

September 18, 2023

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

Re: File# 232-586
Opposition & Amendment to Ordinance 6748 -Transportation Benefit District (TBD)

Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis, Members of City Council, City Manager and Staff,

I am writing on behalf of a coalition of Bellevue residents and businesses who are concerned regarding the direction Council is taking pertaining to the TBD.

I first would like to thank the Deputy Mayor and Council members Lee and Zahn for attempting to put the brakes on the process.

Second, I would like to acknowledge the Mayor and Council member Robertson for engaging with the public. While we disagree on the need, the supporting data and urgency, they have been willing to have a dialog. Thank you.

The TBD is shaping up to be one of the most controversial issues Council has faced and may prove to be defining moment for the legacy of this Council.

There is near unanimous community opposition to the formation of the TBD. It is important to recognize the issue is not just about another tax. The bigger issue is the process of the TBD was fast-tracked without data, transparency, fiscal governance and budget prioritization. This does not represent fiscal governance or due diligence.

I stand before you with a simple request. Before you force tax payers to open their wallets, the City needs to look deep in their own wallet first. You might be surprised what you find.

So where do we go from here?

- 1) Council can approve the Ordinance, disregarding public concerns voiced over the past two months.
- 2) Place the approval of the ordinance on hiatus for six months or more. With 57% of the Council seats up for election in six-weeks, Council should allow the incoming Council the right to vote on this pivotal issue.
- 3) Insert amendments into the ordinance, establishing key “guardrails” to help address community’s concerns. These amendments include;
 - a. Before any TBD taxes are approved, Council shall direct the City manager to review all budgets for opportunities to reallocate funds to support transportation requirements.
 - b. Require voter approval for any tax or fee as provided by RCW 36.73
 - c. Establish a sunset clause for any approved taxes of no more than 2 years and require voter approval for any extension.
 - d. Require the transportation department to identify and seek Council’s approval of all capital projects to be funded by the TBD before the approval of any tax.

Thank you for listening. Let's work together and keep the TBD from fracturing the community while enhancing the integrity and trust the City has enjoyed for over 70 years.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Craig D. Spiegle". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Craig Spiegle

craigsp@agelight.com

425-985-1421

Cc: Transportation Commission

Chris Long, Bellevue Transportation Department