



Summary

I-405/SR 167 Executive Advisory Group Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019
Bellevue Library
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
- Councilmember Claudia Balducci, King County Council/Sound Transit Board
- Commissioner Shiv Batra, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Mayor Allen Dauterman, City of Newcastle
- Sue Dreier, CEO, Pierce Transit
- Deputy Mayor Davina Duerr, City of Bothell
- Mayor Daryl Eiding, City of Edgewood
- Mayor Dana Ralph, City of Kent
- Councilmember Janice Zahn, City of Bellevue
- Rep. Vandana Slatter, Washington State House of Representatives

Staff in attendance:

- Rob Brown, City of Kent
- June DeVoll, Community Transit
- Ingrid Gaub, City of Auburn (on behalf of Mayor Nancy Backus)
- Vangie Garcia (on behalf of Councilmember Randy Corman), City of Renton
- Aaron Hallenberg (on behalf of Sen. Hans Zeiger), Washington State Senate
- Katie Kuciemba Halse, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Victoria Miller, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Elizabeth Mountsier (on behalf of Mayor John Marchione), City of Redmond
- Luke Lamon, Sound Transit
- Mary MacKie, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Kelly McGourty, Puget Sound Regional Council
- Jeremy Metzler, City of Edgewood
- Patty Rubstello, Assistant Secretary of Urban Mobility and Access, WSDOT
- Andrew Singelakis, City of Bellevue
- Charla Skaggs, WSDOT Toll Division
- Craig Smiley, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Mary Soderlind (on behalf of Rep. Tina Orwall), Washington State House of Representatives
- Wendy Taylor, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Karl Westby, I-405/SR 167 Program
- Lacey Jane Wolfe, City of Bellevue

Presenters:

- Paul Cornish, Bus Rapid Transit Director, Sound Transit
- Debbie Driver, Director of Legislative Relations, WSDOT
- Emmett Heath, CEO, Community Transit
- Kim Henry, Program Administrator, I-405/SR 167 Program, WSDOT
- Lisa Hodgson, Deputy Program Administrator, I-405/SR 167 Program, WSDOT
- Robin Mayhew, Director of Management of Mobility, 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, Secretary of Transportation, welcomed the Interstate 405/State Route 167 Executive Advisory Group members, facilitated introductions, and reviewed the meeting topics. Secretary Millar noted the meeting will include updates from the Washington State Department of Transportation, Sound Transit, Community Transit, and King County Parks.

II. Public comment

There were no public comments.

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. He thanked those in the room for their involvement during the successful past legislative session. He reminded attendees that the group last met in April 2019 focusing on the need for toll authorization during the 2019 legislative session. Toll authority for the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lanes (ETLs) Project allows WSDOT to continue work to meet the Legislature's schedule, and honor partnership schedules.

Debbie Driver, WSDOT's Director of Legislative Relations, echoed Secretary Millar's gratitude to the I-405/SR 167 EAG members and provided a summary of the 2019 Washington State legislative session, covering session outcomes, including:

- Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5695: the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane penalties bill;
- Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 1160: 2019 – 2021 transportation appropriations, which included a low-income toll study proviso for the Washington State Transportation Commission; and
- Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5825: the toll authorization bill that includes bonding of the I-405 ETLs and SR 167 HOT Lanes toll revenues to support priority projects throughout the I-405/SR 167 corridor.

Robin Mayhew, WSDOT's Management of Mobility Director, spoke in more detail about the SR 167 Master Plan, which was directed by the Legislature in ESSB 5825. She stated that the goals of the study are to identify near, medium and long-term multimodal transportation needs and strategies. WSDOT will complete the study by June 30, 2021. Mayhew also explained the SR 167 Master Plan stakeholder structure and provided next steps.

Dana Ralph, Mayor of Kent, thanked those who made toll authorization, project funding, and the SR 167 Master Plan possible. She noted the differences between the I-405 Master Plan and the SR 167 Corridor Plan, and conversations she had with Mayor Nancy Backus of Auburn about the south end of the corridor. She thanked WSDOT and said she was excited about the opportunities for the south end of the corridor.



