

Open House #1 Summary

DRAFT – 8/18/2015

Overview

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is collecting input and conducting technical analysis to see where protected bike lanes could support a safer, more predictable traveling experience for people walking, biking and driving downtown.

SDOT hosted the first public open house for the Center City Bike Network project on July 21, 2015 from 5 to 7 PM at Town Hall Seattle. The purpose of the open house was to introduce the project to the public and learn the community's vision.

By the numbers...

114 people signed in at the event.

351 comments were submitted through various open house activities and online.

Meeting goals

- Share project vision and project background
- Develop community ownership and engagement with the project
- Share the criteria and tools SDOT will use to evaluate corridors
- Gather public input on evaluation criteria, vision for safer and more predictable travel and potential challenges and opportunities for individual corridors

Activities

At the event, attendees were able to:

- View a series of display boards featuring information on project goals, unique needs of the project area, the evaluation criteria and other Center City initiatives
- Meet and discuss the project one-on-one with members of the project team
- Watch a project overview presentation
- Provide input in various ways including:
 - Writing a vision for the project on the vision wall
 - Marking on large project area maps
 - Writing topic-specific feedback on flip charts
 - Discuss information one-on-one with project team members
 - Completing the written or online comment form

The display boards, presentation and comment form were also made available on the project website for those unable to attend in person.

Meeting notifications

SDOT used the following tools to publicize the open house:

- Delivered mailer to over 40,000 residents and businesses in the project area
- Sent invitations/calendar/blog post requests to 22 organizations such as Seattle Greenways and Crosscut

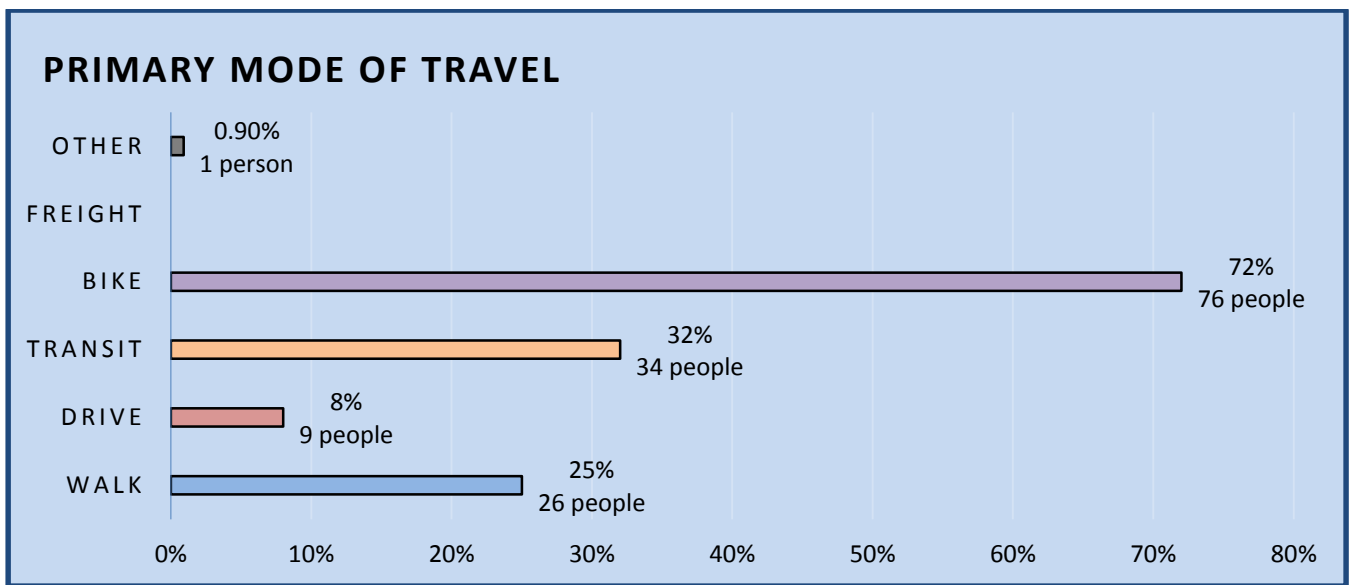
- Encouraged project Sounding Board members to share with their networks
- Posted to SDOT blog and Twitter
- Emailed announcement to 68-person listserv
- Announced on project website
- Posted translated ads on Spanish- and Chinese-language news websites: La Raza NW, Seattle Chinese Times and Seattle Chinese Post

Meeting attendee demographics

How commenters travel downtown

The comment form asked commenters: “Please check how you primarily travel downtown.” Some commenters checked multiple boxes and thus percentages add to greater than 100 percent.

