



Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

June 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

David Seater, Chair
Anna Zivarts, Vice Chair
Han-Jung Ko (Koko)
Emily Meltzer

Pending Confirmation:
Bianca Johnson
Debra Kahn
Jennifer Lehman
Emily Mannetti
Esti Mintz
Maria Sumner

Board Members Present: David Seater, Anna Zivarts, Han-Jung Ko (Koko), Emily Meltzer

Pending Board Members Present: Bianca Johnson, Debra Kahn, Jennifer Lehman, Emily Mannetti, Esti Mintz, Maria Sumner

Members of the Public:

Adrian
Akshali Gandhi
Andrew Bell
Amy Wheelless
Bryan Copp
Denise Ness
Doug MacDonald
Elizabeth Peterson
Gordon Padelford
Karen Craddick

Kate Martin
Krystal Miller
Lee Bruch
Patrick Maunder
Robin Randels
Sheila Cloney
Teresa Damaske
Tom Lang
Tonica Voorhies
Qingyang Xie

City Staff: Polly Membrino (SDOT), Caylen Beaty (SDOT), Elisabeth Wooten (SDOT), Summer Jawson (SDOT)

6:00 pm - Welcome & Introductions - 5 min

6:05 pm - Public Comment - 5 min

- Robin--Parallel streets to Stay Healthy Streets are becoming cut throughs. Make streets 5 mph to make them safer for pedestrians.
- Lee Bruch—NW 95th and NW 83rd have been historically bad with traffic and are getting worse. We need whole zones of Stay Healthy Streets to become healthy neighborhoods. The events on Capitol Hill may show us how to sidestep SDOT's failures.
- Krystal Miller—Lives in West Seattle and is very excited about Stay Healthy Streets. Right now, there are detours through Sylvan, SW Holden, etc. that are leading to unsafe crossings due to the traffic from the bridge closure.

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

- Patrick—Lives in North Seattle between Stay Healthy Streets—these singular streets that have blocked off traffic has had an adverse effect on traffic on parallel streets. Streets that were once walkable are now unsafe streets for walking—there should be a more holistic approach and network of streets.
- Karen Craddick—In the Haller Lake neighborhood there are collector arterials and there should be increased safety for feeder streets near the hexagon area around the lake. It is difficult to access bus stops near the lake on these streets due to a lack of four way stops.

Route 44 Presentation

- Route 44 runs from Ballard to the U-District and planned improvements include dedicated bus lanes and queue jumps signal upgrades, channelization changes, and other safety improvements
- Project development screening process includes evaluation criteria such as transit performance, safety, access, community and equity, and implementation feasibility
- Project is current at 30% design
- A recommended spot improvement at N 46th St (Green Lake Way/Whitman) includes an existing retaining wall and is a complex location; recommendation includes moving the southern curb line to accommodate a new left turn lane and separate through movements from turn lanes.
 - Another recommendation at this spot is to dead end Whitman Avenue and relocate the eastern-most crossing to make it more direct and perpendicular to traffic
- Other planned improvements:
 - Upgrade will include an accessible pedestrian signal (APS)
 - Project will construct a number of curb ramps at priority locations, repair sidewalks, and install wayfinding signs at up to eight bus stop locations
 - New crossings that will include pedestrian push buttons and bicycle push buttons
- Questions
 - Emily Meltzer—Is there a plan to improve the traffic signal, which currently includes a flashing yellow signal to improve the pedestrian crossing?
 - Yes, at the Linden/Fremont intersection, there are planned improvements for pedestrians and vehicles, including relocating

the signal, crosswalk, and on-ramp; also looking into adding a north-south crosswalk, which does not currently exist

