

Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: Wednesday, November 5, 2014/ 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Chair: Kristi Rennebohm Franz
Co-chair: Jeff Aken
Recorder: Merlin Rainwater
Location: Seattle City Hall, Room L2

Minutes Distribution List:

See Attachment A

Members Present:

Merlin Rainwater, Don Brubeck, Leah Curtiss, Lara Normand, secretary, Jeff Aken, Kristi Rennebohm-Franz; Steven Kennedy, Clint Loper, Riley Kimball, W. Michael Wong

Members Absent:

Ester Sandoval, Adam Bartz

Guests:

Joel Preswell; Cathy Tuttle; Josh Cohen, Crosscut; Lionel Job, Montlake Neighborhood; Sean Cryan, Ballard Connects; Jean White

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Kristi Rennebohm Franz called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Kristi read the preamble to the City Council Resolution establishing the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board, stating that the role of the board includes: advising City Council, Mayor and all city departments and offices on matters of bicycling and actions by the city that have impact on bicycling; and giving the board opportunity to contribute to all aspects of the city planning process.

INTRODUCTIONS

Kristi asked SBAB members to share their expertise related to bicycling that they bring to the board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lionel Job: Two things in Montlake: tomorrow the neighborhood group will go to City Hall to request funding for protected crossing at 24th and Interlaken. His group has been involved in giving input to Lyle Bicknell on 520 crossing, but is not satisfied with the continuation of the Central Greenway across the Montlake Cut. Provisions planned for north-south connections are fine for commuters but not for all ages and abilities.

Sean Cryan: Ballard lacks a reasonable bicycle connection to downtown. Adding bike lanes to the Ballard Bridge would provide more commute choices and help alleviate commuting back-ups on the bridge. While the phase two seismic retrofit study of the

Ballard Bridge does provide traffic and structural engineering analysis, it does not provide defensible cost analysis, or provide a level of design that adequately informs or facilitates the decision-making process. He requests that SBAB: 1) Prioritize Ballard Bridge as part of BMP implementation; 2) ask SDOT to provide clarification/further development of cost information as part of the Ballard Bridge study; and 3) Include Ballard Bridge design and funding as a priority in discussions with Mayor and Council on budgetary allocation.

Joel Creswell submitted written comments encouraging SBAB to work toward a solution for the Ballard Bridge that would make it safe, easy and enjoyable for bicycles to cross. This would include a bikeway wide enough for bikes to pass one another, separation from pedestrians crossing, and safe approaches to the bridge from either side.

Cathy Tuttle provided a Seattle Neighborhood Greenways statement on needed improvements for the SR520/Montlake project.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kristi reported that scheduling in-person conversations with Council Members are continuing regarding the budget and BMP implementation plan; we may not be able to meet with all councilmembers individually and may need to continue by email and letters from SBAB.

Steve attended an urban rail conference in Portland.

Phyllis Porter shared comments from the family of Zeytuna Edo who remains in the hospital with serious injuries sustained when a hit-and-run driver hit her. The family appreciates community members who came to the vigil walk on 11/1/14, and wants to build a continuing partnership with SBAB and Rainier Valley Greenways.

PRESENTATIONS

SR 520 Project Design

Time: 6:24 pm

Topic: Non-motorized connections network for 520

Presenters: Candida Lorenzana and Michelle Marx, SDOT and Lyle Bicknell, DPD

Purpose: Present Improved plans developed since 2012 to address severe lack of pedestrian and bike connections in original plan.

Community activists demanded the city engage with WSDOT. SDOT and WSDOT brought in consultants with goal to reconnect communities split by 520. Highlights include:

1. Continue bike/ped facility on Portage Bay Bridge
2. Connections at either end of Portage Bay Bridge to bike/ped network
3. Connect base of bridge to Bill Dawson Trail; create a new connection under Montlake Blvd to bike/ped bridge path

4. Land bridge across 520 from Shelby-Hamlin couplet and Montlake Cut to new Arboretum path less at than 5% grade and without interaction with traffic
5. Connection on Roanoke, improved connection at 24th
6. Connect with proposed greenway on 22nd and existing greenway (Lake Washington Loop signed route) on 26th.

Design is still not perfect but much improved. Crossing of Montlake cut on the Montlake Bridge is clearly suboptimal, improvements will be even more important with opening of Link Light Rail. Considerations include a bike/ped only drawbridge crossing adjacent to Bridge or another option east of the Bridge. Facility is high cost and complex, under study now.

Candida and Michelle: Emphasized work of Non-motorized subgroup to figure out how to connect to existing network; some areas need further study. Lyle notes this project is entirely unfunded, but planning and cost estimates will help policy makers with funding advocacy.

Lyle presented a model of project to the board.

Questions, Answers and Comments:

Board Member: where's 24th southbound? Asked about a 4-way stop at Lake Washington Blvd.

Board Member: what's the expectation for funding? Response: comes from state funds, as it's a state project. City and State working together to develop consensus to be able to advocate with the State legislature. WSDOT is responsible for elements related to project itself.

