

LAURELHURST

L E T T E R

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October 2019

LCC Funding Priorities for City Budget

In the past five years, the City of Seattle has made historic changes to its land use policies with the goal of providing more housing units. HALA, the MHA, the upzoning of most single- and multi-family neighborhoods, and the abolishment of regulations restricting building accessory dwelling units, have all been executed without upgrading the City's infrastructure.

Over the next five years, LCC believes that the City's top budget priority should be to make the new density work for its taxpayers, residents, and employers. Pairing appropriate impact fees from the developers (who now reap the benefits from unobstructed view lines and savings from the lack of expenditures on parking) with existing annual revenue sources, the City budget should fund these key infrastructure needs:

- Fund SDOT for all modes of transportation, namely sidewalks without impediments for all, streets in good repair without sinkholes or potholes, enough capacity on roads for transit, freight, emergency vehicles, and other vehicles needed for transport, especially families, the mobility challenged, and the self employed. SDOT should coordinate with SPCI and OED to partially fund repairs by assessing developers for road damage from continually impacted streets. In D-4, Union Bay Pl. NE and NE Blakeley St., which lack sidewalks, are now severely damaged by four "small" projects. These should be repaired on the developer's dime.

- Invest funds in transit that moves the most people. Extended service hours. Ditch streetcars that continue to be a fiscal drag on the

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Let's Build the Second Bascule Bridge Now

LCC supports City Council Resolution 31904 to update the City's participation of the Second Bascule Bridge as part of the State funded SR520 Bridge Replacement Program for the following reasons:

The State's SR520 Corridor includes, and has funded through its legislation, the second bascule bridge over the Montlake Cut as an integral part of that transportation system and HOV that will be built onto the I-5 reversible lane. The additional capacity of a second bascule bridge for buses, bikes, and pedestrians would add relief to the bottleneck of transit stuck in north/south traffic. Traffic is bumper to bumper along Montlake Blvd. for four hours a day during the morning and afternoon peaks – wreaking havoc with schedules, testing patience, and spewing excess carbon emissions. A 14-foot shared-use path for bikes and pedestrians, similar to the one on the Floating Bridge could include, as the existing Montlake Bridge with only 7 feet in width is not safe.

Times have changed since 2012 when former City of Seattle resolutions 31411 and 31611 rejected a second bascule bridge. Seattle has experienced exponential growth. Light Rail at Husky Stadium averages 10,000 weekday boardings, making pedestrian safety and access critical. Upzones, increased residential density, plus retail and major institution expansions north of the Ship Canal are occurring without upgrades to the City's transportation infrastructure over the Ship Canal.

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Retain City Environmental Review Regulations

LCC urged members of the City Council's Planning, Land Use, and Zoning Committee (PLUZ) not to pursue Council Bill 119600 for a vote by the full City Council. The City has enacted sweeping changes to its land use policies to provide a more than 30 percent increase in housing units. Most of the newly upzoned areas, urban villages, and centers have not even begun to build out to capacity. Impacts from the coming changes cannot yet be measured and evaluated. LCC recommends that the City wait several years to allow for this analysis before considering changes in the SEPA review process. Only SEPA regulations currently provide any type of framework for measuring and, potentially, mitigating unforeseen adverse impacts.

This bill serves no purpose except to remove the opportunity for impacted stakeholders to comment on land use issues. Collaboration among affected parties has been proven to produce far better outcomes than "top down" approaches. CB 119600 eliminates individual project vetting, ignoring unique and site-specific issues. Impacts in high-density downtown residential areas are different from those in single-family neighborhoods, and one size does not fit all.

LCC has specific concerns about the following elements of this proposal:

- Section 1. Projects within an Urban Village should not be automatically exempted from SEPA review. Developers love these loopholes so they can avoid regulations and impact fees by doing piecemeal projects. No reason for ANY exemptions.

- Section 2. The Director of Seattle Department of Construction and

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SDOT budget and do not offer the connectivity needed throughout the region. Divert the streetcar expenditures and substitute more flexible buses to meet demand.

■ Save taxpayer revenue by putting a moratorium on “road diets,” which have sometimes exacerbated congestion and slowed buses. Focus on efficiently transporting the majority of people and goods to benefit the community.

■ Engage immediately with WSDOT and Metro to improve mobility around the Montlake Interchange and Triangle at the University of Washington Light Rail Station. Seattle has neglected the importance of this transportation juggernaut. In March 2020, Northeast Seattle residents will find that Metro has allowed Eastside buses to divert onto Montlake Blvd., eliminating the SR520 stop. SDOT should be funded to collaborate with the UW and Sound Transit to make the “last mile” to Light Rail Stations seamless, regardless of mode. With the City’s carte blanche approval of the UW’s Campus Master Plan, it is time that the City and UW partner to achieve better mobility throughout the Northeast Seattle corridor.

■ Earmark funds to work effectively with WSDOT to relieve congestion in Seattle with planning for a second bascule bridge (part of the SR520 Bridge Replacement).

■ Budget funds to build a new Magnolia Bridge. It is unconscionable that its replacement has not been planned for through a depreciation schedule in the City budget, nor have monies been set aside for its replacement.

■ Fund more officers for our police and fire departments. The increase in population, especially in Northeast Seattle, requires more responses from the Seattle Police and Fire Departments. It is well known that Seattle now has a deficit in the number of officers recommended to provide adequate and effective public safety. Budget for replacing the outdated Northgate area station with two new ones, one centered in Northwest Seattle and one in Northeast Seattle.

