

October 16, 2018

Dear Mayor Jenny Durkan and Seattle City Council,

Seattle needs to dramatically transform its transportation system for multiple reasons— many of which are already reflected in Seattle’s adopted goals. Our Climate Action Plan calls for carbon neutrality by 2050, and transportation is 60% of our current emissions; the recent IPCC report reminds us of the catastrophe awaiting us if we do not act immediately to reduce carbon emissions. Vision Zero calls for zero traffic deaths or serious injuries by 2030. In addition, our streets in the urban core are already failing to move people and goods adequately, equity and access to jobs require lower-cost options for people to get around, and our city’s overall economic health depends on a safe, green, and equitable transportation system.

We are Move All Seattle Sustainably, an alliance of groups advocating for sustainable transportation for all Seattle. We are motivated by the realistic and attainable vision of building a transportation system that not only moves people and goods, but also is equitable, low carbon, safe for everyone, and promotes great public spaces and inclusive neighborhoods.

The reality is that Seattle is not on track to meet its adopted goals. We believe now is the time to get moving. With a smart city budget that embodies our shared priorities, and leadership that is committed to implementing them, we can make progress. As Seattle grows, and especially as we approach the period of maximum constraint, we must aggressively shift our transportation investments to the modes that move the most people with the lowest carbon impact and in the least amount of space. The city’s budget and timelines for funded projects must emphasize **guaranteeing right-of-way for people walking, biking, and riding transit**. This means speeding up timelines for painting dedicated bus lanes and creating protected bike lanes. It also means protecting pedestrians in intersections and putting them first; adaptive signals are failing and, as NACTO recommends, are only appropriate for suburban settings.

We write to encourage the Council to make some relatively simple changes to the Mayor’s proposed budget to promote safe and sustainable transportation options without having to break the bank. And we write to urge the Mayor to lead with vision and urgency in implementing the following high-impact projects:

Invest in safe & accessible streets.

Seattle needs to do more to improve safety for all people who use our streets. 2019 should be the year our city takes a significant step closer toward achieving Vision Zero. Below are our budget requests and our policy priorities for the coming year.

- **Prioritize people walking at intersections.** Adaptive signals have prioritized cars at the expense of people walking. **Ask - budget:** Council should place a proviso on the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) budget stipulating that no funding shall be released to increase the number of adaptive signals, or similar technology, until it can measure and mitigate delays to people walking.

- **Fixing Rainier Avenue.** Moving forward with the Rainier Ave Safety Corridor Project and Accessible Mount Baker would help make Rainier Avenue— Seattle’s most dangerous street— safer and more accessible for all by diverting private vehicles and calming traffic. **Ask - leadership & budget:** Prioritize construction of the Rainier Ave Safety corridor without delay and find funding to implement Accessible Mt Baker.
- **Sidewalk Additions.** Seattle needs to ramp up the pace of sidewalk construction. At our current pace, it will take 300 years to finish the sidewalk network and close the gaps. **Ask - leadership:** Work with urgency to find additional dedicated funding for sidewalk construction as well as maintenance. City Council central staff has been tasked with this research, but it must be prioritized and implemented.
- **Home Zone Pilot.** Home zones use traffic calming measures like diverters to limit and slow traffic on residential streets without sidewalks, creating people-centered places for people of all ages to play, relax, and get around safely. **Ask - budget:** Fund a home zone pilot at \$350,000 for one year. Budget could be reallocated from ITS (which took money from pedestrian budget earlier this year).
- **Missing Link of Burke-Gilman Trail.** With the lengthy appeals process complete, and years of planning behind us, now is the time to begin construction. **Ask - leadership:** Implement the trail without additional delays.
- **Delridge Way multimodal corridor project.** RapidRide H should be an example of how we can improve transit, walking, and biking holistically. **Ask - leadership:** Ensure the project makes it comfortable and convenient to walk and bike along the Delridge corridor in addition to increasing the transit level of service.
- **Eastlake Avenue protected bike lanes.** People biking need a safe connection between downtown and Northeast Seattle, and Eastlake Avenue is the only logical choice. As an added benefit, protected bike lanes would serve the Eastlake main business district. **Ask - leadership:** Implement protected bike lanes, and prioritize the movement of people and goods, on Eastlake Ave.

Help people get to, from, and through downtown.

