

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: May 14, 2014
6:00pm-8:00pm

Location: City Hall, Boards and Commissions Room (L280)

Members Present: Lydia Heard, Devor Barton, Anna Spooner, Jacob Struiksma, Jeffrey Linn, Lillian Berticevich, Mark Landreneau, Joanne Donohue, Jennifer Olivero, Lorena Kaplan

Attendees: Jim Macintosh, Charles Smith, Zach Aibrose, Connie Zimmerman, Howard Wu, Kristen Simpson, Sue Byers

MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 pm

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL: April meeting minutes approved

PUBLIC COMMENT: none

PRESENTATIONS

Time: 6:08pm

Topic: *Union Street Project*

Presenters: Connie Zimmerman, SDOT

- Connie is part of the newly appointed Office of the Waterfront.
- Focus of the Union Street Pedestrian Connection: enhance pedestrian accessibility, connect the waterfront to the downtown area
- Currently at 30% design for Union Street
- The project is from the S. end of Alaskan Way through Pike Place Market to Bell St.

SCHEDULE/NEXT STEPS

- Several years out: build safe Seawall project, remove the Alaskan Way viaduct.
- Connie is here specifically to talk about Union St. portion. The portion of the project planned for E. of Alaskan can go forward even w/o Bertha working; this part of the project, between the aquarium and Great Wheel, is on a fast track.
- There will be many changes in the vertical grade, including a stairway to get to Western Ave.
- 2012 City Council approved an initial design, which wasn't actually something that could be built. So, they began design again and have a new plan.
- Plan to have vertical elevator connections and clear, obvious slopes so there's a clear connection to the waterfront, drawing people up and down.
- An "elevated pedestrian walkway" is part of the plan
- "Middle Union": in front of the Four Seasons, there is currently a vertical drop. Proposing an extended pedestrian walkway to Western: 2 elevators and 2-way staircase, and car access along the drop. Residential and vehicular access to Post Alley. Existing street trees will remain. Will change from 7 to 24 ft. walkway. Staircases will be at both E and W sides of the pedestrian platform and staircases meet in the middle so you can change directions, sharing a common platform in the middle. Trying to improve street to keep it more activated.
 - Lorena: What will the railing be like on this pedestrian platform? Connie: Railing

TBD.

- “Lower Union”: between western and Alaskan. Same pedestrian platform idea: a street level extension from Western, stairs descending. Elevator on W edge for vertical access.
 - Jennifer: Any crosswalk enhancements? Connie: Yes, working with traffic engineers to decide. Idea to localize *one* crosswalk instead of having two, and adding bulb-outs.
 - Lorena: Used needles are discarded in that area. Is there a plan to actively clean up that debris? Connie: There will be more maintenance and security.
 - Joanne: What funding supports this? Also, is this part of Waterfront or something else? Connie: Yes, this is one part of the Waterfront project; it’s one component of greater project and can move forward sooner than the other parts. It will be funded fully, but unsure of how.
 - Jeff: Will benches be added on the sunny side? Renderings only show benches on the shady side. Connie: Benches are only on the N. side because of the building (which used to be immigration bldg.). Also, the Design Commission and Design Oversight Committee thought it was important to have clear/legible continuity and not have benches to go back and forth across the way.
- “Upper Union”: connects with Seattle Art Museum. Plans are focused on helping people spend time there.
- Lighting: Elevator shafts will look like beacons, which will help with wayfinding. There will be surface lighting, no light poles, and lights coming out from the bottom of the walkway so street will be better lit.
- Jacob: Will elevators open onto the street? Connie: They’ll open onto the sidewalk, and one will be to the N and another to the W.
- Lydia: Did you consider outdoor escalators? Connie: This was approved in the original concept, but an inclinor (escalator in an enclosed cab) became impractical.
- Lydia: Are you connected with the private developer proposing gondolas? Connie: Yes, this is the same corridor and they’re working with him to see if they can build both at the same time or not.
- Jeff: Was your design restricted by the width? Connie: Yes, there are tunnels or structures for utilities under the street, which determined where we can place things. They maximized the width as much as possible.
- Lorena: What is the budget? Connie: \$8-10 million.
- Lily: Are you working with the same design team here as with the other portions of the Waterfront project? Connie: Yes, so the project has much continuity.
- Website: waterfrontseattle.org

Time: 6:46 pm

Topic: Pedestrian Funding Sources

Presenters: Kristen Simpson, SDOT

- SDOT’s mission and values: safety, community, etc. They use core values to prioritize what they propose for funding.
- SDOT goal for 0 traffic fatalities or injuries by 2030

SEATTLE’S BUDGET PROCESS

- Annual process, each January. Mayor proposes budget in September, Council approves in November.
- 2 main components: Operations & Maintenance, Capital Improvement Program aka CIP (for larger projects. Most of Ped. Master Plan projects are funded by CIP)
- \$408 million budget for SDOT. Do a fairly good job of securing grants: \$73 mil, 18%.

- Local funding: 44%
- More than 2/3 of budget is for CIP, 1/5 is for O&M. They try to decide about O&M projects to be able to maintain existing work.
 - Jacob: Why isn't there more money for maintenance, which is a big problem? Kristen: agrees that there should be more money for grinding (as a temporary solution). This has to be decided as part of the budget process, before the budgeted money gets to SDOT.
 - Lorena: Safe Routes to Schools has its own money- do they also use the City's O&M budget? Kristen: now that they have their own funding source, it will be reevaluated.
- O&M funds are generated greatly with the local gas tax and Bridging the Gap.
- Bridging the Gap (BTG): a 9-yr property tax levy, passed in 2006. \$365 million property tax levy. There is a 15 member Levy oversight committee.
 - Next steps: begin discussion of current levy status and potential future funding options.
 - Ped Master Plan: \$8.4 million budget for 2014. \$3 million was added this year to the budget for sidewalk repair, ADA ramps. This was an exciting add. Previous budgets ranged between \$5-6.5 depending on budget and available money.
 - Joanne: How do we compare to other cities? Kristen: Hard to answer.
- Other CIP projects: Mercer Corridor, Thomas Street Overpass, Safe Routes to School, etc.
- 2014 BTG ped. deliverables: build 45 crossing and safety improvements, install 4 miles of neighborhood greenways, build 7 blocks of new sidewalks.
- About \$200,000/block for sidewalk building. Prioritization for sidewalks based on the Ped. Master Plan.
 - Lydia: More money should be requested for crosswalk restriping - this would be part of this budget process. Kristen: SDOT does tell them that they hear from people that crosswalk restriping is important.
 - In past years, SPAB has written a budget priority letter.
 - Jacob: would like more grinding for sidewalks. It's an embarrassment that we have this problem. Lydia: This issue also leads to lawsuits.
- Joanne: The trend line seems to be increasing pedestrian funding. Has the new mayor signaled that there might be more prioritization for pedestrians?
 - Kristen: He's said that it's not about one mode or the other, the focus is on multimodal solutions. The Comprehensive Plan addresses this.
- Jim: has a daughter who has almost been hit twice as a pedestrian in Capital Hill.
- Lydia: Has anybody at the City been looking at NY and Sweden's safety plan? The idea is to design for people, not force a behavior change. Kristen: They're looking at both behavior change and design.
 - Mark: Radar feedback signs make people feel guilty, good for behavior change.

Topic: Fauntleroy Way SW Green Boulevard

Presenters: Sue Byers, SDOT and Maribel Cruz, design consultants

- SDOT's mission: safe and reliable

PROJECT HISTORY

- The Urban Village Neighborhood Plan presents a key community theme: to make areas more ped./bike friendly. This plan is to create a bikeway into W. Seattle. The new Bike Master Plan calls for protected bike lanes. Part of their job is to look at the Ped. Master Plan, Bike Master Plan, and other plans.
- 35th Ave SW to Alaska along Faulttelroy. A Whole Foods is planned, a Trader Joe's

exists, and this is a major freight route. Density in this area is increasing.

