

Pedestrian Master Plan

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Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair

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Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging (excused at 10:30)
Theo Lim
Martin Regge
John Savo
Ross Tilghman

Project Description

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) first developed the Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) in 2009 with the goal of making Seattle the most walkable city in the nation. The original plan included goals to reduce the number of pedestrian related accidents, increase equity, create vibrant communities, and promoting health. SDOT is in the process of updating the PMP by using current data as well as a revised methodology that reflects new city wide initiatives. The goal of the revised pedestrian plan is to create a living document that will automatically update as city goals and initiatives evolve.

Meeting Summary

The purpose of this meeting is to inform the Seattle Design Commission (SDC) about the PMP update. The update will include a new methodology for targeting areas that need pedestrian improvements within the city of Seattle. Because the PMP will heavily influence the public realm, SDOT has requested the commission provide feedback and suggestions for improving the PMP updated framework.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain
Rachel Gleeson

September 17, 2015

9:00 – 10:30 pm

Type

Briefing

Phase

None

Previous Reviews

None

Presenter

Michelle Marx

SDOT

Attendees

Steve Durrant

Alta Planning + Design

Summary of Presentation

Michelle Marx, a planner and urban designer with SDOT, briefed the commission on SDOT’s framework for updating the PMP. Ms. Marx explained that the PMP has significant effect on the public realm within Seattle and that SDOT would appreciate feedback from the SDC.

The PMP uses data collected to identify areas within the city that have the highest need regarding pedestrian movement. The current plan’s methodology uses citywide GIS data collected from the 2000 census to analyze where the highest needs are located. The existing methodology looked at three specific elements- demand and

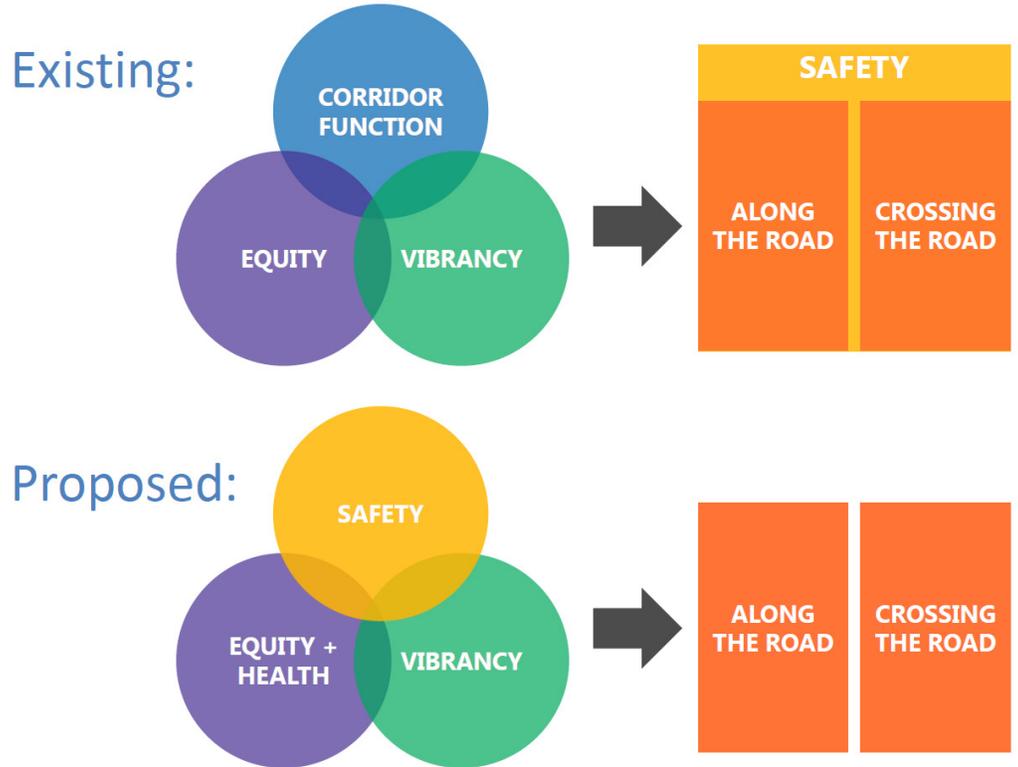


Figure 1. Proposed changes to the PMP framework methodology

Health and Equity Factors	Vibrancy Factors	Along the Roadway
Auto ownership	Universities or Colleges	Street classifications (proxy for volume)
Low income population	Major Generator (e.g. Pike Place, Convention Center)	Arterial speed limit
Disability population	Multi-family, condominiums and apartments	Buffer
Diabetes rates	Major Retail	Sidewalk status
Physical activity rates	Minor Retail	Slope (along)
Obesity rates	Hospital and Community Service	Parking
Communities of color	Park and Open Space	Curb
Age 17 and younger	Population forecast	Length of block
Age 65 and older	Employment forecast	Peak hour parking
Low English-speaking ability	Light rail stations	Street trees
Low educational attainment	Major bus stops	Alleys
Renter households	Minor bus stops	
Housing cost-burdened households	Trails	Crossing the Roadway
Canopy cover	Bridges	Street classifications (proxy for volume)
	Stairways	Arterial speed limit
	Urban Hubs/Villages	Road width
	NC Zoning	Distance between traffic signals and stop signs
	FTN network	Crosswalk
	Arterials	Curb ramp
	Neighborhood Greenways	Signal control
	Schools	Stop sign control
		Number of collisions
		Block length

Figure 2. Potential datasets used to update the PMP framework

vibrancy, equity, and corridor function (see figure 1) to identify these locations, which are then re-categorized based on need for pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and pavement striping. Data used for calculating equity, demand, and vibrancy is dated, while data used for generating corridor functions has been unreliable at indicating where pedestrian needs actually exist.

