Notes

- Introduction by Tracy Krawczyk, Christina VanValkenburgh and Aditi Kambuj
- SDOT project funding supported by One Center City which includes the agency partners
When was the last time you got lost?

Notes
- Ice breaker question
The project is to prepare a wayfinding system strategy, design standards and pilot projects in two areas.

Consultant team consists of three companies:
- Applied Wayfinding - prime and designer of Legible London (a reference project for Seattle)
- Alta Planning + Design - local well-known planning consultant
- 3 Square Blocks - experienced local engagement practice
**Agency stakeholders**
Transportation authorities

**SDOT Contract**

**Community interests**
Businesses, Residents, etc.

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**Applied Wayfinding**
Prime Consultant
Research, Strategy, Accessibility, Graphic design, Standards development

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**Alta Planning + Design**
Subconsultant
Research, Local analysis, Product design, Pilot planning

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**3 Square Blocks**
Subconsultant
Engagement & communications

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**Chudgar Engineering Co.**
Subconsultant
Engineering drawings

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**Notes**
- Team arrangement focuses on expertise in wayfinding project systems with local support on design and consultation
I am provided with the information I need, when I need it, to inspire me to explore Seattle and to help me choose the best way to travel in the city.

Scoping study

Notes
- The funded project was informed by a scoping study undertaken a year ago
- The scoping study exercise helped identify a vision and principles, as well as some of the main opportunities
Scoping

Notes
- The consultant team has been in the city for a week at the start of their research phase
- The week provided an opportunity to undertake discussions with SDOT staff and key contacts to define the parameters for the project, as well as fieldwork to observe and understand the legibility and navigational challenges in the city
Opportunity and challenges
What could a wayfinding system for Seattle achieve?

**Systems**
- Digital as a supporting tool
- Avoid costly, on-street digital kiosks
- Build on the Open Portal

**Operations**
- Think about cost & ability to maintain
- Respond to strong local identities
- Allow some fun

**Policy**
- Walkability: 35% share by 2040
- Flexibility: growth and change
- Support other goals: e.g. social equity

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**Notes**
- The SDOT meetings have centred on three themes
  - **Systems** includes Smart City policies, digital and asset management systems
  - **Operations** includes sign shop capacity and the manager of the existing city (red) wayfinding kiosks and fingerposts
  - **Policy** included a wide range of planning interests from new mobility to community development
A seamless travel experience for all
Overarching goal of mixed mobility

Notes

● Overall the scoping study and discussions have so far supported the idea that the ideal customer experience under a future where mobility is more varied and less auto-dependent, requires a more seamless information environment.
● Digital and physical information (will) play different roles in this.
Wayfinding in the public realm
Encouraging walking and supporting discovery

Notes
- This diagram is from the early work considering the purpose and potential of Legible London
- The focus of the SDOT remit is information in the public realm - street signage, personal information
- The pilots will aim to increase walking and the confidence to explore on foot
Wayfinding to connect
Adding resiliency and increasing options

Notes
- The opportunity of the project is to build some connections between the public realm and other transportation services in the walking environment.
- These opportunities start to develop the idea of a seamless information system coordinating the separate interests of agencies with SDOT.
Observations
Local knowledge

- The consultant team is made up of both local residents and first-time visitors to Seattle.
- The team from Alta briefed the first-time visitors from Applied prior to them arriving to the city.
- Used district organization to recommend neighborhoods in each of these areas to visit.
- Seattle is a city of neighborhoods each with distinct characters and experiences.
First impressions

Seattle is walkable and well connected.

Notes
- The team from Applied Wayfinding, most of which had never visited Seattle before, spent a few days exploring the city
- Our first impression is that Seattle provides all the infrastructure needed to get around easily
- The pain points occur when there are gaps in the information that explains the infrastructure

Distance covered during first week of exploration

- Transit
- Walking
- Cycling
First time user perspective

“We can just cross this avenue to get to Lake Union.”

Notes

- There is sometimes a disconnect between the expectation of a place and the real environment.
- For example, heading out on a bike trip from downtown to Fremont, we were told that Highway 99 was a barrier that was difficult to cross.
- However, the fact that the Highway is also called Aurora Avenue in-situ confused us and meant we had to take our bikes down a pedestrian underpass to get to the bike trail on the other side.
First time user perspective

“The avenues run North–South and are numbered sequentially.”

