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From: Neil Muller [<mailto:neilm@bell-anderson.com>]

Sent: Thursday, August 26, 2010 10:29 AM

To: Waldref, Amber; Apple, Bob; Snyder, Jon; Rush, Richard; McLaughlin, Nancy; Corker, Steve; Shogan, Joe

Cc: Mayor

Subject: Downtown Parking Tax

Hello City Council,

I am writing you in opposition to the proposed parking tax for parking paid by the user. I oppose this idea for a couple reasons, but most importantly this endeavor is contrary legislation to the Comprehensive Plan, which is supposed to support urban growth and not add to suburban sprawl via a long term plan. To me it seems quite obvious that if you add additional tax to surface parking downtown and parking structures downtown that office space downtown, retail space downtown, and living space downtown, will be less competitive with suburban areas. This pushes employers, employees, consumers, and residents outside of the downtown core. This will also add to the perception from tourists that Downtown is not user friendly and tourists will stay and spend outside of the downtown core.

My second concern: is that you have no dedicated specific project or series of projects to fund with this revenue. You have indicated a wide array of projects, potentially city wide, that would receive funding from this measure. If you are going to raise money downtown on the backs of consumers, employers, tourists, and employees you need to strongly consider re-investing those moneys in the downtown core to counteract the loss of revenue to the downtown core caused by the enactment of parking taxes.

Seattle has gone through this same sort of legislation and are pondering it again at present time. Look how much King County's other centers have grown over the last 15 years. Bellevue, Renton, Tukwila, Northgate, Issaquah, Redmond, etc. have all grown, while the City of Seattle's downtown office and retail vacancy continues to rise.

Walt Worthy is one of your larger downtown investors and look at his actions over the last 2 years. He built nearly 500,000 square feet of retail space in Spokane Valley and is currently recruiting businesses from downtown to the Valley. He has 75% or more of that building currently vacant. How much easier do you think it will be for him to recruit businesses from downtown to fill his building should you impose the parking tax? That was a rhetorical question, but I seriously want you to think about it. There are several other developers that have plans and projects for the valley and liberty lake area for additional office space, but are waiting to see what your decision on this issue will be as a component of their marketing and development strategy and decision making.

I understand that you have a huge dilemma in front of you regarding budgets, and don't envy you in the tough decisions that you make, but please think through this proposal and how it will affect the long term viability of downtown and what you envision downtown to look like in 3 year, 5 years, 10 years, and beyond.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this subject.

Regards,

Neil Muller