



## Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

*Stewards of the  
Pedestrian Master Plan*

Jennifer Lehman, Co-Chair  
Emily Davis, Co-Chair  
Ori Brian, Comms  
Erin Fitzpatrick  
Akshali Gandhi  
Bianca Johnson  
Han-Jung Ko (Koko)  
Emily Mannetti  
Esti Mintz  
Hang Nguyen  
Greyson Simon  
Maria Sumner

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### Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

**September 8, 2021**

#### Virtual Remote Meeting

##### Attendees:

##### Board Members:

Jennifer Lehman  
Emily Davis  
Emily Mannetti  
Han-Jung Ko (Koko)  
Erin Fitzpatrick

Maria Sumner  
Akshali Gandhi  
Bianca Johnson  
Ori Brian  
Hang Nguyen

##### Non-board members:

Polly Membrino, SDOT  
Bradley Topol, SDOT  
Hester Serebrin, TCC

Doug MacDonald  
Myna Lee

Approximately 1 other members of the public joining by phone

#### Public Comment – 5 min

No public comment

#### Vision Zero, Transportation Choices Coalition Discussion

- Hester Serebrin—I am joining on behalf of Transportation Choices Coalition (TCC), which works state-wide to help advocate for safe and healthy transportation options. We are located in Seattle, so a lot of our work is focused on the Puget Sound area and local transportation organizations, in addition to working with Puget Sound Regional Council. More recently, we have been looking at how policing and enforcement shows up in every mode of transportation. We are part of the National Transportation Equity Caucus and there is a subcommittee for removing enforcement like Vision Zero and looking at how enforcement affects people of color.
  - We have a document that shows who gets citations for jaywalking, the violence that people experience, the disproportionality of tickets that people of color receive and state sanctioned violence and punitive measures. We are also looking at removing problematic laws such as jaywalking. We also look at replacing armed officers with cameras or civilian officers, although not everyone agrees with this. Another thing we are looking at advocating for is taking the court out of the equation and instead

*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

- resolving issues in ways that are not as punitive or financially based. In all of these interventions, we are trying to chip away at these problems, but any solutions need to be co-developed with the community.
- Based on the conversations that we have had, the things we are moving forward with at the state level are jaywalking and routine traffic stops. Some City Councilmembers support this, but it needs to change at the state level. Sen. Nguyen had a bill aiming to end traffic stops, so there is precedent and conversation around these topics. The City of Seattle is interested in making walking safer, so they will be a supportive partner, but removing jaywalking is something we need to champion at the state level.
- For next steps to remove the jaywalking law, we need to have more coordination and work with the community and other organizations. I'm happy to answer questions and if you want to be involved, please reach out to me at [hester@transportationchoices.org](mailto:hester@transportationchoices.org)
- Emily Davis—Thank you for bringing up these topics and ideas and I want to bring Brad in to talk about Vision Zero and how this is related.
- Brad Topol—I'm here on behalf of Vision Zero to talk about these topics and what SDOT is doing to get to zero pedestrian fatalities and injuries and promote safety for pedestrians. We have a Transportation Equity Framework that is coming out soon based on a two plus year process with community members to see where SDOT is lacking in equity. There should be a document coming out in November for public comment and review. This will have a lot of things that Hester mentioned including enforcement in general, punitive vs non-punitive things within the court system such as options for payment for tickets and avoiding sending someone to collections. There are some non-punitive options like community service, but there are still barriers to this and it is hard to prove your financial status because people have lots of time constraints.
  - The Transportation Equity Framework has been a big push and also have worked with SPD historically to reduce collisions. We are still working with Traffic Enforcement and continue to collaborate with them. We are starting to work with the Office of Inspector General to take a look at fines and other systems.
- Emily Davis—How can we have an impact to advocate for these things considering a lot of things like the bill to decriminalize jaywalking are at the state level?
  - Hester: Come testify at the state!
  - Brad: There are three main avenues to achieve these goals—
    - Remove the law at the state level because the City code follows the state code, but the WA State Legislature is not always responsive to Seattle
    - Regarding fines and fees, the biggest amount of fines are related to license plate registration. The State Supreme Court is in charge of traffic fees and fines at the state level. There is opportunity to work with the State Supreme Court about the inequities and reducing fines and fees related to infractions. We are still early in the process to figure out how feasible this is.
    - The third option is related to making change at the city level. The City Council can deprioritize enforcement at the city level related to things like jaywalking or other things that result in fees and fines.
- Emily Davis—In January, Seattle Bike Blog had a post about jaywalking laws and enforcement. Would it have to be a city-wide push to have SPD to change their enforcement?

