

SEASHORE TRANSPORTATION FORUM
Meeting Minutes
April 6, 2012

Members

Deputy Mayor Chris Eggen, City of Shoreline (Co-Chair)
Councilmember John Wright, City of Lake Forest Park (Co-Chair)
Councilmember Doris McConnell, City of Shoreline
Chris Arkills, King County Executives Office (Alternate)
Mayor Bernie Talmas, City of Woodinville
Councilmember Susan Boundy-Sanders, City of Woodinville
Mayor David Baker, City of Kenmore
Councilmember Brent Smith, City of Kenmore
Councilmember Kyoko Matsumoto-Wright, City of Mountlake Terrace
Peter Hahn, City of Seattle
Councilmember Joan Bloom, City of Edmonds
Jay Larson, Snohomish County (Alternate)
Travis Alley, Councilmember Ferguson's Office (Alternate)
Stacy Trussler, WSDOT
Brian Doennebrink, Community Transit

I. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

II. Approval of March 2, 2012 Meeting Summary

The March 2, 2012 meeting summary was approved.

III. Reports

Co-Chairs

Co-Chair Wright reported that he had attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the reopened section of the Burke Gilman Trail. He expressed interest in using this opportunity to resume discussions between Lake Forest Park and Shoreline about connecting the Burke Gilman and Interurban Trails.

Co-Chair Wright also reported that he had attended the March 15 open house for the Sound Transit Lynnwood Link extension, and commented that all station locations will need access to the light rail and parking from both the east and west sides of I-5.

At Co-Chair Eggen's suggestion, several cities reported on current activities of interest to the group:

- Kenmore – received \$1.1 million from the legislature to continue improvements at 61st Street and SR 522; Microsoft has expressed interest in using an existing park and ride lot for its Connector service
- Seattle – conducting a study of transportation issues related to the proposed basketball and hockey arena in the stadium area; a memorandum of agreement is anticipated in June
- Mountlake Terrace – the first phase of the Town Center has been completed, and groundbreaking for the second phase will begin soon

Co-Chair Eggen also reported that the Regional Transit Committee's recent meeting focused on the anticipated work program for the year, highlighting two issues: alternative service delivery methods and methodology for adding service. He suggested that the Forum should plan to monitor progress on both issues

Copies of the projects that have been selected from the King County area to proceed to the regional project competition were distributed. Projects from the SeaShore portion of the King County area include: West Mercer (Seattle), Aurora corridor (Shoreline), Third Avenue enhancements and RapidRide facilities (King County Metro), SR 522 (Bothell), and Broadway streetcar extension (Seattle). These projects will compete with other regional projects from throughout the region. Recommendations for projects to receive funding will be made by June.

Congress has extended transportation funding through the existing Surface Transportation Act at current funding levels and structure through June 30, but there is not agreement between the two houses on a long term solution. The Senate has already passed a 2-year reauthorization bill, but the House is interested in a 5-year bill at lower funding, based on gas tax receipts.

The special legislative session ends on April 10, and there is no agreement on the budget, so action on other items, including local transportation options, has stalled. While both houses have recognized the need to address the ongoing funding gap for transit services, and have passed separate bills, this issue may not be resolved during this session.

Chris Arkills and Patrice Hardy reported that the Sound Transit Board had a robust discussion of parking and transit oriented development issues at an April 5 Board retreat. The board discussed better ways to manage its parking supply and work with local jurisdictions to tailor solutions. The board also agreed to establish a formal

check-in early in the planning process to determine opportunities for transit oriented development at station locations. Mayor Baker reported that Kenmore is planning to proceed with a transit oriented development and would appreciate information that could provide guidance. Members expressed the need for Metro service to feed the light rail, and Mr. Arkills and Ms. Hardy assured them that the transit general managers coordinate on these issues on a regular basis. Co-Chair Wright emphasized the need to provide good access to transit in order to increase ridership. Mr. Arkills asked members to share their suggestions for improvements with Sound Transit.

IV. SR 520 Tolling

Craig Stone, WSDOT Toll Division Director, provided an update on tolling SR 520. He reminded member that tolling is only one aspect of the Lake Washington Urban Partnership program, which also includes smarter highways, increased transit service and vanpool and carpool programs. Bus service was increased by more than 20 percent in advance of tolling, resulting in increased ridership; since tolling started, and additional 10 percent increase in ridership has occurred. Vanpools in the corridor have increased nearly 17 percent. Park and ride use in the corridor is similar to before tolling, with most lots remaining full.

Toll rates are comparable to bridge toll rates in San Francisco and Vancouver, B.C. The average toll is similar to the 35 cent toll charged in 1963 when adjusted for inflation.

