

Dear Neighborhood Councils:

Recently, the Pedestrian, Traffic & Transportation (PeTT) Committee put forth a resolution to the Community Assembly to shift “bicycle boulevards” from one of the myriad of tools for creating a bicycle-friendly city to an exclusively intra-neighborhood planning tool overseen separately by each of the neighborhoods. We hope that the following information about the Bicycle Advisory Board and bicycle boulevards will assist you as you consider the upcoming proposal.

First, we would like to apologize for miscommunications or lack of communication with the neighborhoods about the Bicycle Master Plan, and specifically bicycle boulevards. Our goals with the plan are to 1) increase bicycle usage and 2) reduce the number of bicycle collisions. To accomplish this, two of our objectives are to develop a bikeway network that links Spokane neighborhoods to each other and neighborhoods with the downtown core and into the region. We are also working on making Spokane streets safer and convenient for bicycling.

The Master Bicycle Plan development schedule includes making quarterly presentations to the Community Assembly and hosting three public meetings to get input from the community. The next quarterly presentation will be in February or March. We will be able to start community meetings in the next couple of months as well. All of these venues will allow for public input and discussion about issues and concerns. We hope the Neighborhood Councils will take advantage of these opportunities and ask that you consider inviting us to visit with your council.

In 1992, the City of Spokane established the Spokane Bicycle Advisory Board. The Spokane Municipal code SMC 4.16.020 General Purpose states, The Bicycle Advisory Board is established to provide advice and direction to the City Council and all departments and offices of the City on matters relating to bicycling and to raise public awareness of bicycling issues.

Without limiting the scope of SMC 4.16.020 the bicycle advisory board is given the following functions and responsibilities:

- A. To initiate and/or assist in revisions to the City’s bikeways plan.
- B. To review proposals and plans for spot improvements and bikeways and provide timely comments to affected agencies.
- C. To review, evaluate and comment on the annual six-year bikeways program.
- D. To promote bicycling as a viable form of urban transportation.
- E. To promote improved safety to reduce accidents and thefts of bicycles by evaluating and recommending changes in design standards for on-street and off-street bikeways, trails and paths accessible to bicyclists, and for secured parking racks and lockers.
- F. To develop possible demonstration projects to encourage commuting through provision of safe, accessible routes, secure bike parking facilities and facilities for commuter clean-up and changing from riding to work clothes.

The Bicycle Advisory Board’s monthly meetings are open to everyone and held on the third Tuesday evening of each month at 6 pm in the Council’s briefing chambers. Board members are volunteers from many different neighborhoods throughout the city. More information is located on the Board’s newly re-designed website at [www.bikespokane.net](http://www.bikespokane.net).

### **Bicycle Boulevards**

A bicycle boulevard is typically located on a low-traffic-volume street where all types of vehicles are allowed and emergency vehicles can get through. The roadway is often modified as needed to enhance bicycle safety and convenience. In other cities where bicycle boulevards are being used successfully, the boulevards are part of a broader network of travel throughout the city for bicyclists, serving as an alternative to riding on arterials. They are often referred to as the “bicycle arterials.” They tend to parallel

automobile arterials and cross the city with minimal jogs. When bicycle boulevards cross automobile arterials, there are sometimes crossing aids, such as cyclist-activated lights.

The vast majority of people who ride bicycles, ride across, around and through neighborhoods, not just within their neighborhood. It is also beneficial to neighborhoods to have people from other neighborhoods ride there to shop, visit friends, and work. Bicycle boulevards can facilitate this movement.

Typically the modifications made to create a bicycle boulevard will calm traffic and improve bicyclist safety. They may also improve the safety or perceived safety of pedestrians. However, because they are streets with motor vehicles on them, they are still not good places for very young children to ride. The League of American Cyclists states, "It is important to understand child development to successfully apply bicycle education. Children under 10 have not developed the coordination or peripheral vision to safely operate their bicycle in traffic. While sidewalks are not completely devoid of dangerous situations, it is important to keep children under 10 out of the roadway, operating on the sidewalk like a pedestrian." Another option to teach children to ride bicycles is dedicated bike paths such as the Centennial Trail.

The following criteria are often used when considering which streets to use as bicycle boulevards:

- Neighborhood street or low-volume collector; not a transit or truck route.
- Very little commercial frontage.
- Within ¼ mile of a major street or a high-traffic collector street.
- Spaced between ¾ and 1½ miles from another bicycle boulevard (approximately the traditional spacing of major streets).
- Few jogs with main segments at least 0.5 mile long and reasonably continuous; (i.e., extends over half of the city.)
- Traffic/crossing signals at major intersections, or traffic signals are potentially feasible.
- Access to major destinations and connections to routes in neighboring cities.

Downsides to bicycle boulevards exist as well, which calls for thoughtful incorporation into a bicycle plan. To create the bicycle boulevard, stop or yield signs are often placed along cross streets to allow through travel for cyclists. The increased use of such signs can have a negative impact and the planning for the route needs to be carefully considered throughout its length to minimize any trade offs.

For more about bicycle boulevards, several resources are available on the Internet. Berkeley, CA; Portland, OR and several other cities have or are in the process of creating bicycle boulevard networks.

The City of Spokane has given both the Neighborhood Councils and the Bicycle Advisory Board great opportunities to improve our community through planning. Neighborhood Councils have received planning money and the Bicycle Advisory Board has received part of a city planner's time. To make the city more livable, we want to focus on working together. To provide a plan that is beneficial throughout the city, we need to have all the tools, such as bicycle boulevards, available.

Bicycle boulevards provide benefits to bicycle riders, pedestrians, and neighborhoods by calming traffic and making the area more attractive. Shifting advisory oversight of an integrated bicycle network from the BAB to each of the neighborhoods throughout the city promotes a piecemeal, rather than integrated, approach to development and will neither enhance the development of individual bicycle boulevards nor the overall bicycling network and infrastructure of the city. Please help us to best serve the City, its citizens and its neighborhoods, by supporting the advisory oversight of the BAB as it currently exists.

Respectfully,

Bob Lutz, Chair  
Bicycle Advisory Board