

SPAB MONTHLY MEETING AGENDA
Joint meeting with the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board
January 8, 2020

Note Different Location: City Hall, Room 370

6:00 pm - Welcome & Introductions - 15 min

6:15 pm - Public Comment - 5 min

6:20 pm - Announcements - 5 minutes

6:25 pm - Vision Zero Update - 60 minutes

7:25 pm - Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board and Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board Joint Discussion - 30 minutes

7:55 pm - Public Comment - 5 min 8:00 pm - Meeting adjourn

8:00 pm - Meeting adjourn

Members present

David Seater
Meredith Hall
Kashina Groves
Anna Zivarts
Andrea Lai
Andrew Dannenberg
Alex Lew
Gunner Colleen
Patrick Taylor
Emily Paine
Carol Kachadoorian
Bunnie Lee

Public Comment

A member of the public thanked Sam and Brad for taking public approach to reducing speed limits.

Doug MacDonald: Results from Oslo scored near vision zero. Key is slowing things down. Have to make speed reductions to get results. LPI results are “anemic” compared to other cities. Posted 25 mph speed limits, but haven’t achieved half compliance. Greenways guy: stick to issues that are most important, based on data. Recognize you all have more in common than you think. Walking and biking advocates sometimes get divided, but recognize improvements are good for both.

Announcements

Simon Blenski explained that the city is rolling out its scooter share pilot in the Spring. SDOT will schedule a standalone meeting later in January where people can learn about the scooter pilot.

Patrick Taylor: asked if there will be public meetings to learn about the pilot. Simon responded that SDOT will send out more information soon.

Presentation from Policy Advisory and Operations Group - Adiam Emery and Tracy Krawczyk, SDOT

Tracy Krawczyk introduced policy and operations advisory group (POAG). We'd like to spend a year thinking about how we integrate all our modal plans. We have four master plans and a comprehensive plan. It says mobility is a priority but doesn't say how we will prioritize trade-offs—for example transit over freight. We're starting on a journey, don't know where we'll end up. Looking for a group of people to represent different points of view.

Adiam Emery: Explained the group is a year-long pilot. Populated with members of each advisory board, policy person, and a business rep. Deadline is January 23rd to get group seated and scheduled in February. Will focus on right of way allocation, design, and new technologies. Looking for user perspective from each mode.

Meredith Hall asked if the boards are going to identify potential POAG members. Krawczyk said people have to apply individually, would like to see at least three different perspectives from each board.

Sam Zimbabwe: This is an opportunity from a policy and operations perspective, and we'll talk about safety aspects as well. The idea is to bring modal boards together, and have comprehensive discussions, instead of bringing issues to one board at a time. It's a new thing. We don't have all the answers on how to do it.

Vision Zero Update, Sam Zimbabwe and Brad Topol, SDOT

Sam Zimbabwe: We made a big announcement in December about not doing well enough with Vision Zero. We thought this is a good opportunity to talk about these things in more depth. SDOT not satisfied about where things have been with safety. Highest number of fatalities in a decade in 2018. We need to reverse that trend.

Brad Topol: Showed historical graph of traffic fatalities. Over the last 80 years things have trended positively, but now we're not seeing as big of the gains. Population in 1936 is half of what it is now. Our fatalities are some of the lowest in the country. 2018 has been the most fatal year. Last highest year was 2006. Serious injuries trending with the average.

Data trends: more ped crashes happen at intersections rather than midblocks. Arterial network has the highest percentage of serious and fatal ped crashes. Second and third are straight collisions at signals.

We take a reactive and proactive approach to safety. Look at high collision corridors and intersections. Proactive: LPIs over the last two years, being more aggressive with citywide speed limit reductions. Bike and ped safety analysis directs us to hotspots around the city. Look at crashes citywide over a 7 year period, and assign risk factors to crashes: number of travel lanes, arterial streets, signals.

LPIs: pushing ahead in 2017-2018. Last year tripled the number of LPIs. Installed about 100 in 2019. Gives peds the walk signal before cars get a green. We see a high amount of left turning fatal injuries in the city. LPIs help mitigate this. 15% of intersections have LPIs. By end of 2020, on track for about 25% coverage.

Sam said approach is same to approach for speed limits. We figure out where and how to do these things, then take them to scale.

