

Dear Members of the Seattle City Council,

We are writing today concerning the proposal to fund seawall-related work by raising the existing 10% commercial parking tax (CPT) to 12.5%. While Streets For All Seattle coalition members recognize the City's obligations on the seawall replacement, we believe that allocation of our limited, flexible transportation funds to a single, capital-intensive project would unnecessarily curtail the opportunity before us to engage in a holistic transportation discussion during the budget process.

As you know, our goal for this year is to secure \$30 million in new dedicated annual revenue for pedestrian, bicycle and transit infrastructure to start building a transportation system that will make Seattle work for our future. Before now, we have deliberately not publicly proposed specific funding mechanisms as it is our desire to work with the Council, Mayor and stakeholders to develop a solution with the broadest possible base of support. That continues to be our position. As such, we feel compelled to urge the Council to table action on raising the CPT for seawall planning and preserve the options we have available for vital investments in pedestrian, bicycle and transit infrastructure.

It is our position that the Mayor's revenue proposal (which comes in response to declines in the local share of the gas-tax and other revenue shortfalls) to support basic street maintenance and accelerate the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian improvements, does not go nearly far enough toward fostering the type of transportation system that Streets for All Seattle envisions. At the same time, we feel that the current seawall funding proposal takes our city in the wrong direction and sets a worrisome precedent by dedicating precious flexible transportation funds to an arguably non-transportation project.

Many of you have expressed your support for our vision of a more sustainable future of transportation in our city and we thank you for speaking up for these priorities. We are proud to live in a city with years of public support for such a vision, and some significant recent progress. As you know, we feel the time is right to take the next step and turn our shared vision into reality. However, it will take careful stewardship of scarce resources and, while we appreciate the necessity of the seawall replacement, it is a matter of public safety and emergency preparedness, not transportation; one which needs no campaign and would likely prevail at the ballot box.

Our ambitions are for Seattle to become America's most walkable city, a place where car ownership is not a prerequisite for gainful employment, where cyclists and transit riders never feel like second class citizens. We look forward to joining with you hand-in-hand to take on this challenge – and win – making a city that will work for our future in the process.

To that end, we ask that the Council table the pending 2.5% CPT proposal for funding seawall planning and incorporate those needs into the broader budget discussion over the coming months.

Sincerely,

Craig Benjamin, Sierra Club
Streets for All Seattle, Co-Chair

David Hiller, Cascade Bicycle Club
Streets for All Seattle, Co-Chair