



Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

May 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Stewards of the Pedestrian Master Plan

David Seater, Chair
Anna Zivarts, Vice Chair
Han-Jung Ko (Koko)
Emily Meltzer

Pending Confirmation:

Bianca Johnson
Debra Kahn
Jennifer Lehman
Emily Mannetti
Esti Mintz
Maria Sumner

Board Members Present: David Seater, Anna Zivarts, Han-Jung Ko (Koko), Emily Meltzer

Pending Board Members Present: Bianca Johnson, Debra Kahn, Jennifer Lehman, Emily Mannetti, Esti Mintz, Maria Sumner

Members of the Public:

Loren Schwartz
Steve Humphrey
Doug MacDonald
Andrew Moskowitz
Adrian E.
Andy Katz
Barbara Richter
Dave Slager
Emily Davis
Erica Barnett

Fran
Yingying Huang
Jack Lynch
Jimmy
Mark
M McCauley
Nelson
Shirley
Tracy Record
Approximately 10 call-in attendees

City Staff: Polly Membrino, Bradley Topol, Summer Jawson, Dusty Rasmussen, Dongho Chang, Belen Herrera

6:05 David called the meeting to order

Public Comment:

- Loren Schwartz—Supporter of Stay Healthy Streets, the addition of the Alki Stay Healthy Street has been transformative. The SHS has enabled families, children, and others to enjoy the park while social distancing. Some neighbors have called it “amazing, phenomenal, paradise”, etc. The change has been awesome.
- Steve Humphrey - Lives on Alki Ave and Harbor Ave. Walkable open streets are great in most cases, but there is very limited parking along Alki and Harbor and the long stretch of Alki that does not permit parking. This will force what is already a serious problem, pushing the negative

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

traffic into a one to one and a half mile stretch where there is racing, donuts, etc. that have been depicted on KOMO. There is already a good stretch for people to walk. The lighthouse is hard to get to and there is limited ADA parking. It needs to be seriously considered before a final decision is made on closing streets. We have been working with the police and the situation and problems have increased.

- Doug McDonald -First Avenue would be a great Stay Healthy Street, but the section by Fred Meyer is a “horror show”. This week bike share is over in Seattle, at least for now. According to Lime, it will only come back in connection with the scooter share program. There are a number of issues that need serious consideration, which is highlighted in the newsletter. We will see a huge influx of private micro-mobility devices and that will challenge sidewalks and the Pedestrian Advisory Board.
- Andrew Moskowitz—Lives in West Seattle. There are real concerns about changing streets without greater efforts to incorporate residents. The plan may have been advertised, but it was not well known. What are the traffic implications? These things need to be discussed and more open to public comment in the future.

SDOT Stay Healthy Streets Presentation Discussion:

Summer Jawson is the program owner for Stay Healthy Streets

Bradley Topol runs the Vision Zero program

Dusty Rasmussen is the manager of Signal Operations

- Stay Healthy Streets began in response to the closures around the cities and crowding of parks and parking lot closures.
 - SDOT heard calls for opening streets to allow residents to be healthy in their communities
 - Most sidewalks are less than six feet wide and the public right of way allows people to socially distance
 - Stay Healthy Streets are based on Neighborhood Greenways, which are anon-arterial streets that have 20 MPH signage, traffic calming, stop signs, and other pedestrian-friendly features
- SDOT looked at Racial Equity Index, OPCD GIS maps showing open restaurants, long stretches of Neighborhood Greenways, etc. to determine SHS
- Other SHS were near parks to alleviate crowding and facilitate walking to parks

Q&A

- Vision Zero program and others are looking into opening SHS in more dense areas that lack Neighborhood Greenways
 - Looking into expanding into other neighborhoods, but there are challenges including arterial street crossings
 - There are some Neighborhood Greenways planned for 2020, but are temporarily stalled due to crew social distancing
- Quick implementation of SHS includes A-frame signs and temporary signs, but permanent changes may include utilizing more durable materials and tactical urbanism at intersections that are non-arterial
- Debra: How are you going to make the signs accessible to people who are DeafBlind?
 - SDOT would like to hear suggestions from SPAB and DeafBlind community
 - Debra will put Summer from SDOT in touch with OM
 - More permanent materials may be more accessible to DeafBlind community
 - Having signs in standard place will help people who are Blind or DeafBlind navigate
 - May be opportunities to add Braille on signs
- Anna: Some routes are too hilly and not accessible to all ages and mobilities. How can we make routes through more accessible areas?
 - SDOT will be accelerating Neighborhood Greenways and focus on connections from dense housing areas to services that people need to access
- Jennifer: How is SDOT tracking usage of streets? What are data to track success?
 - SDOT has done about 64 observations of SHS
 - Average of about 16 people using the SHS per observation
 - Wide variety of use—walking, biking, rolling, etc.
 - Beach Drive SHS had about 88 people per mile, one of the most used
 - Some SHS were implemented to relieve congestion near/in parks
 - About twice as many people use SHS on weekends vs weekdays
 - Pre and post-implementation observations show about a fourfold increase on SHS
 - Observed 90% drop in number of people driving along SHS
- Bianca: How were SHS received in different communities, especially communities of color?
 - There is a problem with implicit bias and the way we need to understand how people of different cultures utilize streets differently.

