

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, October 8, 2008

Meeting called to order at 6:04 P.M.

Present: Celeste Gilman, Chair; Ben Smith, Vice-Chair; Paul Niebanck, Mark Bandy, Howard Wu, Jon Morgan, Tom Williams, Leanne Do, members; Brian Dougherty, SDOT Liaison. Absent: T Frick-McNamara, Kristen Lohse, Randy Earle, Chris Tachibana.

Public: Peg Staehli, Rob Fellows, former Board members; Doug Beman, Mike Ramey.

September's meeting minutes: Approved by voice vote.

Public comment: None.

Pedestrian Master Plan Update.

Celeste said that after a summer hiatus, the Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group resumed monthly meetings September 26. The steering committee did, however, meet during the summer.

The draft plan is scheduled to be presented in February 2009.

Peg Staehli, SVR Design and a consultant on the project, said that the plan will be a web document. The State of the Pedestrian Environment portion may be available now. Other things the group is working on include the "toolbox", which include items grouped under these headings: Enforcement, Education, Encouragement, Health, Equity, Safety, Design, and Engineering. The last two are bigger than all the others combined. To create the toolbox, Federal, state, and city standards were reviewed, gap analysis was performed, recommendations made, and a "best practices" methodology was outlined.

As this is a web document, the "toolbox" will receive additions and modifications over time. Testing of the document's navigation is scheduled for November. It's a similar process to that used for the Right of Way manual. Celeste said that the plan was to include links from the ROW manual to the toolbox.

Celeste asked if the Board will have an opportunity to review the toolbox. Peg said that the document should be viewed in its entirety and encouraged those who view it to look at it from a city-wide perspective. She outlined a public comment process that would highlight the following themes: Speed/signage, maintenance, lighting, street types, and construction zones.

Peg continued by talking about sidewalk criteria. Multiple types of sidewalks were identified, including one curb ramps. Those were compared to national and other standards. From that, a system map was created. She said that SDOT is going ahead with projects and not waiting for the plan to be completed.

Discussion ensued, led by Paul. First, he identified several broad areas:

- Planning and its role in the process
- Need for advocates – to translate the theoretical into political form so things get done
- Identify the advocate(s) and the role(s) should they take in relation to goals, means, and accomplishments

Paul talked about the “visioning” exercise he led at the February SPAB meeting. He asked the group what our role should be and had suggestions as well as cautions about how to proceed from here:

- Engage the plan process
- Champion the plan (Drago: SPAB as “steward” of the Plan). However, the board agreed by acclamation that we need to find out what those who are making the plan specifically mean by the word “steward,” adding that the sooner we find out what this means for SPAB, the better
- Use the plan as the Board’s charter and ensure the Board’s activities mesh with the plan
- Keep abreast of developments and advise authorities when and where City plans fall short of the plan’s goals. At the same time, celebrate successes and recognize and praise those who efforts accomplish targets set in the plan
- Modify the plan as needed in accordance with changing circumstances
- Advise Mayor and Council regularly

Paul went on to say that to handle these responsibilities as well as the board’s ongoing tasks the board would have to be appropriately enlarged. He added that it would be advisable to hold off accepting a role or roles for SPAB for the Master Plan until we are sure that we know what both legislative and departmental staff expect from us.

Paul concluded by saying we are well-positioned to do the follow-up and be the plan’s champion.

Mark asked if the plan would be housed at SDOT. Peg confirmed that, adding that the draft plan would first be reviewed by the executive, then council. She added that if SPAB’s public profile was raised as a result of its association with the plan, the board may need to look at alternate meeting locations or, if the current location is kept, asking the city to keep the doors unlocked for an extra 15-30 minutes on meeting nights to accommodate latecomers.

Ben asked how the pedestrian master plan process different from that for the recently completed bike plan. Brian said that process was dominated by a small group of inside players composed of bike activists and SDOT staff. He characterized PMPAG as a group that leaned more to the “citizen advocate” side of the spectrum.

Peg mentioned that the review process poses some additional challenges and admitted to some frustration as it seemed to be a slow, paragraph-by-paragraph undertaking.

Discussion then turned to SPAB's role in reviewing the entire document and in suggesting changes. Rob said that reviewing the document and determining SPAB's role as plan steward are separate and should be discussed as such. He noted that the words "to shepherd" had been raised in this context and wanted to know what they meant. He added that the city already has the policies and SPAB already has an advisory role. As a result, he wasn't sure how the existence of the plan would change that. He said that most pedestrian money is allocated politically and wondered how SPAB and the plan could affect that allocation. Mark noted that DPD and the private sector have significant effects on this issue as well.

Rob asked if the master plan would be an internal SDOT document or would be one that would affect the larger city structure. Brian replied that the document would be housed at SDOT. He cautioned that "not everything can get done", but said that the plan can "drive improvements (in certain areas) such as construction closures."

Peg said that a City internal audit report cited SDOT for failing to follow its own policy on construction closures. She said there were loopholes in the policy and that no specific person was being held responsible for compliance with the policy.

Mark said that everything ultimately came back to funding decisions. He mentioned coordination of plans, set-asides, and private sector involvement as potential ways to enhance funding opportunities. He wanted to know how SDOT advocated for items not already in their budget and noted that coordination was crucial, particularly for projects that crossed departmental lines. He thought SPAB could play a key role in that process and thereby lessen the chance that something important would get lost when moving from one department to another.

Finally, Paul stated that SPAB should see any drafts of the master plan (or portions thereof) before it was finalized.

#### Sidewalk café Director's Rule Presentation..

Marshall Foster, Office of Policy and Management  
Angela Steel, Department of Transportation  
Mark Troxel, Department of Planning and Development

Marshall handed out copies of the draft Director's Rule and emphasized a couple of key points, including the requirements for pedestrian passage and the public notice requirement. Mark mentioned that the rule would become part of the right-of-way manual, talked about the appeal process available, before going into specifics about the rule itself.

#### Nominations for next year's officers.

All three elected positions are or soon will be open. Celeste said she was relinquishing her position as Chair but would remain on the board. Ben decided to step down as Vice-Chair but would also remain on the board. Secretary Chris Tachibana's term on the board ends in March.

Celeste nominated Tom for chair.  
Howard volunteered to be Secretary.  
Mark nominated Jon for Vice-Chair.  
Ben nominated Mark for Vice-Chair

Recruitment for next year's board.

We need at least one and perhaps two new board members.  
Brian said he would contact Feet First and also emphasize outreach for new members from the south and east parts of the city as well as to those who have mobility difficulties.  
Mark suggested the Rainer Avenue corridor group might be a good place to look.

Upcoming agenda items.

Howard suggested going over the SDOT project list. There was some discussion about the Viaduct, but it was decided to defer that until December. Mercer was also discussed in light of the public forum earlier that week. Mark felt that we should take a stand on this issue and said he would draft a letter.

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.