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February 3, 2017

To: Eric Tweit
One Center City Project

Re: **Center City Basic Bike Network**

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board strongly supports the implementation of a Center City “basic bike network”, as has been proposed by the Cascade Bike Club and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways (see attached handout). A connected network of protected routes to bike is an essential element of solving downtown mobility challenges, increasing bike mode share, and meeting City goals and strategies. This is a priority of the BMP, as stated in the adopted 2014 Bike Master Plan (page 104):

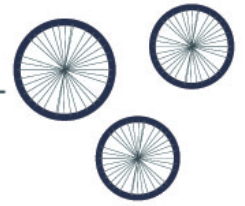
"Completing high-demand segments of the Citywide Network should be a near-term priority. The area in the city with the highest overall demand, based on residential and employment densities, is the Center City area (Downtown Seattle and surrounding neighborhoods such as South Lake Union and Capitol Hill). Much of the Downtown core currently lacks high quality bicycle facilities. A near-term priority for the arterial cycle track (protected bicycle lane) network should be to implement facilities within Downtown, and the creation of safe, high-quality connections to the Center City."

We commend SDOT for moving ahead with several key bike infrastructure improvements downtown such as the extension of the 2nd Avenue protected bike lane (PBL) both north and south, and new PBLs on 7th and 9th Avenue. But, there has unfortunately been a major delay in defining a connected network of PBLs downtown and implementing that network. We understand a factor in the delay has been ensuring such a bike network is consistent with many other development and improvements downtown and that the One Center City project was intended to make that coordination happen.

Without a network of connected protected bike facilities, bicyclists will remain the most exposed, at-risk users of the road. Seattle has invested in progressive bike facilities, but because they are often disconnected, they are limited in their impact on traveler safety. To get to Seattle’s new Protected Bike Lanes and neighborhood greenways on Westlake or Roosevelt, in Columbia City or West Seattle, bike riders must brave many of the more dangerous roads in Eastlake, First Hill, SoDo, and more. These gaps between Seattle’s promising bike facilities pose a threat to every rider and set the city back from its Vision Zero goals.

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 planing processes insofar as they relate to bicycling.

- City Council
Resolution 25534



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Other cities that have implemented a basic bike network have seen substantial returns on investment, with increases in bike mode share and greater diversity of riders. Establishing this momentum is of great importance in Seattle's downtown, where space is constrained and room for expansion limited. Seattle needs to create further modal shifts away from single-occupancy vehicles now for the sake of space and growth, as well as to be consistent with City policies and plans. A greater mode share for transit and pairing biking with transit can be part of this shift. Converting those on the fence about riding bikes into regular commuters and riders would be an enormous boon toward this goal. Studies have indicated there is a large population who would bike if they considered it safe to do so. Too many are not comfortable riding at present.

Moreover, this basic or "pilot" network would provide valuable data and feedback about what works and what needs adjustment. When planning Seattle's multi-modal future, SDOT and the One Center City project would benefit from as much information as possible, but the limited bike data today hamper the SDOT's ability to make an informed plan.

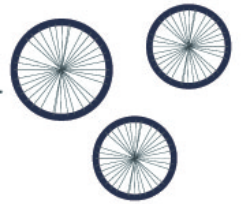
Significantly, the 2nd Avenue PBL started out as a "pilot" project and was constructed and implemented in a matter of months. Implementation of a basic bike network does not have to take many years. Adjustments and refinements to such "pilot" projects which are part of a basic bike network can occur following implementation, as has happened with the 2nd Avenue PBL.

Accordingly, the Seattle Bike Advisory Board is asking SDOT to do the following:

- 1) Define and endorse a City Center basic bike network as a part of the early, "near-term" recommendations of the One Center City Plan, consistent with the BMP;
- 2) Prioritize and implement a complete City Center basic bike network by the end of 2019, at the latest;
- 3) Use a combination of SDOT capital funds, Move Seattle levy funds, and other grants/funds (as potential dollars available from elimination of Bike Share) to implement the network;
- 4) The following elements of a full City Center connected network, and connections to surrounding areas, not currently defined by SDOT, should be prioritized: protected bike lanes (PBLs) on Pike/Pine to provide a safe and critical connection of Downtown with Capitol Hill; PBLs on either 4th and/or 5th

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Avenue to replace the currently unsafe bike lane and sharrows on 4th; a safe connection from the 2nd Avenue PBL south to the International District, the future Dearborn PBL, and eventually Rainier Valley and South Seattle; and a safe connection from the 2nd Avenue PBL to Alaskan Way and future PBL's on Alaskan Way S and East Marginal Way S to SoDo and West Seattle.

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board believes that the immediate boons to safety and connectivity, and the serious delays to date, warrant fast action. We encourage SDOT and the One Center City project to support a City Center basic bike network for a progressive Seattle.

Sincerely,



Steve Kennedy
Co-Chair



Adam Bartz
Co-Chair



Don Brubeck
Secretary

Cc: Scott Kubly, SDOT
Diane Wiatr, SDOT
Meghan Shepard, SDOT
Darby Watson, SDOT
Sandra "Sam" Woods, SDOT
Dawn Schellenberg, SDOT
Kevin Shively, Mayor's office
City Council Transportation & Sustainability Committee
One Center City Advisory Committee
Kelsey Mesher, Cascade Bicycle Club
Blake Trask, Cascade Bicycle Club
Gordon Padelford, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

Attachment:

Bike network sheet from Cascade Bicycle Club & Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

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