



# City Neighborhood Council

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## DISTRICT COUNCILS:

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## COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

To the Mayor, City Council, SDOT Director and Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board:

The overall goals of the draft update of the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan are laudable. However it needs more work in three areas: (1) extending the prior bicycle network, (2) vetting individual routes, (3) prioritizing and phasing the implementation.

We applaud the goal of extending bicycle facilities to better serve families, children, seniors, women, and others who have encountered barriers in the past, especially safety. Bicycling should be for more than commuters and recreationalists. It should serve a variety of local destinations with greenways and cycle tracks.

Yet the bicycle facility maps have several issues. First, suggested greenways and cycle tracks should be placed in the context of current bicycle routes and facilities – existing bike paths, bike lanes, sharrows, etc., and routes from the Seattle Bicycling Guide Map. Only this way can we see if it all networks together.

Second, close examination reveals that many of the individual facilities suggested have not been adequately studied or vetted. For example, are there steep hills or other impediments? Is there adequate street space, or if not, will parking space or traffic lanes or property have to be taken? What is the projected usage, especially versus alternative usage, which in some cases may include transit or trucks as well as cars? What are the financial requirements? Costs versus benefits? What community input / decision making political / processes may be needed?

Third, the diverse character and impact of the suggested facilities leads us to conclude that they need to be more than lines on a map. For example, you might classify them as candidates for a phase I, phase II, or phase III prioritization and implementation. Phase I facilities might be those without significant obstacles – inexpensive and with good community support and projected usage, such as conversion of existing bike lanes to cycle tracks or easy-to-do greenways in areas of increased cycling. Phase II projects would be encountering more financial need, controversy, ambiguous data, or significant competing usage, etc. These will need design / alternatives studies and a significant community process with probable delay. Phase III projects would likely encounter major obstacles, so that they are more aspirational at present and may require many years and revisions.

We conclude that it is premature to put lines on a map without indicating the diverse challenges, including pros and cons, that they represent. Even then, these maps seem more like a vision than a plan. Thus the suggested facilities should be for illustrative purposes only, not part of a formal plan until they have been more adequately studied along with alternatives. In fact at this point it would be appropriate to include such alternatives on the maps. The above letter was authorized by vote at the July 29, 2013 City Neighborhood Council meeting.

Sincerely,



Phil Shack, Chair  
City Neighborhood Council



Dick Burkhardt  
CNC Transportation Committee Chair

cc: District Councils