

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Local Meeting Summary
Renton WA
November 17, 2015

Chairman Haley opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. with introductions of Commissioners and staff.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commissioner Litt moved adoption of the October 20 & 21, 2015 meeting summary. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tortorelli and adopted unanimously.

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

Paul Parker, Deputy Director, WSTC presented an overview of transportation funding and policy.

[Transportation 101](#)

CITY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

City of Renton: Council President Ed Prince provided an overview of the City of Renton, the fourth largest city in King County. He pointed out that every 2.2 seconds a 737, all of which make their first flight in Renton, takes off somewhere in the world. He also noted that Renton has nationally recognized diversity programs, including Renton Technical College and Valley Medical Center/ UW Medicine. The city has been recognized as a model for regulatory reform by The Governors Competitiveness Council and its accomplishments include significant new economic development and redevelopment of former industrial sites. Last week, Renton received a Governor’s GMA lifetime achievement award.

Deputy Public Works Director Doug Jacobson emphasized that Renton is a regional traffic pinch point and an area that is underserved by Transit. Traffic bypassing I-405 & SR-167 is a major problem, as is backups from I-405 traffic ramps onto city streets.

With limited resources, the city is redeveloping historic autocentric growth patterns.

- Actively engaging regional partners WSDOT, King County Transit, Sound Transit
- Working to connect the regional trail network
- Prioritizing pedestrian safety
- Better utilizing the existing roadway network
- Targeted intersection improvements

Renton also is the hub of a non-motorized trail system including the Lake Washington Loop Trail, Lake to Sound Trail, Cedar River Trail, and the Eastside Rail Corridor (currently in master planning process. Environmental review and design in 2016, rail removal in 2017).

City of Kent: Mayor Suzette Cooke told the Commission that Kent is home to America’s fourth largest manufacturing distribution center. The Kent Valley generates 1/8 of the state’s GDP.

Both BNSF and Union Pacific railroads traverse the city. Seventy trains a day move through the Kent Valley. Coal and oil trains will add more delay. The city appreciates the funding for the South 228th grade separation, which will keep people and goods moving.

Kent faces unprecedented challenges on the local front. No other community has close to the freight impact of Kent. Its maintenance backlog is increasing – there is a \$12 million annual need and a \$250 million backlog. Initiatives 695, 747, and 776 have reduced street funding. Kent is the biggest loser from the streamlined sales tax change.

Kent has proposed a Transportation Benefit District (TBD), but voters have rejected it. Kent has used Local Improvement Districts (LIDs), but has reached its maximum; some properties are paying into three LIDs.

Mayor Cooke said that Kent residents may be unwilling to support a TBD in part because Kent residents pay Sound Transit license tab fees; residents of Covington, next door, do not. Kent also is ethnically and economically diverse. As a city with multiple other jurisdictions within its boundaries, it has to have many partners. The city has added a square footage tax to the B&O tax that has helped.

City of Tukwila: Mayor Jim Haggerton briefed the Commission on transportation in Tukwila. Its major challenge is funding to maintain economic development and sustainability. Recent successes include the Transit Center and Andover Park West improvements, the I-5/Klickitat Interchange that improves access to the urban center, and the bicycle/pedestrian bridge connecting the Sounder/Amtrak station to the urban center.

Several economic opportunities linked to transportation projects include a possible Sound Transit Boeing Access Road Station and the Strander Boulevard Extension eastward to Renton and the Sounder/Amtrak station.

Tukwila created one of the first LIDs in the state and is now considering a TBD.

City of SeaTac: Gwen Voepel, Assistant Public Works Director of SeaTac reported that SeaTac International Airport, in the center of the city, is a major transportation generator -- including air, freight, transit, and general travel. By 2035, the City expects 32,000 new jobs, not including those at SeaTac Airport. Several major highways, including I-5, SR 509, and SR 518 provide regional access for autos, trucks, and transit to/from and through the city and airport.

