

# CHAPTER 2: POLICY FRAMEWORK

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## PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The policy framework for the PMP outlines the Plan's:

- Vision – the desired future outcome of the Plan
- Goals – what we expect to accomplish to meet the vision
- Objectives – how we plan to achieve the goals
- Performance measures – how we track progress in achieving the goals and objectives

The vision, goals, and objectives provide the foundation upon which the Pedestrian Master Plan is built, as illustrated in Figure 2-1 and described in this section. Performance measures established for the plan are described in Chapter 6.

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## UPDATING THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

We worked with the Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board (SPAB) to review and refresh the Plan's policy framework. The PMP vision, goals, and objectives are substantively unchanged with this update, and the SPAB recommended only very minor modifications to the previous vision, goals, and objectives. We updated the Plan's vision statement to highlight our ongoing commitment to accessibility. We also updated language within the "Health" goal to explicitly identify getting more people moving as a means of improving public health and mobility. Changes to the "Vibrancy" goal reflect the importance that connectivity plays within and between neighborhoods.

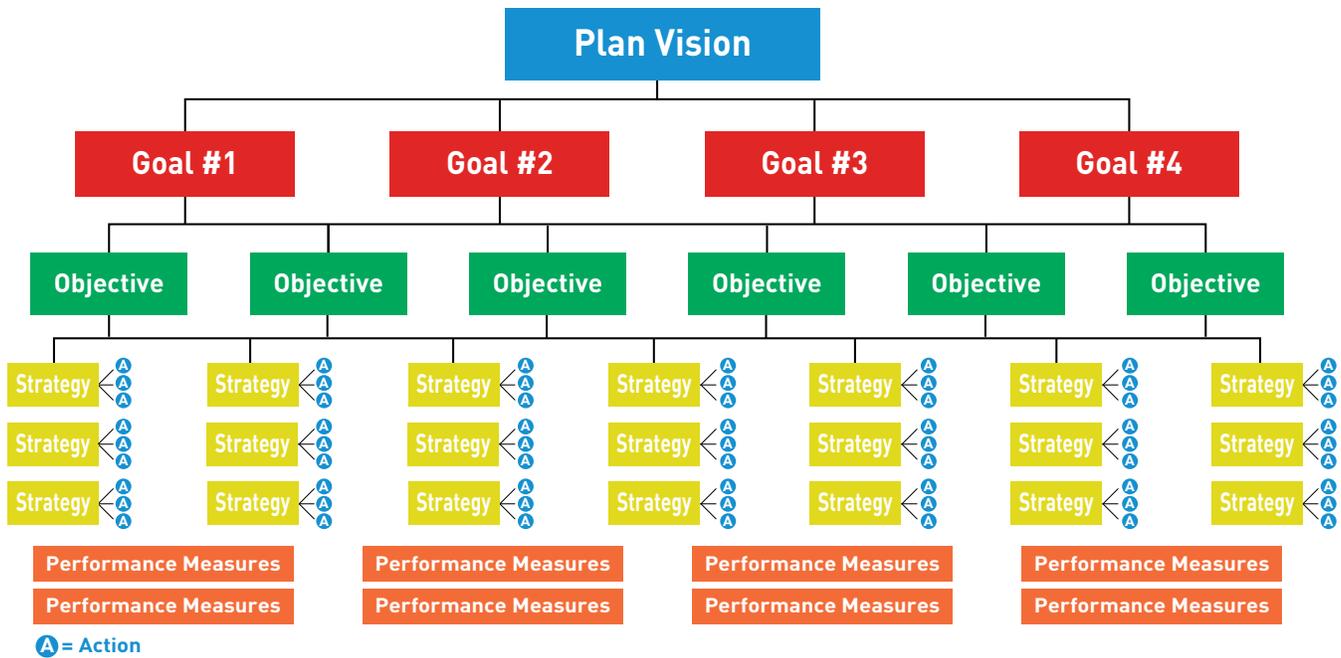
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## Plan Vision

**"Seattle is the most walkable and accessible city in the nation."**

The vision for the Pedestrian Master Plan gives a clear aspiration for the city — that Seattle is the most walkable and accessible city in the nation. We want Seattle to become a "pedestrian city" in which people will use our sidewalks in ever increasing numbers. In Seattle, walking will be a way of life, accessible to people of all ages and abilities, and possible throughout the city. Our vision drives the Plan's goals, objectives, and implementing strategies and actions.

