



FOR SAFE STREETS

A Demand For Action in Seattle
rooted in values of life, equity, and community



August 16, 2019

Dear Seattle leaders,

The City of Seattle has great aspirations to address climate change, make our streets safe for everyone to walk and roll, and expand transit.

Unfortunately, over the past two years, we have experienced poor performance in delivering safe streets projects. At the same time, there has been an uptick in traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

Whether it's bad project delivery models, poor management, or leaders failing to support their staff and instead playing politics, it's clear that the Seattle City Council needs to step-in and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) needs to take corrective action.

We know it doesn't have to be this way. That's why on June 16, 2019, hundreds of caring residents attended The Ride for Safe Streets to call for change. Now, Seattle City Council is considering the "MASS Transportation Package" and the "Green New Deal" resolution. Both are positive steps in the right direction.

The MASS Transportation Package is billed as a work-in progress, with a few proposals now and additional proposals to be unveiled in the future. The package's call for firm commitments for specific important bikeways and bus lanes to get built and thousands of bike parking corrals to get installed are tangible actions that will address key connectivity, accessibility, and equity issues.

Future reforms need to address systemic issues of community engagement, planning and engineering, project management, and funding. Additionally, the MASS proposal to require SDOT to install BMP-planned protected bike lanes with all repaving, transit, and other corridor projects would not have changed the result of Mayor Durkan's decision to not install bike lanes on 35th Avenue NE. The current MASS proposals also do not speed up project delivery or identify new funding.

If we are to reach Seattle's Vision Zero, climate change, and bicycle and transit ridership goals, even bolder, systemic changes are required. This "For Safe Streets" report attempts to fill in the details of how to address the major systemic issues of policy, project delivery, and funding to make our streets safer for people who walk, bike, roll, and ride transit.

The recommendations are rooted in the values of protecting human life, building a more equitable city where all people have safe streets and affordable transportation options, and creating neighborhoods and communities that are genuinely great places to live. The recommendations aim to create systems, policies, and engagement processes that value the time and energy of thousands of volunteers, stakeholders, community members, and staff, past, present and future.

Hopefully, we hope the recommendations are included in the MASS Transportation Package's still yet to be unveiled policies, and be adopted and implemented by Seattle City Council and SDOT.

[Your Signatures Here]

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INTRODUCTION

Transportation is one of the most important issues that the City of Seattle manages, and the City is failing on its commitments to present and future generations.

Our public right-of-way accounts for 26.6 percent of the city's land. This land is how we get from Point A to Point B; from our homes to our jobs, to our schools, to parks, to grocery stores, to restaurants, to everywhere.

How we get there matters. It matters because Seattle's #1 sector for greenhouse gas emissions is transportation. It matters because how long it takes to jobs and schools and how many employment and educational opportunities are near people are the top factors for economic mobility. It matters because just as many people die from traffic violence as from homicides in Seattle each year, and many many more are seriously injured. It matters because active transportation, whether it's bicycling or even walking to the bus, is empirically one of the best ways to improve public health.

Seattle was on the leading edge of addressing these issues. Seattle is regularly named a top American city for walking, bicycling, transit, and climate policy thanks to our modal plans which set the gold standard for all modal plans in the U.S. Seattle was the first city

to adopt a Complete Streets policy. Seattle has a Vision Zero Program to address traffic fatalities through primarily street design. Seattle updated its Right-of-Way Improvements Manual that incorporated the best practices of the NACTO Urban Design Guidelines and similar documents. And Seattle attempted to sync these plans into one broad, cohesive structure in 2015 called the "Move Seattle Plan."

Most importantly, Seattle backed-up its talk by passing in 2014 a transportation benefit district to fund increased transit service and in 2015 a \$930 million, nine-year transportation levy to fund its modal plans. The levy was passed by a wide margin — 58.3% in favor — thanks to significant financial support by large businesses and labor unions and unprecedented organizing efforts by walking, biking, and transit advocacy organizations such as Cascade Bicycle Club and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways. Without the organizing of these organizations, the levy would not have passed.

The 2015 Move Seattle Levy was not necessarily enough by itself to fully realize the goals and targets of the City's modal plans, and it was the expectation by many that the City would seek additional federal, state, regional, and private funding to realize the

plans. But the Levy would have made a major impact bringing all the plans for walking, biking, transit, and freight infrastructure to near their long-term goals.

Since the passage of the Move Seattle Levy, year after year, the modal plans have been delayed and cut back. Compounding financial woes, the City bred distrust in neighborhood and modal communities by not clearly communicating with stakeholders about when and how the modal plans will be implemented. This resulted in localized, project-specific angst on many projects.

The recent decisions to not install long-planned bike lanes on 35th Ave NE and to significantly curtail the implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan are illustrative.

Four years of planning went into the Bicycle Master Plan update of 2014, with thousands and thousands of unpaid and paid people contributing through data, stakeholder engagement, and public input. More years and thousands of people hours went into planning and political buy-in for developing the annual five-year BMP implementation plans, the annual five-year capital improvement plans, annual biennial city budgets, and city policies that require the city to build streets as "complete streets," transportation projects to contribute to a vision of zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries, prioritization of active transportation as a core climate strategy, and implementation of BMP-identified projects during repaving and other major transportation projects.

In order to ensure the Move Seattle Levy dollars made the biggest impact in building out the BMP-planned bikeways, Seattle Department of Transportation ("SDOT") established a policy of building any planned bikeway when it would repave a street. Implementing the BMP in this manner saves the City more than half what the bikeway project would cost if the engineering, engagement, and construction were done separately. For this reason, 35th Ave NE was planned to get "minor separation bike lanes," consistent with the BMP, as part of a repaving funding by the levy.

Engineering design work and community engagement started in 2017 on the project, two years after the Move Seattle Levy was passed and three years after the BMP was adopted. Within those two years, SDOT did not engage stakeholders in the Wedgwood and Ravenna-Bryant neighborhoods, and as a result, the project took them by surprise in 2017 and the project became an easy object of political contention. In what should have been a decision

based on city policy, engineering best practices, and cost-effectiveness, in spring 2019 the bike lanes were removed from the repaving based on politics.

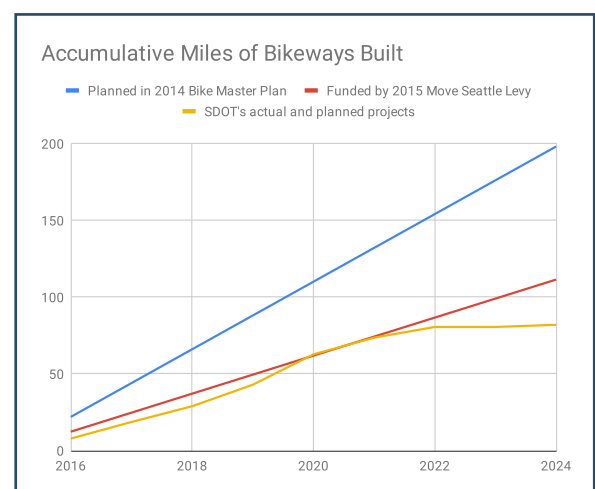
In 2018, SDOT and the Mayor's Office reset the deliverables of the Move Seattle Levy. When the administration presented the final reset to city council in November, the "relaunch" plan didn't include a plan for implementing the BMP. That relaunch occurred in April 2019, slashing the Move Seattle Levy target from build 50 miles of protected bike lanes by the end of 2024 to less than 29 miles, and slashed another 9 miles of planned neighborhood greenways.

To reach the Bicycle Master Plan performance targets, based on the new 6-Year BMP Implementation Plan, from 2025 to 2035, the City will need to construct approximately 70 miles of protected bike lanes and 200 miles of neighborhood greenways. That's double and quadruple the rates of SDOT's planned progress under the Move Seattle Levy.

Based on the experience of project delivery following the 2014 BMP and 2015 Move Seattle Levy, we have identified three principle issue areas that need addressing:

1. Value community
2. Design for safety
3. Prioritize funding

While these issues are highlighted in the experience of implementing the BMP, these issues are not unique to building bicycle infrastructure. Whether it's RapidRide+ Corridors, the Center City Connector streetcar, new sidewalks on busy arterial streets, or pedestrianizing neighborhood streets, the City remains well short of the expectations of the modal plans and Move Seattle voters. The policy solutions do not favor one mode over another but seek to harmonize the modal plans while simultaneously giving greater weight to both community engagement and project delivery efficiency.



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



High Impact Action

#	Recommended Action	Description	Entity Responsible
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VALUE COMMUNITY

Improve Front-end Community Engagement

1	Employ two community engagement staff with the specific purpose of building relationships with key stakeholders along future project corridors	Two SDOT strategic advisors would focus on engaging communities along future transportation project corridors. The strategic advisors should have a background in transportation planning, project development, and community engagement. Ideal candidates would be experienced working with a diverse set of stakeholders, including large business interests and racially diverse neighborhood leaders, and have experience in leading transportation advocacy campaign efforts, especially ballot measures in Seattle. Beyond engaging and building support from stakeholders along future corridors, the strategic advisors would continue to advise the communications, planning, engineering, and construction staff throughout the project development phases.	City Council Budget & SDOT/DON Programming
2	Make sure SDOT staff are well prepared and trained for public engagement efforts.	All staff who attend open houses should know each project corridor's technical details, best practices from similar projects, neighborhood details, and relevant stakeholders. Staff should have memos laying out this information and attend a run-through of any public meeting.	SDOT
3	Focus on creating genuine engagement with community partners.	Genuine engagement requires more than just informing the public or even bringing stakeholders in for a meeting. It is iterative and requires constant communication.	SDOT
4	Pay for staff time within community-based organizations to engage the community.	In order to establish genuine relationships within the community and to build stronger institutional knowledge, SDOT should pursue contracting with organizations to provide community engagement, especially within communities of color.	SDOT
5	Complete and centralize the sharing of community engagement plans and RSJI analyses.	In order to improve institutional knowledge and to continue to refine best practices for community engagement and race and social justice efforts, SDOT should centralize these plans and analyses so all current and future staff members may access them.	SDOT
6	For the modal advisory boards, provide all presentation information, including PowerPoints, reports, and fact sheets, at least 48 hours prior to their meetings	In order for the modal advisory board members to perform their roles well, they need to have time to read and process information prior to the meetings at which they will interface with SDOT presenters. By giving advisory board members at least 48 hours to read materials for meetings, they will be better able to provide advice to city staff. These materials, including powerpoints, reports, and fact sheets, should be posted online where the public can also access the information.	SDOT
7	Allow any modal board member to serve an additional term if they so wish, unless they are otherwise term-limited.	In order to build institutional knowledge on the boards and to respect the time and energy these volunteers give to the city, any board member who wishes to serve an additional term should be able to do so unless they are otherwise term-limited.	City Council Ordinance

The Back-end: Respect the Plans & Policies

8	Amend the Bicycle Master Plan so the "recommended" map is the city's "planned" map of future bikeways, and clearly establish that identified bike routes identified on the BMP map should not be considered alternatives to one another.	The routes in the BMP should be considered more than "recommended," the routes should be considered "planned." In addition, Seattle City Council should make it clear that each planned route should not be considered as an alternative to any other planned route in the BMP.	City Council Ordinance or Resolution
9	Require SDOT to implement walking, bicycling, and transit infrastructure as planned in the modal plans as part of any transportation project. If SDOT decides not to implement the planned infrastructure, then the agency must: (A) Present to the appropriate city modal advisory board why it is not doing so and give the advisory board time to write a formal letter to city council on the board's position prior to a briefing by the agency to the council, and (B) Gain approval from the city council's transportation committee to deviate from the modal plan prior to the agency encumbering costs to construct the project	The modal plans should be considered the default action when SDOT plans a project. This is consistent with the Complete Streets Ordinance as currently written in law. If SDOT needs to deviate from a modal plan, then the deviation should be approved by the city council who approved the modal plan in the first place. Under this proposed solution, only the transportation committee would need to approve the deviation, not the full council, in order to assure a speedy, nonpolitical process for approval. Prior to the transportation committee's decision, SDOT would need to brief the relevant modal committee and the committee would have the opportunity to express its opinion to the transportation committee prior to its decision.	City Council Ordinance



