

Charlie Bryan, Chair  
Lawrence Transportation Commission  
6 E. 6th St.  
Lawrence KS 66044

4 December 2017

re: Bicycle and Pedestrian Prioritization Criteria

Mr. Bryan and Commissioners:

The Sustainability Action Network has requested for several years that the City develop bikeway prioritization protocols, so we're grateful for your attention to this document.

In September, we had sent you a critique of the first draft. Unfortunately, Public Works staff has incorporated none of our bikeway recommendations into this next draft. After three months work, it's disturbing how few changes they have made. I will restate our recommendations, along with some new critique. My comments are focused on bikeways only.

I urge you to direct staff to rewrite this document. Their stated urgency that you must adopt this draft for short term funding reasons is no reason to adopt deficient guidelines that will set policy for many years. You're in the driver's seat, not staff, or should I say, on the bicycle seat.

The Proximity Factors in this draft (p. 4) are exactly the same as the September draft, deficient in the same way. We had recommended that critical factors of "employment centers", "public service centers", and "entertainment" be added, but they are still missing. Without these, measurement of bicycling demand will be artificially deflated. People are far more likely to bicycle with light cargo, such as on trips to jobs, public agencies, entertainment, or the library. In contrast, retail trips most often entail carrying packages that are too bulky or heavy.

Proximity to existing bicycle lanes or shared use paths is outdated policy. National statistics show that 84% of potential bicyclists won't ride in a 6" white-stripe bicycle lane because it's unsafe. Shared use paths are unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists due to conflicts and speed disparity. This criteria should read "Upgrade to protected bicycle lane or separated bicycle track. An opportunity to replace dangerous unprotected bicycle lanes and shared use paths".

Funding considerations have no place in setting these priorities. These protocols should be for determining the need, not the means. Once the safety and utility needs are established for given bikeways, then the annual City budget process will determine how to pay for them, and how quickly. Budgeting priorities are completely distinct. Delete "Available funding", and "Grant funding opportunities" from the Project Selection section (p. 6).

In the final analysis, the process will rank projects based on level of service existing relative to level of service desired. Once staff has run funding estimates for the highest ranking candidate projects, the Transportation Commission should retain the prerogative to set the ratio of dollars among the candidate bikeways, sidewalks, and ADA ramps – not staff.

Thank you,

Michael Almon