



Advisory Group Meeting #9 Summary

June 8, 2017

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Ruth Fisher Board Room - Union Station

Welcome and Introductions:

Penny Mabie, facilitator, welcomed members of the One Center City Advisory Group and led a round of introductions. 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.

Penny noted the presence of two new Advisory Group members, Andrew Thompson and Todd Biesold, and thanked them for participating in the Advisory Group process.

Presentation of proposed near-term projects:

Tom Brennan, Nelson/Nygaard, and agency staff including Eric Tweit (SDOT), Paul Roybal (King County), Juan Higuera (Sound Transit), Gary Johnson (OPCD), Jacqueline Gruber (DSA), and Meghan Shepard (SDOT), gave a [presentation](#) on the proposed near-term projects for Center City. Key topics from the presentation included:

- Traffic operations
- Transit speed, reliability, and customer experience
- Bus service restructures
- Hub area improvements
- Pedestrian experience and accessibility
- Center City Bike Network connections
- Management strategies

Following the presentation, Scott Kubly (SDOT), Victor Obeso (King County), and Mike Harbour (Sound Transit) thanked Advisory Group members for their participation and commitment to the process.

Group members shared the following questions and comments on the proposed near-term projects:

Question: What is the current usage of 4th and 5th Avenues by mode? Was this information considered during the planning process?

Response: *The project team considered the numbers of current users, projected changes in travel times, potential impacts to safety, etc. There is more work to be done regarding tradeoffs in this area.*

Question: *I agree with the last question- how many people are using these corridors by mode? We need this data.*

Comment: We've made great improvements at acknowledging freight, although I'd like to see more data on the proposed near-term projects' potential impacts to freight.

Question: The proposed near-term projects seem fairly mode-specific. Moving forward, is there a bigger idea and/or vision that we can articulate to the community to get them excited about this?

Question: I'm glad to see the protected bike lanes proposed on Pike and Pine streets. How firm is this recommendation in terms of configuration? Could it be a two-directional cycle track? Also, why will the portion from Bellevue to Broadway streets not be complete until 2020? I would encourage all of it to be done sooner.

Response (SDOT): *The proposed configuration is not final, although it is SDOT's preferred option. There is more work to do in how traffic operates, as well as conducting outreach and creating a preliminary design. Closer to downtown, we want to integrate our planning with Pike/Pine Renaissance.*

Question: *So, the configuration is not set in stone and the delay is due to funding as well as the difficulty of the design? Will the interim bike lanes be protected bike lanes?*

Response (SDOT): *The answer to all three of those questions is "yes".*

Comment: I'm concerned that although we are talking about accessibility, we are not specifically addressing "disability accessibility". We need to apply this concept to our thinking regarding the transit hubs, apps, how people will cross protected bike lanes, etc. In Seattle, people who are blind or deaf/blind cannot tell if they're stepping into a bike lane unless they're at an intersection with a traffic signal, and they have trouble crossing mid-block over the protected bike lane. There is also a shared street at 3rd and Bell where the street does not have a curb line, which may pose issues to those who are sight impaired. It is another example of what to be cognizant of during the design process. I encourage the project staff to incorporate proper planning (possibly even disability accessibility experts) into this process to ensure that people of all abilities will be able to use the areas we are designing.

Comment: It would be helpful to understand some of the quantitative outcomes of these proposed near-term solutions, similarly to how options A-D had information on their expected performance.

Response: *The project team will create a final report on the near-term projects with this data.*

Comment: Portland has done a great job with their transit streets. They mix transit with cars and bikes and create a lot of circulation through their main streets. They use less than 70 buses per hour on their streets. We have too many buses going the short distance from Stewart to I-90. Buses should be treated more like a commuter rail and should pick up passengers at a station. I'm glad to see the inclusion of a transfer hub for the link in this plan and that 5th Ave will not be transit only.

Comment: I'm glad to see where this projected is headed – good decisions are coming out of this. We're making the best possible use of limited space. I'm also glad to see near-term implementation of the Center City Bike Network. How can we contribute to the decision regarding protected bike lanes on 4th or 5th avenues?