Early indicators suggest that tolling is successful:

- 225,000 new tolling accounts were opened between February 2011 and February 2012, compared to the goal of 100,000 new accounts
- Approximately 79 percent of all toll trips were Good To Go! Account users, compared to a forecast of 72 percent.
- Good To Go! Pass market share regularly exceeds 80 percent during peak hours
- Transponder transactions account for nearly 91 percent of Good To Go! Transactions, while Pay by Plate accounts for the remaining 9 percent
- Inclement weather in January impacted travel throughout the region, with effects on revenue collections.
- Few complaints about confusion regarding tolling
- Toll traffic is generally at or above projected levels in the first three months of operation: traffic volumes range from 35 – 40 percent, compared to the forecasted 48 percent

- Initial traffic patterns reflect a more traditional peak/off-peak pattern compared to before tolling, where the midday sustained near peak levels
- As projected, most of the diversion occurs during midday and other off-peak times
- Focus groups indicate that the reliable travel time on SR 520 is a significant factor in making trip decisions.
- Informal “slugging” has almost been eliminated as a result

Monitoring of traffic in the I-90 corridor indicates the following:

- A 5-10 percent increase in traffic has occurred, resulting in limited capacity during peak hours.
- Congestion on I-5 and I-405 limits drivers’ ability to access I-90.
- Speeds remain within normal ranges, but weather and accidents have caused significant delays on a few days

Monitoring of traffic in the SR 522 indicates the following:

- SR 522 has not experienced a significant change in traffic speeds, and changes to signal timing have occurred to improve traffic flow on SR 522.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that changes to signal timing to improve flow on SR 522 has adversely affected arterials that feed into SR 522.

Evaluation of the Urban Partnership Program will continue through spring of 2013. Annual increases in toll rates of 2.5 percent will occur beginning in 2012. A 15 percent weekday increase will occur in 2017 when the new facility is open.

Peter Hahn mentioned that Lake City residents have complained about traffic diversion through neighborhoods during limited times as a result of tolling. Co-Chair Wright indicated that Lake Forest Park has recognized that increasing throughput on arterials sometimes results in diversion through neighborhoods. It has changed policy regarding this during its last comprehensive plan update.

Mayor Baker expressed surprise at the consistent increase in traffic throughout the day. Mr. Stone indicated that WSDOT is still sorting through the data to try to understand implications. Councilmember Smith suggested that it will be important to consider traffic using Juanita Drive and Simonds Road. In response to Councilmember Boundy-Sanders, he indicated that information identifying the location of bottlenecks is available on WSDOT’s website.

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Tolling/publications.htm>

V. Sound Transit Lynnwood Link Extension

Patrice Hardy, Sound Transit, briefly reviewed the process and schedule for the Lynnwood Link Extension. In April the Sound Transit Board will determine, based on scoping comments and a qualitative assessment of issues, which alternatives will be considered in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS is scheduled to be issued May 2013.

Nytasha Sowers, Sound Transit, reported on the requests received for alignments and station locations. She noted that Shoreline supports stations at 145th and 185th and Seattle prefers stations at 130th and 145th. King County has requested consideration of alternative locations at 125th/130th and 155th. In addition, Shoreline supports the 185th station on the west side of I-5.

Public open houses have recently been held to seek input on these issues. Comments received include the following:

- Support for the I-5 alignment
- Interest in moving forward with implementation as quickly as possible
- Interest in development around stations
- Some concerns about property acquisition, parking, noise and visual impacts, and impacts on property values
- Many station-specific comments related to N. 185th Street (general support for a station but split on west or east side)
- Most station comments regarding NE 145th St vs. N.125th/130th and NE 155th – roughly an even split in preference between options

East-west bus service, access and parking were common concerns expressed by the public and repeated by SeaShore members. Ms. Sowers indicated that Sound Transit is working with Metro and Community Transit to determine how local service will be provided.

Based on the qualitative evaluation being conducted by Sound Transit staff, the following findings will be reported to the board:

- 125th vs. 130th St. station: 130th St. has better connections to the community
- 185th St. west-side station & connecting alignments: difficult & expensive to construct; few benefits compared to east side
- East side alignment Mountlake Terrace to Lynnwood: higher environmental impacts; no advantages over other alternatives
- 220th St. station: added scope; not authorized in ST2

- Some Lynnwood Transit Center alternatives: higher environmental impacts;
no advantages over other alternatives

Other attendees:

Monica Whitman, SCA	Scott MacColl, Shoreline
Sally Marks, KCDOT	