



May 9, 2019

To: Mayor Durkan  
Seattle City Council  
SDOT

Re: **Bicycle Master Plan – Draft Implementation Plan 2019 - 2024**

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB) writes to you expressing our extreme disappointment in the draft Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) Implementation Plan (IP) for the years 2019 through 2024. Despite a significant increase in ridership following construction of new bike infrastructure and the introduction of electric-assist bike shares during the Seattle Squeeze, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has provided a draft IP that fails to further the BMP vision of a citywide connected bike network. It also ignores the implementation priorities SBAB developed and communicated to SDOT. Additionally, the cancellation of planned bike lanes on 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 40<sup>th</sup> Streets signals the City of Seattle (City) prefers to avoid political risks rather than complete the bicycle network for people of all ages and abilities.

SBAB is designated by ordinance to review and input on the required annual update of the BMP IP. Board members spent many hours meeting with people in the biking community, riding potential routes, and with SDOT staff to prioritize valuable connections. Many of the highest ranking projects do not appear in the current IP draft, nor the list of eliminated projects. It is discouraging to see our work ignored. While we do not expect the City to heed every recommendation that is given, we believe SBAB's time and energy should be treated with respect and accounted for in the decision process. Many of the SDOT/Department of Neighborhood-led café style discussions within four City sectors confirmed similar prioritization of projects and themes as prioritized by SBAB, regardless of location. As such, we request that every project that SBAB initially prioritized be explicitly included in the IP document with an explanation as to whether it will be a funded project or not.

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The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board shall advise the City Council, the Mayor, and all departments and offices of the city on matters related to bicycling, and the impact which actions by the city may have upon bicycling; and shall have the opportunity to contribute to all aspects of the city's planing processes insofar as they relate to bicycling.

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## Vision and Guiding Principles

### *An Equitable Network*

SBAB advocates for transportation justice for the neighbors of South Seattle: every neighborhood deserves safe infrastructure, yet South Seattle, where many of our City’s immigrant communities, low-income communities, and communities of color reside, is crisscrossed with dangerous routes for bicycles and pedestrians.

Furthermore, SBAB, committed to the City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative, wants to correct past inequities that previously enabled miles and dollars focused on projects north of the ship canal. In response, SBAB prioritized many projects in South Seattle. With only six years left on the Move Seattle Levy, the City must take the opportunity to invest in planning for the key citywide network routes of South Seattle. The communities most historically underserved by transportation projects have waited for safe connections to jobs, schools, and services should not be left even further behind due to insufficient funding in 2025.

### *A Connected Network*

SBAB advocates for a connected network: citywide routes that are “all ages and abilities” between neighborhoods and that also complement and connect to the region’s urban villages, expanding light rail, and transit networks. The current draft IP excludes many projects that support these goals; instead, many projects are a patchwork of routes that stub-end or lead to roadways that are not all ages and abilities.

## Our Asks

### *Project Recommendations*

As stated in our guiding principles, SBAB’s highest priority projects are ones that promote equitable transportation options and increased connectivity to complete a citywide bicycle network. We believe that the following projects and themes, many of which are missing from the current draft IP and reiterated by the community in the café style discussions in April, would be the most transformative in achieving these goals. Projects often meet several themes and are purposefully redundant to provide justification for being the most important for the City at this time:

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- **Major north-south routes in Southeast Seattle:** Both Beacon Hill and the Rainier Valley have higher proportions of households without cars. Southeast Seattle also is home to streets with high rates of traffic-related injuries and deaths, especially along Rainier Ave S. Southeast Seattle lacks direct, all ages and abilities, north-south routes that connect Beacon Hill and Rainier Valley to the citywide network. The existing Greenway routes require challenging topographical grades and significant backtracking to access downtown. The projects SBAB continue to prioritize are:
  - A complete north-south connection from South Beacon Hill to Little Saigon
    - Initiating at S Kenyon St and ending at Yesler Way, along Beacon Ave S, 15th Ave S, and 12th Ave S.
  - A complete north-south connection along Rainier Ave S to downtown
    - A complete street from Rainier Beach/Columbia City to S Mt. Baker Blvd
    - A long-term development plan to increase right-of-way from S Mt. Baker Blvd to S Dearborn St/S Jackson St, with parallel facilities to be funded under this BMP that are of the highest caliber in terms of safety, routing, and signage.
  - Martin Luther King Jr Way S between Mount Baker light rail station and the I-90 Trail/future Judkins Park light rail station
    - Connect light rail stations and bicycle networks on the wide right-of-way along Martin Luther King Jr Way S that is currently underutilized.
  
