

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

Mar 11, 2015 Minutes

Attendees:

Members: David Goldberg, Jacob Struiksma, Joanne Donohue, Lydia Heard, Jeffrey Linn, Paul Muldoon, Ninona Boujrada, Bevin Wong

Public Attendees: Thomas Noble, Craig Shumate, Ryan Packer

Other Attendees and presenters: Sam Woods, Michelle Marx, Dawn Schellenberg, Jim Curtin, Scott Kubly, Howard Wu, Gordon Padelford (Seattle Neighborhood Greenways)

Public Comment:

Talk about adding curb bulbs for added pedestrian visibility. Why don't curb bulbs come automatically with marked crosswalks?

A: A lot of times we do bulb outs for compliant ADA. For marking crosswalks we have a minimum number of pedestrians/hour is required. It seems self-defeating if there isn't a marked crosswalk, people won't use it.

Comment on Denny Way: I've been commuting on Denny Way for eight years and haven't seen any pedestrian improvements in that amount of time. That is unacceptable, and it's unsafe for any pedestrian traffic.

Can you please be more specific? Major intersections: Fairview, 8th Ave., Lenora, Virginia and Minor -- no signal and crosswalks frequently make you go out of the way and not in a straight line. 8th Ave is the worst intersection on Denny. There is a large danger on both directions. Cars are speeding, taking right turn quickly and left into traffic even when pedestrians are in the crosswalks. Most of the uncontrolled intersections on Denny Ave. are unsafe.

A: Howard, Do you know of any improvements coming?

Part of Seattle City Light project there will be some improvements on 8th and close to Stewart. Also a look at improving the pedestrian island at Denny & Stewart where there are a lot of transfers to widen that island to make it safer.

We could look at squaring the angle up at 8th Ave because that turn is not squared.

February minutes:

Approved with the edit to Jeffrey's name.

Rainier Safety Corridor, 35th Ave SW Safety Corridor and Vision Zero

Jim Curtin, SDOT

Vision Zero

- Launched Feb. 12, a Swedish approach to road safety: no loss of life is acceptable, recognize the human factor, emphasis on safer roadway design.
- Goal: Eliminate traffic death by 2030.
- We've been up and down: Last year 15 fatalities, year before that 23. More than 600+ pedestrian collisions last year.
- David: Were those all roadway fatalities? A: yes. 50% have been vulnerable user (peds/bikes).
- Lydia: Can I ask you about enforcement? Sweden and NY have laws that make injuries to vulnerable users a misdemeanor instead of just traffic. Isn't that a critical piece? A: Yes. Beyond just the officer, but into the court system. There's some work to be done. But that's at the state legislature level? A: yes.
- Collisions are happening at night, which tells you that speed is a factor because you cannot speed during high traffic times.
- Reduce speed to 25mph starting in March through all of downtown. Re-time all of the 300 signals for the 25mph design speed.
- Jeffrey: When you re-time the signals what's the goal? A: You can set a design speed for signal system. Currently it's designed for 30mph. We want to reduce it so that people who are speeding will not be rewarded with a "green wave"
- At 125th and Lake City we're going to remove a significant problem. Left turning arrow goes to a permissive phase. There's way too much going on there for drivers. Pedestrians will have walk while drivers have a red left turn arrow for example.

- Incorporate Safe Routes to School: Put a greater emphasis on children and elderly and access to transit. Also the Bike Master Plan and PMP and Right of Way Improvement Manual are huge influences to Vision Zero.
- Enforcement: we'll be participating in SeaStat--data driven enforcement strategy. We're hoping to begin April 1. Continue with high visibility enforcement patrols, school zone photo enforcement and traffic collision investigation squad.
- Vision Zero campaign: raise awareness, create behavior change. We'll be doing re-enforcement patrols: reward good behavior (grant funded) Evaluation: every year in late fall a vision zero report will be issued.

