



August 22, 2022

Subject: Eastlake Rapid Ride J Protected Bike Lanes

To: Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle City Council, and Mayor Harrell

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board (SBAB) is very excited about the Rapid Ride J project along Eastlake Ave and the multimodal improvements, including a crucial new all-ages, all-abilities protected bike lane connecting the northeast portion of our city, residents of the Eastlake neighborhood, downtown, and destinations to the south. We have been working with SDOT for the last several years to make this the best facility possible while balancing the needs of the diverse users of this important street. SBAB has heard numerous presentations about the project, provided thoughtful feedback, and written letters of support as it has slowly moved forward. It was very disheartening to read in the summer 2022 edition of the Eastlake News that the head of the Seattle City Council Transportation Committee appears to be seeking to water down this vital project.

[According to the Eastlake News:](#) “District 4 City Councilmember Alex Pedersen, chair of the City Council Transportation Committee, who attended the Zoom meeting, said he hoped SDOT would show some flexibility on the project. He said the project’s plan to eliminate parking on Eastlake is likely to cause an uproar similar to the dispute that erupted over a similar plan on 35th Avenue Northeast. In 2019, SDOT abandoned plans to put bike lanes along 2.3 miles of the street after the plan raised a storm of protest from residents and businesses. Pedersen also saw an equity issue with spending money in Eastlake when areas of South Seattle have greater needs. ‘We could have a creative sharing of the road that would be good and save money too.’”

35th Ave NE represents a failure of the city to follow through on its adopted climate and Vision Zero policies. To hear 35th Ave Northeast referenced as a template for the future trajectory of the Rapid Ride J project is incredibly disappointing, and frankly unacceptable. We have seen the city decide to water down safe infrastructure plans in numerous locations, leading residents who could potentially use active transportation modes to feel unsafe and turn to single occupancy vehicles instead. Pedersen’s reference to “creative sharing of the road” would be counter to both Vision Zero and the Bicycle Master Plan. While we support further investment in South Seattle and welcome council’s support in securing funding for projects in underserved neighborhoods, this is a key project for connecting our city in an all ages, all abilities network and should proceed. Below, we reiterate several of the reasons we believe the city must proceed with the Rapid Ride J project as designed:

Patrick Taylor, Co-Chair
Sarah Udelhofen, Co-Chair
Kashina Groves, Co Vice-Chair
Andrea Lai, Secretary
Yasir Alfarag
Andrew Dannenberg
Meredith Hall
Jose Nino
Douglas Migden
Maimoona Rahim
Yacoov Tarko
Diane Walsh

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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Eastlake is a Critical Connection

Eastlake Avenue has been on the Seattle’s Bicycle Master Plan project list for many years; it is listed as “cycle track (protected bicycle lanes)” and as a corridor on the Regional Bicycle Network map (page 50). The addition of fully protected bike lanes along the Eastlake corridor will fill a key gap in Seattle’s bike network and allow more residents to travel via bike to meet their daily needs – whether that is going to work, school, running errands, and more.

Seattle is failing to meet its Vision Zero goals

Our city has seen increasing traffic fatalities – 26 in 2019, 24 in 2020, 30 in 2021, and had 11 in 2022 at the time of the Vision Zero presentation to the Transportation Committee on June 21, 2022. This corridor is a critical connection for people getting where they need to go in the city, and it needs to be comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. Providing a fully protected bike lane will reduce the chances of traffic fatalities on this major corridor.

Modeshift is key to the City’s Climate Action Plan Goals

Seattle is far from reaching its Climate Action Plan goals, which identify that the city needs an 83% reduction in road transportation to reach our 2030 climate goals. Personal vehicles alone account for 51% of all emissions. As this design stands, it is prioritizing people driving single occupancy vehicles when the city needs to be prioritizing climate-friendly modes of transportation to reach our climate goals. The RapidRide J Project will bring more reliable travel times and an improved experience to riders, which has the potential to shift trips away from single occupancy vehicles and onto transit. Providing safe biking infrastructure is an effective way to decarbonize people’s “last mile” travel to and from mass transit.

Complete the Design as Promised

SBAB requests that SDOT, council, and the Harrell Administration complete the Rapid Ride J project as shown over the last several years including the fully protected bike lane. We, along with numerous individuals and organizations in the city have supported the project with the understanding that it would include protected bike lanes. To remove them at this point would be a betrayal of trust as well as counter to our city’s council adopted Bicycle Master Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Vision Zero commitments. We appreciate all your hard work and thoughtful design on this project thus far and look forward to seeing this transformational project completed.

Sincerely,

The Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board

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