Question: Freight mobility is a growing concern. Many people don't realize that everything you purchase downtown is brought in by a truck. Does the project team have data that indicates how many trucks go into downtown each day and what types of trucks they are? My company delivers products in Center City that must be maintained at certain temperatures. Is there data regarding how many trucks go into the city and how they are stratified?

Response: The City does have data on truck volumes. The project team also looked at various curb space priorities. The City just completed a curb space policy study last year on how to prioritize curb loading space. As the project team identifies projects that are putting more pressure on limited curb space, that will remain a top priority.

Comment: In terms of explaining this project to the community, I would suggest saying that what we're doing is allocating right of way downtown based on data and equity for all modes. If we can show how we're allocating for all modes, that would be helpful. It would also be helpful to know how many buses we're removing from downtown.

Question: I'm glad to see more emphasis being put on public space. Regarding tonight's presentation, how does all of this fit into the long-term vision? How will this improve transportation in the city for the next 20 or 30 years?

Comment: Regarding the conceptual protected bike lanes on 4th and 5th avenues, further analysis should be done on safety impacts, turn movements, etcetera. This is also an opportunity to look at parking garages. We could designate parking garage space for Uber and Lyft pick up, similarly to how SeaTac Airport does now. Load and unload zones are still a priority. People are generally okay with removing parking, but maintaining load and unload zones is important.

Comment: I do not think that a new app should be created. There is a lot that can be done in terms of digital wayfinding, and many companies that can do it well. I'm skeptical that digital kiosks would be used by a lot of people.

Question: Regarding Pike and Pine streets, has the project team met with the Washington State Convention Trade Center to learn more about their plans for expansion? It will create a lot of pedestrian traffic passing between Pike and Pine streets.

Response: *Yes, that coordination has been occurring.*

Question: I agree that it's important to make sure that we plan for accessibility for people with disabilities. Let's think of innovative ideas to improve that experience, including paratransit and community based shuttles and how they fit into loading and unloading needs. What will the public outreach for these projects be as they move forward? Let's be creative and ensure that it's not just a lot of online surveys.

Response: *We'll keep the Advisory Group informed and will give opportunities to be involved as this process moves forward.*

Comment: There is an affordability crisis in Seattle. Service workers are being pushed further out. We need to think about how we'll be asking people to commute further to get to work via these hubs. There might be commute trip reduction opportunities for smaller businesses (i.e. less than 50 employees).

Question: While we have been considering employment growth, another driver for where people decide to live is schools. Have we considered the need for schools in Center City in our analyses?

Comment: Are the proposed bus lanes wide enough? This needs to be hammered down block by block. A sub group should be created to focus on this issue.

Comment: As a property manager, many of my tenants and other property managers would like to get involved. We know the patterns of people who provide services to our buildings, parking garage data, etcetera. The decision to implement a bike lane on 2nd Ave was an example of great communication. The City talked to my valet parking attendant about it in advance.

Comment: Regarding the hub and east/west travel, walking a couple more blocks up a hill could be a real challenge. I would caution against having too many apps. If an app is made, it would be great if it were multimodal (showing info for travelling via bike, bus, etc.). People I've spoken to want to know what's going to happen – what will the outcome of this process be.

Comment: I second the earlier comment regarding affordability. We need to ensure that this system can serve all people. Also, it's important that we bring more youth into this planning process. They have additional insights on mobility that we might not consider, and they will be the primary users of this system in 20 years. They will be inclined to drive as their main mode of transportation unless they're convinced to use other modes.

Comment: Communication of this project needs to be streamlined and simplified for community members. The more we can educate people on their transportation options, the better. The Advisory Group needs a short version of the presentation shared this evening (e.g. 10 slides) to help summarize and communicate the near-term projects.

Comment: What is our big vision? We need a goal to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles in Center City by a certain percent by a certain year. Let's pick a goal and work to achieve it. It would also

be great to do a mobility hub pilot project where we would pick a site, conduct outreach, launch an app, and see how it went. We also need an off-street parking network. We can leverage private dollars for public good. Also, the map showing Center City projects over the next few years is a great resource.

