

## **Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

WEDNESDAY, 10 December 2008

6PM-8PM, Seattle City Hall Boards and Commissions Room L280

### **1. Call to order and introductions (6:00)**

SPAB members in attendance: Tom Williams (Chair), Mark Bandy, (Vice Chair), Howard Wu (Board Secretary), Lee Ann Do (Get Engaged), Kristen Lohse, T. Frick McNamara, Jon Morgan and Ben Smith

Absent: Randy Earle, Paul Niebanck, Chris Tachibana and Lindsay Pesheck (SBAB liason to SPAB)

SDOT staff liaison: Brian Dougherty

Presenter: Jim Curtin (SDOT), Doug Cox (SDOT), Dawn Schellenberg (SDOT)

Public: Peg Staeheli, Peggy Martinez and Doug Beman?

### **2. Meeting Minute Approval (6:05)**

Tom makes a call for the approval of the November Meeting Minutes. The board made a voice vote approving the minutes.

### **3. Public Comments (6:10)**

Tom asks the public for any comments. No comments were provided.

Tom wanted to hear from someone who went to the open house for the road dieting of Fautleroy.

Peg mentioned that the City provided only plan views. The public was split 50% for and 50% against the 3-lane configuration. The tone was contentious. Eric Widstrand did a great job explaining the project.

T added that the public wanted to study the location and conditions of the bus stops, crosswalks and ADA compliant ramps. She also pointed the speed issue, the potential of lowering the speed limit down from 35 to 25. Some brought up adding planted medians. T thought that the electronic posted speed sign seems to be helping drivers to slow down. She proposed that the board could write a letter in support of the 3-lane configuration.

Peg reminded the Board that there should be consideration for the ferry traffic, but the Board should chime in on the pedestrian crossing issue. The public appeared to be half for and half against the crosswalks due to their impact of slowing down through traffic. The public got contentious over slowing the traffic in this area. However, the public contention was not as sever as the Stone Way Avenue work due to the lack of bicyclists at the meeting.

T volunteered to write a letter on behalf of the Board. She also wanted to mention that as a resident in the area, she did not get any mailers about the public meeting and felt SDOT could have done a better job publicizing the meeting.

Dawn Schellenberg from SDOT advised that the letter need to be written quickly. SDOT is looking to get a decision made by the end of the year. Any letter needs to be addressed to Eric Widstrand.

Brian Dougherty cautioned that the any closure of the median would block the turning traffic. Mark added that some spot island treatments are considered by SDOT. However , the location of the pedestrian crossings at odd locations and areas near the park are of concern.

#### **4. Rainier and Aurora Traffic Safety Updates (6:17)**

##### **Jim Curtain and Dawn Schellenberg, SDOT**

Dawn began her presentation by going over the background and reasons for the Rainier Traffic Safety Project. She then summarized the project activities and the direct and indirect results from them.

She highlighted that the total number of injuries went down by 8% and fatalities down by 1%. \$180,000 was invested in street improvements including doing a sign inventory and its maintenance. Signs were also added along the corridor to indicate that Rainier is a traffic safety corridor. In the near future, SDOT will add new street name signs at signals as well as ADA compliant signs. They also added crosswalk countdowns at five intersections. At three other intersections, LED push buttons were added as well as adding a 3-sec lead for pedestrian crossing phase at problem intersections. A red light camera was installed at S Orcas St, and it caught 3,000 violators. Four radar speed signs were installed along the corridor. A crosswalk by Seward Park Boulevard was relocated due to not meeting national standards. At spot locations, pedestrian islands/medians were added to aid pedestrians crossing Rainier as well as prevent cars from passing illegally. The intersection at Oregon Street S and S Rainier Avenue was evaluated and it met warrants for a full signal.

Dawn next discussed the projects relationship with SPD, Seattle Police Department. \$45,000 was given to SPD for additional 750 hours of over time service. As a result, over 1700 speeding tickets, 15 DUI, and 8 citations for inattentive driving were handed out. Overall, there were 3,389 citations given out during the extra emphasis patrols. \$9,000 was given to liquor board to enforce underage drinking laws;

Dawn then pointed out that 67 languages are spoken in the corridor, and this raised the question of what other outreach is needed. The program spent \$100,000 on education and developed as much of the materials as possible to the four most common languages. The education component developed

information cards and were passed out on several days at crosswalks. A few billboards were also put up. Focus groups for the billboards included English, Vietnamese and Hispanic males. The focus wanted to know what the right message needed to be put up. Four different billboards were installed and were up for four weeks. Each of the different billboards was installed at four different locations for a total public exposure of 16 weeks. The education activities developed four safety modules and had community member teach class to fellow neighbors including the elderly, other ethnic groups, and one youth. Based on initial feedback, the seniors could have used more support.

