City of Seattle
Seattle Department of Transportation
Peter Hahn, Director

June 16, 2011

Dear Mayor McGinn and Councilmember Rasmussen:

The Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee III (CTAC III) is pleased to submit its recommendation for the allocation of the revenues generated from the twenty-dollar annual vehicle license fee (VLF). In developing this recommendation, the Committee carefully considered the criteria established in Resolution # 31240; the Seattle Department of Transportation's (SDOT's) budget challenges; and input from the public and the Pedestrian, Bicycle and Freight Boards related to priority transportation investments. We believe that the recommendation strikes the right balance of allocating funding to specific programs, while leaving SDOT the flexibility to accomplish priority objectives in the most cost-effective manner and to take advantage of opportunities to leverage these funds to make the greatest impact.

In the Resolution establishing the CTAC III work program, the Mayor and Council articulated three broad parameters for the current $20 VLF funding: preservation and maintenance; enhancing bicycle and pedestrian safety; and improving mobility and safety for people with disabilities. Consistent with these objectives, our recommendation highlights investments that: preserve basic assets; increase the share of people walking, riding bicycles, and using transit as their transportation mode; and enhance safety and access for all pedestrians, including people with disabilities.

The Committee also solicited input from the public on their transportation priorities and requested priority projects from the pedestrian, bicycle and freight advisory boards. While the revenues from the $20 VLF are not adequate to fund all these priorities, this input helped shape our recommendation and will help guide the Committee as it develops its recommendation on a more comprehensive transportation funding ballot measure.

You will note that the CTAC III recommendation for the current $20 VLF revenues stresses funding for maintenance and preservation needs. Our hope is that this will help address the City's significant backlog of transportation maintenance needs. This focus on asset preservation is all the more important during a time when general fund support for SDOT's core maintenance and operations activities is declining.

In recommending funding for system improvements, the Committee also recognizes the importance of strengthening transit, biking and walking to address mobility, sustainability, and quality of life goals. Here, the emphasis is on investing in high-visibility, innovative projects.

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CTAC III Recommendation – Allocation of $20 VLF Revenues

Transportation Projects and Programs	Funding Recommendation
Maintenance and Preservation	
Pavement Preservation, including pothole repair and more extensive spot repair ranging from a half- block to a half-mile on arterial and non-arterial streets in locations around the city. The emphasis of this funding is on completing the most timely and cost-effective investments that prevent further deterioration of the roadway to the point where repair becomes prohibitively expensive.	$ 2,700,000
Pedestrian Safety and Access, including sidewalk repair, curb ramps, crossing treatments (including median refuges and other traffic calming measures), and other maintenance and small improvement activities along and across the roadway consistent with the recommendations of the Pedestrian Master Plan.	$ 1,700,000
Bicycle Facility Maintenance, including spot improvements, maintenance of wayfinding signs, bicycle lanes, sharrows, bike boxes, and other bicycle markings and facilities.	$ 300,000
Street Cleaning, including sweeping of downtown and neighborhood arterials to improve the pavement surface for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle safety and mobility; removal of debris to improve stormwater quality.	$ 300,000
Total Maintenance and Preservation	**$5,000,000**
System Improvements	
Bicycle Facility Improvements/Innovations, continue to implement the Bicycle Master Plan, including completion of critical connections in the existing bicycle network and improvements that serve cyclists of varying ability and propensity to ride. Emphasis on visible and innovative projects and programs, including programs that increase bike mode share.	$ 900,000
Transit Corridor Improvements, including implementation of transit priority treatments along priority transit corridors, with a focus on cost-effective projects and programs that increase transit reliability and mode share and make the system work better. These improvements will be consistent with the priorities identified in the Transit Master Plan.	$ 900,000
Total System Improvements	**$1,800,000**
Total Funding	**$6,800,000**

The Committee's intent is that this recommendation establish the allocation of the $20 VLF revenue through 2013. As part of the deliberation on the 2014 budget, the allocation should be reassessed to take into consideration changing funding needs and any relevant additional transportation funding resources. We strongly urge that an independent oversight committee monitor VLF expenditures and deliverables. This task of monitoring expenditures and deliverables could be accomplished by the existing Bridging the Gap Oversight Committee or by a newly established, independent board.

The CTAC III committee is now turning our attention to the other tasks given to us in the Resolution. In the coming weeks, we will complete our full review of the City's transportation funding system, and will evaluate and examine the potential for a Seattle Transportation Benefit District ballot measure to fund additional transportation projects.

Sincerely,

Kate Joncas
Co-Chair, CTAC III

Ref Lindmark
Co-Chair, CTAC III

Cc: Council President Richard Conlin
Councilmember Jean Godden
Councilmember Sally Clark
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
Councilmember Nick Licata
Councilmember Tim Burgess
Councilmember Bruce Harrell
Councilmember Mike O'Brien
Peter Hahn, Director, SDOT
Beth Goldberg, Director, City Budget Office