

REGIONAL ALTERNATIVES TRANSIT PACKAGE

[REVISED 02/04/03]

Vision Statement

People are frustrated because their cars and buses get stuck in traffic every day. They yearn for ways to reduce traffic, speed it up, or avoid it altogether. Frustration turns to anger when they see that putting a prohibitively expensive rail line in one corridor won't address the traffic problems that most of us face.

People recognize the importance of mobility not just for commuters, but also for a growing senior and youth population, families, shoppers and freight. They see that growth has not followed traditional patterns and thus requires non-traditional solutions. Our region is not a single downtown hub surrounded by a ring of suburbs. It has become a web of interconnected urban centers, with equal numbers of commuters flowing into and out of Seattle.

People are looking for 21st century solutions. They want to balance the convenience of road-based transportation with a desire not to pave over paradise. They want transit that works for more people in more places, while reducing the burden on the environment created by single occupancy vehicles.

People continue to distrust government. They want to see that the taxes they have approved are producing results. They do not want to dismantle what works well now. They would rather see success demonstrated in an incremental series of smaller projects and innovations that provide the most benefit for the least cost.

We recognize that there is no one silver bullet for Puget Sound's complex transportation problem. We need a package of effective strategies. Given the scope of the problem, our unique topography, limited resources, and the need to ensure money is being spent wisely, we call for a redirection of our Sound Transit light rail project dollars. It is simply the wrong technology for our region--that is why it costs so much here. Light rail was never meant to be elevated or tunneled to the extent that would be required in our region.

We propose two key strategies. The first --in recognition of the urgent need for near term results --calls for redirecting some of the \$3 billion into expanding existing successful programs.

The second strategy is to quickly launch a sincere, thorough, an objective comparison of other promising alternatives for our Region. Instead of spending any more time or money figuring out how we can afford to get to Northgate or the Airport with light rail, let's take a fraction of the time and money to improve the ways we already get there! The remainder of the \$3 billion should be spent on those which bring the most benefit for the least cost.

More specifically we recommend the following:

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: *Let your elected representatives know you want effective transportation options.*

REGIONAL CONSENSUS PACKAGE 2/4/03

STARTING TODAY WITH SMALL BUT PRODUCTIVE PROJECTS which Improve and Expand Successful Bus, Vanpool and Commute Trip Reduction programs and other services.

- Incrementally increase and improve bus service, especially Express service, on routes where there is existing or potential demand. Examples are: I-5, 405, 167, Northgate to SeaTac, 522, North 99 and East-West corridors.
- Open the Bus Tunnel longer on nights and weekends. Increase the number of buses and bus routes as ridership grows.
- Reduce transit fares.
- Improve bus and bus stop cleanliness.
- Provide more information on how to use the system.
- Speed up bus travel via signal priorities.
- Create more mini-park and ride lots where affordable space is available along routes (church lots, etc.)
- Increase carpool/vanpool usage by reducing fees for vanpools and modest marketing of both.
- Reduce the time it takes to clear accidents and incidents off the roadway.
- Evaluate and potentially strengthen tax incentives that reduce the need to travel alone. For example:
 - Telecommuting
 - Proximate Commuting-moving employees to branches closer to their home
 - Parking cash outs & subsidized bus passes
- Work with private sector to get the most benefit from taxis and Flex car programs.

STARTING TODAY WITH LARGER PROJECTS

- Evaluate our major freeways and arterials for possible future incremental conversion from express buses to Exclusive Busway, Monorail or other appropriate technology.
- Evaluate contribution towards HOV lanes and Direct Access Ramps in North/South King County for transit/vanpools.
- Speed up fare collection through pre-pay, proof of payment, or one-pass-for-all systems.
- Evaluate feasibility of HOT (High Occupancy Toll) lanes, a variation on HOV lanes, which would maintain 24/7 60 mph mobility for transit, 3-person carpools, and emergency vehicles; and provide toll access for time-sensitive trucking and "rush-to-the-emergency-room" (or daycare) non-carpools. Monitoring to maintain lane speed would be sensor-based and real-time.
- Partner with the private sector and universities to invest in Research and Development of new, potentially beneficial technologies, such as Personal Rapid Transit (PRT), fuel cells, elevated magnetic levitation trains (Maglev).
- Evaluate contribution to help finish and expand planned bikeways and designated bike routes.

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