Dawn finally went over the data comparison in Appendix A. The results showed that the total number collisions went down. The increase in sideswipes may have gone up due to light-rail construction nearby. Unfortunately, pedestrian collisions went up. Some statistical areas showed improvements while other areas needed improvement. Overall, total collisions and injuries went down as well as top collision types and causes of collisions went down as well.

Celeste wanted to know what the rates for the collisions. Dawn responded that they have not had time to calculate it yet.

Among the lessons learned, Dawn pointed out the need for a public awareness component before, during and after the study and the program should have done the public awareness for street improvements as well. The public did not realize that the improvements were related to safety. The program also learned that economic incentives were the most effective in causing change. The use of billboards with crashes depicted was focused on targeting speeders. From the pedestrian perspective, the message to promote proper crossing behavior was "you jay you pay". The program also relayed the message to students about not texting while driving.

Tom pointed out that it is a secondary enforcement for talking while driving and can only get an offense if the driver is pulled over for another offense. Dawn added that officers had to be clever to catch these.

She then talked about how signal cabinets had decals showing pedestrians walking in a crosswalk, which is not in your face. They found that the public did not get the safety message. The public suggested more local artists to contribute.

Peg added that four years ago, school children did drawings of pedestrians and could be used as art for this project. This art work resides with Feet First.

Dawn added that kids need to be reached electronically such as social sites and other new media.

Mark asked if the study looked at just the last two years. He felt that it should track another year after the light rail work along MLK Jr Way was finished. Dawn concurred. Mark noted that WSDOT data had a data anomaly in 2004 and this corridor needs to be tracked.

Celeste suggested the website "Sound out" as a possible outlet for youth outreach. It is a social site with environmental issues in mind and oriented towards youths. Lee Ann corrected Celeste on the site's name, "Sound off", <http://pugetsoundoff.org/>.

Jim then presented on the proposed Aurora Corridor Safety Project. He pointed out that Rainier is number one in the state for pedestrian collisions where as Aurora Avenue comes in second. This project is funded by Washington State safety commission. \$250,000 was available for funding for this project. Some of the funding came from the "Bridging the Gap" levy. The Rainier corridor was the first time WSDOT did a traffic safety corridor in an urban corridor. Their goal was to reduce collisions by 25%. \$50,000 was allocated for enforcement. The program was looking for low cost/high impact solutions.

Jim then described the characteristics of the corridor. The southern half of the corridor, between the Battery Street Tunnel to Green Lake is like a freeway. People speed through this area. The northern half starts at Green Lake and ends at N 145th Street.

As part of this project a task force was created as well as data was collected. Any solutions are driven by the data. The task force got together and kicked off the project on 10/3/08. They talked about the goals of the project. The task force included residents, businesses, City officials, the liquor board, schools, SDOT, and planning agencies, lots of other stake holders. Other projects in the area also have helped with the kickoff meeting turnout. Right now, the group wanted to identify the problems in the area and the assessment tools. Currently they are starting to look at some of the solutions.

Jim then drew attention to the data for the past three years. It showed that the corridor had 1,581 collisions (roughly 45/mo.) and included 49 fatal collisions. 78 were alcohol related. Most of the collisions take place after the limited access section south of Green Lake due to the signals and merges. Major intersections had the highest collisions.

Last week, SDOT staff did a field visit including pedestrian crossings. They found that there is no crosswalk between N 90th and N 105th Street; this is a very long stretch. Further north along the corridor, it has a very suburban feel. Sidewalks are missing in many areas and many businesses take advantage of it by using it for parking. There was a lot of sign cluttered. Many intersections have missing crosswalks. At N 130th Street, a pedestrian bridge is provided but it is not ADA accessible. Two schools in the area are impacted by this;

Broadview-Thomson elementary school is the most impacted. Ingraham High School just east of Aurora, most kids are serviced by Metro. Jim hoped that the kids are using the signals to cross the street.