Rainier Safety Corridor

- Safety improvements requested by local community for YEARS. The goal is to reduce speeds, enhance pedestrian crossings, maintain transit and reduce injuries.
- There are many projects happening on Rainier Ave now. Traffic volumes are uneven. From Columbia city down to south end city limits, 20k transit every ten minutes. 50-54 feet wide curb to curb.
- Average of 1 crash/day on Rainier. Collision data is well spread out all over the corridor. 260 crashes per mile, more than Aurora and Lake City Way even though it carries less traffic. One of the reasons is the speed. Nearly 2,000 vehicles daily going at least 10 mph over the posted limit of 30.
- Design alternatives: Looking at S Charlestown St to S Alaska St. signs and physical changes, looking at driveways.
- Jeffrey: Have you talked to DPD about zoning issues. A: no
- Joanne: Was Rainier identified in the PMP? A: I don't think it called out a grand Rainier re-do. We look at different criteria: width, characteristic, safety, etc. that determines priorities and then turns them into projects. I think the prioritization did a good job of identifying Rainier.
- Joanne: Since you've said we've been meaning to do something for a long time, what kept us from doing something earlier? A: We've done some things, but didn't have a whole lot of funding. Made some changes, traffic calming, etc. Transit upgrades have been completed, but there's just a lot to be done and it's a super long corridor, 8 miles. But at this point we have a lot of momentum building on the future.
- Jacob: Have you looked at signal cycle? Lots of skewed corners so cars have a hard time seeing pedestrians, and vice versa. A: In regard to your signal, we are using a model that takes into account signal timing and traffic patterns. The data is telling us everything at every intersection. It's all loaded into the model and we can play around to figure out the best solution.
- Jacob: The way the cycle pattern is set up around Alaska is not set up well for pedestrians. It's confusing. A: Right now Rainier is two through lanes at both directions. We can't separate the turns out unless we can get a left turn lane in.
- Design option 1a: Re-channelization: 4 lanes to 3 lanes, 2 general purpose lanes, center left lane. Some of the big issues are left turns from Rainier to side streets.
- David: In that reduced speed area, what will be done beyond posting signs? A: We'll design tight lanes so people feel comfortable doing 25mph. We'll also have police out there after implementation giving citations.
- Guest: What happens to the extra lane, it goes from 4 to 3? A: We have room. Extra foot to each parking or considering a right turn lane.
- Jacob: I do not like right turn lanes. Could we just widen the sidewalks with that extra space? A: That'd be a tall order. Possibly outside of historical areas.
- Option 1b: Re-channelization with protected bike lanes.
- Option 2: Hybrid design: Route 77 is the highest performing route in all of King County. This option is taking that into account. Transit continues to be fast within the speed limit and reliable.
- Next Steps: June 2015 will come out with their final recommendations to the public.
- David: What type of feedback did you get? A: Overwhelmingly in support of the first two options. A few folks have mentioned transit efficiencies. A small group of people who are totally opposed to any change.
- David: They don't like the idea of being slowed down? A: They think the businesses will fail or that traffic will be diverted to Lake Washington Blvd. or others. From our perspective, businesses are hurting now. In the last year, 8 buildings have been hit by a car.
- Paul: When you're looking at these corridors, does your modeling take into account parking and moving parking onto a side street? A: Yes, it's incredibly smart. Parking movement is accounted for, and interactions with pedestrians who are misbehaving, all of it. We've heard in Hillman and Columbia City that parking needs to be addressed so we are looking at those configurations.
- Paul: In Columbia City, there are side streets that don't have sidewalks, or they're very primitive. A: Through this project, I don't see us building much, if any, sidewalk.

35th Ave SW Safety Corridor

- Goal is to make 35th Ave SW safer, between Avalon Way and Roxbury.
- The further north you go, the more use occurs. Autos, transit and pedestrians. 73% of the land is residential so things happen in people's front yards.

- To get to vision zero we need to address both Rainier and 35th Ave SW. Grant funding has been received for additional enforcement.
- Implementation begins this summer, through 2016. Lowering speed limit from 35 to 30mph. Signal improvements: reflective materials, turn signals, and optimization.
- Two recommendations: 1. Complete re-channelization: 4 to 3. SW Roxbury to SW Edmunds. Or option 2. Re-channelization from SW Roxbury to SW Raymond. Then Raymond to SW Edmunds would have peak hour parking restrictions. Only partial pedestrian safety improvements.
- With a lower speed limit alone, it adds 1 minute all by itself from end to end.
- In June 2015 we'll make our final determination to public and late summer 2015 implementation begins.
- Jeffrey: Two times this evening we've had mentions of acute intersections and how they can contribute to danger for pedestrians. Has there been any cataloging of acute intersections? A: No. Seems like a good idea for the PMP. Any road that has a way in its name is likely to have those geometrics in it.
- Jeffrey: Seems like there are some opportunities to improve. A: Agreed. We'll explore our options. There are MANY on Rainier.
- Jacob: Are you looking at pedestrian safety on these corridors? A: Yes, absolutely. We're also doing a parking study. We're throwing the book at Rainier and 35th right now, which feels good.