FIGURE 2-1: PMP POLICY FRAMEWORK



## Plan Goals

To help achieve the vision of making Seattle the most walkable and accessible city in the nation, the PMP establishes 4 goals, as follows:

### Safety - Reduce the number and severity of crashes involving pedestrians

Seattle is tied for second in pedestrian safety among large U.S. cities<sup>1</sup>. However, there are still approximately 460 pedestrian-vehicle crashes per year on average. Because even one crash is one too many, the City is committed to improving pedestrian safety through the PMP and delivery of the City’s Vision Zero program (described later in this chapter).

Investing in safe and connected pedestrian facilities helps to ensure a high quality of life for residents as well as visitors. People who live in accessible, pedestrian-friendly areas are likely to be more familiar with their neighborhoods and to have richer social connections to their community. This is true for all Seattle residents, from young children to older adults and everyone in between.

### Vibrancy - Develop a connected pedestrian environment that sustains healthy communities and supports a vibrant economy

The PMP defines vibrancy as a lively, healthy environment: one that has energy and activity of all types, including healthy business districts. A vibrant pedestrian environment supports and values walking as a mode of transportation, and recognizes the impact of pedestrians on the economic health of a city and region.

A vibrant pedestrian environment includes being able to connect to a variety of destinations, especially schools and transit. It is generally the case that neighborhoods that are pleasant and popular places to walk tend to be some of the city’s most economically vibrant areas, and that improving pedestrian conditions can positively impact the liveliness of a neighborhood. In order to most effectively encourage pedestrian travel in Seattle among all city residents, it is important to think about increasing the quantity and quality of accessible destinations.

<sup>1</sup> 2016 Benchmarking Report, Alliance for Biking & Walking.

## **Equity - Make Seattle a more walkable and accessible city for all through equity in public engagement, service delivery, accessibility, and capital investments**

Walking is the most broadly accessible form of transportation and recreation, requiring no fare, fuel, or license. As such, a quality pedestrian network is at the core of an equitable, accessible transportation system. The City has a commitment to address issues of race and social justice, and the design and implementation of pedestrian projects is no exception.

The PMP will provide for the needs of all of Seattle's neighborhoods, with the goal of improving the pedestrian environment for the city's diverse populations. For those who cannot use or who do not have access to other modes of transportation, the ability to walk safely is essential. People with disabilities may be more likely to be pedestrians, as some physical limitations make driving difficult. Our definition of walking includes mobility for those who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

Equitable services and investments provide the same opportunities for all people and strive to correct the historical inequities that exist in our society. By providing all people safe and comfortable pedestrian facilities for transportation and recreation, Seattle will be well on the way to becoming the most walkable and accessible city in the U.S.

## **Health - Get more people moving to improve health and increase mobility**

Walking, for both transportation and recreation, can have a positive impact on an individual's health. Increased walking and physical activity is linked to reduced obesity and decreased likelihood of a number of chronic diseases. More than half of American adults do not get sufficient physical activity, and over two-thirds of adults are overweight<sup>2</sup>.

Because walking is a low-impact activity, it's something that most people can do at almost any age. Seniors who walk regularly have a longer life expectancy than those who don't walk. And in addition to benefiting physical health, walking is also great for mental health.

More people walking for more trips can also reduce the consumption of fossil fuels, leading to a healthier environment for all Seattleites. Since transportation is the number one contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the Seattle region, walking helps the City meet its climate protection goals by reducing emissions from motor vehicles. Decreased pollution also has health benefits, as air pollution is an irritant that can trigger asthma attacks in children and adults. Ensuring that there are safe, comfortable pedestrian facilities can help Seattle residents make walking part of their active, healthful daily routine.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/obesity-overweight.htm>

## Plan Objectives

Six objectives guide our efforts to achieve the Plan goals. The strategies and actions in Chapter 5 articulate how we will accomplish these objectives.

### Objective 1 - Complete and maintain the pedestrian system identified in the PMP

Funding improvements for new pedestrian facilities and programs, as well as the maintenance of existing facilities, is an essential step in completing and maintaining Seattle's pedestrian system.

### Objective 2 - Improve walkability and accessibility on all streets

All streets in Seattle should be walkable and accessible at a basic level to encourage Seattle's residents and visitors to explore their environment. A clear walkable zone is a horizontal and vertical space that is free of obstructions and other potential hazards.

### Objective 3 - Increase pedestrian safety

A sense of safety is an important consideration as people make the choice to walk. There are a variety of design, engineering, and enforcement strategies that can help to make pedestrian travel feel safer both along and crossing the roadway.

