



Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

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January 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Members present: Jennifer, Hayley, David, Hannah, Bunnie, Angela, Gordon, Manette, Patricia (phone)

December minutes need formatting change, Angela move to approve, unanimous vote

Public Comment:

- Doug: Disappointed in lack of substantive comment from SDOT on bike share ordinance compliance. Presentation tonight is devoid of substance. Provided handout from PMP. SDOT will put 20k bikes in pedestrian clear zone. Provided handout of permit requirements, which define what is an obstruction hazard but require that callers must say “obstruction hazard” when calling in order to get 2 hour response instead of 24 hour. Last handout is comments about the numbers of bikes, decision on limit was unclear. Examples from other cities. No data about how decision is made or to show that sidewalk riding is safe. Pedestrians need a protected place too, it should be sidewalks. SPAB has duty to take an independent look at this.
- Karthik: Lack of patience from drivers on Capitol Hill. Nearly been hit several times, had arguments with people driving. Lack of awareness or traffic. Pedestrians with signal to cross still have drivers moving into the crosswalk. Need enforcement for drivers to raise awareness
- Ryan: Move Seattle workplan, specifically \$95m new sidewalk program. PMP assumes avg per block cost of \$350k/block. \$95k/250 blocks is \$381k/block, but includes 130 blocks of low cost sidewalks. Spending \$1.2m/block in 2024. 1st year of LEvy w/only low cost was \$404k/block. 31 low cost blocks built recently already had existing sidewalks, improvement was to add wheel stops (Rainier Valley Greenway). Needs a more thorough audit.
- Elliot: Thanks people who spoke. Has been following Ryan’s audits. Cautions against aggregating data and dividing by the total; many are unique. Work plan lays out those details. Happy to come back and talk about those projects in particular.
 - Gordon: Where did policy decision come from to do split between traditional and low cost sidewalks?

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*

- Elliot: Using current costs and approved PMP to get the split. Had input from SPAB via PMP Implementation plan and levy “reset” to guide project selection.
- Gordon: David Burgesser had told us that scoring would exclude low cost entirely. SPAB gave direction to follow that scoring. SDOT has chosen to do ~50/50 split without SPAB/LOC approval.
- Elliot: Can have a policy discussion for future updates.
- Angela: Several lives/voices do not get opportunity to grasp these concepts and just want to be safe. Concerned that strategy/statistics are needed but that significance of every life that gets hit or injured is important. Not saying people don’t care. Decision making process should be people first, then cars. Need public safety addresses for pedestrians to be mindful. Need transparent open dialog about policy decisions because it’s about lives, not blockfaces. Equity plays into that decision. All lives are significant.

Jackson Hub - Liz & Mackenzie (sp?):

- Partnering with orgs in Chinatown / International District around 5th & Jackson
- Many agencies are involved (SDOT, Metro, Sound Transit)
- Developing concept plan for the area for agencies to build in the future
- Several outreach events, still a work in progress
- Goals: Safe & comfortable, engaging, connected, iconic
- Current environment is not very welcoming
- Period of Maximum Constraint is an opportunity to do something now while planning for longer term opportunities
- Complex ownership of the space, multiple levels, bridges; not all are poised to be caretakers of the public realm
- Site currently has a lot of visual and physical challenges to see/move through it
- Most of the site is structure built on columns, so big changes would require rebuilding that. Precludes large trees.
- 4th & Jackson is difficult to cross: wide lanes, narrow sidewalks. CID residents say they avoid going to Pioneer Square because of this intersection.
- Station plaza feels outdated and poorly maintained, cluttered, dead plants
- 4th Ave E is uncovered, lots of buses, blank facade
- Angela: ADA info needs to be synthesized so that people can plan ahead.