Notes
- The street grid is helpful in structuring the city but cannot be relied on as it breaks in certain places. For example, 2nd Avenue splits into 2nd Avenue South and 2nd Avenue Extension South just south of Yesler Way.
Describe the real Seattle
Expectation vs Reality

“500 feet will take me 2 mins to walk.”

Notes
● The dramatic level differences in Seattle mean that measuring a distance on the map does not always give you a realistic expectation of the effort and time it will take you to walk it.
Objectives
What does a wayfinding system for Seattle need to do?

Name places consistently

Explain the system

Describe the real Seattle
Outcomes
What can a wayfinding system for Seattle achieve?

Name places consistently
- Helps people build mental maps
- Helps people communicate
- Provides a common language
- Supports and encourages placemaking

Explain the system
- Gives users confidence to make multi-modal journeys
- Supports interchanges and accessible routes
- Gives the user the right information at the right time

Describe the real Seattle
- Gives the user confidence to explore
- Limits unpleasant surprises
- Builds trust in the system
Outcomes
What can a wayfinding system for Seattle achieve?

Name places consistently
Helps people build mental maps
Helps people communicate
Provides a common language
Supports and encourages placemaking

Explain the system
Gives users confidence to make multi-modal journeys
Supports interchanges and accessible routes
Gives the user the right information at the right time

Describe the real Seattle
Gives the user confidence to explore
Limits unpleasant surprises
Builds trust in the system

Notes
● The following pages focus on observations relating to naming, and transit and infrastructure systems.
The Westlake transit interchange is an important transit node in Downtown that visitors may want to locate. When ‘Westlake’ is searched in a search engine several destinations appear, spread across a wide area of the city. None of these are inaccurate as they are located on Westlake Ave., although for a visitor trying to locate the station it could be confusing to know which ‘Westlake’ is the one they need. Additionally, Westlake station as this is not one of the listed destinations.
Name places consistently

Notes

- A review of online, on-street and print material highlighted the wide variety of names used on maps and signage. Some names are historic, others are new and yet to be widely used.
- Through consultation, a naming hierarchy will be established as part of the wayfinding strategy, this will allow names to be used consistently across platforms to provide a seamless experience for users.
The objective of the strategy is not to define hard boundaries to these neighborhoods but to define an approximate area, with less variability than shown here, to allow neighborhoods to be signed to and consistently named.
Name places consistently

Neighborhood boundaries

Denny Triangle

Notes
- The neighborhood of Denny Triangle is well defined at some edges and less so at others.
- The area of this neighborhood will likely vary for different people, some may even consider that Denny Triangle is not a distinct neighborhood but part of Belltown.
- The wayfinding strategy will identify character areas of the city and neighborhoods that may be beneficial to name to improve legibility and people’s understanding of the city.
Explain the system
Transit connections

Streetcar
Amtrak
Sounder
Link Light Rail
Frequent Bus
ST Express Bus
RapidRide

Notes
- The connection between transit modes is often considered a pain point in users’ journeys.
- The Jackson/4th intersection is well served by transit modes and is a good example of the complexity that users face when changing modes. There are multiple modes, run by different operators with different stop names and names that can be confusing. E.g. ‘Union Station’ is not on ‘Union Station Square’ and is no longer an operational station.
Explain the system

Hidden accessible transit entrances

Notes
- Hidden entrances to transit stations make station entrances difficult to find and can add stress to a users' journey.
Explain the system

Hidden accessible routes

- Accessible routes through buildings allow visitors to avoid steep hills in Downtown.
- These routes are often hidden and even locals seem to struggle to identify these routes.
Opportunity: building seamlessness
Metro Vancouver, BC

Notes
- Vancouver's wayfinding system seamlessly links transit modes, on-street maps and the UBC campus, using a consistent graphic language and names.
- This provides a consistent, predictable experience for visitors and is an example of what could be achieved in Seattle.
Workplan

Stage 1
Engagement

Public engagement

Stakeholder engagement

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Pilot site working group 1
Focus groups 1-3
Reference panel 1
Reference panel 2
Reference panel 3

Pilot site working group 2

Stakeholder working group 1
Steering committee 1

Stakeholder working group 2
Steering committee 2

Stakeholder working group 3
Steering committee 3
Thank you