The period of maximum constraint is not just a crisis for the city to weather, but an opportunity for us to dramatically improve our transportation system by dedicating more right-of-way to buses and providing safe bike infrastructure. Transit gridlock will likely suggest corridors that warrant bus lanes, queue jumps, and transit signal priority. We encourage the City to use the 2019 budget to ensure the following projects are completed:

- **3rd Avenue bus only lanes through Belltown.** Ending the bus only restrictions at Stewart Avenue doesn’t make sense since congestion doesn’t stop there. Let’s ensure routes like RapidRides E and D have a clear shot to Aurora Avenue and Denny Way respectively in Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes. **Ask - leadership:** Use existing transit funding to quickly paint bus only lanes through Belltown.
- **1st Avenue transit lanes.** The Center City Connector will dedicate transit lanes through congested stretches of 1st Avenue. Resuming the project promptly will ensure that we have these lanes as soon as possible. **Ask - leadership:** Reprioritize the Center City Connector and finish this project by 2021.
- **Build the Basic Bike Network.** Biking is the fastest, carbon-free way for people to get around and absolutely must be a central component in Seattle’s transportation system. **Ask - leadership:** Implement the Basic Bike Network as laid out in Council Resolution #31826.

- **Connect to the new arena.** Ensure that the city completes key projects over the next three years to build a basic network of bikeways across the city by 2021. **Ask - budget:** Add funding to get people to the new arena by bike and complete the basic bike network in Uptown and South Lake Union.

Connect our neighborhoods with quicker and more reliable transit.

We cannot meet our climate and mobility needs in a compact, modern city without great transit. We believe in the vision laid out in the Move Seattle levy, but it needs to be realized sooner. We can start by using paint. By Metro's last count, Seattle has just 15 miles of dedicated bus lanes. Let's move with haste to fund painting of the following bus lanes which help ensure that pledges made in Move Seattle and One Center City are kept:

- **Rainier Avenue.** We don't have to wait until 2022 or 2024 to get the Route 7 moving faster. **Ask - leadership:** Prioritize bus lanes on Rainier Avenue ahead of RapidRide upgrades.
- **23rd/24th Avenue.** RapidRide upgrades might be delayed, but we shouldn't wait to paint bus lanes for Route 48, especially in the four lane sections of 23rd/24th Avenue where speeding is rampant and collisions far too commonplace. **Ask - leadership:** Paint bus lanes on 23rd/24th Avenue.
- **Route 40.** We don't have to wait for RapidRide to improve this line so the nearly 300 platform hours we're spending on it don't go to waste in horrible gridlock. **Ask - leadership:** Paint bus lanes on Leary Way and N. 36th Street and add a queue jump at the Fremont bridge.
- **Market Street.** Targeted improvements to Route 44 can improve speed and reliability, even as other upgrades to this route remain under discussion. **Ask - leadership:** Add Market Street BAT lanes to keep Route 44 moving in Ballard. Queue jumps for 45th Street at the I-5 interchange could also reduce transit times.

Ensure Transportation Equity.

We urge the City to support internal SDOT alignment around transportation equity, including additional staff or support for staff across teams to infuse an equity lens into policy-making, planning, project development, and operations. To that end:

- **Engage Communities.** Continue and expand upon the transportation equity work already begun with community partners. **Ask - leadership:** Move forward with creating a community stakeholder committee as described in Resolution 31773, and bolster financial support for communities of color and low-income communities to engage with SDOT processes and decision-making around transit and transportation investments.
- **Affordable Transit.** Build on Seattle's pioneering student transit pass program by working to make public transit affordable and accessible for all riders, regardless of income. **Ask - leadership:** Work with advocates, King County, and Metro to advance work on affordable fare programs for low- and no-income riders and fare enforcement reform.
- **Restore Pavement to Parks funding with an equity focus.** The Pavement to Parks Program works with communities to design and create places for gathering, place, and healthy living by transforming underused right of way into mini parks. Some of these parks serve areas of the city with limited access to recreation and park space. **Ask - budget:** Restore funding to the Pavement to Parks Program with an equitable focus on communities in need of open space (such as Rainier Vista and South Park).

October is the key month for revising the proposed budget, and we stand ready to help produce green sheets and other proposals that can reflect these specific priorities and help carry Seattle forward to achieving the vision of a transportation system that is low carbon, sustainable, equitable, and safe for everyone.

Sincerely,

Move All Seattle Sustainably:

350 Seattle
500 Women Scientists Seattle
Cascade Bicycle Club
Seattle Neighborhood Greenways
Seattle Subway
Seattle Transit Blog
Sierra Club Seattle Group
The Urbanist
Transit Riders Union



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