High Impact Action

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POLICIES FOR SAFE STREETS

Plan for Safe Streets

10	Require SDOT to prioritize seamless safe connections both within the existing project area as well as connecting a project to adjacent infrastructure.	This would help address the project scoping problems experienced by multiple projects that fail to adequately connect a project to broader plans and vision, which would otherwise save the City funding in the long-run and create safer, more complete street networks for all people.	City Council Ordinance
11	Officially adopt Vision Zero as a city goal.	SDOT and Mayor Ed Murray adopt Vision Zero as the city's goal to reach zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030, but this goal has not been officially adopted as city policy by the city council despite other resolutions that have referenced it.	City Council Ordinance
12	Set policy that all projects are expected to be designed and engineered to contribute to reaching the Vision Zero goal.	This would be a platitude recognizing that the city has limited dollars and that if the city is to reach its Vision Zero goal, SDOT cannot design projects where there's a chance that a traffic collision will result in a serious injury or death.	City Council Ordinance
13	Require all major corridor projects, including paving, transit, safety, and freight projects, to evaluate whether modal plans' adjacent routes should instead be implemented on the main corridor street in order to achieve the city's overall transportation goals and objectives.	This would help address the fact that projects such as the Rainier Ave S Safety Corridor Project and 23rd Ave Corridor Improvements Project did not include needed safe bikeway infrastructure.	City Council Ordinance

Design to City Goals, Not Throughput

14	Set a city policy that traffic engineering of streets should not be determined by level of service, but on the ability of the street design to meet the city's transportation goals as set forth in its modal, climate, land use, and parks plans and policies.	This helps address SDOT's use of "level of service" ratings to not comply with the modal plans.	City Council Ordinance
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Setting Speed Limits

15	Proactively reduce the speed of arterial streets to 25 mph as part of all repaving, rechannelization, and transit corridor projects.	This puts Seattle's default speed limit into action rather than waiting around for traffic studies.	SDOT
16	Reduce arterial speed limits in business districts to 20 mph.	This allows speeds in business district, even when arterials, to be 20 rather than 25 mph, helping create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.	City Council Ordinance & SDOT
17	Time traffic signals in Downtown and business districts for 12-15 mph.	This builds off the prior allowance of lower speed limits in business districts by also encouraging traffic signals to be timed for traffic speeds that are even slower, more akin to the speed of people walking and biking.	City Council Ordinance & SDOT
18	Sign and design neighborhood greenways and Home Zones for 15 mph.	This establishes a new, lower design speed for streets that are meant for AAA bicycle riders and pedestrianized streets. The official speed limits would remain 20 mph, but the posted recommended speeds and the design speed would be 15 mph.	City Council Ordinance & SDOT

Safe Routes to Schools & Parks

19	Define "schools" and "playgrounds" to include the full range of schools and playgrounds, and define "active use" to mean any school or playground that regularly open throughout the year.	This defines school zones more thoroughly, consistent with common usage of the terms school and playground, potentially creating greater areas for slower, safer speeds. It also creates a more consistent application of the speed zones throughout the day, week, and year, ensuring less confusion by drivers and greater safety around our school and playgrounds.	City Council Ordinance
20	Set the default arterial speed limits adjacent to schools and parks as 20 mph.	This would create a presumption for 20 mph streets next to all schools and parks.	City Council Ordinance
21	Designate school zones at all public schools and at least a quarter of parks.	This effectively implements Recommendation #20 and increases the potential areas for traffic cameras to enforce school zones.	SDOT
22	Engineer streets surrounding schools and parks to the 20 mph speed limits.	This ensures the signed streets for 20 mph are designed for 20 mph.	SDOT
23	Map safe bike routes to schools and parks.	This establishes a large list of potential projects that can be funded using school zone camera revenue.	SDOT, SPR, & SPS

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS




High Impact Action



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POLICIES FOR SAFE STREETS *(continued)*

Automated Enforcement

24	Give broad authorization for SDOT to install traffic cameras to enforce all schools zones and red lights.	This would increase the number of traffic cameras enforcing red lights and school zones. Typically in the past when SDOT has expanded the number of cameras, it has stated how many cameras it would like to implement and requested a budget line item to fund the cameras.	City Council Ordinance
 25	Set a target for every public school and 20% of parks to have a enforcement camera by 2022.		City Council Ordinance or Resolution
26	Mandate 100% of automated enforcement revenue to be spent on street infrastructure projects with a substantial nexus to the purpose of the enforcement.	This would provide dedicated revenue to important street safety projects and build public trust that the enforcement revenue is being spent on a valid purpose.	City Council Ordinance

Seamless, Trail-like Bikeways

27	Adopt the 2014 BMP map as the "planned map" of bikeway projects.	This would help eliminate the segmentation of projects and speed up the planning and community engagement phases of project development and protect projects from political manipulations.	City Council Ordinance
28	Clarify that the bikeways planned in the 2014 BMP should not be pitted against one another.	This helps ensure the entire network of BMP projects get built.	City Council Ordinance or Resolution
 29	In preparation for the 2024 transportation levy renewal, create a project map of trail-like, seamless bikeways that will connect across the entire city.	We do not recommend conducting a major update to the 2014 BMP. Instead, we recommend creating a plan and project development for citywide, trail-like bikeways that would be planned, designed, and constructed as single projects. In general, these routes would not be different than individual segments within the 2014 BMP, but rather a seamless connection of existing segments designed for people of all ages and abilities. This proposed solution would have several benefits, including: (1) clear projects for voters to get excited about when renewing the Move Seattle Levy in 2024; (2) better design of bikeways so that they are seamless and designed for AAA; and (3) have better project management.	SDOT
 30	Create project teams for each cross-city bikeway and implement each bikeway as one holistic project.		SDOT




High Impact Action

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PRIORITIZE FUNDING

Quicker Implementation without Political Influence

 31	Tighten the language of the Complete Streets Ordinance to ensure projects planned within the modal plans are implemented with every transportation improvement project.	The Complete Streets Ordinance already requires the planned projects identified in the modal plans to be implemented as part of any transportation improvement project. Unfortunately, the mayor has not adhered to this policy. As a result, the Complete Streets Ordinance language should be tightened. In addition, Recommendations #8, #9, #27, & #28 provide additional accountability.	City Council Ordinance
32	Minimize alternatives analysis during project planning to alternatives that are consistent with the modal plans.	Also highlighted in Recommendation #28, this will speed up project delivery and reduce political risk.	City Council Ordinance



Budget Transparency

33	Make budget memos and proposals from within SDOT's divisions and subdivisions publicly available much earlier during the year as part of the annual budget process.	Getting the initial memos and ideas from within SDOT will help councilmembers and stakeholders are better prepared for proposing amendments to the Mayor's budget proposal in October.	City Council Ordinance
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Fix Initiative 42

34	Amend Initiative 42 to clarify that park uses such as bike paths and natural stormwater filtration are not subject to the requirement for approval by city council ordinance, even when the proposed action is made by a department other than SPR.	This addresses a major problem that has siloed SPR off from SDOT in working together to promote active transportation and green infrastructure to and through parks.	City Council Ordinance
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Increase Funding

 35	Prepare to renew the Move Seattle Levy in 2024 with full funding for the modal plans.	The Move Seattle Levy is the largest funding source for walking and biking projects in Seattle, and will need to be renewed.	SDOT
36	Proactively find additional funding sources from federal, regional, county, and private sources.	SDOT should develop projects that will be competitive for federal, state, regional, and county funding opportunities. In addition, SDOT should work with community leaders to identify potential private foundations and individuals who may be willing to fund iconic projects.	SDOT
37	Dedicate revenue from congestion pricing to implementing the city's modal plans.	If SDOT is successful in implementing congestion pricing, the revenue should be dedicated walking, biking, and transit infrastructure in order to give people alternatives to driving and paying the congestion charge.	City Council Ordinance
 38	Dedicate 100% of revenue from traffic enforcement cameras to transportation safety projects with a substantial nexus to the camera's purpose.	This provides much needed funding for street safety projects, and establishes a substantial nexus between a penalty and what it funds. In addition, requiring the substantial nexus will better position Seattle to get authorization from the state legislature to use cameras to enforce bus lanes and "block the box." In the past, the decision to allocate traffic camera revenue to safety projects has been a budget decision. In order to ensure future city councils and mayors continue to dedicate the revenue to safety projects, the policy should be written into an ordinance.	City Council Ordinance

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt and a grey patterned scarf, is speaking into a black microphone. She is holding a small white object in her left hand. In the background, a man in a dark jacket is holding a camera, and two women are standing with their arms crossed. One woman is wearing a bright green jacket and orange pants, and the other is wearing a pink jacket and black leggings. Bicycles are parked in the background, and a green street sign with the word 'Ave' is visible.

VALUE COMMUNITY

Casey Gifford, former Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board Chair (photo credit: Seattle Bike Blog)

IMPROVE FRONT-END COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

When community members, stakeholders, businesses, and volunteers dedicate thousands of hours or even just one hour, they deserve to have that time be valued meaningfully by the City of Seattle.

On the front-end, the City needs to ensure its engagement is inclusive, transparent, and empowering.

On the back-end, the City needs to continue to adhere to the plans, reports, and other decisions that are the result of advice from citizen advisory boards and the open houses and citizen comments part of long-range planning efforts and specific street improvement projects.

Better street safety infrastructure is strongly supported by people across Seattle, SDOT engages in robust community outreach during the development of modal plans and levies, and yet the agency continues to run into localized opposition to particular projects.

Forty-five percent of Seattleites report riding a bike at least monthly and 78 percent report having a positive view of people who bike. According to polling, strong majorities of Seattleites want safe, protected bike infrastructure. And the last transportation levy was adopted with 58.3% support.

But even with overwhelming support for street safety projects, SDOT must still face the reality that opponents will nearly always exist. Through a commitment to previous planning efforts and better community engagement strategies, much of these opposition can be avoided and mitigated.

The solution is not necessarily in increasing the amount of effort that SDOT puts forth, but in the consistency and quality of the engagement effort. Here are our recommendations for improving engagement.

Example #1: From Bicycle Master Plan to Project Delivery

The 2014 Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) Update, Move Seattle Levy and 35th Ave NE project provide a good illustration of how much outreach SDOT does to engage the public and stakeholders and where engagement gaps exist.

BMP Update Phase I - 2012-13

- An online survey tool that resulted in 3,500 responses. Of these respondents, 36% said motorist behavior, 32% said inadequate bike infrastructure, and 26% said feeling unsafe were leading reasons for why they did not bicycle more.
- SDOT communicated via existing email and social media platforms.
- SDOT presented at numerous events and meetings from May-June 2012, including Bike to Work Month events, Alki and Ballard Summer Streets, the Seattle Pride Parade, city boards and commissions,
- SDOT put up posters and 10,000 translated business cards (six most spoken languages) provided to six neighborhood service centers, 37 Parks & Recreation public facilities, every library, every bicycle shop, ten diverse community groups.
- SDOT paid for a scientific public opinion survey.

BMP Update Phase II - 2012-2013

- SDOT held open houses at New Holly, City Hall, & UW.
- SDOT presented at 24 meetings of city boards and commissions and neighborhood organizations.

BMP Update Phase III - 2013

- After SDOT published a near final plan in August 2013, additional comment letters from stakeholder groups and neighborhood associations were sent into SDOT.
- Cascade Bicycle Club asked its members to write email comment letters to SDOT, resulting in a couple thousand comment letters.
- One especially vocal neighborhood was Ravenna. As a result, Mayor McGinn held an open house about the BMP's planned protected bike lane for NE 65th Street, which more than 300 people attended. Following the open house, SDOT agreed to modify the planned route and submitted a final draft to City Council to approve.

BMP Update Phase IV - 2014

- In the winter of 2013-14, opponents to the Westlake Protected Bike Lane sued the City over the BMP update in order to exert leverage over the Westlake project. SDOT settled the lawsuit by promising the creation of a project stakeholder group.
- Seattle City Council finally held public hearings and adopted the BMP Update in April 2014.

Community engagement for the 2014 BMP update was

both robust and also deep in neighborhoods where key stakeholder groups were passionate (e.g., Ravenna and Westlake). SDOT received input from literally tens of thousands of residents. SDOT presented directly to neighborhood associations across the city. And if SDOT did not reach someone, surely, the media did. From 2011 until the adoption in 2014, the Seattle Times ran 20 articles that discussed the BMP update, and the TV and radio outlets covered it even more. Nearly everyone living in Seattle from 2012-2014 would have heard about the BMP update.