- Mackenzie: All will be ADA accessible, working to make the whole space feel more inviting, Thinking about where to put truncated domes, make things simple and easy to use at the human scale.
- Surveys found that safety was most important goal. Wayfinding, lighting
- Now have a consolidated concept plan to present later this month, will use to help determine cost
- New Link station for ST3 will be in this area, so want to avoid spending a lot of money on structural improvements now (roof rebuild). Will be passing these outreach results into process for future plans. In the short term the structures can be cleaned and repainted.
- Replace driveway and parking in front of Union Station with plaza and seating, open up kiosks and blockages along the sidewalk. Most parked vehicles are from Sound Transit, working with them to stop that.
 - Andrea: Wasn't always parking, now used by security
 - Mackenzie: Plan hasn't been totally vetted yet by SDOT/ST/Metro, but they have had input to it. "They're coming to the table."
- Raised crosswalk across 4th Ave S. Visual cue that drivers should slow.
- New signalized crosswalk at King
 - Hayley: Permanent vs. temporary concerns with this?
 - Mackenzie: Bridge has to be redone anyway and would remove these improvements, but still worth it in the short term
 - Andrea: What's on the table for the stations? What's timeline?
 - Mackenzie: We've heard 4th or 5th, some want Union Station to be a station again.
 - Liz: Sound Transit is making decisions in the spring. Could be cut & cover or deep bore tunnel for additional trains.
 - Hayley: Choices are either to expand the existing station or go deeper
- Updating ped scale lighting along 4th
- Eliminating/scaling back planters and columns in existing plaza on 5th
- Recommending covering the open part of the station to be able to see and walk directly through
- Expanding sidewalk on north side of Jackson next to Sounder entrance (already in progress)
- Propose expanding sidewalk along 2nd Ave Extension
- SDOT is looking at signal timing as a separate project, have pointed out that it needs improvement (people have to run today)
- Recommending lidding BNSF railway with a park or other public open space
- Wayfinding pilot project will be implemented here

- Angela: Amtrak station is on the edge, but part of how the different modalities intersect
 - Mackenzie: Wayfinding for transfers is very important here with streetcars, buses, light rail. Considering a digital kiosk with arrival times/delays
- Space in front of King Street Station and plaza across Jackson is currently being refreshed (in concept design) via Pioneer Square Parks & Gateways program
- Gordon: Really exciting to see plans. Two questions: What is plan for little triangle south of Jackson? What about bike route through the plaza? It's the route to south seattle and isn't clear.
 - Mackenzie: Bikes: Meeting with people developing the bike route through this area. "A lot of cooks in the kitchen." Lots happening in these communities is causing outreach fatigue so backed off to let SDOT folks working on the BMP handle this. Haven't heard final route yet. Looking at bike parking options for this project. Feedback wants something centralized, covered, but not lockers.
 - Mackenzie: Triangle: People wanted more vegetation. Planning elevated "green roof" so that plants are visible while driving and walking by, but needs to be lightweight because underlying structure is too old/weak to support people. Still working on long term vision, when bridges are rebuilt there will be more opportunities.
- Hayley: Walks through this area twice a day. Thinks it's unlikely that money would be invested in a temporary signal. Need to have good Plan B just in case. Likes incorporation of wayfinding project.
- Andrea: Also walks through twice a day, did wayfinding for Sound Transit. For crosswalks with signal timing issues: Width is really constrained, no shoulder. People are pushed almost against buses when crossing. Often bikes from light rail to King County, tries to avoid the street (tracks) but ends up against a bus. Ped volumes are increasing.
 - Mackenzie: Bike routing is really challenging, contentious.
 - Liz: Asking to widen crosswalks whenever possible.
- Hayley: Have you heard about wobbly pavers.
 - Mackenzie: Looking at repairing, but not replacing. Some historic that need to be kept.

Bikes, E-Bikes, E-mobility and Sidewalks- Joel:

