



Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

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

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2021 - Virtual Remote Meeting

Attendees:

Board Members:

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

Maria Sumner
Esti Mintz
Greyson Simon

Non-board members:

Polly Membrino, SDOT
Eleen Trang, SDOT
Jennifer Meulenberg, SDOT
Venu Nemani, SDOT
Sam Zimbabwe, SDOT
David Wright, Sound Transit
Abel Pacheco, Sound Transit
Carrie Avila-Mooney, Sound Transit
Sanjeev Tandle, Sound Transit
Jamae Hoffman, Sound Transit
Barbara Phinney
Ryan Packer

Tracy
Vincent Johnson
Kat Mut
Sean
Loren Schwartz
Brian Townley
Mollie Means
Loren Schwartz
Brent Macfarlane
Barbara Richter
William Washington
Alonso

Approximately 2 other members of the public joining by phone

Vision Zero Pedestrian Fatalities Announcement

Maria: This year, 28 people have been killed in traffic collisions in Seattle including 17 people walking, 4 people biking (one on an e-scooter), 3 people on motorcycles/mopeds, and 4 people driving.

Public Comment

Jon Morgan: I am the former SPAB Chair and I am curious to listen in tonight and maybe comment again at the end of the night.

Doug MacDonald: About a week and a half ago, the City Auditor reported on sidewalk repair and the report is dismal. I spent several hours reading about it and I am writing an open letter to the SPAB. In 2016, the SPAB asked SDOT for sidewalk inventory and conditions. I'll follow up with the board. Also, I have shared photos of crosswalk conditions downtown with Allison Schwartz. The sidewalk conditions downtown are not

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*

Doug (cont.) good and that is where most pedestrian fatalities occur. The solidarity budget that many people have put forward has called out the need for better pedestrian fatality data. We need better data than what we have from SDOT and SPD.

Sound Transit Presentation on Pedestrian Safety at Sound Transit

David Wright, Chief Safety Officer at Sound Transit

David: Thank you for inviting us to speak today. I want to acknowledge the pedestrian fatalities at the station in the Rainier Valley. We have heard community concerns about safety and other challenges near the stations in addition to concerns about gentrification and other inequities. Sound Transit wishes to be a better partner to the community and we seek to amplify community voices and focus on community and equity values.

Jamae Hoffman: I am the East Link development management manager and worked for SDOT for 13 years and prior to that I was the Director for Transportation Choices Coalition. I am here to give an update on the Judkins Park Station. I want to talk about what Sound Transit is building, what SDOT is working on, and what WSDOT is working on.

- To start off, we will have a photo of Jimi Hendrix, approved by his sister to be featured at the Judkins Park station by Jimi Hendrix Park. We plan to open the Link 2 line including Judkins Park station by 2023.
- The station is long, spanning from Rainier Avenue to 23rd Avenue. It is located near the Mountains to Sounds Trail and there are some other important destinations nearby such as Lighthouse for the Blind, which is southeast of the Northwest African American Museum and local schools in the area.
- Currently there is an East Link Connections project which will be a proposal to shift the transit route to better connect Judkins Park Station. Outreach and surveys are underway now.
- We already have made a lot of progress building the Judkins Park Station. The West entry is on Rainier Avenue S. There will be three opportunities for pedestrians to cross Rainier. One includes a new curb ramp and audio (APS) push button. Another goes north, and there is also a new path which is a partnership between SDOT and Sound Transit to connect to the Mountains to Sound Trail.
- SDOT designed a bike lane on the east side of Rainier to connect to the station.
- There are elevators on both sides of the elevated pedestrian bridge to connect to the station entrance on Rainier.
- The existing sidewalk on Rainier Ave has been widened by 8 feet and there is a mixing zone at the station entrance. There are tactile markings for people with disabilities at the station entrance. Sound Transit and SDOT worked with the accessibility lead to make sure the tactile strip led to the station. Based on this feedback, the tactile strip was rerouted to better lead to the station.
- Rainier has been repaved and there is a crossing to the south of the station with new APS.
- SDOT is building additional improvements on Rainier including signal upgrades for transit priorities and adding a new crossing on the north side of I-90 ramp.
- Other projects led by SDOT include a System Access Fund award for \$2.4M for better access to the station including a staircase and trail near Hiawatha Place.
- There are also WSDOT projects in the area including improving the I-90 off ramp to merge onto Rainier. The new project will improve the pedestrian crossing here.