The leading collision type on the corridor was rear ends. Most occur between Winona Avenue N and N 85th Street. Angled collisions more prevalent towards the north where drivers displayed more risky behavior. More than half of all pedestrians hit were fatal.

Tom was not surprised by statistic given the speed on the roadway.

Mark pointed out that there should also be consideration on the statistic for hitting fixed object as near misses for pedestrians. There needs to be more investigation into this driving behavior.

Jim pointed to page 17 of the handout, which shows what objects were hit. Ben felt that the graphic needs to be clarified, with percentages or total number

Jim then pointed to page 29, which shows the locations for hit pedestrians/cyclists. Jim mentioned that N 115th Street has been on SDOT radar screen. East of this intersection is not good either for pedestrians. Further south, there was a fatality at Lee Street. Jim wanted the board's input considering the freeway nature of this section. Currently, only one pedestrian bridge serves this area. Many people jump over the jersey barrier.

Ben cited crazy pedestrian behavior that he has seen in this corridor, specifically, he has seen people carry things across the roadway near N 43rd Street. Jim was not sure what they can do to prevent risky behavior other than putting up a 10' fence. Peg wanted to know if a 10' fence could be included as part of the project. Jim said it is not possible. Peg wanted to know if the 10' fence could be physically installed on the jersey barrier. Mark said it could be done. T is concerned with the length of such a barrier.

In the near term, Celeste suggested that SDOT could provide information about where the nearest closest safe crossing. In feet or blocks, give tools for people to know what their alternatives can be. In the long term, more crossings are needed. T added that if the crossing is more than 250 feet, a crossings is needed. T wanted to know if there is a way to provide for the desired lines.

Tom suggested that perhaps the AWV, Alaskan Way Viaduct, project could help out in the southern portion of the corridor.

John wanted to know if there is a possibility for breaching the jersey barrier for a at-grade crossing. Jim responded that the roadway context needed to be changed for that to happen. Mark noted that the AWV surface alternative provides for surface crossings. But Mark felt that the project should focus on the

north side of the corridor since that area has more typical pedestrian behaviors than the south. He was surprised by the number of collision for N 85th Street intersection. Jim told the board that SDOT will put in red light cameras at this location.

Jim told the board to contact him if we wanted to get involved. The project has a Google site. The next meeting is at 1/8/2009, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at the Green Lake Community Center.

## **5. Presentation on 2009 Sidewalk Projects and 2010 Planning Process (7:10)**

### **Doug Cox, SDOT**

Doug explained that his role at SDOT is to plan the construction of sidewalk projects. Before "Bridging the Gap" Levy, pre 2007, SDOT did not have much funding for sidewalk projects, almost \$500,000. The projects selected were not scrutinized for its importance. Selection was based on citizen requests and "easy wins". Once the funding came, \$2 million was set aside for sidewalk projects in 2008 and \$2.5 million in 2009 and 2010. With this funding comes more scrutiny for how the money is being used.

SDOT's planning and spending process needs to be more transparent with its selection process. In the summer of 2007, with pavement group, SDOT did a full inventory of existing sidewalks and to develop criteria for project selection. They also looked at other pedestrian generators (e.g. libraries, schools, community center) and census data. This data was then overlaid with the inventory data and produced an output where the highest needs were highlighted. Over 25% of city blocks are missing sidewalks. To address this all at once is an overwhelming task. The prioritization criteria were applied and a project list was developed. This location of the projects on the list is spread out throughout the City. Doug then explained that the next step in the process was to do field visits to do a reality check and confirm if the project list made sense. They checked to see if the project connected to any where (network), connected to places people will go to (destinations), or if it served high pedestrian use (logic). Doug then referenced a map on the backside of the handout. The map outlines the urban villages. The Criteria points were allocated heavily towards urban villages. Projects were spread out throughout the city.

Doug noted that in 2008, 15 blocks of sidewalks were completed. Tom confirmed with him if it was 15 blocks on both sides of the street. Doug Cox replied that it was 15 block faces. Then Doug added that in 2009 and 2010, SDOT will build 17 block faces of sidewalks. All of these projects will be in urban villages, not just on arterials but also on some side streets. As the pedestrian master plan gets developed, the criteria will adjust. SDOT sees a great opportunity to work with the developing plan.