Corridor Program

Kim Henry, WSDOT's I-405/SR 167 Program Administrator, noted the two planning documents that have guided the strategy for the I-405/SR 167 Program over the past two decades, the multimodal I-405 Master Plan and the SR 167 Corridor Plan. He echoed how WSDOT will update the SR 167 Corridor Plan into a Master Plan. He also mentioned that due to the SR 167 Master Plan development, the I-405/SR 167 EAG member list has expanded, now including more jurisdictions along SR 167. He reminded the group that in 2009, the Legislature directed WSDOT to study the 40+-mile system of ETLs. An expert review panel reviewed the study results, which resulted in the EAG adopting a 10-year 40-mile plan. With the funding from the Legislature in the 2019 session, WSDOT can come close to completing the 40+-mile system and fully implement that strategy. Henry also thanked the Legislature and the I-405/SR 167 EAG for all their work.

Henry reminded the group that at the last meeting in April, WSDOT was waiting on toll authorization for the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and ETLs Project and that there were multiple projects without construction funding at that time. Thanks to the work this legislative session, WSDOT is now working to deliver several newly funded projects.

Lisa Hodgson, WSDOT's I-405/SR 167 Deputy Program Administrator, provided an overview of project updates. She began with news regarding the I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and ETLs Project; WSDOT has opened bids for the project and the design-builder Flatiron West Inc.-The Lane Construction Corporation Joint Venture submitted the apparent best value proposal. Hodgson reviewed the project scope and schedule, highlighting construction of two new direct access ramps, one at Northeast 44th Street in Renton and one at 112th Avenue Southeast in Bellevue.

Hodgson then discussed other projects that were funded through bonding in ESSB 5825 during the 2019 legislative session, including:

- I-405/North 8th Street Interchange Project (funded for design);
- Northbound SR 167 Express Toll Lane Extension (fully funded for construction);
- Southbound SR 167 Express Toll Lane Extension (fully funded for construction); and
- I-405, SR 522 Vicinity to SR 527 Express Toll Lanes Improvement Project (fully funded for construction and additional capacity improvements).

Hodgson then showed the progress WSDOT will make on direct accesses in the corridor throughout the next five to six years. Lastly, she showed a program delivery schedule and explained that there is an Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue study required to support bonding with the I-405, SR 522 Vicinity to SR 527 Express Toll Lanes Improvement Project defining the critical path. Overall, there will be more opportunities for multimodal access once all the projects are constructed. There will be a lot of construction work over the 40+ miles in the next five to six years and the corridor will look significantly different once the projects are complete. Adding direct accesses reduces weaving and provides better operations for all lanes.

Discussion

- Bellevue Councilmember Janice Zahn expressed excitement about the 112th Avenue Southeast direct access ramp as part of the Renton to Bellevue Project and asked if there will be a Sound Transit Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stop at that interchange as part of the ST3 package (ST3). Paul Cornish, Sound Transit Bus Rapid Transit Director, said that the stop at 112th Avenue Southeast was not part of ST3. However, they are exploring opportunities for collaborating here. Councilmember Zahn also expressed concerns about the lack of construction funding for the SR 520/124th Avenue Northeast Project.
- Allen Dauterman, Mayor of Newcastle, asked if the park and ride at 112th Avenue Southeast would have structured parking. Kim Henry said that it will be surface parking. Mayor Dauterman asked if there would be any studies about the park and ride capacity at 112th Avenue Southeast. Henry said that there are no studies at this time, but it can be a future conversation.