A major project is the 28th/24th Avenue corridor project, which connects north to the airport and south to Des Moines, passing directly past the new Angle Lake Light Rail Station at South 200th Street. It opens up acres of land-locked property for redevelopment in the corridor. A large cast of partners are responsible for this project, which would not have been possible using only City of SeaTac sources. FMSIB, TIB, Sound Transit, WSDOT and the Port of Seattle have pitched in on the \$25 million project, with only \$2.6 million from SeaTac.

The City is working to upgrade roads and facilities, including sidewalks and drainage, it inherited when it incorporated in 1990. Reconstructing roadways from the older King County rural arterial standards to meet urban traffic and multimodal need is very expensive. In 2009, Sea-Tac established a 20-year sidewalk program with a goal of 12.5 miles of new sidewalk. It also is working to create a comprehensive system of bicycle trails.

The City currently gets most of its revenues for funding transportation projects and programs from four primary sources: commercial parking tax accounts for more than half of its revenue, and state and federal grants account for 28% of its funding. Smaller amounts come from transportation impact fees and the motor vehicle fuel tax.

Sea-Tac does not have a TBD. It enacted a utility tax earlier this year.

[City of Renton](#)

[City of Kent](#)

[City of Tukwila](#)

[City of SeaTac](#)

Follow-Up/Action: None

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REGIONAL PROJECTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Patty Rubstello, Assistant Secretary, Toll Division, WSDOT, reported that over the first six weeks of I-405 Express Toll Lane (ETL) operation, travel times have improved in both the ETL and the general purpose lanes. Overall, congestion is less, but areas of congestion have moved north, where there is only one ETL lane.

The average southbound toll has been about \$2.00. The maximum was \$6.50. The northbound pm peak is \$2-\$3. Transit is moving freely and faster. Ridership is up.

The Washington State Patrol has been valuable to the rollout; it has provided feedback, ride-alongs, and been helpful in implementation.

Kim Henry, Assistant Regional Administrator, Design Build & I-405/SR 167 Project Director, WSDOT, briefed the Commission on the text phase of I-405 ETL construction. SR 167 Stage 1, the ETL direct connector to I-405, is underway, funded with \$285 million. It is planned to open to traffic in 2019. Stage 2, Renton to Bellevue ETLs, are funded at \$700 million, with work to begin in 2016. Stage 3, I-405/I-90 interchange improvements, funded at \$235 million, is scheduled for 2025 – 2030. Stage 4, expanding the ETLs south from Kent-Auburn to the Pierce County line, will open in early 2017. SR 167 Stage 5 remains unfunded.

Puget Sound Gateway Project

Craig Stone, Gateway Program Administrator, SR 167/SR 509, WSDOT, briefed the Commission on the Puget Sound Gateway project. The Gateway projects (SR509 and SR167) provide more direct links from the state's largest ports to the distribution centers in the South Sound and to Eastern Washington. It also provides direct access to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport from the south for both passenger and air cargo.

SR 167 Overview

SR 167 is the primary freeway connecting the Kent and Puyallup valleys to the Seattle/Tacoma/Bellevue metropolitan area. Completing the missing link will increase safety and relieve congestion on I-5 and SR 161 and reduce traffic volumes on surrounding local streets. The environmental document is 8 years old and needs to be updated to include tolling. Construction will begin in 2019.

SR 509 Overview

SR 509 is a major freight route that provides a better connection between the Port of Seattle and the Kent Valley. A 2-mile gap in the existing system drives overuse of I-5, SR 599, SR 518, and local arterials in south King County. The environmental document is 10 years old and needs to be updated to include tolling.

Closing the gap will:

- Improve freight travel time and reliability
- Create access to SeaTac airport from the south
- Enhance community and economic development
- Help realize land use goals for the area

Construction will begin in 2019.

