



## Advisory Group Meeting #4 Summary (DRAFT)

January 12, 2017

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Union Station – Ruth Fisher Board Room

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### Welcome and Introductions:

Penny Mabie, facilitator, welcomed members of the One Center City Advisory Group and led a round of introductions, noting the presence of two new Advisory Group members. Penny reviewed the meeting agenda and materials with Advisory Group members and provided attendees with a reminder of the Advisory Group's purpose and meeting ground rules.

Members shared the following relevant interactions with the community since the November 10th Advisory Group meeting:

**Comment:** Many people who are familiar with other transportation projects are unaware of One Center City.

**Comment:** On Tuesday, Eric Tweit and Meghan Shepard, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), presented at the Downtown Residents Council Membership Quarterly Meeting. There were a lot of questions about the streetcar and bike lanes on 2nd Avenue. The questions were specific to where Downtown Residents Council members live and work.

**Comment:** There are some public questions about whether new Park and Rides are part of the One Center City project.

### Guiding Principles Review and Discussion:

Penny provided members with an overview of the draft Guiding Principles, which were drafted by a subcommittee established at the November 10, 2016 meeting. The committee developed two formatting options for the guiding principles, one that lists only the principle statements and one that includes a one or two-word description in addition to the principle statements. Penny noted that the guiding principles were not listed in any particular order.

**Penny invited the Advisory Group members to provide feedback on the draft guiding principles.**

**Comment:** The second option is advantageous in that the one to two word descriptors can be used as a brief elevator pitch of the guiding principles. They may also help people better absorb the information.

**Comment:** If the guiding principles are not in any prioritized order, they could be put into alphabetical order so that readers do not assume there is any assigned priority.

**Comment:** The term “wayfinding” should be added to the “user experience” guiding principle so that it reads, “Create an easy to use and intuitive system by prioritizing accessibility, pedestrian mobility, way finding and multimodal connectivity”.

**Comment:** Accessible transportation is very important to people of all abilities, seniors, children and those with low income. What was the intended meaning of the word “accessibility” under the “user experience” principle? Does it apply to transportation, finances, or something else?

***Response:** The goal is to improve accessibility for multiple groups and in multiple areas, and so the subcommittee felt that the definition of “accessible” should be fairly broad.*

***Response:** Accessibility for all users is already defined under the Transportation guiding principle, where it says “Provide safe, affordable, comfortable, reliable and convenient transportation options for all users”. To emphasize, the principle could incorporate the words “of all abilities” to the end of this phrase.*

**Comment:** In addition to “people and goods,” can “transit” also be specified in the optimization guiding principle? This additional language could help to capture the importance of loading and unloading. It is important for Center City spaces to be mindful of all modes of transportation.

***Response:** The cars and buses are moving people and goods, so the presence of transit is implied. The principle was written in a way that places focus on people and goods as opposed to modes of transportation.*

Advisory Group members agreed to make the following changes to the draft Guiding Principles:

- Include the one or two-word descriptors
- Alphabetize the guiding principles
- Edit the user experience guiding principle to “Create an easy to use and intuitive system by prioritizing accessibility, pedestrian mobility, way finding and multimodal connectivity”
- Edit the transportation guiding principle to “Provide safe, affordable, comfortable, reliable and convenient transportation options for all users of all abilities – daytime and nighttime, commuters and non-commuters, and those needing timely multiple connections”

## Near-Term Challenges and Solution Types Overview:

Tom Brennan, Nelson/Nygaard, gave a presentation on near-term challenges, solution types and measures of success relevant to One Center City. Tom noted that due to in part to public and private construction projects planned between 2018 and 2023, congestion could increase travel times downtown for drivers and transit riders during the afternoon rush hour. The near-term solution types that Tom reviewed included transit service restructuring, Center City Bike Network implementation, surface transit operations, and pedestrian and public realm improvements and activation. Tom noted that the next Advisory Group meeting would focus on specific solutions within these four categories.

### Following the presentation, members shared the following questions and comments about the near-term challenges and solution types:

**Comment:** I don't see data reflecting the additional 600 buses that will be operating on 1st Avenue between 2019 and 2023, following the decommissioning of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and before the completion of the Alaskan Way Surface Street.

***Response:** The project team did not include this data in the model because these buses are moving from one downtown location to another, so they are not considered to be additions to the downtown street network. The team is primarily interested in buses that will be new to downtown streets, like those coming from the tunnel to the street surface.*

**Question:** Do transit projections account for behavioral changes that people may make to accommodate for increasing congestion in Center City in the 2018-2022 timeframe? For example, some people may stop taking public transit if density and delays become too challenging.

***Response:** That is something to consider. The models are not perfect, but the project team has a good level of trust in them. This project aims to retain downtown ridership despite increased challenges.*

**Question:** One of the alternatives presented tonight involves people catching their buses from the International District or Westlake Station, and transferring to/from light rail. The hubs are already congested. Is it possible to keep the buses in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel for an additional year?

***Response:** There are many alternatives, and they will be discussed further at the next meeting. One of these alternatives involves buses that would normally go all the way through downtown terminating at a hub. It is assumed that some bus routes, not all, might make that change. While the hubs may be congested, they are designed to accommodate large volumes of people, which our sidewalks are not. The buses ultimately need to be removed from the tunnel, and this presents opportunities, such as the potential for increased rail service through the tunnel.*

**Question:** Why was 2019 chosen for the no action baseline? It seems that many major changes, such as the opening of the new Google office in South Lake Union and the closure of the Fairview Avenue North Bridge, are happening in 2018. Are these changes being considered?

**Response:** *The project team chose 2019 as the baseline because it is the first full year after many of those changes take place. Most of the changes highlighted within the presentation are happening in fall 2018, so 2019 was chosen as the representative first full-year. Traffic modeling does take into account land use changes, but not down to the parcel level.*

**Question:** Do projections consider changes in growth and development in the coming years? The Center City transit routes look the same as they did ten years ago. How will Seattle provide new transportation options to neighborhoods with a growing workforce?

**Response:** *The project team will be thinking about this throughout the process. Some alternatives may also present opportunities to increase transit service through downtown.*

**Question:** None of the near-term solutions seem related to single occupancy vehicles. Has there been any modeling around single occupancy vehicles and how they will affect transit?

**Response:** *All operational modeling involves both transit and automobiles. Downtown streets are near capacity, making single occupancy vehicles inefficient. The project team is looking at ways to improve transit and biking to encourage use of those modes.*

Tom thanked the Advisory Group members for their comments, and reminded everyone that they would go further into specific solutions at the next meeting.

Penny divided Advisory Group members into four groups for small group discussions, and she assigned each group two Advisory Group Guiding Principles. Each group was encouraged to consider the following questions in their discussion:

- How well do the four solution types presented align with the draft guiding principles?
- For your group's assigned guiding principle, develop two to three indicators of success that could be used to evaluate how well potential solutions support that principle.

After discussion, the groups reconvened to share perspectives.

Penny requested that Advisory Group members share takeaways from their discussion, highlighting any challenges that they encountered while applying specific principles to a potential solution.

**Comment:** The "flexibility" guiding principle is difficult to apply, and is a bit confusing. Part of flexibility is being open to grand new ideas, such as implementing "no cars downtown on Fridays".

**Response:** *Penny noted that indicators may help clarify the intent of the flexibility guiding principle.*

**Comment:** It is difficult to measure “economic prosperity for all” within the “Well-being” guiding principle. It seems broad and idealistic.

***Response:** The guiding principles sub-committee started with economic prosperity for businesses, then decided that people should have economic prosperity as well. There may be a better way to phrase it.*

**Comment:** There should be a solution type category for single occupancy vehicle management options. Specifically, including congestion pricing and other ways of discouraging people from driving downtown.