Move Seattle Levy

One year later, the Seattle City Council put the Move Seattle Levy on the November ballot. Core to the levy was implementing the Seattle's bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and freight master plans, as well as the city's Vision Zero policy, as outlined in the Move Seattle Plan. While \$930 million over nine years would be insufficient to implement the plans completely, it was a major investment that made realization of the modal plans realistically possible.

During the campaign in favor of the ballot measure, thanks to more than 1,200 volunteer hours, 23,500 voters were talked to about what the Move Seattle Levy would do and another 40,000+ voters received voicemail messages about the Levy. Tens of thousands of more voters received three mailers, one of which was personalized to the specific transit, bicycle, pedestrian, freight, and maintenance projects that the levy would fund near them. With this effort, 58.3% of the Seattle voters passed the levy.

Given the level of outreach for the BMP and Move Seattle Levy, Seattle residents had a strong understanding of the planned and funded walk, bike, and transit infrastructure.

Project Delivery

As SDOT shifts from adoption of the long-range modal plans and the levy, its communication largely shuts down until there is a specific street improvement project it needs to communicate with neighbors and stakeholders about. Often this silence is several years. In the case of 35th Ave NE, the project team did not start planning it and engaging the community until 2017, three years after the BMP update and two years after the levy adoption. In that time, many residents forget prior decisions and others residents may be new to the city.

In addition, SDOT staff members change. Staff who worked on a modal plan or levy may no longer be with the agency and may not know why decisions were made, what stakeholders were engaged and what they cared about, or what previous staff members told the community. This gap in communication between planning & funding stage and project implementation stage often results in fractured trust as staff members lack institutional knowledge and provide inconsistent messages back to the community.

Eliminate the Communication Gap

Through the development of the long-range modal plans, tens of thousands of Seattleites participate in engagement processes and buy-off on planned infrastructure investments for walking, biking, transit, and freight projects. The Seattle City Council ultimately endorses these plans, putting the city's elected political capital behind the plans. Then 9-year levies, 5-year capital improvement plans, and biennial budgets deepen the city's and public's commitment to these plans. Yet, the time gap in engagement with neighbors and stakeholders between the planning phases and the project development phases results in misunderstandings, misinformation, and mistrust for particular street improvement projects.

The time gap between the modal plan adoption and the project development phase is a missed opportunity to build trust and relationships between SDOT and the community.

The gap is completely foreseeable. The City's five-year capital improvement plans and multi-year implementation plans of the bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and freight plans provide clear roadmaps for when projects will go into planning, engineering, and construction. SDOT should have a community engagement staff who proactively build relationships with key stakeholders along important future project corridors, building consensus among the community around the already approved plans and helping to shape the future projects.

Improve Communication During Project Development

Most stakeholders' opinions about a project are set before project development even begins. This is why community engagement prior to project development is so important. While SDOT's community engagement may be equal or superior to that of outreach in many other cities, time and time again the community engagement has been insufficient in several regards.

Frame the Issues

All materials, webpages, and presentations need to describe why a project is important, and provide clear, concrete messaging and images that fit the dominant messaging. For many transportation projects, the most important reason is the safety of all people in the neighborhood, no matter how they get around. This positive framing needs to be backed up with clear examples of where similar projects have worked in the

past. Even if the project is primarily a paving project, if the roadway will be rechannelized in order to improve safety, it's especially important to provide proper framing.

Set Expectations

Often during the initial planning stages of a project, the City will present options as open ended. This is a disservice to SDOT and the community, especially if not all options will be seriously considered. Projects will get built much more efficiently with less opposition if the agency is direct and forthright with the community, stating to neighbors that the street will be rechannelized and stating to modal activities that, no, the modal plan does not call for the best possible design so no the project won't be gold-plated. By being more direct, projects will be built more quickly with fewer counterproductive conversations.

Be Prepared

SDOT has held open houses and public meetings where staff members did not know the project or the neighborhood. There have even been instances, including the initial 35th Ave NE Project open house, where lead staff members did not know how to speak about the empirical safety outcomes of previous street rechannelizations and the data proving effectiveness. For every public meeting, SDOT should have an internal memo with information about the project, neighborhood, key stakeholders and their opinions, relevant project data and similar case examples, key messages, and FAQs, and SDOT should conduct a run-through with all staff members who will be participating in the meeting. Without this preparation, even otherwise benign public meetings can go sideways.

Lift All Voices

In order to ensure all people and stakeholders are reached, and to ensure the City meets its Race & Social Justice Initiative's goals, SDOT needs to be intentional in making sure all communities are heard in the community engagement process.

At one level this requires making complete lists of people, businesses, and organizations to talk to and then genuinely engaging them in a conversation about their needs in the neighborhood. At another level this requires ensuring public meetings are not dominated by the few voices who show up and not weighting those few loud voices over decisions already made in prior modal plans and city policies.

For those community members who possess the loudest voices, not getting the outcome they want can create resentment. It's important for SDOT staff to recognize that the tenor of a public meeting shapes people's opinions. SDOT must ensure all voices are equally represented in a public meeting both in attendance and in air-time. If not all key constituencies are represented at a public meeting, SDOT needs to go directly to the underrepresented communities in order to ensure the full diversity of the community has the opportunity to participate and weigh-in.

Genuine Engagement Requires Co-Creation

To the extent the community can truly shape the outcome of the project, SDOT should get better at involving the community in co-designing the project.

There have been numerous instances where SDOT has held initial conversations with community groups who provided detailed input about their desired design for the project only later to have the input completely disregarded with no follow-up and no way for the community groups to interact with the project team to explain the problems they hoped to solve and why they wanted certain designs.

Often this issue is a disconnect in a project's phases and in the technical trainings of different people on a project team. Community outreach specialists and transportation planners are trained to listen and collect feedback from the public, but traffic engineers rely on their own training and expert judgment to determine what will work best. Likewise, budget staff and administrators are careful to keep a project on-time and under-budget.

If SDOT wants to genuinely engage the community and end the community's complaints that the agency does not listen, then the planning and engineering process must become more iterative through all phases of project development between the team and the community members.

Tailor the Engagement Level to the Project Stage

While aiming for co-creation establishes strong community buy-in, not every stage of project development can be co-created. SDOT needs to be more intentional in understanding which level of engagement is appropriate for different stages of project development.

The "Continuum of Community Engagement" chart on the next page describes a range of engagement levels. In the beginning of a project or during long-range planning, the engagement may start on the right-side of the chart with community partnerships and collaboration. As a particular project moves from a long-range plan into project development and then through the stages of project development (planning, engineering, and construction), the decision-making should naturally move to the left side of the chart.

While decision-making may move left as a project develops, the actual community engagement may still remain on the right side of the chart, especially if partnerships are built with community-based organizations to help facilitate a project's engagement efforts.

Support Community-Based Organizations

When conducting outreach to communities of color, whether to people of specific racial, ethnic, nationality, or language backgrounds, it's better to rely on trusted, knowledgeable voices within their communities rather than outsiders. This is why King County through its Office of Equity and Social Justice is changing how its community engagement is conducted. Instead of relying on agency staff and contracted liaisons, the County is contracting with organizations to conduct outreach on a range of issues. This structure has the benefit of establishing voices from trusted organizations, being able to communicate with neighborhoods and communities on a wide range of County issues rather than single projects, building institutional knowledge about County programs within the organizations that can carry on between outreach staff members, and being able to resource community-based organizations that often otherwise struggle to have much staff capacity. SDOT and the City of Seattle should follow suit. This community engagement model could be used for outreach to both underrepresented communities of color and more traditionally-engaged communities.

Continuum of Community Engagement

Non-Participation		Tokenism			Community Valued		
Manipulate	Therapy	Inform	Consult	Dialogue	Placate	Partner / Collaborate	Delegate
Level of Community Engagement							
City limits information to community so community does not have opportunity to express opinion	City makes decision without informing public then provides listening sessions after decision has been made	City informs community	City consults with community stakeholders	City engages in dialogue with community stakeholders	After or in anticipation of adverse decision, City placates influential community stakeholders by providing additional "win"	City collaborates with community stakeholders	City delegates the control over community engagement process and final decisions to stakeholders
Characteristics of Engagement							
• No/inaccurate communication before decision and/or one-way communication after decision	• Inaccurate or one-way communication before decision, and two-way communication after decision • City asks for input on how to improve process in future and promises to do better	• Primarily one-way channel of communication • One interaction • Term-limited to events • Address immediate need of city and community	• Primarily one-way channel of communication • One to multiple interactions • Short to medium term relationships • Shapes and informs city programs	• Two-way channel of communication • Multiple interactions • Medium to long term relationships • Advancement of solutions to complex problems	After decision is made: • Two-way channel of communication • Multiple interactions • Medium to long term relationships • Advancement of solutions to complex problem	• Two-way channel of communication • Multiple interactions • Medium to long term relationships • Advancement of solutions to complex problems	• Two-way channel of communication • Multiple interactions • Medium to long term relationships • Advancement of solutions to complex problems
Strategies							
Obfuscate the decision that is being made, then after decision made, admit decision was made due to unavoidable circumstances.	Obfuscate the decision is being made or blame unavoidable circumstances, then after decision is made, hold focus groups, briefings, and listening sessions.	Media release, brochures, pamphlets, outreach to vulnerable populations, ethnic media contacts, translated information, staff outreach to residents, new and social media	Focus groups, interviews, community surveys	Forums; advisory boards; stakeholder involvement; coalitions; policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony; workshops; and community-wide events	After decision is made: Stakeholder involvement; policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony; and workshops.	Co-led community meetings; advisory boards; coalitions and partnerships; policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony.	Community-led planning efforts; community-hosted forums; collaborative partnerships; coalitions; policy development and advocacy, including legislative briefings and testimony.
Who Controls Engagement							
City	City	City	City	City	City	City	Community
Who Controls Decision							
City	City	City	City	City	City controls initial decision; community may choose what additional city actions will make an otherwise undesirable decision okay with them.	Shared. No decision made without approval of both parties	Community

patterned after a chart used by King County

Centralize and Share Community Engagement Plans and Results

A major barrier to genuine engagement across all departments is the lack of a central database of current and past community engagement plans and results. This results in a siloing of information such that agency staff are unable to know who the key neighborhood stakeholders are and what their main priorities are.

By maintaining a database of the plans, stakeholders, conversations, and other outreach results across SDOT and all city agencies, city staff will be able to learn from past experiences and continue to improve its engagement efforts.

Race & Social Justice Analyses

In order to achieve socially justice outcomes, SDOT should assess both the community engagement plan and the infrastructure project itself using race & social justice analyses.

All community engagement plans should be reviewed using a race and social justice analysis to ensure all key peoples, communities, and stakeholders are included within the outreach and genuinely engaged in the planning and engineering processes. The race and social justice analyses of the community engagement plans should be kept with the engagement plans in a centralized database.

In addition, all transportation projects over \$1 million in cost should be reviewed against the a modified version of the Race & Social Justice Toolkit.

When analyzing each project, SDOT staff should be mindful that low income populations, people of color, and people with disabilities are the most likely to use transit, sidewalks, and bikeways, and these populations are also the most likely to be impacted by traffic violence. Efforts to make their trips safer and to increase the number of economic opportunities accessible by their chosen mode of travel should be viewed as a significant benefit toward improving equity.

These analyses should likewise be stored in a central database for other communications, planning, and engineering staff to share with one another.



Example #2: Advisory Board Membership

In November 2018, Mayor Durkan dismissed Casey Gifford from the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board, well-regarded as a highly effective board member and chair, just hours before what was to be her last board meeting. In Ms. Gifford's place, Mayor Durkan appointed a staff member of an organization that one of Mayor Durkan's deputy mayor had previously served as executive director.

In May and June 2019, a mayor's representative informed the board that the mayor intended to not reappoint most of the board members and instead appoint people who represent the mayor rather than provide unbiased policy advice to SDOT and the city.

This blatant disrespect to current board members showcases a direct effort by the mayor to devalue volunteers' time, undermine the integrity of the board, and minimize its ability to hold the administration accountable.

