



Seattle

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board



*Stewards of the
Pedestrian Master Plan*

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April 12, 2023

To: SDOT Director Greg Spotts, City Council Transportation Committee,
Mayor Harrell

Re: Seattle Crosswalk Policy & Improvement Funding

In January 2022, the Seattle Department of Transportation published its new “Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Location Guidelines.” These new guidelines proactively consider pedestrian demand for connections to destinations throughout a community rather than depending on pedestrian counts to trigger the process to install safer crosswalks.

The Pedestrian Advisory Board is an advisory board composed of members of the Seattle community representing diverse interests and charged with advising you, the City Council, and all departments and offices of the City on matters related to pedestrians.

Given the startling trend in pedestrian-related crashes and fatalities on our transportation system, we see this updated crosswalk guidance as critical to our safety infrastructure and the implementation of these crosswalks as an urgent priority to address this crisis. Frequent, convenient, and safe crossings are an essential component of Seattle’s transportation network and enhance connections for all modes.

We know that there is significant demand for safer crossings throughout the city because, in the last year, there have been multiple new crosswalks installed by citizens (often called “guerilla” crosswalks). Typically these guerilla crosswalks are installed in response to citizens’ frustration at seeing SDOT not respond to their requests for safer crossings at frequently used locations. Director Spotts is working with SDOT staff to identify and revise internal processes that delay the installation of enhanced crossings. In the meantime, staff are required to respond to any self-installed crossings by removing them from the roadway. This cycle creates tension between all parties and uses valuable resources that could go toward making more permanent improvements for safer streets.

The Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board shall advise the City Council, the Mayor and all the offices of the city on matters related to pedestrians and the impacts which actions by the city may have upon the pedestrian environment; and shall have the opportunity to contribute to all aspects of the city’s planning insofar as they relate to the pedestrian safety and access.

~City Council Resolution
28791

City staff have proactively identified and installed about 20 crosswalks based on equity criteria and the pedestrian plan and have more priority locations identified. In our discussions with City Staff on this issue, a common thread is the limitation of staff and funding for enhanced crossings and stand-alone pedestrian improvements. This is not an acceptable response to the pedestrian fatalities that our City is experiencing and we can not wait or depend on the approval of federal funds for this program. The situation calls for urgent action from all of us.

In response to the crisis of pedestrian fatalities on our streets, we are asking for the Mayor's Office and City Council to make a commitment to improving pedestrian safety in Seattle by identifying and approving dedicated funding to the City's Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Program. These funds should be used to:

- increase staff's ability to respond to community requests for new and enhanced crosswalks
- install quick-build solutions for urgently needed crosswalk locations
- continue to proactively identify the need for enhanced crosswalk applications
- Increase the rate of installation of the enhanced crosswalk locations in high-need areas with a focus on disproportionately impacted communities.

Thank you for taking the time to review our comments and consider what is required to ensure SDOT has the resources to respond to community needs for safe street crossings.