

**From:** Burson, Allison on behalf of McGinn, Mike  
**Sent:** Monday, March 28, 2011 4:30 PM  
**Subject:** Timing of a transportation ballot measure

March 28, 2011

Ref Lindmark, Co-chair, Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee  
Kate Joncas, Co-chair, Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee

Dear Mr. Lindmark and Ms. Joncas:

I am writing to provide feedback that I understand you and the CTAC-III committee requested at your March 15 meeting regarding the timing of a potential ballot measure to fund transportation priorities.

As you know, there are several priority funding needs that are being considered for the ballot over the next couple of years. My top priority has been and continues to be a voter approved bond measure to fund replacement of the waterfront seawall. This is a well documented and significant public safety risk. I believe there is consensus between me and the City Council that funding for reconstruction of the seawall will require voter approval. It is my hope that the Council will move to put this measure on the August 2011 ballot. I believe voters will respond to a well known and narrowly defined public safety need.

I also remain committed to bringing to Seattle voters a plan to fund expansion of our in-City rail system that would more effectively connect major urban centers such as West Seattle and Ballard. As you know, SDOT is in the middle of conducting a Transit Master Plan (TMP), which will look at these and other priority corridors to determine which transit mode is best suited for each corridor. The full TMP will be complete later this summer, with the outcome of the corridor analysis expected to be done this spring.

Once the TMP is complete, we will then need to advance the recommendations for high capacity transit improvements, including rail expansion, to the next level of planning and design. This is basic work that must be accomplished before we ask voters to help fund an expanded in-City rail system and before we can begin to seek grant opportunities. The funding required to pay for this planning and design work is not currently appropriated. The choice in front of us is how quickly we move toward planning. To provide a sense of these costs, SDOT estimates that it would cost roughly \$10 million to get an 8 mile rail line to 15 percent design.

One way to raise these funds is to advance to the voters a modest transit ballot measure later this year in either August or November. Our budget does not currently give us flexibility for that level of funding. If this ballot measure passed, the level of design work funded would allow us to seek federal grants for construction, as well as develop a timetable for a larger ballot measure to fund construction.

Another alternative is to conduct a conceptual level of design for priority rail corridors that would make alignment and operational decisions and develop budget estimates for further design and construction. SDOT estimates this would cost \$1.2 to \$1.5 million for an 8 mile line. While limited, the Council and I

do have revenue options available to us to fund this work. However, it likely means reductions in other SDOT spending beyond cuts we will need to be making in the months ahead to the SDOT budget in response to mid-year General Fund and Transportation Fund financial challenges. This more limited planning work is expected to take just 6 to 8 months. It would set up a more ambitious transportation ballot measure in 2012, including capital funds to construct the next phase of rail expansion.

A third path that I hope we can all agree is off the table is doing nothing. At a time when we continue to face difficult funding cuts, including potential cuts to SDOT's maintenance budget, we also have a responsibility to make the kinds of investments that will build a solid long term foundation for Seattle's future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mike McGinn  
Mayor of Seattle