The most people (72 percent) identified biking as their primary mode of travel, followed by transit (32 percent) and walking (25 percent).

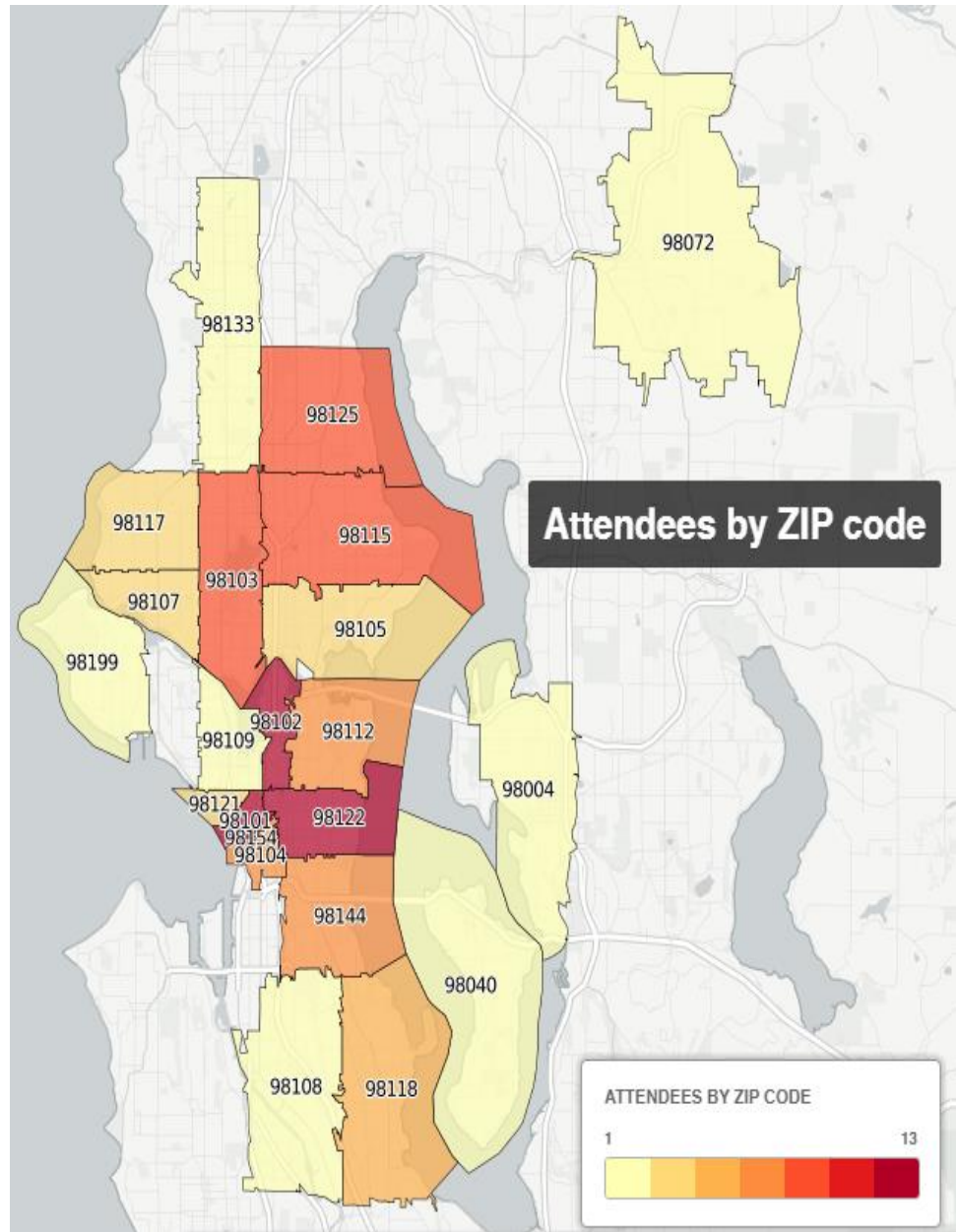


Where attendees live or work

A total of 93 open house attendees provided their ZIP code within the open house sign-in sheet. The heat map to the right shows where attendees live or work.