Value People's Time, Expertise, and Dedication

Thousands and thousands of hours from unpaid volunteers to paid contractors and agency staff went into the creation of the city's modal plans. Thousands more paid and unpaid hours go into continued planning, engineering, reviewing, and providing input into modal plans and transportation projects, month after month. These individuals are smart, passionate, and use the best judgment they can to provide advice to the city.

When a project is delayed or cancelled due to political calculus, it devalues the work of the city's residents. Worse, when the expertise of the modal advisory committees is disregarded, the city's commitment to the decision-making structure is undone and their time is devalued.

City residents have a fundamental expectation that the modal plans will be implemented, and advisory committee members have an expectation that their time will be well spent.

In order to value people's time and dedication, SDOT should always endeavor to implement the walking, biking, and transit projects that the Seattle City Council and voters have approved through the modal plans and transportation levy.

In addition, the Seattle City Council, mayor, and SDOT should respect and empower the modal advisory committee members. Their volunteer effort and expertise go far beyond that of the average citizen, and yet building their technical and institutional knowledge takes time and participation. The modal advisory boards are not the personal fiefdoms of the mayor, councilmembers, or agency. The boards are charged to be the guardians of their respective modal plans and providing outside advice to the City. SDOT should take the time to sufficiently inform the modal advisory boards in a timely manner and carefully consider the boards' advice.

Finally, with short terms, it's difficult to build institutional knowledge on the boards to provide meaningful input to the agency. Every effort should be made to support those committee members who wish to continue their service. Advisory committee members who wish to serve additional terms should be able to do so, within the a board's applicable term limits.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Employ two community engagement staff with the specific purpose of building relationships with key stakeholders along future project corridors.
2. Make sure SDOT staff are well prepared and trained for public engagement efforts.
3. Focus on creating genuine engagement with community partners.
4. Pay for staff time within community-based organizations to engage the community.
5. Complete and centralize the sharing of community engagement plans and RSJI analyses.
6. For the modal advisory boards, provide all presentation information, including PowerPoints, reports, and fact sheets, at least 48 hours prior to their meetings.
7. Allow any modal board member to serve an additional term if they so wish, unless they are otherwise term-limited.



Example #3: How project planning that doesn't follow the modal plans costs money and lives

The process for creating the 2014 Bicycle Master Plan started in the spring of 2011, first as a budget request by SDOT to Mayor Mike McGinn's office. The request was proposed by the mayor in his budget, and passed by council. Then SDOT allocated staff time and contracted out services from 2012 to 2014 to create the plan. When the plan was finally adopted by city council and formally signed into law, Ed Murray was mayor.

One project in the 2014 Bicycle Master Plan is protected bike lanes on NE 65th Street, connecting the Green Lake and Ravenna neighborhoods. This particular project became a fierce topic of debate during the mayoral election of 2013, which ultimately led to the BMP map prioritizing a protected bike lane on NE 65th from Ravenna Boulevard to 20th Ave NE, then a neighborhood greenway from 20th to 39th Ave NE.

In spring 2015, Andy Hulslander was killed while biking westbound on NE 65th St at the intersection of 15th Ave NE. Had Andy been in a separated protected bike lane, the drunk driver would not have driven threw Andy as he blew through a red light. Neighbors, Cascade Bicycle Club, and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways called for immediate installation of a protected bike lane. Rob Johnson, who was running for city council, made it a signature issue of his campaign.

Even then, it took SDOT until spring 2019 to finally install the protected bike lanes. On NE 65th Street between Ravenna Blvd and 20th Ave NE from Nov. 1 2013 until March 31, 2019, there were 144 traffic collisions, of which 59 resulted in injuries (four had serious injuries), and three resulted in fatalities. Twenty of the collisions involved people walking and eleven involved people biking; 100 percent of the people walking and biking were at a minimum injured and all serious injuries and fatalities were borne by these vulnerable users. The length of time it takes to implement projects, and any delay to the projects, kills people.

Likewise, the 2014 BMP prioritized new bike lanes nearby for 35th Ave NE in the Ravenna/Bryant and Wedgwood neighborhoods.

The Complete Streets Ordinance, adopted in 2007, states that all transportation projects, with narrow exceptions, shall be planned, designed, and constructed "to provide accommodate accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all abilities" as consistent with the city's modal plans. The 2015 Move Seattle Levy, which funded repaving 35th Ave NE, built upon the Complete Streets framework by planning to build BMP-prioritized bike lanes as part of any major paving project.

When SDOT began planning the repaving project for 35th Ave NE in 2017, it initially scoped building the BMP-prioritized bike lanes. SDOT spent the next two years engaging the community, planning, and designing the bike lanes.

But after it became politically contentious, Mayor Jenny Durkan ultimately eliminated the bike lanes from the project. This decision was contrary to the BMP, the Complete Streets ordinance, the Seattle Bike Advisory Board's advice, and SDOT's final design of the project that went out to bid. All of the time, energy, and resources that went into prioritizing, planning, and engineering the bike lanes was wasted.

Within the first two weeks of the new rechannelization of 35th Ave NE, a person bicycling was hit by a car driver and sent to the hospital, and a person on a motorcycling was struck and killed by another driver.



THE BACK-END: RESPECT THE PLANS & POLICIES

Once major plans and policies are adopted, the City owes it to city, residents, volunteers, and stakeholders to implement them. It's a matter of valuing people's time, fiscal responsibility, and good government.

Tens of thousands of hours, both paid and unpaid, go into developing modal plans and policies, and millions of public dollars have been spent to create them. The process, including budgeting, administration, contracting, community engagement, best practice policy review, design, and engineering, takes years, frequently lasting entire terms of elected officials.

When these plans and policies are not adhered to, we waste public resources, devalue people's time and energy, and fail to build toward a coherent vision that was laid out in the plans.

One common argument by opponents to particular street safety projects prioritized by modal plans is that the modal plans did not consider the fine grain detail about each block. This is fundamentally not true. For example, the 2014 Bicycle Master Plan is based on Seattle's roadway centerline database with the bicycle network developed on a block-by-block basis of each roadway segment's characteristics, roadway widths, posted speed limits, actual speeds, and traffic volumes.

It's possible, even likely, that not all community stakeholders were aware of the technical details to which a modal plan was constructed and now do not feel that specific projects had the benefit of complete information that they, as community stakeholders, could have provided. In such situations, these stakeholders will say the community engagement process was broken.

However, while the city should improve its community engagement efforts, the modal plans and policies also need to be respected in order for the city to be effective.

Community engagement should follow principles of "co-creation" and be as inclusive as possible for the

broad modal plans, and once plans are set, the openness of the community engagement to decision-making needs to narrow as projects near construction.

In order to hold SDOT and the mayor accountable to the adopted modal plans, a process needs to be established to hold the agency's feet to the fire. For this reason, the projects and policies identified in each modal plan — pedestrian, bicycle, transit, freight, and Vision Zero — need to be considered the default actions of the agency.

For the agency to deviate from the plans, SDOT should be required to present the proposed deviation to the relevant modal advisory board and the city council's transportation committee, and receive an affirmative vote from the transportation committee to approve the nonconformance. This process would finally imbue meaning and purpose into the modal plans and advisory boards.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS TO RESPECT PLANS & POLICIES

- ★ 8. Amend the Bicycle Master Plan so the "recommended" map is the city's "planned" map of future bikeways, and clearly establish that identified bike routes identified on the BMP map should not be considered alternatives to one another.
- ★ 9. Require SDOT to implement walking, bicycling, and transit infrastructure as planned in the modal plans as part of any transportation project. If SDOT decides not to implement the planned infrastructure, then the agency must:
 - (A) Present to the appropriate city modal advisory board why it is not doing so and give the advisory board time to write a formal letter to city council on the board's position prior to a briefing by the agency to the council, and
 - (B) Gain approval from the city council's transportation committee to deviate from the modal plan prior to the agency encumbering costs to construct the project.



POLICIES FOR SAFETY

Mother of Jesse Gurnett calls for action following a fatal collision on May 29, 2019.

In 2014, SDOT set a goal of reaching zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 — a goal known as “Vision Zero.”

Vision Zero is modeled after proven Swedish traffic engineering principles that streets can be made safe by designing to account for human error, and that education, encouragement, and enforcement strategies are less important.

Key precepts to Vision Zero design and engineering require calming traffic and otherwise providing dedicated space for different modes.

When "soft" (people walking and biking) share space with "hard" (vehicles), all users need sufficient time to react to one another's actions, including sight distances, reaction times, and stopping distances. In addition, intersections and driveways must also be carefully designed to protect soft from hard through the conflict zones.

SDOT, in general, does an admirable job attempting to engineer streets to be consistent with Vision Zero and the modal plans. However, there are instances where project scope limits the ability of a bikeway project to create a safe connection to other infrastructure, where project budget does not enable needed improvements to intersections or additions of sidewalks to arterial streets, and where built-in city and state policies limit design options.

SDOT is operating with a limited budget and a defined timeline to reach its 2030 Vision Zero goal. If it is to accomplish the goal, every project that the agency builds will need to be designed to accomplish zero serious injuries within its segment. There is no time or resources for do-overs.

And even if every project is accomplished, SDOT will still need to find ways to implement dramatically more safety improvements on streets not currently within its expected 10-year project horizon. With the need to better design every project and to increase safety even farther, we recommend the City pursue several policy strategies areas.

PLAN FOR SAFE STREETS

Project Scope & Budget

SDOT's project scoping and budget routinely short changes seamless, safe connections.

Two examples are the Westlake CycleTrack and the intersection of N 50th Street, Green Lake Way and Stone Way, highlighted below in examples #4 and #5.

Projects should not cutoff directly at their geographic boundaries. Each project is about creating a citywide network of safe streets and failure to some extensions of projects hinders the ability to create that citywide network.

Certainly, the city is operating with a limited budget and cannot spend unlimited amounts to make small marginal gains. Still, refusing to consider small changes at minimal cost with significant benefit is fool-hardy. If the city is to reach Vision Zero, it cannot let the expected big costs of perfect solutions be the enemy of inexpensive good actions.

Moving forward, project scope definitions and administration should allow for rational considerations of connections to the broader bikeway network.

Example #4: Scoping the Westlake CycleTrack

The City received significant regional dollars to build the Westlake CycleTrack along the parking lot between Lake Union and Westlake Ave N. This project was important as it created a flat, comfortable route from Fremont to South Lake Union, promising an "all ages and abilities" bicycle route that fixed the problem of bicyclists having to dodge parking cars. However, according to SDOT, designing how the new bikeway would connect to the Fremont Bridge and into South Lake Union was beyond the scope of the project. As a result, there is no good, seamless connection from the Fremont Bridge to the Westlake CycleTrack, and the route from 9th Avenue northbound into the Protected Bike Lane has no good

routing or curb cut.

While the regional grant's scope may have limited its dollars to just the specific parking lot segment, surely SDOT could have been wise enough to consider how to make sure people can actually use the new infrastructure. In scoping the project with its contracted design firm, SDOT could have added a small portion of non-grant dollars to the project so that the firm could evaluate and design the northern and southern connections. This limited foresight needs adjusting so that SDOT can build the seamless bicycle, pedestrian, and transit networks necessary to create a safer city.

Example #5: Scoping the Intersection of N 50th St, Stone Way, and Green Lake Way

The intersection of N 50th Street, Green Lake Way, and Stone Way is an example of SDOT's use of project budgeting to undermine safe and seamless connections. In 2017, SDOT began planning and designing efforts for rechannelizations as part of the repaving of East Green Lake Drive/Way, Green Lake Way, Stone Way, N 80th Street, N 50th Street, and N 40th Street.

The intersection of 50th, Green Lake Way, and Stone Way is in the heart of the project and is considered one of the worst for pedestrians and bicyclists in the city. The BMP calls for protected bike lanes on Green Lake Way and Stone Way, and on N

50th Street to the west of the intersection. However, early on in the process, SDOT decided the cost of reconfiguring the intersection would be too expensive to include within the project's budget.

Local neighbors and street safety advocates pointed out that simple fixes to the timing of the intersection's traffic lights would allow for significant improvements, including the extension of protected phases for people walking and biking. But because SDOT had already decided not to touch the intersection, even the community's strongest efforts were not enough to change direction.

Example #6: Vision Zero & 23rd Ave Corridor

For people biking south from Montlake up to the Central District, the most direct route with the least grade is 23rd Avenue. All other routes include significant grades or significantly out of the way routes. However, the 2014 BMP did not prioritize a protected bike lane on 23rd Avenue and instead suggested alternative side street neighborhood greenways that were windy, steep, and on rough roadway surfaces. When the 23rd Avenue Corridor Improvements Project considered how to incorporate bikeways, it generally followed the 2014 BMP. Worse yet, the project did not even implement bus lanes for the segment from Montlake up the hill to the Central District, and it did not rechannelize the street so traffic would be calmer and the street would be easier for pedestrians to cross.

Example #7: Vision Zero & Rainier Ave S

The second case is Rainier Avenue S, which has received many iterations of safety projects over the last two decades. The 2014 BMP prioritized a protected bike lane on Rainier Avenue from Boren Avenue to Martin Luther King Jr Way, at which point the protected bike lane would continue south on MLK Way. But it was never clear if the MLK Way route would truly be feasible considering it is designated as a priority freight route and it could not be easily rechannelized from its four lane configuration with the light rail in the median. Meanwhile, Rainier Ave S has major commercial and residential destinations in Columbia City, Hillman City, and Rainier Beach to which people would like to bike to. Despite the obvious benefits, SDOT did not implement protected bike lanes as part of Rainier Ave S Safety Corridor project that rechannelized much of the street from four to three lanes.

Major Corridor Projects & Vision Zero

If Seattle is to reach Vision Zero and its bicycle ridership goals by 2030 and 2035, every major corridor project will need to do its part to be designed for zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries and with all ages and abilities bikeways. But all too often SDOT fails to create genuinely safe environments for all modes and all people.

The Complete Streets Ordinance requires SDOT to provide for the "appropriate accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all abilities," consistent with the modal plans. While the modal plans are great in many respects, the plans are not always perfect, and some streets and projects are left out of the plans that should be included.

Two examples are the 23rd Avenue Corridor Improvements Project and the Rainier Avenue S Safety Corridor Project, highlighted above in Examples #6 and #7.

Certainly not every arterial street will have protected bike lanes. Budget constraints and the need to prioritize limited funding is perhaps the strongest reason. And there is also competing uses, such as freight and light rail on MLK Way.

But major corridor projects, such as the 23rd Avenue Improvements Project and Rainier Avenue S Corridor

Project, need to do a better job of considering whether the modal plans' planned alternative routes are realistic and whether those routes should instead be built as part of the current project.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENT TO PLAN SAFE STREETS

- ★ 10. Require SDOT to prioritize seamless safe connections both within the existing project area as well as connecting a project to adjacent infrastructure.
- 11. Officially adopt Vision Zero as a city goal.
- ★ 12. Set policy that all projects are expected to be designed and engineered to contribute to reaching the Vision Zero goal.
- 13. Require all major corridor projects, including paving, transit, safety, and freight projects, to evaluate whether modal plans' adjacent routes should be implemented instead on the main street(s) of the corridor project in order to achieve the city's overall transportation goals and objectives.

DESIGN TO CITY GOALS, NOT THROUGHPUT

Since the 1940s, core to the philosophy of America traffic engineering has been increasing the throughput of vehicles on our roadways, measured by "level of service," graded A through F. The idea goes, the more cars moving through an intersection or street — and the faster they are moving, the better it is performing.

Who goes missing from this equation are people riding transit, riding bikes, and walking. What is lost is how a street can create a sense of place where people hangout in sidewalk cafes, where people shop in storefronts, where people people-watch, and where kids feel comfortable playing in the street.

The great streets of the world are not interstates filled with cars going 70 mph. They are where interactions happen, dreams are sparked, and love flourishes. The great streets of the world are rated "Level of Service F." F for friends and family.

Unfortunately, despite encouragement from Seattle City Council to move away from "LOS" and despite SDOT's statements saying they no longer use LOS, SDOT continues to use LOS. For example, SDOT explicitly refused to touch the intersection of N 50th Street, Green Lake Way, and Stone Way in large part because the intersection is rated LOS F and they did not want to take any actions that may make traffic worse. One must wonder, how is it possible to get a lower rating than F?

One solution may be to count people, not cars, when conducting a "level of service" analysis. This approach is called "multimodal level of service," or MMLOS for short. People riding buses, biking, and walking get counted just as much as cars.

But the MMLOS approach has obvious flaws. For example, say only one in a thousand people walk through an intersection and only one in 100 of those people use a wheelchair or walker. Should the city not build sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and ADA curb ramps?

Another basic flaw is that MMLOS designs to the use of today, not how we want people to use the street in the future. A public plaza, a park, and a parklet would all likely still get an F rating. If the City is building a network of bikeways with the expectation that it will result in eventually in 20% of people commuting by bike to work, the lag of waiting for the network to be built and the bike culture to catch up would leave the street rated F for awhile.

This is not to say that LOS and MMLOS do not have their place. They provide useful data that helps planners and engineers understand how a street or intersection is being used. But transportation planners and engineers clearly need direction that they should not use LOS and MMLOS as the determining factor for how to engineer a street. Instead, they should focus more on whether a street design fulfills the overall goals of a city to reduce single occupancy vehicular trips, to increase walking and biking, to increase transit ridership, to end traffic fatalities and serious injuries, and to improve livability with great public places.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENT TO DESIGN TO CITY GOALS

- ★ 14. Set a city policy that traffic engineering of streets should not be determined by level of service, but on the ability of the street design to meet the city's transportation goals as set forth in its modal, climate, land use, and parks plans and policies.

▼ *Intersection of N 50th St, Green Lake Way, and Stone Way. As part of a major paving and rechannelization project, SDOT refused to improve this intersection because many of the lanes were measured to perform at a Level of Service ("LOS") of "D" and "F". Advocates had pushed for a minor change to one turn lane which had an LOS of "C".*



SPEED LIMITS

Speed is the number one factor in whether people are killed or seriously injured in traffic crashes.

While drunkenness and distraction can be factors, the fact that an object in motion hits another object is the reason why a collision occurs. The faster the collision, the more likely a more serious injury will occur; at 20 mph there is a 90% likelihood of survival while at 40 mph there is just a 10% likelihood of survival.

Engineers consider posted speed limits to have limited effect on driver behavior. But posted speeds do have three important aspects:

1. Speeds signs are the best public education tool the city has to express what the safe speed of a street is.
2. The posted speeds are the regulatory basis for which police officers can enforce the law, and getting caught driving 35 mph in a 20 mph zone will get a higher penalty than in a 30 mph zone.
3. The posted speeds establish the speed to which the engineers can design a street to.

This is why Seattle City Council lowered the default speeds for all streets in 2016. The default speed limit for nonarterial neighborhood streets was decreased to 20 mph and the speed limit for arterial streets was dropped to 25 mph. Because the city council's action only changed the default speed limit, the signed speed limits on arterial streets remained the same unless changed by SDOT. Shortly after city council's action, SDOT did reduce speed limits to 25 mph on arterial streets in Downtown Seattle and targeted, limited neighborhoods.

Moving forward, SDOT has limited reducing speed limits to only after a rechannelization project has been implemented and at least a year of data is collected to determine whether the speed of the rechannelized streets has decreased.

SDOT has proceeded with this policy because SDOT interpreted state traffic engineering guidance documents to require speed limits to be set to the speed of the 15th-percent fastest drivers (85 percent of drivers would be slower, 15 percent faster). This engineering guidance was meant to apply to rural and

separated highways where having a wide range of vehicle speeds on the roadway could cause rear-end collisions at fast speeds.

But in the urban context, the state guidance is a one-way ratchet to faster and faster speed limits at the detriment of traffic safety.

SDOT has recently discovered new state and federal guidance which it believes gives it authority to set speed limits based on the 50th percentile speed of drivers. Under this new approach, speed limits will be set to the average speed of drivers, which is slower than top 15 percent. Still, it's a fundamentally flawed approach to set speeds based on how fast drivers want to go rather than the speed that is safe.

The Seattle City Council has determined that the default speed limit for arterial streets is 25 mph. By establishing 25 mph as the default speed, the City Council has effectively decided that 25 mph is a generally reasonable speed for arterial streets. In order to make our streets calmer and to clearly communicate to the public that slower speeds are safer, whenever possible, SDOT should proactively reduce the signed arterial speed limits to the default.

In business districts with high pedestrian volumes, such as in Downtown, Columbia City, Alaskan Junction, Uptown, Ballard, Lower Fremont, U District, Greenwood, and Lake City, even lower speeds are appropriate. These are locations that should be prioritized for people walking. Moreover, during rush hour, vehicular traffic rarely exceeds 20 mph in business districts, so 20 mph speed limits would not significantly impact traffic flow but would improve the safety and comfort for customers and workers.

In Portland, Oregon, the traffic lights in its downtown have been timed for vehicular traffic to move at 12-15 mph (typically 12.5 mph). In Seattle, SDOT times its traffic signals to match the posted speed limits. In tandem with implementing slower speed limits in Seattle's downtown and business districts, SDOT should follow Portland's lead and time its traffic signals to be even slower than 20 mph.

Beyond arterial streets, even at 20 mph residential streets are too fast to feel comfortable for people to bike while sharing the roadway with cars. Neighborhood greenways are supposed to be designed for people of all ages and abilities to feel comfortable biking — effectively having a trail-like experience but on neighborhood residential streets. Trails are designed for travel at 15 mph, meanwhile SDOT engineers its greenways to 20mph.

Recognizing that so many of Seattle's neighborhoods lack sidewalks that it might be hundreds of years before every street has sidewalks, the Move Seattle Levy envisioned using a portion of its funds for pedestrianizing streets through less expensive alternatives to concrete curbed sidewalks. SDOT now has a "Home Zone" program that pedestrianizes whole blocks by "limiting and slowing traffic on adjacent residential streets within a grid of arterial streets, creating zones of people-centered areas that prioritizes pedestrian safety and community use of the right-of-way." However, SDOT's design standard is to slow traffic to 20 mph, still much too fast for adults and children walking and playing in the street.

State law does not allow for speed limits to be set below 20 mph, but jurisdictions can post lower "recommended speed" signs and design their streets to be slower and calmer than 20 mph. Given that greenways should be a trail-like experience and "home zones" should be comfortable for people walking in the street, the city council should establish that greenways and home zones must be designed for 15 mph.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENT IN SETTING SPEED LIMITS

15. As a matter of city policy, SDOT should proactively reduce the speed of arterial streets to 25 mph as part of all repaving, rechannelization, and transit corridor projects.
16. Reduce arterial speed limits in business districts to 20 mph.
- ★ 17. Time traffic signals in Downtown and business districts for 12-15 mph traffic.
18. Sign and design neighborhood greenways and Home Zones for 15 mph.



(photo credit: Seattle Department of Transportation)

SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOLS & PARKS

Children and adults deserve to safely walk and bike to schools and parks without fear of being seriously injured by a driver. Unfortunately, the number of children who walk and bike to school has precipitously dropped since the 1950s.

That's why the state legislature adopted the school and playground speed zone law and safe routes to school program. The state gives wide authority to local jurisdictions to lower speed limits near schools and parks, automate enforcement, increase the speeding fines, and direct revenue to safety infrastructure and programs.

The state school and playground speed zone law states:

"[Jurisdictions] may create a school or playground speed zone on a highway bordering a marked school or playground, in which zone it is unlawful for a person to operate a vehicle at a speed in excess of twenty miles per hour. The school or playground speed zone may extend three hundred feet from the border of the school or playground property; however, the speed zone may only include area consistent with active school or playground use."

While the City of Seattle has a decent program to address street safety near schools, it is far from fully utilizing its authority to make walking and biking to our schools and parks safe for children and adults.

Jurisdictions have the authority to establish the robustness of their school and playground zones in several important ways, including:

- Defining which schools and playgrounds will be protected.
- Determining how the resulting traffic camera revenue will be spent.

School & Playground Definitions

All people deserve to be safe while walking and biking. Seattle should be a city where kids and parents feel safe to ride to a park and play in the street. In addition, adult walkers, joggers, runners, and others recreating deserve to be able to safely get to a park, trail, community center, or public school track and field without driving.

Given long-term decline in physical activity among children and growing chronic health concerns resulting from the decline, it's even more imperative that we create complete networks of safe streets to schools and parks. To create a holistic safe network built around trips to schools and parks, SDOT's school zone program needs to be expanded to all schools and playgrounds.

Currently, SDOT applies the school zone program primarily to elementary schools, not to public or private schools of other educational levels, and not to playgrounds or active parks.

Seattle City Council should explicitly define, for the purpose of its school and playground speed zone program, "schools" as any public or private pre-school, K-12, technical school, or university. This will provide a complete range of protection to students, teachers, and parents.

Seattle City Council should also explicitly define "playfields" as any public or private park that is publicly accessible that is used for play or physical activity. Parks used exclusively for ecosystem benefits, such as forested areas on hillsides without any trails, could be excluded.

This approach to defining playgrounds to include parks for physical play on fields and trails is consistent with the naming of many existing parks in the city, including the Alki, B.F. Day, Ballard, Bar-S, Bayview, Benefit, Bryant Neighborhood, Burke-Gilman, Cascade, Cleveland, E.C. Hughes, East Queen Anne, Fairmont, Foola, Gilman, Highland Park, Hutchinson, Lakewood, Madrona, Meridian, Othello, Rogers, Ross, Sacajawea, Sandel, South Park, T.T. Minor, University, Van Asselt, and Victory Heights Playgrounds.

In total, Seattle has named 28 parks as "playgrounds," many of these with jungle gym equipment, large fields, and even orchards. It is only natural to expect that a child or an adult may run across a street unexpectedly at any moment at these locations, such as when chasing a kickball or softball. Seattle should promote the ability of people to safely

walk, run, and bike to their parks by expanding 20 mph zones to the full range of playgrounds.

Finally, Seattle City Council should explicitly define "active use."

The state law requires the school and playground zones to be designated for "active" schools and playgrounds. Seattle currently defines "active" by signage on school zone signs to either be by time-of-day when a school is in session or "when children are present." Both approaches are highly confusing to drivers and do not fully protect people walking and biking to the schools and playgrounds.

Schools are active not just 7:55 a.m. To 2:25 p.m. In the morning, students have free & reduced breakfast, early study sessions, zero-hour physical conditioning classes, or may simply be playing in playfield. At lunch, elementary and middle school students may run across the street to get a ball kicked out from the playfield and high school students may go to lunch off campus. In the evening, any number of activities are happening, including sports, band practice, drama, clubs, after-school studies, and vocational education programming.

"Active use" also cannot be so simply defined by the school year, with winter break, spring break, and summer session excepted. Extracurricular and community activities happen year-round at schools. Playgrounds and their jungle gyms and playfields are busy all the time, from before dawn until after dusk.

There's also a matter of clarity and consistency for drivers to ensure fairness and compliance. Drivers who are not parents with kids at the local elementary school cannot be expected to know who school is in session, and the time-of-day changes to the 20 mph enforcement zones end up acting as speed traps.

For clarity to drivers and the safety of people going to and from schools and playgrounds, Seattle should define "active use" not by time of day, but by whether the school or playground is being actively used in a particular year.

There are times when schools and playgrounds are closed to be remodeled and improved, and in such situations there is no risk a person would be walking to the school to go to class or for after school programming or to the playfield to play soccer. But absent the shuttering of the school or playground, Seattle's 20 mph zones for schools and playgrounds should reflect that anyone may be coming to or from the school or park.

This comprehensive approach to defining schools and parks will provide a foundation for signing and designing streets to speeds that are more consistent with children and adults who are walking and biking to schools and parks. If SDOT builds upon this foundation, Seattle will have a network and culture of safety and being physically active.

School & Playground Zone Designations

Once the City clarifies the definitions for schools and playgrounds, SDOT needs to actually designate the school and playground zones and sign the streets to 20 mph. There are 113 schools in the Seattle Public Schools system, but just 15 schools zones enforced by a traffic camera.

A robust designation of 20 mph zones adjacent to schools and parks would provide clarity and consistency for drivers and protect people walking and biking to the schools and parks.

Safe Bike Routes to School & Parks

At present, the city's "Safe Routes to School" map only marks walking routes. In order to generate a list of potential bikeway projects that could be funded by school zone traffic revenue, SDOT, Seattle Parks & Recreation (SPR), and Seattle Public Schools (SPS) should create a bike routes map for each public school and identify needed bike infrastructure improvements along those routes.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENT FOR SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOLS & PARKS

19. Under the policies for implementing "School Zones," Seattle City Council should define "schools" and "playgrounds" to include the full range of schools and playgrounds, and define "active use" to mean any school or playground that regularly open throughout the year.
20. Seattle City Council should set the default speed limits adjacent to schools and parks as 20 mph.
21. SDOT should designate school zones at all public schools and at least a quarter of parks.
22. SDOT should engineer streets surrounding schools and parks to the 20 mph speed limits.
23. SDOT, SPR, and SPS should map safe bike routes to schools so school zone traffic revenue can be directed to those projects.

EXPAND AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement of traffic safety laws is one of the most fraught issues. The best way to ensure compliance is not through more policing but through designing and engineering streets to effect driver behavior to be consistent with desired behavior. We can never have sufficient police officers to catch even most traffic violations. Plus, increasing the number of police officers who conduct traffic stops would increase concerns about racial bias in policing.

Automated enforcement, through traffic cameras, is a better approach. Automated enforcement can be more comprehensive to more easily catch violators, and generates revenue that can be redirected toward street calming projects that reduce the number of violators.

Plus, traffic cameras lack many of the negatives of increasing the number of police officers:

- No pretextual stops.
- No racial bias in issuing tickets.
- Offenses are billed to the owner of the car, and not recorded as an offense on a driver's record.

The state authorizes cities to use traffic cameras to enforce red lights and school zone speed limits. The state also authorizes Seattle to have one traffic camera to enforce a standard speed limit in one spot. In the future, the state may authorize the use of traffic cameras to enforce bus lanes and keeping crosswalks and intersections clear (known as "blocking the box").

Seattle City Council should set an official policy to dedicate 100% of revenue from automated enforcement to transportation projects that have a substantial nexus to the purpose of the traffic camera.

All school zone camera revenue should go toward projects that make walking and biking to schools and parks safer, and all red light camera revenue should go toward making intersections and arterial streets safer for people walking and biking. Likewise, the policy should specify that revenue from new traffic cameras, such as for bus lanes and "blocking the box," should also be dedicated toward painting bus lanes and crosswalks, improving biking and walking access to transit, and making intersections safer.

By dedicating all automated enforcement revenue to projects with a substantial nexus, there will be greater public support for automated enforcement.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR EXPANDED AUTOMATED ENFORCEMENT

24. Seattle City Council should give broad authorization for SDOT to install traffic cameras to enforce all schools zones and red lights.
25. Seattle City Council should set a target for every public school and 20% of parks to have a enforcement camera by 2022.
26. Seattle City Council should mandate 100% of automated enforcement revenue to be spent on street infrastructure projects with a substantial nexus to the purpose of the enforcement.



(photo credit: Seattle Department of Transportation)

SEAMLESS, TRAIL-LIKE BIKEWAYS

The way SDOT plans and engineers bikeway projects is fundamentally flawed. We need a new approach that considers the BMP-prioritized bikeways as SDOT's default action and that takes a holistic approach toward connecting Seattle with seamless, trail-like bikeways.

The current model is to convert the 2014 BMP into small individual segments, and then analyze and prioritize those segments for implementation according to metrics such as ability to implement the segments with other major corridor repaving and rechannelization projects, ridership potential, and racial justice factors. While the prioritization factors are meritorious, the segmentation results in suboptimal bikeways.

For projects implemented as part of other major repaving, safety rechannelization, or transit corridor projects, the bikeway is intrinsically a secondary priority to the primary purpose of the project. For example, Rainier Avenue S has been subject to multiple major safety and transit corridor projects over the last three decades. Rainier Ave S would also be the flattest, most direct route to bike from Downtown to Columbia City and Rainier Beach if it had a sufficient bikeway. But despite being prioritized in the BMP for protected bike lanes from the International District to Mount Baker and despite strong advocacy from the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board and groups like Rainier Valley Greenways, SDOT has never implemented bikeways as part of its Rainier Ave S projects.

The segmentation also means that specific bikeway projects lack sufficient scope to be truly transformative in creating complete, continuous bikeway networks that support people of all abilities to ride to where they want to go.

For example, the 2nd Avenue Protected Bike Lanes was implemented in Downtown Seattle in 2014 as an "all ages and abilities" facility. But it was not connected to any adjacent AAA bikeway infrastructure. So, a person who was "interested but concerned" had no reasonable way to get to the bikeway. Five years later, the 2nd Avenue Protected Bike Lanes have been expanded but still do not connect into a seamless AAA bikeway network.

The segmentation and discontinuous bikeway network is the result of several flaws:

- Treating the 2014 BMP Map as "recommendations" rather than as the "planned" network, which forces advocates to fight for every bikeway project despite the fact that the segments have already been planned and approved by SDOT and Seattle City Council in the BMP.
- Pitting BMP-planned bikeway projects against one another when planning segments by conducting alternatives analyses of parallel routes.
- Limit project scope to each segment, limiting potential connections to adjacent bikeways and the broader citywide bikeway network.

As SDOT prepares for a 2024 renewal of the Move Seattle Levy, SDOT should look toward a new approach for major project delivery that is more akin to how RapidRide and light rail corridors are planned, designed, and constructed. SDOT should plan out a network of seamless, trail-like bikeways across the entire city. Many of these routes will include trails, protected bike lanes, and greenways already built out but will fix missing connections along those routes. Other routes may be completely new.

The planned citywide network of trail-like bikeways would not replace the existing BMP. Instead, it would create a new planning layer that uses the existing BMP map as its foundation, with each cross-city bikeway planned, designed, and engineered as a single project.

This new approach will ensure that bikeways are seamless, connect neighborhoods so that people of all ages and abilities can get to where they want to go. It will help ensure SDOT project teams are considering the broader context of their projects. And it will set-up SDOT to be more competitive for applying for larger federal, state, and regional grants.

To help ensure renewal of the transportation levy in 2024, the new project delivery model should be used for putting together the levy proposal and deliverables. Building out networks of seamless, trail-like bikeways will provide a more tangible, iconic approach to pitch to voters the planned investment in the bike network.

The draft 2019-2024 six-year BMP Implementation Plan called for updating the 2014 Bicycle Master Plan. While in general the BMP should be updated every ten years or so, the current BMP is a strong document. In a time when SDOT is struggling to implement it on time and under budget, spending staff resources on a major update is wrong-headed.

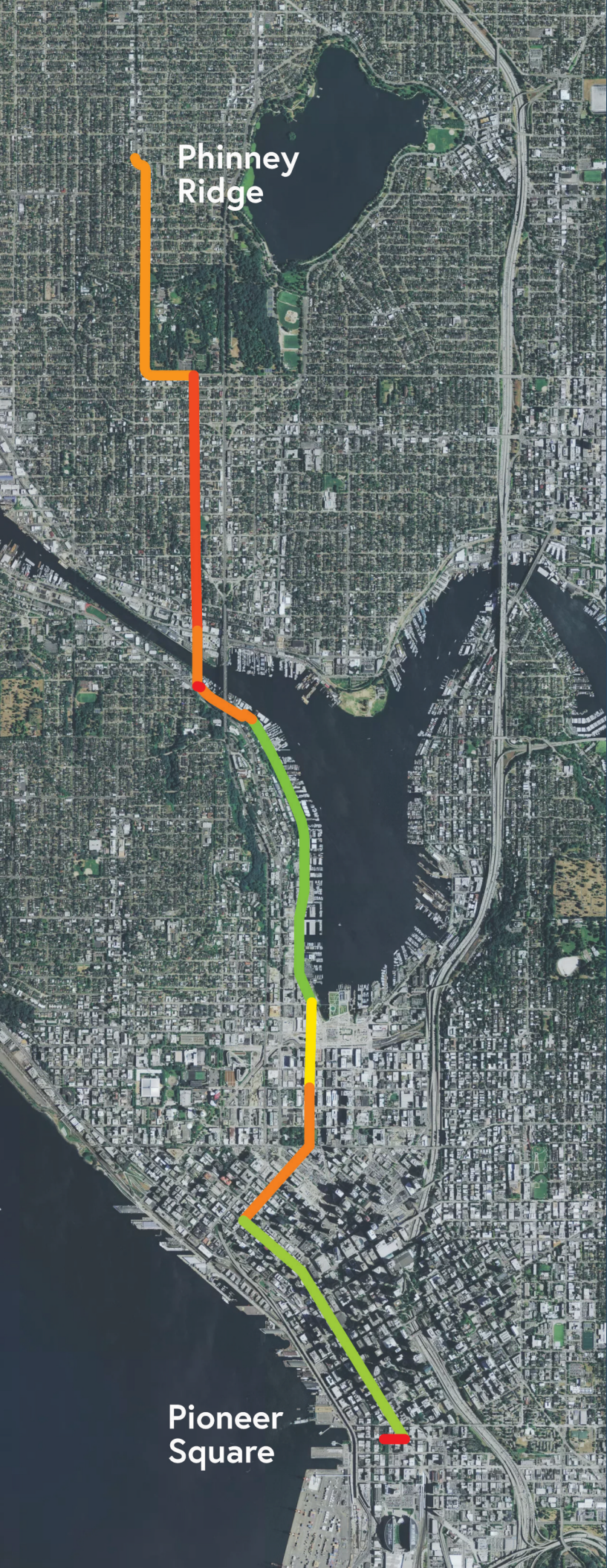
Example #8: Discontinuous Bikeways

Imagine someone who is "interested but concerned" who wants to bike from Phinney Ridge to Pioneer Square. Here's a route they may take.

