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November 12, 2022

City of Bellevue
City Council
450 110th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98004

Re: Curb Management Plan - Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Dear Mayor Robinson and Councilmembers:

On behalf of the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), I'm writing to convey input on the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) that sets the foundation for a future Curb Management Plan (CMP). The BDA Transportation Committee has closely tracked the CMP's development over the course of eight meetings since the initiative kicked off earlier this year. We're eager to see the combined efforts of the City, BDA, and other stakeholders rewarded with an effective plan that addresses current issues and prepares us for future challenges.

We urge the City to adopt the CPA by the end of this year so the CMP can move forward in development and avoid delays that can setback progress. The BDA Transportation Committee's exclusive focus on the CMP has revealed the complexity of curb space issues and that a management plan is only successful if it accounts for all the uses that interact with the curb. The proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan and new eight transportation elements create the basis for a plan that accounts for all uses with a suite of new management tools.

The proposed CPA aligns with the BDA's [2019 Grand Connection Pilot Activation Report](#) and [2021 Placemaking Workshop Series Report](#) which both recommend permitting process updates that encourage public space activation and a playbook that identifies where and what type of placemaking can be programed in the public realm. However, the language use of "consider" for the policies NEW-2, NEW-6, and NEW-7 suggests the City needs to conduct analysis to inform another policy update. We encourage the City to use language that is more supportive of the policy's intent, while retaining flexibility for further evaluation in its application. We suggest replacing "consider" with "allow for" so the policies create the basis for application with the underlying notion there's performance criteria and oversight.

See our [September letter](#) to the Planning Commission for more details regarding our position on the CPA and our work. The letter has three outstanding items we request the City address. Please ask City staff at your upcoming work session about items 3, 4 and 5 from the section regarding transportation elements.

Concerns have been voiced about how some of the CPA policies proposed can manifest disruptive scenarios. An example often used is permitting a food truck in front of a restaurant. That would be a potentially negative outcome; however, the proposed CPA acknowledges food truck zoning for which the CMP would create the permitting standards that would not allow for such a scenario. We recommend you view the CPA as a package rather than a collection of individual policies, because the CMP's ability to manage one curb use scenario relies on managing all the other curb space demands.

Lastly, we strongly encourage the City to improve public information about the CMP's evolution over the last year. Information that would help includes: a FAQ, charts that explain the rationale for each component, definitions for terms, and a diagram that demonstrates the relationship between each component (such as pricing and curb typology). Sharing clear information will be vital for the CMP's progression because stakeholders who engage at different stages of the process don't benefit from the full picture, which may embolden well-meaning community members to obstruct work by commenting on misunderstandings.

Again, we encourage you to advance the CPA by the end of this year so we can keep the momentum going on the CMP. The BDA remains a committed partner to track the development of the CMP and engage when appropriate. Thank you for your leadership, time, and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Jack", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Matt Jack
Director of Public Policy
BDA