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January 6, 2012

Peter Hahn, Director
Seattle Department of Transportation

RE: Seattle Bicycle Master Plan Update

Dear Director Hahn,

On behalf of the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB), we would like to thank your Department the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) for the opportunity to participate in the consultant selection process for the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) issued on December 28, 2011. **We have nominated Gabe Grijalva to sit on the SDOT selection team.**

In addition to the consultant review process, we wish to provide additional input to the larger scoping process of the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan Update (Update). This letter provides input on the scope as well as an additional request to be a part of the Update Technical Review Team.

Status of 2007 Seattle Bicycle Master Plan

As you know, the 2007 Seattle Bicycle Master Plan (2007 Plan) provided a strong template for moving forward on integrating bicycling into Seattle's transportation network. Still, due to the fast-evolving state-of-the-art in bicycle design and planning and because of decisions made during the 2007 Plan's development, it falls short in several aspects. The Plan Update presents an opportunity to include best practices and new thinking in safety and design that will ultimately provide a better bicycle network, as well as more thorough guidance to your staff as they implement the Plan.

This Update is incredibly timely. As 2012 begins, we continue to see peer cities across the nation implement expansive bicycle networks that promise to improve safety and increase mode share. Seattle's historical commitment to bicycling gave us a head start, but **we are poised to lose that advantage.** This Update represents an opportunity to reclaim our position as a leader in expanding bicycling as a safe, accessible, and affordable transportation choice.

We are encouraged by the City's continued emphasis on connections to bridges and across bodies of water, a complete and safe trail network, and connections across freeways. These are important to complete the gaps that exist in part to Seattle's challenging topography,

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 impacts which actions by the city may have upon bicycling; and shall have opportunity to contribute to all aspects of the city's planning processes insofar as they relate to bicycling.

-City Council
Resolution 25534

geography, and roadway features. We are also excited to hear that there will be more of a corridor approach in the Update's planning.

Input on Update Scope

As advisors to the City on projects, policies, and programs that affect bicycling in Seattle – and as stewards of the 2007 Plan – we believe the following issues need to be addressed in the Update:

- **Bicycle integration with transit lines and stations.** The recent Transit Master Plan did not include policies or protocols for how to integrate bicycle and transit planning. The Update provides an opportunity to delineate how integration can occur, and incorporate lessons learned from recent successful examples, such as the First Hill Streetcar planning process.
- **Strong Connections Through Downtown.** Compared to peer cities, Seattle does not have safe bicycle facilities through its downtown which discourages cycling by residents and visitors. Creating separated facilities through one of the areas with the highest bicycle ridership in the City should be a priority of the Update.
- **Cycle Tracks.** Corridor planning using cycle tracks will be necessary for creating protected facilities within the city that promote safety and increased mode share.
- **Neighborhood Greenways.** We are particularly excited by the strong interest in building out Neighborhood Greenways across the city. Greenways fill an important role in the bicycle network (especially intra-neighborhood), but due to geography and topography, other separated facilities including trails and cycle tracks are necessary for those 'willing but wary' cyclists who may feel intimidated by the current network. Additionally, we would advocate for inclusion of planning for Neighborhood Greenways in the Pedestrian Master Plan, as well as other planning documents for parks and utilities.
- **Integrating Multimodal Level of Service.** The 2010 version of the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM 2010) establishes clear ways of measuring level of service for bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and automobile travel. Adopting multimodal level of service measurements and standards throughout the city would help ensure that facilities are being designed for the appropriate level of service – as well as travel comfort and safety – of all modes.
- **Safe Intersection Design.** 2007 Plan implementation has resulted in better facilities; however many of them disappear at intersections, which is where the highest rate of accidents involving bicycles occur in the right-of-way. Inclusion of best practices in intersection design, as well as incorporating multimodal level of service models, is necessary.
- **Bicycle Priority Engineering.** Just as more intersections are being engineered to give transit priority at stop lights, intersections in our city can and should be designed to allow the bicycle rider safe and quick access through an intersection. Treatments such as bicycle-specific signals, "bike boxes", the "green wave" of signal timing, advance loop detectors, and diagonal crossings will help us continue to move in the direction of a world-class city for bicycling.

- **Traffic Control Devices.** Integrating traffic control device planning and design (such as evident in Portland, OR) represent another area where significant improvements could be made within the context of the Update.
- **Data Collection.** More emphasis on data collection – particularly permanent data collection stations – is necessary to test the outcomes (intended or not) of new and updated facilities.

Request for Technical Review Team Involvement

Finally, we again thank you for allowing us to participate in the RFQ selection process for the Update. We appreciate that SDOT views SBAB as a technical resource and peer reviewer. We take this job very seriously and approach it with a high degree of professionalism. Knowing that the consultant will not address the entire scope of the Update and assuming that a Technical Review Team will be formed as was the case with the Transit Master Plan, **we respectfully request to have a seat on the Technical Review Team.**

We appreciate your thoughtfulness and service and recognize your interest in creating a city that is bikable for everyone. We cannot overemphasize the import of this Update. Please let us know if we can be of any further detail on our input or request.

Sincerely,



Blake Trask
Chair, SBAB



Max Hepp-Buchanan
Vice Chair, SBAB

Cc: Seattle City Councilmembers
Goran Sparrman, SDOT
Charlie Bookman, SDOT
Kevin O'Neill, SDOT
Sam Woods, SDOT
Doug Cox, SDOT