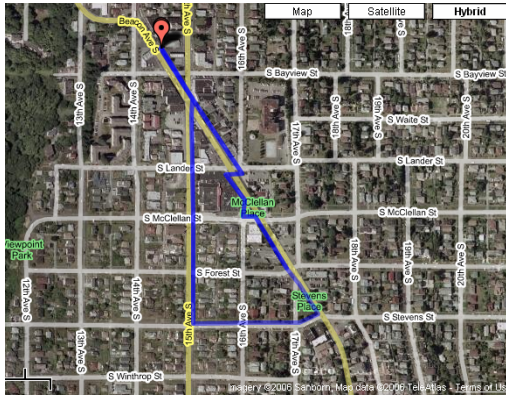


BEACON HILL WALKING AUDIT – AUGUST 12, 2006



The Beacon Hill area is a diverse community in Southeast Seattle. The future Sound Transit Light rail station is an opportunity to create a new pedestrian plaza with premier transit access and a potential town center in the heart of Beacon Hill. There are several improvements in the surrounding area that would enhance the future (and current) pedestrian environment and make the Beacon Hill neighborhood a more vibrant and walkable community, leading to more people out on the street and a more economically successful business district.



TOP OBSERVATIONS:

- Beacon Hill residents would like the Light Rail Station to contribute to the livability and walkability of their community. With the station comes the opportunity to create “Plaza de la Raza”, the heart of the community.
- There are signals on Beacon Avenue that could be improved to encourage walking and a more convenient pedestrian environment.
- There are crossings in the area that could be improved for safety.
- Speeding and volume of traffic is a concern of residents, especially on 15th Ave S.
- Beacon Ave S creates problems due to its width and its cutting through the street grid at an angle.
- There are small parks, landscaping and views that make walks pleasant, but more destinations would increase walking.

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TOP RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Continue to plan for “Plaza de la Raza” which could be the heart of the community, bringing more people out to be the eyes on the street and engage in community-oriented markets, festivals, or other outdoor events. It should be pedestrian oriented, connect visually to El Centro de la Raza, and be a lively place that attracts community members and activity. Full funding and limited vehicle access on Lander should be explored.
2. SDOT should evaluate and change signal timing at Beacon Ave S and 15th Ave S. and S Bayview St and consider installing audible signals.
3. SDOT should evaluate left turn lights at Beacon Ave. S. and S. McClellan St. for elimination.
4. Community members should attend Design Review meetings and ask that Beacon Hill Design Guidelines be fully used.
5. The crosswalk at Beacon Ave. S across the entrance to 17th Ave. S. going north needs added measures to increase pedestrian visibility and safety.
6. Curb bulbs and parking are some measures that could calm speeds on 15th Ave. S.





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Photo Credits: David Levinger, Mark Holland





Item Key













Issues and action items are labeled with four color-coded icons that identify what action is recommended to make improvements. Additionally, as most of the action recommended is in the public domain, each item includes a specification for the category area that can facilitate coordination with or by the appropriate local or state agency.

- ★ - citizen or business initiative could solve this problem
- ☎ - existing programs can be tapped to make improvements
- 📄 - policy change or new funding may be required to implement changes
- ⌘ - informational - action not necessary, but opportunities may exist











Issues and Action Items





ITEM	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	PHOTO
1 ☎	Beacon Ave S and 15 th Ave S. and S Bayview St	The signal here is one of three “all walk” or “scramble” pedestrian signals in the city. Unfortunately, pedestrians have to wait too long to cross the street. The requirement for the button to be pressed in order to for the light to change also lessens the pedestrian environment. The signal timing group could alter the timing so that a pedestrian phase can be provided for either green direction at the signal, cutting the delay in half. Also, using the signal timing work sheet, it appears that the walk signal is not long enough for children and elderly to cross safely: retime the signal to provide 3.5 ft/sec crossing times.	Signal timing	
2 ☎	Beacon Ave S and 15 th Ave S. and S Bayview St	Because this is an “all walk “ signal, clues must be given for blind and low-vision pedestrians. Feet First recommends that the city add audible signals to all locations where there is all-walk phasing.	Audible signals	













ITEM	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	PHOTO
3 ✨	Beacon Ave S and 15 th Ave S. and S Bayview St	Here is a small planting area in the roadway that needs better landscaping and maintenance. Benches, newspapers, and other items of interest might make the area more welcoming for walkers.	Planting area	
5 ✨ ☎	Beacon Ave S and 15 th Ave S. and S Bayview St	Traffic here is high speed, noisy, high volume. If there were more interesting destinations and more people on foot, the vehicles would tend to move more slowly.	Traffic speeds	
6 ✂	Beacon Ave S and 15 th Ave S. and S Bayview St	There is a driveway with an entrance within the crosswalk.	Crosswalk	
7 ✨	Beacon Ave S and 15 th Ave S. and S Bayview St	Our group discussed destinations. This corner could be an important one for the community, as it is the intersection of several important streets. However, the buildings are not optimal for destinations. A large one is a storage unit, which creates empty, dead space instead of a lively and engaging storefront. There is an awning, but no real reason to pause.	Land Use	













