

October 23, 2023

To: Bruce Harrell, Mayor
City Council Transportation Committee
Greg Spotts, SDOT Director
STP Project Team

Re: Seattle Transportation Plan

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board urges you to take bold steps to assure that the new Seattle Transportation Plan (STP) can achieve its goals of bringing greater safety and equity to our streets, reducing carbon emissions and freeing up street spaces for transit, neighborhood gatherings and a more robust bicycle network.

The process to develop this draft STP involved thousands of citizens and many dozens of community groups. Their message to the City, outlined in the top 5 “actions”, is clear:

- Make more space for pedestrians
- Make it easier and safer to bike around Seattle
- Increase people-friendly streets
- Improve transit service and access
- Reallocate street space

Emission Reduction Metrics must form the core pillar of Transportation Investments

We applaud the strong aspirational language in the draft STP urging rapid and transformative changes to our current system. And we are encouraged by the ambitious goals set in the Climate Change Response Framework (reductions in internal combustion engine vehicles from 65% to 35% of trips and strong increases in transit, bicycles and walking by 2030). However, these goals must form the core pillar for evaluating the success and direction of Transportation investments in the City, not buried in the STP document. And there must be specific metrics tied to these goals and interim targets so we can alter our course if the expected results are not being achieved.

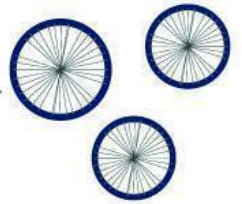
Evaluate projects on how effectively they reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled

For the STP to be more than a plan on a shelf, the Council and Mayor must provide bold leadership and support investments to help people drive less. They must also

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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.

- City Council
Resolution 25534



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set policy for how conflicts are resolved between transportation modes. We need additional bus only lanes on busy thoroughfares (or combined bus and freight designated lanes), and sometimes an arterial is the only solution for a protected bike path. How will the City make decisions to create those lanes when it will inevitably slow down traffic for single occupancy vehicles? We need the council and Mayor to back up the STP aspirations with hard decisions—decisions that will inevitably make some users unhappy.

Efficiency moving people via transit, walking, or other riding should be key

We also need to close the gaps in some of our most important bike corridors—gaps that may require crossing an already narrow bridge or other pinch point. Here too, without clear policy direction, making the decisions to narrow or remove SOV lanes or parking will be decided by outdated SDOT metrics of how quickly private vehicles move instead of how efficiently our streets move people using transit, walking, rolling or riding bicycles.

Funding for Maintenance and upkeep is essential

Lastly, we urge the Council to include budget dollars for Maintenance of existing and new transportation assets. Potholes kill cyclists and cause damage to vehicles. Lack of sidewalks and safe bikeways enroute to transit stops discourages uses of transit; and LED marquees and transit ambassadors improve efficiencies. All this requires funding for ongoing maintenance and upgrades.

Electrification of Vehicles is not a panacea for congestion and infrastructure costs

A final comment. We commend the City for making progress on electrifying our metro bus lines and city maintenance vehicles, and field testing the new eSwingo bike lane sweeper. Greater electrification in our transportation systems will help reduce our carbon footprint and clear the air. But let's remember, single-occupancy electric vehicles will do nothing to reduce congestion on our roadways, reduce the demand for parking or ease infrastructure costs in our rapidly growing region. Let's instead put our effort where it really matters—developing a more equitable allocation of the 27% of land area that is already in streets and right-of-way.

Sincerely,
 Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board

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