



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Seattle Transportation

Seattle
Freight
Mobility
Advisory
Committee

May 14, 2007

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Re: FMAC COMMENTS to the DRAFT BICYCLE MASTER PLAN released Apr-07

Dear Mr. Lagerwey,

Following are comments and recommendations from the FMAC related to the Draft Bicycle Master Plan as presented to the FMAC on April 17, 2007.

1. **ENCOURAGEMENT:** Bicycle use is not an option for the freight haulers represented by the Freight Mobility Advisory Committee (FMAC). Bicycling, however, reduces the number of vehicles vying for room on the city's roadways, is a mode of transportation that is healthy for the participant and the air quality of our city. For these reasons bicycling is to be encouraged and the FMAC is pleased to be included in the dialogue to improve conditions for bicycling and bicyclists in the City of Seattle contemplated by the Draft Bicycle Master Plan (BMP).

Sightline Institute of Seattle (formerly Northwest Environment Watch) has a weblog series on bicycle riding in Seattle. The Institute recently cited a Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA) survey of 900 bicyclists in the Portland area done in 2004 (entitled "Blueprint for Better Biking"). The Institute's referenced the study to point out that only 1% of bicycle riders are "strong and fearless" and willing to ride on any road. The next group, 7% of bicyclists, is comprised of "enthused and confident cyclists who ride regularly on most types of bikeways", but 60% of bicycle riders "require low-traffic and no-traffic routes to feel safe and ride more often." To that end the BTA recommendations to policy makers in the Portland-area in order to encourage increased ridership focuses on "a comprehensive network of connected bikeways... (of) low-traffic bicycle streets (that) will link to off-street or higher traffic, longer-distance routes." FMAC encourages the City of Seattle to consider the findings of this survey and to concentrate its bicycle investment funds in low-traffic and no-traffic routes for bicyclists in the Seattle-area as well.

2. **SAFETY:** In every instance the comments made here by the FMAC are guided by concerns for the safety of the bicycling community around the larger freight hauling conveyances that the FMAC represents.

Seattle Freight Program Websites: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/freight.htm>
<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/fmac.htm>



The Seattle Freight
Mobility Advisory
Committee consists
of representatives from
various agencies and
industry partners
in Seattle.

A. Arterials: The FMAC notes that a good many of the proposed bicycle facilities/bike lanes contemplated by the BMP are along arterials. This concerns the FMAC. The BMP does not provide information about the relative safety of arterial vs. non-arterial routes for bicyclists, but in light of the BTA's survey it's clear that a majority of bicyclists do not feel safe riding on these roadways. FMAC believes that an evaluation should be conducted that helps identify the most dangerous locations and/or conditions of current bike facilities. Bicycle network investments can then be made to either improve/remove the identified conditions or to re-route away from those locations. While police incidents have been relied upon in the past, FMAC encourages SDOT to review Fire Department incident reports which have proven to be more abundant on the topic of responding to bicycle incidents not resulting in hospitalization.

B. Speed disparity: The disparity of speeds between freight hauling vehicles along Seattle's arterials and Major Truck Streets and bicyclists can sometimes result in bicyclists finding themselves "pulled" toward passing vehicles as/after a freight hauler passes. This is of particular concern for younger and smaller bicyclists. The FMAC is pleased to see that the BMP includes increased emphasis on education for bicyclists and the "rules of the road" but wonders if the intent is to permit/encourage all riders, including children, to use all bike facilities, including "on roadway" facilities along Major Truck Streets and arterials. FMAC believes that there is more danger in use of these facilities and that young and novice bicyclists should actually be discouraged from their use.

C. Visibility: Truck tractors have limited visibility for articles close to the ground. The ability of a bicyclist to "move into" a truck "impact zone" unseen by the driver is especially troubling. This manifests itself most frequently when bicyclists move up the right side of roadways at stop locations, essentially becoming a new obstacle during the time the truck was still. Also bicyclists will sometimes inadvertently move into the ROW while trucks are swinging wide in order to make turns. Night-time and rainy weather conditions, typical of our city for half of the year, make bicyclists especially difficult to see by truckers raised above automobile/bicycle levels. To prevent these dangers, bicyclists should be discouraged from riding on roadways where large freight haulers will predictably travel (Major Truck Streets and arterials). Rather than signing a Major Truck Street to "Share the Road with Bicycles" (BMP map comment 77), signage along these streets should instead direct bicyclists to the nearest bike facility away from these roadways.

