

November 2021 Seattle Transit Advisory Board meeting

Minutes, 11/17/21

Board members: Erin Tighe, Emily Walton Percival, Alex Wakeman-Rouse, Sandro Pani, Art Kuniyuki, Carla Saulter, Andy Martin, Michelle Zeidman.

Board-elect: Amin Amos, Autumn Sharp.

SDOT: Nico Martinucci, Cliff Mountjoy-Venning, Ben Smith, Sam Zimbabwe, Venu Nemani.
Public: Mike Dee, Hasan Nikopour Deilami, Linda Stroud.

Andy called the meeting to order. Introductions.

Remarks from SDOT's Director and City Traffic Engineer

Sam Zimbabwe & Venu Nemani, SDOT.

- Sam thanked board members for their service, especially while remote.
- Impressive ridership numbers coming out of Northgate, and it's the beginning of 4 years of openings. Progress on Madison RapidRide and Delridge RapidRide, making transit more reliable and safer to access.
- Venu introduced himself and looks forward to getting to know us.
- Question: will the West Seattle Bridge open on schedule? Yes, mid-2024.

TAB Officer Nominations

- Erin nominated Michelle Zeidman to be co-chair
- Andy nominated Keiko Budeck to be co-chair

Approval of October meeting minutes

Andy Martin moves to approve, Michelle seconds. No objections. Erin, Alex, and Carla abstain. Minutes approved.

Seattle Comprehensive Plan Update

Aja Hazelhoff & Michael Hubner, OPCD

Presentation:

- Part 2, following Seattle Transportation Plan update last month
- First time Seattle Transportation Plan and Comp Plan updates are happening simultaneously.
- Comp plan updated every 8 years, guides housing and job growth for the next 20 years.
- Core values include race/social equity, environmental stewardship, community, economic opportunity and security
- Growth of at least 112,000 housing units and 169,500 jobs by 2044
- Exploring new ideas, including designating new centers/villages, more housing options outside centers/villages, "15-minute" neighborhoods, growth around transit
- Will include maritime and industrial strategy for low barrier, well-paying jobs

- Transportation chapter in plan, provides high level guidance to SDOT for its modal plan and Seattle Transportation Plan
- Community engagement is huge for this plan, leading with race and equity and providing transparency. Prioritizing resources to engage with a variety of communities who have not historically been engaged with, in recognition of racially inequitable outcomes in the past
- Multi-year project, with adoption in 2024. 2022: growth strategy alternatives and EIS scoping, and development of policy focus areas. Draft EIS will be in 2023. Community engagement throughout with heaviest engagement in next year.
- TAB should consider how we want to be involved in first and second phases (next year), and how our issues and values can inform the Comp Plan and align our work.

Board Questions:

- Emily: What is the percent of current units/jobs is over current numbers? What's the pop growth and pop/unit? Answer: the ratio of housing:jobs has more housing:job than currently in the city, moving us to providing more housing near job centers. Will follow-up with more stats. Overall population growth: approaching 1 million people by mid-2040s.
- Erin: To what extent is the Comp Plan an enforceable document? Read 2035 plan which had good goals and metrics, but when it comes to applying the plan in programs, not always alignment there. Answer: It's a big doc and most are addressed in first 200 pages. Enforceable under GMA, zoning and modal plans need to consistent with Comp Plan. Intent to have a plan that is clear with regard to goals/outcomes. High level policy document, and there is a lot of other work required to implement the plan, including budget uncertainty and work of other players (transit agencies, for example). Implementation happens in modal plans, budget, etc. Comp plan sets direction and strong guidance.
- Art: does the Plan use the Metro Connects plan, which runs through 2040? Answer: will be looking at the plans for transit into the future. When looking at future areas for growth and transit-supportable growth, will refer to Metro Connects.
- Alex: can you speak a little bit about the vision of marrying transit plans and land use? Single family zoning is such a big elephant in the room. I'm not sure how transit priorities should change if single family zoning doesn't. Answer: overarching framework that transit is a big part of growth strategy, but starting with different land use densities across city and transit routes. Council has asked for one alternative that includes more "missing middle" housing like townhouses in single family zoning. Also expect to study increasing density around transit.

Next steps:

- Expect future coordination and they will come back in the future when there is more info to provide, and/or they can provide additional info in the future via TAB liaison too.

Employer Shared Transit Stop Program

Ben Smith, SDOT

Presentation:

- Hope this will go to Council in early 2022. Director's Rule simultaneously.
- Employer shuttles are authorized by state law. Historically shuttles were treated as temporary use of curb zones, with Shuttle Vehicle Load Zones (and associated permit fee).

- April 2017: SDOT, Metro, Microsoft, Children's Hospital joint pilot program with evaluation report issued in October 2018, no negative impacts on transit/roadway operations, suggested best practices.
- Policy development in 2018-2019. Program development paused due to COVID, most shuttle service ceased due to pandemic.
- Goals include maintaining public transit as the priority with shuttles as complimentary, filling gaps. Want to increase employee travel options, reduce SOV travel. Consolidating bus zones and shuttle zones to be more efficient with curbspace.
- Going to City Council with legislation to change municipal code, create fee structures and application process. Also with authority to collect fees and manage applications, zones, permits, stops.
- Director's Rule will set details of application process.
- Proposing to double permit fee and set a fee structure, add a data requirement as permit condition (routing, stops, passenger utilization, delay/crash incidents).
- Load zones: formal application process, hourly review fee for applications, reimbursement for signage/paint to install new zones
- Cost recovery will be better with this new approach
- Sharing transit stops: priority is to not harm transit. Shared transit stop is a bus zone which a specific shuttle operator is approved to use. With some stops excluded from the beginning, including RapidRide stations, transit lanes, layover, unprotected bike facilities (10% of all stops). Approval based on transit zone length and roadway ops, bus boarding activity and service frequency, shuttle capacity/frequency/boarding policy.
- Setting max at 20 applications per employer/year with max 50 shared stops/employer. And max of 250 total stops citywide (3,000 bus stops citywide).
- Intend to confer with Metro on application and preliminary SDOT decision
- Open to alternate solutions, like shuttle vehicle load zone, existing passenger-load curb uses, different bus stop, etc.
- \$5k/stop/year use fee for shuttle operators.
- All stops renewed annually, not permanent. Enough flexibility to change if transit conditions change.
- Trying to avoid/learn lessons from SF's problems with tech shuttles.
- Equity considerations/perceptions: no pilot stops in the South end, no surprising because of demographics of current employees (is this a benefit or a burden?)
- Program launch expected Spring 2022. Review of fees, etc. after two year.

Board Questions:

- Emily: what goals or metrics is the fee structure set to? Does it account for state of good repair? Etc. Answer: broader conversation about how to set the fees and how they should work, the levels were set to strike a balance between charging what we can and encouraging this tip of activity. Trying to be revenue neutral for staff time, but not structured as revenue cost center to pay for more than administration of the program.
- Alex: what are the differences between the current definition of a shuttle vehicle and the updated definition? Answer: technical update.
- Amin: where do the fees go once they're collected, just SDOT? Answer: yes, go to SDOT for program admin.
- Andy: how would you determine when shuttle service was not a complement but competing with a public transit option? Answer: that's an art, not a science. Why we confer with Metro.

Example, Children's runs a shuttle that supplements service on the 65 bus and this keeps those folks from driving who would not have taken the bus.

- Carla: Looks like there has been a lot of thoughtful work on this, but fundamentally have a problem with the concept. The bus is for everyone and the bus stop is an extension of that. For buses to stop at these stops that not everyone can ride, doesn't feel right to me.

Follow-up:

- Direct comments to sharedstoppilot@seattle.gov

Board Liaison/Workgroups/Project Committees

- Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee – Emily – portfolio update from SDOT, gleaned that there were goals from 2015 and 2018 and reviewed them, met a broad variety of goals for those two sets of goals. One area not meeting goal is bridge seismic goals due to costs. Councilmember Pederson mentioned STBD reserve level and the possibility of a countywide measure makes renewal risk low. // Nico: current STBD reserve goal of \$20 million to ramp down from expected service level down to zero, contractually obligated to have this. Next likely time for countywide measure could be 2024, bigger conversation if that moves forward.
- STBD Priorities Project Committee – Sandro and Andy talked about STBD priorities and want to form a committee to work with SDOT on this. Also, Emily, Michelle, and Erin are interested. Andy motions to form a committee to work on Seattle STBD investment priorities consisting of Andy, Sandro, Emily, Erin, and Michelle. Sandro sections. No objections. Motion passes.

Recruitment/Reappointment Update

- Autumn and Amin are board members-elect. Will be appointed by Mayor's office.
- Council appointee to be determined.
- Get Engaged member to be determined.

Board Officer Elections

- Andy motioned to approve Keiko and Michelle as co-chairs. Carla seconds. No objections, abstentions. Motion approves. Keiko and Michelle are officially co-chairs.

Major Items updates:

- ORCA recovery cards for essential workers, 1700 participants used 175,000 times saving \$0.5 million since summer. Some of most used cards in any program. Set to expire in end of year.
- Mayor announced expansion to ORCA opportunity fund to kids living 2 miles from school. About 800 student sign-ups so far, working with schools to boost enrollment.
- Metro Ridership update: systemwide slow recovery since Fall 2019, with 48% recovery for weekday, 66% for Saturdays, and 64% for Sunday. Weekend ridership has recovered more than weekday ridership. About 200,000 daily rides on weekdays. About 1/3 of rides are mid-day, 1/3 PM. Ridership recovery by route and top 10 routes.

Public Comment

- Hasan: do you talk about bridges? (Answer: only as it relates to transit.)

Potential December Agenda Items

- Reaching out to Mitchell Lloyd re: Metro safe reform efforts.
- Work planning

Announcements

- Last meeting for Alex and Carla, we thank them for their service! Alex and Carla said farewell and thanks.
- Erin and Andy said a few words about how they enjoying being co-chairs and are looking forward to continuing to serve on the board.

Meeting adjourned at 8:03pm.