Comment: I'm excited to see the hubs concept, although I have concerns about accessibility and equity. The hubs need clear and legible wayfinding. We cannot be overly reliant on technology- it's not accessible to everyone as not everyone has a smart phone. We also need to ensure that people with mobility issues can get to their end points easily, perhaps with a local service that connects buses.

Comment: 90,000 out of the 250,000 people who commute to Seattle come from Snohomish County – we need buses. In the long-term, we need to get more youth involved in this project.

Comment: Center City neighborhoods are expected to become denser and developed in the coming years (e.g. additional housing units near 23rd and Jackson). The project team should be aware of and considering how this increased density will affect One Center City.

Public comment:

Four participants gave public comment at the meeting.

- Ryan Packer, The Urbanist, noted that he submitted a letter to the project team regarding the need for the near-term projects to help meet the goals of “Vision Zero”. He said that it’s essential to ban right turns on red lights for pedestrian safety, to establish non-motorized pedestrian zones, to increase traffic enforcement (blocking crosswalks), and to prioritize pedestrians when expanding signal improvements.
- Kelsey Mesher, Cascade Bicycle Club, thanked the group for their work. She said there are many competing priorities and limited space. The Center City Bike Network project began before One Center City, and there has been much discussion around how many people use Center City and by what modes. We should think about what we want our transportation system to look like. We need to build a bike network that is safe and connected to get more people biking.
- Gordon Padelford, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, emphasized the importance of the pedestrian realm. He explained that in the wake of the Paris Climate Accord and forthcoming effects of climate change, he felt hopeful that the group can help make a lasting, positive impact and set an example for other cities. He introduced a goal for “Pollution Free Center City by 2035” via biking, walking, a zero-emissions metro fleet and all vehicles entering Center City having zero emissions.
- Jan Katzenberger noted the importance of designing with the elderly in mind. She said that as people get older, walking a half block to work becomes more difficult. A system needs to be in place to move elderly and disabled people, with easy transfers at hubs for all users. It would be great if there was a school downtown.

Wrap up and Next Steps:

Penny thanked the Group members for their time and participation in the night's meeting. She reminded all that the next scheduled Advisory Group meeting would take place on July 13 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the Ruth Fisher Board Room at Union Station.

Identified Action Items:

- No immediate action items were noted. The project team will follow-up in July with information on final near-term projects and next steps for implementation.

Attendees:

Advisory Group Members:

- Amalia Martino
- Anders McConachie
- Andrew Thompson
- Brian Ferris
- Brie Gyncild
- Catherine Hennings
- David Blandford
- David Wiggins
- Ella Williams
- Erin Goodman
- Hester Serebrin
- Jared Jonson
- Jeff Myrter
- Jennifer Butler
- Jessa Timmer
- Jim Erickson
- John Pehrson
- Michael Davis
- Peggy Martinez
- Reese Tanimura
- Rico Quirindongo
- Sabrina Villanueva
- Staci Haber
- Thatcher Bailey
- Todd Biesold
- Tom Graff

Observers:

- David Miller
- Erik Ashlie-Vinke
- Gordon Padelford
- Jan Katzenberger
- Kelsey Mesher
- Ryan Packer

Agency Staff:

City of Seattle

- Eric Tweit, SDOT
- Diane Wiatr, SDOT
- Meghan Shepard, SDOT
- Lizzie Moll, SDOT
- Candida Lorenzana, SDOT
- Benjamin de la Pena, SDOT
- Tracy Krawczyk, SDOT
- Kevin Shively, Mayor's Office
- Sam Assefa, OPCD
- Gary Johnson, OPCD
- David Driskell, OPCD
- Amy Gore, CM Johnson's Office

Sound Transit

- Wesley King
- Juan Higuera
- Mike Harbour

King County DOT:

- Kim Becklund
- Paul Roybal
- Victor Obeso

Downtown Seattle Association

- Jacqueline Gruber
- Don Blakeney

Other Project Staff:

- Tom Brennan, Nelson/Nygaard
- Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues
- Justin McCaffree, EnviroIssues
- Erin Tam, EnviroIssues