



Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

Jennifer Lehman, Co-Chair
Emily Davis, Co-Chair
Erin Fitzpatrick
David Flasterstein
Bianca Johnson
Emily Mannetti
Esti Mintz
Maria Sumner

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) Meeting Minutes

March 09, 2022 - Virtual Remote Meeting

Attendees:

Board Members Present

Jennifer Lehman, Co-Chair
Emily Davis, Co-Chair
Erin Fitzpatrick
Bianca Johnson
Emily Mannetti

Esti Mintz
Maria Sumner
David Flasterstein, Get Engaged Member

Members of the Public

Polly Membrino, SDOT
Emily Burns, SDOT
Jinny Green, SDOT
Brian Dougherty, SDOT
Tom Hewitt, SDOT
Ankur
Bob Svercl
Bryan Townley
Jon Morgan

Christopher Robertson
Doug MacDonald
Robin Briggs
Sarah Udelhofen
Trip Allen
Richard Gelb
At least one other member of the public
joined by phone

Welcome, Introductions, and Vision Zero Update

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.

- Pedestrian fatalities have been trending upward, but there were no fatalities in February and none so far in March
- Two people have died so far this year in traffic collisions (one person walking, one person biking)

Public Comment

- Doug: I could not get my comment in the last meeting, so I want to talk about scooters. We need a good evaluation and we need to get scooters off the sidewalk. There is a new person at SDOT from Santa Monica and it sounds like this person was instrumental in Santa Monica and did a fantastic job. I regard Emily Burns and Jinny Green as two hard working civil servants at SDOT. They are great and they are trying to do great things, but we need serious money committed to this program. I look forward to their presentation tonight and I admire both of them, but we need very tough questions about when and how money will be allocated to this program.

-City Council Resolution
28791

Sidewalk StoryMap Presentation, Emily Burns – SDOT

- Emily Burns: I am an asset manager with the Seattle Department of Transportation. I have worked here since 2006 and as an asset manager we look at the different assets that SDOT is in charge of and in this case I am looking at sidewalks. Sidewalks unfortunately have not had a large infusion of cash, so we are trying to demonstrate the need for sidewalks by having the data.
- Most of you have seen the vision, mission, and values at SDOT including things like equity, safety, and mobility.
- I have invited some of you to review the StoryMap tool and we hope you keep the SDOT values in mind as you review the tool.
- The tool is based on an ESRI program like some other tools at SDOT. We know that well maintained sidewalks are especially important for people with vision impairments and mobility challenges. We would like to partner with businesses and residents to help with maintenance.
- The project tool fits into a previous assessment in 2017 and the 2021 Sidewalk Repair report which was delivered to City Council.
- We want to make sure before the tool goes out to the general public that we have caught critical salient points and received feedback. The project team includes people from the ADA program, Sidewalk Program Manager, and others at SDOT and the City.
- The Sidewalk Assessments in 2018 and later years revealed challenges with sidewalks including cracks and other disrepair. In 2021 the City requested an independent audit and there was a large concurrence of the value of a report that SDOT worked on with the Evans School program.
- Regarding scope, the Sidewalk StoryMap has multiple tabs including an overview and disclaimer, information for property owners and occupants, information about new and upcoming sidewalks and walkways, and an overview of the sidewalk assessment including existing conditions.
- There are pop-up details in the StoryMap tool that allow people to click on different links and pop-ups. There is also a tab on accessibility including language translation services and other options.
- There is a tab on sidewalk maintenance which discusses the backlog of need and looks at different types of mitigation including shims and bevels. Asphalt shims are temporary fixes that can last for a few years. Bevels can be long term or permanent improvements depending on if there are underlying tree roots.
- There is also a section highlighting specific sidewalk repair projects throughout the city. There are boxes on the lefthand side of the screen that talk about what type of repair we used and we prioritized repair at this particular location (e.g. it was near a school, in a highly disadvantaged neighborhood, etc.)
- The largest section of the StoryMap is for property owners and occupants and explains their responsibilities. We have an explanation for why it is important that sidewalks are clear of vegetation and code compliant.
- There is a section on ground issues such as leaves, snow, etc. and there are embedded videos created by Rooted in Rights and Disability Rights WA that show why having clear sidewalks is important. There are also other benefits for clearing out leaves and debris related to stormwater and drainage. We also show examples of a clean up that Seattle Neighborhood Greenways performed and why it was valuable for people with limited sight or mobility.
- We also have sections about where to park bike share bikes, how to route cords to electric vehicles on the street so they don't impact users, and other related uses.
- We also have a section on street trees because trees and sidewalks don't always get along. We have a map of all trees with symbols by ownership such as SDOT owned, WSDOT owned, privately owned, etc. You can also click on the map to see more about the tree species or other information.

- We have been building a dataset with our Seattle IT team, which allows us to update the information when there are sidewalk repairs or new sidewalk observations. You can also search by location (e.g. Dearborn and 6th) and it will take you to that location. The information is available for download if you would like to do additional research.
- We also have content on the site about why some neighborhoods don't have the same level of sidewalks as others, a lot of which has to do with annexation of different neighborhoods over time. We also highlight new examples and projects that include before and after projects. We are also updating our sidewalk conditions on a regular basis and the data is updated within a week.
- We have reached out to a lot of people to be beta testers of this tool. We would like the SPAB members to be part of the beta tester group, if you are interested. Please email me or Polly if you want to be a beta tester.

Q&A:

- Jon Morgan (public): Why doesn't the city trim trees above sidewalks when they trim for the 14' clearance over streets?
 - Emily: The people who are trimming trees do not necessarily have the certification to trim near power lines, but I will ask urban forestry about that and see.
- Emily Davis: This is a lot of data and it is very comprehensive. Were all the sidewalks surveyed in 2017?
 - Emily Burns: About 99% of our sidewalks were surveyed. The 17 interns went out to look at almost all of the sidewalks in the city to see what the condition was at that time, which informs our data. I am hiring an intern, so if you know someone interested in this I would love to have some good applicants.
- Esti Mintz: I am very excited to see this tool. It will be great to have a place where you can go and check things out to see what's going on with sidewalks. For years, nobody wanted to take responsibility for sidewalks that weren't working, so it's nice to be able to look at this tool and say that a specific sidewalk is not working.
 - Emily Burns: Yes, we are passionate about sidewalks and they are a fascinating and critical asset in the city. We have all of the features from curb ramps to the curbs themselves and we want our transit providers and others to have good data to plan around. We are looking beyond just one transit stop and thinking about trip planning and route planning.
- Jennifer Lehman: It is great to see all of this information in one spot. In my neighborhood it can be difficult to see if a sidewalk is City owned property or private property and it's nice to know who to be able to report it to.
 - Emily: That's a good observation and I believe that you can look at individual parcels so you can research ownership of specific sidewalks.

Sidewalk Safety Repair Program – Jinny Green, SDOT PEMS/PSMRCC Division

- I work in the PSMRCC Division which stands for Pavement Signs and Markings/Right of Way Crew Construction
- In this presentation, I will talk about the sidewalk safety repair program, Move Seattle deliverables, how we prioritize sidewalk repair, and our 2022 work plans
- The Sidewalk Safety Repair Program oversees the maintenance of the City's existing sidewalks
 - We repair damaged sidewalks and also perform preventative maintenance (shims and bevels)
- One example of a repair we did recently was a sidewalk panel replacement at 22nd Ave S which needed to be repaired because an SDOT tree fell in a windstorm and cracked a sidewalk slab in half. Another

example is on E Thomas and 17th Ave E where we replaced a sidewalk that was in very poor condition. There were multiple shims, uplifts, cracks, and it was difficult to navigate. The after photo shows the full block length project where we could give SDOT trees more room in the root zone and build a new sidewalk with the 4 foot minimum pathway for ADA access.