### Objective 4 - Plan, design, and build Complete Streets to move people and goods

Complete Streets accommodate multi-modal travel with walkways, bicycle lanes, transit facilities, and freight design treatments. They encourage pedestrian movement by providing improvements such as curb ramps, landscape buffers, natural drainage features, and streetscape elements such as street furniture and lighting that help create friendly pedestrian environments.

### Objective 5 - Create vibrant public spaces that encourage pedestrian use

Seattle's neighborhoods should be connected by a network of pleasurable and interesting places that are inviting. While there is no magic formula, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods provide a mixture of land uses, human-scaled buildings, interesting and engaging streetscapes, and places within the public realm for people to linger alone or in the company of others.

### Objective 6 - Raise awareness of the important role of pedestrian movement for transportation, recreation, and in promoting health and preventing disease

Walking is an inexpensive form of transportation and recreation that provides health benefits for people, communities, and the environment. Education, encouragement, and enforcement campaigns can promote pedestrian movement and provide information about ways to improve pedestrian safety.



## PLANNING CONTEXT

The Pedestrian Master Plan along with the Transit Master Plan, the Bicycle Master Plan, and the Freight Master Plan, all guide our efforts to improve travel safety, choices, conditions, and efficiencies. Adopted by City Council, each of these plans reflect our core values, and they identify policies, projects, programs, performance measures, and priorities to advance their respective transportation modes.

The PMP builds upon an existing foundation of City goals and policies, including the policy framework established in the 2009 Plan. The content of this Plan is also informed by a series of transportation planning, policy, and design initiatives undertaken since the original PMP was adopted, including:

- Seattle Comprehensive Plan
- Move Seattle
- Vision Zero
- Climate Action Plan
- Complete Streets policy
- Right-of-Way Improvements Manual

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## SDOT CORE VALUES

### A Safe City

We will not accept traffic deaths as an inevitable part of traveling together in a safe city. Our goal is to eliminate serious and fatal crashes in Seattle. Safety also means being prepared for a natural disaster by seismically reinforcing our bridges to withstand earthquakes.

### An Interconnected City

More travel options don't always equate to an easy-to-use, interconnected system. Our goal is to provide an easy-to-use, reliable transportation system that gives you the options you want when you need them.

### A Vibrant City

A vibrant city is one where the streets and sidewalks hum with economic and social activity, where people meet and shop and enjoy the beautiful city we live in side by side with goods delivery and freight shipping. Our goal is to use Seattle's streets and sidewalks to improve the city's health, prosperity and happiness.

### An Affordable City

Our goal is to give all people high-quality and low-cost transportation options that allow them to spend their money on things other than transportation. The transportation system in an affordable city improves the lives of all travelers: those with the latest model smart phones in their pockets and those without.

### An Innovative City

Demographic changes and technological innovation are radically reshaping transportation. Our goal is to understand and plan for the changes of tomorrow, while delivering great service today. This includes newer, more nimble approaches to delivering projects and programs to our customers.

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## Seattle Comprehensive Plan

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, Toward a Sustainable Seattle, is a 20-year vision and road map for Seattle's future. The Plan guides City decisions on where to build new jobs and housing, how to improve our transportation system, and where to make capital investments such as utility improvements, new sidewalks, and libraries. Seattle's Comprehensive Plan is the framework for most of the City's big-picture decisions on how to grow while preserving and improving our neighborhoods.



The four core values of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan are:

- **Community:** Developing strong connections between a diverse range of people and places
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Protect and improve the quality of our global and local natural environment
- **Economic Opportunity and Security:** A strong economy and a pathway to employment is fundamental to maintaining our quality of life
- **Social Equity:** Limited resources and opportunities must be shared; and the inclusion of under-represented communities in decision-making processes is necessary

Seattle's urban village strategy supports the core values by:

- Directing growth to existing urban centers and villages
- Contributing to the vibrancy of our neighborhood centers
- Reinforcing the benefits of City investments in transit, parks, utilities, community centers, and other infrastructure

As part of the 2015-16 major update of the City's Comprehensive Plan, the City has established a series of new policies relating to right-of-way allocation and how decisions are made with regard to using street space. The policies establish 6 essential functions of the street in the public right-of-way:

- Mobility (moving people and goods)
- Access for people (for example, bus stops and short-term passenger vehicle parking)
- Access for commerce (for example, loading spaces for trucks)
- Activation (for example, parklets)
- Greening (street trees, green stormwater)
- Storage (longer-term storage of vehicles)

The policies state that, in making right-of-way decisions, we should accommodate as many of these functions as possible and look to the modal master plans to identify specific needs on individual streets and corridors. These policies direct SDOT to focus on the pedestrian realm in making right-of-way allocation decisions.

