

September 16, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**Re: Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Community Planning Grant for Lidding I-5, Downtown Seattle, Washington**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board is pleased to offer our strong support for the City of Seattle's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Community Planning Grant for funding to advance efforts to lid Interstate 5 in central Seattle. The project creates a unique and necessary opportunity to stitch together Seattle's diverse urban neighborhoods and bring quality open space, housing, jobs, and economic vitality to an area that has been divided and environmentally impacted for decades. The project area is also among the fastest growing urban centers in the country but has not seen a commensurate increase in park space, affordable housing, and other civic amenities to support a growing and diverse population.

Connectivity among Seattle's central neighborhoods was severely reduced by the construction of Interstate 5 in the 1960's, which was an urban renewal project focused primarily on automobile mobility and rejected early community ideas for lids and transit right-of-way. Freeway Park, a local landmark that spanned over I-5 starting in 1976, began to mend physical connections but has not yet significantly expanded to keep up with population and employment growth. A 2020 I-5 Lid Feasibility Study by the Seattle Office of Planning and Community development concluded that the I-5 lid project is a generational opportunity to address the long-standing social, physical, environmental, and economic harms caused by the freeway and unlock a multitude of public benefits on up to 17 acres of new public land.

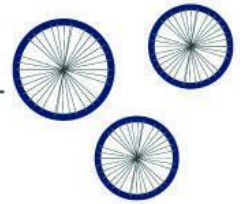
Lidding more of I-5 will catalyze the reconnection of Seattle's core neighborhoods and surrounding communities. The community benefits of the project would be transformational and include:

- Reducing barriers to economic opportunity by supporting affordable housing connected to affordable transportation options.
- Building safe streets that prioritize walking, biking and transit;

Donna McBain Evans, Co-Chair  
Peter Bryan, Co-Chair  
Joseph Roberts, Secretary  
Yasir Alfarag  
Ty Bottorff  
Max Green  
Douglas Migden  
José Niño  
Christine Stawitz

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 planning processes insofar as they relate to bicycling.

- City Council  
Resolution 25534



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- Improving public health by building acres of green space and reducing the noise and air pollution directly impacting local residents, particularly at the many low-income buildings facing I-5.
- Improving climate change resilience through stormwater capture and urban heat island mitigation.
- Capturing the value gap caused by the freeway, potentially unlocking billions of dollars in private investment.

Critically, the project could also support a seismically sound transportation facility built to resilient standards and incorporate necessary climate change adaptations. The scoping for this project and adjacent work will include community engagement to ensure that the project results in equitable and healthy community-driven improvements.

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB) advises the Mayor, City Council and City departments on projects and policies that improve bicycling conditions in our City. SBAB is in strong support of the I-5 lid concept because there is a serious lack of east-west connections for people on bicycles in Downtown. The construction of a lid over I-5 would greatly improve this situation and allow for construction of bikeways that serve local neighborhoods and provide easy access to downtown jobs and commerce. This would help us reduce car use for short trips and result in lowered vehicle emissions and vehicle miles traveled, helping improve our air quality and reduce our carbon footprint.

Lidding I-5 is vital to the future of Seattle and to making our city more connected, sustainable, and equitable. We look forward to engaging in efforts to advance the I-5 lid project and encourage you to fund the City of Seattle’s Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Community Planning Grant application.

Sincerely,

Pete Bryan, co-chair  
 Donna McBain Evans, co-chair

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