- Budget had SLI that required a look at this

- Using this presentation/work to frame the discussion, will have ongoing conversation before report is due in June.
- Want to make sure the city is Safe, Interconnected, Affordable, Vibrant, and Innovative
- Current regulations allow bikes on sidewalks, must yield to pedestrians and at reasonable & proper speed. SMC 11.44.120
- E-bikes allow Class 1 & 2 on sidewalk, prohibit class 3. RCW 46.61.710
- E-scooters not allow on sidewalk. RCW 46.61.710
- City doesn't have a separate law to address this, so state law is used
- Generally e-mobility devices aren't allowed on sidewalks, except Segways
- Andrea: Why aren't scooters allowed?
 - Joel: Was written before current trend in scooters, addressed electric/gas "toy" scooters
- Hannah: Can the City have different laws than the state?
 - Joel: Yes, in either direction
- Bike vs. ped collisions are rarely reported, three in 2014-2017
- 400 car vs. bike collisions per year in the street, 20 serious or fatal injuries
- Data is only based on reports, so likely not capturing all bike:ped collisions
- Large parts of the city lack safe places to ride bikes (e.g. Rainier Valley, north Seattle), so prohibiting bikes on sidewalks forces people into unsafe streets
- Bike laws nationally are inequitably enforced against people of color
- Angela: How many outreach conversations are happening? Not just data?
 - Joel: Only looking at data now, but those conversations are important as we go forward.
 - Angela: Not just mobility, also activity
- SDOT has gotten feedback that bikes/scooters on sidewalks make people feel unsafe and less enjoyable to walk/linger
- People living with disabilities experience an outsized impact from sidewalk riding
- Jennifer: Where is this feedback from? Are there hotspots?
 - Joel: More in the downtown core
 - Jennifer: Not citywide?
 - Joel: No, in terms of people expressing that they feel unsafe.
- Would like to have discussion about what's working and what needs work
- Starting parking audits this month, will give feedback and later enforcement with companies
- Three pillars of how bikes are parked:

- Preventing ADA compliant pathway: zero tolerance, fleet cap immediately reduced by 20 bikes/incident
 - Other blocking: Between 4-6% block sidewalks, etc. Goal is 3% this year, lower in future. If more than 3% block then fleet cap reduced by 1000.
 - Generally non-compliant: e.g .in planting strip. 30% threshold.
- Quarterly reports to make public, on website
- Angela: How do people report problems?
 - Joel: Right now you can call SDOT but it's not fully integrated. Quickest way is to email/call the bike share company. Goal is to build a reporting mechanism, maybe integrated with Find It, Fix It.
- Gordon: How do you distinguish ADA vs. general blocking
 - Joel: Via SDOT audits
- Patricia: Not clear on context of presentation. Is this part of sidewalk management plan? Input to bike share program management? Not sure what feedback is being solicited.
 - Joel: Presentation is about sidewalk management plan, talking mostly about bike parking but also riding bikes on sidewalks
 - Patricia: Council gave short deadline. This should be opportunity to look at big picture issues and formal planning process (limited space, equity, disability). This seems very unstructured. Would like to better define the problems on sidewalks, reexamine restricting bikes on sidewalks. Perhaps SPAB would like to see a major study on the use of our sidewalks with bigger context.
 - Joel: Good feedback. That is what we're doing, today's presentation is just framing the problems. Hear to learn. Response to SLI 35-3-A-1 is due in June 2019.
- Data collection and rider education still need more work
- Patricia: What's due this summer?
 - Joel: Budget included Statement of Legislative Intent requiring SDOT to include survey of new mobility options, evaluation of other cities' efforts, and strategy to integrate these in a safe and sustainable manner, including use of bike lanes. Using the report we're preparing now for framing (due end of this month). Will be back again.
 - Patricia: In June SPAB could ask for a larger study of use of sidewalks (bike riding, parking, etc.)
 - Joel: We plan on including that. SLI focuses on electric mobility, but bikes can travel at these speeds too