- On our staff, we have two full time staff members, 4 concrete crews, 2 asphalt crews, 4 street maintenance crews, and a bevel contractor.
- The Move Seattle 9-year budget and Deliverables includes 225 block equivalents of sidewalk repair in 9 years (25 blocks of sidewalk replacement in each year) and 1,000-5,000 sidewalk spot repairs (bevel/shims)
 - In 2020, the Covid restrictions put many of our projects on hold. The majority of the repairs were completed under capital projects, which was also the same for 2021.
- The repair prioritization for sidewalks is based on safety, mobility impairment, cost, and usage (related to distance to schools, government facilities, transit, hospitals, etc.)
 - The priority score is also based on the severity of the problem and other factors such as leveraging opportunities with other capital projects, ADA team, Safe Routes to School team, Vision Zero team, and others. We also look at geographic and social justice (including race and social equity index) distribution and emergent repair needs or high complaint locations.
- In 2019, our program piloted a proactive grid approach to asphalt sidewalk shims. The goal was to install shims on a regular basis. We learned that this work would be hard to do without having a dedicated shimming crew and it would pull crews off of other projects including pot hole filling. We do not have the crew capacity to perform this proactive shim work based on our existing crew capacity.
- In 2020 and 2021, we implemented a similar grid approach for beveling. We looked at West Seattle this year and we plan to continue the proactive grid approach to beveling sidewalks in future years.
- In 2022, we are aiming to complete 83 projects (totaling \$3.6 million) across the city. In Council District 1 we have 15 projects, in Council District 2 we have 20 projects, Council District 3 has 20 projects, Council District 4 has 3 projects, Council District 5 has 10 projects, Council District 6 has 12 projects, and Council District 7 has 3 projects. Based on this list and the Council District map, most projects are in Council Districts 1, 2, and 3. We focused on communities most impacted by Covid-19 for this year's work plan.
- In addition to these projects, we also have some partnership projects with outside crews.

Q&A:

- Jennifer Lehman: Thank you for this great presentation. You mentioned pivoting from proactive shim work toward proactive beveling work. Does this inform the projects that you will undertake in the next few years? Will these future projects mostly be bevel repairs?
 - Jinny: The table that showed the levy years and blocks, it does not include shim and bevels. The annual goal of 1,000-5,000 shim and bevels combined. Even though we are not continuing the proactive shimming program at this time we are continuing to proactively bevel.
 - Jennifer: Does this inform the work in the future related to staff capacity?
 - Jinny: Yes, we are not able to get to all areas based on funding and the beveling is a supplement to what we can do. When you see beveling it means that that area will not likely be improved again soon.
- Emily Davis: When it comes to the shim and beveling program, that is just for sidewalks that SDOT owns and maintains, right?
 - Jinny: No, that is for any sidewalk. Even if a privately owned tree breaks a sidewalk we will still do repair work.
- Bob: Does sidewalk repair also include things like drainage issues or puddles?

- Jinny: Yes, we address ponding issues. Someone put in a request on SDOT, in this case a blind person who had to go through a puddle just to get to their destination. We work with SPU on these issues related to drainage.
- Robin Briggs: How does the number of sidewalk miles completed compare to the rate at which sidewalks become poor and require maintenance? Are we catching up or are we falling behind?
 - Jinny: That is a hard question. We would have to look closer at the data and I'm not sure at what rate sidewalks go from fair to poor typically.
 - Emily: To answer the question we have to have a better understanding of our deterioration rate. Additionally, we don't always know when private property owners fix their sidewalks. We do condition assessments about every 10 years for sidewalks, which is the national guidance. Typically it is not concrete that is deteriorating from regular use. We have some sidewalks that are over 100 years old that are still in good or excellent condition. When there is an underlying utility or street tree, that's when we see the decreasing conditions. Regarding the question about if we're catching up, we have all sorts of challenges now such as delivery drivers going up on sidewalks which damages the sidewalk. My guess is that at this time we're not able to catch up at this time based on budget and funding.
 - Robin: Thanks! I think it's important because it signals the level of funding we should have in the budget.
- Emily Davis: No other board members or questions from members of the public at this time. We appreciate your time presenting to us.

Board Business

- February meeting minutes approval. Maria moves to approve, Jennifer seconds and the board approves meeting minutes unanimously.
- Recruitment update:
- Kadie Bell Sata presentation on Walker and Roller Grant from Washington Traffic Safety Committee (WTSC)
 - SDOT received a grant focusing on safety education. This falls into three pillars of focus, eliminating racial disparities and achieving racial equity, and Vision Zero and climate goal pillars.
 - SDOT received \$250,000 grant from WTSC. The objective is to increase safe behavior and reduce racial bias in driver yield behavior.
 - SDOT will conduct evaluations pre, mid, and post surveys
 - The first campaign was related to the 25 MPH speed limit reductions; SDOT is developing and implementing an education campaign with a consultant and thank you to the SPAB members who participated in the creative brief
 - In 2023 we will launch the safety campaign with ad buys
 - Every intersection is a legal crossing and SDOT is going to educate drivers about this including putting up signs that show what percentage of drivers stop for pedestrians at a specific intersection
 - SDOT is also addressing other community priorities such as job experiences for youth doing data collection and other work for SDOT; Delridge Neighborhood Development Association is the first partner for this work
 - Emily Davis: I'm excited for this campaign, especially the sign related to drivers stopping for pedestrians
 - Maria: Can you talk more about the purposes behind collecting data related to BIPOC vs. people of color waiting for cars to stop at intersections?