- Brad—We can't tell SPD what to do, but we are having conversations with SPD and their enforcement officers. At the end of the day, SPD does not have to listen to SDOT even if we show them data and work with their captains.
- Hester—There is also a policy document for Vision Zero that talks about enforcement. It seems like the policy document has not caught up with the ideas of the on the ground staff. Is there an opportunity to change the policy document?
  - Brad—Great questions. Since we are internal agencies and work together, there is a sensitivity about how SDOT broadcasts language around enforcement. There is a RET (Racial Equity Toolkit) underway looking at enforcement within Vision Zero. One of the biggest challenges is looking at what's in our toolbox. On the SDOT side we have infrastructure and treatments like road diets and leading pedestrian intervals (LPI), but SPD's main tool is enforcement, so when they think of safety they think of writing more tickets. We think more about changing behavior through street design, so our tool boxes are different.
- Erin Fitzpatrick—I would like to know more about balancing disability access when you are looking at equity. I work with people who are blind at Lighthouse for the Blind. There are intersections that are not safe for pedestrians with disabilities. Another issue can be with homeless encampments on sidewalk and who gets the right of way there?
  - Hester—Great point. It would be great to have engineering fixes and a lot of people will say that there is some room for enforcement and legislation. We worked with Disability Rights WA on blocking the box enforcement to help access for people with disabilities. There is not a clear answer regarding enforcement, but we are focusing on making sure people can travel safely without dealing with punitive measures.
  - Brad—I'm not familiar with the initiatives that the Mayor is doing for housing and sidewalk encampments, but regarding behaviors that endanger lives, that is a good point. We've been asked to look at right on red collisions, but our data is not showing too many collisions or fatalities due to right on red although we aren't able to measure near misses. This is something to think about regarding safety for pedestrians who are blind and may not be aware of oncoming traffic due to drivers taking a right on red.
- Koko—When I drive and see the yellow pedestrian crossing sign, I drive more carefully and look out for pedestrians. Would it be possible to add more of these signs?
  - Brad—The yellow diamond signs alone may not be super effective from a compliance standpoint, although you are right that they help with awareness. They are a lot cheaper too, so striping crosswalks and adding these signs is good to raise awareness that people are walking. When I worked in Chicago, we striped crosswalks pretty much everywhere, but that is not the case in Seattle, although the SPAB could advocate for this because crosswalks and yellow signs are cheap and simple.
    - Koko—I bike most days and see that people are stopped on the sidewalk and trying to get across at unmarked crosswalks, but drivers don't often stop for pedestrians to cross. Even the flashing pedestrian beacons don't always make drivers stop at crosswalks.
- Jennifer—Police reports will make it seem like jaywalking is the cause of a pedestrian death or injury, which is victim blaming. Decriminalizing helps to some extent, but how can we show the seriousness of people's injuries and deaths and not blame the pedestrians? A writer from The Urbanist posted a police report last night that said that a vehicle struck a jaywalking pedestrian, but that seemed to blame the pedestrian.

