

January 16, 2012

Gary Prince
Senior Project Manager
King County Department of Transportation
KSC-TR-0817
201 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98104-3856



Dear Mr. Prince,

The Maple Leaf Community Council is elected to represent the nearly 4,000 homes and businesses in the Maple Leaf neighborhood of north Seattle. The Northgate Transit Center is just north of our northern boundary and the coming changes in this area directly affect our neighborhood.

We are writing to oppose plans for King County Metro or Sound Transit to construct a new parking garage at Northgate. A publicly owned parking structure is not the best fit with King County's or the City of Seattle's long-term vision for Northgate. Numerous near and long-term alternatives could more than address demand for parking. Specifically, constructing a pedestrian bridge to the underutilized parking North Seattle Community College appears to be a significantly better long-term use for scarce public dollars.

Metro's recent analysis shows that over 90% of Metro's parking users are from Seattle, with the highest concentrations within three miles of the transit station or within half a mile of an existing bus route to Northgate. Additionally, Northgate's status as LINK's northern terminus will be temporary, as the North Corridor extension is scheduled to open a mere two years after the Northgate station's opening.

This is not to say parking is not needed, but that people will adjust to less expensive solutions that provide Metro more flexibility. There are large parking lots at the Northgate Mall, North Seattle Community College, and along Aurora Avenue that could be connected directly or with shuttles. Rapid Ride D will bring frequent, reliable downtown bus service to Aurora in 2012 while minor changes and increased frequency to the current bus network should reduce parking demand at Northgate. Combined together, we do not believe spending \$15-20 million in public funds on a parking garage is a prudent decision.

Instead, a similar amount of money should be spent on a pedestrian/bicycle bridge connecting the North Seattle Community College (NSCC) with the Northgate station. This would link a huge source of available daytime parking in the near term while securing future ridership indefinitely. Additionally, directly funding pedestrian and bicycle-orientations portions of the Northgate Comprehensive Transportation Improvement Plan (CTIP) and relevant elements of Seattle's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans would be better uses of public dollars than a parking garage.

Sincerely,

Joshua Newman
President
Maple Leaf Community Council