

June 17, 2008

Mayor Ray Stephanson
Council Member Paul Roberts
Council Member Mark Olson
Council Member Arlan Hatloe
Council Member Ron Gipson
Council Member Drew Nielsen
Council Member Brenda Stonecipher
Council Member Shannon Affholter

C/O City of Everett
2930 Wetmore Avenue
Everett, WA 98201

Re: Downtown Revitalization & Parking Management

Dear Mayor Stephanson & Council Members:

Last month, you received a petition signed by downtown stakeholders who have been active in revitalizing Everett's urban core. Our petition requested you to adopt measures to improve management of existing parking resources and to plan for new public parking facilities that will be needed to support future growth. Since that time, our group has been joined by additional stakeholders who believe that a viable parking strategy is essential for the redevelopment and success of Everett's downtown area. We have attached a list of all stakeholders who have signed the petition to date.

According to published news reports, the City of Everett signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Village Theatre in December, 2007 regarding future development of the former Key Bank site. This MOU was executed prior to the completion of the parking study by Barney & Worth in May, 2008 which identified a need to create new public parking facilities to replace spaces lost to development and to accommodate future growth. The MOU was also executed before the Everett Theatre's financial difficulties became public knowledge in May, 2008. In light of information revealed by the parking study and the potential closure of a downtown icon, we believe the City of Everett should not proceed further with the Village Theatre at this time.

While public funds have been invested in planning efforts for a new children's theater and public space at the Key Bank site, the amount of this expenditure pales in comparison to the harmful economic impacts to downtown businesses that will result if the City fails to provide adequate public parking facilities. The Barney & Worth study projects a need for a new public parking garage in three to five years; however, it makes sense for the City to plan for future needs over the next ten years. In such a scenario, it is likely that both the Key Bank site and the City's Wall Street Building parking lot would be needed for creating public parking facilities and vibrant public spaces. Each site is well suited for such purposes, and utilizing them would eliminate the need to take private property through an expensive and controversial eminent domain process.

When evaluating local and regional examples where cities have been successful in revitalizing their urban centers, one finds a strong relationship between proactive parking management and the health of their retail and business communities. On a regional level, Everett can learn from Boise, Idaho where annual downtown sales have doubled since 2003 due in part to the city's investment in public parking garages and the creation of a Parking Advisory Committee to help manage parking resources (article attached). Locally, Everett can learn from Tacoma's example, where leaders committed to invest \$15 million in high-capacity parking facilities to keep Russell Investments in its downtown core (article attached). If Everett is truly serious about promoting retail and business development in its downtown core, the City must have a plan for creating and managing parking – especially now, given deteriorating economic conditions.

Since many of us participate financially in the Business Improvement Area (BIA), we have asked our Downtown Services Manager, Sue Strickland, to post this petition and supporting information on the Downtown Everett Association's web site, and to raise awareness of our petition via the newsletter that is published monthly. We have a reasonable expectation that our request will be honored as it stems directly from the Downtown Everett Association's list of priorities, which include the following:

Downtown Everett Association Priorities

- Create a safe and clean environment
- Keep members educated and informed**
- Provide representation to media and government**
- Enhance quality business and commerce**
- Encourage residential development
- Support long-term parking solutions**

We request that the City of Everett provide a written response to our petition that outlines what actions will be taken with regard to the four key parking recommendations we cited in our previous communication to you. We also request that the City's response be addressed to Sue Strickland so she may post it on the Downtown Everett Association's web site in order to keep interested downtown stakeholders informed. Finally, we request that copies of our petition and accompanying materials be shared with officials in the Office of Economic Development so they may become better informed about the importance of parking and its impacts on the long-term success of downtown Everett.

Sincerely,

Downtown Everett Stakeholders

Enclosures:

List of Petition Signatories

Idaho Statesmen – Article Dated June 14, 2008

Puget Sound Business Journal – Article Dated June 5, 2008