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Lara Normand, Secretary

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November 19, 2014

Dear City of Seattle Mayor Murray, Councilmember Tom Rasmussen and SDOT Director Scott Kubly:

Thank you for your leadership on supporting multi-modal priority transportation needs for all residents in Seattle and for opportunities to collaborate with you on important transportation priorities.

At the November 2014 Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board meeting, we discussed transportation priorities for the Rainier Valley with meeting presenters Phyllis Porter and Deb Salls -- leaders of the Rainier Valley Greenways group -- and Emily Ehlers, SDOT staff for the Rainier Valley Greenways Projects. We requested the opportunity to collaborate with them on two fronts: 1) in support of equitable implementation of Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) facilities throughout the city; and 2) by echoing Rainier Valley neighborhood residents' deep concerns about transportation safety in their community -- especially for their children and youth.

Many who live along the Rainier and MLK Avenue corridors live within easy walking or biking distance to schools, community centers, playfields, transit stations and commercial centers. There is a dearth of safe cycling and walking routes to and within Seattle's south end, and the absence of routes that connect these neighborhoods to major destinations are of particular concern. Equity is a major goal of the BMP, and the lack of equitable connectivity in this city is an imbalance that needs to be rectified.

Recent events in the Rainier Valley have included two hit-and-run incidents involving children in crosswalks on MLK, a car colliding into two storefronts on Rainier Avenue, and a car driving at high speeds hitting multiple cars and injuring ten. These events underscore the need for immediate action to calm traffic in the area. SDOT is in the process of studying a North-South Greenway, which will provide a parallel, non-arterial route. However, there is a clear need for immediate action along the two main arterials -- both of which represent the most direct and flattest rights-of-way connecting the Rainier Valley to downtown.

The BMP establishes Safety and Connectivity as the most heavily-weighted of the five goals set forth, and as stewards of that plan we are concerned with making all our city streets safe for all modes of travel, and for all ages and abilities. We know that residents living near Rainier/MLK Avenues -- as in neighborhoods throughout the city -- are in fear of walking and bicycling because of dangerous roads and intersections. We are concerned not only about the safety of present bicyclists and pedestrians, but future generations as well. In response to the need for transportation improvements along Rainier/MLK Avenues, the Bicycle Advisory Board recommends that the following actions be expedited:

- Slowing traffic speeds to 25 through signage, cameras and enforcement;
- Providing crossing guards at intersections of all critical routes to school and community centers;
- Improving signal timing to allow pedestrians and bicyclists increased time to safely cross existing controlled intersections;
- Improving signal timing to reduce wait times for pedestrians and bikers attempting to cross ;

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 planing processes insofar as they relate to bicycling.

- City Council
Resolution 25534



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- Providing curb bulbs and flashing beacons to make crosswalks more visible when in use;
- Providing “No Turns on Red” signage at intersections; and
- Expediting requests for controlled intersections in the form of stop signs and/or roundabouts on residential streets between Rainier and MLK where cut-through traffic and speeding occur.

Providing protected bike lanes (PBLs) along Rainier Avenue -- as an alternative to the current BMP map which identifies only MLK as a future protected bike lane route south of Mt. Baker Blvd S -- should also be part of the discussion between SDOT and the community. Perhaps a PBL pilot project along key sections of the arterial is in order – especially where steep topography prevents all ages and abilities full access to the potential Greenway routes.

Achieving all goals of the BMP (Safety, Equity, Connectivity, Livability and Ridership) in the neighborhoods of South Seattle will be an ongoing challenge if adults who live in the area continue to feel unsafe navigating Rainier and MLK – and dread the thought of letting their children cross these streets.

Thank you for your recent support and response to the residents of Rainier/MLK Avenue neighborhoods, for your immediate attention to the actions recommended above, and to ongoing collaborative conversations in these matters. Thank you also to SDOT leadership (especially Scott Kubly, Jim Curtin and Dongho Chang) who are facilitating the Road Safety Corridor Meetings being held in the Rainier Avenue Neighborhood. Finally, thanks again to the Rainier Valley Neighborhood Greenways group, led by Phyllis Porter and Deb Salls, for gathering community input and shining a light on this urgent issue.

Sincerely,



Kristi Rennebohm Franz
SBAB Co-chair



Jeff Aken
SBAB Co-Chair

Cc: Anthony Auriemma, Legislative Assistant to Councilmember Rasmussen
Phyllis Porter, Rainier Valley Greenways
Deb Salls, Bikeworks
Emily Ehlers, SDOT
Jim Curtin, SDOT Safe Routes to School Project Manager
Dongho Chang, SDOT City Traffic Engineer

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