



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Dear Director Sam Zimbabwe-

At the Sustainability & Transportation committee meeting on Tuesday, May 21st we shared a helmet cam video of a person riding a bicycle on 35th Ave NE. The video shows multiple cars making illegal passes using the center turn lane at relatively high speeds. As a daily commuter for 20 years, the video made me and my colleagues nervous.

The Seattle Department of Transportation states that its first core value is Safety. The SDOT blog about this project claims that "By slowing vehicle speeds and better defining the travel lanes, this helps increase safety for everyone on 35th." Watching this video, it doesn't appear that defined travel lanes have reduced speeds or increased safety. In fact, it appears that in some locations, by eliminating a lane of parking and widening the travel lanes we have increased speeds and decreased safety.

We would like you to answer the following questions:

1. From this video and other observations, do you believe the design as implemented has met the objectives of the project and Vision Zero?
2. Did this design go through the Complete Streets Checklist assessing how this design serves all people travelling on the corridor, including people walking, biking and taking transit?
3. If there are some shortcomings of the design as implemented, do you have plans to make improvements to the design? If so, what is the timeline?
4. If this design failed to meet the safety objectives for all street users, can the department do some analysis as to how a decision to recommend this design was erroneously reached? What can we do different in the future to avoid these mistakes?

Since there has already been a serious injury to a bicyclist hit by a car in this corridor where a person biking was transported by ambulance to the hospital, we would like to see urgent action if there is agreement that action is needed.

Another concern is that the decision making used on 35th Ave NE will be replicated in other controversial corridor projects, like Eastlake that is a part of the Roosevelt Rapid Ride corridor. Council urges SDOT to take its commitment to safety seriously and design right of way according to that value.

Please respond to the questions in this letter before the June 18th committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Councilmember Mike O'Brien

Councilmember Kshama Sawant

Council Member Abel Pacheco