



# City of Seattle

## Seattle Planning Commission

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### Staff

Barb Wilson, Director  
  
Diana Canzoneri,  
Senior Policy Analyst  
  
Jesseca Brand, Planning &  
Development Specialist

August 14, 2013

Peter Hahn, Director  
Seattle Department of Transportation  
PO Box 34996  
Seattle, WA 98124-4996

### RE: DRAFT Bicycle Master Plan

Dear Mr. Hahn,

The Planning Commission commends you and your staff on the June 2013 DRAFT Bicycle Master Plan (BMP). SDOT has done a tremendous amount of meaningful public outreach, and produced high quality materials that allowed for a thoughtful conversation on bicycling in the City. The diversity of public outreach opportunities, neighborhood forums and online maps, has allowed many voices to the table that contributed to a very good DRAFT plan. We would like to acknowledge the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board for their vital role in the creation of the BMP, and thank them for their detailed review of the current DRAFT. We will continue to track the development of the BMP throughout the update process and offer advice at the broader policy level. Below please find our thoughts on the direction of the DRAFT plan.

- **Build a bicycle network that makes riding a bicycle “a comfortable and integral part of Seattle life for all ages of riders”**

We support the DRAFT BMP and the vision it presents for the future of bicycling in the city. We agree that building a bicycle network that makes riding a bicycle “a comfortable and integral part of Seattle life for all ages of riders” is the right focus. This overarching vision supports Seattle’s progress toward reaching the multi-modal and climate goals set out in the comprehensive plan.

- **Integrate the Bicycle Master Plan with other modal plans and the Capital Investment Plan**

The Commission supports incorporating the BMP with the Transit Master Plan and the Pedestrian Master Plan. The direction that SDOT has taken in viewing these documents as interconnected is the right direction. As the Freight Master Plan is updated it will be important to ensure that these two plans are also well integrated. While there is a tremendous opportunity to interconnect these four modal plans, the Commission would also recommend better integrating the BMP with the Capital Improvement Plan.

The DRAFT BMP as outlined is incredibly ambitious, in terms of its scope and required investments. With over 450 miles of new or improved bicycle facilities planned, SDOT will need strong prioritization principles and program management to implement and leverage additional funding opportunities. Therefore, the Commission encourages including bicycle infrastructure and maintenance in the Capital Improvement Program. This technique has been used very successfully in other major metropolitan areas and would be a way to leverage and conserve limited resources.

- **Ridership will help realize the goals of safety, connectivity, equity and livability**

The Commission appreciates the measurement and criteria outlined in the DRAFT BMP. These measurements are effective tools to hold the program accountable to the goals outlined in the plan. The incorporation of interim goals would make this section even stronger by targeting incremental improvements that help achieve the overall goal. The DRAFT outlines 5 major goals – Ridership, Safety, Connectivity, Equity and Livability. We recommend that Ridership become the dominant goal in the plan because it will reflect the effectiveness of the other goals. Ridership is measurable and focuses on the vision of making biking more accessible for all ages and abilities. The Commission also recommends that the City begin a more robust measurement of mode share. By systematically documenting mode share, SDOT will have the metrics to benchmark and better plan for future investments.

- **Maintaining existing bicycle infrastructure is essential**

While we understand that new investments are a crucial piece of the plan and part of achieving the vision set forth, it is imperative to maintain both current and future bicycle infrastructure. The DRAFT BMP does not fully address the issue of current bicycle infrastructure maintenance. Specific attention is needed to improve those spots that are so badly deteriorated that the facilities may not be safe or provide connectivity. The Commission urges SDOT to fully fund the maintenance of bicycle infrastructure, because a poorly maintained system will discourage riders at every level. The Commission understands that SDOT records quality and accessibility of current bicycle infrastructure. Upgrading existing facilities that have deteriorated should be prioritized and balanced with the need to embark on new projects.

- **Outline separate goals and benchmarks for the Citywide Network and Local Connectors**

We recommend project prioritization be divided into two categories of bicycle infrastructure: Citywide Network and Local Connectors. The Citywide Network and Local Connectors serve different purposes, attract different riders, are designed differently, and achieve different goals. The Citywide Network serves as the backbone of the City's bicycle transportation grid. The Commission commends the current mapping of the citywide bicycle network to include connections not just from neighborhoods to downtown but within and between urban villages and transit communities as well. These connections will become even more important as there is continued growth in urban centers and transit communities. The Local Connectors serve neighborhood mobility and provide connections to the Citywide Network. Bicycle facilities that provide Local Connections are important contributors to neighborhood livability. These Local Connectors are typically located on streets that have lower traffic speed and volume than the Citywide Network, and are welcoming to bicyclists of all ages and abilities.

- **End-of-trip facilities are vitally important**

The Commission applauds the inclusion of end-of-trip facilities as a priority in the DRAFT BMP. Including these facilities in new commercial and residential projects is essential for rider experience and also contributes to ridership and mode share goals. However, the current residential

requirement of 1 bicycle parking space for 2 dwelling units may be inadequate to meet the demand for bicycle parking. We suggest SDOT conduct an analysis of the market demand for residential bicycle parking and we support an increase in the number of required parking spaces for bicycles in residential buildings. In commercial buildings the Commission supports including secure bicycle parking, lockers and showers to benefit bicycle commuters. The Commission also supports more on-street bicycle parking for short term use. For these short term spaces we suggest providing an up-to-date online inventory that is available to the public.

- **Adequate Resources for Full Implementation of the Plan**

The DRAFT BMP requires education and information programs, infrastructure maintenance, inventory tracking, design and coordination between several departments and mobility plans. The Commission has concerns about the adequacy of funding and staffing to implement these programs. To fully implement this Plan will require dedicated staff and a budget.

The Commission is very supportive of the DRAFT BMP and thankful to the Bicycle Advisory Board and SDOT staff for all of the hard work in pulling this together. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our initial thoughts and recommendations as you proceed with this effort. We are available to answer any questions or to provide clarification. You can contact me or call our Director, Barbara Wilson, at (206) 684-0431.

Sincerely,



David Cutler, Chair  
Seattle Planning Commission

cc: Mayor Michael McGinn  
Seattle City Councilmembers  
Darryl Smith, Ethan Raup, Alison Van Gorp, David Hiller; Mayor's Office  
Tracy Krawczyk, Kevin O'Neil, Sara Zora; SDOT  
Diane Sugimura, Marshall Foster; DPD  
Rick Hooper, Miriam Roskin; Office of Housing  
Norm Schwab, Council Central Staff  
Allegra Calder, Chair, Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD OF DISCLOSURES & RECUSALS:**

- Commissioner Josh Brower **recused** himself from discussion and action on this matter.
- Commissioner Amalia Leighton **recused** herself from the discussion and action on this matter.
- David Cutler disclosed that his employer, GGLO, works on projects that may be impacted by the Bicycle Master Plan.
- Commissioner Grace Kim disclosed that her firm, Schemata Workshop, works with Seattle Department of Transportation on bicycle planning.
- Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa disclosed that her firm the Underhill Company, has several Sound Transit projects and these projects may be impacted by the Bicycle Master Plan.
- Commissioner Colie Hough Beck disclosed that her firm HBB Landscape Architecture works on infrastructure projects that may be affected by the Bicycle Master Plan.
- Commissioner Matt Roewe disclosed that he works for Via Architecture and some of their projects may be affected by the Bicycle Master Plan.