Brad explained large scale speed limit reductions started in 2015. Downtown went down to 25. Required large number of traffic signals to be retimed. Gateway signs warning visitors of new citywide speed limits. Results: reduction in serious and fatal injuries, and overall collisions. SDOT started by targeting urban villages and downtown. Looking at the rest of the city now. Today 25% of streets are already 25 mph. Looking ahead targeting the rest. Working with crews to make sure everything is out there by 2021.

Brad shared current project putting in new speed limit signs at a higher density. What you see today is people driving a road at what the speed feels like. You'll start to see more consistent messaging. We don't want someone to miss a sign. We want them to see one every several minutes. Replaced signs at Greenwood and Phinney, and saw 85th and 50th percentile speeds drop. 33% reduction in crashes. 85th street used to be unsigned. With signs, saw small reduction in speeds, large reduction in crashes.

Takeaway, Brad says, is that small reductions in speeds, lead to large reductions in crashes. Seeing 3-5% reduction in speeds turning into 30% reductions in collisions. Hoping there's a halo effect—if you see signs everywhere people will always drive slower speeds. In the Greenwood / Roosevelt urban village, new signs led to a 3.5% reduction in 85th percentile speeds, 44% reduction in crashes.

Anna Zivarts asks has there been a discussion restricting rights on reds or left turns? If everyone is actually going 30 because the speed limit is 25, why not go to 20? If all this expense why not go to 20 so we get to 25.

Sam: the speed limit means the speed limit. Maybe we need to do an education campaign. If we say it means something else all the signs are meaningless. I think 25 is a pretty aggressive first step. Brad adds that 460 miles of arterials, and only a mile or so is 20 mph. These are areas with bad visibility.

Sam: changing left turns can sometimes make pedestrians wait longer. We want to be data-based determining most severe problems. Left turns are biggest source of

crashes, along with straight midblock on arterials. Changing one thing can move problem to different location. We want to look at systematic policy approaches.

Andrew Dannenberg asks how many seconds is an LPI? Does data say longer, shorter should be better or worse? Brad responds 3-5 seconds, based on national data. Sometimes signal engineers will make different calls based on local data.

Gunnar Colleen asks is the data public? How are you working with WSDOT in areas with different jurisdictions? Brad responds that the data are online. You can download all this data off our website. Collisions take three months to be populated. Based solely on police reports, doesn't capture some near misses, or places that "feel" unsafe.

Brad says SDOT does coordinate with WSDOT. They own Aurora, Lake City Way. We will be working with them on those speed limit reductions. "Extra layers of collaboration." Some border streets will have to work with Tukwila, King County as well.

Sam: We don't have to do additional regulatory processes to change city streets. State routes have regulatory processes we don't have 100% control over. Seen no indication of challenges with WSDOT, but have to collaborate with them.

Carol Kachadoorian asks for places where you've reduced speed limits more than a year ago, do you see additional reductions as time goes on?

Brad: Lots around downtown are too new for secondary data. But as part of citywide initiative we're collecting more data, planning to make this a more continuous thing. Looking to start collecting speed data in addition to ADT data. Going to also make reporting more frequent. As we go ahead will see more consistent indicators.

Kachadoorian asks about public outreach, are you letting people in that area know?

Sam: we're figuring out how to sequence this effort citywide. Going to have a big public education campaign. Hopefully leads to halo effect where 25 is the default.

Kachadoorian notes that it's difficult to capture near misses in the data. Brad responds: most common tools other governments use is public web map. Drop a pin tell us what happens. It leads to issues where some demographics won't use the tool. For example, ESL. It's hard to validate which ones are actual near misses, and which ones are people using it as a forum for their concerns.

Sam adds that BPSA captures geometric conditions that are leading to crashes in other places. Can use that to address things before there is a collision. Still relies on police reports. There are unreported collisions not evenly distributed across the city.

Brad explains that enforcement consists of 2 patrol types. Plainclothes police officer crossing, and cop to flag down drivers who don't yield. At Aurora and other high-crash areas, dispatched more officers.

David Seater asks how are you deciding which crosswalks? Are you doing it at unmarked crosswalks? Brad says SDOT is still looking at it, but probably just marked.

Meredith Hall express concerns about racial profiling in police enforcement in South Seattle. Brad responds that SDOT goes through a racial equity toolkit. We try to foresee and address things that would lead to profiling. Finalizing toolkit for enforcement right now.

