Chapter 3: Policy

FRAMEWORK

"In my view, the city can't make people ride a bike, nor can they make them ride safely, so the best the city can do is provide facilities which promote safe riding, which I think the plan does."

The BMP exists on a foundation of citywide planning policy, while its policy framework enhances the details and intent of past city plans. The city's primary policy document is the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. This document, in conjunction with an adopted Complete Streets policy and Climate Action Plan, provides the policy context for the BMP.

The Plan Vision, Goals and Objectives

The BMP is organized around an overall vision statement and five goals. Six objectives summarize how the goals will be achieved.

Vision

"Riding a bicycle is a comfortable and integral part of daily life in Seattle for people of all ages and abilities."

The vision statement for the plan expresses the desired "end state," or result, of implementing the plan. Riding a bicycle in Seattle will be safe, convenient and an attractive travel option for a large number of people. Bicycle infrastructure will be part of the overall urban framework and built environment of the city. Emphasis is placed on planning, designing and building bicycle facilities that will be used by a broad range of people throughout the city.

Goals

The vision statement is supported by five main goals that articulate what the plan seeks to achieve over time in order to meet the vision. The goals also set the basis for the plan's performance measures and prioritization criteria, which are outlined in Chapter 7. The performance measures will help track progress in meeting the goals of the plan as it is implemented over time, and the prioritization framework will guide which projects and programs are implemented in the near-term, mid-term, and long-term.

Ridership: Increase the amount and mode share of bicycling in Seattle for all trip purposes.
Getting more people to use a particular travel mode is one of the main purposes of this modal master plan. The BMP seeks to increase both the total number of bicycle riders in the city and the total percentage of all trips made using a bicycle. This means increasing not only commuting and recreational rides, but all trips around the city, including short trips to the local store, neighborhood business district, schools or other community facilities, and for connections to transit.

Safety: Improve safety for bicycle riders.
Safety is SDOT's most important responsibility. Bicyclists and pedestrians are particularly vulnerable users of the street system. Many of the types of facilities and design standards outlined in this plan enhance safety and increase predictability, not only for people riding bicycles, but also pedestrians and drivers of cars, trucks, and transit.

Connectivity: Create a bicycle network that connects to places that people want to go, and provides for a time-efficient travel option.
In order for a bicycle system to be heavily used, it has to be connected and get people conveniently to their destinations: work, shopping, school, transit stations, etc. This plan guides the creation of a bicycle network that is connected with safe, all ages and abilities bicycle facilities that are focused on relatively flat routes where possible, and that link to key destinations around the city.

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The Plan Vision, Goals, and Objectives 27
The organizing framework of the BMP is the Vision, Goals and Objectives.

Seattle Comprehensive Plan 30
The Seattle Comprehensive Plan provides policy guidance on how the city will accommodate the expected growth and future demands on transportation infrastructure.

Complete Streets 31
Seattle has a policy on complete streets that requires all new city transportation improvements to provide appropriate accommodation to all roadway users.

Climate Action Plan 32
Active transportation will play a role in helping to achieve Seattle's goal to become carbon neutral by 2050.

Bicycle commuter on 4th Avenue and Spring Street.

Equity: Provide equal bicycling access for all through public engagement, program delivery, and capital investment.

This goal emphasizes the importance of making investments throughout the city and connecting every neighborhood. It also promotes the idea that people in every neighborhood should have a voice in helping to design their communities' best bicycle facilities.

Livability: Build vibrant and healthy communities by creating a welcoming environment for bicycle riding.

This goal highlights the broader benefits of building a connected, safe bicycling network, which include increasing public health and community vitality.

Objectives

The plan identifies six principle objectives that summarize how the goals of the plan will be achieved. Chapters 4–7 go into more detail identifying specific strategies and actions for advancing these objectives.

Objective 1: Complete and maintain a safe, high-quality bicycle network of on-street and trail facilities throughout the city.

One of the most important outcomes of this plan is developing a safe, connected network of bicycle facilities. Chapter 4 outlines a future bicycle network that connects destinations within the city. The prioritization of the plan network is laid out in more detail in Chapter 7. Projects will generally be prioritized based on how they meet the goals of the plan (increasing ridership, safety, connectivity, etc.).

Objective 2: Integrate planning for bicycle facilities with all travel modes and complete streets principles.

Planning for bicycles cannot happen in a vacuum. The city's arterial street system has many modal demands: transit, freight, pedestrians, bicyclists, general-purpose traffic capacity, and on-street parking. All of these compete for space within the city's limited street right-of-way. As the city grows in the future, the city's streets will need to accommodate all users of the roadway to improve the mobility of people and goods in the safest and most efficient way possible.

