

# **SOUTH COUNTY AREA TRANSPORTATION BOARD (SCATBd)**

November 15, 2011

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Members**

Councilmember Wayne Snoey	City of Covington (Chair)
Mayor Dave Hill	City of Algona (Vice Chair)
Councilmember Ralph Shape	City of SeaTac
Mayor Pete Lewis	City of Auburn
Chris Arkills	King County Executive (Alternate)
Councilmember Marcie Palmer	City of Renton
Charlie Howard	PSRC
Grant Fredricks	City of Des Moines (Alternate)
Councilmember Les Thomas	City of Kent
Stacy Trussler	WSDOT
Councilmember Clarke Brant	City of Normandy Park
Councilmember Bart Taylor	City of Milton
Steve Roemer	City of Burien (Alternate)
Emiko Atherton	King County Council (Alternate)
Kelly Hayden	Pierce Transit
Councilmember Victoria Laise Jonas	City of Maple Valley
Brian Ziegler	Pierce County
Tom Hooper	Port of Seattle (Alternate)

### **I. Introduction, Comments, October 18 Meeting Summary**

After introductions, the meeting summary of October 18 was adopted by the Board.

### **II. Reports, Communications and Citizen Requests to Comment**

Chair Snoey reported that the SCATBd support letter for Sound Transit's TIGER III grant application to extend light rail to S 200<sup>th</sup> Street in the City of SeaTac was delivered to Sound Transit. Rachel Smith, Sound Transit, said the grant application was sent out on time and they will know by the end of the year on the results of the grant request. Chair Snoey commented on the failure of I-1125, and noted that King County votes were instrumental in defeating I-1125. He also informed the Board that Representative Pat Sullivan will be at the next December 20 SCATBd meeting. The discussion will focus on the upcoming Session and suggestions on the best way SCATBd Members might work with Legislators to address SCATBd's transportation priorities.

Mayor Hill briefed the Board on the PSRC Executive Board meeting that was held on October 27. He reported that the Suburban Cities Association had expressed its concern that the prioritization process may not be fully vetted and ready for approval by the General Assembly in the spring of 2012. He also said that the PSRC is proposing to use a scorecard approach in the priority process, where project benefit results would be

reported in a simple, graphic format. He suggested that crosschecks should include a review against actual growth information.

Charlie Howard reported that the PSRC was convening a project selection committee of elected officials to give policy direction regarding the framework for the next round of federal funding amounting to about \$300 million over the next two years. He said Councilmember Burbidge will chair the committee. Mr. Howard also announced that the FHWA was soliciting applications for 12 discretionary grant programs with FFY 2012 funding totaling an estimated \$200 million nationwide. He noted the fast turn-around for this request and said that WSDOT must submit all applications to FHWA by COB on January 6, 2012. All project applications from local jurisdictions must be submitted to WSDOT by COB on Friday, December 9th.

Chair Snoey asked for volunteers for nominating committee to nominate a 2012 SCATBd chair and vice chair. Mayor Pete Lewis and Councilmembers Bart Taylor and Marcie Palmer volunteered to serve on the committee.

### **III. RAMP Update, Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive**

Pierce County Executive Pat McCarthy briefed the Board on the Regional Access Mobility Partnership (RAMP) RAMP is a regional coalition including business, labor, public and private organizations dedicated to improved mobility in the South Sound area. RAMP's mission is to ensure a healthy regional economy associated with the development of an effective, efficient transportation system and the resources to sustain it. She said in contrast to SCATBd, RAMP was more diverse in respect to who attends the meetings and includes cities and towns, the Puyallup tribe, Chambers, unions and the Port of Tacoma. Executive McCarthy said that with the help of RAMP and South King County cities, Pierce County was able to get more funding for transportation projects in the south Sound area to the tune of about \$500 million. She said she saw a lot of common interest between the South King County area and Pierce County, and could see SCATBd and Pierce County aligned on a number of transportation issues. She said that state funds spent in the region should be balanced so that the region can grow. She noted that Snohomish and Pierce counties are still building roads, and there is a need to build east-west access for freight and citizens. She also noted that the proposed Cross Base Highway is important to provide east-west travel relief for Pierce County residents. The County needs to be more nimble to adjust to changing transportation issues such as addressing congestion around Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM), without giving up on priorities such as SR 167 and SR 509.

Mayor Lewis asked if freight rail was on RAMP's agenda, since he said there is a need to improve the movement of freight traffic through the region and to address at-grade rail crossings in the area. He said that with the widening of the Panama Canal and the resulting competition from east coast ports, freight mobility in the region will have to be addressed. Executive McCarthy said that coordination on freight mobility was a good

idea and she will share these concerns with the Port of Tacoma. Mayor Hill also noted that we will be facing competition with the Port of Vancouver because of their rail connections to the mid-west. Executive McCarthy said it would be a good idea if SCATBd, RAMP, and the two ports would get together to see what a joint agenda for freight mobility would look like particularly as it affects the Port of Tacoma.

Executive McCarthy said that Pierce County and its jurisdiction are making an effort to connect with their legislative delegation to talk about transportation priorities. She said that Pierce County is rallying around a common legislative agenda and SR 167 connection to the Port of Tacoma was one of the top priorities. She passed out a copy of RAMP's legislative agenda for 2011, she noted that the agenda represented a bipartisan effort to highlight RAMP's priorities. She also said if South King County representatives can align their agenda with Pierce County representatives, it would create a force to be reckoned with. Mayor Lewis said he like the brochure format that RAMP was using to highlight their legislative agenda, and said that SCATBd should a similar format. Chair Snoey said that he is working on a similar format for SCATBd's legislative agenda.

Chair Snoey wanted to know how the region can get their voices and concerns heard. He said there needs to be some common voice to address transportation issues with the legislature. He asked how the RAMP agenda compared with Pierce County agenda. Executive McCarthy said the agendas are in alignment, and they do work with each other to make sure they are in alignment. She also said it might be a good idea to get the gubernatorial candidates to meet with RAMP/SCATBd to hear local concerns. She said it would be good to educate them on the needs in the south sound area. Councilmember Les Thomas noted that when he was in the State Legislature, a combined voice on legislative issues made a big impact on legislators; when one group speaks as a whole, legislators listen.

Charlie Howard said that at the last Executive Board meeting the Board passed a motion directing the Transportation Policy Board to look at transportation governance and funding issues. He said that an interesting aspect of governance that might come out of this discussion is that the Puget Sound region has a lot of transportation needs and is the economic engine for the State and yet, the region is not treated like that. He said if the rest of the rest of state won't allow us to invest in transportation to support the economy, then the governance discussion might focus on how the region could do that independently of the rest of the state.

#### **IV. 2012 Metro Service Changes**

David Hull, King County Metro, briefed the Board on 2012 Metro Transit Service changes. The Council approved a \$20 congestion reduction charge (CRC) to preserve transit service near the current level for two years. The charge will be paid by vehicle owners in King County when they renew their vehicle registrations. As part of the CRC legislation the Council also directed Metro to revise bus service to make the transit

system more efficient and productive, phase out the downtown Seattle Ride Free Area, and start a transit incentive program to attract riders to the transit system.

Mr. Hull said that the CRC includes requirements for right sizing services. Right sizing includes finding the right product rather than a fixed route that is cost effective and still provides mobility to customers. In February Metro is moving towards three conversions from fixed routes to Dial-A-Ride-Transit (DART). DART service will increase coverage and convenience and present an attractive alternative for new and existing riders and features flexible routing to increase rider convenience. Within defined areas riders can call in advance to request the bus pick them up at home or another location, or ask the driver to drop them where they need to go. Two service changes are in the south county in the SR 169 and SR 164 corridors. The other one is in the Bothell/Redmond area.

The CRC also requires Metro to restructure 100,000 hours minimum of service from under performing routes and reallocate these hours according to the strategic plan and service guidelines. Metro has used its service guidelines to determine how to reallocate resources to make much needed improvements in service quality — alleviating crowding and enhancing on-time operation, as well as increasing use/ridership of the transit system.

Mr. Hull said that all affected routes are listed on Metro's "Have a Say" website. He said that Metro Transit staff is currently engaging with the public to educate them on the service change concepts. He encouraged SCATBd members to visit the website, and make comments or suggestions. He gave the following time line for the proposed service changes:

- January – February 2012: Metro gathers public feedback on the proposal and sends recommendation to the King County Executive.
- March 2012: The King County Executive presents Metro's recommendation to the King County Council.
- April 2012: The King County Council hosts a public process to consider Metro's recommendations.
- May 2012: The Council makes a final decision on Metro's recommendation
- September 2012: Metro begins service changes.

