

**Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP)**  
**May 11, 2012**  
Meeting Summary

**ETP Members**

Councilmember Kimberly Allen	Redmond (Chair)
Mayor Bernie Talmas	Woodinville (Vice-Chair)
Councilmember Kevin Wallace	Bellevue
Councilmember Andrew Rheaume	Bothell
Councilmember Joshua Schaer	Issaquah
Councilmember Allan Van Ness	Kenmore
Chris Arkills	King County (Alternate)
Paul Carlson	King County (Alternate)
Councilmember Dave Asher	Kirkland
Councilmember Don Gerend	Sammamish (Alternate)
Deputy Mayor John James	Sammamish
Mayor Tom O'Dell	Sammamish
Councilmember Jane Brahm	Mercer Island
Councilmember Mike Cero	Mercer Island
Councilmember John Stilin	Redmond
Councilmember Susan Boundy-Sanders	Woodinville
Councilmember Doug Dicharry	Medina (Small Cities)
Mayor Dave Cooper	Yarrow Point (Small Cities)
Councilmember Amy Ockerlander	Duvall (SVGA)
Mayor Jim Berger	Carnation (SVGA)
Dick Paylor	Eastside Transportation Association
Charlie Howard	PSRC
Deputy Council President Fred Butler	Sound Transit
Charles Prestrud	WSDOT (Alternate)

**I. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**II. Approval of April 13, 2012 Meeting Summary**

The April 13, 2012 meeting summary was approved with no corrections.

**III. Downtown Seattle Ride Free Area Report**

Candida Lorenzana, Transportation Planner with King County Metro Strategic Planning and Analysis group, presented an update on plans for ending the Downtown Seattle Ride Free Area (RFA). Ms. Lorenzana began by providing a background regarding the temporary congestion reduction charge passed by the King County Council in 2011.

The \$20 congestion reduction charge was a vehicle licensing fee increase to preserve transit service that would have been eliminated due to a reduction in recent sales tax revenue. The ordinance for the congestion reduction charge included a free-ride ticket program that will give each household with a registered vehicle ten bus passes. People can also donate the passes to human service agencies through the King County Human Services Ticket Program. The Council ordinance also requires Metro to discontinue the RFA by October 2012 and to submit an implementation plan to council by May 2012, or renegotiate the terms of the RFA with the City of Seattle to accurately off-set the cost of operating the RFA. Seattle currently pays \$400,000 a year for the RFA, but Metro estimates its loss of fare revenues to be over \$2 million a year.

If the RFA is eliminated, all passengers in Downtown Seattle will start paying fares as they board. To ensure operational speeds are not degraded, Metro is proposing a number of steps to ensure smooth passenger loading and operations, including: move some buses from the bus tunnel to 2nd and 4th Avenues, find ways to reduce bus dwell times at stops, adjust traffic signals to support bus movements, find ways to more quickly collect fares, and improve fare enforcement.

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, Metro hosted a public meeting to discuss the impacts of removing the RFA. Metro had 300 people attend and collected almost 800 comments. Metro is also launching a marketing campaign to educate the public about the changes.

Metro recognizes that the RFA provides a no-cost option for many low-income riders to travel within the Downtown Seattle area, and is working to mitigate the impacts of removing this service. King County is working closely with its partners to evaluate all mitigation options including increased ticket distribution through the Human Services Ticket Program, donation of vans for human service agencies, or a free circulator as possible solutions to reducing the impact on these populations.

The following are the next steps for eliminating the RFA.

- May 1st: Implementation Plan transmitted to Council.
- May-September: Implement projects and communicate changes to riders
- September 29: End of RFA, implement mitigation
- October: Monitor implementation and adjust as needed to ensure smooth operations

Councilmember Boundy-Sanders asked why Metro is planning to take buses out of the downtown bus tunnel. Ms. Lorenzana replied that all buses will spend more time at a stop in Downtown Seattle once Metro starts having customers pay as they board. In the tunnel, this will create a backup if Metro maintains the existing volume of buses, and Metro also has agreements in place with Sound Transit to maintain certain headways to ensure reliable Link operation. This will force some buses out of the tunnel.

Councilmember Schaer expressed concern that because the RFA provides a benefit to low-income riders who have trouble affording a bus fare, removing it will likely result in low-income

riders receiving citations for not paying the fare costing them much more than they are able to afford. Mr. Arkills responded that switching to front door loading should actually reduce fare evasion. In addition, Metro is working to provide options for low-income riders.

Councilmember Wallace commented that Seattle's bus tunnel is an un-constricted throughway and Metro should be putting more buses through the tunnel because of surface street congestion. Additionally, the concept of implementing a circulator in downtown Seattle will increase costs, contrary to the original purpose of removing the RFA which was a cost-saving measure. Mr. Arkills responded that King County is currently in negotiations with the City of Seattle on how to pay for a circulator.

Councilmember Stilin asked for more information regarding King County's reduced fare program. Ms. Lorenzana said there are two programs; one is the reduced fare program for seniors, riders with disabilities, and Medicare card holders, and the other program is the Human Service Ticket Program where bus tickets are provided to human service agencies at 20 percent of cost. Mr. Arkills added that the cost of the Human Service Ticket Program is equally share by the City of Seattle and King County. Seattle has a majority of human services offices, but people travel from throughout King County to these offices. This is why the costs are split between the agencies.

Vice-Chair Talmas asked if the traffic simulations performed by Metro looked at the capacity for additional bus service on 2nd and 4th Avenues. Mr. Arkills said that the simulations did look at 2nd and 4th Avenues, and they do have additional capacity for Metro buses.

Councilmember Brahm asked how changes in the Downtown Seattle RFA will impact how the ORCA card works. Ms. Lorenzana said that shifting to pay on entry will cause some changes to a small number of buses. Most buses charge either a one-zone or two-zone fare for the entire trip. A small number of buses charge a one-zone fare, and then switch to a two-zone fare mid trip. When buses switch to pay on entry, passengers riding buses that switch from one to two zone fares will have to tell the driver upon boarding which type of fare to be charged for.

Councilmember Schaer asked if ETP member cities need to inform their citizens about changes to the zone fare system. Jack Whisner, Transportation Planner with King County Metro Service Planning, said that Metro is planning educational efforts to tell riders about changes to the zone system and how to properly pay the fare. Mr. Arkills added that Metro is currently reviewing how the zone system operates and may make changes.

Mayor O'Dell commented that changes to zone fare system need to be clear to Metro riders, or it could result in a serious overcharge to the public.

Chair Allen said that she wants to see clear signage explaining how to pay the fares. On the South Lake Union Streetcar, she experienced that explaining how to pay a fare with an ORCA card is located in small print inside the vehicle. She does not want to see something similar on Metro buses.

Mr. Paylor asked if Metro explored working with local businesses to establish a Local Improvement District to pay for the RFA since business likely benefit from this service. Mr. Arkills responded that downtown businesses and residents have been split on whether to continue or eliminate the Ride-Free-Area. The Downtown Seattle Association remained silent on this issue during discussion of the congestion reduction charge.

#### **IV. Growing Transit Communities Program**

Ben Bakkenta, Program Manager at the PSRC, presented the PSRC's Growing Transit Communities (GTC) Partnership program. The program is trying to implement the region's adopted growth management and transportation plans, Vision 2040 and Transportation 2040. The challenge that the program is trying to address is how to capture more of the region's residential and employment growth in equitable transit communities. Our program involves a large consortium of cities, counties, human service agencies, developers, and others.

The GTC Program is funded by a grant from the US Department of Transportation and US Office of Housing and Urban Development. The PSRC collaborated with a number of agencies and jurisdictions in our region to apply for the grant. The program focuses on applying the HUD Livability Principles to growth in our region. These principles include:

- Provide more transportation choices
- Promote equitable, affordable housing
- Enhance economic competitiveness
- Support existing communities
- Coordinate policies & leverage investment
- Value communities & neighborhoods

The GTC Program is focusing on concentrating growing along our region's three main rapid transit corridors; the South corridor from Seattle to Tacoma, the North corridor from Seattle to Everett, and an East corridor from Seattle to Redmond. In the North corridor, the program has identified study areas that include planned and proposed light rail stations, bus rapid-transit stations, and other major transit nodes. Although Sound Transit has recently reduced the numbers of stations for study in the North corridor, all station areas are still shown because the GTC review process started before Sound Transit had narrowed the scope of the environmental review.

The GTC Partnership has four major components, the Corridor Action Strategies, the Regional Equity Network, the Affordable Housing Strategy, and the Demonstration Projects occurring in each corridor.

The Corridor Action Strategies will have three major deliverables. They include an existing conditions report of the corridors, recommended actions, and implementation agreements. These products will be informed by an 18-month stakeholder task force process which is

underway, public engagement, review by partnership committees, consultant products, and input from other key stakeholders.

Another product being developed as part of the GTC Partnership is an Opportunity Map of our region. This map identifies areas with access to 'opportunity'. Opportunity is measured by looking at the education options, economic health, housing availability, transportation and mobility options, and the general health and environment of an area. The Final Opportunity Mapping report and interactive Opportunity Maps are available at the GTC Partnership website:

<http://www.psrc.org/about/advisory/gtc-committees/gtc-affordable-housing/fair-housing-subcommittee/regional-opportunity-maps/>

The first part of the Existing Conditions Report for the study areas is also available. The report is divided into two parts with the first part including data on demographics, economy, and land use in the 74 station areas. The second part will be available in June and will include data on housing, transportation, and the policy environment. A final report is expecting in July. The draft report is available online:

<http://www.psrc.org/growth/growing-transit-communities/existing-conditions/>

PSRC staff is also performing a Residential and Commercial Market Analysis. This includes a few components: an assessment of local and regional house and commercial market conditions, TOD housing and commercial space demand projections by corridor, and a land use capacity analysis.

The GTC Partnership is working with all the program partners to develop a regional transit community typology. This will be a tool that categorizes study areas based on common characteristics, opportunities and barriers. The typology will also provide a number of policy strategies and future investments are that could be implemented for different transit community types.

In the East Corridor, the development of a demonstration project is being guided by East Corridor Task Force. Rather than focusing initially on a specific project like the North and South Corridors, the East Corridor Task Force is looking at specific corridor issues to locate station sites for further study. The corridor issues of concern are retaining existing businesses, access to affordable housing, providing transportation connectivity and mobility options, and fostering public/private partnerships. The Task Force is reviewing consultant proposals now.

Deputy Mayor John James asked if the orange dots on the handout indicated areas already selected for the demonstration project. Mr. Bakkenta answered that the orange dots represent areas under analysis using a new tool called the Decision Commons. The University of Washington's Runstad Center is developing a 3D visualization tool called Decision Commons that can illustrate the effects different policies choices have on land use and development. The

actual sites for the demonstration project are still in review, but we are looking at stations in the Bel-Red, Overlake, and Crossroads areas.

Councilmember Wallace said that the GTC map in pamphlet appears to be based on Sound Transit's light rail alignments, and discounts the quality bus rapid transit systems that currently exist. Mr. Bakkenta said that the grant application request was targeted toward proposals that focused on development around station areas. The GTC proposal did use the light rail corridors, but it still includes Community Transit Swift buses stations and RapidRide stations in the Crossroads area.

Councilmember Wallace suggested that the GTC program look at the existing funding model for the growth of development around nodes. It is impossible to locate all of the region's growth in the small pre-defined nodes. Also, when those nodes are developed, the public bears the cost to pay for infrastructure upgrades when the private sector should be paying for them.

Councilmember Cero said he would like to see the GTC be conscience of existing cities' long range visions. Cities should not be left with problems resulting from prescribed growth. Mr. Bakkenta said that the PSRC is actively working with cities and community stakeholders groups to meet their growth expectations.

Mr. Paylor said that the I-405 Bus Master Plan has existed for 10 years recommending a bus rapid transit system along I-405, but this is not shown on the GTC program's map. Mr. Bakkenta said that the GTC program's work is looking at transit plans that were adopted in T2040, and worked with the transit agencies to identify locations for further study. Charlie Howard added that no transit agency has come forward to support the I-405 Bus Master Plan. It could be an option for the future, but GTC is focused on what is currently in T2040.

Councilmember Asher said it is worthwhile to for members to be engaged in high level planning at this stage to help direct future planning efforts.

## **V. Report from the Rules Subcommittee**

Councilmember Schaer explained the details of the Rules Subcommittee's proposal for amending the 2007 ETP Procedures, and recommended changes to the renegotiated 2012 ETP Agreement. Of note the subcommittee suggested using Robert's Rules as the default parliamentary procedure with a few exceptions. This includes removing abstention votes from the total needed to obtain a majority—inline with previous ETP practices. Also, the subcommittee recommended that all items requiring action by ETP be announced immediately after the prior meeting to allow members adequate time to review the proposed action.

Councilmember Cero said he supports applying Roberts Rules, but is concerned about providing an exception so that abstained votes reduce the necessary quorum. Vice-Chair Sanders agreed. Councilmember Boundy-Sanders said the ETP has traditionally had a policy advocacy role, and would not want abstentions to limit ETP's ability to support policy issues.

Councilmember Gerend said the Rules Subcommittee recognized the challenge of requiring the chair and limited staff to identify and enforce a quorum, and supports maintaining existing ETP practices that a quorum is based on the number of voting members in attendance.

Deputy Mayor James said that he supports the committee's suggested changes, but suggested that items requiring action must be identified at prior meetings, not right after the prior meeting. Mayor O'Dell agreed. Councilmember Boundy-Sanders expressed concern about requiring a month's notice because many issues emerge quickly, and ETP would be limited in their ability to respond. Councilmember Asher expressed support for providing advance notice of action items. Councilmember Van Ness suggested that ETP needs to have documentation of items that will be voted on at the next meetings.

Councilmember Asher suggested that the changes to the ETP Agreement that all cities have to approve should begin soon.

Deputy Mayor James suggested that the body provide a mechanism for ETP to make an emergency vote. Many members expressed support for a two-thirds vote to suspend the rules.

The Partnership called to vote on adopting the Rules Committee's proposal which suggested changes.

**ACTION: ETP adopts the Rules Subcommittee's May 11, 2012 proposal amending language at the end of the proposal to read:**

*15. We agreed that items to be addressed or voted on at the next ETP meeting shall be announced at the prior meeting, so that respective jurisdictions will have an adequate opportunity to seek input from their colleagues and/or staff.*

*16. Any items for vote have to be announced at prior meetings, unless an emergency is declared by two-thirds of the body to suspend existing rules and take immediate action.*

**VI. Reports**

Chair Allen said that King County staff has requested that ETP extend the existing agreement. Mr. Arkills said the King County staff prefer to extend the agreement, but are willing to work with cities on their concerns. Chair Allen asked the King County return to discuss plans for revising the agreement.

**VII. New Business**

Councilmember Stilin said that the 2011 Legislative Subcommittee suggested that ETP start discussing transportation issues in mid-2012 to prepare for the next legislative session. Chair Allen agreed and asked members to consider membership for a legislative subcommittee for next meeting. Chair Allen closed the meeting.

Eastside Transportation Partnership Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2012

Page 8

Other Attendees:

Monica Whitman, SCA	Terry Marpert, Redmond
Will Knedlik, ETA	Wes Edwards, KCDOT
Doug Jacobson, Renton	Jack Whisner, KC Metro
Don Samdahl, Fehr & Peers	Dan Grayuski, Fehr & Peers