ITEM	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	PHOTO
8  	Beacon Ave S and 15 th Ave S. and S Bayview St	Across the street is a building which could be used for shops, but unfortunately has entrances that are not inviting for pedestrians. The recently released Beacon Hill Design Guidelines can be helpful in the future, as neighbors could attend Design Review meetings and ask for pedestrian friendly entrances using design appropriate for the community.	Land Use/ Pedestrian design	
9  	Beacon Ave. S and S Lander	This is one of the corners which will lead to the entrance of the Beacon Hill Light Rail Station. We discussed how it is particularly important to have pedestrian friendly design here. We discussed the Plaza de la Raza proposals. The Beacon Hill Pedestrian Task Force has been leading efforts to have Lander Street, which is closed and will remain closed for an extended time, become a pedestrian oriented place.	Roadway	
10  	Beacon Ave. S and S Lander	Among the ideas they have considered are having Lander closed to vehicles, or all vehicles except emergency vehicles, or all except emergency and transit. A design charrette will be held Sept. 12 2006 to discuss this.	Roadway	
11  	Beacon Ave. S and S Lander	Areas around Rainier Ave. are scheduled to have funding to mitigate Sound Transit Light Rail. The Beacon Hill Light Rail Station is a more recent addition to the stations, and has not received as much funding as other stations. More funding might be obtained to improve the pedestrian environment, and City Council could be contacted about this.	Funding for pedestrian improvements	







ITEM	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	PHOTO
12 	Beacon Ave. S and S Lander	Because this area will provide access to the Light Rail Station, it will be important to improve the crosswalk. Cars do not always stop for pedestrians, so more signs or a light may be needed.	Crosswalk	
13  	Crossing Beacon Ave. South at Lander	This is another view of the crosswalk, which goes to the Red Apple grocery store. We saw people disembark from the bus and cross in front of the bus, which is dangerous not only because of potential to be hit by the bus, but also as it impairs being visibility to the car drivers. Bus riders need continued education.	Pedestrian education	
14  	Turn lane from Beacon Ave. S. to S McClellan St.	This sidewalk needs to be repaired, and Sound Transit is likely the agency to do this, as the damage was likely done during the construction.	Walkways	
15 	Along Beacon Ave S near S McClellan	This is a "desire line" on an island next to Beacon Ave. S. Pedestrians want to walk along Beacon Ave., though the sidewalk takes them away, along the turn lane. This might have been done out of concern for a safe crossing of the turn lane. This was done probably decades ago, and would be expensive to redo. Current guidelines in force now would have more likely resulted in a sidewalk where pedestrians want to walk.	Walkways	







ITEM	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	PHOTO
16 📞	Beacon Ave. S. and S. McClellan St.	This intersection and traffic light are long for pedestrians because of a left turn light cycle. Because cars turning left both north and south do not have a lot of opposing traffic, it is not clear that they need the left turn cycle, and if this was taken away, it would cut down on the wait for pedestrians. Often pedestrians become so impatient they cross without the walk light anyway.	Signal timing	
17 🌟 📞	Beacon Ave. S. and S. McClellan St.	Another view of the intersection. At this spot we heard about community efforts to have a distinctive way of informing people that they have entered the Beacon Hill neighborhood. Beacons have been proposed which could serve both as art and a distinctive way to mark entrances to Beacon Hill.	Local art and “gateways”	
18 📞 ⌘	Beacon Ave. S. near S. Forest St.	This is a view of the crosswalk near the library. Often drivers do not stop.	Crosswalk signing and enforcement	
19 📞 ⌘	Beacon Ave. S and S Forest St.	This is our group looking across to 17 th . The sidewalk is generous around the library, but crosswalks around there are challenging for pedestrians.	Walkways	

ITEM	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	PHOTO
20 	Beacon Ave. S and S Forest St.	This is another view of the crosswalk near the library. The sign for pedestrians comes just after the crosswalk.	Crosswalk	
21 	Beacon Ave. S and S Forest St.	This is a view of the library. It has become an important center for the community since it was built. It has distinctive architectural features. There are wide sidewalks around it, and places to gather and sit outside, as well as inside.	Architecture, Design review, land use	
22   	Beacon Ave. S and S Forest St., near 17 th Ave. S.	This is a view of Beacon towards 17 th . Cars turn onto 17 th at a high rate of speed, endangering pedestrians crossing there. This corner could be evaluated for curb extensions to increase visibility and slow speeds. It may also be appropriate for a pedestrian refuge.	Crosswalks	
23   	Beacon Ave. S and S Forest St.	Our group then crossed Forest together. Because of the geometry, the crossing is very long. It may not need bulbouts or islands because the traffic volume is low, however.	Crosswalks	

