

## **Now is the Time, This is the Plan**

By Cynthia Mullis

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In my energetic 20s and 30s, I lived in San Francisco and New York without owning a car. I got around almost entirely by walking, bicycling and public transportation—I certainly paid my dues on BART, buses and subways. I appreciated living in cities with excellent transit options, but when I moved to Seattle in 2000, I was happy to indulge in the luxury and convenience of relying on my car for easy transportation.

Now, after living in Seattle for over 16 years, it's clear to me that the good ol' days of being able to drive anywhere, at anytime, as quickly as possible (and park for free) are over.

As our region gets progressively denser, more congested and urbanized, we are suffering through a painful growth phase that could be called the "Puget Sound Traffic Disaster."

One option for dealing with this is to continue insisting on outdated twentieth century solutions that prioritize automobile dependency. A car-first approach is not the answer. It is estimated that almost a million new people will move to this area by 2040—studies have proven that expanding automobile infrastructure in a rapidly growing region will only mean more cars on already congested roads.

Another option is to take action, both personally and politically, to demand and use transportation alternatives. This includes light rail, bus rapid transit, bike lanes and multi-use path corridors, neighborhood safety and connectivity, congestion improvement, and managed parking that makes it easier to walk and bike to transit options.

On a personal level, I have become enthusiastic about self-powered modes of transportation: I've resolved to put my money where my mouth is by returning to my youthful ways of walking, biking and busing whenever possible. In addition, as an active member of the Cascade Bicycle Club, I participate in their advocacy efforts to make bicycling safer and more accessible to everyone.

On a political level, I vote for candidates who strongly support mass transit, along with improvements to biking and walking infrastructure. I agree with and vote for ballot measures such as Sound Transit Regional Proposition 1, the Bellevue Transportation Levy, the Kenmore "Walkways & Waterways" Bond Measure and the Issaquah Traffic Improvement Projects Bond.

I disagree with The Seattle Times' opposition to Proposition 1, stating that it should be rejected because it's too costly and imperfect. Despite its flaws, it's a huge step forward. Being paralyzed into inaction by waiting for the optimal plan means that the Puget Sound transportation crisis will get increasingly worse before it is resolved. We have been waiting for real mass transit alternatives for a long time—Proposition 1 is the comprehensive system our region has needed for decades. I believe that now is the time and this is the plan. I intend to ride my vintage San Francisco cruiser bicycle to the nearest ballot drop box and vote accordingly.