Objective 3: Employ best practices and context sensitivity to design facilities for optimum levels of bicycling comfort.

This objective directs SDOT to stay current on changes in bicycle standards, design, programs, and other actions. It enables the city to use new bicycle design standards and facility types as they evolve. While the plan contains a glossary of bicycle facilities, this plan intentionally does not contain a full list of detailed design standards. These are better contained in the Seattle Right-of-Way Improvements Manual, where they can be more easily updated as best practices evolve. As the city updates the Right-of-Way Improvement Manual it should consider design standards incorporated in NACTO's Urban Bikeway Design Guide. Context sensitivity is important to ensure that bicycle facilities are designed and built taking into consideration the overall characteristics of the street, the adjoining land use types, and

Bicycle lane on 9th Avenue North.

other factors. This applies not only to bicycle corridor improvements, but end-of-trip facilities such as on-street bicycle corrals or other bicycle parking, storage, or maintenance needs.

Objective 4: Build leading-edge bicycle facilities, including on-street separated facilities, multi-use trails, and neighborhood greenways.

This plan focuses on neighborhood greenways (residential streets that are prioritized for bicycles and pedestrians) and facilities on arterials that are separated from traffic (cycle tracks and buffered bicycle lanes), as well as completing the city's multi-use trail system. These facilities will help develop a connected citywide network for people of all ages and abilities.

Objective 5: Update and apply a prioritization framework for bicycle investments throughout the city.

One of the most important aspects of each city modal plan is to develop a clear framework for how to prioritize investments. This plan has a 20-year time horizon, and will be implemented incrementally using a clear prioritization framework that is based on the overall goals of the plan. The specific criteria within the framework can be adjusted over time, but the plan provides the overall direction. Programmatic elements that focus on safety, educating all roadway users on the rules of the road, and encouraging people to ride bicycles will also be prioritized.

Objective 6: Identify and implement actions to support and promote bicycle riding.

In addition to developing bicycle facilities in streets and on trails, other actions are needed to support bicycling. These include designing and implementing end-of-trip facilities; ensuring that bicycling is well-coordinated with transit; implementing programs to enhance bicycle safety, use, and education; and developing a robust funding strategy. The Puget Sound Bike Share launch in 2014 will be a key program to help promote bicycle riding.

"Puget Sound Bike Share is a ***partnership*** of public and private organizations working to bring bike sharing to King County. Bike sharing is an ***innovative*** approach to urban mobility, combining the ***convenience*** and ***flexibility*** of a bicycle with the ***accessibility*** of public transportation.

puget sound bike share

A recently renovated segment of the Burke-Gilman Trail on the University of Washington Campus provides separate space for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Seattle Comprehensive Plan

The Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Toward a Sustainable Seattle, establishes the city's vision for land use, transportation, and growth management policy issues. The Plan is organized around a set of four core values:

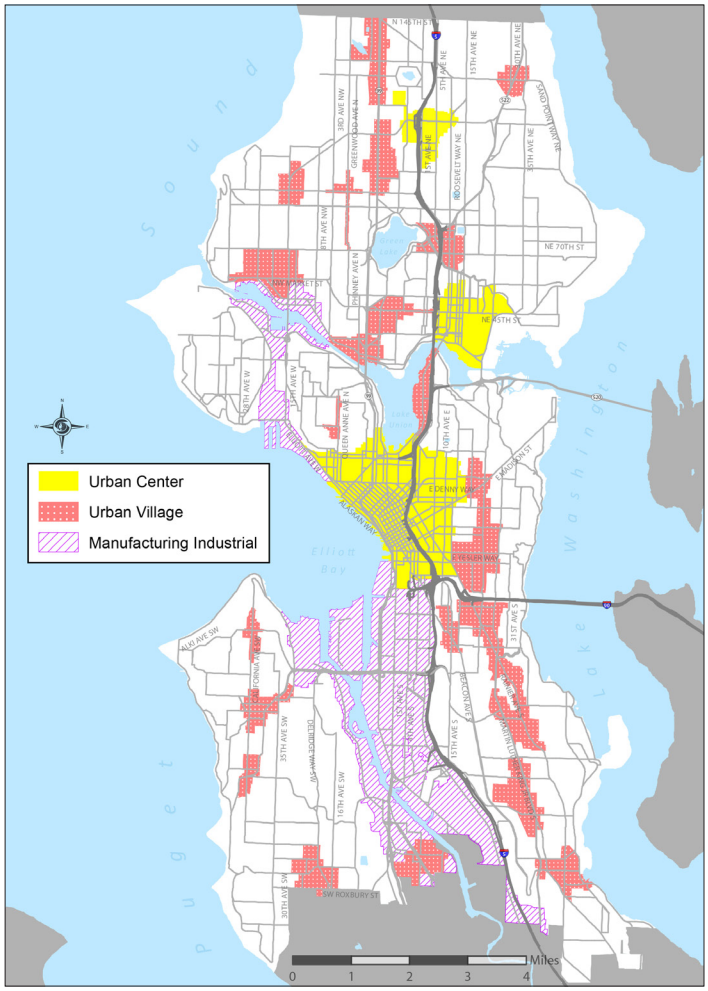
- Community
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Opportunity and Security
- Social Equity

