

**MINUTES OF THE LOCAL MEETING OF THE  
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
November 16, 2010**

The local meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 8:30 a.m., on November 16, 2010, at Bellevue City Hall, Council Chambers, 450 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Bellevue, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair Philip Parker, Dick Ford, Elmira Forner, Latisha Hill, Carol Moser and Dan O'Neal.

**CHAIRMAN WELCOME AND COMMISSION INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Parker convened the meeting at Bellevue City Hall at 8:30 a.m. He introduced Commissioners and explained that the Commission meets in communities around the state to hear local perspectives on transportation.

**MINUTES APPROVAL/ADOPTION**

*It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner O'Neal to approve the September 20, 2010 Omak special Commission meeting minutes and the September 21, 2010 local Commission meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.*

**TRANSPORTATION 101 – A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF FUNDING AND PLANNING IN WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION**

Paul Parker, Senior Policy Analyst, WSTC, gave a presentation on transportation funding and planning in Washington State.

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP03\\_Trans101.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP03_Trans101.pdf)

**CITY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES**

Mayor Don Davidson, City of Bellevue, welcomed the Commission to Bellevue, the second largest community in King County and one of five Metropolitan Cities in the Puget Sound region. Bellevue's population of nearly 123,000 is forecast to reach over 148,000 by 2030. Employment exceeds residential population, a trend that is expected to continue.

The city is about 32 sq miles with 80 percent of its land in residential zoning. About one-third of the residents speak a language other than English at home. Bellevue has three Growth Centers: Downtown, the Bel-Red Corridor and Eastgate (the existing commercial district along I-90).

Bellevue's seven-year Capital Improvement Plan historically averages around \$300 million. Since the recession, Bellevue has lost one-third of its revenue for transportation.

Downtown: Downtown is the primary focus for commercial development. The day-time population Monday through Friday is about 250,000 which include shoppers, college and school populations, as well as meeting attendees.

About 35,000 people work in Bellevue's Central Business District who don't live there. Plans will double that in 20 years. Housing is also growing downtown. Multi-family development is attractive to empty-nesters and professionals.

Bel-Red Corridor: The City plans to transform an aging light industrial/commercial area to one of the largest Transit-Oriented Development sites in the country. By 2030, 10,000 new jobs and almost the same number of new residents are anticipated.

Bellevue in the Region: One of the 5 metropolitan centers in PSRC. Four major regional transportation components:

- Regional bus connectivity
- High Capacity Transit/Light Rail
- Highway improvements
- HOV Performance

Downtown travel demand assumes transit mode share grows to 40 percent by 2020; a doubling of today's share. Transit service will include light rail across I-90, through downtown Bellevue and the Bel-Red Corridor to Redmond, Bus Rapid Transit and increased bus service.

Bellevue has a relatively new transportation system; it has not had the Operations and Maintenance expense that other cities have. It has also historically paid a lot more attention to how it operates the system.

Many WSDOT Projects are key to Bellevue's future development. Major projects completed and under construction: include

- NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street HOV Direct Access Interchange
- NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street Extension
- I-405 South Bellevue Widening
- I-405 Northbound braided ramp to SR 520

Unfunded planned and proposed projects include:

- I-405 Southbound braided ramp from SR 520 to NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street
- NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street Extension
- I-405 additional lane in each direction
- NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Interchange/Main Street Bridge
- I-405 Renton to Bellevue (I-90 to SR 169)

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP04\\_CityofBellevue.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP04_CityofBellevue.pdf)

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP04\\_BellevueGrowthCenters.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP04_BellevueGrowthCenters.pdf)

Action/Follow-Up: None

## **KING COUNTY: UPDATES ON KEY REGIONAL FACILITIES, CORRIDORS AND PROJECTS**

Jane Hague, Vice-Chair of King County Council, asked that transit tolling be deferred on the SR 520 Corridor. King County, like other counties, is having budget issues. In light of budget issues the County's strategic plan envisions that government will be more efficient by tightening its priorities. A recent review of transit operations by the County will allow Metro to provide more bus service in a more efficient way through scheduling and operations.

Kathy Lambert, King County councilmember from the Redmond area, explained that rural roads in King County are in deep jeopardy. The rural population is decreasing dramatically. The County Capital improvement Plan requires \$240 million a year; after scheduled annexations occur, road fund revenue will drop to \$102 million. Some roads will probably return to gravel; at current funding projections, stormwater pipes and culvert maintenance will be on a 330-year cycle.

Harold Taniguchi, Director, King County Department of Transportation, spoke about the many roles of the Department. It operates Boeing Field, two passenger-only ferries, Metro Transit, and manages the county vehicle fleet. King County also has road services contracts with 11 cities.

Paulette Norman, Road Services Division, emphasized that the county road system is old and deteriorating. There are also several hundred bridges in King County. Over a million trips a day take place on King County rural roads.

Recommended direction: Moderate the decline in asset condition.

- Continue to look at efficiencies
- Ensure the agency is right-sized
- Update facilities master plan
- Pursue new funding

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP05\\_KingCounty\\_RoadServices.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP05_KingCounty_RoadServices.pdf)

Action/Follow-Up: None

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES**

Kevin Desmond, King County Metro Transit, explained that today's revenue is \$1 billion under projections from only a few years ago. In 2010-11 biennium, Metro Transit captured \$240+ million of one-time savings, generated \$30 million in new revenue and reduced annual costs by \$38 million; Metro Transit has increased fares four times in four years. Reductions include:

- Eliminated 70 positions
- Scheduling efficiencies
- Service reductions
- Transit Now deferrals

Despite these fiscal efforts, by 2015, Metro faces a potential 17 percent service reduction from 2011. In addition, Metro has no capital program, aside from bus replacement.

Metro's Transit Task Force developed a policy framework for growth and, if necessary, contraction, of Metro Transit System:

- Create and adopt new performance measures
- Control agency operating costs and create a sustainable cost structure
- Guidance for service reduction and growth decisions
  - Emphasize productivity
  - Ensure social equity
  - Provide geographic value
- Create clear and transparent guidelines
- Principles to develop service guidelines
- Develop a broad coalition of community and business interests for additional transit revenues
- Use task force direction to update mission statement and create a vision statement

Last year the Legislature removed adult day care funding; that transit demand is up 10 percent.

RapidRide is Metro Transit's Bus Rapid Transit brand. The A Line (Federal Way/Tukwila) is in operation; 5 more lines are under development, including the B Line – Bellevue/Redmond. B Line service is scheduled to begin in October 2011. Signal Prioritization will add the equivalent of 10,000 service hours, reduce trip time by 20%, and prevent bus bunching. The BRT Lines are designed to connect with other Metro and Sound Transit service, improve transit coverage and reduce duplication.

Metro spends \$28-\$30 million/year on SR 520 service; during the morning peak, 25% of SR 520 commuters use transit. With the Urban partnership Agreement, between Metro and Sound Transit, there will be an additional 90 one-way peak period trips a day.

Ric Ilgenfritz, Executive Director, Planning, Environment and Project Development, Sound Transit, shared that public transportation is a portfolio of products. Revenue is down 25 percent (\$3.9 billion). Light rail fully funded to Northgate. Nine-mile segment to Lynnwood is next on the list for 2023.

South King County subarea is in the worst fiscal shape. There is enough money to get to S. 200<sup>th</sup> Street; unclear whether able to get to Highline Community College/S. 216th.

East Link at about 25 percent design; the current terminus is at Overlake Transit Center. Sound Transit is negotiating with Bellevue over downtown route; tunnel costs \$285 million more.

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP06\\_MetroTransit.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP06_MetroTransit.pdf)

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP06\\_SoundTransit.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP06_SoundTransit.pdf)

Action/Follow-Up: None

## **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS IN BELLEVUE AND EAST KING COUNTY**

Kevin Brown, Director, King County Parks, explained that the King County Regional Trail System spans 300 miles, 175 miles managed by King County. Hundreds more miles are planned, of which 125 miles are within unincorporated King County.

A trail has a life cycle of 25-30 years. The Burke-Gilman trail has reached the end of its cycle.

On Burke-Gilman, 68% of weekday traffic is bicycle commuting.

Kurt Triplett, Kirkland City Manager, shared that in 2006, Kirkland was first city in the state to adopt complete streets. One-third of Kirkland's transportation budget is allocated to sidewalks. Kirkland has developed walking maps in an effort with King County Public Health – it has been ranked WSJ ranked as one of the top 10 walkable suburbs by the Wall Street Journal.

The complete streets program builds from ground up; will be a big challenge to build it with the coming 33,000 population annexation.

The Eastside Rail Corridor presents a real opportunity: Light rail? A trail only? Or both?

Kirkland suggests incentives for complete streets and regional trail connections in state funding criteria. Please consider dedicating small portions of tolling or HOT revenue to implement Eastside Corridor.

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP07\\_KirklandBicycle\\_PedestrianAccess.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP07_KirklandBicycle_PedestrianAccess.pdf)

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP07\\_KingCountyParks.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP07_KingCountyParks.pdf)

Action/Follow-Up: None

## **I-405 EXPRESS TOLL LANES CONCEPT**

Craig Stone, Director, WSDOT Toll Division, talked about the I-405 Master Plan and the Eastside Corridor Program. Kim Henry, I-405 Project Director, explained that the Nickel and TPA packages provided \$1.7 billion. Most of the program has been completed.

In 2009, the Legislature requested a detailed traffic and revenue study for the I-405 corridor. The 10-year implementation strategy is a \$2 billion plan. Phase I is Bellevue to Lynnwood construction, then tolling and SR 167 toll lanes extension. Phase II is PE, right-of-way acquisition and construction of the remainder.

The Expert Review panel looked at:

- Policy

- Methodology
- Phasing
- Financial

Grant Degginger, Bellevue City Councilman: Very important to provide mobility in and out of the Eastside economic center. Should we proceed with the first phase? Probably.

There is no direct comparison to I-405 corridor nationally that the Expert Review Panel saw. This corridor is a very important part of the state's economy: aerospace, high tech and finance.

Tolls are coming; we know that. Let's continue to show good value. WSDOT has been very successful with design-build process and low bids.

We need to talk more about financing; how to decide which projects merit the state's credit. Need public education and buy-in to move from 2+ to 3+ carpool. We are not there.

Mayor Joan McBride, City of Kirkland: We are excited about Phase I implementation. We think of I-405 as our artery. WSDOT has done a good job getting the project to where it is today but we are becoming a little alarmed that the project may go out to bid next year without Express Toll Lanes.

At the Senate hearing, there was a lot of concern about 3+ carpool. We need help with the politics of moving from 2+ to 3+; that's a role Commission can help with.

Randy Corman, Renton City Council: City wants to see I-405/SR 167 interchange. Most of the traffic has to make a cloverleaf turn to stay on the corridor. Anything to make that corridor an I-5 relief valve needs to correct that. Renton is supportive of the WSDOT concept; the phasing needs more work.

Sonny Putter, Newcastle City Council: Jurisdictions working for 10 years to find a way to make the system work. The Express Toll Lanes concept is a way to move forward incrementally. We need a mosaic of funding sources. We also need to distinguish in public eye what the difference is between a tax and a user fee; the Express Toll Lanes provides a choice and I think people support that.

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP08\\_EastsideCorridorTolling.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP08_EastsideCorridorTolling.pdf)

Action/Follow-Up: None

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Paul W. Locke is concerned about bonding. He is also concerned about deflation. The more outstanding debt, the worse off you are.

Jim McGraw has just formed an organization called TollRunner.com. He is bothered by lack of privacy of all-electronic tolls. He told the Commission to slow down; don't take away people's

right to drive on a road they already paid for. Slow down and finish what we are building. It's not a "user fee"; it's a tax.

Barb Delauder, Director of Licensing for King County. Taxicabs from County that aren't dual-licensed in City and County will have to pay a double-toll without a paying fare in one direction.

Will Knedlik, I-405 user alliance. Tolling can suppress demand during rush hour more effectively than gas tax. It is less clear that tolls can raise revenue than to suppress traffic.

### **SR 520 BRIDGE TOLL RATE SETTING – WSDOT PROPOSAL**

Mr. Stone provided a review of the Toll Assumptions used to develop the Toll Proposal and the variable toll rates that would emerge from an initial peak hour toll rate of \$3.50 or \$3.80 per crossing. He also briefed the Commission on prospective diversion and traffic flow.

[http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116\\_BP10\\_SR520.pdf](http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/November16/documents/20101116_BP10_SR520.pdf)

Action/Follow-Up: None

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON WSDOT TOLL RATE PROPOSAL**

1. Stu Halsan spoke of the impacts of tolling on tow trucks. Because tow trucks are part of the emergency response system on the highways and bridges, they should be exempt when responding to an incident.
2. Dave Overstreet, Public Affairs Director for AAA Washington, asked for an exemption for their response vehicles. He pointed out that a vehicle being towed with a Good-to-Go pass would be assessed a toll.
3. Paul W. Locke testified that every vehicle should pay a toll; no exceptions. Establish a refund process, if need to, but you need to collect enough money to assure the bondholders they will get their money back.
4. Randy Boss, Gig Harbor resident, expressed his view that the Commission action on SR 520 tolls will impact other toll-payers in the state. Many of the issues before the Commission have been discussed by the TNB Citizens Advisory Committee.
5. Tim Eyman, spoke against the government's desire to take the public's money with taxes and fees. He said that I-1053 puts politics back into the decision making process.
6. Jim McGraw, TollRunner.org, objects to the decision to eliminate toll booths. He believes that you are forced to have a tracking device in your car or pay a large fee. He says it is a violation of his religion to have a number to buy, sell or trade.

## **COMMISSION ACTION ON SR 520 TOLL RATE PROPOSAL**

*It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner Forner to adopt the proposed CR 102 rule package with the maximum \$3.50 toll rate as the package to move forward for public review and comment.*

*The Commission agreed to add language clarifying that tolls would increase by 2.5 percent annually, subject to review and modification by the Commission. The motion passed unanimously.*

The Commission discussed whether to add an exemption for tow trucks and response vehicles, and decided to consider that further before taking action.

*This meeting has been recorded. If you would like additional meeting details audio is available at TVW <http://www.tvw.org/media/mediaplayer.cfm?EvId=2010091006&bhcp=1> . Please contact the Transportation Commission Office if you would like to request an Audio Cd for a nominal fee at (360)705-7070.*

**WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

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DATE OF APPROVAL