## Move Seattle

Move Seattle is the City's 10-year strategic vision for how we will move people and goods throughout Seattle. In many ways, it overlays our modal master plans and identifies opportunities to create a safer, more integrated transportation system. Move Seattle outlines the 10-year outcomes that we will achieve and the projects we plan to implement, in accordance with the Mayor's vision and our core values.

In November 2015, Seattle voters passed a 9-year, \$930 million transportation levy to help achieve the vision set forth in Move Seattle. The Levy to Move Seattle replaced the Bridging the Gap Levy that expired at the end of 2015. The pedestrian improvements accomplished with Bridging the Gap funds between 2009 and 2015 are outlined in Chapter 3 of this document.

The Levy to Move Seattle will fund numerous transit and transportation projects across all parts of the city to help reduce congestion, increase safety for all travelers, and continue to address our City's transportation maintenance needs. This funding will be a critical tool for delivering Move Seattle, and for implementing the PMP.

The prioritization process outlined in this Plan will guide the use of levy funds dedicated to pedestrian improvements. Move Seattle's pedestrian-related outcomes include:

- Repair sidewalks and support healthy tree growth in areas of high pedestrian demand to enhance safety and support walkable neighborhoods
- Repair damaged residential sidewalks through innovative cost-sharing solutions to support walkable neighborhoods
- Evaluate and address safety concerns and crash locations quickly and effectively
- Implement safety programs along corridors with high levels of crashes
- Improve safety in school zones
- Provide education programs to help pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists travel safely and efficiently
- Repair damaged or closed public stairways to connect neighborhoods and improve accessibility

See the following page for Move Seattle's pedestrian-related actions.



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## MOVE SEATTLE PEDESTRIAN-RELATED ACTIONS (2015-2017)

Roll out a coordinated Vision Zero program:

- Implement 20 mph speed zones in residential areas on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis, starting with areas with the highest crash rates
- Carry out 5 corridor safety projects, including on Rainier Ave S, 35th Ave SW, Lake City Way, and SW Roxbury St
- Reduce arterial speed limits to 30 mph or lower to improve safety
- Create a traffic safety education kit for community groups and schools to promote road safety and Vision Zero
- Partner with Seattle Police Department to conduct routine enforcement in areas with high crash rates
- Partner with SPD to install at least 12 new school zone cameras
- Improve school walking routes at up to 12 locations and upgrade school zone signage at up to 15 locations each year

Build out an all ages and abilities bike network:

- Build up to 50 miles of the highest-priority protected bike lane

segments connecting to and through downtown and new neighborhood greenways to improve pedestrian and bicycle travel to and through our neighborhoods

Repair critical infrastructure to increase safety:

- Repair up to 25 blocks of damaged sidewalk each year
- Rehabilitate up to 5 stairways each year

Prioritize pedestrians:

- Make the 27% of the city without sidewalks more walkable — through constructing up to 30 new blocks of sidewalks connecting to transit stops and community centers and identifying new funding tools and partnerships to increase sidewalk construction
- Use high-reflectivity crosswalk markings on all projects
- Modify signal timing to favor pedestrians in neighborhood business districts
- Install up to 25 pedestrian countdown signals each year
- Help employers develop walking programs for employees in Seattle's most walkable neighborhoods

## Vision Zero

Vision Zero is our goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries on Seattle streets by 2030. It uses a data-driven approach to prioritize engineering improvements that increase safety and predictability on our roadways. The program also provides funding for targeted education and enforcement.

# VISION ZERØ

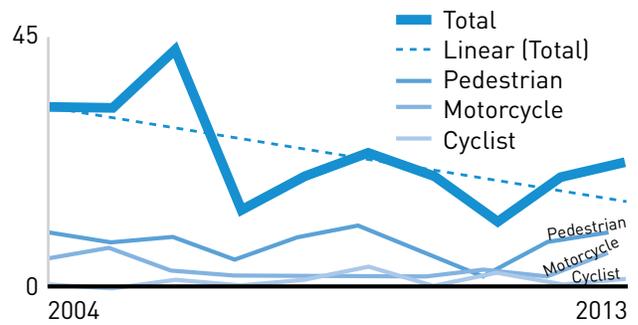
SAFER STREETS FOR SEATTLE

Vision Zero improvements are intended to provide roadway safety for all users, including people driving, people riding transit, people biking, and people using sidewalks or crossing streets. While all users are susceptible to the impacts of unsafe roadway practices, people who walk and bike are particularly vulnerable to serious injury when involved in a crash. Although crashes with pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcycles make up less than 5% of total crashes, they comprise nearly 50% of all traffic fatalities on Seattle streets as demonstrated by the graph in Figure 2-2.

We consider safety for people walking and biking a top priority since the likelihood of injury is nearly 100% if they are hit. Figure 2-3 shows that speed is especially lethal for these vulnerable users, as the risk of injury and death increases as speed increases.

Vision Zero safety objectives are infused in all of our transportation work, including this Plan. We will use our ever-increasing wealth of safety data to prioritize investments in locations where conditions are most difficult for pedestrians.

FIGURE 2-2: DECLINING TRAFFIC FATALITIES ON SEATTLE STREETS



Traffic fatalities on Seattle streets have been declining; however, pedestrians and bicyclists make up a disproportionate percentage of all traffic fatalities.

FIGURE 2-3: HIGH VEHICLE SPEEDS INCREASE LIKELIHOOD OF PEDESTRIAN INJURY

### HIT BY A VEHICLE TRAVELING AT 20 MPH



9 out of 10 pedestrians survive

### HIT BY A VEHICLE TRAVELING AT 30 MPH



5 out of 10 pedestrians survive

### HIT BY A VEHICLE TRAVELING AT 40 MPH



Only 1 out of 10 pedestrians survives

High vehicle speeds increase the likelihood that pedestrians will suffer serious or fatal injuries when hit.

## Climate Action Plan

The 2013 Climate Action Plan provides a framework for meeting Seattle’s climate protection goals, including the overarching goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2050. Road transportation is a critical focus of the Climate Action Plan as Seattle’s largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, comprising approximately 40% of 2008 community emissions. These emissions come from fossil fuels burned by vehicles as they travel through the city moving people and goods. Passenger transportation represents over a third of all road emissions and is the transportation source where City action can have the greatest impact.

The City’s 2030 goal is to reduce GHG emissions from passenger vehicles by 82% and vehicle miles traveled by 20%. A key strategy to achieve this goal is to expand transit, pedestrian, and bicycling infrastructure and services to provide safe and effective choices for getting around. High quality transit, bike, and pedestrian networks provide the underlying backbone of a low carbon transportation system. The Pedestrian Master Plan helps implement the Climate Action Plan by guiding planning and investments to expand and improve the pedestrian network.

## Complete Streets policy

Seattle’s Complete Streets policy (adopted by City Council in 2007) requires us to consider appropriate and safe accommodation for people of all abilities – whether they walk, bicycle, drive a car or a truck, or take a train or bus – when designing and constructing new transportation projects. We implement the Complete Streets policy through a checklist, which evaluates projects against the policy. This assessment process helps us identify project improvements to balance the needs of all users.

The Complete Streets policy and program are key tools in implementing the PMP. As part of the Complete Streets review process, SDOT projects are evaluated against the PMP recommendations,

and PMP implementation is folded into larger project scopes where possible. In fact, many of the corridor projects funded by the Levy to Move Seattle reflect recommendations from the 2009 PMP in their scope assumptions and baseline cost estimates.

## Right-of-Way Improvements Manual

The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual (ROWIM) provides design guidance to property owners, developers, architects, landscape architects, and engineers involved with the design, permitting, and construction of improvements to Seattle’s rights-of-way. The ROWIM attempts to balance the access and mobility needs of everyone who uses the right-of-way.

The manual outlines procedures and design criteria to address the critical balance among safety, the preservation and maintenance of roadway infrastructure and utility services, context-sensitive design, and preserving our environment.

The 2016 update of the ROWIM will provide specific design guidance for a wide array of pedestrian-related infrastructure. Much of this design guidance stems directly from the recommendations provided in the “Pedestrian Toolbox,” developed as part of the 2009 PMP. Pedestrian design elements that will be included in the updated ROWIM include (but are not limited to):

- Specify minimum sidewalk widths (including frontage zone, pedestrian clear zone and furnishing/landscape zone) for various street types
- Details on desired turning radii at corners to improve pedestrian safety at intersections by slowing turning vehicles
- Guidance on the provision and design of pedestrian facilities at intersections including crossing islands, curb bulbs, raised crosswalks, and raised intersections

- Guidelines for providing new low-cost walkways on non-arterial streets
- Improved guidance on complying with the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA), by offering more clarity on how Seattle applies federal design guidance

Because the ROWIM will provide detailed design guidance for new pedestrian infrastructure, the PMP intentionally does not include engineering-level design guidelines or standards. Rather, the implementing strategies and actions outlined in this Plan focus on the actions, policies, and programs needed to improve pedestrian conditions in high priority locations, and throughout the city.



