

Nov. 17, 2020

Dear Seattle City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment as Seattle's 2021 budget process draws to a close. We are organizations representing a variety of stakeholders that want to express opposition to the late proposal to increase councilmanic Vehicle Licensing Fees for the purposes of funding bridge maintenance.

There is a clear mandate that Seattle voters want and are expecting a well-funded transit system, with Proposition 1 passing with more than 80% of the vote. Due to the anticipated impacts of I-976, the renewal measure provides less service funding than the original, and without additional funding will result in tens of thousands of hours of transit service cut. We were repeatedly told throughout the package development process that any available VLF funds would be part of making our transit system whole.

The last-minute proposal to increase the VLF to fund bridge maintenance is inconsistent with these commitments, and rushes the discussion of how to use this revenue source. Key stakeholders including the Transit Advisory Board, Transportation Equity Workgroup, and community, should be engaged on an appropriate timeline before decisions are made.

Finally, we need a long-term plan for bridge maintenance. This proposal is a short term band-aid, and the level of funding is inadequate to meaningfully address bridge needs. On the other hand, \$7.2 million per year could make a big difference when it comes to transit service. We support the City in seeking funding from the State Legislature for bridge maintenance and replacement as part of a state-wide transportation package.

Please outline a better process for the VLF that prioritizes restoring transit. We look forward to supporting a more thorough process and plan for both transit service and long-term bridge maintenance.

Sincerely,

Transportation Choices Coalition
SDOT Transportation Equity Workgroup
OneAmerica
Disability Mobility Initiative, Disability Rights Washington
Transit Riders Union
The Urbanist
Cascade Bicycle Club
Sierra Club Seattle Group
350 Seattle