



September 2, 2021

Dear Community Package Coalition representatives

Re: Pike Pine Streetscape and Bicycle Improvements project

Thank you for your interest in the Pike Pine Streetscape and Bicycle Improvements project. This project will greatly improve bicycle connections for all ages and abilities in the Pike Pine corridor by providing a continuous, well-designed protected bicycle route between the Broadway Protected Bicycle Lane (PBL) and the Second Avenue Protected Bicycle Lane (PBL). In addition, the Melrose promenade project will connect at the east end of the project area.

We appreciate your involvement throughout the project design and below are answers to your most recent comments and questions.

1. *Q: Please provide a full accounting of how the \$10 million is being spent on the Pike/Pine corridor. We understand that \$9 million is being spent on the bike improvements between Melrose and 2nd Avenue (in addition to the \$10 million for Pike/Pine Renaissance Pedestrian Improvements also secured through the WSCC public benefit package), leaving just \$1 million for the Bellevue to Broadway permanent connection. Specifically, how is \$9 million being used? We are concerned that \$1 million is not sufficient to provide a safe, all ages and abilities permanent bike connection between Melrose and Broadway and would like to see funding allocation that reflects this as a priority*

A: The project team will provide you with the financial breakdown per fund source once we receive the engineer's estimate on the 60% design engineer's estimate, which will happen in the next few weeks.

\$1 million has funded interim upgrades to the Protected Bicycle Lanes within the Pike Pine Streetscape and Bicycle Improvements project area. The remaining \$9 million budget is being used for the permanent PBL improvements between Bellevue and 2nd Avenues. As you will see in the fund split, all the funding is being used and it is not possible to fund additional improvements east to Broadway within this budget without cutting scope. In 2019, SDOT completed PBL improvements in both directions on Pike Street between Bellevue and Broadway. At this time, SDOT's priority continues to be extending and connecting an all ages and abilities bicycle network across the city, and we have not prioritized further upgrades to the Pike Street PBLs.

2. *Q: We understand that WSDOT has denied earlier design plans for the Pike Street bridge based on weighting issues pertaining to the proposed design improvements. Please provide additional information regarding those issues. We believe that SDOT planners can find creative ways to provide a safe, protected path within any weight constraints; paint and posts are not sufficient for a permanent protected bike lane.*

A: The Pine Street bridge over Interstate 5 will include an expanded concrete sidewalk and a cast concrete bike lane buffer with planters. The Pike Street bridge, by contrast, has significant

weight restrictions that mean the project will not be able to add any appreciable weight to that bridge. WSDOT's 2019 update to their Bridge Design Manual updated the load rating criteria for box girder bridges. The updated criteria required a more restrictive load rating criteria be used for box girder bridges with bottom slab widths greater than 60 feet. Analysis of the Pike Street bridge load rating has shown that the bridge, based on the WSDOT bridge design manual, is not structurally capable of safely accepting the additional weight of the concrete sidewalk expansion and concrete bike lane buffer that were proposed as part of the 30% design.

Despite these limitations, the Pike Street bridge improvements will include a buffer between the bikeway and the roadway of 5 feet wide to provide a generous lateral offset from traffic (greater than the standard 2 to 3 feet of buffer width typically used for protected bike lanes), and will include vertical elements to reinforce the separation. The project team is also looking at whether this section of the bikeway buffer can be augmented with a curb, or potentially a limited number of concrete planters. These options are being discussed with WSDOT.

It should be noted that the weight restrictions only apply within the limits of the bridge itself, which begins just east of the I-5 on/off-ramp and ends at Hubbell Place. The length of bikeway buffer that will use the lightweight treatments is limited to this short stretch. East of Hubbell, the project will be able to expand the concrete sidewalk on the north side of the street and will provide a concrete buffer between the bikeway and adjacent traffic lanes. The below visual shows how the corridor overall will be improved – all considered it is a dramatic enhancement to both the pedestrian and cycling environment along Pike.



3. *Q: Currently, the Pike Pine Renaissance team is planning bike lane transitions on Pike and Pine at Melrose, based on the assumption that the permanent alignment of lanes will be the same as the existing temporary lanes on Pike. Please inform us who will be determining the final, permanent bike lane alignment east of Melrose and how the community can help inform that decision.*

4. *If the transition is necessary at Melrose, the prescribed path for cyclists must be as clear and intuitive as possible to prevent head-on collisions between people biking up and downhill, and to enable first-time westbound cyclists to successfully transition to Pine. Please include any plans to ensure this.*

A: Bicyclists transitioning at Melrose Ave to the southside of Pike Street was studied in depth as part of efforts to determine the best location for eastbound cyclists to transition from the north side to the south side of Pike Street. For the 30% design, this transition was proposed on the near side (west leg) of the Pike/Bellevue intersection. However, subsequent traffic analysis showed that placing the transition at Bellevue Avenue created significant delays to bicycle traffic by increasing the overall cycle length of the signal at that intersection. The signal phasing at this intersection is complicated by the fact that all eastbound bus traffic turns left at this intersection. The delay for cyclists would be significant either with the two-stage bike lane transition as previously proposed, or with a direct diagonal crossing for bikes at the intersection. At the same time, the team had been working with King County Metro to reconfigure the pedestrian half signal at Melrose Avenue in support of moving a nearby bus stop to Melrose and providing a transit priority signal.

Building on this work, the team reviewed potential transition options at Melrose Avenue and found that overall delay to bicycle traffic would be reduced as compared to the Bellevue Avenue transition. Additionally, the transition at Melrose can be placed on the downstream side of the intersection (east leg), which greatly improves the transition experience for cyclists by providing more staging area for the two-stage transition, placing the queue box outside the lane of through traffic rather than in-lane, and allowing cyclists to proceed eastward as soon as they have made their crossing from the north to the south side of the street. The team has determined that this transition location is superior to the previous proposal and will advance it in the project design. See the attached map that illustrates this transition.

We appreciate the Community Package Coalition's continued interest and support as we develop safe, more accessible and better-connected bike lanes in the Pike Pine corridor and throughout the city. Thérèse Casper, Project Manager for the project, will be following up with you to share the financial information.

Sincerely,



Sam Zimbabwe (Sep 2, 2021 10:05 PDT)

Sam Zimbabwe
Director Seattle Department of Transportation



Marshall Foster (Sep 2, 2021 09:59 PDT)

Marshall Foster
Director Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects