



**City of Seattle
Seattle Planning Commission**

David Cutler and Amalia Leighton, Co-Chairs
Vanessa Murdock, Executive Director

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 10, 2014
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Co-Chair David Cutler, Josh Brower, Keely Brown, Colie Hough-Beck, Bradley Khouri, Grace Kim, Marj Press, Morgan Shook

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Catherine Benotto, Luis Borrero, Jeanne Krikawa, Amalia Leighton, Kevin McDonald, Tim Parham, Matt Roewe, Maggie Wykowski

COMMISSION STAFF

Jesseca Brand - Policy Analyst, Diana Canzoneri-Senior Analyst, Robin Magonegil – Administrative Assistant, Vanessa Murdock - Executive Director

GUESTS

Susan McLaughlin, SDOT

IN ATTENDANCE

Mark Ostrow, Krystal Brun

Please Note: Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript but instead represent key points and the basis of the discussion.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair David Cutler called the meeting to attention at 3:01 pm.

▪ **Chair's Report**

- Co-Chair David Cutler

Co-Chair Cutler reviewed the upcoming meetings and noted that the March 27 draft minutes would not be approved due to a lack of quorum. He added that the meeting would adjourn at 4:10 pm. and go into an Executive work session until 5:30 pm.

▪ **Briefing: Right-of-Way Improvement Manual**

- Susan McLaughlin, SDOT

Co-Chair Cutler welcomed Ms. McLaughlin.

Co-Chair Cutler called for disclosures and recusals.

Disclosures & Recusals:

- Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck disclosed that SDOT is a client of her firm, HBB Landscape Architecture.
- Commissioner Josh Brower disclosed that his law firm, Veris Law Group PLLC, and he represent owners and developers of residential and commercial/industrial property in Seattle that may be subject to and use the Right of Way Improvement Manual.

Ms. McLaughlin gave a presentation on the Right-of-Way Improvement Manual.

Co-Chair Cutler commented on the manner in which new ideas are implemented in the streetscape and noted that one of the things he noticed in other cities was their ability to try new things in real time. He wondered to what extent SDOT was thinking about allowing this type of iterative process. Ms. McLaughlin replied that there was nothing to prohibiting this approach and noted that the manual they could actually encourage people to be creative and adaptable. She added that this concept is very in-line with SDOT's current thinking about street activation and reallocation of public space by employing interim design strategies.

Commissioner Brower asked if the American Associate of State Highway and Transportation Officials "Green Book" and the "Urban Street Design Guide" by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) would be incorporated within the Right-of-Way Improvement Manual (ROWIM) or how would they be used in the update process. Ms. McLaughlin responded that the ROWIM update would need to be consistent with applicable federal and state regulatory requirements, particularly ASHTO and WSDOT's Local Agency Guidelines. She added that, given WSDOT's recent endorsement of the NACTO urban street design guide and SDOT's role on the steering committee for that document, this update would utilize the "Guide" to ensure Seattle is encouraging and enabling best practice street design.

Commissioner Hough Beck asked how prescriptive the manual would be in terms of the maintenance and updating of street furniture and street trees. Ms. McLaughlin replied that the manual update will try to provide more specificity about street furniture, trees and landscaping and will offer more illustrative guidelines about these street elements. She added that if private developers construct non-standard street furnishings, it is typically the responsibility of private developers to maintain those areas. Ms. McLaughlin continued that, in regards to prescription, they are investigating ways to ensure high quality furnishings and how SDOT can provide ongoing maintenance for those assets. She added that at this point, relative to the role of private development, SDOT is considering a variety of things from incentives to land use code requirements.

Commissioner Khouri asked what does the last step "adopted into the director's rule," mean. Ms. McLaughlin answered that the ROWIM is adopted as a Directors Rule and this requires public notice and after that process is complete it goes to the Director's Office of DPD and SDOT for signature. She added that this is such an

important piece of legislation they will be briefing Council as well and will likely lengthen the public process to make sure that they get it right.

Co-Chair Cutler stated that DPD and SDOT have two different roles in this as well as neighborhoods having a say in how things might be developed. He asked how they were planning to tackle this issue. Ms. McLaughlin replied that there are many thoughts on this topic of improved collaboration between DPD and SDOT. She added that it is part of the reason why they have created the Early Phase Development program. Ms. McLaughlin continued that many stakeholders would agree that SDOT should get involved early and they are currently identifying ways to do that in order to improve better urban design outcomes and offer clarity to developers. She added that SDOT is working closely with DPD now so that the updates of the ROWIM and Comprehensive Plan are consistent.

