and should be incorporated into the map.*

- *Response (A. Caspi): Access Map is working to incorporate APS information on their map.*
- *Anat recommended that all participants review the e-mail sent to the Committee to sign up for the study; hardcopy papers were also provided for those interested in participating.*
- *Comment (D. Miller): Would like to second the request for the APS data. Some of the intersections in the City are aren't fully equipped with APS. It would be good to know which legs of the intersection have APS.*
- *Question (unnamed): Are there students that are braille users involved on the project?*
- *Response (A. Caspi): The project does have students that use braille involved but would welcome more. The project has been working on making the information cards voiceover accessible.*
- *M. Shaw noted that the City of Seattle also has an Accessible Route Planner, which is similar to the Access Map tool. The City is working to include good information, including current information on the location of accessible pedestrian signals and designated disabled parking spaces to help people plan their routes. The City has data on accessible pedestrian signals but is working to improve it; there is mixed in the dataset information on older APS devices (i.e. "cuckoo and chirp" style) that may not be as useful for route planning as this technology is no longer the standard used. Additionally, moving forward, the City has in place a policy that requires APS upgrades to include all legs of the intersection; for this reason there should not be a concern of new upgrades including improvements only at certain legs of an intersection.*

IV. **Seattle Public Utilities (Hans VanDusen): Waste Receptacles on Sidewalks (10:50-11:20 am)**

- *Hans VanDusen, from Seattle Public Utilities, came to talk about waste receptacles on the sidewalks.*
- *In the future, there may be an opportunity to include information on accessible route planner tools on when waste receptacles are typically left on the sidewalk, potentially blocking access, for pick-up.*
- *Hans manages the waste pick-up contracts for Seattle Public Utilities. Hans will help drive the initial conversation on waste receptacles that block access on the sidewalks; we can follow up with others as need be.*
- *People are asked to place their waste containers in a planting strip, if available, or on the driveway within three feet of the curb; in the absence of a planting strip, people are asked to locate the bins within three feet of the curb.*
- *The Seattle Municipal Code allows for a "reasonable time" for removal after waste has been collected.*
- *The Director's Rule, which is an administrative rule to clarify city law or city code, allows for a 24-hour rule for waste collection service; for example, people may put their waste receptacles out 24 hours prior to collection and pick them up 24 hours after.*
- *In the contract, companies agree to pick up everything within the planting strip or driveway within eight feet of the curb (which is a larger area than the specified 3-foot requirement that people are asked to leave their waste receptacles). Companies are asked to leave the waste receptacles in a neat and orderly location.*
- *Hans is happy to reach out to the field staff to gather additional information on waste pick-up and waste container storage on the sidewalk.*

- *SPU follows up on complaints when individuals leave their waste receptacles out longer than the maximum allowable 24-hour window. Many of these complaints/requests are required to be taken on a case-by-case basis to come up with an adequate solution.*
- *Comment (Scott Bass): There are blockages that happen on the sidewalk, including the carts that can be there for a long period of time. They can impact our travel, but can affect other people (children playing, people walking their dogs, etc.). It is a big issue.*
- *Question (unnamed): What do you do about contractors that leave the containers out that block access? Is there an ability to policy them?*
- *Response (H. VanDusen): Service contractors are expected to leave the waste receptacles in a neat and orderly manner where they were found. If necessary, due to complaints, SPU can monitor a contractor and work with them to make sure that the waste receptacles are placed correctly.*
- *Question (unnamed): Is there data on special construction-related pickup? Would you be willing to put a camera on your vehicles so that we can assess the situation on the ground on a regular basis?*
- *Answer (H. VanDusen): We may be able to run a query to see when someone is on construction notice (e.g. house or condo demolition/construction); that could be a significant amount of time with potential impacts. The contractor would be required to obtain a Street Use permit to put a large container on the street for demolition, so we should be able to obtain that permit information.*
- *Comment (D. Miller): Some of the new developments, for example some seen in Columbia City, do not have planting strips where waste receptacles can be placed. It appears that there is no consideration of assigning specific locations for waste pickup so that containers don't conflict with pedestrian access. Similar to the bike share issues, perhaps the waste receptacles could be placed in the street so that sidewalk access is not an issue. If parking could be limited on certain days, perhaps this would allow us to put waste containers in the street.*
- *Response (H. VanDusen): Large multifamily or commercial buildings are required to have on-site space for waste receptacles. Buildings built before this requirement went into effect in 1994 may not have space on-site for waste receptacle storage and pickup. SPU encourages groupings of townhouse units of six or more to have centralized waste collection. It isn't a requirement to have this consolidated service, but it is encouraged and it can help minimize impact to sidewalk access.*
- *There may be pedestrian and vehicle access concerns if we propose moving the waste receptacles to the street. The DOT would likely be in favor of vehicle and pedestrian safety and access that may not favor placing the receptacles in the street.*
- *Comment (Richard Baron): Sidewalks can be blocked between 60% to 100% by solid waste containers. This is not a simple problem that happens infrequently.*
- *Comment (Sandra): In a location near the Department of Services for the Blind, there is an area where trash cans are placed in a narrow sidewalk area where there are overgrown hedges. It makes access through this area difficult. What is the course of action for placement of those (trash cans)?*

