



Summary

I-405/SR 167 Executive Advisory Group Meeting

Wednesday, April 3, 2019
Tukwila Community Center
10 a.m. – noon

Executive Advisory Group members and elected officials in attendance:

- Secretary of Transportation Roger Millar, Chair
- Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold, City of Kirkland
- Commissioner Shiv Batra, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Councilmember Randy Corman, City of Renton
- Mayor Allen Dauterman, City of Newcastle
- Deputy Mayor Davina Duerr, City of Bothell
- Mayor Allan Ekberg, City of Tukwila
- Deputy Mayor Gary Harris, City of Woodinville
- Mayor Dana Ralph, City of Kent
- Councilmember Janice Zahn, City of Bellevue

Staff in attendance:

- Chris Arkills, King County Metro
- Benjamin Brackett, Puget Sound Regional Council
- Jeff Brauns, City of Newcastle
- Rob Brown, City of Kent
- June Carlson, City of Kirkland
- Dylan Counts, WSDOT
- Kelly Cheeseman, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Ingrid Gaub, City of Auburn (on behalf of Mayor Nancy Backus)
- Alex Herzog, City of Woodinville
- Lisa Hodgson, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Cyndy Knighton, City of Tukwila
- Katie Kuciemba Halse, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Erin Leonhart, City of Bothell
- Monica Marchetti (on behalf of Sen. Hans Zeiger), Washington State Senate
- Victoria Miller, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Elizabeth Mountsier (on behalf of Mayor John Marchione), City of Redmond
- Drue Nyenhuis, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Jim Seitz, City of Renton
- Ariel Taylor, Sound Transit
- Wendy Taylor, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Blake Trask, Office of King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci
- Noah Tunick, Community Transit
- Karl Westby, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Lacey Jane Wolfe, City of Bellevue

Presenters:

- Katie Chalmers, Service Planning Supervisor, King County Metro
- Paul Cornish, Bus Rapid Transit Director, Sound Transit
- Kim Henry, Program Administrator, I-405/SR 167 Program, WSDOT
- Doug Hodson, Finance Manager, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
- Patty Rubstello, Assistant Secretary of Urban Mobility and Access, WSDOT
- Curt Warber, Project Manager, King County Parks



Note: These meeting notes are intended to capture the discussion at the meeting, including questions and comments from the group. This is not intended to be a formal testimony or a complete transcript of the meeting. Meeting materials including the PowerPoint presentation are available on the web at: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/Tolling/EastsideCorridor/EAG2013.htm>

I. Introductions and Agenda Review

Roger Millar, WSDOT's Secretary of Transportation, welcomed the Interstate 405/State Route 167 Executive Advisory Group, asked members to introduce themselves, and provided an overview of the meeting topics. Secretary Millar reminded attendees that the group last met in December 2018 and plans additional meetings in 2019. This meeting will include updates from the Washington State Department of Transportation, King County Parks, Sound Transit, and King County Metro.

II. Public comment

Erik Ashlie-Vinka of the Economic Alliance Snohomish County and the Snohomish County Committee for Improved Transportation (SCCIT) stated that the Committee supports toll authorization and bonding in 2019. He said that it would be a missed opportunity if the legislation does not pass, specifically in the lens of project costs.

III. WSDOT update

Secretary Millar talked about the importance of the I-405/SR 167 Executive Advisory Group. He said the group has shaped the I-405/SR 167 corridor by informing policy for two decades and that 2019 is a critical year for toll authorization. Through a partnership with cities, counties and agencies along the corridor, planning documents guide the progress made throughout the corridor. He also spoke about the 40-mile express toll lane system that the EAG endorsed in 2010, generating a ten-year implementation strategy.

Patty Rubstello, WSDOT's Assistant Secretary of Urban Mobility and Access, gave an update on the 2019 Washington State legislative session and covered legislation relevant to WSDOT, including:

- House Bill (HB) 1160, Senate Bill (SB) 5214: 2019 – 2021 transportation appropriations proposals;
- SB 5970, SB 5971, SB 5972: Forward Washington transportation funding proposal; and
- SB 5695: concerning high occupancy vehicle lane penalties.

She also mentioned that the House of Representatives transportation appropriations budget proposal includes funding for the Washington State Transportation Commission to conduct a study on discounted tolls for low-income drivers.

Rubstello spoke to agency-request toll authorization legislation, SB 5825 (Senator Steve Hobbs) and its companion, HB 1899 (Representative Jake Fey), relevant to the I-405/SR 167 corridor. Representative Fey has also sponsored HB 2132, which would address the completion of the planned construction of various facilities by advancing construction, issuing bonds, and tolling portions of I-405, SR 167, and SR 509. Rubstello covered the benefits of securing toll authorization from the Legislature in 2019, which include maintaining schedules for projects, honoring partnership commitments, and having toll revenue from the Renton to Bellevue express toll lanes start to accrue in 2024 to meet projects identified in Connecting Washington. She stated that HB 2132 includes the authority to issue bonds; however, it would require 60% approval from each legislative body rather than a simple majority. She expressed concern that WSDOT is not in a position to advance projects in the I-405



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corridor without toll authority from the Legislature. Secretary Millar reflected legislative leadership's desire for bipartisan support of toll authorization and bonding legislation. He went on to say that if toll authorization was not approved in 2019, it will affect contracts moving forward and partner projects.

