



Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

David Seater, Chair
Gordon Padelford, Vice Chair
Hannah Keyes, Secretary (Get Engaged)
Christina Billingsley
Janine Blaeloch
Hayley Bonsteel
Patricia Chapman
Angela Davis
Afra Mashhadi
Beau Morton

October 30, 2017

To:

Seattle Department of Transportation:

- Rachel McCaffrey - rachel.mccaffrey@seattle.gov
- David Burgesser - David.Burgesser@Seattle.Gov
- Aditi Kambuj - aditi.kambuj@seattle.gov
- Jason Fialkoff - Jason.Fialkoff@Seattle.gov

Sound Transit:

- Andrea Burnett - andrea.burnett@soundtransit.org
- Kristin Hoffman - kristin.hoffman@soundtransit.org

King County Metro: Kate Elliott - kelliott@kingcounty.gov

From:

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

On August 9, 2017, the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board visited the three station sites for the Sound Transit Northgate Link Extension in the Northgate, Roosevelt, and University District neighborhoods. We would like to thank the representatives from SDOT, King County Metro, and Sound Transit who joined the Board to describe the many projects planned at each site. The Board would like to follow up with the agencies to highlight concerns about station area access in each of the neighborhoods.

Northgate Station

At Northgate Station the Board identified two areas of concern. First, the area immediately adjacent to the future station (the current site of the Northgate Transit Center) will become an active construction area when Phase 2 construction begins. This coincides with the opening of the new light rail station and integrated bus facility. We wish to stress the importance of maintaining safe, comfortable, and direct pedestrian access to the new station around the construction site, in accordance with SDOT Director’s Rule 10-2015. SDOT should take an active role to ensure that the Director’s Rule is enforced. King County, if appropriate, should consider adding requirements to any development agreements for the site to provide pedestrian accommodations during construction.

Second, we are concerned about the connection between the street level bus bays and the new pedestrian & bicycle bridge during the times that the station is closed, roughly 1am to 5am. Even when Link isn’t running, people crossing the bridge will still need access to the transit services and other neighborhood connections at the station. Without access to the station this connection will involve a significant amount of backtracking. Sound Transit should give serious consideration to providing a continuous, 24/7 connection through the station.

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*

Roosevelt Station

We have several concerns in the Roosevelt station area. First, the large plazas along NE 66th Street may lead to midblock jaywalking, as people will likely follow the more direct desire line through the plaza rather than crossing at the corner. SDOT should consider proactive ways to address this, such as widening the crosswalk or adding a new mid-block crossing.

Similarly, the proposed “bike plaza” parking area is located mid-block on NE 66th Street. This seems likely to cause a conflict between people walking to the station and people on bikes trying to reach the plaza. SDOT and Sound Transit should consider this conflict and require that sidewalks along the future development sites on NE 66th be wide enough to accommodate all users accessing the station.

Next, the Board heard that SDOT will be repaving 12th Ave NE but has no plans to change the configuration of the street. Having seen the significant improvements that were made to Roosevelt Way NE as part of a recent repaving project, the Board asks that SDOT make similarly bold changes to improve 12th Ave NE for people walking, biking, and using transit.

Also on 12th Ave NE, a Sound Transit representative pointed out that a new crosswalk would be installed on 12th Ave NE at NE 66th St, but that the crosswalk would not have a signal or RRFB because SDOT determined that such changes weren’t warranted. The Board is concerned that high pedestrian volumes here, along the most direct path to Roosevelt High School, may not have been considered. The Board asks that SDOT provide more information about this decision (including results of a video study, if one was done) and reconsider whether crossing improvements should be installed prior to the station opening.

NE 65th Street

A particular concern for the Board is the set of improvements planned as part of the NE 65th Street Vision Zero Project. Since June of 2015 there have been three deaths and three serious injuries in this section of 65th, yet the project plans to provide no changes to the street layout east of 20th Ave. Crossing improvements are planned only at 15th Ave NE and 20th Ave NE.

SDOT’s plan includes *narrowing* the space for pedestrians in order to create space for a protected bike lane and a passing lane. Sidewalk space is already too narrow at the heavily used bus stops in this area, a situation that is likely to get worse after the light rail station opens. Narrowing the sidewalks is likely to lead to people waiting for the bus in the protected bike lane, an unsafe situation for everyone, while adding a passing lane creates a hazard for people crossing the street around a stopped bus. The Board asks that SDOT reconsider prioritizing the movement of cars over the safety and comfort of people walking, biking, and using transit along NE 65th Street.

East of 20th Ave there are no plans to continue the protected bike lane or transit facility improvements, yet retains curbside parking on both side of the street. In areas where parking is underused (east of 25th Ave NE, for example), this is likely to lead to speeding drivers and dangerous crossings for people walking. The Board asks that SDOT change the design of the street to slow cars and create safe crossings for people through the use of center refuge islands, curb bulbs, and/or RRFBs.

U District Station

The Board identified two concerns about pedestrian access to the station on Brooklyn Ave NE between NE 43rd St and NE 45th Street. First, the existing crossings of NE 45th St at Brooklyn may need improvement, particularly the crosswalk on the east side of the intersection which has very little sidewalk space for people to wait for the signal to change. SDOT and Sound Transit should evaluate widening the sidewalk with curb bulbs into Brooklyn St, which seems excessively wide at this location.

Lastly, the pedestrian connection from the station to the University of Washington along NE 43rd Street is likely to see heavy use, which led to the development of concept plans for “neighborhood green streets” along NE 42nd St, NE 43rd St, and Brooklyn Ave NE. The Board asks that SDOT, OPCD, and DCI ensure that the Director’s Rules for this area (DPD rule 13-2015, SDOT rule 06-2015) are followed as properties in the area are developed.

The Board appreciates the staff time and effort from SDOT, King County Metro, and Sound Transit in conjunction with our station tour, and looks forward to continuing to work with the agencies to provide safe and comfortable access to light rail stations throughout Seattle.

Sincerely,

David Seater, Chair
On behalf of the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board