

TAB Meeting (5/22/2024)

Meeting Notes

- Agenda
- Members in Attendance
- Public Comment Time
- Approval of Previous Minutes
- Bus Lane Automated Traffic Enforcement Cameras
- Low pollution neighborhoods
- Board Business & Committee Updates

Members in Attendance

Carolin Tillinger

Priya Balan

Art K

Ashwin Bhumbala

Zach B

Carolyn B

Sandro Pani

Matt Yarrow (SDOT)

Jon Morgan

Radcliffe Dacanay (SDOT)

Christine Alar (SDOT)

Jack

Rob

Morris Richman

Welcome and introductions of board members

Approval of the previous minutes

Ashwin motions and Sandra seconds.

Presentation: Bus Lane Automated Traffic Enforcement Cameras

Christine Alar (SDOT)

Introduction:

- Giving an update on the bus lane automated traffic enforcement camera program.
- This program has been in effect for a while so just going to focus on the bus lane portion here is the problems it can also cause some safety issues because

- the lanes are designed to have just buses in them, you have a clearance Vehicles using down there can be some issues with Sidelanes and vision and things like that
- So looking to keep folks out of the bus lane and leave it as a top level of priority measure that we can keep for our buses
- Map shows the passenger delay throughout King County and it circles on the area close to downtown Seattle and this is where we have our red bus lanes painted
- but the highest passenger delay is very similar to the map of the geographical restricted areas where we are allowed to put automated traffic enforcement cameras in the downtown core and then including a major arterial (Aurora Avenue North South West Seattle Bridge and then the approaches to those major arterials)
- This was part of the legislation in 2020 that was passed and that was House Bill 1793 and that approved a pilot program to go into effect specifically for Seattle
- Blocking the box is not Transit related. It's basically when cars park over crosswalks or the middle of the intersections and traffic can't flow properly. That was a big safety issue especially for people trying to cross the street.

Legislation History

- programs move together as a pilot, the fines were limited at 75 dollars
- it's a camera enforcement and first cameras were installed in 2022
- did them both at the same time so the block the box and the cameras were intended you know but the same time being installed
- This legislation cameras automated pedestrian signal programs help with safer Crossings and that has been a big benefit and it has made great improvements.
- The other 50% went into the state fund for the Cooper Jones active Transportation safety account so it could be used basically anywhere in the state.
- one of the concessions in Olympia, for it to pass we had to basically share price
- so it was important to put some enforcement in particular areas and then Block series. In some areas we wanted to put in cameras for a bus lane, however it just proved very difficult because it's a center running bus lane as they approach to 99 and it just was very problematic for being able to successfully capture violations without accidentally capturing people like moving into a turn lane and just decided to shelf that until technology changed a little bit for traffic report.

Newest Location:

- There was one additional camera and installed this year early and 2024 and that was on the West Seattle Bridge so the cameras that were used to enforce the transit priority on the low bridge during Bridge repair camera in the eastbound Direction on the West Seattle Bridge

- we're also required to post signs depending on the speed of the traffic, but about 50 feet before where the cameras are actually located and these signs go up 30 days before we turn the cameras on so there's a lot of time for people to get used to it.
- the first 30 days after the camera is turned on - first violation is just a warning and then after that second one would be a citation.
- recent house bill that was just passed and signed into earlier this spring, it goes into effect in June. In a couple weeks into the program, the automated traffic enforcement cameras will be permanent and expands the options for hospitals adjacent to hospitals, and racing zones that have been identified and includes schools. So this is a huge change and it was huge legislation.

Communication

- Part of the communication strategy for this program was doing press releases and media updates.
- Every time we put a new camera in place, to the communities where the camera is located some equitable Outreach driver to education including posting of the photo enforcement signage, going in the right of way 30 days before and then the additional 30 Day Warning is done.
- All this additional warning - SDOT is not legally obligated to do but it's just standard practice
- With each warning or citation that's sent out there's an insert that's translated into multiple languages to give people an opportunity to call and get the detailed information in another language and get an interpreter, making it more accessible and inclusive.

Contract

- Existing Contract with Verra Mobility for red light and school zone cameras managed through Seattle Police Dept
- Working closely with SPD for the visual review of the photos by Officer because that was a state mandate
- The new house bill 2384 actually eliminates the public service department and then our citations are processed through the Seattle Municipal Court, although the first violation is a warning, second is a citation.

Metro /SDOT

- Worked closely with King County Metro during this process in order to identify places a lot of people were violating.
- It doesn't necessarily affect the travel speed and reliability, if it's not during a critical congested time we just want to make sure that it does remain open so that buses keep that priority level.
- Metro is also providing the AVL data to support SDOT.

Questions

Zack - I know that there's some information that we probably don't know now especially or not yet because of the new bills that will get a new camera for Transit enforcement on bus lanes. Do we have a set list and also will the Transit bus lane enforcement also intertwine with blocking the Box because like an example in Denny way and Stewart Street a lot of cars will just block the crosswalk and that in turn prevents the bus from even driving. The bus line is usually clear but the bus can't even go because there's always cars blocking the intersection during peak travel times like in the evening.

For the first question, whether we have a list of locations that we identified, sometimes we just can't get the angle correct to accurately capture the vehicle license plate. Sometimes if it's a center running bus lane or on Mercer we looked at having a block the Box camera there and it was very challenging because we couldn't accurately capture because of the angle and there's so many lanes we couldn't capture. Working on upgrading technology and the options of adding mask arms to the infrastructure. This is a project that is underway and it's been underway for a while. Moving on to your next comment about the box and together yes it's a problem we do need to have two different cameras to do those. One camera can't do both at this time and the idea is if we can get the Box cameras and enforcement to work correctly then the buses will be able to flow through without the need to specifically adjust it for the bus lane. In some locations it's really challenging so we do think about that and it's kind of just part of traffic as a whole including buses and pedestrians and everything to make it a little bit address that question.

Ashwin - First question is about the results of the pilot. Remember reading at some point that this stuff has to be done like some report by 20 25 or something like that to go back to the legislature. so I guess it's a nice bonus for you all that even without the report with this new legislation it's already been expanded from Pilot to the full program. But I'm guessing maybe that report is probably being worked on now or starting to and I remember reading other articles about the amounts of tickets that were headed out and the amount of violations that were caught. I was wondering if you have any preliminary results.

Ans: As part of the pilot program we were required to put on/submit a preliminary report which would have been due this June and then a final report at the beginning of 2025. With the passage of house bill 2384 we are no longer required to do either of them so we started working in January/February and we are working very closely with King County Metro. And we paused work, it became clear we weren't going to need to turn it into a report to submit it to the state, but we do intend to have a report done this year and what

things were taken into consideration - I do not have details at this point that I can share. There was a media request for the number of citations and that comes through our city traffic engineer but it's not something that I get access to but it should be included in this report, just to see what the effect was on passenger delays and hospital liability as well as the total number of on violations. There are only a very few repeat offenders. Once they get a warning and then a citation and there's not a lot of people who continue to make the same mistake.

Sandro - It's probably not included in the bill but has been looked at or studied by Metro or has thought of putting cameras to the buses so that drivers could enforce and take pictures. I think a lot of times what happens I'm thinking mostly blocking of bus stops or example earlier like intersections where you know it's maybe not right when someone driving down the lane but it's blocking the stops. What bugs me the most because they're parked there either temporarily trying to fix someone up or elsewhere and I think that usually disrupts service the most. So just wondering if that's being considered ?

Ans: I work really close however it is restricted to just capturing parked or standing vehicles in a bus zone or in a bus lane. so there's no moving violations, not any like people using it to get around traffic. It would just be as that would be sort of the extent in the US right now. From my understanding, most agencies that have bus mounted cameras are only capturing parked vehicles and I know places like they have a huge issue with people just parking and need bus lines in bus stops. We don't really have that problem, we have people using them to drop off and pick up a lot but not just parking there and like calling it good so it'll be interesting to see how Metro boosts forward with making the most out of that.

Ashwin - I was going to ask what Sandra asked. I was going to ask about the cameras on the bus so that's good to hear that Metro is moving forward with a pilot. I know this bill just passed. Is there any estimation ? I know this pilot's in the very early planning stages. Do you have any idea of what a very high level timeline is for that pilot versus where would the tickets go, would it be handled through King County courts.

Ans: What they do now is it's an automatic feed from the cameras to SPD and they have officers reject them that way and then it moves on to the Municipal Courts now. So there is a human element deciding like - this is a violation or this isn't a violation and that's currently SPD officers. May potentially not be in the future the new bill allows for any qualified understood and I'm curious about other uses of of these cameras. For example, maybe this is probably true but I don't know these cameras can be used by SPD as part of an investigation. There are other entities outside of just the traffic violation founded contacts that could access these cameras.

Ashwin - then my last question - other ways of enforcing bus lanes beyond just automated cameras themselves. For example, it apparently has a lot of contraflow bustling which helps a lot with the enforcement because people are much less willing to hop into a bus lane that's going the other direction. That is probably really expensive but retractable, with RFID and other stuff so that there are other ways you could do this and it all comes down to how much they would cost and if it's something new like Seattle doesn't have any retractable? Have these changes to bustling design in general been thought of and talked about as part of this whole enforcement story ?

Ans: Yes, so we did look around the country and we found a lot of hardened Lane lines, curbs, designated ways, like tactical discouraging things like the zip Lansing that could be very expensive but also not supported by emergency vehicles like really big issues with access. When you have a zipline and then Punch Bowl lanes, they are great but again difficult to install for various reasons. We launched a pilot program for a couple things that picked from around the country that they had done with other things and we installed that on Rainier Avenue south at Alaska Street and that was installed sort of late 2023 and early 2024. It's just a series of raised tiles, raised payment markers RPMs and and reflective markers before you enter that area and we've been monitoring to see if there are any violations.

Presentation: Low pollution neighborhoods

Radcliffe and Jack SDOT

- Directed by the mayor's office to deliver three of these areas by 2028
- the working definition is designated the policy program built interventions or incentives to reduce pollution and increase climate resilience
- It's not just for tailpipe emissions but also for buildings so this is why we called it low pollution instead of when it was once called Low traffic Zone. It's also about building so we're working and partnering with the office of sustainability and environment to deliver on these Ideas.
- We mentioned the mayor's executive order. We also published a climate change response framework last October and then also received a rebuilding American infrastructure and Equity Grant. A grant from the federal government to carry out some of this work. The C4 our city and our region would be purchasing electric buses, so we're working in partnership with King County Metro to make that happen.
- We are supposed to deliver an area of the city that zero emission area and our response investing in community resilience. It's planned for the creation of carbon free low

pollution neighborhoods with Concepts like low emission zones. We were calling it before as ecodistricts, resilience districts and superblocs.

- London is probably the most famous for Low emissions Zone based on pricing but here is a version of the cap hill. We have the Capitol Hill ecodistrict, which was a branding effort way back in the early 2000 but now has evolved into what's called "just communities".
- Think of these areas that we're thinking of to be low pollution neighborhoods, but they're taking it a bit further in response to flooding and then Super blocks.
- Famous approach to this - example of Spain. Super blocks of Spain and Barcelona and (image)- it's about managing access onto some of our neighborhood streets. The yellow Corridor it's very difficult to go through, that whole Corridor and you are obligated to turn left or right out of that zone but that yellow suggests that those are people's spaces/cycling spaces that you could access those areas in a safe manner.
- We did some analysis of our household travel survey/ Regional household travel survey in Seattle. Most of our trips are under three car trips in Seattle. Washington in essence, we would reduce internal combustion engine trips to 35% and the remainder would be in cycling/ walking/ taking Transit and EGS.
- Received about a million dollars from the federal government to prepare this place to implement neighborhoods, working with the community to implement things thinking about where in the city we can carry out these low pollution neighborhoods.
- Identify some candidate areas and then again co-create and see what's right for the selected area to find a project.
- It's about being able to choose different options more regularly. We want to create an area that is truly a low pollution affordable housing project and across the street from a park. Work with the community to define the goals of this work and deliver on our outcomes of safety equity and climate resilience with boards and community members for implementation. Will be building on existing work we've done, the home zones as a response to the closure of the West Seattle Bridge.
- At Transit stations there's a great opportunity there I'm sure you've all experienced you District station and then the Robert maestas Plaza at Beacon Hill to really taking these opportunities to build on them and be able to deploy them collectively

Questions:

Zack - Love the idea of having more low pollution neighborhoods. Some examples that I can think of besides Occidental, Bell Street, Pioneer Square and Ballard Ave - that's been kind of converted to having more outdoor seating/ street events. Would really love to see more of that in Seattle - car free completely. Would like to see Ballard Ave completely car free. There's a lot of streets where we only close it off for a certain event, like 9th Avenue North/ Denny closed off for Farmers Market, because it doesn't have a lot of car

traffic in the first place. To see roads like that be kind of permanently car free or mostly car free because we're already closing them off for special events. Then why not make it full time. Last comment - for example Pike Street between Broadway and 12th Avenue I would love to see that look like Bell Street or Ballard Ave. I think it would just be a much more pleasant place to be if people can kind of walk in the street and there's actually outdoor seating.

