



*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

Joanne Donohue, Chair
Gordon Padelford, Vice Chair
Beau Morton
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April Kelley
Afia Mashhadi
Janine Blaeloch
Catherine Morrison
Paul Muldoon
Cameron Zapata (Get Engaged)

August 22, 2016

Ian Macek
Seattle Transportation Department
PO Box 34996
Seattle, WA 98124

Dear Mr. Macek,

The importance of the next version of Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) to the future of Seattle as a thriving, desirable city in which to work and live cannot be overstated. Projections show that Seattle will continue to see dramatic increases in both employment and people living in the city. Demographic shifts over the next 20 years will increasingly show that people prefer to live in denser, more vibrant cities than ever before.

While this is something that most people know, the lack of implementation of many parts of the previous PMP has been a source of concern. We understand that the City has very few resources currently available to fund the entire PMP; aside from the nine years' worth of funding from the Move Seattle levy, the Plan is short on funding details. To ensure that the plan is fully implemented, and that the citizens of Seattle are fully aware of the challenges that they will face in making Seattle the most walkable city in America, we believe that the City must be forthright about the city's current, limited funding options, and about what it will take to fully fund and implement the pedestrian improvements in the plan so that we will actually see them reflected in the physical fabric of our city.

A complete and well-maintained pedestrian system is Objective 1 in the PMP, and while there many good ideas in the current draft, I am writing on behalf of the Seattle Pedestrian Board's collective concerns and questions. Our concerns fall under a few broad categories that will, if addressed, go a long way in helping to meet the objectives laid out in the PMP. Page numbers referenced in this letter apply to the hard copy version that was provided to board members versus the online version.

Regarding Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) indicators and the increased pedestrian safety they would allow, we have a series of questions that either the plan could clarify or we would appreciate having answered:

- How many intersections currently have APS indicators?
- On page 25, the Plan talks about APS indicators being installed when requested as funding is available. Is there currently a backlog of these requests or is the city usually able to meet these requests?
- Is the process for requesting APS indicators widely known amongst the organizations that

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*-City Council Resolution
28791*

SMT, 700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3800
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www.seattle.gov/spab email: pedboard@seattle.gov



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serve people with disabilities?

- How much funding is currently set aside for APS indicators in the Sidewalk Accessibility Program?
- On page 32, the Plan talks about city wide map that helps pedestrians with disabilities plan routes. When will this be online?

Related to the above topic, we are aware that the city is engaged in an ADA Curb Ramp Study. We request language in the implementation section that indicates the city is committed to integrating the PMP and ADA Curb Ramp Study Recommendations. We are concerned that the new curb ramps could find themselves surrounded by poorly maintained or a lack of pedestrian infrastructure.

Regarding current sidewalk conditions, we have a number of comments related to successfully meeting Objectives 1 and 2 of the Plan:

- Page 15 of the Plan talks about cost sharing solutions to incentivize homeowners to repair sidewalks. We are wondering what these cost sharing solutions are. If the city hasn't identified a funding source, perhaps it would consider working on a change in state law so that cameras could be placed in residential neighborhoods (like the city does around schools). People going faster than the posted speed limit would be ticketed and this would create the cost sharing pool. The same pool would allow people of modest means to get their share picked up by the city so that we don't end up with the wealthier parts of the city tapping all of the incentive money.
- Page 16 of the Plan talks about the city identifying new funding tools and partnerships to increase sidewalk construction. We recommend some specific strategies that could be explored rather than a vague statement like this.
- We are delighted to know that the city will be repairing up to 25 blocks of damaged sidewalks per year. This number would be more meaningful if we knew the actual number that needed repairing. We understand that updating the sidewalk assessment data base could easily cost \$300K, but we would like to see a stronger commitment from the city to explore how this might be done. Technological innovation may soon make what is currently an expensive task more affordable. We have a first class university in town with students eager to work on meaningful projects to improve their community. This is how the One Bus Away Application came online and most recently the research into ORCA card usage that was reported in the Seattle Times.
- We are delighted to see Strategy 1.4 Repair Sidewalks and related actions on page 78 in the Plan and will be monitoring implementation of these strategies.

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Regarding new sidewalks, we have the following comments and questions:

- We appreciate the need to prioritize where new sidewalks will be constructed, but it should also be clear that 45% of the city lacks sidewalks versus 27%. The latter number focuses on the sidewalks that are missing within the PIN.
- We recommend that the plan identify the funding gap that exists for completing the sidewalk infrastructure, so the information stays front and center with the mayor and the council.
- The PMP talks about finding new ways and incentives to get sidewalks beyond code requirements from new developments. We should encourage use, where appropriate, of the sidewalk alternatives mentioned Action 1.1.4 on page 73 in the Plan, such as stamped and/or stained asphalt at-grade walkways separated by landscaping improvements.

Regarding Greenways we have the following comments and questions:

- Greenways are a pedestrian improvement particularly in areas where there are no sidewalks and people are walking in the street. Among the leveraging opportunities to consider is that between Safe Routes to School (which has dependable funding) and Greenways. Planned Greenways and Safe Routes to School projects often seem to overlap or occur close to each other.
- The PMP cites 60 miles of new Greenways in 9 years. Recent press reports have said that the network has been reduced from 52 (not 60) to 32 miles. We would like clarification on these numbers.

Regarding Complete Streets we have the following comments and questions:

- We recommend making Complete Streets and the Complete Streets checklist prominent in the outreach process for repaving projects, so that the public knows that the city is committed to making this a reality.
- We would like clarification whether Complete Streets policy only applies to arterials where there are already sidewalks or whether the policy can also provide pedestrian improvements where none exist.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Pedestrian Master Plan. We look forward to working closely with the Seattle Department of Transportation on its implementation.

Sincerely,



Joanne Donohue, Chair
Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

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