- *Response (H. VanDusen): These are taken case-by-case. SPU would need to partner with SDOT to come up with a solution; sometimes the receptacles may need to be located out of the way on the private side of the property line.*
- *Question (unnamed): How does SPU count the number of containers blocking 10% to 100% of the sidewalk?*
- *Response (H. VanDusen): Additional monitoring is likely needed, beyond what is currently available. The town home developments have been creating more of a concern over the last decade.*

V. City of Seattle Sidewalk Condition Assessment: Video Demonstrations of Improvements (11:20-11:50 am)

- *M. Shaw spoke about the 2017 Sidewalk Condition Assessment and some of the improvements that have been made. Videos were shared with the Committee, courtesy of Harold Wirch, of before and after conditions. The videos were taken from a camera mounted at the front of a wheeled walker. The videos were taken in the Northgate area.*
- *SDOT has been working around the City performing sidewalk make-safe repairs, largely needed due to tree root growth and movement that creates uplifts and level changes along Seattle sidewalks.*
- *A bevel treatment of a sidewalk is where a sidewalk that has been uplifted by tree roots or other causes, is ground down to make the transition between sidewalk segments as smooth as possible.*
- *A sidewalk shim is where asphalt is placed between or over sidewalk segments to help smooth out uplifts, cracking, or other sidewalk conditions.*
- *The first video shows the walker rolling over sidewalks with significant uplifts, cracks, debris, and utility access covers.*
- *The second video showed the walker rolling over the same areas of sidewalk after make-safe repairs (beveling and shimming) had occurred. While the results of the improvements are not perfect and not intended to be a permanent solution, the improvements made the sidewalk much easier to use and for the walker to roll over.*
- *Question/Comment (Richard Baron): It is understood that property owners are responsible for making repairs to sidewalks and that they are accountable. Is there any information available on enforcement in terms of holding property owners accountable? Are they fined if the sidewalk is not repaired?*
- *Response (M. Shaw): Private property owners are responsible for sidewalk repairs when private infrastructure or trees cause damage to the sidewalk.*
- *Response (L. Lewis Phillips, CAO): Under the SMC (15.72), if the property owner chooses not to make the repairs to the sidewalk, the issue is brought to City Council and the homeowner may be found to be in violation and a lien can be placed on the property. Current attempts to bring similar these violations to City Council have not been successful.*
- *It can be difficult to determine by looking at a sidewalk, if it is a city-owned tree or a privately-owned tree that causes sidewalk damage. City crews may have to be dispatched to make safety repairs to sidewalks when property owners opt not to make the necessary fixes.*

VI. Next Steps and Priority Topics (11:50-12:00 pm)

- *Proposed for the next PAAC meeting are the following topics: Beacon Hill access/mobility study currently ongoing (by SDOT); tactile delineations (pilot program) and tactile crosswalk features (pilot at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Rainier); discussion on pedestrian “mixing zones” and some of the access concerns; vertical access downtown Seattle; updates on the Bike Share Program.*
- *Comment (P. Chapman): Patricia is on the Seattle Ped Advisory Board; she noted that the Bike Share Program is moving forward with bike vendor permit applications that will result in 20,000 bikes in Seattle (up from 10,000 now). There have been conversations regarding concerns of bicycles riding on the sidewalks and impacts on people with disabilities, the elderly, and others.*
- *SDOT has performed outreach on the Bike Share Program to collect information on concerns of people living with disabilities and implications of bike share parking on the sidewalks.*
- *Comment (A. Caspi): The Committee should consider discussing construction permitting and acquisition of public data regarding sidewalk impacts and closures.*
- *Comment (unnamed): In light of the recent pedestrian collisions at Rainier and Henderson, the Committee should consider discussing pedestrian safety improvements (Vision Zero).*

VII. Adjourn (12:00 pm)

Action Items:

- *SDOT to add the intersection north of Montlake and Pacific to the APS request list; hopefully, this location can be upgraded at the same time as prioritized in 2019/2020.*
- *SDOT to coordinate improvements around the University Station with King County Metro and/or Sound Transit.*
- *M. Shaw to add “mixing zones” discussion to the next meeting agenda.*
- *M. Shaw to add construction permitting to future meeting agenda with a discussion facilitated by Heather Marx or the Project Coordination group. Street Use inspectors could also be invited to discuss sidewalk closures, impacts, and enforcement when access is blocked or limited by construction activities.*
- *M. Shaw to add Vision Zero and pedestrian safety and access to future meeting agenda.*