

City of Seattle

Policy & Operations Advisory Group

POAG Meeting Notes — September 2020 (Meeting #4)

Thursday, September 24, 2020

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Electronic Meeting via WebEx Events

Attendees

Name	Board/Commission/Group
Warren Aakervik	Freight Advisory Board
Dorene Cornwell	Pedestrian Access Advisory Committee
David Goldberg	Seattle Planning Commission
Steven Feher	Pedestrian Access Advisory Committee
Grace Kim	Seattle Planning Commission
Bryce Kolton	Transit Advisory Board
Alex Lew	Bike Advisory Board
Emily Mannetti	Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board
Kiana Parker	Transportation Equity Workgroup
Geri Poor	Freight Advisory Board
Yordanos Teferi	Transportation Equity Workgroup
Erin Tighe	Transit Advisory Board
Anna Zivarts	Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

Not in attendance: Pierre Brunelle, Mike Stewart

Presentation Summary

- SDOT presented they key outcomes of a modal integration policy:
 - Resolve modal conflicts at the planning stage (rather than project delivery stage)
 - ROW allocation decisions independent of funding source
 - Consistent and transparent approach to plans and policies
 - Improve our project development and outreach processes
 - Operate our streets to support our modal plan priorities
- SDOT presented on the key principles guiding the modal integration policy:
 - Protect network integrity
 - Prioritize pedestrian movement and safety within urban villages and centers
 - Prioritize person throughput in between urban villages and centers
 - Prioritize bicycle safety and legibility at critical connections
 - Prioritize goods movement in Manufacturing/Industrial Centers
- SDOT provided background on additional policy work under way at SDOT, including:
 - Bus-only policy
 - Freight-only lane policy
 - Urban center & urban village pedestrian priority
 - Critical bicycle network segments

Discussion Summary: Key Takeaways

- Climate crisis:
 - This work needs more direct connection to mode shift goals and climate impacts.
 - Projects should be evaluated based on their ability to contribute to mode split goals.
 - Concern about how political involvement erodes our ability to meet climate emissions commitments.
- Treatment of personal vehicles:
 - Cars are not accounted for in this work because there is no modal plan for them. Why is it assumed that they should be accommodated on every street? How are they factored into complete streets/corridors?
 - We should be questioning these underlying assumptions and account for their impacts on climate, equity, livability.
 - An approach to this work could include anchoring to the intended outcome to make non-car modes that are as convenient, reliable, and fast—or more so—than driving. The issue of using existing travel patterns as the basis for thresholds for bus-only lanes is that it doesn't take into account induced demand and potential future behavior.
- Equity:
 - The discussion on the “war on cars” may be too simplistic because it does not address the fundamental equity concerns inherent with any modal shift, if the disparate impacts on different groups is not accounted for. We need to recognize that not everyone has the same privilege to not use a car (e.g., living with disabilities, alternative affordable options). We shouldn't instigate huge shifts in modal priority if the alternative infrastructure is inadequate (e.g, transit) to support equitable adoption.
 - How do we know these policies/updated map meet communities' mobility needs?
 - How should the City handle community input that supports outcomes that will make the transportation system less equitable, accessible, and inclusive to marginalized populations? What kind of City standards or policies can be developed to ensure that community engagement processes don't result in more harm to marginalized groups?
- Usefulness of UC/UV as framework for policy
 - Members expressed concern about relying on the Urban Center/Urban Village designation to define a priority on pedestrian infrastructure.
 - Are the boundaries updated frequently enough to be relevant?
 - Should we be making distinctions instead based on areas of the city with different displacement risks? Are there better ways to define different mobility needs across the city?
 - There is a need to better articulate how the policy will address freight access to key destinations in UC/UV.