Board Member: Is there any legal obligation through Environmental Impact Statement or, Complete Streets Ordinance?

Response: Lid and multi-use paths are included in EIS. Lyle notes this route is an old Olmstedian path.

Board Member: Requested that a lot of emphasis be placed on new bike/ped bridge for all ages and abilities with seamless connection to light rail.

Response: Difficult conversation how to fund this; WSDOT responsible for highways.

Board Member: If there were a new bike/ped bridge, would there still be improvements on Montlake Blvd?

Response: There would be some improvements.

Board Member: Is there a 520 entrance from Montlake for cars?

Audience comment: There will be more cars on Montlake due to elimination of onramps in Arboretum.

Response: Priority is to make ramp crossings as short and safe as possible for pedestrians.

Board Member: Will there be more congestion?

Response: SDOT notes that traffic volumes have decreased with tolling.

Lyle: width of corridor is really just to store cars. Candida: SDOT planning Montlake ITS (Intelligent Transportation System) program, giving better info for people traveling through the Montlake Corridor. Also, 23rd Ave. project will make improvements; however, Phase 3 of the project, which includes this portion of the corridor is currently unfunded.

Board Member: Are there plans to avoid bike congestion when 25% bike mode share is reached?

Response: That's a priority for SDOT; lots happening in Montlake triangle. Goal is to eliminate intersections as much as possible since that is where congestion occurs.

Board Member: Would be very pleased to see a second, dedicated bascule bridge that completely separates bikes and peds from busy Montlake.

Audience Comment: Neighbors are not satisfied, no west side AAA (All Ages and Abilities) crossings; this improves commuter/recreation but not neighborhood AAA. Keep up good work; provide an equally good design on west side of Montlake

Response: Intent is to maintain high quality design over quantity of facilities, and to provide good way finding

SBAB Updates and Next Steps

SDOT presenters announced that City Council Transportation Committee meets January 13; this is an opportunity for public comment on this updated plan. The full Council will consider in another couple weeks if the Transportation Committee passes it.

SBAB: appreciates improved design and engagement with community. SBAB's priority is for second bascule bridge for bike/peds. SBAB also supports Montlake concerns for AAA route on the west side of Montlake Blvd.

Rainier Valley Greenways

Time: 6:57 pm

Topic: Overview of Rainier Valley Greenways work over last year and a half

Presenters: Deb Salls and Phyllis Porter, Rainier Valley Greenways, and Emily Ehlers, SDOT

Purpose: Introduce Rainier Valley Greenways to SBAB

Rainier Valley Greenways started Labor Day 2012; BikeWorks hosts Rainier Valley Greenways meetings.

See handout on Rainier Valley greenways community Action Plan, which includes Actions for 2014-2015, Street Improvements Agenda, and Outreach Addendum.

Vision/Goals: To get a dialog going and engage the community by:

- Gathering evidence and advocating persuasively
- Seeking victories both large and small

The group increases public awareness of greenways and protected bike lanes, by advocating persuasively and by building demonstration pop-up greenways and protected bike lanes (in Heritage parade on Rainier Ave)

Other activities:

- Signal timing study: UW students compared Rainier Beach, Columbia City, Ballard; found timing not up to code; retiming not completed yet
- Vigil walks: Trayvon and Zeytuna, raise awareness bring families/community/city leaders together
- Engaging our community: over 40 organizations contacted last year; multi-language communication with community; mapping exercise; bike/walk map; collaboration with Feet First;
- SE Transportation study 2008

List of 2014-2015 priority projects include: East-West and North-South Greenway advocacy and planning, Rainier Ave Safety program, Biking/Walking Map of Rainier Valley, Protected Bike Lanes on Rainier or MLK.

The Rainier Corridor Safety Project is on SBAB's agenda next month; a couple meetings in the next couple weeks.

Questions, Answers and Comments:

Board Member: How can SBAB support? Send letter to SDOT?

Response: Yes, and participate in Rainier Ave Safety meetings

Board Member: one thing mentioned at Solutions Meeting: signal changes on Rainier; any plan for follow-up study to Signal Timing Study on MLK?

Response: Yes, and an SBAB letter to city regarding prioritizing safety improvements on Rainier would help.

Board Member: Have heard there is a city policy regarding no improvements until there are a certain number of crashes.

Board Member: Have experienced that when asking for a traffic circle – many accidents go unreported.

SBAB Updates and Next Steps

SBAB will send a letter supporting safety improvements in Rainier Valley and along MLK. (Note: See SBAB website for posted board correspondence)

North-South Greenway Design

Time: 7:20 pm
Topic: North-South Greenway Planning
Presenters: Emily Ehlers, SDOT
Purpose: Current status Greenway planning in SE Seattle

Emily Ehlers gave a brief presentation about Neighborhood Greenways (see link to PowerPoint presentation). She announced an open house tomorrow, November 6th, at 6:00 pm for the North-South Greenway. A second meeting will occur sometime in spring 2015.