- o Bianca Johnson—Are there concerns at the 11th Ave NW intersection with Market due to the three lane section?
 - There will be a signal added here instead of just a flashing beacon
- o Debra Kahn—Thinking about the changes and communication to the DeafBlind community, is there a plan for improvements to communicate to the DeafBlind community, specifically with the accessible pedestrian signals (APS)?
 - There will be plans further in the design process and past projects have included soliciting feedback from a community group that is involved with the DeafBlind community.
 - One resource is David Miller from Lighthouse for the Blind, who could help with the outreach to the community.
- o Jennifer Lehmann—It is exciting to see the changes happening to Route 44 and traffic and pedestrian improvements and creative solutions.
- o Maria Sumner—What will be used to make the decision for where the Wayfinders and how many will be implemented?
 - Currently, the design uses 8 Wayfinding signs, but there has not been a decision regarding locations, which will be based on existing street infrastructure. There may be constraints related to setting them into the ground, but that will be worked into the final design.
- o Karen Craddick—When and why would the wayfinding signs be used when the majority of residents are on their phones using map apps?
 - There is an interest in having a more equitable way for more people who do not have smart phones to navigate the area.
- o Emily Mannetti—Are the wayfinding signs being implemented all over the city and will there be a uniform system or are they done on a project by project basis?
 - There is a uniform design in mind and there are currently two pilot programs for installation. There has been a community request for wayfinding, so this will be an opportunity to use it in a project in the area.
 - There was an effort to get SDOT, Sound Transit, etc. to adopt a universal wayfinding system across the city, so that is the goal with this project.

Stay Healthy Streets Discussion

- Anna-We are having a discussion tonight about Stay Healthy Streets including updates since May and in the context of national and local conversations around racism, policing, and who is and isn't allowed to use the streets. Also, opening space to discuss disability access in Stay Healthy Streets, particularly in the context of opening streets to restaurants.
- Bianca—In the context of Ahmaud Arbery and navigating streets, has there been an increase of calls, conflict, or other incidents on streets or the Stay Healthy Streets? What has the reaction been to Stay Healthy Streets?
 - Summer-The tensions of quarantine has caused stress. There have been instances of people putting signs that have been knocked down, but there are some people who may be intentionally knocking down. There have been reports of people who need to drive through the streets but have not felt welcomed or allowed to drive to streets.
 - Summer-There are planned changes for signage to let people know that they can drive through if they need to. Some people are worried about whether or not they will be able to drive through the streets if they need to, but that comes to education around Stay Healthy Streets.
- Patrick Maunder—The traffic problem has been pushed from Stay Healthy Streets to other streets.
- Summer Jawson, SDOT—This is a powerful time and we are seeing streets transform by the city and by the people.
- Anna Zivarts—Are you collecting demographic information on people who are using Stay Healthy Streets and how that compares to the demographics of the City? Looking at the map, there are lots of areas that aren't well served. Worried that this infrastructure will come in place of improved sidewalks and curb ramps. How can we make sure every street is safe to walk and roll on?
 - Summer-The data gathered now is observation-based from SDOT employees. The only demographic recorded was child versus adult. We are working with outreach teams on a Stay Healthy Street survey which will collect voluntary demographic information and information about which Stay Healthy Street they use, where they live, etc. There is also automated data being collected on Stay Healthy Streets.
- Anna Zivarts—Can the speeds on the Stay Healthy Streets be reduced even more so that they are safer for pedestrians? There will be streets in Seattle that won't have sidewalks in our lifetime. Are Stay Healthy Streets going to replace sidewalk improvements?
 - Stay Healthy Streets has not diverted money from the sidewalks program. Stay Healthy Streets can complement sidewalk programs and other pedestrian improvements.

- Esti Mintz—Did you hear any response or complaints from shop owners about people not being able to drive to the store now that stores are opening?
 - There have been some concerns, but there were sections not incorporated into Stay Healthy Streets because of small businesses. There have been concerns in Lake City due to people using business parking areas for non-parking and delivery trucks not being able to easily navigate streets. There will be revisions to the signs to show that drivers can go through the street if your destination on the block.
- Emily Meltzer—There are concerns that people who live on streets, particularly people in Othello and people of color, weren't consulted before the streets were turned into Stay Healthy Streets. In this area, some of the signs have also been pushed to the side. Are there other ways that Stay Healthy Streets can help facilitate community connection?
 - There was no neighborhood outreach anywhere because it was an emergency response to COVID-19. The Stay Healthy Streets were implemented to make streets more accessible for people to walk/bike during the pandemic. The mayor wants to make 20 miles of Stay Healthy Streets permanent and there will be future outreach for this. The hope is that Stay Healthy Streets will be something that communities can create individually regarding place-keeping and honoring the space that they are in. The Stay Healthy Streets will likely look different depending on the culture of the community. There could be overlap with other community walking tours, neighborhood history, street murals, etc.
- Emily Meltzer—Recommendation to work with Department of Neighborhoods to do community outreach and grants, etc.
 - Summer-Stay Healthy Streets are community focused.
- Jennifer Lehman—Are the permanent 20 miles already determined?
 - Summer-Conversations with neighborhoods about what the Greenway network will look like, did SDOT pick the right streets, etc. will help dictate which streets become permanent.
- With traffic being diverted to other neighborhood streets, has SDOT looked at this?
 - Summer-SDOT is out collecting data on Stay Healthy Streets, but not on parallel streets because traffic during COVID-19 does not look like typical traffic patterns. There has been observed 60% reduction on parallel streets and 80-90% reduction on Stay Healthy Streets. There have not been traffic studies on these streets recently because traffic is not in a normal pattern right now due to the pandemic. There is a plan in place to evaluate traffic data on parallel streets.
- Has SDOT looked at a creating a network of Stay Healthy Streets?

- o There have been positive responses regarding the northern loop of Stay Healthy Streets. SDOT plans to include questions around loops vs. a long stretch of Stay Healthy Streets in each neighborhood.
- Anna Zivarts--Can you give an update on if Stay Healthy Streets are expanding and what the timeline might look like?
 - o Summer-The expansions are ready to go as soon as the crews are able to work on them, which is limited due to crew capacity. Several locations are ready to go if that is where the city can focus the attention there.
- Debra Kahn—I live near Fremont Avenue and enjoy walking on the closed street, but am concerned about crossing over 105th St because it does not have a vibrating crosswalk signal and it is hard to detect the signal when it is going off. IS it possible to switch that signal out with a vibrating signal to have a better sense of what is going on? There are at least two DeafBlind people who could take advantage of that.
 - o Summer-I will reach out to the signals crew to ask about what it would take to make that improvement.
- Anna Zivarts—What should we be doing about our streets without sidewalks, curb ramps, or other missing infrastructure? Should we move to a Greenways model or accept a low cost sidewalk as an alternative?
- Debra Kahn—There is an area on Fremont between 99th and 95th that is really narrow and I was getting nervous walking on the street as it has cars parked on both sides. At one point a car was driving too fast. I wasn't sure and didn't check if there was a sidewalk as I thought it was okay to walk on the street. Also I've noticed some people would walk on the left side viewing oncoming traffic while others are walking on the right side. When you are walking, do you walk with traffic or against traffic? I wear a reflective vest which is also helpful to wear to alert drivers that you are there.
 - o David Seater--Most people try to walk against traffic, but often there isn't room to walk if there aren't sidewalks.
 - o Anna Zivarts--For bicyclists, there is a three foot passing law required for cars, but that is not the case for pedestrians. The law says that if you are the pedestrian and there is no sidewalk it is your responsibility to get out of the roadway if a car is coming. We are trying to change the state law so that cars are required to move out of the way.
 - o Lee Bruch—There is a liability for pedestrians because of the state law.
 - o Patrick Maunder—Now that traffic has increased significantly, we have to get out of the way of cars, but there are drainage ditches so it is not possible to get out of the way.
 - o David Seater—Is there an opportunity to sign onto support changing the law as SPAB?

