



*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

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To: Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) Planning Team, SDOT Director Greg Spotts, City Council Transportation Committee, Mayor Harrell

Re: Seattle Transportation Plan: Pedestrian Plan, SPAB Comments

The Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) presents an important opportunity to position Seattle to reverse a startling trend in pedestrian related crashes and fatalities on our transportation system, while encouraging communities to make active transportation choices over single occupancy vehicles. Several of the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) members have taken advantage of the public engagement activities through Phase 2 of the plan, and we would like to submit these compiled comments on the progress so far.

1. Pedestrian Improvement Network

The plan includes two options for an updated Pedestrian Improvement Network (PIN). The SPAB supports Option B for a 'Tiered PIN' that considers safety and equity as well as proximity to land uses, with the following additional comments:

- Proximity and access to groceries and fresh foods should be considered within the system. All people in Seattle should have the ability to walk to fresh food and grocery. The current system assumes that P-Zones, Urban Centers, and Urban Villages mostly include grocery retailers. The consideration could just identify what sort of grocery or access is included to fresh foods, with credit given for type of grocery retail in decreasing priority: community farmers market, full grocery (includes fresh meat, produce and bakery), corner or convenience market places.
- Giving credit for current land use may give existing and thriving neighborhoods an advantage over struggling neighborhoods. Consideration should be given to the impact that improved pedestrian facilities could have on future land use to improve business by improving the pedestrian infrastructure.
- The pedestrian network should include land use accessibility that does not require pedestrians to cross vehicle centric infrastructure, such as parking lots. Coordinate with the Comprehensive Plans to require development reviews to consider pedestrian route directness between building entrances, transit stops, and comfortable pedestrian pathways. .

The Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board shall advise the City Council, the Mayor and all the offices of the city on matters related to pedestrians and the impacts which actions by the city may have upon the pedestrian environment; and shall have the opportunity to contribute to all aspects of the city's planning insofar as they relate to the pedestrian safety and access.

*-City Council Resolution
28791*

- Coordination with the Seattle Comprehensive Plan's People Streets and Public Space connection are needed to determine the connections to these spaces as well as safe routes to parks and schools. Consider adding People Streets and Public Places to the Land Use consideration within the tiered scoring system.
- The plan should consider pedestrian ability and prioritize investment around land use for disabled users (such as the school for the blind, elderly/senior or assisted living centers, hospitals, etc.).
- Proximity to other routes with low stress pedestrian infrastructure should be a consideration in the PIN. Pedestrian infrastructure deserts (larger geographic areas without pedestrian infrastructure) should have a higher priority than those with adjacent low stress infrastructure.

2. Pedestrian Crossings Priority Improvement Network

The STP considers a new tiered priority improvement network for crossing improvements as well. SPAB supports the inclusion of the pedestrian crossing improvements network within the plan, to be similar to the considerations of land use, safety, and equity. In addition to the comments above, SPAB would like to submit the following comments for the new Crossing PIN.

- The crossing maps currently consider the distances between safe crossings by identifying intersections without parked or enhanced crosswalks. The plan needs to identify barriers to pedestrian travel (such as state routes, highways, and major arterials with limited crossing opportunities) and prioritize crossings that break down these barriers to pedestrian travel.
- Add new performance metrics to identify barriers to pedestrian travel, such as something similar to the City of Bellevue's Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress, or WSDOT's Route Directness Index. If the goals of the plan are to encourage more active transportation, it should also include a target for those metrics (i.e. a level of traffic stress policy, or maximum route directness index).
- Crosswalk safety needs to be emphasized in the consideration of crosswalks and the removal of barriers to pedestrian travel. SDOT's Bike and Ped Safety Analysis Phase 2 report identifies a strong positive relationship (i.e. an increase in pedestrian related crashes) at intersections with permitted movements, stop-controlled (all-way and two-way), and non-through lane markings. The Crossing PIN should consider these when scoring the safety at prioritized pedestrian locations. If safety at intersections is a concern, consider pedestrian only phases, removal of permitted turning movements over pedestrian walk phases, and lastly enhanced crossings at nearby intersections.
- When prioritizing crossing locations, include points for community requests for enhanced crosswalk improvements. Locations where pedestrian advocacy groups, community members, or system users are frequently requesting improvements should be prioritized. Community requests for pedestrian improvements should not be denied simply because of low prioritization through the tiered analysis process.

- The proposed safety metric considers the speed of the vehicles on the adjacent facilities. This should be a consideration in the level of traffic stress, and the consideration should use actual travel data and not posted speeds.
- SDOT staff is currently reviewing and updating the Crosswalk improvement guidelines. These efforts should be included in the STP Crossing PIN and not as a separate policy.
- Enhanced crossings should be defined as more than just a marked crosswalk with accessible curb ramps. They should include speed reduction measures for vehicles moving through the crosswalk, pedestrian signal improvements that provide protected pedestrian movements such as HAWK signals, or active-activation beacons such as rectangular flashing beacons with pedestrian push buttons. Defining enhanced crossings should not restrict staff from enacting low cost quick build measures such as delineators and pavement markings as a temporary solution while engineering designs and funding are determined for more permanent enhancements.
- SPAB understands that the STP will be followed by an implementation plan that will update Streets Illustrated. However the STP should include guidance that right-of-way for identified improvements needs will not be taken from disadvantaged property owners (properties within identified equity improvement areas). Space for active modes should be accommodated by reallocating the existing right-of-way.

3. Prioritization and Progress Tracking

For all of the PIN, the plan should include a number of miles of sidewalk or trail, and a number of crossings for each tier (1 through 5). Given the volume of pedestrian improvement needs throughout Seattle, we will need to see that approximately 20% of all needs fall into each tier. If the entire network falls into tier 1 or 2, then the plan has not identified an overall priority.

The STP plan should include action to report on plan progress annually at a minimum. Progress on the plan should be reported by number of miles of sidewalks or trails or number of crossings per tier such that anyone interested can track that we are following up on our ability to complete the pedestrian infrastructure needs in order of priority as agreed upon by SDOT staff, the council, and the system users.

4. Other General Comments

During a Joint Meeting with the Bicycle Advisory Committee, the question was raised why a similar priority system was not being developed for bicycles. There are a number of interactions between the modes that need to be considered, such as bicycle/scooter parking, pedestrians in bike lanes / bikes on sidewalks, and treatment at intersections. A similar concern was raised for how both modes would interact with transit.

The current plan still has each mode broken out into its attachment, and were presented separately at public involvement events. It is unclear to the board what coordination between these teams has occurred. There has been no discussion within the plan or chapter, how to prioritize one mode over the others, and where. The biggest question this plan needs to be answering is how we are managing what mode has

priority and where. Even with reducing vehicle volumes, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit will still compete for space, and are already doing so today. These are important issues that need to be addressed within the plan.

The public comments have overwhelmingly identified the need for rapid transformation of our transportation system. Improvements often take years to deploy and require engineering analysis, design, and grant funding applications. The plan needs to identify policies to shorten SDOT's response to community needs. At a minimum this policy should include processes that allow quick-build solutions that can be deployed without fully engineered plans and specifications, that can be installed by City Crews.