



# City of Seattle

## Seattle Planning Commission

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Demographer &  
Senior Policy Analyst

February 18, 2014

Honorable Councilmember Tim Burgess, President  
Seattle City Council  
PO Box 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

### RE: Bicycle Master Plan

Dear Council President Burgess,

We appreciate the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) staff, in particular Sara Zora and Kevin O'Neil for their technical work and community outreach that has culminated in this ambitious and comprehensive update of the Bicycle Master Plan. We would also like to acknowledge the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board for their meticulous review of the proposed bicycle routes and facility types. The Planning Commission reviewed the preliminary plan and submitted comments to SDOT in a letter on [August 14, 2013](#). We are pleased to see that many of our comments have been incorporated in the document.

The Commission fully supports adoption and implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan and suggests a few additional changes to the plan in order to help realize the goal of bicycle ridership of “all ages and abilities”. As in our previous letter we offer our advice at the broad policy level.

- *Funding strategies are well-articulated but two areas need additional resources*

We appreciate the incorporation of Capital Improvement Plan funds as a dedicated resource for the Bicycle Master Plan. While we understand that the current funding source would be tied to “commute by bike” mode share, we

suggest that SDOT look at ways to explicitly link program funding to overall bicycle ridership.

Overall the funding picture is well articulated and the Commission supports these improvements to the initial draft.

As stated in our previous letter, maintenance of bicycle facilities must be appropriately funded. We are pleased to see the addition of more detail in the maintenance section of the Plan. However, we are still concerned that there doesn't appear to be a strong focus on routine maintenance such as sweeping, freshening of paint/thermoplastic, snow removal and post-snow gravel/sand removal. We recognize regular maintenance has budget implications and we urge this be reflected more directly in the Plan.

Also, as previously stated in our letter, we believe that a dedicated staff person is essential to the successful implementation of this Plan. We are pleased to see mention of a bicycle coordinator to oversee many of the programmatic and educational programs outlined in the Plan, and encourage the Council to identify additional resources for this position.

- ***Commend the strategic focus on increasing ridership***

We are pleased to see incorporated interim goals and incremental improvements as well as the overall focus on increasing ridership. Ridership is a great way to measure progress and the success of the overall strategy. The addition of interim goals and the focus on incremental improvements will also allow for SDOT to make necessary adjustments to the Plan and take advantage of opportunities throughout the City as they arise.

- ***Connecting destinations and providing adequate facilities***

We appreciate that the Plan maps indicate great connections to and between Urban Villages and Transit Communities, and we would like to see this better reflected in the goals of the document.

Specifically, we suggest Transit Communities be noted as a destination type that should be connected. We also would like more clarity on preferred bicycle facility locations. While we understand that the front of a building may not always be a suitable location for bicycle parking, it is essential that bicycle facilities are visible directly from the routes and that they be easily accessible and visible by users at key destinations.

- ***Integration with other Multi-Modal Plans could be improved***

As stated in our previous letter, integration of the Bicycle Master Plan with other modal plans is critical. The current draft is much improved in terms of integration with the Freight Mobility Plan and the associated potential user conflicts. However with respect to integration with the Transit Master Plan the Plan may not capture the potential synergy of fully integrating the two modes. Of particular concern is the need to integrate stronger network ties and references to bicycle access to connect to a transit system – providing last mile, first mile expansion of the frequent transit network. Similarly the less apparent integration with the Pedestrian Master Plan may result in some missed opportunities to integrate non-motorized mobility. Some more detailed language is necessary in order for the Plan to properly reflect the desirable modal connectivity.

- ***Take advantage of opportunities as they arise***

The Commission remains concerned that the commitment in the Plan to the “ultimate” bicycle facility type may jeopardize the implementation of minor improvements that could make a big difference in creating a more bicycle-friendly street system. We offer, for an example, that the significant focus on developing complete greenway corridors may diminish the amount of resources available for other types of improvements for the Citywide Network and Local Connectors. In large part, routes identified as greenways – both Citywide and Local – are currently very bikable and walkable because they are generally low speed and low volume non-arterial streets. Challenges to bikability for all ages and abilities occur when crossing arterials. Intersection

improvements and wayfinding could make a big difference in the bikability of a greenway corridor without all of the other components that are ultimately desirable along a greenway.

Overall the Commission is very supportive of this Plan and commends the work of SDOT on preparing the Bicycle Master Plan. We have been and will continue to work with SDOT to make improvements to the Plan before final adoption. We fully support the Council moving forward with adoption of this important guiding document for bicycling in Seattle.

Sincerely,



David Cutler

Co-Chair



Amalia Leighton

Co-Chair

cc:

Mayor Ed Murray

Robert Feldstein, Steve Lee, Kathy Nyland; Office of Policy and Innovation

Seattle City Councilmembers

Goran Sparrman, Tracy Krawczyk, Kevin O'Neill; Seattle Department of Transportation

Rebecca Herzfeld, Sara Belz, Martha Lester; Eric McConaghy; Lish Whitson; Council Central Staff

#### SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD OF DISCLOSURE & RECUSAL

**Commissioner Josh Brower** Recused and left the room.

**Commissioner Colie Hough Beck** disclosed that the firm she works for HBB has as a client the Seattle Department of Transportation.

**Commissioner Grace Kim** disclosed that her firm Schemata Workshop has as a client the Seattle Department of Transportation.

**Commissioner Amalia Leighton** disclosed that the firm she works for SVR consulted with Seattle Department of Transportation on the Bicycle Master Plan and she personally worked on cost estimates for the Bicycle Master Plan.

**Commissioner Matt Roewe** disclosed that the firm he works for VIA Architect works with clients that may be impacted by the implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan.