

January 10, 2006

The Honorable Reagan Dunn, Chair,
King County Council Regional Transit Committee
King County Courthouse
KCC-CC-1200
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmember Dunn,

King County Metro Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) members would like to share our preliminary perspectives with regard to King County's role in waterborne transit (WBT) in the greater Puget Sound area.

Our members worked with staff throughout 2005 to review and provide feedback on the King County Waterborne Transit Service Study. We agreed unanimously that the Summary Report for the Waterborne Transit Policy Study is very high quality work. We felt that presentations at our meetings reflected thorough planning and strong attention to detail. We appreciated staff patience and attention to our many questions. We feel that the level of detail in the completed Policy Study was important in that it was easily understood and educational, even to those unfamiliar with the topic of waterborne transit.

With that said, TAC members reached consensus on these points:

King County should not be involved in waterborne transit policy/implementation. Waterborne transit should have the lowest priority as a policy decision at the county level. Lack of available funding and a long list of public transportation and transit needs are the main reasons that waterborne transit should have the lowest priority on the King County Council and Regional Transit Committee's agendas.

We acknowledge two exceptions:

- **Vashon Island waterborne transit policy and implementation should be considered should the State of Washington decide to discontinue passenger only service from Vashon to downtown Seattle.** Should that happen, King County should immediately consider providing replacement service with new funding sources. This is an important route and service of transportation which, if discontinued, will adversely impact other means of transportation, namely Metro buses and the roads between West Seattle and downtown. If passenger only boats are eliminated, those who normally ride the passenger only boats will require additional bus service or will choose to drive from Fauntleroy.
- **Waterborne transit should be considered among the mix of services used to mitigate for long construction projects on the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the SR520 Bridge, and for emergency services should either of these facilities be incapacitated by a natural or man-made disaster.**

Even though "choices" are a very important element in Metro's transit policies, we believe residents are more interested in congestion relief when it comes to the application of resources and expansion of our existing transportation system in the greater Puget Sound area. This study does an excellent job discussing how applicable waterborne transit is to our specific area; however, waterborne transit does not measure up as a component to congestion relief when looked at from a taxpayer's point of view.

Again, our group very much appreciated being active participants in the development of this study. We commend David Hull, Metro transit planner and Paul Lavalée, consultant, for their outstanding work. Again, King County should focus completely on the issues of fundability and mobility as we select, fund and build our major transportation and transit systems in the Puget Sound area.

Sincerely,

Dick Burkhart, Chair
King County Transit Advisory Committee

Cc Ron Sims, King County Executive
King County Councilmembers
Harold Taniguchi, Director, King County Department of Transportation
Laurie Brown, Deputy Director, KCDOT
Kevin Desmond, General Manager, King County Metro Transit
Victor Obeso, Manager, Metro Transit Service Development
David Hull, Supervisor, Metro Transit Service Planning
Paul Lavalée, consultant, IBI