1. Ride in minor separation bike lanes on Phinney Avenue.
2. Ride down a harrowing Fremont Avenue, squeezed next to parked cars
3. Go through the busy intersections of Lower Fremont with no bike infrastructure whatsoever
4. Ride on the narrow Fremont Bridge sidewalk with many other people,
5. Either take a right on Nickerson to make a cloverleaf pattern route to the Ship Canal Trail or wait extra long in an exposed position to use the crosswalk to get over to the the sidewalk toward the Westlake CycleTrack
6. Ride the Westlake CycleTrack to 9th Avenue
7. Ride south on 9th Avenue in minor separation bike lanes and in mixed traffic
8. Ride up the Bell Street hill in mixed traffic
9. Ride the Bell Street Festival Street with cars that are illegally driving straight through
10. Turn left and bike in the 2nd Avenue Protected Bike Lane, being extra-cautious of drivers turning into parking garages and illegally turning left on red.
11. Use a "Copenhagen right-hand turn" onto Washington Street into mixed traffic to get into Pioneer Square.

While some of this route has AAA infrastructure, most of it isn't and none of the route is seamless. This is not a network that will enable a substantial growth in bike ridership.

If even just one segment along a route isn't AAA, then someone who is "willing but wary" is unlikely to ride the route at all.



NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR SEAMLESS, TRAIL-LIKE BIKEWAYS

27. Seattle City Council should adopt the 2014 BMP map as the "planned map" — as opposed to the "recommended map" — of bikeway projects.
28. Seattle City Council should clarify that the bikeways planned in the 2014 BMP should not be pitted against one another.
- ★ 29. Starting in 2021 — in preparation for the 2024 transportation levy renewal — SDOT should create a project map of trail-like, seamless bikeways that will connect across the entire city.
- ★ 30. Once the levy is approved by voters, SDOT should create project teams for each cross-city bikeway and implement each bikeway as one holistic project.

Design of Seamless, Trail-Like Bikeways

In general, this report does not address specific design of bikeways, understanding that SDOT already has a strong Streets Illustrated Manual and relies on NACTO Design Standards. Instead, this report urges SDOT to lower the signed and design speeds of streets, and increase the level of traffic control on these streets to slow traffic to the signed speeds.

In addition, we strongly urge SDOT to do more to address safety at intersections with the use of "protected intersections" and "leading pedestrian intervals, and to promote more social bicycling by having no bike lane thinner than 6' wide, and 12' for bidirectional bike lanes.

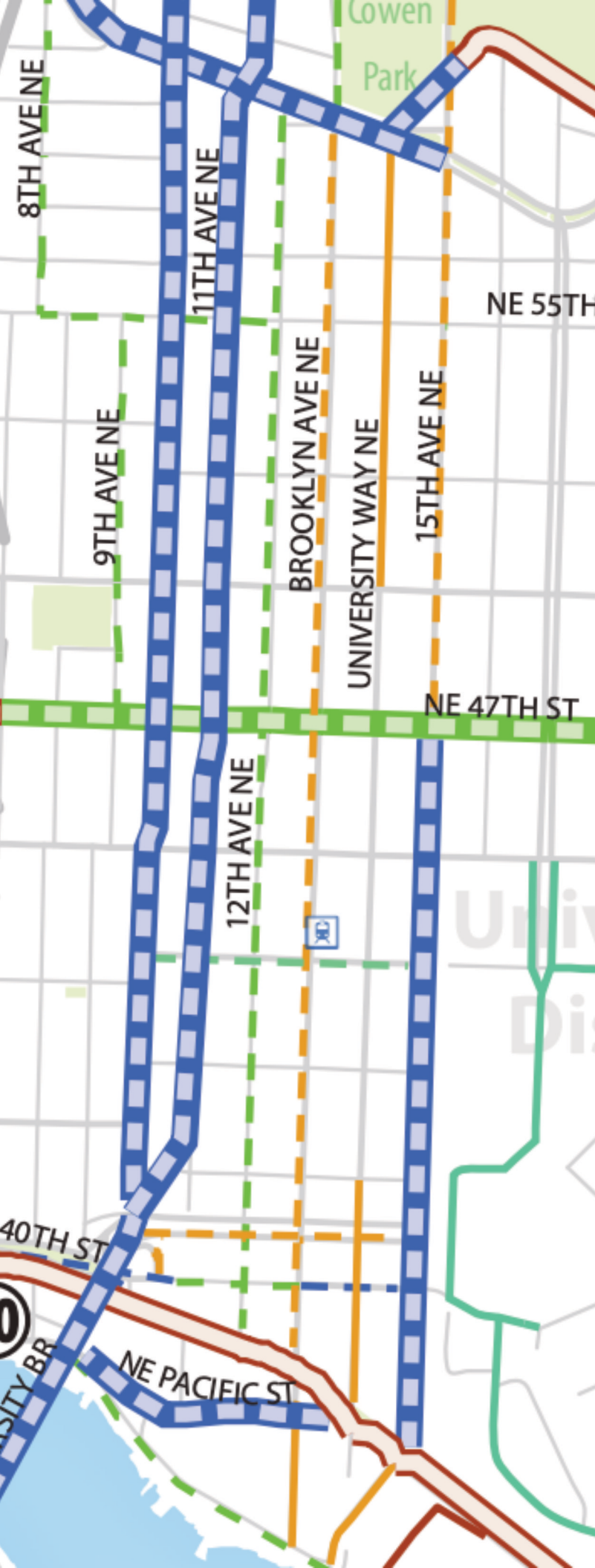
Potential Citywide Trail-like Bikeway Projects

Example #9: Indianapolis Cultural Trail

The City of Indianapolis takes the approach of building out its bikeways as trail-like and seamless. The Indianapolis Cultural Trail is now 8.1 miles long with several connected segments.

SDOT should take a similar project management approach toward building out its bikeway network.





Example #10: *Pitting U District Bikeways*

It's understandable that SDOT would want to explore alternatives to a planned bikeway when designing a street. However, this often can undermine the BMP by pitting planned bikeways against one another. An alternatives analysis also gives reactionary neighbors an incorrect impression that we need only to put "bikes on another street" rather than make sure every street is safe so that people may arrive at their destinations.

Seattle City Council's Resolution 31515, which adopted the 2014 BMP, stated:

"More detailed design and community engagement may lead to a project being developed in a different way or location than envisioned in the Plan, including where multiple bicycle facilities serve parallel transportation corridors."

In many places, this alternatives analysis of projects does not fit the BMP's goal to create a network of safe bikeways.

For example, in the U District, nearly every north-south street is prioritized for bike infrastructure. Given the high potential for high ridership in the U District, this prioritization for a strong network of bikeways is especially important.

If SDOT were to conduct alternative analyses for individual routes and determine that the adjacent routes are better, then soon the BMP's prioritized network for the U District would no longer exist.

For this reason, Seattle City Council should make it clear that any bikeway alternatives analysis, if conducted, should not result in a net reduction in the planned bike network in terms of quality and quantity.



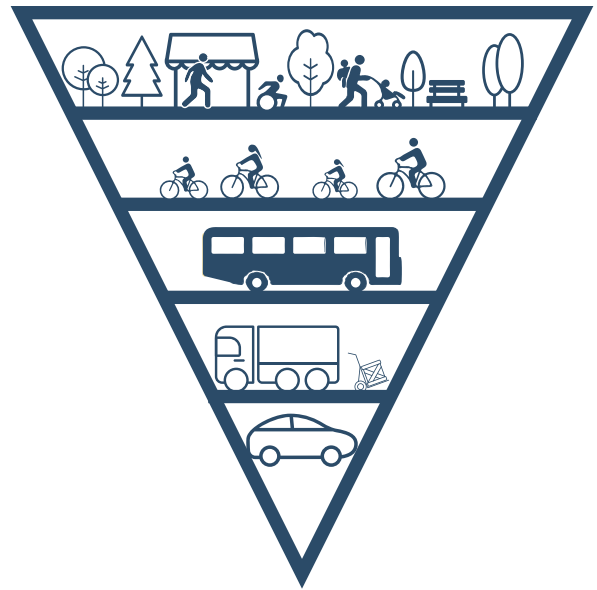
PRIORITIZE FUNDING

Safe streets advocates were by far the strongest supporters of Seattle's 2015 Move Seattle Levy that provided \$930 million in funding.

Most crucial to the success of creating safer streets, and most nebulous to advocate for, is having sufficient financial and staffing resources.

All budgets are finite. Budget prioritization is an actualization of a city leadership's priorities.

It is especially important that the city prioritize accordingly, be fiscally responsible and transparent with taxpayer dollars, and find any necessary additional resources so that it can deliver on the projects listed in the modal plans, reach Vision Zero, and address climate change.



Many leading cities across North America, including Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, B.C., have adopted modal prioritization hierarchies to communicate which modes it views as most important for the future of its city. In creating safer streets, addressing climate change, improving mobility in densifying cities, and creating great neighborhoods, this hierarchy is critical for setting prioritizes in not only planning, designing, and engineering streets, but also in budgeting.

The safest, flattest, most direct ways across the city should be designed for people walking and biking, not people in cars. In choosing whether to rechannelize a street from four general purpose lanes down to two with two bus-only lanes, the hierarchy provides clear direction. And in choosing between on-street parking for personally-owned cars and an on-street bike corral, a bus stop, or a delivery zone, the priority is set.

Most importantly, the modal hierarchy forces SDOT and city council to consider how it prioritizes its transportation budget. For context, the 2019-21 state transportation budget was \$9.98 billion, but dedicated just \$41 million (0.4%) to safe routes to school and other walking and biking projects. By contrast, the 2015 Move Seattle Levy was \$930 million and dedicated \$275 million (29%) to walking,

biking, and other safety projects.

Building out the entire 2014 BMP is estimated, on the high-end, to cost \$550 million. Building out sidewalks and other safety projects will likewise cost hundreds of millions. In order to reach the city's climate goals and Vision Zero, Seattle City Council will need to continue to put a heavy priority on building out its walking, biking, and transit networks. In addition, SDOT will need to become much more efficient at implementing its modal plans and realizing the objectives of the Complete Streets Ordinance.

Example #11: N/NE 40th Street

One of the appalling aspects to the administration's recent decision to not proceed forward with the planned bikeways for N/NE 40th Street and 35th Ave NE was how recklessly fiscally irresponsible the actions were.

SDOT estimates that planning, engineering and constructing the N/NE 40th Street bike lanes would cost \$400,000 if done independently of any other project. But when done in conjunction with the paving project, the bike lanes would cost just \$175,000. These costs savings are reached because community engagement, planning, and engineering can be done all at the same time.

After two years of planning and engineering efforts that brought the project up to 60% design, SDOT eliminated the bike lanes on 40th Street. The remaining funding of \$70,000, which would have gone to the physical paint and bollards, instead will now go toward pedestrian improvements.