Within the table below, ZIP codes shared by fewer than 5 attendees are shown in "other."

Zip Code	Quantity
98101	13
98122	10
98102	8
98103	6
98115	6
98125	6
98104	5
98112	5
98144	5
Other	29



Comment summary

Key findings

- Safety and user conflicts were primary concerns. Many commenters felt the bike network would improve safety by increasing predictability in the corridor, separating modes of travel and keeping people on bikes away from traffic.
- Many commenters were not satisfied with the current travel options in the Center City and were supportive a bike network.

Comment process

The public was able to provide input in the following ways:

- Written comment forms at the open house (31 comments received)

- Online comment form available on the project website from Jul. 22 to Aug. 4, 2015 (81 comments received)
- Vision board exercise (61 comments received)
- Center City roll plot map activity (150 comments received)
- Second Avenue Protected Bike Lane and project evaluation criteria flip charts (28 comments received)

Comment analysis

Project staff transcribed all written comments and categorized each open-ended answer by theme. Key themes that arose across all feedback methods were safety, connections, mode conflicts and the Second Avenue Protected Bike Lane. The key themes are described below and verbatim comments from the vision board, map and flip chart activities are provided in the appendices.

Safety

Many commenters expressed concerns about safety when travelling through the Center City area. Respondents identified protected bike lanes and the Center City Bike Network as an opportunity to improve safety for all users travelling through the project area.

Representative comments:

“My biggest concerns are safety, accessibility, and mobility, in that order. We need to do a MUCH better job of preventing conflicts with motor vehicles, which can be done through limiting movements, speeds, points of conflicts, and/or targeting areas where we can reduce or completely eliminate motor vehicle access and give those areas to people walking and biking.”

“Safety, convenience, predictability, enforcement. When I walk I frequently see drivers run red lights, cutting me off in the crosswalk, and I have seen drivers turn left illegally on 2nd Avenue w/ the cyclists.”

“Riding bikes downtown is often scary, especially with kids, as a driver and as a bike rider.”

Connections

A number of commenters, particularly people who bike, raised questions and concerns about how protected bike lanes would connect to other parts of the city.

Representative comments:

“Desperately need PBLs downtown that connect people who bike downtown to lower Queen Anne, Fremont, Pike/Pine and Sodo.”

“Having a better connected downtown would be such an amazing step toward Seattle becoming a truly international and green city.”

“Prioritize Pike, 2nd Ave, Westlake connection, and Dearborn PBLs. Whatever you do CONNECT downtown to the rest of the good bike infrastructure that is emerging just beyond. Don't leave riders having to bridge a gnarly traffic gap. Build big.”

Mode conflicts

A number of commenters expressed concern about conflicts between the different modes on Center City streets.

Representative comments:

“When I am on the footpath (walk/bike), I don’t have an indication when cars are exiting a parking garage. It will be good to have (mandatory) mirrors to help the drivers as well as pedestrians/bikes to see each other.”

“Bicyclists simply don't stop at signed intersections, they go the wrong way on one-way streets, they blow through crosswalks and this all happens more often than not. As a pedestrian or a driver, I have to assume that a bike will pay no attention to traffic regulations.”

“When I walk I frequently see drivers run red lights, cutting me off in the crosswalk, and I have seen drivers turn left illegally on 2nd Avenue w/ the cyclists.”

Second Avenue Protected Bike Lane

Commenters expressed support for the existing Second Avenue Protected Bike Lane as well as concerns.

Representative comments:

“2nd Ave is a great start to safer biking but needs to be implemented on a much larger scale.”

“Right turns (unrestricted) problematic—car/bike conflict.”

“Red [lights] are hard to see.”