Corridor Program

- Secretary Millar discussed the regional station access program, stating that King County is piloting programs to get people from home to the station without requiring their own vehicle. He said that these are operational improvements that are needed rather than capital improvements, and that partners need to continue to work together on this issue.
- Emmett Heath, CEO of Community Transit, asked about future improvements at the I-405/I-5 interchange in Lynnwood. Kim Henry explained that there is a phased approach to the construction from Everett to Bellevue and from Lynnwood to Bellevue. He said that the improvements between SR 527 in Bothell and I-5 in Lynnwood would have been too much in terms of immediate project funding during the 2019 legislative session; the improvements between SR 527 and I-5 are in phase 2 of the project and completion of the project will be evaluated in future priorities. Secretary Millar mentioned that Robin Mayhew's group is looking at regional mobility and scenario planning, including the I-5 system partnership between Marysville and Tumwater.
- Jay Arnold, Deputy Mayor of Kirkland, asked if the direct access ramps will be part of the express toll lane system. Kim Henry said yes, all direct access ramps will be part of the express toll lanes system except for Brickyard in north Kirkland, which will be a BRT inline stop.
- Commissioner Shiv Batra, Washington State Transportation Commission, asked if the Coal Creek Parkway Southeast interchange improvements and I-405/I-90 interchange improvements are included in the current funded contract. Kim Henry said that the Coal Creek Parkway Southeast interchange improvements will include roundabouts and will be included in Contract 3 of the Renton to Bellevue project; and that there will be improvements to the I-405/I-90 interchange in the current funded Renton to Bellevue Contract 2 project.
- Councilmember Zahn asked if the Renton to Bellevue Contract 3 could start sooner so that the Coal Creek Parkway Southeast interchange improvements could be built sooner. Kim Henry said that it would be challenging due to the timing of the Investment Grade Traffic and Revenue (IGTR) study and what the Legislature chooses to do in the future regarding funding. Secretary Millar added that the current priority is getting ready for the opening of BRT and that there are challenges relating to cash flow from Connecting Washington.

IV. Sound Transit update

Paul Cornish, Sound Transit's I-405 Bus Rapid Transit Director, gave a brief overview of the Phase 1 project refinements for the I-405 BRT project. He explained that there was a workshop held in spring 2019 with stakeholders to refine the project and identify an interim and long-term solution for BRT while meeting the objectives of ST3 and the I-405 Master Plan vision. He then covered the outcomes of the workshop and the I-405 BRT Elected Leadership Group's recommendation for BRT, which is to move the stations from outside ramps to inside stations to leverage state investment, ETLs and the long-range vision for the inline station at Northeast 195th Street. He then spoke to the funding opportunities for the refined project, the refined project performance comparison between Lynnwood and Bellevue, and the WSDOT task order scope. Lastly, he provided the next steps, which include developing the conceptual engineering and cost estimate for the Brickyard inline station; completing the conceptual engineering, environmental review, and cost estimating for all I-405 BRT elements; and the Board making a decision on the project schedule and potential additional components.

Discussion

- Davina Duerr, Deputy Mayor of Bothell, expressed appreciation for the work to find a solution to BRT in the SR 522 to SR 527 area.
- Kirkland Deputy Mayor Arnold echoed Deputy Mayor Duerr's comments.



Corridor Program

- Councilmember Zahn commented about bus headways with the new BRT efficiencies. She also expressed concerns about the transit hub in Bellevue, and about how BRT will interface in Downtown Bellevue. Cornish said that Sound Transit is looking into those questions and concerns.
- Commissioner Batra asked about the timeline for the Brickyard inline station, inquiring if Sound Transit plans to go to the Board for construction funding in 2020. He also asked if the savings in travel times include using Brickyard. Cornish said yes, the travel times include Brickyard inline station. He also explained that the Sound Transit Board will need to approve construction of the Brickyard inline station; if approved, the intent is to complete the Brickyard inline station by 2024 in time for the opening of BRT.
- Representative Vandana Slatter from the 48th Legislative District asked if BRT would improve the general-purpose lanes in the north end of the corridor. Cornish said yes, there are some general-purpose improvements in Lynnwood. Rep. Slatter then asked Sound Transit to monitor the bottleneck in Lynnwood.
- Secretary Millar ended the discussion after noting that, with the opening of BRT in 2024, the commute from Lynnwood to Bellevue will be immensely improved. By taking advantage of the infrastructure that will allow BRT to be in the center lanes, there will be a nearly 50 percent savings in time.