- Erin—I see what you’re saying, but it does provide context that a person was walking in a place where the driver would not expect.
- Brad—Collision reports in general give the allure that they are a concrete thing, but often the officer shows up after the collision occurs. There are often conflicting witness statements and you do not hear the statement from the person who was hit if they are taken away in an ambulance. Police reports can sometimes conflict with other witness testimony from people who don’t talk to the officer.
- Hester—If you take away jaywalking as a catchall, do you open opportunities to understand what infrastructure is missing, for example to see what circumstances led to the collision?
- Emily D.—I am curious about the Chicago vs Seattle sidewalk striping data.
  - Brad—You can put a post in the center of the road that says “state law, stop for pedestrians” and those seem to have a bigger impact than rapid flashing beacons. Unfortunately, they are struck a lot, but Chicago would replace them regularly since they only last about a month. Having the sign right in front of the driver in the road is a good reminder and pedestrians would also point to the sign to reinforce the law that pedestrians have the right of way.
  - Emily—Does that exist in Seattle?
  - Brad—It does, typically where there is a median, so the signs are less likely to be knocked over. We are looking into this more with Vision Zero.
- Maria—Can we talk more about camera ticketing? I think Brad or Hester said that maybe we don’t want to go in that direction because it ultimately supports the carceral system and is punitive. Do you see this as a tool in the long run?
  - Hester—I see it as a tool and a medium term fix. It takes bias out of an immediate interaction with a police officer. One of the most compelling things against enforcement by law enforcement is because it is only happening where and when someone is on the clock. A camera is operating all day, so it is always working. I have also heard that speed radar feedback signs are effective and non-punitive. There is also still opportunity for bias in automated enforcement depending on where they are placed. Also, sworn law officers have to review the cameras, which requires police funding and personnel. There are also broader arguments around privacy and if they lead to more policing.
  - Brad—Hester did a great job explaining that. It is a proven tool that cameras can reduce collisions, but there are concerns about where red light cameras and school zone cameras are placed. An example of how bias can affect camera placement is that the streets that are the most unsafe are the streets that have not historically been invested in and are in under-invested communities that have higher levels of poverty or disparities. We want to reduce red light running and speeding, but we also don’t want a ticket to destroy someone’s life. There is a grey area. Tickets can be the first step for someone going to collections or losing their job and we do not want to support that cycle.
- Emily Davis—Maria also brought up Lake City Way and missing crosswalks in the chat. Maria said that Lake City Way has been missing marked crosswalks for months since WSDOT did repaving in this area. I know WSDOT and SDOT work together in the city, but how does that partnership work? We would like to know more about how SDOT works with WSDOT and SDOT.
  - Brad—Thank you for bringing that up and I will follow up on the missing crosswalks there. We do work with WSDOT regularly and there can be a back and forth, but generally we can move faster than normal when there is a safety concern. For example, we worked with WSDOT on getting posts up on Aurora because there was a safety concern.

- Emily D.—Regarding jaywalking, does SDOT look at SPD enforcement for jaywalking to see if there are disparities and racial biases?
  - Brad—Yes, we are looking at this and we are working with the Office of Inspector General to look at data for traffic infractions for the last five years. We have seen a large uptick in jaywalking specific tickets in the last two years. Some of our preliminary data show that we had an average of 10-12 jaywalking tickets per year around 2016, but in 2019 we had about 80 jaywalking tickets, which is a major increase. It is not a lot compared to driving tickets, but it is the primary ticket given to people walking (about 75% of pedestrian tickets) compared to about 25% of tickets for not following traffic signals. We are analyzing this data with OIG. SPD worked with the Center for Policing Equity to look at Terry stops, which is detainment when you stop someone. They are looking at detainment and we are looking at instances where people are stopped and ticketed, but not detained in any way. We are seeing trends that people of color, specifically Black individuals, are overrepresented by about a factor of 3 for Terry stops. We are seeing similar numbers for general traffic stops looking at the data so far, but we are still looking at the data.
- Emily D.—Thank you for this helpful information and for coming to talk and we are excited to continue to work together.

## Board Business

- Motion to approve July meeting minutes is seconded and approved by SPAB. Board realized that July meeting minutes we already approved previously.
  - Motion to approve August meeting minutes is seconded and approved by SPAB.
  - Jennifer—Good news, the meeting minutes are now up on the SPAB website, which was brought up by Greyson. Kudos to Polly and Eleen and I know that there are more website updates coming.
- Added to the agenda—Levy Oversight Committee update
  - Jennifer—The Levy Oversight Committee is looking at different pedestrian priorities like building new sidewalks, repairing current sidewalks, and striping crosswalks. This levy is a property tax and different from Sound Transit Benefit District, which is a car tab. I wanted to raise a concern about the Levy. SDOT reported out to LOC to say that there are two projects, the sidewalk repair program and new sidewalks programs that have issues. One problem for new sidewalks is crew availability. As an advisory board, I think this is an area we need to plug into and see what is going on. I think we should start stepping up here.
  - Emily Mannetti—I am curious if you have more information about how projects are rolling out across the city and where investments are being made. I am curious to know how and where things are being implemented. Do all neighborhoods get a few sidewalk repairs or are some neighborhoods prioritized?
    - Jennifer—This is a great question. I have access to a public facing dashboard that references the City's progress towards meeting its commitment and I will post it in the chat here  
[https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/city.of.seattle.transportation/viz/Levy\\_Dashboard\\_16141242942520/SafeRoutes](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/city.of.seattle.transportation/viz/Levy_Dashboard_16141242942520/SafeRoutes). I know some projects were paused because of Covid and we got a late report last year. I thought there was a commitment to come back for a more robust discussion, but we haven't heard much more which is concerning.

- Maria—Do we know more about what is being funded if it is not new sidewalks or sidewalk repair?
    - Jennifer—There hasn't been a discussion on what money is being spent on instead, but there is a slide that says that SDOT will share details on investments with LOC in October. I hope that SPAB will be consulted as one of the modal boards. I am trying to keep an eye on this with these meetings and thought I would see a jump on projects completed, so that was not great to learn last night.
    - Emily—This is relevant to next month's meeting, which is supposed to be the PMP progress report update.
- Vision Zero subcommittee update
  - Maria—We met tonight at 5:30 right before the meeting. We talked about what we want to accomplish for the rest of 2021. We talked through a few proposed action items:
    - Bringing awareness of Vision Zero to the Mayor and City Council to show that SPAB is speaking out about this, including clear calls to action to achieve VZ goals. We could get ideas for calls to action from Allison or Brad from VZ.
    - Reporting monthly on Vision Zero status numbers at the monthly meetings. We could share that after public comment to ground ourselves in the data.
    - Post about pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries on Twitter to amplify the data
  - Emily D—I think that these are great ideas and we can maybe do a vote on if we want to talk about pedestrian deaths at each meeting
  - Emily Mannetti—I think that's a great idea and during Covid a lot of people do not know what is going on around them
  - Emily D—I motion to include VZ stats during each meeting; Jennifer seconds and SPAB votes to include this during each meeting.
  - Maria—We will probably work with VZ for the calls to action and we can also bring that back to the board and maybe reach out to the modal boards to see if they want to be involved. It sounds like VZ wants the city to support some of the VZ strategies at the state level, so I think the best angle is for the City Council to support state policy around decriminalizing jaywalking and other things. The VZ committee will work on the letter.
  - Emily D—Thank you VZ for working on the letter and for working on all of this.
  - Maria—VZ subcommittee will likely be meeting at 4:30 before monthly meetings.
- Upcoming meetings
  - Public Space Management would like to come talk about the Safe Start Permit, which allows businesses to expand operations into the right of way. They are presenting a recommendation to the City Council in mid December and would like to talk about outreach with the board prior to making a recommendation. Is SPAB interested in having Public Space Management talk about this?
    - Emily Mannetti—I would like to hear about this program and learn about how the policy changed during Covid and how they are moving forward. It would be good to learn more about it prior to the meeting if we do discuss it.
    - Jennifer—I'm not in a rush to hear about this unless they want our feedback to influence the recommendation. Otherwise, I think it should wait until next year.
    - Polly will check in with Public Space Management to see if they want input from SPAB regarding the policy or if they just want to share information about the program.

