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September 20, 2010

Council President Joe Shogan and Council Members
City of Spokane
808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard
Spokane, WA. 99204

RE: Imposition of Commercial Parking Tax on Paid Parking in Downtown Spokane and Periphery
Greater Spokane Incorporated Position

Dear Council President Shogan and Council Members:

Greater Spokane Incorporated joins with other stakeholders to voice a strong opposition to the imposition of a targeted tax on paid surface and/or structured parking in the City of Spokane. The purpose of this tax would be to offset general fund deficits and is contrary to sound infill objectives in the growth management of Downtown. This tax may possibly steer development to the suburbs, and thus would promote sprawl.

The concentration of paid parking facilities is almost exclusively in the Central Business District (CBD). The hospital district and University District within this district are key economic engines for the City and the Inland Northwest region. In addition, commercial and professional real estate professionals foresee broad fiscal implications and impairment to commerce in the CBD. Increased fees to these businesses will increase the cost of operations for our healthcare and educational institutions.

It must also be mentioned that Downtown is unique; business and property owners already self-assess themselves for maintenance and operations through BID assessments. It is evident that these businesses are willing to share the cost in sustaining a vibrant Downtown. Implementing this tax would only create competitive disadvantages for downtown area businesses and will hinder business opportunities. This tax will also have unrealized consequences; employers and residential developers will look elsewhere, therefore diminishing property values and tax collections.

It is not the time to introduce new taxes. We need a business climate where our local businesses can grow and prosper. Greater Spokane Incorporated and its members encourage the Council to reject legislation that will discourage downtown development. Thank you for your time and your willingness to promote a positive business climate.

Sincerely,


Richard G. Hadley
President & Chief Executive Officer


Thomas R. Quigley
2009-2010 Chairman, Board of Trustees
President & CEO, Kiemle Hagood Company