

Kristi Rennebohm Franz,
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Don Brubeck, Secretary

Jeff Aken
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Steve Kennedy
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Lara Normand
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Michael Wong

January 14, 2016

TO: SDOT Director Scott Kubly

RE: **Rainier Avenue South Safety Corridor and Rainier Valley North-South Greenway**

Dear Director Kubly:

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board appreciates having SDOT Staff Summer Jawson and Jim Curtin at our January monthly meeting to present and collaborate with us on Rainier Avenue South and the Rainier Valley North-South Greenway. We commend and thank them both for their participation in community-organized rides to study and improve upon the planned facilities for Southeast Seattle.

As a follow-up to SBAB's January 6th meeting, we would like to take this opportunity to comment on the Rainier Avenue South Safety Corridor and North-South Greenway projects – specifically our support for an All Ages and Abilities Protected Bike Lane (PBL) along that corridor.

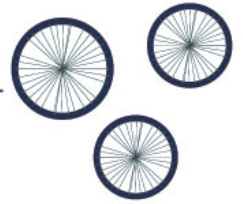
We recognize the improvements that SDOT has made to date with regard to rechannelization of Rainier Avenue South. Public feedback from recent policy rides -- with members of Family Bikes, Rainier Valley Greenways and SBAB, among others – points to a growing demand for a PBL on Rainier Avenue. Progress has been made, but the recent collision in front of the Rainier Valley Chamber of Commerce, illustrates the fact that there is still work to be done to make this corridor safe for vulnerable users.

In particular, we feel it is crucial that SDOT:

- Design and implement a robust and high quality protected bike lane on Rainier Avenue South that exemplifies BMP goals of Equity, Safety, Connectivity, Ridership and Livability. Planning for a short-term pilot project with provisions for a longer-term solution to the corridor would be a logical approach. However it is accomplished, the PBL needs to link seamlessly to the N-S Greenway in order to provide true connectivity and to increase awareness and ridership.
- Revise the final N-S Greenway route. The route as planned does not currently meet All Ages and Abilities standards due to steep grades in one particular section (38th Ave S between S Alaska and S Angeline Streets), and therefore it does not serve as a viable and safe alternative to Rainier Avenue South. Avoiding steep grades is the type of feedback that SBAB and other groups have provided since early planning phase of the project, input which has been reinforced by the recent policy rides and public comment.

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

- City Council
Resolution 25534



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- Ensure that future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) design will fully accommodate the protected bike lane and Greenway improvements. This should be explicitly stated in the RFP that goes out to consultants.
- Integration with other planning efforts is critical to the success of the Rainier Avenue PBLs and Greenway. For instance: The North end of the Greenway needs an all ages and abilities connection to the Mount Baker Transit Hub. The planning gap between the north end of the Safety Corridor Project (Letitia) and the south end of the Accessible Mount Baker project (Walden) needs to be addressed. Expansion of Pronto Bikeshare stations and engaging that program with SE Seattle schools would provide more transportation options for the area. Planning for and implementing a similar PBL and traffic calming along MLK -- in conjunction with these Rainier Avenue improvements -- is the only equitable way to serve the entire Rainier Valley.

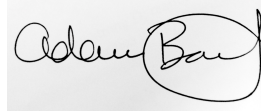
SBAB's SE Seattle Working Group is ready to dedicate our time to one or more working sessions with SDOT and other stakeholders to explore alternative crossing locations at Rainier that would better connect the Greenway to the future PBL and avoid the steepest slopes. SBAB also wishes to collaborate with other advisory boards, such as the Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Boards, in order to accomplish the goals of a truly safe and functional multi-modal corridor.

Disadvantaged neighborhoods in southeast, south, southwest and far north Seattle have lagged behind other parts of the city for too many years in terms of bicycle and pedestrian-oriented infrastructure. With the approval of the MOVE Seattle Levy, it is time to rebalance the scales and provide high quality transportation infrastructure in low-income areas that have been traditionally underserved.

Sincerely,



Kristi Rennebohm-Franz
Chair



Adam Bartz
Vice Chair



Merlin Rainwater
Vice Chair

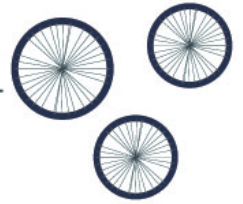


Don Brubeck
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