- Emily D—Would you be interested in hearing about this program whether or not we can provide input? Several SPAB members are interested.
- Sound Transit meeting related to pedestrian deaths at the at-grade Sound Transit station
  - Akshali—We are likely having Sound Transit come to talk to the board at the November meeting, but they will need to check in closer to the date. Do we want them to present or should just have them come do a Q&A?
  - Emily D—I think it would be good for them to present on safety and things like FHWA regulations and then do a Q&A. What do others think?
  - Jennifer—I would like them to talk specifically about why there are certain safety measures in place at some stations, but not the Columbia City stations.
  - Akshali—It sounds like maybe we want it to be more open ended and have time for people to ask questions.
  - Erin—Maybe we can send them our questions in advance so they know what we are wondering about.
- October meeting
  - We are hoping to have the PMP Progress Report presentation in October, but it may depend on the timeline and approval from the Mayor's Office
- Next Steps on Just Cares letter
  - Maria—Last month, we voted to draft a letter and I wrote a letter and tried to be comprehensive, but I think we are missing a lot of pieces and information. I think maybe we should shelve this for now because we don't have all of the information that we need and I don't want it to come across as the board being in favor of sweeping the sidewalks. I want to take a step back because this is an accessibility issue, but I don't know if our voice is what needs to be in this conversation when we still have a lot of gaps in our own knowledge and stance here. What does everyone think?
  - Emily D—Yes, that makes sense that writing the letter helped us think through this. Perhaps we move this to the agenda planning meeting and we can continue to collaborate with SDOT and the City to try to figure out how their policies are morphing.
  - Jennifer—I think we are trying to navigate this carefully with nuance and making sure what we advocate for is humane.
  - Emily Mannetti—Have we heard from SDOT on what their plan is for encampments? My vote is that when there is a new administration, we have SDOT or someone from the Mayor's Office come talk to us about their plans.
  - Maria—If it is possible to get data on how frequently encampments are blocking sidewalk, that would help determine priority for how big of an issue this is.
  - Emily M—I used to work at the Downtown Seattle Association and they do a twice yearly account or more regularly, so they may have more up to date data on how many encampments are on sidewalks.
  - Emily D—I think they stopped doing those counts during Covid, but it is worth reaching out and seeing if we can get more data. I'll reach out to Downtown Seattle Association and ask if they have information about that and if anyone is tracking that information and then we can keep this on the docket for future meeting topics. This is still relevant and I think something worth discussing.
- World Day of Remembrance is Sunday, November 21

- Emily D—Tomorrow I am meeting with Seattle Greenways and other organizations to talk about what to do to remember people who were killed in traffic. One year there was a campaign where they posted white silhouettes of people where they were killed in traffic. Let me know if you have any ideas for the day this year or feel free to send me an email.

### **Public Comment**

- No public comment
- Emily D—Anything else the board wants to discuss?
- Emily M—This came up with my neighbors—related to charging EVs, you used to be able to get a permit to run charging cables, but it sounds like this is not something you can do anymore. When I walk around the neighborhood there are cords going across the sidewalk and it could be an accessibility issue.
  - Emily D—This is relevant because I just tripped on an EV charging cord.
  - Emily M—Also, we are encouraging the transition to electric vehicles to reduce greenhouse gases, but we don't want cords across the sidewalks everywhere. Something to talk about at a future meeting.
- Koko—Emily, when you go to the meeting to talk about the Day of Remembrance will you talk about SPAB so people know that they can come to us with problems?
  - Emily D—It is going to be a meeting with community leaders from different organizations who already know about SPAB, but I can bring this up again.
- Erin—The rapid flashing beacons are useless for people who are blind and DeafBlind because pedestrians don't know when the cars are stopping. I would like to see these banned and replaced with full stop signs.
  - Emily D—This is a good point and maybe we can talk about this with the people who come to present at the PMP Progress Report update

Meeting adjourned at 7:57.