Community input: learned while designing East-West Greenway that there is a great demand for the north-south Greenway paralleling Rainier Ave.

SDOT requests input on barriers to walking and biking and preferred routes

Samples of public input to be collected include: popular destinations, current routes, and barriers to getting places.

Timeline presented: Design in late 2014 early 2015, implementation in 2016

Board Member: can we do a ride?

Response: Yes, that's very helpful. There's no rush, beginning of the year would be a good time to do a ride.

SDOT can use volunteers to help input data from the Rainier Valley Greenways audit; Board Member Riley Kimball will work on this with Deb Salls of Bikeworks.

SBAB Updates and Next Steps

Board Member Lara Normand agreed to organize a scouting ride in the Rainier Valley after the first of the year.

Riley Kimball will work with Deb Salls on creating a more analysis-friendly data form for the community's audits.

Ballard Bridge Study

Time: 7:27 pm

Topic: Ballard Bridge Sidewalk widening feasibility study

Presenters: Sandra (Sam) Woods, SDOT

Purpose: Evaluate feasibility of various alternatives to improve pedestrian and bicycle travel across the bridge

Challenges: development occurs right up to 60-foot right-of-way; bridge designated as a major truck street; nearly 100-yr old bascule bridge is designated as an historic structure

Portions of the bridge are classified as “Fracture critical,” and inspected frequently as Federally mandated.

Ballard Bridge has been identified as a priority for planning as early as 2007 – carries 55K vehicles per day.

Other challenges:

- Pinch points - sidewalk narrows to 3.5 feet on the bascule; can't be changed as it's part of mechanical infrastructure to raise the bridge
- Crossing at Emerson is challenging due to curb cut direction and required turning radii for trucks

Alternatives studied:

1. Widening sidewalks by modifying the existing railings and curbs gains 1-foot additional width will cost \$22 to \$35 million; largest costs are related to potential real property acquisition (adjacent marine operations)
2. Widening sidewalks to 6 or 10 feet by structurally widening the bridge will cost \$26 - \$48 million for both sides
3. New railing separating walkway from cars: extend railing \$3.2 million
4. Independent project for grade separating the crossing at Emerson – connects the Ship Canal Trail (\$18m)

Board Member: Seismic retrofit cost \$15.5 million per Bridging the Gap

Board Member: Need to look at short term solutions, including reverse lanes in peak periods. Railing along curb would increase safety tremendously.

Audience Comment: Not convinced this would be safe due to handlebars catching on railing.

Board Member: first phase of seismic retrofits ignored complete streets and ignored modes other than cars; Report is not good enough - references old BMP and AASHTO standards, doesn't mention NACTO standards; 2nd set of upgrades should allocate funding to bicycle and pedestrian upgrades.

Response: Major costs are due to potentially relocating business on the southwest corner of bridge, including an historically-important wooden boat repair company (property owned by Port of Seattle, leased by business).

Questions, Answers and Comments:

Board Member: We need to think beyond current 3% of the mode share, and be willing to re-allocate some of the travel lanes.

Response: Study assumed no impact on travel lanes – other than I-5 this is heaviest ship canal crossing.

Board Member: This process should be less compartmentalized and would like to see whole connectivity across the bridge and a phased approach to solutions. Realize that railing options aren't great, but better than nothing in short term. Where is evaluation that gets us some lower cost options? Assuming current traffic configuration is fixed is a fatal flaw. What about a reversible lane, similar to bridge in Vancouver BC?

Response: Speed limit has been reduced to 30 mph.

Board Member: Why is there no rule for walking bikes to dismount in interim, if it is so dangerous to pass?

Audience Comment: Glad study was done, would like to understand better what real estate costs are. Gap in pavement to get off bridge and onto Emerson is awful;

Response: briefed North Seattle Industrial association. Freight community wants underpass and upgrades for bikes.

SBAB Updates and Next Steps

Study of new ship canal bridge crossings (Michael James) - may want to present to SBAB

SBAB has not reached consensus on specific recommendations; discussion will be continued by email.

SBAB retreat will be scheduled; this will be a major topic of discussion.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at
8:01 pm

ATTACHMENT A

Meeting Minutes Distribution List:

Edward Murray, Mayor, City of Seattle
Andrew Glass-Hastings, Transportation Advisor, Office of the Mayor
City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, Transportation Committee Chair
Scott Kubly, Acting Director, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
Goran Sparrman, Deputy Director, SDOT
Dongho Chang, City Traffic Engineer, SDOT
Emily Ehlers, SBAB Liaison, SDOT
Kevin O'Neill, Planning and Urban Design Manager, SDOT
Sam Woods, Manager, Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs, SDOT
Sara Zora, Transportation Analyst, SDOT
Diane Sugimura, Director, Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
Bernie Agor Matsuno, Director, Department of Neighborhoods (DoN)
Allie Gerlach, SDOT Communications
Meeting Presenters
City of Seattle Council Transportation Committee Members
City of Seattle Neighborhood District Coordinators
SBAB Members
Individual Meeting Attendees