This was a terrible waste of the city's bicycle project funds. SDOT will have spent \$175,000 on minor pedestrian improvements, and if it ever decides to build the bike lanes, it will have to spend at least another \$400,000. That's \$575,000 wasted.

That's why it's critical SDOT implement the BMP-prioritized bike lanes with every transportation improvement project, consistent with the Complete Streets ordinance. Otherwise, the city is wasting opportunities to inexpensively build out its bike network.

TIGHTEN COMPLETE STREETS ORDINANCE

Due to political intervention, SDOT is wasting hundreds of thousands of dollars on community engagement, planning, design, and engineering on projects it ultimately never builds or takes an excessive amount of time to complete.

As demonstrated in example #11, SDOT wasted \$575,000 on community engagement and engineering for relatively minor bike lanes as part of a repaving of N/NE 40th Street, which will now not be implemented. Mayor Durkan's decision on 35th Avenue NE was likely even more costly. And the Center City Bike Lane Network has been delayed for years with ever more community engagement and engineering costs.

SDOT's typical timeline for a corridor project is three years: Year 1, planning and community engagement; Year 2, engineering; and Year 3, construction. Given that Seattle City Council has already adopted the BMP with specific bikeway typologies designated for each street, and given the Complete Streets Ordinance requires SDOT to implement the BMP through most roadway improvements, SDOT could speed up project delivery by considering the 2014 BMP map to be the "planned" rather than "recommended" bikeway routes.

By making the 2014 BMP — and all modal plans — the presumed default action, the first year of project development when design alternatives are considered could be minimized or eliminated. In addition, projects would be less likely to be overturned later due to political considerations.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR QUICKER IMPLEMENTATION WITHOUT POLITICAL INFLUENCE

- ★ 31. Tighten the language of the Complete Streets Ordinance to ensure projects planned within the modal plans are implemented with every transportation improvement project.
- 32. Minimize alternatives analysis during project planning to alternatives that are consistent with the modal plans.

BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

Transparency in budgeting is critical for Seattle City Council, stakeholders, and the public to have a meaningful voice in shaping of the city's biennial budget. With a firm understanding of the funding possibilities, leaders and stakeholders can propose concrete budget amendments.

Unfortunately, there's a lack of transparency in Seattle's budgeting. For example, for several years, the Seattle City Council had been making progress in increasing the percentage of revenue from red light traffic cameras that was dedicated to street safety projects. But in 2018, Mayor Durkan zeroed out this funding source for safety projects and redirected it to the general fund. Because it was discovered late in the process, city council struggled to find a different way to pay for the general fund programs.

Often the problem is tied directly to the funding of specific projects and programs through the budget. During the spring of each year, divisions within departments put together initial budget ideas, which are then passed up to the department heads. Then the department heads finalize their agencies' proposed budgets as a budget memo and submit them to the mayor's office and City Budget Office (CBO), who vet and finalize the memos into one

budget proposal, which is ultimately submitted to city council by October 3 of each year. While the mayor's office has the benefit of seeing every initial budget memo and idea from each division and subdivision within the departments, city councilmembers generally do not, and instead the councilmembers only get a few weeks to put together their amendments. This leaves little room for councilmembers to negotiate funding sources or projects against the mayor's proposal.

In order to improve transparency and the ability for councilmembers to amend the proposed budget, the initial budget memos and ideas by the departments, divisions and subdivisions should be made publicly available. This will give the councilmembers, and the community at large, more options and time to consider how to shape the budget.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR TRANSPARENCY IN BUDGETING

33. Make budget memos and proposals from within SDOT's divisions and subdivisions publicly available much earlier during the year as part of the annual budget process.



FIX INITIATIVE 42

Initiative 42 was a petition from Seattle citizens in 1996 to ensure park lands were not lost to other uses, which was adopted by city council action in 1997.

The ordinance prohibits city departments from selling, transferring ownership, or changing the use of lands used for parks and recreation. If it wishes to do so, the city council must enact an ordinance finding the transaction is necessary because there is no reasonable and practical alternative, and receive land of equivalent size, value, location, and usefulness that serves the same community and purpose.

Unfortunately, the Parks and Recreation Department's (SPR) attorney's office has used Initiative 42 to block reasonable projects that have an otherwise rational connection to the city's goals and objectives relating to recreation, open space, and environmental benefits.

For example, for the repaving of East Green Lake Drive/Way, SDOT wished to install open stormwater raingardens instead of a piped stormwater system underneath the roadway. The stormwater raingardens would cost significantly less since the roadway would not have to be dug as deep, but it would require using a small edge of Green Lake Park. SPR refused to allow SDOT to proceed with the raingarden approach, adding hundreds of thousands of dollars (if not millions) in costs to the project.

For another example, during the creation of the BMP, SPR refused to allow any proposed new bike routes to be shown going through existing parks. Potential routes through Lower Woodland Park, Ravenna Park, and Jackson Park were eliminated from consideration. The basis for this opposition was Initiative 42.

However, Initiative 42 also states that the city council may also adopt an ordinance to convert park lands to other purposes in some circumstances even when not necessary and without an equivalent exchange of park land acreage. These allowable uses include: the reversion of right-of-way owned by a City utility; the opening of an unimproved street for street use; a sub-surface or utility easement compatible with park use; and franchises or concessions that further the public use and enjoyment of a park.

Perhaps a stormwater raingarden could have fit within the utility easement exception, but still the city council would first need to pass an ordinance. This requirement for adopting an ordinance adds time and political risk to a project.

SPR has become especially parochial about Initiative 42. However, Initiative 42 was not written to apply only to SPR's land, but to all of City of Seattle's land. It's a policy for all departments. Conceivably SDOT's Pavement-to-Parks and Parklet programs should fall under Initiative 42, as would public recreational boat launches and forested, park-like greenbelts managed by SDOT and Seattle Public Utilities.

SPR's parochialism has also led it to odd conclusions. Much of SPR's parks are also in a natural, forested state, providing eco-benefits of tree canopy and stormwater filtration. SPR also manages many miles of multi-use trails that are used by commuters to bike and walk to work, including the Burke-Gilman Trail, Alki Trail, Beacon Ave Path, Duwamish River Trail, Elliott Bay Trail, and Interlaken Boulevard. Despite these facts, SPR did not allow potential new bike routes to be marked on the BMP map or new stormwater raingardens as part of an adjacent city project. SPR has also resisted ideas for bike paths through park property as part of SDOT projects, such as in Jackson Park for a neighborhood greenway and in the Lower Woodland Park parking lot to extend a protected bike lane from around Green Lake Park.

The values of Initiative 42 are good. How it's being leveraged by SPR is not. Initiative 42 should be amended to make it clear that uses commonly provided by parks such as bike paths, walking routes, stormwater filtration, and tree canopy are not subject to the limits of Initiative 42 and do not require city council action. By making this clear, agency silos will be broken down, city departments will save staff resources in not having to bring these issues before city council, and ultimately transportation projects will both save money and be better designed.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS TO SAVE PROJECT COSTS BY FIXING INITIATIVE 42

34. Amend Initiative 42 to clarify that park uses such as bike paths and natural stormwater filtration are not subject to the requirement for approval by city council ordinance, even when the proposed action is made by a department other than SPR.

FIND MORE FUNDING

Even if SDOT improves its project delivery and the administration becomes fiscally responsible, the city is not on track to meeting the goals set out in its modal plans. There are too many sidewalks, curb ramps, bikeways, and transit corridors to build and not enough money.

SDOT will need to renew the Move Seattle Levy in 2024. At that point there will still be just six years left until the Vision Zero horizon year of 2030, and eleven years to the BMP horizon year of 2035. The ability to take meaningful action to address climate change will also be quickly slipping through our hands like grains of sand. So, beyond the levy renewal, SDOT needs to proactively find additional sources.

It's likely that SDOT will need to find \$500 million to \$1 billion in funding to complete substantial portions of its Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans.

▼ Staff and volunteers from Seattle's safe streets advocacy groups made more than half of all calls and door knocks in support of the Move Seattle Levy in 2015, with remaining support from social justice organizations, "Friends of SDOT" volunteers, engineering firms, and labor unions.



Move Seattle Levy Renewal

With renewal of the Move Seattle Levy coming in 2024, SDOT needs to begin planning how the new levy will be shaped. The levy should provide sufficient revenues to reach the city's goals for Vision Zero, bicycle ridership, transit ridership, and greenhouse gas emissions. In shaping the levy, SDOT should be proactive in creating new project delivery models that are more efficient and more compelling to voters in terms of creating tangible projects — namely a network of seamless, trail-like bikeways and pedestrian-oriented business districts and neighborhoods.

Congestion Pricing

Mayor Durkan has led a conversation for the implementation of congestion pricing in Seattle. This is an exciting development, although politically fraught. If congestion pricing is implemented, the revenue should be dedicated to projects that provide people with opportunities to get around without having to drive and pay the congestion charge, and the expenditures should reflect both a modal hierarchy and implement the city's modal plans.

Traffic Enforcement Cameras

Traffic enforcement cameras are an obvious source of funding. One hundred percent of the revenue from traffic cameras should be dedicated to safety projects with a substantial nexus to the cameras' purpose.

The city already dedicates 100% of school zone camera revenue to its Safe Routes to School Program. With expanded 20 mph zones at more schools and playgrounds, we can make our schools and playgrounds safer by dedicating the new traffic camera revenue to walking and biking improvements in more areas of the city.

For a brief moment, the city dedicated 25% of red light camera revenue to Vision Zero and Safe Routes to School projects, but the most recent budget repurposed this revenue to the general fund. Moving forward, 100% of the red light camera revenue should be dedicated to Vision Zero safety improvements, especially at intersections. Projects with strong nexus to red light violations would be to retiming downtown traffic lights to speeds of people biking and walking, installing no-turn-on-red restriction signs, and building curb bulbs.

The City of Seattle has sought authorization from the state legislature to use traffic cameras to enforce

bus lanes and "block the box" violations. City council should be proactive in assuring the state legislature that the revenue will not be a "cash cow" for the general fund, but will instead also be spent on transportation projects with a substantial nexus to enforcement mechanism.

Revenue from bus lane traffic cameras should be dedicated to: painting bus lanes red and other signage so drivers know not to drive in the lanes; improving bus stops to have better shelters and readerboards; and improving walking and biking access to the bus stops. Revenue from "block the box" traffic cameras should be dedicated to the similar projects as the red light traffic cameras, projects that focus on crosswalks, curb bulbs, and pedestrian-friendly signal timing.

Finally, revenue from school zones and playground zone cameras should be spent both on safe *walking* routes to schools and playgrounds, as well as safe *biking* routes to schools and playgrounds.

Public funders

With a huge transportation funding gap, Seattle needs to proactively seek additional funding from public sources, such as from federal, state, regional, and county funding sources. King County's park levy renewal and Sound Transit's System Access Fund and mitigation funding tied to its Ballard, West Seattle, and Lynnwood Link projects have been potential sources. Additionally, Seattle can be more proactive to package projects to be funded through the capital budgets of the state legislature.

Private funders

Aside from development agreements as part of new building construction, an untapped source is private funders.

There are many examples both nationally and locally that SDOT can look to for private funding models. Indianapolis built most of its Cultural Trail with donations from private foundations and individuals. The Verdant Health Foundation funded much of the recent bikeway improvements in Edmonds and Lynnwood. REI helped fund planning work for multi-use trails in South Seattle and for the Eastside Rail Corridor.

As Seattle looks to fund major bikeway improvements in the future, perhaps there are branding and legacy opportunities that could attract significant private funding.

INCREASING FUNDING

- ★ 35. Prepare to renew the Move Seattle Levy in 2024 with full funding for the modal plans.
- 36. Proactively find additional funding sources from federal, regional, county, and private sources.
- 37. Dedicate revenue from congestion pricing to implementing the city's modal plans.
- ★ 38. Dedicate 100% of revenue from traffic enforcement cameras to transportation safety projects with a substantial nexus to the camera's purpose.



◀ People ride bikes both for transportation and recreation, and often both at the same time. Bicycling is both an individual and social activity. If Seattle is to reach its ridership goals, the bikeways will need to be designed for social biking for people to comfortably ride at least two abreast. Adequate funding, engineering, planning, and community engagement will help us reach this goal. (Photo credit: Chris Bruntlett, Modacity)





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