- Hannah: Should talk about full right of way allocation, not just sidewalks. Is that being looked at?
 - Joel: Yes, but that's why we're here to help define that problem statement
- Patricia: Looks at use of sidewalks, not just technologies. Should be more holistic.
- Andrea: Not clear what the ask is, or what's at stake. Sounds like there may be bigger debate about making bikes illegal on sidewalk. Also asking about obstacles to bikes on sidewalk. Is that right?
 - Joel: We're still at problem definition. Some people are asking why sidewalk riding is legal. Want to have a broader discussion.
 - Andrea: What exactly are you looking for feedback on?
 - Joel: Looking for framing on how right of way is used in the context of safety, equity, and comfort.
- Bunnie: Has several considerations. Data on reports: would like to hear more on where they're coming from, seems skewed because vehicle collisions are much more severe. How will you hear about bike & ped "almost collisions," or minor collisions that don't result in a hospital visit or police report? How can people report that? Need to broaden this into a public survey to get feedback, e.g. "How do you feel about the state of walking on the sidewalk?" Would get at least qualitative data. Haven't heard discussion of hills. Bikes riding down hills on sidewalks (or in street) are significantly more dangerous. Rain increases these dangers/difficulties. Talking about regulations in city-wide or statewide level, but problems seem concentrated downtown. Have we considered limiting restrictions on sidewalk riding to the downtown core? Surprised not to have heard that given equity focus on non-downtown neighborhoods. Should concentrate efforts on where we're having the most safety issues. Potential for new UPS delivery bikes on sidewalks and bike lanes, hasn't been discussed. Could impact ability of people and traffic to move. Doug brought up appropriate numbers of bikes. Fleet reductions are being used as punishment for blockages. Haven't heard if data will be collected to see if bikes are being used and the numbers are appropriate. No consideration of whether there will be too many bikes.
 - Joel: This is great feedback. Intentionally left content out of presentation to elicit responses like this, have been taking notes. Regarding numbers of bikes, we went from 10k in pilot to 20k now to see if that's the right number. Will be looking at underused bikes, may have value as an option for people even if used infrequently.

- Bunnie: Concerned about high concentrations of bikes in areas that exceed the number people need. Might consider allocating market share rather than fleet size based on compliance.
- Joel: We can do that now, when one company's cap is reduced another's can be increased.
- Andrea: As a consumer of bike share downtown it frustrating to see a big grouping of bikes and none of them work (not charged, inoperable, broken). Frustrating that the bikes are there blocking the sidewalk when they can't be used. Quieter neighborhoods never have bikes (e.g. at light rail stations), many are broken or vandalized. Also want to make sure we don't lose the right to ride on the sidewalk. In many areas still not safe to ride in the street.
 - Joel: Audits will also look at fleet maintenance. Wasn't collected in pilot but will be setting a baseline now.
- Jennifer: Echoes Bunnie's comment about focusing on neighborhoods vs. downtown. Example of children learning to ride bikes on sidewalks. Important issue for right of way is speed, not mode. Perhaps bikes can use sidewalks if they're moving at speeds comparable to pedestrians. Moving bikes off the sidewalks may not give a safe space for bikes.
- Patricia: Can you send links to the Ordinance and SLI to SPAB?
 - Joel: Yes.
- Gordon: Bunnine's points on near misses was good, need better reporting. Surveys: Would like to see scientific surveys rather than just comments. Fighting over scraps: Would like to see data collection after PBLs are installed to see if sidewalk riding is reduced. Would like to see city adopt a multimodal level of service. Should regulate behavior (e.g. speeds) not equipment. Parking in planting strips should be allowed in residential neighborhoods to reduce blocking curb ramps.

Recruiting: Closes 1/26 (Saturday). Share the social media posts.

DON / SDOT project - Angela:

- Working with Belen, Brian Dougherty, DON rep
- Appeal about safety and urban sprawl. Safety of everyday living needs to be looked at broadly, using her neighborhood as an example
- Coordinating with DON, apartment complexes, community; people who aren't being considered, not always an integral part of the decision making
- Looking at this as a person living in a situation that is problematic for the whole city

- Got a book from DON about civic engagement
- Asked SDOT to look at parts of the street that are in disrepair (eg. striping faded), setting up a time to do that
- Will be meeting with apartment complexes at a community meeting
- Look at what's working and what isn't, consider how that can apply to other neighborhoods via DON
- Unlikely to finish before her SPAB term ends, but will continue to keep us informed
- Collecting narratives from residents
- Will send compiled letter to city officials to highlight stories that aren't being told via SDOT/DON
- How the board can help:
 - Email about different ways PMP is implemented, funding mechanism
 - Look at that, consider framing a letter about funding
 - Angela to call Gordon