



Amanda Barnett, Co-Chair
Casey Gifford, Co-Chair
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Steve Kennedy, Vice Chair
Puja Shaw, Secretary
Mitch Brown
Rich Brown
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Alexander Lew
Claudia Lewis
Sarah Margeson
Emily Paine

May 3, 2018

To: Rachel Acosta, Seattle Parks and Recreation Board of Park Commissioners
Christopher Williams, Seattle Parks and Recreation Interim Superintendent
Goran Sparrman, SDOT Interim Director

Re: **Seattle Parks Proposed e-Bikes on Multi-Use Trails Pilot Project**

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board offers these advisory comments on the proposed Multi-Use Trails Pilot Project that is before the Board of Commissioners.

Pedal assist e-bikes should be permitted on the multi-use trails, consistent with the new state law.

Surveys show that people are substituting e-bikes for cars. Allowing e-bikes on Seattle's multi-use trails is a positive step that Seattle Parks can take to meet obligations of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, Climate Plan, and Bicycle Master Plan.

We hear complaints that some regular pedal bike riders exceed 20 miles per hour (mph) on trails, startling other trail users. We agree that 15 mph is a reasonable speed limit for all trail users. Pedal bikes and some classes of e-bikes can go faster than 15 mph. Similarly, some cars can go over 120 mph; drivers of those cars are required to conform to much lower speed limits in school zones, and most do, thanks to education and enforcement. The type or class of bike or vehicle is not the problem. The behavior of the driver or rider or pedestrian is the concern. We urge you to regulate the behavior, not the type or class of bike.

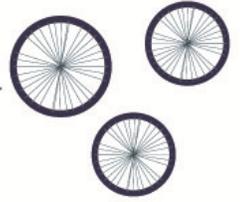
Banning e-bikes would mean banning a high percentage of bikes used for family biking. Cyclists all over this city travel at very low speeds to get their kids to school, go to the park, shop for groceries, visit the library, access community centers, etc. For many parents, not having the option of using on a paved trail or sidewalk would mean forgoing the trip by bike or feeling like they are putting their children at risk.

E-bike riders, when given the choice of a trail with a small speed and weight differential to other trail users, or an arterial or bridge with a huge speed and weight differential to other road users, should be allowed to use trails for their safety.

The concerns about safety for pedestrians from e-bikes seem based upon fear of change, instead of upon actual experience and data. As noted in the briefing documents, people are

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~ City Council
Resolution 25534



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already using pedal assist e-bikes on our multi-use trails. Pedestrians and non-e-bike riders are being killed and seriously injured by people driving cars and trucks, NOT by people riding e-bikes. More than 30,000 people were killed in car and truck crashes in the US last year. The number killed or seriously injured by people riding bikes on trails is too low to be recorded in annual public health statistics.

Changes are necessary to align all Seattle agency regulations with State law and with other jurisdictions, so that trail users will have a seamless set of requirements as they go from King County to SDOT to Parks to UW to Port of Seattle trails, all in one ride.

We advise Seattle Parks and SDOT to focus on education for trail users to get all users to co-exist safely under a well-understood code of conduct.

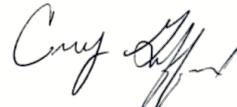
Seattle Parks and SDOT should also focus resources upon reducing the large backlog of trail maintenance needs, and remedying the lack of consistency in trail markings, signage, bollards and street crossings. The poor trail conditions documented in SDOT's 2016 *Seattle Trails Upgrade Plan* create greater safety hazards than the e-bike riders who are already using our trails.

Sincerely,

SBAB



Amanda Barnett
Co-Chair



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Steve Kennedy
Vice Chair



Adam Bartz
Vice Chair



Puja Shaw
Secretary

Cc: Mayor Jenny Durkan
Ahmed Darrat, Transportation Policy Advisor
Mike O'Brien, Rob Johnson, Kshama Sawant, and Bruce Harrell; City Council
Serena Lehman, SDOT

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