Residents have had some mixed reactions to the new sidewalks due to the loss of parking spaces, gardens, and “property”. Doug wants the program to choose projects where people are enthused to have sidewalks.

Brian asked Peg to see if she sees the Board’s future role as holding the City accountable for recommended actions in the Pedestrian Master Plan. Peg agreed with that thought. She then added that the board will be the watcher. Also, this criteria selection approach in the master plan has been presented to the council and the PMPAG, pedestrian master plan advisory group. A map shows that the connections between the generators have more of the need than the urban villages. It is important to get to the Villages, but the plan also recommends connecting areas in between centers. We should look at Del Ridge & MLK areas. Peg said that the City programs see much value for the tool. Brian followed up by saying that the Board would be the co owner of the sidewalk project list.

Mark then asked if the City is looking for the Board’s endorsement, maybe with some common sense changes. Peg added that the prioritization factors include human justice as part of the need.

Celeste though it was great that the process is more data driven. She suggested a marketing strategy for getting residence enthusiastic for sidewalks; perhaps talk about improving the home values. She wished that sidewalk funding could to reflect sidewalk needs.

Peg noted that the previous SPAB curb ramp comments were taken into account. They will take account for curb ramps at points. Also SDOT will combine the prioritization from other process into one.

Ben expressed that he is glad to take on the responsibility as the overseer of the Pedestrian Master Plan. He is glad to see that SBAB does that and wanted to see SPAB do it too.

Doug explained that the “Bridging the Gap” Levy is just one way that sidewalks get built. Another possibility is through neighborhood funds and safe walk routes to school programs.

Jon wanted to know if the Levy funding addresses fixing sidewalks. Doug responded that it only addresses new sidewalks. Neighborhood funds as well as another maintenance fund take care of this.

Tom felt that this prioritization is a great start, but it was a daunting task, maybe 817 years to complete the sidewalk network. He suggested a separated fund for sidewalks in the form of another levy or some other funding mechanism.

Brain suggested that Liz Ellis could come talk to us about sidewalk maintenance.

## **6. Work plan for 2009 (7:35)**

### **SPAB**

Tom wanted people's feedback about what we did before and wanted to see if this process was useful, or should we focus on the SDOT project list and supplement it with other important projects. He wants to ultimately create an agenda. He wanted help with some direction.

Mark felt that the project list is better place to start. With the Pedestrian Master Plan to be completed in the 2nd quarter, we need to be strategic in our approach.

Tom felt that there is a need to have a champion on Council to help us out including Jan Drago and Jodie Vice.

Ben felt that reviewing the project list was good, no surprises. It was good to know how things are moving along. Ben then pointed out that about 75% of the projects are SDOT related, but we need to be aware of other agencies including WSDOT, Sound Transit and Metro. Sound Transit Central Link opens up next year and starts construction on the University Link. Metro is also preparing for their Rapid Ride service.

Peg suggested that the neighborhood planning needs to be tracked, headed by council member Sally Clark.

Celeste mentioned that last year, the previous list was developed from talking to City Council members. Even though some things were addressed and others were not, she felt she had a good handle on things. She also thought that we need to also consider Ben's ideas and the neighborhood plans. We need to take account for the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Tom asked if it would it be a good idea to get people to volunteer for tracking projects.

Ben suggested to work with a project manager rather than specific project.

T added that the round robin time would then be used to give updates each month.

Celeste suggested that each board member should get in touch with a SDPT project manager by February.

Ben proposed reactivating the subcommittees with other major projects coming online including the waterfront and other projects.

Tom felt it would be more important to get people committed on projects now before it gets too busy.

Celeste wondered if we would want to reevaluate the retreat timing to match with the City cycles.

Tom asked when are sidewalk projects need to be submitted. Brian responded that projects are determined 18 months ahead of time. Peg mentioned that it follows the City Council schedule. Brian added that the money to work with is driven by council but the timing is important too.

Peg added that because the Master plan is web based, the timing of the test case is shifting. The board needs to remind the group to be included in the test. It would be important for the board to test it out. The beta test, soft launch is planned in March.

Ben reminded the board that even though the PMPAG ramps down, the board involvement ramps up.

Tom asked for any other suggestions. He liked the idea for picking a project manager. He also likes to keep the bigger picture items in sight. He would like to have everyone choose one for the project managers in the next couple of weeks.

