

From: Emily Johnston, concerned citizen

Date: January 02, 2023

RE: Bicycle commuter safety : Prioritizing our most vulnerable roadway users

### **Executive Summary**

Washington State's pedestrian and bicyclists fatalities rose 26% from 2020 to 2021, and serious injuries rose 28% in the same year. Although pedestrian and bicycle crashes represent only 2.5% of the annual total, they resulted in 26.2% of all traffic fatalities for the year. The majority of major accidents involving bicyclists occur in population centers, particularly on roads with speed limits exceeding 25mph. The individuals impacted by these accidents show an over-representation of historically transportation-disadvantaged individuals<sup>1</sup>. There is a clear need for swift, major safety policies to stop the increase of these incidents.

### **Current Policies**

There was a recent agreement to allow WSDOT and local authorities to expedite the process of lowering speed limits, a major contributor to the severity and frequency of accidents. Additionally there will be a requirement to apply Complete Street principles to projects over \$500,000 after July 1, 2022. The Complete Street principles<sup>2</sup> will prioritize safety for all users, including "those who have experienced systemic underinvestment, or those whose needs have not been met through a traditional transportation approach".

### **Suggestions**

There is an immediate need for protected bike lanes that not only provide a lane for pedestrians and cyclists, but also provides a barrier between them and traffic<sup>3</sup>. The implementation of these lanes should be required for all major through-ways and routes to allow commuters to arrive safely at their destination.

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<sup>1</sup> Millar, Roger. 2022, *Gray Notebook 86 - Quarter Ending June 30, 2022*, <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/gray-notebook-Jun22.pdf>. Accessed 2 Jan. 2023.

<sup>2</sup> "Complete Streets." *Smart Growth America*, [smartgrowthamerica.org/what-are-complete-streets/](https://smartgrowthamerica.org/what-are-complete-streets/).

<sup>3</sup> University of Colorado Denver. "Cycling lanes reduce fatalities for all road users, study shows: Roads are safer for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists in cities with robust bike facilities." *ScienceDaily*. ScienceDaily, 29 May 2019. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190529113036.htm](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190529113036.htm).