■ Continue to fund and expand the effective work of the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) teams that identify homeless folks and refer them to appropriate services. These teams tackle the tough issues behind the homeless crisis in our City.

■ Restore funding to Seattle Parks and Recreation for local community center programs and operating hours. LCC supports restoring funding to its Community Center with hours to operate at least two days/week with classes, public meeting space until 8:30 p.m., and year-round school programming hours from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. Often, the community centers are the most accessible and affordable option for parents of young children, for after school enrichment, and for senior exercise and life-learning enrichment classes. For example, LCC and LEAP (emergency preparedness) evening meetings held at the Community Center benefit the whole community while, at the same time, senior enrichment classes, youth piano lessons, and yoga classes take place.

■ Provide financial resources for historic preservation. The City has allocated vast resources in its budget to support developers with better permitting processes. The City can equally benefit from resources earmarked to preserve irreplaceable historic sites and buildings. LCC, with its own 100-year history, requests funding continue to expand to support Historic Seattle’s expert work. Mostly notable in D-4, the University District and “The Ave,” with its ethnic small business character, needs historic preservation support to retain this history. With funding in the City’s budget, Historic Seattle could operate as a more effective resource for communities to save historic places that are disappearing due to lack of community know-how. The history of the City’s places and structures inform its identity and values, which are the roots of its future. Allocate resources to fund preservation. ■

Retain Regulations continued from page 1

Inspection is not an elected official, and should not be authorized to promulgate rules that have served the local EPA regulations of local jurisdictions. This bill states that the rules “may have different standards,” which is counter to applying standards at all. Thus, this bill makes no sense. The existing regulations already offer numerous discretionary allowances as “Director’s Rules.” No further waiving of SEPA regulations is needed.

■ Section 3. This section refers to transportation impacts that are the results of various types of development. Transportation impacts are cumulative on the City’s road infrastructure and transit capacity. Such impacts are best vetted and tracked using existing SEPA regulations. The proposed new rules waive the SEPA analysis, neglect the fragile environment, and fail to measure any project’s carbon footprint.

■ Section 4. This section contains language that is outright confusing and can be misinterpreted: “With the amendments, the following non-project actions will be exempt entirely from SEPA review.” (No amendments presented.) This entire section is unnecessary and could be used to undermine environmental protections intended to protect and preserve treasured City shoreline and tree canopy assets.

■ Section 5. This concerns removal of the current time period allowed after an appeal. No reason to change any of this language, which should be left in the Seattle Municipal Code.

Retaining the opportunity to assess the impact of development is crucial for protecting our City’s environment. ■

LEAP Disaster Preparedness Class October 16

*Laurelhurst Community Center
Wednesday, October 16,
7 to 8:15 p.m.*

Please RSVP for this free class by emailing LEAPlaurelhurst@outlook.com. ■

UNCLASSIFIEDS

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Build the Bridge continued from page 1

Projections for population and employment increases north of the Ship Canal in the coming years will result in more than 16,000 daily new trip generations without added infrastructure capacity.

The new bridge design should be approved with input from both the Seattle Landmark Preservation Board and the Seattle Design Commission. The Montlake Historic District with its Olmsted architectural traditions and the historic character of the existing bridge must be considered when discussing a second bridge. The past history of the City's places and structures inform its identity and values, which are the roots of its future. Seattle must advocate for the resources to preserve them.

Seattle has taken on more than its share of the region's growth without ANY major improvements in the infrastructure to ease congestion for those who live and work here. Seattle's traffic congestion rating is the seventh worst in the country, which also increases our carbon footprint through inefficiencies and excess emissions.

LCC urges the City Council to support the approval of Council Resolution 31904, which would give our City a seat at the table to analyze the data and participate in whatever form a second bascule bridge might take. ■

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<http://thelaurelhurstblog.blogspot.com/>
News, events, issues, restaurants, businesses and lots more. Email a tip or story idea or subscribe at laurelhurstblogger@gmail.com.
The blog and LCC are separate entities. ■

CALENDAR

Oct. 14 (Mon.) 6:30 to 8 p.m.

LCC Board of Trustees
Laurelhurst Community Center

Oct. 16 (Wed.) 7 to 8:15 p.m.

LEAP Disaster Preparedness Class
Laurelhurst Community Center

Oct. 19 (Sat.) 3 to 7 p.m.

11th Annual Monster Bash
St. Stephen's Grounds - Rain or Shine

Nov. 13 (Wed.) 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

SUN Park Weed and Sweep
47th Ave. NE and NE 47th St.

Nov. 18 (Mon.) 6:30 to 8 p.m.

LCC Board of Trustees
Laurelhurst Community Center

Drop off donations for Elizabeth Gregory House, a U District women's shelter: Huda Giddens at 4338 NE 44th St. (Leave in dark green, covered bin at the front of the house.)

The Laurelhurst Letter is published ten times a year. DISPLAY ADS cost \$75 per space per issue, with a five-issue commitment paid in advance. UNCLASSIFIED ADS are free for PAID members of the Laurelhurst Community Club, except that repeat ads or ads deemed commercial cost \$20; 25-word maximum. Email copy to laurelhurstnews@comcast.net.

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October 2019

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11th Annual Monster Bash Fabulous Halloween Fun!

**Saturday, October 19
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