Brad continues presentation by explaining Red light camera initiative. Doubling number over the next few years. Have 31 around the city. Seen reductions in angle and T-bone collisions, and ped safety. Looking at locations with high angle and ped collisions for new cameras. Adding 5 school zone speed cameras.

Taylor asks how do you choose where to put them? Brad responds this isn't a funding tool it's a safety tool. Want to be targeted about where we put them in. Next ones will be based on crash data, high-collision locations for peds.

Doug MacDonald asks do they bring in more money than they cost? Brad says yes they do. There are some maintenance and admin costs.

Kachadoorian asks are there schools where you've chosen to put cameras where they haven't been successful? Brad says he is not sure. Sam adds that school zone speed cameras are very restrictive. Lower than prevailing speed limit for specific hours. Only effective in hours where it's active. We've tried to be extremely data-driven, bc it's a contentious issue. Limited to time frame which is not necessarily where we see all the crashes.

Brad introduces major crash review task force. Injuries spread out throughout the city. Looking for different perspectives and levels of expertise. We want to work with medical examiner, different agency partners and maybe develop new initiatives.

Brad introduces potential new initiative: no right turns on red. Heard this from the advocates and ped board. Looking at crash data and determining what program we could use to expand this. Today 10% of traffic signals have this treatment. 60% of crashes are turns on green, 40% are right turns. Right turns are lower proportion of total crashes, really low on serious injuries. Will keep looking at this, but priority is LPIs, other measures.

Brad moves to projects on high-collision corridors. On Aurora, installing additional curb ramps. Next two years have 2 million in capital investments for improvements on Aurora. Looking to launch long-term planning study on Aurora as a whole. Aurora needs some heavy lifting. We need a high capital, high investment project. Will take a longer time to plan and find funding. Would be good to have something similar to Shoreline. Want to look at it from all different angles. Lake City Way: new capital improvements, sidewalks, crosswalks.

Kashina Groves: Really appreciates lowering of speed limits. We're doing things that rely on cooperation from the public. On the other side we have enforcement. Lots of problems with that. Traffic fines don't impact everyone equally. Red light cameras only affect person getting ticket. What are your pie in the sky ideas for the next couple of decades?

Brad: moving toward modal shifts. How do we continue to move people with greater density. Long term goal is continuing to get people out of single occupancy vehicles and into other modes. If you can get someone out of a motor vehicle, peds don't usually cause fatal injuries. The more you can cause that modal shift, the more you're reducing the risk.

Sam: This isn't something SDOT can do on our own. It will be a shared achievement when we reach vision 0. Nationally, larger vehicles lead to worse collisions, lots of state raised speed limits on freeways, early warning features added to cars reduce driver responsibility. Made certain types of travel systematically safe, but haven't done the same for car travel. It's a whole systematic approach we have to take.

Adiam: capacity issue right now, with growth coming in. Need to align network to support what we want. Need to stop allocating right of way for single-occupancy vehicles. Need to shift the culture toward bikes and transit. LPIs, other changes now are the foundation. If you have a dedicated bus lane, it makes it attractive to shift to transit.

Dannenberg asks are the radar signs effective? Brad responds that they are relatively inexpensive and easy to implement. Right now throwing all staff at getting regular signs in place. As we get feedback, will continue to put in radar signs. They are effective at reducing speeds. One of the reasons why they work is you're aware that someone else is aware of your speed.

Patrick asks about street design changes. On 15th the other day, watching someone jaywalk by crown hill urban village. Distance between the lights, everything gave incentive to jay walk. If in two years or three years we don't see enough progress do you have another set of policies? How are you keeping yourself accountable? Also though, I think these are all great.

Sam: there are bits of things we've done in an episodic fashion now that are the next things. We want to look at where they're effective and how we take those things to scale. We are looking to expand signal controls, ped only signals. In urban villages, making more controlled crossings is a way to encourage people to walk.

Brad: We've got a whole toolbox. Like on Rainier, put in pedestrian crossings, more signals, medians. Looking at gaps in safe and comfortable ped crossings. Might start applying for state grant funds for some of those things.