[I-405 Express Toll Lanes](#)

Follow-Up/Action: None

THE CONTINUING CHALLENGE OF AT-GRADE CROSSINGS AND FREIGHT MOVEMENT

Dave Catterson, Government Relations Analyst for the Association of Washington Cities (AWC), briefed the Commission on the Road-Rail Conflict Study administered by the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC). Funded by \$250,000 of the cities' statewide fuel tax distributions, the AWC/JTC study will:

- Identify prominent road-rail conflicts,
- recommend a corridor-based prioritization process for addressing the impacts of projected increases in rail traffic, and
- identify areas of state public policy interest, such as the critical role of freight movement to the Washington economy and the state's competitiveness in world trade

The study also must consider the results of the updated marine cargo forecast, which FMSIB is partnering on with the Washington Public Ports Association.

Expectations for the study for Cities/Regions:

- Ability to make an effective case to funding partners for solutions to prominent road-rail conflicts
- Identification of priority crossings with the greatest impacts on traffic congestion, safety, freight mobility, and emergency access
- Central database for data on at-grade crossings

Expectations for the study for the state:

- Ability to prioritize investments in solutions to at-grade crossings
- Balancing of interests in freight mobility, safety, traffic congestion and emergency access

Ashley Probart, Executive Director, FMSIB reported that 40% growth in rail traffic is projected. The marine cargo forecast will look at pinchpoints in the rail system.

[2016 Road-Rail Conflict Study](#)

Follow-Up/Action: None

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Harold S. Taniguchi, Director of King County Transportation, briefed the Commission on the five divisions of King County Transportation: Metro, King County Airport, Marine Division, Fleet Administration, and Road Services. The Marine Division, which provides passenger ferry service to West Seattle and Vashon Island, served over 400,000 riders in 2014. The Federal Transit Administration provided funding for two new vessels, adding capacity for 75 more people capacity – up to 250 people each. Metro Transit is one of the 10 largest bus systems in the nation.

The Road Services Division maintains 1,500 miles of road in unincorporated King County. It also contracts with several cities for services such as soil engineering. King County established a Bridges and Roads Task Force earlier this year to look at how to maintain the road system in the unincorporated area. County road revenue is \$90 million, but the full system need is \$350 million. The annual need to merely manage risk is \$110 million.

Mr. Taniguchi noted that about 40% of Snohomish County residents commute into King County to work, according to PSRC. Only 3.6% of retail sales take place in the King County’s unincorporated area, compared to an average 29% for Pierce and Snohomish, creating a revenue shortfall.

What the County has done:

- Focused on county roads & critical safety services
- Reduced and reorganized staff (more than 260 positions were cut)
- Consolidated maintenance & office facilities
- Reduced vehicles, equipment & services
- Leveraged technology to reduce staffing needs
- Implemented process improvements to reduce cost of work and improve timeliness

The Bridges & Roads Task Force has issued Draft Efficiency Recommendations:

1. Incorporate county roads that are orphaned, islands of roads within cities, and Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs) that are within the growth boundaries of cities into those jurisdictions.
2. Increase the amount of work that county crews can perform “in-house” without having to go to bid with contractors where it saves dollars and time.
3. Update outdated state statutes for local roads, including the county road engineer laws to reflect current day technology and practices.
4. New revenue is needed for the city and county roads.
5. City and County elected officials should consider seeking additional revenue authority.
6. Consider additional authority for property taxes, revenue based on vehicle values, and/or county-wide revenue options that are progressive, tied to inflation, sustainable long-term, and provide a benefit to cities and the county.

Chairman Haley noted that Pat Carelli from Congressman Smith’s office joined the Commission meeting.

Chris O’Claire, Manager of Strategy and Performance for King County Metro described several King County Metro projects.

Metro established six RapidRide Lines between 2010 and 2014. The F Line, implemented in June 2014 connects Burien, SeaTac, Tukwila, and Renton. Rapid Ride F has over 5,500 boardings on a weekday, reaching its five-year goal in one year.