V. Community Transit update

Emmett Heath, CEO of Community Transit, gave an update on the Community Transit *Swift* Line. He began by noting the 10-year anniversary of the *Swift* Blue Line, which stretches from the Aurora Village Transit Center in Shoreline to Everett Station, and said that it is still the most popular route out of all the Community Transit *Swift* Lines with 6,000 customers per day. The *Swift* Blue Line serves people all day rather than typical peak times of day, with 10-minute headways helping riders access everyday activities.

Heath then spoke about the early performance of the *Swift* Green Line, which launched in March 2019 and runs from Boeing/Seaway Transit Center in Everett across I-5 down to Canyon Park Park and Ride in Bothell, where the line connects with the future Sound Transit BRT. The *Swift* Green Line will become even more valuable when it connects with the Sound Transit network at the Canyon Park Park and Ride and at the future light rail station in Lynnwood in 2024. Heath also noted the partnerships that were essential to launching *Swift* Green Line because it runs through many different jurisdictions.

In 2024, Community Transit will complete the *Swift* Orange Line and the *Swift* Blue Line extension. *Swift* Orange Line will be the third line and will serve east-west connectivity from Edmonds Community College in Edmonds to McCollum Park Park and Ride in Everett. Heath said that the *Swift* Orange Line is still in the project development phase, there have been submissions to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and Community Transit would like for the opening of *Swift* Orange Line to coincide with the opening of the Lynnwood Link light rail. The Lynnwood Transit Center station is expected to be the busiest station with a forecasted 18,000 boardings a day and a bus moving in or out of the station every 45 seconds.

Heath ended his presentation with a look at the Community Transit *Swift* future network integrated with current and planned Link light rail, as well as Sound Transit's BRT. He also noted that the *Swift* Blue Line will eventually extend into King County and end at Northeast 185th Street in Shoreline, stating that the county lines should not be boundaries that limit good transit connectivity.

Discussion

- Deputy Mayor Arnold of Kirkland congratulated Community Transit on the *Swift* Green Line and commented that he has heard positive feedback from his constituents about Community Transit's *Swift*



Corridor Program

Lines when telling people that Sound Transit's BRT will operate similarly. Heath credited a strong and close partnership with Sound Transit.

- Deputy Mayor Duerr of Bothell echoed Deputy Mayor Arnold's comments and added that the *Swift* system is well thought-out, and she hopes that I-405 BRT from Sound Transit will run similarly.
- Commissioner Batra thanked and congratulated all the agencies for working together to create a functional and integrated system, stating that Seattle is ranked one of the top areas in the country for transit service.
- Rep. Slatter asked for clarification on the percentages of transit riders that use transit for work. Secretary Millar answered that 15 percent is people commuting to and from work during peak hours, and the other 85 percent is people commuting for other reasons. He stated that WSDOT is focused on reducing commute times, including how to give people more choices to take public transit to more places other than to and from work.
- Deputy Mayor Duerr commented on congestion around schools in the area and asked how much of the percentages are from parents driving their children to school. Secretary Millar said that parents driving their children to school is a key part of the traffic and there is work to do in that area to provide more alternatives.

VI. King County Parks update

Curt Warber, King County Parks' Eastrail Project Manager, gave a brief project update stating he would return with more information at the next EAG meeting. He shared that the King County Parks levy was approved by voters in August 2019 and includes funding for ongoing partnership with WSDOT on projects such as the Wilburton trestle and the crossing at I-90. It is an \$800 million levy over six years with \$160 million set aside for regional trails and a third of the levy for Eastrail. King County Parks is working on revenue modeling and waiting to receive more funding through budget authorization from the King County Council in 2021.

Discussion

- There were no questions or comments after Warber's presentation.

VII. Wrap up

Secretary Millar thanked the EAG members for attending and reiterated the importance of local and regional partnerships. He ended by saying that there is a lot of work ahead for all the agencies, and we should all look forward to delivering these projects and improvements.