Westlake Cycle Track

Dawn Schellenberg & Sam Woods, SDOT

- With Move Seattle we looked at our mission and vision to be sure they're in alignment. We're at 90% design currently with this project.
- The range is from the north end of the ship canal, below Fremont Bridge to Lake Union Park: about 1.2 miles. People call it a parking lot, but it's actually a street. The cycle track will align next to the sidewalk: 10 feet wide with 2 feet buffer. Sidewalk will be 8 feet plus 3 feet door buffer. There are 19 ADA crossings, 5 ADA links to bus stops. We'll be adding pedestrian level lighting.
- Jacob: What is this material? A: Is it slippery? Is that what you're worried about? Jacob: Yes. A: It's grippy/textured. We don't think it's slippery, but we'll look into it.
- Jacob: Are leaves and dirt going to collect in the grooves? A: We'll check on it.
- Rumble strips will be added to cycle path before pedestrian right of way crossing, plus "slow" and a stop bar.
- Paul: Is the crosswalk elevated? A: no.
- Paul: For a cyclist approaching on the right hand side, you have a parking spot right next to the crossing. Have you thought about removing the parking space? A: Yes. We'll treat it like a driveway.
- It becomes a mixed use space at the south end where pedestrians, bikes and cars turn. Several questions asked about the direction and intersections of the pathways and how they would interact. They took notes of visibility and confusion concerns and will look further into it.
- Jacob: Have you looked into how they do this in other areas to see how they handle it elsewhere? A: We'd say this is an incredibly unique situation. We can look into it and research it more.
- David: Where pedestrians cross are there indications that people need to stop? A: Technically pedestrians can cross anywhere on the cycle path.
- David: So stop for peds is in crosswalk? Because I think people will be inclined to keep going and roll through them. A: I think that's where the education comes in.
- David: How many crosswalks are there? A: 19. There will be a lot of cues and a lot of visual. We'll keep evaluating as we go along.
- We want to take the same approach as we did on 2nd Ave for the first two weeks where we're out there implementing and changing things immediately.
- David: Will there be a way for users to provide feedback? A: I'd like to do the same thing as 2nd Ave with ambassadors. We can also put out temporary signs with contact info.
- Highland drive will be north only.
- Paul: Will the auto crossings be raised? A: Yes, they'll stay as they are today, which is raised.
- David: What are the crossing conditions for Westlake? A: Full crosswalk now.
- Railroad Park: Move cycle track around outside of the park.
- Jacob: Pay stations not on sidewalk. Not facing the sidewalk either, because people line up and block the sidewalk. A: Yep, good feedback. We'll take note.
- If you have other ideas for education on this, let Howard know. They're looking ways to get the word out.
- Jacob: What are you doing for bikes to make noise as they approach the crosswalk? A: I'm going to figure out unique art for baseball cards for people to put them in their wheels. Maybe it would start to help education people on how important noise is, or using their bells, etc. Let's figure something out Jacob.

- The schedule is to have it open in early 2016, with construction beginning in September.

Q&A with Scott Kubly

- Scott gave an overview of some of the changes that he is implementing at SDOT, and why. Explained why he was breaking project development out from mobility and trying to get away from having a bunch of DOT's where everyone is doing a little bit of everything. He cited Roosevelt as a good example of how we will be seeing projects looked at going forward: everything at once during design phase, taking into account experts in all modes and the result being a balanced approach that maximizes what we can do with the corridor.

PMP Update

Michelle Marx, SDOT

- Finalized project scope with consultant and schedule. For the detail on the scope of work, see slides.
- Looking at what has been done since 2009 and get a full picture to date. We're shooting for five years to be consistent with the bike master plan. They want to be substantially complete by end of year. That means having a draft ready for public review by December. Wanted to get a sense from you on how to get time set up time for workshops to dig into topics further? Discussion.
- Agreed upon meeting outside of our regular meeting and inviting the full board so that anyone who was interested and available could participate. Will have one meeting each for: prioritization, performance targets and toolbox.
- Next month: Have Michelle back for the "assess progress to date" milestone/report out.
- What are your (SPAB) desired project outcomes?
- Jacob: Are there other things that are based off complaints? A: I don't know. It's been so long since we've done a sidewalk inventory and assessment; it's just so dated. We don't have any funding to do any inventory which is why it's complaint based now. In my dream world, we'd do that to get a good picture.
- Jacob: Can we roll it into this project to do an assessment? A: We don't have the money. It's not in the budget for this project.
- Paul: My budget for this project is X and a sidewalk inventory project is Y. I don't know how big of a gap that is? A: I don't either. I just know it's big. We are going to do a city wide curb ramp assessment. I'm going to see if we can latch onto that to see if we can get the sidewalk data.
- What would you define as a successful update?
- Lydia: We hear over and over again, sidewalks on every street. We probably should know the numbers and how unrealistic that is. What are the alternatives practices and options? And cost associated with those?
- David: The list your team came up with seems like a good list. I'd like to get that and be able to add online and give us time to prioritize those.
- Jeffrey: It'd be good to see those applied to SDOTs day to day work. There are times when I've seen curb ramps implemented when a curb bulb would have been perfect.
- Lydia: City and state laws could be looked at? There are a lot of studies that show it could be safer for mid-walk crossings but state and city laws prohibit us from doing any of that.
- Jacob: Also having a curb bulb making a square corner not to sit in the thirty foot space and not be in the crosswalk. I don't see that as being a part of the process if you're building a sidewalk or if a city is building a city.
- Lydia: Is your toolbox going to include temporary fixes? Having something that can go over the rain gutter to increase the size of the sidewalk without construction.
- Michelle will send the outcomes for the board to add to and prioritize.
- David: Can you throw some dates out for possible workshops? It would be great to get those scheduled now. Michelle will do that.
- Jacob: Also for the toolbox, how to deal with construction. I think the PMP should be looking at those types of things.

Action Items:

- Michelle to send outcomes to board to prioritize and suggest workshop times.

8:25 Adjourn