

**HOV FACILITIES IN THE
SEATTLE REGION**

***Moderator: Secretary Duane Berentson
Washington State Department of
Transportation***

**Seattle Metro's High-Capacity
Transit Study**

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I would like to provide an overview of the high-capacity transit planning activities currently underway in the Seattle area. There is an interesting history to many of the current efforts. Rapid transit votes failed in 1968 and 1970, and a System Planning effort from 1984 to 1986 ended inconclusively. In 1988, there was renewed interest in high-capacity transit planning in the Puget Sound area. This culminated in voter approval of an advisory ballot measure which urged agencies to plan rail transit more rapidly.

Initially, in response to this measure, Seattle Metro anticipated identifying a priority corridor from the 1986 system planning effort. However, we soon realized that a larger system, encompassing three corridors would probably be needed. Thus, we reoriented our efforts and developed a scope of work to conduct an Alternatives Analysis on three corridors. UMTA agreed to go along with this, as long as we identified a single corridor for UMTA funding purposes early in the process.

As the final alternatives to be carried through the Alternatives Analysis process were being identified, some groups became concerned that we were getting too detailed

for a public vote. It was suggested that we should first identify the 2020 three-county system and make sure there was support for this plan before moving ahead with the Alternatives Analysis. Currently, we are in the process of developing the 2020 system plan. The three main alternatives being considered are a low-cost TSM plan, a mid-range transitway alternative, and a higher cost rail option.



I would like to briefly summarize some of the key aspects of the Seattle area that influence our transportation system and then describe the three alternatives. I will focus mostly on the TSM alternative, as the HOV lane system provides the key investment for this option. Ron Anderson will follow with a few more specific details on the HOV lane system in the Seattle area.

The TSM alternative includes the approximately 250 miles of HOV lanes planned for 2020. Building on these facilities, the TSM alternative represents a sound, lower cost, comprehensive program of improved transit service. It also provides the bases off which the other alternatives pivot; it is a foundation, in other words, of any high capacity transit system.

The TSM alternative is designed to respond to the problems we see in our region. These include separating buses from traffic congestion and filling the gaps in the current HOV lane system. One of our more challenging problems is providing better direct access to the different employment centers. This problem is likely to be the greatest point of comparison between our alternatives and where our TSM alternative is weakest.

We have received some direction from the Council in defining this TSM alternative. For example, we include a 40% to 50% increase in transit services by 2010. Much of this increase in service will be directed at suburban employment centers, areas of high growth, adding service to productive routes, and improving circulation within activity centers. In addition, our annual service level would grow from 2.6 million hours in 1990 to 3.85 million hours in 2010.

The transit system in the Seattle area has evolved from one serving primarily radial trips focused on the downtown area to a multi-destination system. As you will see on the tours this afternoon, much of the southern portion of the county has lower densities, making its travel patterns difficult to serve with regular route transit. The city of Bellevue, to the east, is a major employment and activity center which needs its own radial system.

The service design guidelines being used in the analysis include route design, service coverage, frequency, speed and reliability, simplicity, and productivity. We are looking at a mix of services including regular route, demand-responsive and customized service, and carpooling and vanpooling. The capital components of the TSM alternative include expansion of the bus fleet, HOV priority treatments, park-and-ride lots, transit centers, and other

support facilities, in addition to the HOV system itself. Arterial HOV lanes are key to this system's future productivity, given the prominence of our transit passenger miles on arterials versus freeways. Connectivity of freeway and arterials has to be achieved to make TSM successful as a future integrated system.

We hope to complete the system planning activities during 1991 and develop a specific 2020 system and financial plan. This plan will then be taken to the voters for their consideration. Based on voter approval, AA and preliminary engineering would be initiated.

Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel

Rick Walsh

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I would like to provide a brief overview of the Downtown Seattle Transit Project, which we fondly refer to as our bus tunnel. I really have two tasks; to tell you about the tunnel, and to give you some background on why the tunnel was developed.