With these core values in mind, one of the primary methods for accommodating expected growth is the plan's Urban Village Strategy, which identifies locations for increased residential and commercial density in parts of the city characterized by neighborhood business districts. The plan also includes six regional growth centers (also known as urban centers): Downtown, First Hill/Capitol Hill, Uptown/Queen Anne, South Lake Union, the University District, and Northgate. These areas are a focus of growth within the city and the region. Additionally, Seattle has two manufacturing/industrial centers. All of these centers are recognized in Vision 2040, the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) adopted regional growth plan. Map 3-1 shows the location of urban centers, urban villages, and manufacturing/industrial centers within Seattle.

Much of the policy direction in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan is designed to promote multimodal transportation options within and between urban centers and villages.

The overall policy direction in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan helps frame the more specific goals, policies, and strategies in other documents, including the BMP. The Transportation

Map 3-1: Seattle's Urban Centers, Urban Villages, and Manufacturing Industrial Centers



Element of the plan and the Transportation Strategic Plan contain the following goals and policies pertaining to bicycling:

TG15 Increase walking and bicycling to help achieve city transportation, environmental, community and public health goals.

TG16 Create and enhance safe, accessible, attractive and convenient street and trail networks that are desirable for walking and bicycling.

T34 Provide and maintain a direct and comprehensive bicycle network connecting urban centers, urban villages and other key locations. Provide continuous bicycle facilities and work to eliminate system gaps.

Other applicable goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element include:

TG18 Recognize that the primary transportation purpose of the arterial street system is to move people and goods, when making on-street parking decisions.

T39 Restrict on-street parking when necessary to address safety, operational or mobility problems. In urban centers and urban villages where such restrictions are being considered, the pedestrian environment and transit operations are of primary concern, but decisions should also balance the use of the street by high-occupancy vehicles; access to local businesses; control of parking spillover into residential areas; and truck access and loading.

Complete Streets

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, in 2007 the City Council adopted a "complete streets" policy, which states in part that:

- The city will plan for, design and construct all new city transportation improvement projects to provide appropriate accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all abilities, as well as freight and other motorists, while promoting the safe operation for all users; and
- The city will incorporate complete streets principles into SDOT's Strategic Plan; Seattle Transit Plan; Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans; Intelligent Transportation System Strategic Plan; and other SDOT plans, manual, rules, regulations and programs, as appropriate. Complete street improvements that are consistent with freight mobility, but also support other modes, may be considered on these streets

Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan, 2013 update adopted by the City Council, 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%, with a specific target of tripling the amount of bicycling. A key strategy in the plan to meet these goals is to implement new on- and off-street bicycle facilities and services to accommodate riders of all ages and abilities in order to increase the share of trips made by bicycle and thereby reducing vehicle miles traveled and GHG emissions. The technical report prepared in support of the Climate Action Plan noted that investments in bicycle facilities and services are highly cost effective opportunities to reduce GHG emissions.

The Climate Action Plan is implemented through related plans developed and executed across multiple departments, including the BMP. Consistent with the BMP, the Climate Action Plan's vision for transportation infrastructure and service includes:

- There is a bicycle facility within ¼ mile of every home in Seattle.
- Protected/buffered on-street bicycle lanes and greenways connect Urban Centers and Villages.

To realize the goals and vision, the Climate Action Plan highlights the importance of funding and implementing the city's modal plans, including the BMP, and highlights the following actions pertaining to bicycling:

Actions to be implemented by 2015

- Build bicycle lanes that are physically separated from traffic in the Center City.
- Expand on-street bicycle racks and facilitate provision of off-street bicycle parking and bike sharing.
- Implement bicycle intersection safety improvements on heavily traveled bicycle corridors.
- Consider a transportation modal hierarchy as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update in order to address greenhouse gas reductions, safety, mobility and funding priorities.

Actions to be implemented by 2030

- Develop a comprehensive, connected network of safe and comfortable bicycle facilities to, from and within the Center City and Urban Villages.
- Develop a citywide network of neighborhood greenways that prioritize walking and bicycling on residential streets.

Workers installing a cycle track (protected bicycle lane).

MARKET ST
NO TURN ON
CHASE
THANKS FOR RIDING!