**Comment:** People are very used to riding their bus, so any changes in transit service may be a source of frustration. A good measure of success may be retention of ridership and/or increased ridership.

Penny noted the Advisory Group will receive the revised guiding principles to review before they are finalized.

### **Wrap-up and Next Steps:**

Tom thanked Advisory Group members for sharing their perspectives and questions. He noted that the next Advisory Group meeting on January 26th, would build on concepts discussed at this meeting and would focus on potential solutions. He also noted that the February 9th meeting would provide members with additional opportunities to discuss potential solutions and continue conversations from the January 26th meeting.

Penny opened the floor to any remaining questions. An Advisory Group member asked if any progress had been made on creating a platform for Advisory Group members to communicate outside of the scheduled meetings. Meghan Shepard, SDOT, thanked the member for their feedback and noted it as an action item. Another Advisory Group member asked if an informational one pager could be created to help explain why the One Center City Advisory Group exists. Meghan supported this idea and noted it as an action item. Meghan also noted that the One Center City staff will be briefing and interviewing the Advisory Group member’s organizations in the coming weeks. She explained that media coverage will increase as they begin to talk about One Center City more publicly. Lastly, she noted that an online open house for One Center City will be live by the end of the month.

Penny thanked Advisory Group members for their attendance and noted that the next Advisory Group meeting would take place on Thursday, January 26th, at Union Station in the Ruth Fisher Board Room.

### **Identified Action Items:**

- One Center City staff will incorporate edits to the guiding principles per the comments of Advisory Group members and will send out an updated draft via email for final review.
- One Center City staff will create a platform for Advisory Group members to communicate with each other outside of the scheduled meetings.

- One Center City staff will create a handout providing information about One Center City and the role of the Advisory Group.

**Attendees:**

**Advisory Group Members:**

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| • Amalia Martino (phone)    | • Jessa Timmer           |
| • Anders McConachie (phone) | • Jim Erickson           |
| • Brian Ferris              | • Leslie Smith           |
| • Brie Gyncild              | • Maiko Winkler-Chin     |
| • Catherine Hennings        | • Michael Davis          |
| • Cindy Zwart               | • Monica Smith           |
| • David Wiggins             | • Monty Anderson (phone) |
| • Erin Goodman              | • Rico Quirindongo       |
| • Holly Houser              | • Sabrina Villanueva     |
| • Jared Jonson              | • Staci Haber            |
| • Jeff Myrter               | • Thatcher Bailey        |
| • Jennifer Butler           | • Tom Graff              |
| • Jenny Schmitz             |                          |

**Observers:**

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| • Carl Leighty  | • Jalene Guthrie |
| • Lyle Bicknell | • Jane Lewis     |

**Agency Staff:**

**City of Seattle**

**Sound Transit:**

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|---|----------------|
| • Andrew Glass Hastings, SDOT               | • Mike Harbour |
| • Alberta Bleck, Seattle City Council Staff | • Wesley King  |
| • Candida Lorenza, SDOT                     |                |
| • Chisaki Muraki-Valdovinos, SDOT           |                |
| • Diane Wiatr, SDOT                         |                |
| • Eric Tweit, SDOT                          |                |
| • Kevin Shively, Mayor’s Office             |                |
| • Meghan Shepard, SDOT                      |                |

- Tracy Krawczyk, SDOT

**Downtown Seattle Association:**

- Don Blakeney
- Jacqueline Gruber

**King County DOT:**

- Frank Abe.
- Kim Becklund
- Paul Roybal
- Victor Obeso

**Other Project Staff:**

- Tom Brennan, Nelson/Nygaard
- Tyler Cohen, EnviroIssues
- Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues
- Justin McCaffree, EnviroIssues
- Erin Tam, EnviroIssues
- Brett Watson, EnviroIssues