## **V. SR 509 Study Briefing**

Stacy Trussler reported that the I-5/SR 509 Corridor Completion and Freight Improvement Project Steering Committee endorsed a preferred toll financed, phasing plan for completing the SR 509 connection to I-5. The endorsed option includes one lane in each direction of the SR 509 extension between South 188th Street and 24th Avenue South/28th Avenue South, and two lanes each direction between 24th/28th Avenue South to I-5. This recommended option includes an extension of 24th Avenue South into the terminal drive of the airport. This option also includes a South 228th Street connection that provides direct movement into and out of the Kent Valley. It includes both inside and

outside connections to I-5. The inside connection would merge to the existing HOV lanes during the off-peak period. In the peak periods, the I-5 left shoulders would be used as HOT lanes in conjunction with the converted HOV lanes, to form a two-lane HOT lane corridor south to the direct access ramps at S. 317th Street. The full build out of the preferred design for the SR 509 connection to I-5 includes a connection to a Port of Seattle-built south access freeway to SeaTac International Airport and HOV lanes along the SR 509 corridor between South 188th Street and I-5. Ms. Trussler said that this recommendation will be presented to Executive Committee at their November 21 meeting for their consideration.

Shuming Yan, WSDOT, reported on a public opinion survey about SR 509 that was conducted by WSDOT in June 2011. The telephone survey was conducted on 400 randomly selected households in the southwest King County area and had a margin of error of +/- 5%. Mr. Yan reported on the following survey questions:

1. Should construction of the SR 509 project be a priority? 39% said yes, 40% said about the same priority as other highway projects: 17% said no, and 4% didn't know.
2. How much would you support tolls on SR 509 extension to help pay for the project? 16% were very supportive, 30% said they can be persuaded to support tolling to help pay for project, 17% were neutral, 38% were not supportive at all, and 2% don't know.
3. Would you be more or less supportive of tolls on SR 509 extension if the toll revenue was used exclusively to help fund that project and not used for anything else? 56% said more supportive, 27% said neither more nor less supportive, 14% said less supportive, and 4% didn't know.
4. If a choice needs to be made between adjusting tolls to reduce congestion or using tolls to raise revenue for building the SR 509 extension, what in your judgment, should be the higher priority? 48% said tolls should be used to do both, 20% said use tolls to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow, 16% said use tolls to fund the project, and 16% didn't know.
5. Would you be more or less likely to support tolls on the SR 509 extension if no tolls were charged after 8:00 PM? 44% said more supportive, 38% said neither more or less supportive, 15% said less supportive, and 4% didn't know.
6. Would you be more or less likely to support tolls if the toll varied by time of day on SR 509 extension? 40% said more likely, 36% said wouldn't matter either way, 24% said less likely, and 1% didn't know.
7. Would you be more or less supportive of using tolls to fund the SR 509 project for transit, carpools and vanpools were exempt or received a discounted toll? 38% said more supportive, 36% said neither more nor less supportive, 24% said less likely, and 2% didn't know.
8. Would you support conversion of I-5 HOV lanes to HOT lanes if the toll revenue helped pay for the SR 509 extension? 51% said yes, 45% said no, and 4% didn't know.

9. If the toll for using SR 509 extension was about \$3 during peak hours, what would you be most likely to do? 49% would take another route, 18% would drive your vehicle and pay the toll, 10% would change travel time to a time of day when the toll amount is lower, 6% would carpool, 6% would take transit, 4% would for go the trip altogether, 3% would change destination, 2% would van pool, 1% would work at home/telecommute, and 2% other.

Mr. Yan summarized the results:

- There is substantial support for the SR 509 extension, only about one person in five indicated the project was not a priority.
- Overall support for tolling the extension is weak. More respondents are opposed to tolling than support it, but a significant percentage was neutral or less firm in their opinion.
- Respondents were fairly evenly split on converting the I-5 HOV lanes to HOT as a way to help fund the SR 509 project.
- The results suggest support for tolling can be increased by:
  - Using the toll revenue exclusively for the project
  - Varying toll rates by time of day and allowing free use at night
  - Allowing exemptions or discounts for transit and HOVs
- If the extension is tolled some traffic will shift to other routes, off-peak hours, or other modes.

Board members noted that the public might misunderstand the descriptions used in describing the project, since SR 509 extension might mean a parallel facility to the I-5 corridor. It might be better to describe the project as SR 509 connection to I-5. Chair Snoey said that this option was consistent with SCATBd's earlier support for SR 509 Option 3A which included a connection to Kent's South 228 Street Corridor. Grant Fredricks said that there was no funding for WSDOT staff to keep working on the SR 509 project. He said SCATBd members should work with their legislators to provide staff funding to keep working on this project.

Other Attendees:

Kathy Mooney, City of Kent	Tom Gut, City of SeaTac
Jim Seitz, City of Renton	Cheryl Saltys, PSRC

SCATBd Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2011

Page 7

Shuming Yan, WASDOT	Paul Takamine, King County DOT
Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn	Monica Whitman, SCA
Rachel Smith, Sound Transit	Bob Giberson, City of Tukwila
Keri Rooney, Pierce County	David Hull, King County Metro
Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive	Eric Chipps, Sound Transit
Mayor Debra Perry, Milton	