Meredith Hall asks if there are any exceptions to 25 mph rule. Does it apply to freight corridors? Brad says roads under WSDOT management are exceptions. Those may be more challenging or take more time. On a couple of roads we may look at doing a step. We want to make sure they're working right.

Sam: Research we have now is for 5 mph increments of speed reduction. We don't have all of that worked out for 10 mph, for example 35 to 25. Don't know how SODO will be addressed. There are places where just changing signs won't get the result we need to see.

Hall says we need to look at people, who are not trucks, moving through SODO safely.

Kachadoorian asks how to enforce bus operators so they're not putting pedestrians at risk. Articulated buses rush through intersections. Emily Pane notes that they're worried they're not going to get through the intersection. They need 60ft of clearance.

Colleen says there is inconsistency with how people have to cross streets, missing their chance or facing too long of a distance between marked crosswalks. Adiam notes SDOT will be addressing those issues with POAG. Brad adds that when we first install things, like LPIs we get a lot of comments. But now I don't get any comments. People adjust over time. We're striving to be as consistent as possible.

Hall asks can the city take find it fix it app and do outreach to non English speaking community. In SODO people don't know how to use it. It's such a great tool. Maybe we could add self-reporting of near misses.

Public Comment

MacDonald: If crosswalks are where accidents are happening, why isn't SDOT coming up with a metric to track where there should be marked crosswalks. He says he thinks that crossings on Aurora are unsightly nuisances.

Sam: our crosswalk marking are on a four-year cycle of being remarked. Some places where they do fade, but always remarked on a four year cycle. Find it fix it is where you can report if they're not. At Aurora, all crossings are legal. We need to upgrade them to be accessible. Multiple lane crossings are challenging, but they're a threat to peds and legal crossings.

Question from another member of the public on effectiveness of enforcement. Seems like there's a blind eye to the value of enforcement. Does anybody collect data on enforcement? Is enforcement more or less expensive than engineering?

Sam: trying to do enforcement around specific crash types. Aware of bias in enforcement and how that gets done. Good data from red light cameras. Engineering—it depends on whether it's a behavioral or engineering issue.

Dannenberg says he likes the idea of scaling these solutions up. Does your modeling show this will bring us to zero deaths? Where does that line hit? Brad says that is a difficult equation to run. No equation for how people behave. Transportation is social as well as engineering. If we do similar treatments on similar corridors would expect change in behavior. Sam adds that this is a big set of steps, but there will be more steps in the future.

7:25 pm - Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board and Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board Joint Discussion - 30 minutes

Hall asks to identify who is interested in applying for the POAG, need to make sure we're representing on that board.

Christina Groves asks how the two boards can better align their goals. We know we're aligned with ped stuff, but ped advocates don't always feel that way about bike advocates. We don't know what are our blind spots.

Kachadoorian says that ped and bike issues are not the same. More peds with different abilities and needs. You can't be hit by a ped but you can be hit by a bike. Which doesn't mean we need to be adversarial, but there's that awareness. Have commonalities on areas like pavement standards.

Bunnie Lee: There are big experiential differences. Bikers more accustomed to the rules of the road, closer to the experience of driving a vehicle. Peds envelope a wider range of experiences—children, people who can't drive, don't know traffic rules.

Hall: That's a valuable point and takes me to the scooter discussion. They're inviting everybody to step onto something whether they know the rules of the road. Bicycle requires more coordination, more intuitive to start and stop.

Taylor: People might be more inclined to ride on the sidewalk on scooters. Pushing against bike route riding onto sidewalk.

Dannenberg asks if there are city policies the two boards might work together on. Seater suggests bike lanes. It's a lot more comfortable walking alongside a bike lane than next to cars. It's a way the ped board could support the bike board. Kachadoorian suggests surfaces and pavement condition issues. Separated bike lanes and people with disabilities.

Taylor notes that micro mobility devices don't have a home right now. Protected bike lanes could get them off the sidewalk.

Hall: curb cuts are something ped board could keep in mind. It's important to have those, especially with a cargo bike, so you don't have to haul it up over the curb.

Next steps: Board members suggest ways for the two boards to collaborate on issues. Someone from each board could attend the other board's meetings. Boards could have more joint meetings, maybe one per year on a topic of shared interest. Taylor suggests

e-scooters as a topic. Board members hope to find three people from each board interested in applying to be on the POAG.

8:00 pm - Meeting adjourn