3. **BRIDGES**: The City of Seattle has a number of water bodies that divide our city. The "at grade" bridges that cross these waterways must therefore be shared by all modes of ground transportation. FMAC urges careful design of safe entrances and exits from our bridges, keeping bikes and pedestrians separate from motorized vehicles whenever possible. Of particular concern to the FMAC are the notes associated with the southern "exit" of bicyclists from the Aurora Bridge. The facilities described in BMP map comments 51 & 52 are considered exceedingly unsafe for bicyclists, from the FMAC perspective. Reconsideration of these facilities is strongly urged.
4. **MAJOR TRUCK STREETS**: There are a limited number of arterials in the City of Seattle designated as Major Truck Streets (see <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/freight.htm#majorTrucks> and the attendant map for specifics). There are additionally, a number of arterials of trucking significance that connect the Major Truck Streets. Because these routes facilitate freight, they tend to have a higher portion of large freight hauling trucks, especially within the two M&I Centers. The FMAC urges that bike facilities be avoided on Major Truck Streets (bike lanes & sharrows).

SDOT designates that all arterials be designed to accommodate the moving and

turning requirements of trucks. All arterials should therefore be viewed as having the potential for more freight related traffic. In instances where the bicycle network necessarily intersects these roadways, the FMAC should be consulted for their freight mobility expertise early in the design process, BEFORE these projects proceed to final design when input becomes more difficult to incorporate.

5. Comments along specific roadways follow:

A. Remove proposed new bike facilities from Major Truck Street roadways where separate facilities exist within 1-2 blocks. These include:

- i. W Nickerson from the Fremont Bridge to the Ballard Bridge (a parallel, multi-use facility exists 1-block north along W Ewing)
- ii. Westlake N from the Fremont Bridge to Valley St (a parallel, separated facility exists on the north side of Westlake)
- iii. Valley St (unless the 2-way Mercer St configuration is implemented) (a parallel, separated facility exists on the north side of Westlake)
- iv. Alaskan Way along the Central Waterfront (a parallel, separated facility exists on the north side of Alaskan)
- v. 6th Ave S from S Spokane to S Royal Brougham (a parallel, separated facility exists 1-block west on 5th S)
- vi. N 34th & N Northlake Pl (a parallel, separated facility exists for through bicycle travel, recognizing access to the Fremont Bridge is problematic in this area further review is required before imposing bike lanes on both sides of this roadway)

B. Move the climbing lane along Stoneway N between N 34th & Greenlake Way, 1-block east to Woodlawn Ave N.

C. Move the shared roadway along NW 77th (between 32nd NW and W Greenlake Dr) 1-block south to 75th NW, in order to eliminate the need for another stop light along 15th NW.

D. Remove the sharrows between Bell St & Clay Street along

- a) Elliott Ave (instead use the separate facility 1-block south on Alaskan), and
- b) Western Ave (instead use the designated sharrow 1-block north on 1st Ave) (reference BMP map comment 69).

6. DUWAMISH M&I CENTER: The surface roadways within the Duwamish M&I Center are/will be relied upon heavily by bicyclists living and working in West Seattle, Beacon Hill, Georgetown, South Park and southern destinations. Additionally, these roadways will become detour routes for extended periods of time during the construction phases of projects planned over the next 3-7 years including; East Marginal Way Grade Separation, Alaskan Way Viaduct, SR519, I-5 repaving, Spokane Street Viaduct expansion, Lander St Overpass, 1st S & 4th S repaving. Care should be taken to locate bike facilities on these roadways that maximize the safety and visibility of bicyclists, incorporating separation from freight movement as much as possible.

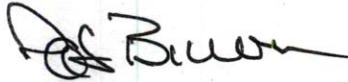
Examples might include moving the bike lane from the west side of East Marginal Way (from S Spokane to Royal Brougham) to the east side, where no freight turns would cross over the bike lane (BMP map comment 70), or reconsidering the sharrow

along 1st S (from East Marginal Way S to Royal Brougham) to a bike lane south of S Spokane (NOTE: care must be taken to consider minimum parking widths for truck tractors along this route however). Equally, care should be taken not to create bike facilities that adversely impact freight traffic flow through this area for which our regional economy depends so much.

7. **CONSTRUCTION PLANNING:** It has been suggested that the FMAC should have an opportunity to review all capital projects involving arterials at the beginning of the construction project planning phase so that bike or pedestrian accommodations can be analyzed against the needs of freight movement. FMAC welcomes that opportunity.

EDUCATION & UNDERSTANDING: The FMAC is very interested in the potential for incorporating the particular challenges of combining the freight & bicycle modes on our city roadways. Incorporation of this element in public outreach is very desirable from the FMAC's perspective - for both freight haulers to learn and become sensitive to, as well as the bicycling public.

Respectfully,



Pat Binion
Co-Chair



Peter Whitehead
Co-Chair

Cc: Greg Nichols, Mayor of Seattle
Jan Drago, Seattle City Council
Grace Crunican, Director SDOT
Ron Borowski, SDOT
Wayne Wentz, City Traffic Engineer
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