Carrie: I will be talking about best practices for station design.

- We have some best practices for design that are simple, seamless, and intuitive. We are moving to standardize stations with customized elements.
- In the future, we want to avoid passenger track crossing and provide adequate vertical circulation. We also want to use existing topography to minimize elevators and have more at-grade station entrances. We do have a process to look at upgrades for existing stations to figure out what projects get prioritized. Criteria include feasibility, passenger needs, safety, etc.

Sanjeev: I will talk about enhancements to the existing facilities.

- Regarding at grade safety analysis at MLK, existing conditions meet ADA requirements. In 2019, Sound Transit worked with SDOT to make sure that everything met the requirements. We are relocating audible devices to the end of the station to warn pedestrians and vehicles when trains are coming.
- We recently installed “another train coming” sign for pedestrians exiting the station. We have replaced two older pedestrian warning signs with new signs. In the coming months, we will have the same signage at the other two stations. This will help with pedestrian safety.
- Current safety MLK improvements include replacing existing train warning signs for left turning vehicles. The new signs will alternatively flash the light rail symbol and “NO LEFT TURN” during train presence. These will be installed in coming months.
- Future MLK safety improvements include updating standards and requirements for at-grade crossings. Sound Transit is conducting an MLK safety study to review all crashes along MLK corridor to see which are light rail related crashes and see if we can improve safety along the corridor. We are also looking at all at grade crossings to see if there are deficiencies.

Abel Pacheco: Sound Transit has been working with SDOT and we want to acknowledge the impacts we have had on the corridor. We want to work with different stakeholders across the Rainier Valley in partnership with different organizations.

- Sound Transit is engaging in community conversations, information sharing and planning with different groups before going into the action phase and ongoing planning and conversations with the community.

Q&A:

- Maria: We talked about some of the collisions that occurred at at-grade stations in previous meetings. For Link 2, will there be new at-grade stations or is Sound Transit moving away from that in general?
 - Jemae: There is one at-grade crossing and there are a couple of stations with at-grade crossings within the station environment, which have already been built. Moving forward, we want to learn more from our study that we are conducting to guide future design.
 - David: Our goal is to complete the study and standardize our processes. First we are focusing on MLK and then we will move over to working on East Link.

SDOT Presentation on Alki Beach Keep it Moving Street

Jennifer Meulenberg: Jules, the outreach lead, will be co-presenting with me tonight.

- I will go through the presentation and open it up to questions. The board can also reach out to us if you have questions or comments. The website for the project (seattle.gov/transportation/alkikeepmovingstreet) has contact information.
- SDOT is framing the project around the six core values of equity, safety, mobility, sustainability, livability, and excellence.
- Alki Point is identified in the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan as a future Neighborhood Greenway. In May 2020, SDOT implemented a Keep Moving Street, which was temporary as part of the COVID-19 response.
- Keep Moving Streets are not the same as Stay Healthy Streets because they do not exist on Neighborhood Greenways and do not go through a formal public involvement process
- The project area is along Alki Ave southwest to Beach Drive SW. It is along the point of Alki Point. Currently, the street is closed to through traffic and open to people walking, biking, and rolling.
- We have an open survey to hear from the public about a permanent design.
- We have funding for outreach and early design, but do not yet have funding for a permanent at this moment.
- We would like to know from the community: What is currently working well, what isn't and what have you heard from others?
- There are three options for the design, but elements could be "mixed and matched" based on community feedback:
 - Option 1 involved making it a Stay Healthy Street + Neighborhood Greenway. It would include a sidewalk, parking, people walking and biking on the street and sidewalks (closed to vehicle through traffic). Could also include decorative crosswalks
 - Option 2 would be a neighborhood greenway plus additional space. It would include lanes for driving with sharrows to show where bikes are and would include a separate pedestrian space.
 - Option 3 is a one-way street and shared walking and biking path. This would include space for vehicles (one-way) and a bidirectional multi-use trail for people walking and biking on the water side.
- We are also wondering about loading and parking and also who else (community groups or others) that we should talk to.
- You can also contact us through our email which is AlkiKeepMovingStreet@seattle.gov

Q&A:

- Koko: Thank you for the presentation. For the walking and biking paths, would you put lines to show where people should walk and where people should bike? Around Greenlake, the lanes are shared by pedestrians and bikers, but the bike lane only allows bikes, not both. Did you get feedback about that and how are you going to design that?
 - Jennifer Meulenberg: Right now, we are showing the walking and biking path that is mixed use without lines, but if you have a preference for a delineated space then we would like to hear that feedback.
- Esti: It makes sense to direct questions to locals in the area, but Alki is more than just a neighborhood pedestrian area. It is a touristy area and a place that is almost impossible for people in the city to enjoy without having greater public transportation possibilities. I saw that some of the options mean getting rid of a lot of the parking. Normally I would say that's great, but in this case, it would be hard for a lot of Seattle residents to access this if they can't drive to

access this area. That is one thing to consider for the design. When I saw that in one design that 90 parking spaces would be eliminated, it makes me think that many visitors will not have access anymore.

- Emily: I do not enjoy shared walking and biking areas because it is asking for collisions between pedestrians and bikes and becomes a hazard. Thank you for going through the options - it definitely made it more clear what your proposal was.

Board Business

- October meeting minute approval: Erin motions to approve the minutes, seconded by Emily. The board members in attendance unanimously vote to approve the minutes.
- Get Engaged update: We are hoping to move forward with one of the candidates and need approval from the Mayor's Office and the Get Engaged Program.
- Maria: I would be happy to take over the social media/Twitter presences.
- Emily: We received three emails from members of the public recently. The first one is related to the Home Zone pilot program in the Bitter Lake area. We received an email that said that the Home Zone had an adverse effect on walking in this neighborhood. Does anyone have feedback on those emails or for anyone at SDOT? It is hard because the cost effective measures were for street narrowing on Dayton, but it is hard to know where pedestrians should walk on that street. I can't say too much about it because I just learned about it and I have never been on this street. SDOT also received this email and they will be commenting on it.
 - Jennifer Lehman: Part of our advocacy could be that when these Home Zones are implemented there is adequate consideration for pedestrian spaces and that we are not pushing pedestrians into the street as if it were a Stay Healthy Street.
 - Erin: I was unsure about how the Home Zone affected the pedestrian area.
 - Emily: I was also unsure. Maybe we need to go up to the area and look at the street.
 - Barbara: A lot of this area has no shoulder and it has parked vehicles. The goal was to narrow the street to slow down traffic, but there was no way for pedestrians to navigate. There are ditches and vegetation and we are squeezed in because there is no space for pedestrians. There are students going to school and pedestrians and cars are forced to share a smaller area. There is no formal negotiation with property owners to allow a space for pedestrians to walk on their property if there are open ditches or parked cars on the shoulder. There is nowhere for pedestrians to get out of the roadway.
 - Emily: Did the Home Zone affect pedestrian access on this street?
 - Barbara: It's the same pedestrian access, but a narrower roadway.
 - Emily: This is a pilot so this is good information for SDOT to hear. Perhaps the board could push SDOT to look at this.
 - Barbara: The City must have the political will to tell property owners that there has to be a safe place for pedestrians on these streets without sidewalks. The Home Zone made this worse and exacerbated this problem.
 - Jennifer Lehman: For next steps, it seems there is an opportunity for the board to talk about this. The Council is currently adopting the budget that may add funds for Home Zones. Maybe we could email the Council and copy SDOT saying that it is the right path to focus on Home Zones, but there needs to be more accommodations for pedestrian spaces.

- Emily: For the second email we received from the public, a business owner wanted to coordinate with us about pedestrian access in Lake City Way.
 - Maria: I read the email and it wasn't clear about where the owner was concerned about. My current concern is about the lack of crosswalks at Lake City Way. There has been repainting and currently there are one or two thin lines for crosswalks instead of the regular zebra striping. This came up in a board meeting and we connected to WSDOT and they said they would do the full striping in September. This has been pushed to the spring because of the weather. I don't know if this means that for six months.
 - Emily: Normally the WSDOT crews do the painting, but during storm season I think they are focused on trees blocking roadways, flooding, and other issues related to weather.
 - Maria: This is a high priority network and maybe as the board we can call out to some local officials to talk about crosswalk painting on Lake City Wy and downtown based on the earlier public comment.
 - Emily: Council is voting on budget soon and as a board we ought to draft a letter pushing for the Vision Zero budget to be increased with a focus on urgent crosswalks and repairs.
 - Erin: Could we also advocate allocating budgeting to increase staff temporarily during winter months when they know that crews have to respond to storms and other emergency response?
 - Emily: The budget is voted on soon on November 22.
 - Jennifer Lehman: They are in the final budget balancing, so I don't know if it makes sense to advocate for new funding. If there are things in the budget that are under consideration that we can endorse for pedestrian safety then we could do that.
 - Emily: Do we want to try to get a letter out before the budget is voted on? This would be prior to our next meeting, so we couldn't vote on it. I will write a letter and send it to a subcommittee (up to three other people) so we can send it out before the budget. Anyone else want to be involved? Maria, Esti, Jennifer.
 - Emily: Since the specific crosswalk project in Lake City Way involves WSDOT, maybe we can ask them more about why they aren't able to restripe the crosswalk until the spring. Do we want to ask them?
 - Maria: I am interested in knowing more about this and see if we can have another agency like SDOT come in to restripe the crosswalks as a stop gap.
 - Emily: I see that SDOT has done a lot of restriping, but there is more being done going into the winter. Maybe SDOT can ask WSDOT to add striping since it is in Seattle.
 - The last bit of board business is related to looking ahead to future meetings including the December meeting when the ADA coordinator comes to talk to the board. We can also talk about SDOT and the Comprehensive Plans and the other Seattle Transportation Plan feedback. We can talk about that more in our December meeting.

SDOT Director Sam Zimbabwe and SDOT City Traffic Engineer Venu Nemani

- First off, I want to thank you all for the work that you do on the board. I know it is challenging to do this virtually and I want to thank you for your service and help. Hopefully we can get back to in person meetings and I know a lot has changed since you all decided to join the board. I'll also talk a little bit about what to look forward to at SDOT.
- This year has been a year of getting a lot of things done despite the pandemic, including catching up on delayed work last year.

- We remarked 2500 crosswalks this year. We did a lot of sidewalk repair including shim and bevel and other sidewalk repairs. It looks like this might also be one of our biggest curb ramp construction years.
- We also continue to have pedestrian safety issues. We have had a rough year in terms of fatalities and serious injuries. We continue to push forward with safety initiatives like hardened centerlines and there is more work to be done.
- We are looking forward to the Seattle Transportation Plan which will be a multi-modal plan that integrates all of our plans. The folks working on that are thinking about how to engage with communities and make a meaningful effort. We are also excited about the new bridges we opened including the Fairview bridge and the John Lewis Memorial bridge in Northgate. It takes a challenging crossing of I-5 and makes it more accessible. I will turn it over to Venu who has been with SDOT for a few years and is our new City Traffic Engineer.
- Venu: I have been with SDOT for over four years and in transportation engineering for over 18 years. Before coming to SDOT I had leadership roles in Maryland. During my time at SDOT I have focused on safety, multi-modal access, and Vision Zero projects.
- I have worked on several pedestrian projects at SDOT. My team has delivered a dozen or so improvements on MLK this year and we are working on more. We have been working on Home Zones and I think working on Vision Zero and pedestrian safety is the key to success at SDOT. My transportation philosophy is to promote safety, equity, and climate action goals. If you are interested, I would love to catch up in a one-on-one conversation and get to know your priorities. I was here for the whole meeting and heard conversations going back and forth. Please forward me the emails that you received as well as Barbara's contact information. I would like to hear about Barbara's experience as well. Maria, please give me the locations on Lake City Way for the striping. We try to not mark crosswalks during the wet season because the application does not hold for as long and starts to peel off. However, it is not reasonable to wait eight months to have permanent crosswalks marked. If you can forward me those locations, I will personally take a look at that to see what we can do in the interim. That is an intense corridor with lots of traffic and pedestrian volumes. We have a lot of crosswalks to mark and some wear out faster than others and we can take care of some emergency crosswalk striping. My contact is Venu.Nemani@seattle.gov and if you want to reach out to have a cup of coffee I would be happy to do that.
- Emily: Thank you both. It was great having you. Does anyone want to bring anything up while we have their attention?
- Maria: Thank you for joining and thanks for your care and attention. I will follow up with Venu on these issues.
- Emily: I am also glad to hear that Venu was able to share more about why the crews don't always stripe crosswalks in the winter.
- Maria: As the board, we are trying to make Seattle the most walkable city in the country. What are the top things SDOT is focusing on to make that happen?
- Venu: We need to promote pedestrian safety with high visibility crosswalks, frequent crossing opportunities, and identify improvements that are working and scaling them up as quickly as possible. We need to embed our design philosophy into every project that we have to help the most vulnerable people who are walking, biking, and rolling. If we can do that at scale, I think Vision Zero will be achieved based on all of our efforts combined and a consequence of all of the actions that we have taken.

- Sam: I will reinforce what Venu said. We both spent time in the DC area that has benefits and similar challenges to Seattle. There is not one thing we can do to snap our fingers to make it the best walking city, but it is a combination of new things. We're starting with hardened centerlines and signal timings and other pedestrian safety interventions. It is all the little things that build up to improve safety and encourage more people to walk. I was up with the Lake City Collaborative to celebrate a street mural unveiling and this helps people celebrate their streets. We also recognize there are missing sidewalks and we need to continue building out that network as well.
- Emily: Thank you for your thoughts and we will go into public comment.

Public Comment

Doug: I am interested in painting crosswalks and I had questions for Allison and I will wait for her to get back to me. I want to talk about Venu's comment. The problem with the City's cycle of repainting crosswalks every four years is that different crosswalks last shorter or longer depending on vehicle use. If you're locked into this cycle, a lot of crosswalks may get missed because they faded earlier. Crosswalk painting should be aligned with crosswalk inspection. This is worth pursuing because if crosswalks are worn out then we could have two or more years when there are no crosswalks because they need to be painted. There may not be much you can do about painting crosswalks in the fall, but I would like to hear more from engineers and Vision Zero to see why crosswalks are not up for painting for another two years. I want to shout out Koko and Emily's comments on the shared paths, which are shared problems. You have huge conflicts if you do not separate pedestrians and bikes. We are not paying enough attention to this. People need to understand that bikes yield to pedestrians. If someone says "on your right" the pedestrian should not have to jump out of the way. There is a lot of activity on Alki and I was happy to hear the board talk about that.

Venu: Thank you for your comment. We do remark crosswalks systemically on a four year cycle, but that doesn't mean we will not remark crosswalks if they need it before the four year mark. We are trying to get a better idea to see how often certain crosswalks need to be remarked based on the wear and use from through traffic and turning traffic. We do remark outside of the four year cycle. We try to keep up with requests from communities and elected officials.

Doug: I hope that SDOT can do late summer inspections of crosswalks to see where improvements need to happen. I think this is related to Vision Zero and it is a lot cheaper than a lot of other things, so we need to get the paint onto crosswalks.

Sam: I appreciate that and we worked to get to the level of four year remarking cycle and we can continue to improve. As Venu said, we can remark crosswalks outside of that cycle as well.

Jon: Is there a reason that crosswalks have to be repainted and not use white raised buttons that also calm traffic at that intersection?

Venu: Yes, we have ADA concerns and it is a large area so we could not cover that entire area with white buttons. Paint is used for the most temporary crosswalks. We use thermoplastic more often for crosswalks which last much longer than paint, even if we are saying that we are "painting" a crosswalk. Thermoplastic is heated up and adheres to the pavement and is much more durable.

Sam: We also have to plow our streets occasionally and we would lose raised bumps if we plowed which would not work for crosswalks that are on plow routes.

Emily: Thank you to Sam, Venu, the board members, and the public.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.