F Line Customer Satisfaction:

- Overall satisfaction 88%
- Better experience 83%
- Trip time 84%
- Reliability 84%
- Personal safety (on bus) 79%

Metro's Alternative Services Program provides mobility services to parts of King County that do not have the infrastructure, density, or land use to support traditional fixed-route bus service. Options include

- Existing Alternative Services, such as VanShare, VanPool, and Rideshare matching
- Community Shuttle, a Metro route with a Flexible Service Area involving community partnerships
- Community Van, a fleet of Metro vans for local group trips which are scheduled by a local transportation coordinator
- Real-Time Rideshare, leveraging mobile applications to enable private carpool ridesharing to take place in real-time
- Trip-Pool, real-time ridesharing between home neighborhood and a transit center, using Metro vans and ORCA fares

Metro's Service Guidelines Task Force Work Plan:

- How transit service performance is measured as specified in the Metro Service Guidelines to reflect the varied purposes of different types of transit service;
- Approaches to evaluating how the goal of geographic value is included in the Metro Service Guidelines, including minimum service standards;
- Approaches to evaluating how the goal of social equity is included in the Metro Service Guidelines;
- Outline financial policies for purchase of additional services within a municipality or among multiple municipalities (City of Seattle is purchasing 200,000 hours of service);
- Outline guidelines for alternative services implementation

Key Takeaways:

- When making reductions, consider relative impacts to all parts of the county
- Modify service types to measure like services (urban, suburban, demand-response)
- Provide greater protection for peak-only services in event of major service reductions
- Changes to social equity and geographic value have effect of increasing target service levels – or overall need for transit services
- Provide greater funding for alternative services as a way to meet diverse needs
- There is a need for additional funding to support expansion of the system (over 500,000 hours of demand is unfunded)

Long-Range Plan Objectives:

- *More useful transit:* seeking an increase in daily Metro boardings from the current 400,000 to over 800,000 by 2040, and an increase in county-wide peak period transit mode share from about 10% in 2014 to about 20% in 2040.
- *More meaningful partnerships:* Service and development that support one another and infrastructure that enhances service.
- Jurisdictions are seeking clarity and insight about what Metro is and how it interfaces with Sound Transit and other services. At this point, Metro is not recommending specific revenue sources.

Sound Transit

Chelsea Levy, Government and Community Relations Officer with Sound Transit (ST), works in the South Sound region from Sea-Tac to DuPont. ST serves 52 jurisdictions within its boundary and projects that it will serve 39 million riders after the University Link and Angle Lake stations open in 2016.

Current ST projects in South King County and Pierce County projects include:

- S. 200th Link Extension
- Federal Way Link Extension – *planning to Federal Way, opening to Kent/Des Moines 2023*
- Tukwila Sounder station improvements – *completed*
- Sumner & Puyallup Station Access Improvements - *in planning.*
- Tacoma Link Expansion – *in planning*
- Tacoma Trestle – *in design, opening 2017*
- Lakewood Sounder layover & yard expansion – *in design*

ST anticipates releasing an ST 3 Draft System Plan in February, open for public comment until June.

[King County Transportation](#)

[King County Metro](#)

[Sound Transit](#)

Follow-Up/Action: None

TRANSPORTATION AND SOCIAL EQUITY: PROBLEMS AND APPROACHES

A panel discussed the topic of transportation equity and opportunity in south King County. Andrew Austin, Policy Director, Transportation Choices, introduced the topic noting that there are fewer transit routes providing access to community colleges, hospitals and senior centers in south King County. Bus access is less expensive than having a personal car, but it is slow. Investments in transit service can

- improve access to college, increasing economic opportunity
- improve access to health care, reducing health care costs

He suggested that transportation planners need to consider housing and transportation costs together, rather than the cost of housing alone.

Robin Mayhew, Program Manager, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), began by pointing out that there is no common, agreed-upon definition or set of values for fairness or equity principles. At its most basic definition *equity is about ensuring that all people have access to resources and opportunities to thrive.*

- Transportation equity considerations focus on:
 - the disparate benefits and impacts of transportation investments and funding sources on different socioeconomic populations

- outcomes that repair inequities of past transportation decisions
- Incorporating equity into decision-making
 - Decision-makers often interpret equity in different ways such as emphasis on socio-economic factors, geographic fairness, access to all modes and generational factors

Ms. Mayhew emphasized that equity is not equality:

- Equity acknowledges that some groups face problems created by deep-rooted or historical injustices that limit them from accessing what they need; thus, they require additional resources to help reduce these systemic barriers.
- Equality is about providing individuals with the equal access to goods, services and opportunities, regardless of needs or socioeconomic status.

