



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 4, 2013
To: Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board
From: Kevin O'Neill, ACIP, SDOT Policy & Planning Division
Subject: BMP Update – Performance Measures and Prioritization

Introduction

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information for the discussion at the March 6 SBAB meeting. At the meeting, staff will be presenting information on plan performance measures, and will begin a discussion on the overall prioritization framework for the plan. Information on both topics is summarized below.

Performance Measures

Over the summer and early fall, SDOT staff worked with the bicycle advisory board on an updated policy framework for the plan. This resulted in a broader policy framework that's organized around five goals pertaining to ridership, safety, connectivity, equity, and livability (see attachment). SBAB and community members have expressed interest in not just the goals and objectives, though, but performance measures, and specifically how or whether we set targets for achieving them (for example, the current Bicycle Master Plan has a goal of increasing ridership, and a target of tripling ridership between 2007 and 2017).

At the September, 2011 SBAB meeting, SDOT presented a list of potential performance measures for SBAB consideration. Since then, staff has done more evaluation of performance measures, and worked on defining potential data sources. Data availability (in the near term and the longer term) is central to be able to track performance measures over time. Another issue that pertains to setting targets has to do with how aspirational to be, particularly when it comes to whether or not to set targets based on project completion. One major issue there is that meeting any future target is dependent on future funding decisions made by the City Council (and future Council's).

The proposed approach to performance measures is to identify metrics for which data is available (or realistically could become available), and which helps track progress made on implementing the goals of the plan. The measures are intended to be outcome based (for example, ridership increase), rather than output based (miles of facilities built).



The ability to meet a time-bound metric such, such as build x miles of cycle tracks in y years, is dependent upon available resources, which may fluctuate year to year. The intent of the proposed measures is to identify the most important plan outcomes, so that investments are prioritized to meet these outcomes. For example, implementing a major arterial crossing or eliminating a barrier in the system may increase bicycle ridership more than building x new miles of facilities. This approach would focus on plan implementation being resource-constrained as opposed to time-constrained, with the focus being on tracking the most important outcomes of the plan.

At a briefing on the BMP update at the September 11 Transportation Committee, staff specifically raised the issue of aggressive near-term system completion performance measures (for example, build x miles of facilities in y years) relative to budget commitments. In response, Councilmember Rasmussen stated that, while he agreed that the plan should have measurable outcomes, he did not believe that it was appropriate for the BMP update to define specific system completion metrics (e.g., number of miles of cycle track miles to be completed per year), as the decision about what portion of system completion could be achieved in a given year should be part of the annual budget discussion (including the CIP).

A draft set of performance measures is attached (see matrix titled Bicycle Master Plan DRAFT Performance Measures). For each goal in the plan, one or more performance measures are identified (although one measure could certainly help advance more than one goal). In each goal, there are performance measures identified for which data is available, or could easily be available. There are also draft measures identified (in *italics*) that would might be desirable to measure (or there has been public or SBAB support for including), but that more work would have to be done to determine whether data could be developed to support this. For any performance measures, it is critical that data be available not only in the short term but in the longer term, so that progress can be tracked over time. The chart lists proposed performance measures, and then for each measure lists a “baseline” (the point at which SDOT would start collecting data), a desired trend and/or target, the data source, and other notes or issues that SDOT and SBAB should consider when finalizing this list for the plan update. Note that while it is fairly easy to establish desired trend lines for each measure (and this was the approach used in the performance measures established for the Pedestrian Master Plan), it would be more challenging to establish targets for many of these. The topic of performance measures will be the main discussion point at the March 6 SBAB meeting.

Prioritization

At the March 6 SBAB meeting staff will also begin the discussion with SBAB on how to prioritize BMP investments over time. This is a very important part of the plan update, and will likely take more than one meeting to discuss. To begin to frame the discussion, attached is another best practices white paper that has been developed by the consultant team on prioritization. The paper discussed both broad, policy-driven prioritization frameworks, and specific project evaluation criteria. A prioritization framework for the BMP update could include components of both, or just focus on project evaluation criteria.

The current BMP does not contain a prioritization framework, so developing one is an important component of the plan update.

Conclusion

At the March 6 SBAB meeting staff will present an updated proposed set of plan performance measures for discussion, and will begin the discussion on the plan prioritization framework. The latter topic will likely be dealt with in more depth at the April SBAB meeting.

Attachments

- BMP Updated Policy Framework (Vision, Goals, Objectives)
- Draft Performance Measures Matrix
- Best Practices White Paper on Prioritization