



March 28th, 2018
Seattle City Council

Dear Seattle City Council,

As a diverse coalition of organizations, we overall support updates to parking regulations to allow reduced parking requirements and for greater flexibility, minimizing construction costs of housing and making more space available for new housing. Reducing parking requirements and unbundling parking from rent are a key recommendation in the comprehensive Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) that aims to reduce the cost of housing. Requiring a minimum number of stalls to be built, current parking codes make housing units more expensive. Current parking requirements result in fewer housing units being built and undermine the City of Seattle’s commitment to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. As a City we are investing in transit service as well as active transportation projects to give people alternatives to driving a vehicle.

We are pleased that legislation to update parking requirements is before the Seattle City Council. They will assist in meeting Seattle’s commitments to reduce the reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and achieve the HALA strategy to lower housing costs. These changes are much needed and long overdue—**Please consider our recommendations for the proposed legislation.**

Further encourage unbundling. We support further expanding unbundling of rent and parking to include all apartment buildings regardless of size, and that lowers the square footage threshold for commercial structures to 4,000 sq. feet. These changes provide flexibility for developers and lower the cost for residents, especially those who decide to be car-free. Embedding the cost of parking into building requirements masks the true subsidized cost of car ownership.

Do not allow for SEPA mitigation of parking impacts. While we appreciate the intent of the amendments for SEPA mitigation, it is contrary to the goals of the code changes contained within the legislation. The point of this policy change is to drive down costs of housing, reduce delays and encourage development within urban villages. Yet, use of SEPA mitigation would further delay and possibly prevent much needed homes from being built and trigger review of off-street parking. This amendment could have a possible chilling effect if the area is close to the threshold for mitigation.

Do not exempt Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal from parking reductions. It is important that we not exempt one single area from these policies. One of the goals of this legislation is to reduce the cost of housing and provide predictable policies across all urban villages. By exempting one area, the City of Seattle would be failing to implement the goals of the policy adequately across the city. There are other means that the City can take to alleviate parking concerns without exempting areas of the city. For example, the City of Seattle could consider implementation of a residential parking zone (RPZ) within the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal neighborhood or take other action; while also keeping in mind that these policies do not limit parking from being built, only reduce requirements.

Expand the FTS walkshed to one-half mile. This change aligns with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recommendations, as well as best practices for accessing frequent transit service. *Move Seattle*, Seattle Department of Transportation’s 10-Year Strategic Vision for Transportation, states a goal of providing 72% of Seattle residents with all-day transit service within a 10-minute walk (approximately one-half mile) of their homes. In 2014, Seattle voted to increase bus service across the city, which will help us reach this goal and provide even faster and more reliable alternatives to owning a vehicle. Providing parking in areas surrounding frequent transit incentivizes car ownership, which

causes additional vehicles on roads, creating congestion and less safe conditions for people walking and biking to transit in these neighborhoods.

Expand off-site car parking requirements to one-quarter mile. The City of Seattle has made a commitment to prioritize pedestrians, bicycles and transit service. We support the Executive's recommendation of expanding off-site parking requirements to one-quarter mile. One of the goals of this legislation is to allow for greater sharing of parking between buildings and uses to reduce the number of needed parking stalls. We support the expansion of the off-site parking requirements to one-quarter mile. We also would like to encourage the use of loading zones for residential buildings so that residents can easily drop off groceries or other heavy personal items before making the walk back from off-site parking.

Regarding bicycle parking code

As Seattle becomes less dependent on using a personal car to get around, the amount and quality of bicycle parking must improve. The Seattle City Council set a performance target in the Bicycle Master Plan to quadruple bicycle ridership by 2030, resulting in approximately 12.5% of commuters getting to work by bicycle. These numbers should serve as our baseline for determining how much bike parking must be available at our workplaces, schools, restaurants, entertainment venues, and train stations. Bicycle parking must be safe and convenient, and accessible for all people, including those with cargo, family, and electric bicycle. We recognize that while bike parking takes-up significantly less space than car parking, the increased square footage dedicated to bike parking comes with tradeoffs, and thus a citywide exemption from floor-area ratio maximums and an allowance for entertainment venues to utilize bike valet need to be included. By including these changes, we can make bicycle parking easier and more convenient for all abilities and users, a vital component to the city reaching its bicycle ridership goals.

We urge you to pass parking requirement updates with the proposed changes to lower costs and improve the livability of our urban villages with people first policies.

Sincerely,

350 Seattle
Bicycle Security Advisors
Cascade Bicycle Club
Futurewise
Housing Development Consortium
Seattle For Everyone
Seattle Greenways
Seattle Tech 4 Housing
Sierra Club
Transit Riders Union
Transportation Choices Coalition