Co-Chair Cutler wondered to what extent the manual will look at how utilities are run and placed throughout the City and are those placements part of the Right-of-Way Improvement manual. Ms. McLaughlin stated that there is a utility section within the manual. She added that they will be working directly with Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle City Light to update those sections and that there will be a Utility Chapter lead, who will be in charge of identifying those opportunities. She noted that, relative to green infrastructure, there is an interdepartmental team that has been working for a year to develop new typologies that will work within the Right of Way. Ms. McLaughlin continued that this is a good head start on updating the ROWIM sections pertaining to Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI).

Commissioner Brown asked, if based on the changes to this model, are any changes to the Comprehensive Plan foreseen. Ms. McLaughlin replied that they are running on parallel tracks and DPD and SDOT have a good working relationship and there is interest to strengthen the tie between these two documents.

Commissioner Kim stated that she appreciated that SDOT wants to see that the streets are for more than just auto traffic. She wondered how SDOT is planning to roll this product out and how are the SDOT front line staff going to be trained on this new manual and its new approach. Ms. McLaughlin replied that the update to the manual would simply offer new guidelines and standards. She added that the front line staff, so to speak, is responsible for checking the standards and adhering to it. Ms. McLaughlin stated that the manual would be shared with the reviewers during the update and she anticipated a few training sessions once it is approved.

Co-Chair Cutler stated that, even with the update, it would be difficult to foresee all the problems and possible solutions within street use. He stated that he would echo Grace's concern on the review process and would think as much about street design as the Design Review Process does about building facades. He added that it appears to be more about checking the box rather than solving the problems and enhancing the public realm. Ms. McLaughlin stated that they are looking for ways where SDOT can have a more relevant role in the DPD permitting process, perhaps through an early design meeting with SDOT. She added that they see this as a great opportunity to present SDOT thoughts early and be in a parallel track with the DPD process.

Commissioner Khouri asked how this might affect what is happening on the waterfront and if there are going to be ways that this can influence that project. Ms. McLaughlin stated that there are two ways that the manual may influence the Waterfront: the first one being that the ROWIM will offer street guidance for SDOT led projects; capital projects follow the same guidance as private development and Washington State may

incorporate the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide into their Local Agency Guidelines. She added that if that happens, then it could be assumed that the typologies offered in that guide will be consistent with our ROWIM update.

Co-Chair Cutler stated the reference to the Climate Action Plan made him think of sea level rise. He wondered how SDOT is looking at the streets that might be impacted by sea level rise. Ms. McLaughlin replied that the consideration of climate adaptation is part of SDOT's Complete Streets analysis. She added that they do this type of review when they undertake capital projects. She continued that the Complete Streets Assessment is a great tool but is currently not being used by private development. Ms. McLaughlin stated that SDOT is considering ways to incorporate it into all new development.

Diana Canzoneri wondered if there are certain parts of the manual that are targeted to safety and making it more hospitable for families with kids. Ms. McLaughlin responded that the neighborhood greenways, public space management objectives and new street types are ways in which family friendly design can be addressed in the manual update.

Commissioner Brown asked at what phase they would be looking at Comprehensive Plan amendments. Ms. McLaughlin answered that they are doing that right now and throughout the update. She added that they are working within the Comprehensive Plan Interdepartmental Team to see if they can continue to bring the two updates and final products together.

Commissioner Kim encouraged engagement with communities of color and that SDOT look at the planning that they are doing through the lens of equity. Ms. McLaughlin stated that is absolutely part of the ongoing assessment.

Co-Chair Cutler thanked Ms. McLaughlin.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Ostrow stated that he is on the Queen Anne Community Council and that he is very excited about the update on ROWIM. He stated that in looking at the existing manual there are two particular street types of interest to him: the local street connectors and commercial connectors. He noted that the adjacent uses are single family and as a dad, it would be good to have some safety and traffic calming that would benefit families.

ADJOURNMENT

Co-Chair Cutler adjourned the meeting at 4:11 pm.