

# Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

**Date/Time:** June 11, 2014  
6:00pm-8:00pm

**Location:** City Hall, Boards and Commissions Room (L280)

**Members Present:** Lydia Heard, Dottie Faris, Devor Barton, Jacob Struikma, Jeffrey Linn, Lillian Berticevich, Joanne Donohue, Jennifer Oligero, Ninona Boujrada, David Goldberg, Lorena Kaplan

**Other Attendees:** Howard Wu, Dongho Chang, Jamerica Hayes, Tom Williams, Aubrey Weeks, Rob William, Matthew Amster-Burton, Kathy Tuttle

**MEETING CALL TO ORDER:** 6:04 pm

**MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:** May meeting minutes approved

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** none

## PRESENTATIONS

*Time:* 6:08pm

***Topic:*** *Pedestrian signals and signalized crossings*

***Presenters:*** Dongho Chang, SDOT

- Dongho spoke at an elementary school this past Monday about his job as a civil engineer.
- Roadways were built in the '60s and are now overdue for repair. He says we're deferring the inevitable by putting off basic maintenance, and we're using funding from a gas tax but we should think about how to use our existing resources in a sounder manner. Doing this work has to be about sound growth.
- We are doing the right things in Seattle—great projects during a time of unprecedented growth and no roadway expansion.
- Through the decades we've developed traffic controls to move vehicles, not people. Now, we're considering that measurements of success are focused on the wrong thing (i.e. vehicles). Now we need to figure out how to prioritize modes based on anticipated growth: first prioritize people, then transit, then cars.
- Jacob: why isn't funding set up for that priority?
  - Dongho: There is a top down approach: money flows from federal funds to state to county to municipalities; federal and state dollars dictate funding. This is a narrow funding structure, and it's very convoluted but organized. How do we change the dialogue? From the ground up, thinking locally and strategically. SDOT realized it has priorities set by 50 organizations grouped together, and this is a broken paradigm. Now, SDOT is saying we have to be context sensitive. There are ways you as a resident can have an impact, like now by being a Board member and giving advice. But, funding is still constrained by other things. Kathy's Greenways model is a powerful, unique model showing positive interactions.
- Auto travel has been declining while walking and biking is increasing. We are doing the

right things here in Seattle. Some of the things people are impatient about, SDOT is trying to address at a local level. These things are cutting edge.

- Attendee: Why are we putting poles 3 feet into the sidewalk, making it harder to walk?
  - Dongho: I asked the same thing. The public right of way represents a civil right. I am pushing back, saying we need to give engineering judgment. The federal govt. requires that we fulfill certain priorities.
  - We got sued because somebody opened their car door into a pole. But, we can put them in the sidewalk 18 inches from the curb.
  - Tom: This is not consistently done from corner to corner.
  - Devor: We feel like we're making our voices heard but nothing is being done.
- Matthew: I want to highlight a very specific issue: there are new poles sprouting up on 15<sup>th</sup> and John. Charity couldn't get past a pole because it was in the way of their wheelchair. Please don't put barriers in the way of pedestrianism. Go take that pole out.
  - Dongho: Let me bring the people actually designing those poles so you can understand the design constraints. For example, pushbuttons are required by legislation
    - Matthew: By what point to we change this.
  - Dongho: **FAA** is a federal arm of the government carrying out a Justice Dept. mandate.
    - Lydia: The mandate is not supposed to be prescriptive if you're able to show you can meet the mandate. Is there some way you could help with that?
    - Dongho: It's required to paint a crosswalk, and put in a curb ramp and pushbuttons. It's also required that you have to stop for pedestrians and crosswalks.
- Dongho: Since the '70s, **METCD** prioritized crosswalks. Then that prioritization was removed to help allow cars to take control. Now, SDOT says that it's safe for cars and want to change the priorities. We need to develop standards about how to make things better for pedestrians.
  - We have smartphones now, and the ability with Bluetooth to help lead people around streets and through crosswalks. But, we've been told we can't give this technology to the public because it's an equal access issue.
  - I'm working with a leadership team to come up with consistent policy. But, the only way they can change is to have citizens say or suggest to. We have one of the most progressive transportation policies in the nation; we can show them how we can do this.

*Time:* 6:53 pm

**Topic: ROWIM (Right of Way Improvement Manual)**

*Presenters:* Susan McLaughlin, SDOT

- This Manual could be much more useful. This update aims to make it more useful.

**RIGHT OF WAY IMPROVEMENT MANUAL: AUTHORITY**

- Adopted via director's rule. Not codified. Policies, procedures, and practices for how the City manages physical improvements.
- This is not about private development, which is dictated by land use code. We'd like ROWIM to have more authority and have more teeth.
- Who uses ROWIM: developers and property owners. Land use code tells them *what* to do, but not necessarily specifics. ROWIM interprets and adds more detail than land use code.
- Capital project teams reference this manual, too. State and federal sources have more

teeth, though. Currently, ROWIM is more like a guidance manual.

## BACKGROUND

- Developed in 2005. Best practice at the time. Web interface was really helpful.
- Few minor updates but hasn't been rehailed since 2005.