- Kadie: Yes, this is a major issue because people of color often wait 4 times as long or more for drivers to yield for them to cross versus white people. We want to understand this more and raise awareness about these micro and macroaggressions that people face.
- Jennifer: I put a Tweet in the chat that describes a little bit more about what Kadie is describing here.
- Kadie: Yes, this is part of the reason why enforcement is being deprioritized—because of the disparate impacts on communities of color. I'd like to come back once we have concepts for our educational campaign.
- Leadership Discussion and Vote
 - Emily Davis: This is Jennifer Lehman's last SPAB meeting, so it is time to talk about leadership on SPAB. Would anyone like to be a co-Chair with me?
 - Maria: I'm staying on for another term and I don't really want to co-Chair, but I would be happy to step up if you need it. If someone else on this call wants to be a co-Chair then I can step back.
 - Emily: Thank you. It is not a lot of work and I'm ok with running more of the meetings since I know that you run a lot of meetings during your day job. Jennifer also served on the Levy Oversight Committee, so we will need someone to fill that role. Does anyone want to fill this role?
 - Maria: I am sort of curious about serving on the Levy Oversight Committee. Maybe you can run the meetings and I can serve on the LOC.
 - Emily: Also, anyone is welcome to come to the agenda planning meeting.
 - Polly: Maria, do you still want to be on the Vision Zero subcommittee?
 - Maria: We had a subcommittee of about five people and I think we are down to just two members at this point. We want to keep being in partnership with SDOT but there are not a ton of actionable items at this point. Is it worth it to still have a subcommittee or do we mostly want to keep the Vision Zero stats at the top of the meeting?
 - Emily: I agree that we want to keep the Vision Zero stats at the beginning of the meeting and keep the conversation going with Allison. I'm happy to join that subcommittee and we can have meetings as needed.
 - Bianca: I am not going to continue my term because I am moving.

Transition Discussion

- Emily Davis: We would love to hear thoughts about everyone's time on the board, considerations for the next board, things we can improve upon, or anything else you want to share.
- Emily Mannetti: I'm sorry I never got to meet any of you in person, but maybe I can come as an audience member when you are back in person to say hi.
- Jennifer: It was a great experience and I learned a lot. I may reapply in the future to be a board member. I'm starting a job that will involve night meetings so I have to step away from the board. Maybe I can join again in the future.
- Esti: When people go back to the office we should do a reunion.
- Maria: Are there any updates on if meetings are going to be remote or in person?
- Polly: No other updates at this time but I will keep you posted.

Public Comment

- Doug MacDonald: Thank you Jennifer, you have done a great job. I want to thank Polly too because she has been very good about helping me send things to the board. Something that is interesting is that

there are disadvantages of two year terms. In 2016, when the new Pedestrian Master Plan started, there was nothing about the condition of the sidewalks in the plan. The Plan also did not include something from 2009, which was where people actually walked. This was interesting but it was not included. Now we have the Priority Investment Network, but it's not connected to the condition of the sidewalks or where people walk. In 2016 or 2017, City Council appropriated \$400,000 and created the condition assessment of the sidewalks. This report produced a great report of sidewalk conditions. From then to now, there has been an evolution of data over several years. This review only happened because of the vacuum in the Pedestrian Master Plan. Sometimes the plan seems detached because there is no foundation of sidewalk conditions in the plan. The most important thing the SPAB can do is to help shape the next Levy. Emily and Jinny are doing work related to sidewalks, which is the reality foundation for pedestrian conditions in Seattle. Tonight's presentation was important because it shows where foundation can be laid and how the SPAB can leverage its enthusiasm and pressure. It's very exciting and this evolution runs side by side and around the Pedestrian Master Plan. I was one of the people unhappy with the Pedestrian Master Plan in 2016, so I am pleased with the work that Emily and Jinny are now doing. The two year term has too much turnover because just when people are getting settled in it's time for them to leave. I think all the advisory boards suffer from too much turnover. Thank you to everyone who is leaving and thanks everyone who is staying on. There is a lot of work to be done, especially for the Levy.

- Jon Morgan: I think we need a separate Sidewalks for All levy and people would vote for it. It's what Olympia did, and basically Shoreline. Why not Seattle?

No other public comment. Meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.