



City of Seattle

Seattle Planning Commission

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September 9, 2016

Honorable Councilmember Mike O'Brien
Chair, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Seattle City Council
via e-mail

RE: Freight Master Plan

Dear Councilmember O'Brien,

The Planning Commission appreciates the opportunity to provide this letter in support of Seattle's first Freight Master Plan (FMP). The efficient movement of goods through the local, regional, and international freight network is more important than ever given increasing pressures on the street network from our growing population and vibrant economy. This plan recognizes and addresses the unique characteristics, needs, and impacts of freight mobility as Seattle continues to grow.

As the stewards of the City's Comprehensive Plan, we have been consistent supporters of proactive planning that considers the inter-relationship between land use and transportation. **The Planning Commission applauds the leadership of the Seattle Department of Transportation in development of the FMP's vision, goals, and freight network.** We also commend the Department's efforts to engage the public and encourage critical feedback on the Plan's contents through ongoing meetings of an FMP advisory group, stakeholder interviews, and extensive community outreach. Adoption of the Freight Master Plan will join our other important modal plans in the City of Seattle's efforts to achieve a high-quality, integrated transportation system that meets the needs of all users.

Benefits of the Plan

The FMP provides a data-driven priority freight network for the reliable and safe movement of goods and delivery of products throughout the city, the region, and beyond. This network lays out a hierarchy of designated street types; provides connections between urban centers and villages and access to our important manufacturing and industrial centers; improves safety throughout the city; and reduces conflicts between multiple transportation modes. **The network also benefits Seattle's environment by considering climate change in planning for freight facilities and addressing the**

health effects on communities impacted by higher freight volumes. Ongoing innovations within the transportation industry toward more sustainable technologies and the use of alternative delivery modes that rely less upon fossil fuels will help reduce the cumulative impacts of freight movement throughout the city. We recommend additional research regarding these emerging technologies to inform this planning process.

Balancing all Modes

The Planning Commission strongly supports the FMP's attention to all transportation modes and to land use context. The plan's goals and guidelines call for **accommodating freight movement, rather than designing for the largest vehicles on the road**, except where absolutely necessary. This approach elevates the aim to provide safe mobility in constrained urban environments where pedestrians, cyclists, and cars are using the right-of-way, especially in and connecting urban centers and villages. It aligns the FMP with the other modal plans of the city and provides designers the flexibility to retrofit corridors to ensure safety and efficient movement for all users. This approach is also in keeping with the update to the Right of Way Improvements Manual, which the Planning Commission applauded for defining street types based on adjacent land use and design standards that balance the needs of all modes, including freight.

Data Driven Prioritization and Monitoring

The Planning Commission supports the FMP's prioritization of important investments in critical freight mobility infrastructure with a strategy and implementation plan. We applaud SDOT's plan to use **data and performance measures to monitor and update the Plan** based on where trucks are actually traveling and in relation to other ongoing transportation priorities.

We appreciate your interest in our feedback on the Freight Master Plan. The Planning Commission would be happy to discuss our recommendations and/or provide additional comments in support of this important document. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or our Interim Executive Director, Valerie Kinast, at 233-7911.

Sincerely,



Grace Kim, Chair
Seattle Planning Commission

cc:

Mayor Edward Murray
Seattle City Councilmembers
Scott Kubly, Tracy Krawczyk, Gabriela Vega, Ian Macek; Seattle Department of Transportation
Sam Assefa; Office of Planning and Community Development
Peter Lindsay; Council Central Staff