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Relationship to other plans and standards to consider while updating ROWIM: Seattle Municipal Code (answers *what* is required for private development while ROWIM addresses *how*), standard plans and specs (ROWIM can offer more specifications in this update), federal/state/regional regulatory requirements (while updating, how do they try to keep ROWIM consistent with all other requirements?), city wide plans- Comprehensive Plan, Bike/Transit/Modal Plans (they want to be consistent with city-wide plans in place. This timing offers a great opportunity to fit well under the Comprehensive Plan.

## KEY OUTCOMES

- Revise the manual's structure and organization so it's more explicit
- Create a multi-disciplinary and widely distributed user survey for subject matter experts in SDOT, SCL, SPU, the fire dept., development community, Boards, and Commissions. A consultant team has been hired to help with this.
- Produce an illustrative, interactive web-based manual with a modern, easy-to-navigate user interface. Graphics are very important for telling the stories text can't tell.
- This will be something to bring to meetings with developers.

## EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

- ROWIM can help address and enhance:
  - Illustrative street typologies
  - Development review process improvements (to ensure better outcomes- the updated ROWIM can help with early phase development in urban forestry and working with developers early. Currently, developers are able to get their Master Use Permits without even really looking at plans from SDOT through **SEQUA**. Qualitative aspects of their plans need to be reviewed and SDOT needs to be at the table earlier. SSOT wants to be involved at design review stages, pre-SIP.)
  - Interim design strategies (are picking up across the country)- act as a bridge
  - Public space mgmt. program (i.e. parklets, alley activation)
  - Modal plan design criteria (ex: buffered bike lanes, ped. lighting, freight plans, etc.)
  - Construction coordination (the Construction Hub program is starting to tackle some of this, and this manual can make the direction more clear)
  - Crime prevention through environmental design (Seattle is one of the only regions without this focus)
  - Ped. lighting
- The aim is for ROWIM to be part of the Design Review Board and Design Commission process, since this is where a lot of design decisions are being made.
- Street manuals are helpful because they help us see *all* uses of streets; people need streets for so many other things these days and are using streets as public spaces.
- Lessons learned: In a recent webinar, NYC, SF, Philadelphia, and Chicago explained lessons learned about their enhanced streets manuals. They each had different strengths. NYC used no consultants for their update.

## PROJECT STRUCTURE

- Tuhl Design (who worked on Boston Complete Streets) and SVT are SDOT's consultants.
- Tomorrow will be the launch for Seattle's team.

- The updated manual will have 6 chapters, each led by a different person, then through Susan, then to the consultants. Most of the work will be done in house because adopting this new manual also has to be institutional change.
- SDOT will make up the Executive Steering Committee.
- An interdepartmental team will review at key milestones.
- Advisory group (made up of members from Boards/Commissions). SPAB should nominate one or two Board reps. This involvement will be a portal for interest groups.

#### NEXT STEPS

- June-August: structure
  - June-July: user survey
  - June-December: content development
  - June-July: focus groups (Not defined yet but don't want to do interdisciplinary. Don't have a list of who will be involved in the focus groups right now.)
  - Sept-Nov: format and graphics
  - Aug-May: web page development/implementation
  - They're working with their legal department; raising the bar on requirements may require changes.
  - TBD: adopting the update via director's rule
  - June-December is a live discussion.
- Jacob: The goal is to have more right-of-way teeth?
    - Susan: Yes. If want to codify ROWIM, it would be sharpest teeth...Taking this action would be through director's rule.
  - Dottie: What about the Complete Streets Manual? Why do these have to be separate?
    - Susan: We're ahead of the game, to be honest- our process can be improved and we're aware of that, but we have a process. We don't want this to be the vehicle for the kind of change that the Complete Streets Manual brings. We already have that program- we don't want this to be a guidance document, we want it to be a standards document.
  - Attendee: Have you thought about how Complete Streets would be part of an intermodal plan?
    - Susan: The **Move Seattle** comprehensive plan sets street classifications. Street types are local jurisdictions/ownerships; they get to decide how they want to change those things locally through street typology.
    - AASHTO (American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials) assigns streets for **cities** larger than 50k and NACTO (National Association Of City Transportation Officials) does so for **cities** larger than 200k. They assign principal and major arterials, but not local ones.
  - Joanne: how do we help?
    - Susan: look through the subtopics list for ROWIM. Chapter 4 is for design criteria, which will host most of what we're interested in with this conversation. You can also nominate for the ROWIM advisory group.
  - Kathy: We've been meeting since January. We'd like you to be more aspirational. Within an institution things can get dulled down. How do we extend the vision?
    - Susan: You're right. Still, policy parameters are a reality check.
  - Jacob: Will this also address using up sidewalk space?
    - Susan: A frames, sidewalk café space are address through public space mgmt. and will then go through this review.

Time: 6:39 pm

**Topic: Board business: Work Plan and reporting**

- Lydia: Is google groups a good way to work and deal with the Committees?
- Devor: I would need more training.
- Lydia: You can just hit *reply*, as with a regular email, but it tracks them all through the google groups site. There's a link in the google groups for how to get to the google drive that has editable docs.
- Joanne: reached out to Bike Board after meeting with Susan. One suggestion: we could ask about the Complete Streets checklist during our meetings. Complete streets only applies to SDOT projects.
- We could make complete streets our all-encompassing issue...we should focus on the narrow goals.
  - Procedure: do a one-time follow-up with the project w/in the 30% design stage
  - We could get a small group of people to ask to follow up on specific things from Dongho's presentation.

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT: 8:08pm**