Appendix A: Vision board comments

Open house attendees were able to provide feedback via the “vision board” (pictured below). They were asked: what is your vision for a more vibrant city and safer traveling experience for people walking, biking and driving downtown? Verbatim responses are categorized below:



Open house vision board activity

Safety

- Less stress for all road users—prioritize safety for people biking and walking
- Pedestrians can cross the street without cars turning at the same time—safety!
- Safe streets in a way that encourages people currently afraid to ride a bike to feel more confident to try
- Focus on safe and plentiful non-car options
- Center city 20 mph: “twenty is plenty”
- Everyone arriving safely at their destination regardless of travel mode
- Safety By design
- Safety In number of pedestrians/bikes
- Safety: Reduced speeds
- Walk around town without the need for constant vigilance
- Network of PBLs Downtown to north, south, east
- Bike separate from cars (and car doors) with room for faster bikes to safely get around me
- Bikes and cars 100% separate
- Plenty of bike share, safer streets for use them

All ages and abilities

- I can bike my son to daycare downtown
- Safe enough for a kid to ride/walk

- 20 years from now, when I'm 89, I'll still be able to bike everywhere!
- An 8 year old can bike to anywhere in the city
- Everyone feels safe on the roads. Kids, elderly, parents, etc...
- Kids and elderly being able to walk/bike safely everyday
- All people (kids, adults, elderly) can walk or bike anywhere in the city without being afraid
- My young children and elderly parents can bike safely to the awesome downtown library!

Balancing travel modes

- Shared understanding of shared public way as a shared resource for all
- People primary focus. Cars only if they can play nicely
- Build a better rapid transit system so we have less cars on roads
- That all modes are considered in a holistic way. We must have cars, freight, bikes, buses, streetcars, and pedestrians!! Balance achieved!!

Street design

- More cycle tracks!!!
- More bike lanes
- DENMARK
- Streets for people, not cars
- Remove on-street parking to make room for separated bike facilities (there is plenty of car storage in off-street lots)
- More visually inviting streets with separated bike lanes
- Every neighborhood has greenways (more than just a few)

Activation

- Lunchtime summer concerts
- Dancing in the streets
- Better health—less pollution, more exercise, less stress (than driving)
- Many, many more bike racks outside and inside
- There should be bike stops [leaning rails]
- Events and activities downtown that encourage folks to get out via foot or bike
- Work/live balance; Bike/pedestrian community

Behavior change

- Slower speed limits for cars—enforced by camera
- No helmet law!
- Abolish helmet law!
- Helmet law for minors; not having any legal excuse
- You don't have to get hit by a car to need a helmet... KEEP the helmet law!
- Engage the DMV—educate the drivers

- Ticketing reckless cyclists/bike enforcement

Connections

- Bike routes are clear and connected
- Creative, cohesive bike system!
- Build better bike infrastructure to connect neighborhoods
- Protected bike lanes that connect the city's destinations and neighborhoods
- A bike freeway
- Bicycling through the missing Elliott Bay/Westlake connections and a protected [bike lane on] Union
- Safe and connected network of bike lanes! Connect to Capitol Hill!
- Connected bike facilities with seamless transitions

Appendix B: Flipchart comments

Attendees were also able to provide feedback via flipcharts located next to the Project Evaluation Criteria and Second Avenue Protected Bike Lane display boards. Verbatim comments are listed here:

Evaluation Criteria

- Safety: enforcement
- Business impacts on traffic
- Is it safe enough for an 8 year-old or new/inexperienced cyclist?
- You missed the streetcar tracks—Avoid
- Cafes on sidewalks restrict pedestrian traffic
- Need greater focus on all ages and abilities
- Where is income equity in families?
- Connections to neighborhood plans, like the First Hill Public Realm Action Plan
- Prioritize pedestrians and bikes at intersections
- Support for companies to institute bike commuting programs
- Just as important as actual safety is perceived safety
- Prioritize safety, connections and ridership
- Quantifying connectivity: how many homes, workplaces, shops, entertainment facilities can be reached using the network? What percentage of the total is that?
- High priority for Vision Zero goals with emphasis on PBL's and pedestrian safety
- Efficiency should be a core value. Don't put parks in the street
- Increase public education about multifunction transportation that we have to choose priorities on-street vehicle storage will have to yield to higher priorities, including better pedestrian facilities and green strips