VISION 2040 is the PSRC’s policy-level land use, economic development, and transportation strategy to accommodate an increase of 1.3 million people and 1.1 million jobs by 2040. The strategy features equity considerations in many of the multicounty planning policies related to transportation, housing, economy and public services.

Transportation Policies in VISION 2040 specify:

- T-24 Implement transportation programs and projects in ways that *prevent or minimize negative impacts* to low-income, minority, and special needs populations.
- T-25 Ensure *mobility choices* for people with special transportation needs, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, the young and low-income populations.

In addition, the Transportation 2040 (T-2040) Update says:

Environmental justice means that people with low-incomes and minority residents benefit from public investments and *do not shoulder the negative effects disproportionately*.

- *Involves developing transportation projects that benefit low-income or minority communities*
- *Emphasizes ways to involve affected communities throughout a transportation project’s development.*

PSRC’s T-2040 addressed special needs populations, active transportation for all ages and abilities, and a prioritization framework that includes social equity and access to opportunity.

The tool for Social Equity and Access to Opportunity assessed:

- How projects improved environmental health and avoid creating new, mitigate existing, or eliminate previous negative impacts for special needs and environmental justice populations.
- How projects improved access to opportunity

The tool for Jobs Access assessed:

- How projects access areas of high job concentration or support job retention or expansion
- How projects provided access to job-related training or educational opportunities

The Growing Transit Communities Strategy (GTC) is a plan to promote thriving and equitable transit communities in the Central Puget Sound region and to provide tools and resources to implement adopted regional and local plans. A cross-sector stakeholder group provided an independent perspective and social equity lens to the recommendations developed in the GTC.

The GTC Social Equity Framework:

- *Ensures that current residents, businesses and other community members benefit as their communities change and grow, rather than being displaced to areas that offer fewer opportunities.*
- *Seeks to ensure that new growth and development creates housing choices affordable to socially and economically diverse populations, opportunities for community businesses and institutions to thrive, and employment opportunities that pay a living wage.*
- *Empowers communities and builds local capacity to actively participate in planning and policy making processes start for developing a common definition for regional planning.*

The Growing Transit Communities Partnership, partnered with the Kirwan Institute to develop thematic maps showing level of access to opportunity by a series of 20 indicators representing five major categories of opportunity: *education, economic health, housing and neighborhood quality, transportation/mobility, and health and environment.*

PSRC'S Draft Transportation 2040 Performance Measures also address equity, such as (but not limited to):

- Human Health – air quality, access to opportunities to walk or bike
- Equity - connecting low opportunity areas with high opportunity areas
- Safety and Security – reduction in fatalities and serious injuries
- Accessibility – how well can people access transit, jobs, bike facilities, etc.

Chris O'Claire, Manager of Strategy and Performance for King County Metro, reported that recommendations from an Equity and Social Justice Task Force at Metro incorporate social equity throughout:

- Changes to service guidelines
- Revise service types
- Better incorporate social equity and geographic value into the target service level analysis
- Enhance the planning and outreach process
- Enhance the alternative services program

Task Force discussions and recommendations included:

- How service types affect social equity and productivity
- Address the needs of youth, elderly, and persons with disabilities
- Better reflect the differences across the county when evaluating geographic value and social equity
- Change the definition of low-income from 100% to 200% of the federal poverty level (consistent with ORCA LIFT)

For the Alternative Services Program:

- Task Force discussions and recommendations included:
 - Expanding and using alternative services to supplement fixed route system and meet some needs that are not currently being met
 - Lower cost of providing alternative services

- Enhance planning for alternative services by working with jurisdictions, employers, and residents

The old paradigm for transit measured service:

- Speed (mobility)
- Number of routes
- Number of trips
- Number of service hours

The new paradigm measures opportunity by considering both service and land use:

- What can I get to?
- How far can I get?
- How often can I get there?