Kim Henry, WSDOT's I-405/SR 167 Program Administrator, reviewed the I-405 Master Plan and the SR 167 Corridor Plan, explaining that the plans have guided all work by the program. He reflected on the request by a legislator in 2018 to prioritize needs throughout the corridor, in which the I-405 Master Plan and SR 167 Corridor Plan were used to determine both funded and unfunded project prioritization.

Henry gave a brief overview of project updates, including the I-405, SR 522 to SR 527 Capacity Improvements Project, the Northeast 132nd Street Interchange Project, the Northeast 85th Street Interchange Project, the SR 520/Northeast 124th Avenue Interchange Project, and the recently opened I-405/SR 167 Interchange Direct Connector Project. As design advances on the I-405, SR 522 to SR 527 Project, Henry stated that WSDOT is seeing construction cost increases related to operational improvements and fish barriers. These cost increases have been communicated to local legislators for their understanding.

Henry also provided an update on the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lanes Project and emphasized that the program needs toll authorization in 2019 to ensure the project stays on schedule. He showed a timeline of the I-405 delivery schedule and next steps, explaining that the project is currently in procurement, with notice to proceed and construction anticipated in late-2019. Without the authority to collect tolls, Henry explained that:

- the Renton to Bellevue project could experience construction delays and budget increases;
- future projects in the I-405/SR 167 corridor would lack the funding needed without Renton to Bellevue toll revenue reinvestments; and
- WSDOT would be unable to honor schedule commitments with partners, including King County's Eastside Rail Corridor Trail and Sound Transit's I-405 bus rapid transit (BRT). Express toll lanes are crucial for the successful implementation of BRT along the corridor.

Discussion

- Bellevue Councilmember Janice Zahn echoed the importance of toll authorization legislation for the Renton to Bellevue segment and asked about funding for the SR 520/124th Avenue Northeast Project. Henry answered that there is funding for design and right of way acquisition, but not for construction. Secretary Millar reiterated legislative leadership's desire for bipartisan support for HB 2132 and reminded members that legislation without bonding requires a simple majority.
- Kent Mayor Dana Ralph introduced Briahna Murray from Gordon Thomas Honeywell Government Affairs and Doug Levy representing the City of Renton. Murray said that it is a key time in the toll authorization legislation process and she recommended that Executive Advisory Group members reach out to legislators. Levy stated that progress toward bipartisan support is being made and that positive conversations are ongoing.
- Curt Warber, King County Parks Project Manager for the Eastside Rail Corridor, addressed the King County Parks' project schedule, which shows an approximate six-month delay in the opening of the Wilburton Trestle to account for an assessment of the timber piles and structural retrofitting.
- Deputy Mayor of Bothell Davina Duerr asked about the SR 522 to SR 527 Capacity Improvements Project increased costs. Henry answered that additional costs are due to fish culverts and restriping in other areas of the corridor to help operations. Secretary Millar echoed that when WSDOT opened the express toll lanes between Bellevue and Lynnwood, it solved problems but also moved problems. With the SR 522 to SR 527 Capacity Improvements Project, WSDOT wanted to make sure that if they were moving



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problems, that they could solve them too. Secretary Millar also noted that WSDOT continues to work with tribal representatives and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding fish barriers.

- City of Redmond Transit Project Manager Elizabeth Mountsier asked a clarifying question about the low-income toll study. Rubstello confirmed that it was included in the House transportation appropriations budget proposal.
- Washington State Transportation Commissioner Shiv Batra asked about fish culvert legislation and funding. Secretary Millar explained that when fish passage is within a certain proximity of a project, it is included in the project scope.

IV. King County Parks update

Curt Warber, King County Parks' Eastside Rail Corridor Project Manager, gave a brief project update and schedule overview regarding the Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Trail Project.

Doug Hodson, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks' Finance Manager gave an overview of the executive proposal for the 2020-2025 King County Parks Levy. He explained that the proposal would add investment to the park system and keep up with population growth in the region. He reviewed the proposal goals, which were to take care of what we have, grow and connect regional open space, improve regional trails and mobility, and make parks and recreation more accessible. He went into more detail about the Eastside Rail Corridor, stating that eventually the trail will connect to Woodinville and Redmond and then the SR 520 trail.

Hodson discussed the proposal's benefits to residents and businesses, highlighting that there would be increased access to more open space and backcountry trails, as well as improvements to major facilities and heavy investments in regional trails. The proposal was amended by the Regional Policy Committee to include programs and projects important to cities, such as an increase in equity grants, new open space and public pools grants, and additional trail projects.

Hodson ended his presentation with a brief overview of the proposed park levy process and timeline. He noted that the proposal needs action from King County Council by the end of April 2019 to adopt the parks levy ballot measure for an election date of Aug. 6, 2019.

