



P.O. Box 1064, Lawrence KS 66044
a Kansas 501(C)(3) not-for-profit

Lawrence City Commission
City Hall
6 East 6th St.
Lawrence KS 66044

16 January 2018

re: Bicycle-Pedestrian Project Prioritization Policy

Mayor Boley and Commissioners:

Sustainability Action has been promoting bicycle transportation longer than any other local organization. Our priority is transportation before recreation. Recreational cycling may be enjoyable for a fraction of a percent of Lawrence citizens, but bicycle transportation has the potential of reducing by up to 30% our community's use of fossil fuels as well as our carbon footprint.

To help prioritize bikeways that will serve cyclists who are commuting from homes to jobs or to government offices or to community centers, Sustainability Action proposed prioritization protocols in 2015. We are please that the City Commission is now considering such a policy. We would like to offer revisions to make it better.

The main prioritization protocol that we proposed is to make use of origin-destination data – where cyclists are coming from, and where they are going. Building bikeways in those corridors would be the most cost-effective.

The prioritization policy before you has a scoring matrix that includes only half of useful origin-destination data. Digital pages 5 and 6 list "proximity factors" for scoring potential projects. Scoring is excellent on the "origin" side based on housing density, because the vast majority of trips originate at home. However, the "destination" side of the equation falls short.

The only destination factored into the matrix is schools. Are we to assume we want only students to bicycle? We suggested at the Transportation Commission meeting that the matrix include proximity factors of "employment centers", "entertainment", and "public service centers" (see letter below).

It was reasonably pointed out that the first two were too dispersed to measure. But the third one comprise significant destinations – trips to government offices or to community centers. People are more inclined to bicycle to such places because it entails "errand" or "liesure" activities that involve few if any heavy parcels. Bikeways for these types of destinations will generate a high degree of buy-in.

Please add to the Bikeway Demand Model Proximity Factors the category of "Public Service Centers".

Thank you,

Michael Almon



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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