Representative Mia Gregorson, who represents the 33rd District in south King County, noted that within 25 years of rapid growth, the District has become majority-minority. Suburbanized poverty is real.

As we consider transportation projects, she urged that we ask about the human impact? She suggested that the Commission weigh in on housing impacts related to schools, and asked for help us breaking down the silos. Rep. Gregorson encouraged the Commission to provide some recommendations on social equity and transportation. If anyone of us live a day longer due to improved access or walkability, it is worth it.

[Transit for All](#)

[Transportation & Social Equity](#)

[Social Equity at King County Metro](#)

Follow-Up/Action: Continue to consider equity issues in transportation policy and funding.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Amy Shumann, King County Public Health, talked about health and transportation. A 2007 article in the New England Journal of Medicine posits that 60% of health depends on where you live, 30% is genetics, and 10% is health care.

Ms. Shumann listed the components of healthy transportation:

- Sidewalks
- Bike facilities
- Public transportation
- Traffic calming

She noted that even though the walking infrastructure they experience is often worse, people who are black or Hispanic walk more than white population. In more affluent areas, 13% of children walk to school; in places with 80% free and reduced lunch, 55% walk to school.

Ms. Shumann cited several opportunities to improve healthy transportation:

- HEAT – Health Economic Assessment Tool for cycling and walking developed by World Health Organization
- ITHIM - Integrated Transport and Health Impact Modeling tool developed by the Centre for Diet and Activity Research (UK)
- THT - Transportation and Health Tool developed by the U.S. DOT and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The challenges for improving healthy transportation are that the costs of public health impacts are externalized -- they are not accounted for in the current framework of planning, funding and building highways, bridges and public transit – and data availability.

What is needed:

- Authentic, sustained engagement of leaders of low-income communities of color at every stage
- Comprehensive, insightful documentation of existing conditions, both socioeconomic and health
- Strong partnerships between public health and planning
- Tools that measure health impacts – especially by race and income
- Policy recommendations which reflect the priorities and needs of low-income communities in the context of regional growth and change

Chip Vincent, Director of Community and Economic Development, City of Renton, reported that the city aims to focus density in concentrated mixed-use centers where service delivery is cost efficient and meaningful alternatives to single occupant vehicles exist. The city sees bicycles and walking as more than simply alternative transportation, but as part of the city’s quality of life.

The Trails and Bicycle Master Plan seeks to have parks within ½ mile of low density and ¼ mile of high density residential areas, and to link parks together. Renton’s complete streets standards provide an opportunity to create a good public realm and enhance the public environment with greenspace and high quality design.

In Downtown Renton, the goal is a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown.

The plan includes:

- Conversion of two-way traffic and creation of a public plaza
- Creation of a festival street and expansion of public plaza

In the Sunset Area:

- Converting hardscapes to greenscapes, improving connections and quality of life
- Housing will be 3-6 stories, with a three acre park in the center
- Groundbreaking for a new Sunset Library
- Adding density to a transit-rich area
- Bike lanes and multi-use trails
- Support for community gardens

City working to establish a SEPA based bicycle-pedestrian impact fee. Funds will ensure new roadways accommodate all users.

The City required that 440 multi-family units be a component of the commercial development at The Landing. It is requiring an 8-story height minimum for Transit-Oriented Development.

[Seattle & King County Public Health Transportation](#)

[Healthy Communities](#)

Follow-Up/Action: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul W. Locke said that low interest rates are hurting seniors who depend on investments. Taxes are too high.

Sonny Putter commented on Renton's smart growth effort and noted that developers need a return on investment to develop smart. He said that the PSRC is depending on cities using existing authority before asking for more funding authority and stressed the need to regionalize transportation funding and governance. Mr. Putter added that Representative Gregerson would like to see the Commission to play a bigger role and suggested the conversation with her continue.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

ANNE E. HALEY, Chairman

JOE TORTORELLI, Vice-Chairman

ABSENT

RITA BROGAN, Member

VACANT, Member

ROY JENNINGS, Member

VACANT, Member

JERRY LITT, Member

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL