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April 25, 2019

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To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter in support of the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport's (SEA) plan to begin construction on curb cuts on the Arrivals and Departures drives. This recommendation was one of the top priorities identified in the SEA Accessibility Assessment and Research Project that Open Doors Organization (ODO) completed in 2017, following the Port of Seattle's mission of becoming the most accessible airport for travelers with disabilities, older adults and non-English speakers.

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The purpose of the project was to identify key areas of improvement pertaining to accessibility throughout the airport and based on these areas, provide recommendations for how to best address these areas within a realistic timeframe. The addition of curb cuts along the Arrivals and Departures drives was among the top 3 recommendations made, both to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards and to provide easier access for arriving and departing passengers with and without disabilities.

The ADA requires facilities, such as airport passenger terminals, with long, continuous passenger loading zones to provide one accessible passenger loading zone in every continuous 100 linear feet of loading zone space. Although SEA may be exempt from this requirement due to the terminal being built prior to the 1990 signing of the ADA, the benefit that curb cuts provide to the greater population of travelers cannot be overlooked. Whether a traveler uses a wheelchair or scooter, has difficulty with steps or lifting luggage, or is traveling with a child and stroller, curb cuts provide a level, non-restrictive path for any traveler.

While the population of aging adults continues to grow, and now a reported 1 in 4 people have a disability per the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), there will be an increase in the amount of travelers needing access to a curb cut so adding more will also reduce likely congestion on both drives in the future.

On behalf of ODO, I commend the Port of Seattle and Sea-Tac for not only initiating the Accessibility Assessment and Research Project, but also moving forward with the recommendations made. It is clear that access is a priority across the board, from Commissioners to each airport department, and we are excited to see SEA continue to work towards the goal of becoming the most accessible airport.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at EricLipp@opendoorsnfp.org or by phone at 1-773-388-8839.

Kind regards,

Eric Lipp
Executive Director