



# City of Seattle

## Seattle Planning Commission

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Demographer &  
Senior Policy Analyst

August 10, 2011

Honorable Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, Chair  
Seattle Transportation Benefit District  
Seattle City Council  
PO Box 34025  
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

### RE: Proposed Uses for Vehicle License Fee Revenues

Dear Councilmember Rasmussen,

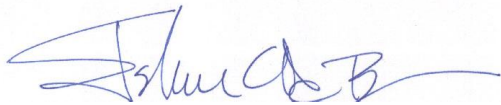
We have reviewed the preliminary proposal outlining potential uses for a Vehicle License Fee (VLF) aimed at prioritizing and funding transportation projects. We support the concepts and priorities embodied in the Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee III (CTAC) recommendations.

We are pleased to provide you with our comments supporting the CTAC III recommendations as follows:

- **There is a critical and urgent need for investment Seattle's transportation infrastructure.** Without new revenue sources the City will not only fall further behind on maintaining our streets but will also not be able to effectively further the goals of making necessary investments to optimize access to existing transit service. We also recognize additional revenue is necessary to build new transit infrastructure including future bus rapid transit, street car and rail.
- **We support the City moving forward with the full additional \$80 VLF – which would generate revenues up to \$27.2 million annually.** While other revenue sources like the motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) might have greater advantages we understand that VLF is the tool that has been provided by the state legislature. CTAC's recommendation includes important allocations for additional pavement preservation, street cleaning, safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways, and transit corridor improvements vital to our transportation system. The full \$80 dollar VLF as opposed to a smaller number provides the revenue necessary to construct the important downtown Rapid Streetcar connection as well as allow for significant progress in constructing high capacity transit (likely to be Rapid Streetcar) for the Ballard or Eastlake corridors.

- **Focus on implementing the projects that have already been identified as priorities.** We support and commend CTAC's recommendations to focus on implementing functional plans such as the Transit, Bike, and Pedestrian Master Plans. These plans and the accompanying project priorities were the result of data driven analytical efforts that involved extensive civic and community outreach efforts. The focus on implementing these plans is a logical and well-founded approach for prioritizing transportation funding projects.
- **Equity and fairness are strongly factored into Seattle's functional plans.** The Pedestrian, Bicycle and soon-to-be-released Transit Master Plans all strongly factor equity into their prioritization methodologies. Focusing VLF revenue on implementing these functional plans ensures this funding will appropriately target underserved and vulnerable communities. Transportation costs are generally the second highest household costs for Seattleites. Making the transit system stronger and more accessible will allow low income populations the opportunity to significantly decrease their household transportation costs.
- **Allocating the revenue from a VLF should focus on creating overlapping benefits and synergy for the transportation system.** The three proposed "buckets", *System Preservation and Safety, Transit Master Plan Implementation, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Implementation* include many projects and programmatic efforts which leverage one another in creating a balanced and enhanced transportation system that will benefit all its users. We are in general agreement with the allocation to divide an \$80 VLF as follows: 30 percent for safety and preservation, 50 percent for transit improvements and 20 percent for bicycle improvements.

Sincerely,



Josh Brower, Chair  
Seattle Planning Commission

cc: Seattle Transportation Benefit Directors (a.k.a. Seattle City Councilmembers)  
Honorable Michael McGinn, Mayor  
Darryl Smith, Ethan Raup, Julie McCoy, David Hiller, Michele Scoleri, Rebecca Deehr; Mayor's Office  
Norm Schwab, Dan Eder, Rebecca Herzfeld; Council Central Staff  
Peter Hahn, Bob Powers, Barbara Gray, Tracy Krawczyk, Tracy Burrows, Tony Mazzella, Jennifer Wieland; SDOT  
Diane Sugimura, Marshall Foster, John Skelton, Mike Podowski; DPD  
Bernie Matsuno; Department of Neighborhoods  
Ref Lindmark and Kate Joncas, Co-Chairs; CTAC III

**SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD OF DISCLOSURE & RECUSAL:**

- Commissioner Kadie Bell represents Public Health - Seattle & King County on the Transit Master Plan Advisory Committee.
- Commissioner David Cutler's employer, GGLO, provides planning and architectural services for projects that may be impacted by the City's functional master plans.
- The firm Commissioner Colie Hough-Beck works for, Hough Beck & Baird Inc. works on Transportation projects in Seattle and King County.
- The firm Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa works for, The Underhill Company LLC, works on transportation projects in Seattle and King County.
- Commissioner Roewe works for VIA Architecture who provides planning and architectural services for transportation projects in Seattle and King County.