- o SDOT wants to listen voices of people of color regarding SHS
 - o There have been comments about how to change signs to be more inclusive and educational
- David: Oakland is building a large network of pedestrian-focused streets. Does SDOT have a target or vision for what the network might look like?
 - o SDOT is receiving requests everyday for SHS in different neighborhoods, both building off the existing network and in new areas.
 - o SDOT is working with the Mayor's office to help give people more notice when there are more SHS that will be opening in different areas.
- Koko: Many neighbors in Greenlake are excited about SHS in the Greenlake area, but some people are inconvenienced by the SHS in the area. Community members are wondering how long the SHS will last.
 - o Parks coordination SHS are now called Keep Moving Streets.
 - o There is not intention to keep the street near Greenlake closed permanently, unlike other SHS
 - o The intention is to reopen Greenlake way and there is a project to install protected bike lanes that will link the bike network and improve mobility
 - o Some people may need to take longer driving by going on a different street, but there is a commitment to Vision Zero in the city to prioritize safety
- Anna: Some of the Greenways in south Seattle require people to push the rapid flashing beacon and otherwise cars don't necessarily yield to pedestrians and cyclists. Is it possible to add stop signs for these crossing to help pedestrians, particularly people with low vision or reduced mobility?
 - o Vision Zero is planning to add stop for pedestrian signs at these areas, which have been successful in other cities
 - o Painted posts/bump outs can be added in these areas to alert drivers and make pedestrians more visible at arterials
 - o Looking at strategies city-wide
- David: Are there updated signals for pedestrian safety?
 - o Traffic volumes are down 50-60%, so the traffic cycle length is reduced which reduces wait time for pedestrians
 - o SDOT is starting to put signals into automatic recall so the walk sign comes on at the same time as the green light, particularly in the urban center areas to decrease pedestrian interaction and potential for crowding
- David: Will signals be going back to the way they were before or are there plans to keep this indefinitely?
 - o There is a significant amount of effort to put signals into recall

- o Right now the focus is to put signals on recall that might stay that way indefinitely
- Jennifer: With the emergency response, do you have to reassess project lists or are you able to accelerate projects?
 - o For signal operations, the program is in emergency response mode for COVID-19 response and West Seattle Bridge response
 - o The bike master plan program is looking at what projects can accelerate during this time, but there is a balance between crew availability with social distancing and the need to accelerate projects for mobility, particularly for West Seattle
 - o Vision Zero was able to accelerate leading pedestrian interval implementation along with the signals team
 - o For speed limits work for Vision Zero, the project already was accelerated and is proceeding on schedule city-wide
- David: There has been some criticism around streets blocking access to ADA parking spots, which makes parks inaccessible to some residents.
 - o There will be some ADA spots added at the parks next to ramps in order to provide better access for people who need close ADA access
 - o SDOT and Parks have been meeting three times per week to better understand what the problems and challenges are. Parks was aware of the issue and has started opening ADA parking spots at some of the closed locations.
- Anna: As the parking lots are closed, particularly at Seward Park, many people are parking up the hill. It is not accessible to many folks to use neighborhood parking due to the steep hill. Currently, there is no parking accessible for people who use handicap spots. There is conversation to be had around adaptive bicycles being more accessible to some folks than walking.
 - o SDOT will share these comments with Parks.
 - o SDOT and Parks want to make ADA parking and accessibility to parks even better in the long run.

Other Comments/Questions:

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Public Comment

- Andy Moskowitz—Appreciate time that people volunteer their time to help the city. Given health concerns during COVID-19, more people are going to use private vehicles. With the West Seattle Bridge closure, there is no choice, but to drive south to Roxbury. With limited number of streets in West Seattle, there are impacts of safety, noise, and pollution for people living in the

neighborhood. It is important to acknowledge the negative impacts of these closed streets.

- Steve Humphrey—The idea of Stay Healthy Streets are good, but they became permanent quickly. What public comment was called for and how was that addressed? Was there an Environmental Impact Statement for these changes? It seems that the cart is before the horse if the EIS is necessary. There was a ramp removed and one handicap parking spot near the residence is not marked as handicapped, which has been a problem prior to the pandemic and it seems to be a lack of interest in finishing the project.
 - Response: SDOT will be talking to the public about changes to SHS. Most locations are Neighborhood Greenways that went through public processes and were intended to have low traffic volumes. SDOT will engage with the community as we look to make these permanent to avoid unintended consequences.

