



Date: July 5, 2006

To: Mayor Greg Nickels and Members of the Seattle City Council

From: Ron LaFayette, Chair, and Michelle Rupp, Vice-Chair, on Behalf of the Northgate Stakeholders Group

Subject: STAKEHOLDERS ADVICE #9 CONCERNING THE COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT PLAN (CTIP)

The resolution establishing the Northgate Stakeholders Group assigned the Stakeholders the task of reviewing and commenting upon the proposed Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan (CTIP). The CTIP represents the framework through which the City will carry out future transportation investments in the Northgate area.

Because of the critical role transportation investment plays in Northgate area redevelopment, Stakeholders have devoted a considerable amount of time to responding to CTIP proposals and drafts presented by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). Formal Advice has been provided to SDOT, the Mayor and City Council in three separate instances:

- On June 24, 2004, Stakeholders accepted the CTIP scope of work, including a plan for Stakeholder participation in the planning process.
- On February 28, 2005, Stakeholders recognized SDOT's response to Stakeholder recommendations and endorsed CTIP Planning, Financing and Technical Assumptions.
- On September 9, 2005, Stakeholders again recognized SDOT responses and endorsed the full utilization of the Department's Evaluation Criteria in all further stages of the CTIP process. The application of these criteria would subsequently aid in determining which possible street, bicycle and pedestrian improvements would be given highest priority.

The Stakeholders did not complete discussion on point-triggers for residential streets and welcome continued discussions with SDOT on this issue.

SDOT has now completed the draft Coordinated Transportation Improvement Plan and an accompanying Environmental Impact Statement.

Having reviewed the plan at each stage, the Stakeholders endorse it as the next major step in guaranteeing appropriate and sufficient transportation investment in the Northgate area. Directed by this plan, the City now must take these critical steps to guarantee that transportation priorities are achieved:

- (1) Secure the necessary financial resources*
- (2) Recognize and respond to the impacts of new development*
- (3) Lower the thresholds for remedial actions for residential streets by re-examining the weighted-point system, providing greater weight for traffic volumes and speeds*
- (4) Ensure that implementation on residential streets at the thresholds will be a high priority within SDOT and the CTIP*
- (5) Ensure that the mitigations for residential streets will be of sufficient and serious nature to overcome the specific traffic related problems which the thresholds identify and that they are a part of the annual CTIP report and monitoring*
- (6) Separate the enforcement issue of speed violations from traffic volumes; specifically, put more officers on the problem streets. Ensure that the Seattle Police Department and SDOT will coordinate actions to address speed and parking problems on residential streets*

The Stakeholders reviewed this draft CTIP plan at CTIP Subcommittee meetings on May 18, 2006 and May 30, 2006 and at a Stakeholders Group meeting on May 9, 2006. Stakeholders completed deliberation at their June 27, 2006 meeting.

Throughout the CTIP development process, the Stakeholders and our CTIP Subcommittee have emphasized several major points with regard to our goals for multimodal transportation in Northgate. All of these were addressed to some extent in the draft plan; however, they deserve further discussion and consideration before implementation of the CTIP. These include:

- Response to the impact of traffic on both commercial and residential areas in a way that will advance both economic vitality and quality of life
- The need to improve pedestrian safety and mobility through the area
- The need to improve East-West connections (including walkability of the Northgate Way I-5 underpass) as well as the improvements in North-South arterials
- Emphasize not just investment in major capital improvements but in all transportation modes
- The need to construct an expanded walkway connecting the Northgate shopping areas, Transit Center and transportation options with North Seattle Community College

Stakeholder review of the draft CTIP has underscored the nature of this Plan as a blueprint requiring future actions to make it come alive. Prior to CTIP's completion, however, the following specific steps must be addressed:

1) Responding to Unforeseen Impacts

CTIP calls for improvements in arterials and signalization in order to anticipate traffic increases generated by new commercial projects. The impact of these improvements on all commercial and residential areas must be monitored. It is, however, impossible to predict all of the impacts of new development on residential streets, because traffic on those streets is monitored less frequently. Thus, Stakeholders call for SDOT to adopt as a standard operating procedure a more proactive system to identify and respond to residential streets that are experiencing problematic traffic volume increases.

2) Guaranteeing Sufficient Funding

The draft CTIP has identified a number of funding sources that must be drawn upon in order to realize the transportation investment priorities identified by the Plan. Thus, the order of projects pursued will depend in part on the availability of special funding and is not fully predictable. The Stakeholders call upon the City to increase its own levels of transportation investment and aggressively seek regional, state, and federal funding to make certain all high priority projects are completed.

3) Building Sidewalks

SDOT has noted that sidewalk projects are often difficult to fund without related improvements to arterials. Stakeholders call for the CTIP to increase the dedicated fund SDOT now draws upon for these improvements.

4) Monitoring Progress

Because the success of CTIP is wholly dependent on its effective implementation, the Stakeholders call for the formulation of an annual progress report process whereby SDOT and the City report their CTIP-related actions to the Stakeholders and thus the community. This process should be used to review the extent to which each element of the CTIP is being fully attended to and to gain comment on any major actions that were not anticipated in the Plan. The creation of such a process will also provide executive and legislative officials with information on the extent to which progress has been made that they can use in subsequent decision making, including transportation funding decisions.

The monitoring process should include these steps:

- The SDOT director should designate the person who will carry out the annual assignment to prepare the report on behalf of the agency and the City.
- The report should detail the specific actions taken during the previous year on the projects prioritized in the CTIP; the actions expected to be taken in the upcoming year; and what is anticipated in ensuing years. This would enable the Stakeholders and Northgate community to formally assess the extent to which the plan has been implemented.
- The report should also evaluate the funding streams currently available for CTIP projects; identify any changes in levels of anticipated funding; and describe the steps being taken to secure sufficient funding.

- The report should be provided to the Stakeholders in advance of the scheduled Stakeholder meeting for review by the CTIP subcommittee and ultimate review of the Stakeholder group.
- The results of the Stakeholder review should be communicated to SDOT, the Mayor and the City Council.

5) Managing Parking

The CTIP includes a number of proposals developed by the Department of Planning and Development and SDOT to adjust parking regulations to match requirements in other commercial zones of the city. Stakeholders object to any modifications to parking requirements that could potentially lead to spillover parking in residential neighborhoods and continue to support modifications that facilitate innovative parking solutions. CTIP also provides for ongoing review of on-street parking restrictions developed by SDOT in conjunction with residential neighborhoods. The Stakeholders have been assured that such reviews will continue to incorporate the neighborhoods' views about maintaining or strengthening restrictions to ensure the spaces are available for use by adjacent residential properties.

6) Meeting Bicyclists' Needs

The CTIP is just the beginning of an important effort to identify and attend to the transportation needs of Northgate area bicyclists. Because bicyclists' needs are often distinct from those of pedestrians and motorized vehicles, CTIP should focus on the development of a Bike Master Plan by SDOT.