PROJECT GOAL

- Goals have evolved over 15 years, responding to community needs from the W. Seattle Triangle Plan.
- Existing conditions: no dedicated bike space, hard to safely cross, poorly defined sidewalk, minimal landscaping, major freight corridor
- Existing right of way: 90 ft. more than usual but so many users need to be accommodated
- Anticipated project elements: maintain freight mobility, improve ped. amenities, protect bike lanes, add landscaping and other urban design features. They are now at very beginning of design process.
- Timeline: July- 30% design package and open house. Fall- 60% design package.
 - They have pending funding for about 60% of the project, which is \$2 mil. They'd ideally begin construction in Spring 2015 but don't have all funding.
- Major design element: add a center median, change street corner angles to degrees
- Mark: It's hard to see lights of APS signal? What will you do?
 - Sue: In general, SDOT will try to address that.
 - Mark: The vibrating signal is best.
 - Jacob: He'd rather APS signals not make the noises. Instead, he listens to what the cars are doing, and using vibrating is fine. On smaller blocks, it's hard to tell what direction the beeping is coming from. Ideal: just vibrating. Or: signals should say "walk", with actual directions.
 - Mark: arrows need to be point person in the right direction. Sometimes when they're installed it's not safe. Vibrates don't have to be on all the time, but it's good to have the kind that you can activate so you use it when you want.
- 18 feet will be on each both sides of the corridor.
 - Struggling to include space for all users b/c bikes need to be part of that 18 ft. separated by grade from a white strip. Cycle tracks require at least 6.5 ft. Requirements are for 6-8 ft. for pedestrians but they'd really like to see at least 8 ft., and 12 would be ideal.
 - Lydia: What will the drive lanes be like? SDOT: There will be 2 in each direction, sometimes with an additional turn lane.
 - There is not lots of bus activity. This is a designated freight route. There is a lot of traffic to get to the ferry.
- W. Seattle groups were very involved w/ DPD planning and they just picked up the project and are just starting their outreach.
- To make 90 degree corners, they'll have to narrow the lanes. The fire dept. says they don't have lots of issues as of now.
- Lydia: What do you anticipate your funding sources will be? SDOT: We don't think we will score well for grant money. Local city money will be better, and Rasmussen was interested in the project.
- Lydia: Have you looked at the safety study of the 35th Ave corridor? SDOT: They probably will coordinate at some point.
- Joanne: Will this be considered a road diet? SDOT: Probably not.
- Website: seattle.gov/transportation/fauntleroywyswbldv.htm
- Jacob: Are there driveways? The fewer the better for pedestrians. SDOT: Yes, there are many, and they're ill-defined. One of the goals of the project is directed by the fact that this is a very car-centric environment
- Time: 7:40pm

Topic: Board Updates

- Lorena: completed a submission to Safe Routes to Schools
- Jacob: Committees for Transit Access and Complete Streets have been combined because they overlap.
- Devor and Joanne met with Greenways and Feet First as part of the Complete Streets Committee:
 - The Complete Streets Ordinance was passed w/ no funding, so they'd like to be part of helping generate funds when we have ideas. Lisa's input (who speaks w/ many people throughout state): people think there's so many Complete Streets requirements that it's silly to even attempt fulfilling/enforcing them.
 - We'll want to meet w/ Susan for the Committee's next steps. Also, she said there's muddle over what it means to meet the Complete Streets Ordinance.
 - Mayor has signaled planning multimodal efforts on the campaign trail.
 - Now that the Right of Way manual is being reviewed for an update, we probably have a good opportunity to prioritize ped issues... mode prioritization triangle: hierarchy of needs. Looking at road diet approach as way to help ped needs b/c narrower streets are more safe for peds. They're really interested in working with us.
- Devor: is on the Westlake Design Committee. One question that comes up is: how do we properly utilize the entire corridor? There will be an open house soon.
- Lydia: would like a list of items for the Council Communications Committee to take to councilmembers. Nick Licata has offered to meet with us. We can bring a list of SPAB priorities to him.
 - Jacob: Sidewalk space is being taken up by other things.
- We should have an annual report and an annual work plan that follows up with it, according to our charter. SPAB's last work plan was in 2008.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT: 8:05pm