- o Anna Zivarts—It would be good to get support from other groups in the state. Are we pushing for slower speeds on Stay Healthy Streets or do we want to push for more low cost sidewalks on as many non-arterials as possible as quickly as possible? Where should we put attention and focus?
- o Emily Meltzer—Lowering speed limits on non-arterials is a great first step. Can we prioritize certain areas for low cost sidewalks?
- o Esti Mintz—We should be aware that the City will be broke for the foreseeable future, so maybe writing a letter to try to change the law, which does not require money, might be a better way to go.
- o Jennifer Lehman—Did anyone have any recommendations for low cost improvements for social distancing?
- o David Seater—We have asked the city to decriminalize walking in the streets.
- o Emily Meltzer—We could use one way sidewalks to prevent folks from having to walk past each other. There are examples from other cities, but not sure how effective they have been.
- o David Seater—It is a challenge and costly to build low cost sidewalks where there are drainage ditches. Could the city focus on Neighborhood Greenway treatments for streets without sidewalks instead of drainage ditches?
- o Anna Zivarts—Parked cars can narrow the roadway, which slows cars where there are sidewalks. Where there aren't sidewalks, cars park where there otherwise would be sidewalks, which widens the roadways and increases speeds and traffic.
- o Maria Sumner—“Streateries” can be good for social distancing, particularly near local businesses. In light of recent events, we have an opportunity to rethink how we are using streets. How are we thinking about data for pedestrian traffic and how can we use that to advocate for changes that we want to see?

Public Comment

- o Lee Bruch—Some cities have used opposing one way streets, which has made it safer for pedestrians to walk because it limits and slows car traffic.
- o Gordon Padelford—Thank you for your time keeping people moving around safely, particularly as streets are becoming places for public discourse. If you have connections to small businesses or business districts, start the conversations now about “Streateries” or public eating areas. You can reach out to Seattle Neighborhood Greenways.
- o Kate Martin—Concerned about expanding Stay Healthy Streets into Stay Healthy Zones. The Department of Neighborhoods has no funds, so we

are trying to figure out ways to implement Stay Healthy Zones bounded by arterials. Was there opposition from the board regarding Stay Healthy Zones rather than a single Stay Healthy Street? We need backup from SPAB, so if you have feedback for us, we'd like to know if we have support for Stay Healthy Zones.

- The board has not made an official endorsement for Stay Healthy Zones.
- o Doug MacDonald—In the entire discussion of Stay Healthy Streets, the city has avoided its obligation to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). I do not like the 1st ave continuation of the Stay Healthy Street by Fred Meyer. There should be a serious look at the potential environmental effects and the city has not acknowledged this. There is also a vegetation management problem on sidewalks. Neighbors bushes and trees are covering the sidewalk and the city should make a point to tell people to cut back their own vegetation. Vegetation management should be put on an action mission for SPAB.
- o Sheila Cloney—Live in Phinney Ridge on 73rd and a fan of the Stay Healthy Street. It should not terminate on NW 73rd street because it is a major cut through street. Before the virus, we were on target to get a grant to fix the roadway with SDOT and SFD. It is a matter of time before there is a fatality on that street. There have been many incidents and there has still been traffic during covid. People are crossing to Sycamore and 1st and 2nd and there are people who have to unsafely cross in this area. Something needs to be done immediately to make this safer. 73rd has not been treated equitably and there could be an accident. There should be stop signs at every intersection there. Anecdotally, people are driving in to use the Stay Healthy Street.
- o Tom Lang—Stay Healthy Zones would be a more effective approach than the Stay Healthy Street. If there aren't sources of funding for community projects, could SDOT allow the community itself to implement changes on the street? Could SPAB ask SDOT?
- o Krystal Miller—If sidewalks are inaccessible due to lack of curbs, any efforts to change the law to favor pedestrians should acknowledge that in the language.

Board Business

- Still waiting for council and mayoral approval of new members
- May and June minutes will be sent out together for the board to approve next month

- Several board members are in favor of Stay Healthy Zones rather than Stay Healthy Streets, but there is concern that some communities will not get equitable treatment.
- The board could advocate for the concept of Stay Healthy Zones with community input being a key component.
- David Seater will draft a letter regarding Stay Healthy Zones and send it out to be discussed at the next meeting in July.
- Anna Zivarts--It would be good to have space to discuss policing and pedestrian space in future meetings.
- Emily Meltzer will draft a statement from SPAB regarding policing.