



November 3, 2021

Re: Eastlake RapidRide J Bike Lanes

To: Darrell Bulmer & Team

Thank you for the detailed RapidRide J Project update in our October Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB) meeting and for your hard work on this project. SBAB is very excited about the inclusion of protected bike lanes and the overall improved accessibility on Eastlake Ave for the RapidRide J line.

SBAB would like to emphasize a few specific points in writing below as a follow up to our October 6th conversation.

Eastlake is a Critical Connection Through the City

Currently, there is not a direct biking route through Eastlake that is protected and suitable for people of all ages and abilities. The closest protected route between the north side of the cut and downtown is the Fremont Bridge using the Westlake Cycle Track – a significant detour for anyone trying to access locations near the University Bridge and in Eastlake.

The addition of fully protected bike lanes along the entire Eastlake corridor will fill an essential gap in Seattle’s bike network and allow residents to travel through and to Eastlake via bike to meet their daily needs – whether that is going to work, school, running errands, attending appointments, and more. Eastlake Avenue has been on the Seattle’s Bicycle Master Plan project list for many years; it is listed as “cycle track (protected bicycle lanes)” and as a corridor on the Regional Bicycle Network map (page 50).

As a critical connection through a high pressure corridor, SBAB would like to see the highest feasible level of protection possible for the proposed bike facility. Paint and post are not enough and will lead to the bike lanes being used as pick up and drop and for deliveries as we have seen on similar facilities throughout the city. A bike lane that has cars parked in it on a regular basis fails to meet the standard of an all ages and ability facility.

Maintain Protection on the Weakest Block

A bike lane is only as safe as its weakest block. As this design stands, the 1.5 blocks between Harvard and the bridge only have paint protecting people on bikes from cars. Seattle has been trending in the wrong direction on Vision Zero goals, with increasing fatalities – 26 in 2019 and 24 in 2020 ([The Urbanist](#)). As of September 2021, Seattle had already seen 21 fatalities. According to [the Urbanist](#), “based on the trends

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The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board shall advise the City Council, the Mayor, and all departments and offices of the city on matters related to bicycling, and the impact which actions by the city may have upon bicycling; and shall have the opportunity to contribute to all aspects of the city’s planning processes insofar as they relate to bicycling.

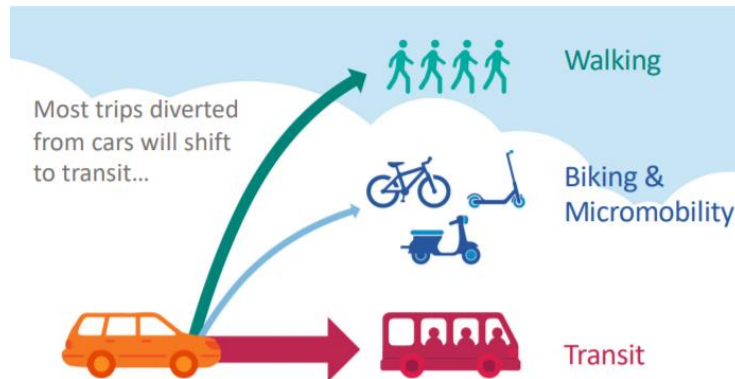
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identified in the [9/7/21 Vision Zero] presentation, Seattle could see 35 people lose their lives by December 31st". This corridor is a critical connection for people getting where they need to go in the city, and it needs to be comfortable for people of all ages and abilities.

We are happy to see that the sections south of Harvard have stronger protection, including a wider barrier, double white lines, and posts. SBAB calls on the project team to maintain the same level of protection on the 1.5 blocks between Harvard and the bridge that the southern portion of Eastlake receives. If you are unable to create a 3-foot buffer between the traffic lane and bike lane, we urge you to bring in creative solutions to approach this constrained corridor, such as:

- Raising the pavement to sidewalk height to restrict people driving from veering into the bike lane or driving over flex posts
- Painting the entire bike lane green to clearly indicate to people driving that it is designated for people on bikes
- Using [armadillo bumps](#) to separate the bike lane from the vehicle lane (if raised pavement is not an option)



Consider the City's Climate Action Plan Goals

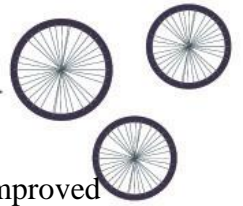
Lastly, while we understand that this section of the corridor is a complex environment, we would like to urge the project team to re-examine the need for two travel lanes in both directions on this 1 block stretch.

Seattle is far from reaching its Climate Action Plan goals, which identify that the city needs an 83% reduction in road transportation to reach our 2030 climate goals. Personal vehicles alone account for 51% of all emissions. As this design stands, it is prioritizing people driving single occupancy vehicles when the city needs to be prioritizing alternative modes of transportation to reach our climate goals.

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The RapidRide J Project will bring more reliable travel times and an improved experience to riders, which has the potential to shift trips away from single occupancy vehicles and onto transit. In addition, the recent opening of 3 new light rail stations will allow more people to utilize high-capacity transit options instead of personal vehicles. According to a [September 2021 update](#) on the Seattle Climate Action Plan, “In addition to generating direct emissions reductions, investments to improve and expand transit will play an outsized role in enabling many other emissions reduction strategies. Most trips diverted away from a car by other strategies are projected to shift to transit.” Providing safe biking infrastructure is an effective way to decarbonize people’s “last mile” travel to and from mass transit.

We appreciate all your hard work and thoughtful design on this project thus far and look forward to the next design milestone.

Sincerely,
The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board

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