Discussion

- Kirkland Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold inquired about the amendment put forward by the Regional Policy Committee. Hodson explained that the amendment provides more specificity on the included projects, programs and investments.
- Bellevue Councilmember Janice Zahn thanked King County Parks for the projects and stressed the importance of trail connections throughout the corridor. Councilmember Zahn inquired if bus rapid transit buses will have increased capacity for bicycles to encourage multimodal travel. Sound Transit's Paul Cornish answered that the agencies are looking at ways to facilitate transit and bicycle use.
- City of Redmond Transit Project Manager Elizabeth Mountsier asked if the proposal will be referred back to the Council's Budget and Fiscal Management Committee or the Regional Policy Committee (RPC). Hodson replied that the proposal would be referred to RPC if there are changes; however, it is anticipated that final Council action will occur in April 2019.
- Renton Councilmember Randy Corman asked about the status of the bridge over Interstate 90. Warber responded saying that it is not a currently funded project; however, it is the agency's highest priority unfunded project. Councilmember Corman asked about safety issues and if there is a chance to include that project in the levy. Warber said that while it is a huge priority to fund that project, it is too expensive



and out of scale to be included in the levy. The agency recently formed a funding commission to bring more private investments into the corridor.

V. Regional transit update

Paul Cornish, Sound Transit's I-405 Bus Rapid Transit Director, gave a brief overview of the I-405 BRT project. He explained that the project would be two segments, one from Bellevue to Lynnwood in the north and one from Burien to Bellevue in the south. He stated that the lines would open in 2024, which is a shared goal with WSDOT because of its connection to the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lanes Project. He also noted that there would be connections to several light rail stations. Cornish highlighted the interagency work that Sound Transit has continued to do with cities along the corridor. He reviewed project refinements for both the north line and the south line, noting that the agency and stakeholders have been working to identify long-term solutions for the connection between SR 522/NE 145th and I-405 BRT. Cornish provided estimates on increased ridership and improved travel times due to project refinements. He ended his presentation with the announcement of BRT program branding, Stride, with a station design concept and a project schedule overview. As part of this presentation, Renton Councilmember Randy Corman noted that the Sound Transit's Elected Leadership Group has come up with creative solutions and that the City of Renton is looking forward to I-405 BRT.

Katie Chalmers, King County Metro's Transit Service Planning Supervisor, discussed King County Metro's service planning updates and ongoing projects. Chalmers explained that Metro has finalized the North Eastside Mobility project recommendation, which was submitted to the King County Council in early 2019. If the Council adopts the recommendation, changes to regular bus service in the areas of Bothell, Kenmore, Kirkland, Redmond, and Woodinville will take effect in March 2020. Metro has also begun working on the Renton-Kent-Auburn Area Mobility Plan that will integrate RapidRide, other fixed-route and dial-a-ride transit (DART) buses and Metro's Community Connections Program. Parts of this mobility plan will go into effect in September 2020, and the RapidRide I Line will be in service in 2023. Chalmers noted how King County Metro is connecting with Stride BRT through an integration agreement with Sound Transit for all ST3 projects. Lastly, Chalmers talked about the RapidRide line from Totem Lake to Eastgate, which will connect with I-405 BRT in Totem Lake and Downtown Bellevue. King County Metro is targeting March 2025 to start service.

Discussion

- Bothell Deputy Mayor Duerr noted a recent presentation that King County Metro gave to Bothell City Council and stated how critical the integration of Metro service is in the success of BRT.
- Newcastle Mayor Allen Dauterman asked about any additional connections in Newcastle. Chalmers said that there are plans to add more connections but they are currently unfunded. It is unclear whether those new connections will be funded in time with the opening of BRT.
- Kent Mayor Dana Ralph expressed excitement about the RapidRide I Line and emphasized the importance of connecting people to the system.
- Kirkland Deputy Mayor Jay Arnold asked about outreach efforts to communities about the upcoming service changes. Chalmers assured that King County Metro would be in communication with the communities and requested recommendations from EAG members about best practices in reaching constituents.
- Bellevue Councilmember Janice Zahn expressed the importance of good BRT connections, especially the Bellevue Transit Center hub. She also commented that there are minimal options for people to get around during construction throughout the eastside and asked how the agency would account for that. Chalmers said that King County Metro would aim for an outreach effort similar to the one in place during the Alaskan Way Viaduct closure, with multiple agencies getting the message out.



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- In response to Councilmember Zahn's comments, I-405/SR 167 Program Administrator Kim Henry said that WSDOT plans to keep lanes open during peak times and on weekdays during construction of the Renton to Bellevue Project. He stressed the importance of coordinating with other agencies to communicate to the public.
- Chris Arkills, representing King County Metro spoke of the Eastside Mobility Initiative, which undertakes short and long-range coordination of construction in the eastside.
- City of Redmond Transit Project Manager Elizabeth Mountsier echoed the importance of the Eastside Mobility Initiative in coordinating regional stakeholders. On behalf of Redmond Mayor Marchione, Mountsier acknowledged the work of transit agency staff in advancing the planning and communicating to the public.

VI. Wrap up

Secretary Millar thanked the EAG members for attending and reiterated the importance of local and regional partnerships. He ended by saying that the next EAG meeting will be once legislative session has ended and in the meantime, WSDOT needs toll authorization.