Ashwin - Another example is Capitol Hill station Plaza which is shown in one of your pictures. So I think a lot of the gentle traffic coming measures just don't work. There needs to be some sort of physical restrictions in order for to make these places actually enjoyable for pedestrians. My last comment - there are a lot of concerns coming from local businesses and that seems to be a common theme in terms of taking parking spots for putting in a bustling space, or putting in a bike lane. I would be interested to hear more about cities like Barcelona that do super blocks really well. If you don't want people to use the streets I thought that was really cool and I think there's a way to do that in Capital Hill and other similar locations that still moves people and goods but just doesn't for cars.

Priya - Echoing Zack's comments, convey roads with less car traffic into more LPNs or people's Street or bike/ped prioritized space. I thought of the same examples - 9th Avenue or Ballard Ave or even University District farmers market and places where they usually convert them for events and then they go back to being normal roads. Another comment I had was the image that you showed of Spain, which had a huge stretch of people's place. It would be great if something like that can be replicated somewhere in Seattle. Most of the car-free streets that we see here for example the Belltown Bell Street is not that big it's probably a couple blocks long so something of that big stretch would be really nice to see because most of the time

Sandra - Two questions or comments - I lived on First Hill and so the changes that happened at minor Pike and Melrose, in the construction going on and there was a huge impact on commuter traffic down and everyone leaving the hospital going to I-5. The traffic became a lot worse and it seemed like just letting that small change of making between Minor and Boren one way and then closing that the path between Minor way seemed to make things a lot worse. I think overall and standards in terms of level of service of growth since we're going to be putting cars onto other roads. It's going to be part of creating these thoughts to update those standards to allow for slower heavier traffic on different roads where typically you know we'd want a level of service to be higher and we are really looking at other traffic options.

Ans: This is going to be a ballet of where and how many more cars we move off of some of these streets onto other roads. This is where an improved transit network plays a big

role, where some of those cars we're expecting, the drivers we're expecting to shift into improved transit to mitigate the traffic. That would happen if we're shifting cars off of some of these eventual low pollution neighborhoods. We're also going to take a look at where the average daily traffic is relatively low.

Board business

- Ashwin - Interested in following up on Bus Lane Enforcement pilot and the results.
- South Lake Union Letter - Edits done on the letter with the board members.

Ashwin motions, Zack seconds, Art thirds to send the letter to Sound Transit.

Major items update: Carolyn

- Trailer direct is launching this weekend for Memorial Day.
- Mayor's proposed Levy is currently being considered by Council. The joint letter between the bike board and the transit board had been received and that was reflected in the mayor's updated draft proposal. Now it is being considered by the Council. Now would be a good time to create a subcommittee if needed.
- General recruitment update - Wrapping up the recruitment, a lot of record number of applicants.
- Subcommittee report. Working with Ashwin and Art to try to help facilitate a meeting with council member and transportation committee chair Rob Saka. Looking like we are developing a process in which that can happen.
- Levy oversight committee - Ashwin - last meeting was more around feedback and debrief from certain members of the Olympics. Presentation on the new updated and the final version of the mayor's version of the plan. Council is currently deliberating on no information. It's about 100 million dollars more spread across and then the initial proposal of 1.3 million and council is now deliberating on that. One of the comments was that the amount may go higher to 1.7 or perhaps two billion, which of course would help the transportation side and the transit side specifically.
- There is a July deadline for Council to either put it forward for Vote or not. So if we chose to write a letter or strongly as a board, the month of June would be the perfect time to do that if you as a private citizen wish to go to the public meeting.
- Thoughts regarding having a subcommittee : Ashwin, Art, and Zach will work on the Levy subcommittee.