Advocates band together to push City leaders on transportation promises and budget investments

As climate disruption accelerates and Seattle hurts towards the “Period of Maximum Constraint” that begins with the viaduct closure next January, advocates fear that the City is not acting fast enough to cut carbon emissions, keep people and goods moving, and prevent traffic fatalities. That’s why transportation and climate action groups have joined together to form a new coalition called Move All Seattle Sustainably (MASS).

Coalition members delved into the Mayor’s proposed 2019-2020 budget and zeroed in on what is missing to meet Seattle’s needs. MASS delivered a letter to Mayor Durkan and the Seattle City Council urging budget changes and leadership on key transportation projects, and coalition members will testify at upcoming budget hearings.

“As the recent IPCC report has made clear, to avoid climate disaster we must take dramatic action now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions” said Sarah Shifley, volunteer with 350 Seattle. “Transportation is by far Seattle’s largest source of emissions. The steps outlined in the MASS Coalition’s letter are not optional measures, but very real necessities for a livable future.”

“Seattle has to be a leader in building a sustainable and climate-friendly city, now more than ever,” said Rebecca Monteleone, Chair of Sierra Club Seattle Group. “Making it easy to get around the city without driving is one of the most important things we can do to combat climate change and build people-friendly neighborhoods. Our policies and our budget need to reflect this priority”.

“Seattle is facing a climate crisis, a housing crisis and the Period of Maximum Constraint, and we developed transportation plans that address all these problems. We need leadership from the city to implement and fund these plans,” said Owen Pickford, executive director of The Urbanist. “Leadership would double our dedicated bus lane mileage, connect our disconnected network of protected bike lanes, and prioritize people walking by removing expensive adaptive signals. It’s too late for inaction, second guessing, or slow-rolling solutions. Climate, housing, and transportation leadership means putting people walking, biking, and riding transit first.”

“More people are riding public transit than ever before, and many routes are standing-room only at rush hour,” said Katie Wilson, general secretary of the Transit Riders Union.
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“King County Metro says they can’t add bus base capacity or hire and train drivers fast enough to meet the demand. But the City can make a big difference by creating dedicated bus lanes downtown and throughout the city. Not only will this make buses faster and more reliable, it will allow Metro to serve more riders with their existing fleet, easing overcrowding and improving efficiency.”

"We are particularly asking Seattle’s elected leaders to choose to prioritize people who are walking around our city and our neighborhoods,” said Clara Cantor, a community organizer with Seattle Neighborhood Greenways. “This means prioritizing people walking at intersections, and not spending money expanding the adaptive signal program until it can measure and mitigate delays to people walking. It also means finding additional sources of funding for building out our network of sidewalks, as well as funding low-cost, creative solutions such as Home Zones to help people feel safer walking down the street.”

So far, Move All Seattle Sustainably includes 350 Seattle, 500 Women Scientists Seattle, Cascade Bicycle Club, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Seattle Subway, Seattle Transit Blog, Sierra Club Seattle Group, The Urbanist, and Transit Riders Union.