- Anonymous—The portion of the P-shaped Stay Healthy Street goes through High Point community and the map doesn't show that it goes past High Point Commons Park, Triangle Park, and other parks. There is a lot of open space that the route goes through and maybe the route should stop by the playfield area so there is still an opportunity for a loop. The route does not connect anyone to services. It sounds like SDOT is forcing the Stay Healthy Streets on the High Point neighborhood by educating residents that it is there rather than asking for input.
 - SDOT is aware of the parks in the High Point neighborhood and the events that occur in that area. The reason the parks don't show on the map is how fast SDOT made the maps and they aren't city parks so they have to be manually added. The High Point community has been a prioritization for outreach about making SHS permanent or not.

- Resident near Beach Drive (Molly?)—Thrilled about the way the street is being used for biking, walking, skateboarding, etc.

- Jack Lynch, Capitol Hill resident—Wants to emphasize the importance of SHS in dense areas like Capitol Hill. There are lots of residents who don't rely on cars and SDOT should prioritize SHS in these areas.
 - SDOT is implementing Greenway on Republican and looks forward to implementing Stay Healthy Streets

- Doug McDonald—Any suggestion that SHS can piggyback on EIS is not going to stand. The SEPA procedures should be used so that residents can make public comment. There has been dissatisfaction with SDOT's SEPA compliance.

- Dave Slager from Maple Leaf—Really like the SHS, which seem like a great low cost strategy where people can still access their homes. Would love to see the

92nd Street gap by Greenwood to have a Neighborhood Greenway or Stay Healthy Street

- Adrian from Belltown—Would it be possible to reduce the number of lanes so that other lanes can be used by pedestrians?
 - There has been about a 50% reduction of vehicles traveling and approximately 10% increase in vehicle speeds. We have not seen a reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Pedestrian injury and fatality rates are just below average. SDOT is looking at corridors where we can balance the needs of mobility and vehicles and pedestrian mobility to reduce pedestrian exposure.
- Andy Katz—Big fan of Stay healthy Streets along Columbia. Thanks to SDOT for rolling out the program.
- Margaret McCauley—Family is a big fan of the Stay Healthy Streets in the Central Area
- Gloria—Please make the Alki corridor a healthy street by painting crosswalks
- Ying Ying—How are Stay Healthy Streets selected? Are any coming to the Pinehurst area?
 - SDOT is looking at accelerating Neighborhood Greenways in the Pinehurst area. They will be constructed this year if we have crew availability.
- Shirley Savelle—Thanks to SDOT for the Stay Healthy Streets. It keeps the family from getting on each other's nerves and the family can walk together on the street including her husband who walks with balance poles. Really happy about being able to walk to the grocery store and run errands along the Stay Healthy Streets.

Other public comment from chat:

- Nelson—Question: If part of the reason you were doing this was to help the Coronavirus six feet thing, why is this permanent?
- Dave Slager—When people use SHS, some will naturally spread out to the sidewalks for social distancing or separation from cars. Why omit sidewalk peds from the counts? Pre-implementation counts likely include sidewalk peds, yes?
- Fran—I'm from West Seattle, and honestly, this looks like a boondoggle for the people who live along the coastline at Alki/beach drive, to entirely

'gate' their area and prevent access to all. Everyone who comes to that area now does NOT live there and so must park in the neighborhoods around there, which are already pretty overburdened. Seattle is amazing in giving coastline access to all. Results of this permanent approach: city-sanctioned gated community for the coastal elites. There are few children living there, most who come will be driven by their parents, who must then park in an already overburdened area.

- Dave Slager—That's my able-bodied experience on the 92nd St crosstown greenway as well: Cars don't stop for the rapid flashing beacons until you stick yourself out into the street.
- Fran—Plus, with my MS, I must then park further away and walk in to get to the park which until recently I could stop at in a moment, along with many others. There are so many other areas where this would make sense, LIKE around the Alki community center, where there are children aplenty and families who would appreciate the traffic reduction.
- Ying ying Huang—I would also like to know down the future, what are the next steps, would we be looking at more permanent design changes? conversion to complete streets in design?

Board Business

- Board confirmations are still on hold, but hopefully confirmations will happen in June
- David will send out meeting minutes, which the board can vote on next month
- Anna—Some non-arterial streets are used as cut throughs for cars avoiding Rainier, there have not been instances of traffic increasing on neighboring streets due to the closure to through traffic. It would be good to encourage SDOT to share data that shows that we're not creating mini arterials on other streets.
- Emily Meltzer—Hoping we could have a virtual retreat, especially to welcome new members.
- Carol and Chaiytan have left the board, so we are looking for some people to fill those seats.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55