- **Safe connections to employment opportunities in SoDo and the Duwamish Valley:** The Duwamish Valley is one of the largest employment centers of Seattle, yet there are no safe routes for bikes and pedestrians nor reliable, frequent bus services to get people to and from these jobs. Between SoDo and Georgetown, the unsafe road conditions with high freight traffic and high vehicle speeds have resulted in one recent fatality. The people living throughout the valley in encampments – some of the most vulnerable people in Seattle – use bicycle transportation as their connection to opportunity and must risk their lives to do so. Throughout SoDo and the Duwamish Valley,



there are numerous flat corridors with generous rights-of-way, all of which could be potential routes. Both the Georgetown and South Park communities have demonstrated support for bicycle projects generally, and the following specifically, in multiple outreach projects, including the recent Georgetown Mobility Plan:

- South Park-Georgetown Trail project
- North-south SoDo connection project from the SoDo Light Rail Station to Georgetown (Airport Way S, 6th Ave S, 4th Ave S, 1st Ave S, and the continuation of the SoDo Trail are all options)
- S Spokane Street (east-west connection from the West Seattle Bridge Path/East Marginal Way to Airport Way), possibly using the wide north sidewalk as a multi-use trail.

- **Major citywide routes in West Seattle:** West Seattle has few connected routes along and across the ridges to connect people to the urban villages at Admiral Junction, West Seattle Junction, Morgan Junction and Westwood and to routes to downtown, South Park, and the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal. These routes, which were included in the 2017 BMP IP, would create a robust network for circulation within West Seattle as well as connections to the rest of the City for a part of Seattle that is fairly isolated, and include:

- E Marginal Way, Fauntleroy Way SW, Sylvan Way SW, SW Roxbury St, and the Delridge Way SW Multi-modal project

- **Safe connections to public transit:** As Link light rail expands, safe access to the light rail stations will be a necessity and help increase ridership of the City's transit investments while improve door-to-door travel times for users. Safe first mile/last mile connections to transit should be prioritized, as we see King County Metro is doing. Many of the projects already mentioned will provide transit connections; however, we will include all stations where connections are lacking:

- Future stations, namely Northgate, Judkins Park, West Seattle Junction, and Delridge Stations
- Stations on Martin Luther King Jr Way S, namely Rainier Beach, Othello, Columbia City, and Mount Baker Stations

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- SoDo Station to/from areas further south of the station

- **High ridership corridors that lack all age and abilities facilities:** There are high ridership corridors that lack all ages and abilities facilities throughout the City, but especially in the Center City. Protected bike lanes on Eastlake Ave E would create an all ages and abilities citywide network connection between northeast Seattle and downtown, allowing access to some of the City's densest areas and largest educational institutions and employers:
  - Eastlake Ave E between South Lake Union and the University Bridge
  - Center City Bike Network

### *Additional Funding*

Key to advancing the City's vision of a network of bike routes connecting our City is funding to pay for the transformational projects listed above. While some programs funded by the Move Seattle Levy were on track to deliver close to expected outcomes prior to the reset, the bike program is slated to deliver only 60% of projects. In partnership with a letter passed by the Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee dated May 7th 2019, SBAB asks the City to bolster funding, find ways to speed delivery of crucial projects, and to put project delivery on parity with other modal programs within the Move Seattle Levy. SBAB also requests the projects listed above be advanced in planning above all other projects listed in the current draft Implementation Plan to the point that even if there is currently no identified funding source, they would be ready to advance should grant or other funding opportunity arise.

### *Political Commitment*

SBAB implores our political leaders to deliver on the commitments made in the numerous adopted policies and plans including the Bicycle Master Plan, Climate Action Plan, Vision Zero, Safe Routes to School Program, the Race and Social Justice Initiative, the Complete Streets Ordinance, and the Comprehensive Master Plan, as well as the voter approved Move Seattle Levy. These policies demonstrate the City's values - safety, equity, sustainability, livability, health, and vitality - and represent the

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result of countless hours of public process.

SBAB asks the City to honor the aforementioned commitments by making decisions that aligned with the City's goals and policies and informed by feedback provided from City Boards, Commissions, and Committees. Based on recent reversal of projects mentioned in the beginning of this letter, public trust has eroded in the City's political will to implement or support bicycle projects. We fear that a precedent has been set, that a loud, angry minority, who is not representative of our racially and socioeconomically diverse city, can overrule years of citywide public process and adopted city policy. Please prove us wrong.

We therefore encourage Mayor Durkan, City Council Members, and Director Zimbabwe to preface the Implementation Plan with a letter of commitment to use best efforts to deliver on the BMP Implementation Plan.

Sincerely,

Amanda Barnett  
Co-Chair

Emily Paine  
Co-Chair

Alex Lew  
Co-Vice Chair

Kashina Groves  
Co-Vice Chair

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