Second Avenue Protected Bike Lane

- Red [lights] are hard to see
 - Make larger
 - Bike symbol blacks it out
 - String across lane
- Right turns (unrestricted) problematic—car/bike conflict
- Interested in accident numbers now compared to old bike lanes
- Is there any ongoing evaluation or diver education?
- Consider moving bikes and buses to third
- Make east/west connection at Bell/Blanchard rather than Pike/Pine
- Not clear where to enter and exit [bike lanes]
- All walk to make bike turn easier
- Could a bike counter, a la the one on the Fremont Bridge, be installed so that folks, especially drivers, have an increased awareness of just how many cyclist are downtown?

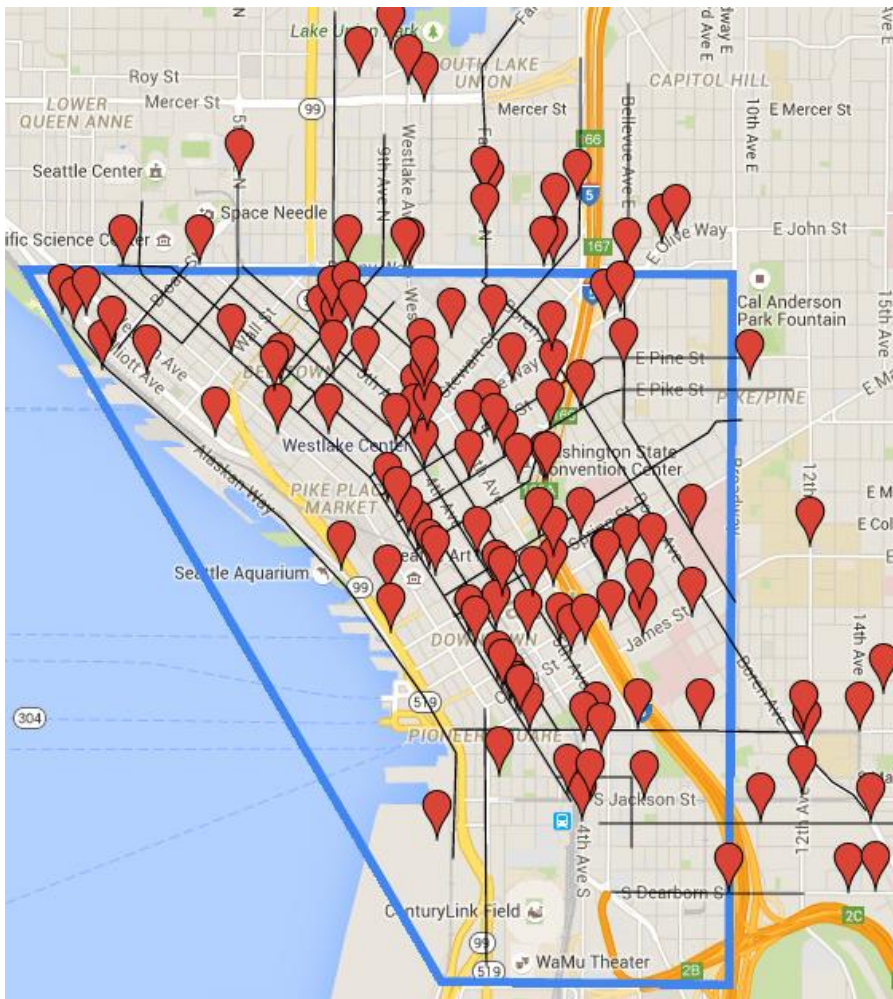
- Please also consider safe connections further from downtown (e.g. Lake City, Northgate, West Seattle) by expanding current bike lanes that end mid-block (especially east-west) and corridors like Roosevelt that connect more neighborhoods than just Eastlake
- Would love more public, covered bike parking—especially in residential/apartment-dense areas

Appendix C: Map comments

The project area map was printed out on several roll plots showing existing bike facilities. Attendees were able to mark on the maps with input on specific locations within the project area. Map comments are recorded at this link: <http://bit.ly/1IYePcu> and previewed below.



Open house map activity



Preview of map comments. Go to this link to view the interactive comment map: <http://bit.ly/1IYePcu>