ITEM	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	PHOTO
24  	Beacon Ave. S. and 17 th Ave. S.	<p>This is another view of the intersection of 17th and Beacon. The visibility of pedestrians who want to cross 17th along Beacon, at the Southeast corner is poor and needs to be enhanced by trimming of greenery as well as other options as islands, listed above. This also might be a potential place for a “Gateway” treatment.</p> <p>The crosswalk along the Southwest side of Beacon Ave. is faded.</p>	Maintenance, crosswalks, gateways	
25    	At Stevens Place along Beacon Ave. S.	<p>Stevens Place is a little oasis along Beacon Ave, where traffic is buffered by more grass and a magnificent tree in the center of the tiny park. The park has a group of people organized around concerns for it. There have been some reports that transient people loiter there. One solution might be to put a small playground, tables, or other items that would attract more people and activities to the park.</p>	Land use, parks	
26 	At Stevens Place along Beacon Ave. S.	<p>A view south from the park, which has a number of large shade trees.</p>	Landscaping	
27 	At Stevens Place along Beacon Ave. S.	<p>View of one of the Beacon Hill pedestrian scale streetlights. Beacon Hill has many of these lights in the area, some of them have art connected to them. They add an interesting ambiance to the area.</p>	Lighting	

ITEM	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	PHOTO
28 ☸	At Stevens Place along Beacon Ave. S.	Another view of the park and the center tree, and the pleasant environment for stopping and talking.	Community gathering places	
29 ✨ ☎ 🚫 ☸	Along 15 th Ave. S.	15 th Ave is a major street in the area, and traffic often speeds, and vehicles often do not stop for pedestrians. In some areas, especially north of the Beacon intersection, curbs near the intersection-30 feet from crossing- could have a red line to prevent parking, which could improve pedestrian visibility. Curb bulbs could also help prevent parking and bring the pedestrian out where drivers could see them better.	Roadways, crosswalks	
30 ✨ ☎ ☸	Along 15 th Ave. S. looking north	<p>More on street parking along 15th Ave S would help calm traffic. It is not allowed during peak times currently. Car owners have concerns that their car might get hit, but as more cars park and it becomes common, it would provide a buffer for pedestrians and tend to slow traffic.</p> <p>We discussed the option of a Pace Car program for Beacon Hill, where neighbors put a Pace Car bumper sticker on their car, and agree to drive the speed limit. This would be more challenging here, with so many cars coming through the area, and works more easily in areas on the edges of communities.</p>	Parking, traffic calming	
31 ☸	Looking west from 15 th	The area around 15 th has many cross streets that have views of the city. Also, many of the areas houses have beautiful plantings that also enhance the walking experience.	Walking environment	



ITEM	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY	PHOTO
32  	Along 15 th close to intersection with Beacon Ave.	Cars are parked blocking the sidewalk. These triangular pieces of land are somewhat unusual. There could be a concrete block that stops the first car so that only one car fits. Also more could be done with the triangles to make the area pleasant, such as interesting landscaping. Many of the triangles are completely filled with asphalt even in areas too small to park, and this is a missed opportunity.	Parking	
33   	Beacon Ave S and S Spokane St, also 15 th Ave. S and S. Spokane St	While we did not walk to S. Spokane St, we discussed the challenges of pedestrian access to Jefferson Park. There are a number of proposals to attempt to create safer crosswalks.	Access	

Contacts & Project Information

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Feet First is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We are an advocacy organization building walkable communities. We help people take simple steps to create better places to live, learn, shop, work, and play – a world that cares about health, community, and design.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTACTS:

Jefferson Park Alliance
www.cityofseattle.net/commnty/Beacon/groups/jpa
North Beacon Hill Council
www.northbeacon.net
 Meets: the 1st Thursday of the month at 7pm
 Jefferson Community Center, 3801 Beacon Ave
Greater Duwamish Neighborhood Council and Service Center
www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nsc/duwamish.htm
 2821 Beacon Ave S - 233-2044

Pedestrian Task Force
 Working to create safe, viable walking opportunities in Beacon Hill.
 Contact Jodie Vice jodievice@yahoo.com
South Beacon Neighborhood Council
www.neighborhoodlink.com/seattle/sbnc/
 Meets: 1st Wednesday of every other month at St Mark's, 6020 Beacon Ave S, 7pm-8:30pm
Beacon Ridge Improvement Community (BRIC): www.bric.extrapolation.com

Beacon Alliance of Neighbors (BAN)
www.cityofseattle.net/BAN
 Meets: 3rd Tuesday, 7pm, at Quarters 1 on PacMed campus, NW corner of 14th & Judkins
Beacon Hill Chamber of Commerce
www.beaconhillchamber.com
 Meets: 1st Wed., 2414 Beacon Ave S, 9am

 Find an extensive list of South End groups here:
www.cityofseattle.net/BAN/south_enders.htm