The updated methodology will look at analyzing safety, vibrancy, and equity & health in order to target areas with the highest pedestrian need (see figure 1). While the previous elements included too many categories, which limited the effectiveness of the results, the new elements will use specific indicators in order to identify specific needs. Key indicators include identifying areas with pedestrian collisions, signalized pedestrian crossings, communities of color, low-income populations, and obesity rates as well as walksheds to frequent transit stops, parks, and schools (see figures 2 & 3). Previous indicators such as homeownership and cars per household, which have historically represented lower income communities, are not included because they now represent a lifestyle choice and no longer accurately target areas of great need.

Over the next several months, SDOT will continue to host public outreach events and briefings as well as provide public surveys for feedback. Public feedback will provide a framework for how SDOT should weigh each of the methodology elements, which will guide how the city prioritizes pedestrian improvements.

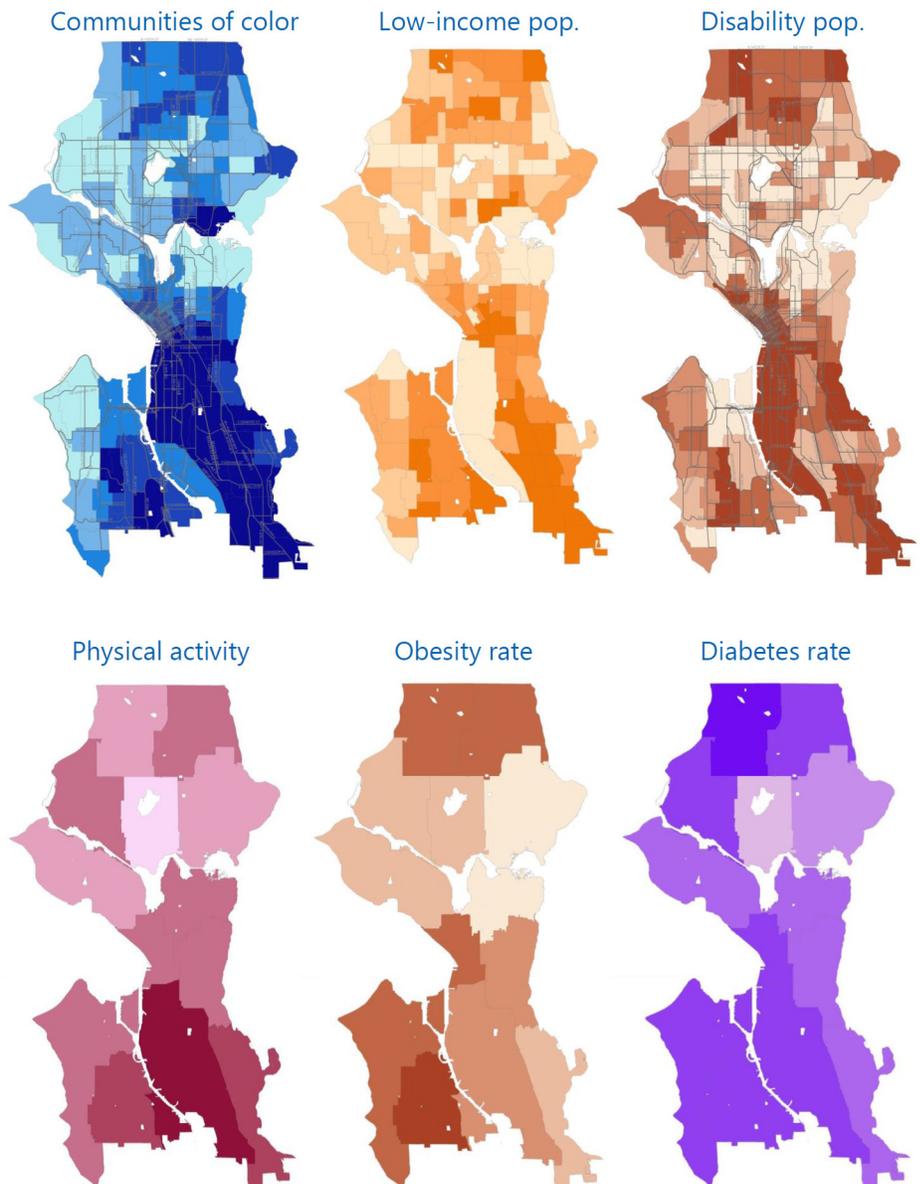


Figure 3. Examples of datasets included in the updated framework

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The commission appreciates SDOT's presentation on the PMP update. While they agreed SDOT has provided a detailed plan for revising the PMP, which includes updating the methodology to reflect citywide initiatives, the commission had several suggestions for SDOT as they move forward with identifying specific indicators for prioritizing pedestrian improvements.

The commission suggests SDOT also use qualitative measures such as analyzing the reasons behind pedestrian movement by understanding what motivates pedestrians to walk in certain areas. Qualitative measures such as this, which might not reflect in the quantitative data, could provide several indicators for pedestrian improvements.

When deciding where pedestrian improvements should take place, the commissions suggests SDOT reach out to other city departments in order to understand what their role is within the process. Overall, the commission thinks it beneficial to have access to the PMP framework while reviewing projects throughout the city. It is important to understand which areas have been identified for pedestrian improvements, which will then affect how the commission reviews public benefit for projects located within these zones.

Action

Because this was a briefing, which provided SDC with information about how SDOT is updating the Pedestrian Master Plan framework, no action was taken