## **7. Update on Board Candidate Recruitment (7:50)**

### **Brian Dougherty and Tom Williams**

Tom noted that there were 15 applications this year. Overall candidates looked good. Six were eliminated, and 9 are scheduled to have interviews on 1/9/2009. A couple of the applicants are from the south end, which is a good thing. The interview process is on schedule.

Brian pointed out that the drawback of the applicant pool is that we do not have a visually impaired person. He asked the Board that if they know of anyone who would be a good candidate to let Brian know before Christmas. He is willing to bend the rules for including a visually impaired person.

## **8. Round Robin (7:52)**

Kristen mentioned that the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop open house is coming up on 12/11/2008.

Jon mentioned that he met up Rich Miralis from City Light at the intersection of 4th Avenue and Pine Street to talk about issues with City Light. They walked along Pine Street between 4th Avenue and Broadway. Jon felt that some time in the future, it would be good to have City Light to be a future presenter.

T mentioned that she would like to use his comments to include in her work on the Pike/Pine corridor work.

Doug Beman mentioned that City Light has a new program to assign case numbers on working on reports. Tracking numbers are now provided. Jon said that it is nothing new other than it was more for public service. He wanted to know if anyone followed up on the curb ramps discussion.

Ben talked about the south end Viaduct project. Mike Johnson presented the urban design on the south end of AWW and along E Marginal Way. Ben also pointed out that the intersection at 6th Avenue and Pine Street is the busiest corner and the Nordstrom Christmas setup is blocking the sidewalk.

Celeste followed up that the south viaduct project has been much improved now that they have an urban designer aboard.

Lee Ann requested to see if each board member is willing to talk to her individually about the board and their roles.

Mark mentioned that tomorrow night's AWW stakeholder meeting will show the hybrid AWW option. We urged the Board to comment on the pedestrian issues on this.

T proposed to have a quick subcommittee to talk about AWW issues.

Ben mentioned that the TTC, tri-transportation committee met. He heard that the Ballard board felt it was going to be surface option and that a \$3 million replacement viaduct is not likely since there is no money.

Mark urged that the Board needs to go on the record to about the pedestrian issues on the AWW.

Peg mentioned that there have been great strides on maintenance issues including for trees. A KAB (Knowledge, Attitude, Behavior) study is coming out. 700 people will be interviewed on pedestrian issues. They are looking at the concept of "pedestrian zones". Peg mentioned that Mark Fenton is coming in March to kick off events. She recognizes the City Light issues and recommends a pedestrian lighting study. She believes that there are no good pedestrian lighting plans in the country.

Brian updated us on Trong's updates to the curb ramps criteria. Brian said that he can show the updates if requested. He also mentioned that a bunch of pedestrian in pavement signals have been installed including at Alaskan Way. These signals should be actuated, but there have been some issues. SDOT is looking at ways to balance the actuation.

T suggested that there should be an education campaign to educate pedestrians and drivers about the in pavement lighting.

Celeste noticed a proliferation of pedestrian flags and is very happy to see it. She remembered that in the past, SDOT stance was against it.

Brain added that SDOT will maintain 11 locations, but citizens can put their own flags up on their own.

T noticed people making eye contact to make sure drivers see them when they use the flags.

Howard talked about the unique pedestrian crossing signals in Taiwan. What makes them unique to the ones we have in the United States is that the figures are animated. As the crossing time diminishes, in addition to a countdown timer, the pedestrian figure is walking faster until the time is up, in which the figure becomes a red standing figure. He doubts that the United States would ever adopt these signals due to the timing coordination between the pedestrian and traffic phases. However, he felt that they are very good visuals for people to understand the amount time they have to cross the street.

Tom then asks for topic suggestions for upcoming meetings. He suggested sidewalk maintenance and maybe a discussion about signals.

Celeste felt that the presentation for signals was not as receptive. She hoped that the master plan will have some influence on signals.

Peg felt that there are still many things that still needs work, but at least they will be identified in the plan

Mark felt that the Board should make a commentary on the hybrid option for the AWW.

Celeste felt that with the AWW option decided, the Board should have a presentation, maybe by Jan or Feb

Ben suggested that we can take another look at the south end of the AWW again.

Celeste felt that the design is at this point is good enough that another presentation is not needed.

## **9. Adjourn Meeting (8:16)**