

December 16, 2008

Ms. Mary McClure, Executive Director
Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council
P.O. Box 1934
Kingston, WA 98346

Subject: Response to questions from the KRCC Board on December 2, 2008

Dear Mary:

Thanks for letter. I'm glad the information in the presentation stimulated the Board to engage in some lively conversation. This is what we intend when we take the plan process on the road. I've consulted with several staff here on the questions raised at the Board meeting, and our responses are listed below.

Question 1: How does having no State income tax may affect population growth, especially among retirees?

Response 1: PSRC staff is not in a position to answer the question regarding income tax and population growth. PSRC's economic models examine the structural relationship between our economy and the national economy, but not the growth implications of either having or not having an income tax. Undoubtedly, having a state income tax would play a role in the state's growth, but we can't evaluate this influence independently from other confounding influences.

Question 2: In these turbulent economic times, do you anticipate a shift in policy perspective on job growth vs. job retention/stability, particularly at Naval Base Kitsap?

Response 2: PSRC, the Economic Development District, and the Prosperity Partnership are currently working on adding the military cluster to the Regional Economic Strategy (adopted in 2005). This work is aimed at strengthening and enhancing the existing military presence in the Puget Sound Region, and potentially growing the cluster in the future. Right now, we're primarily interested in job retention at the region's military facilities, including Naval Base Kitsap. The more than \$3 billion in annual payroll (military and civilian) related to the region's Military cluster is a stabilizing influence and a significant contributor to our region's ability to endure tough economic times – particularly as military spending is not directly tied to current economic circumstances. Staff believes the work being done related to the Military Cluster will encourage the Department of Defense to expand their presence in the region, but keeping what we have is our priority.

Question 3: Re: Slide: *Percent is each county's workforce that commutes to King County*: What is the data source's time period for the assertion "in Kitsap, one worker in seven commutes into King County" i.e. 1970, 2000, or the entire 30 year period?

Response 3: The information in Slide 12 displays the percent of each county's workforce that commutes to King County (between 1970 and 2000). There are four columns for each county, which display the percent of daily commuters who traveled to King County in 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000. The number 1 quoted (one in seven) is based on the 14% figure for the year 2000.

For Kitsap County the slide shows 8% in 1970, a higher amount (approximately 12%) in 1980, then a slightly lower amount (approximately 10%) in 1990. As the slide shows, this information was derived from the 1970 and 2000 Census, Journey to Work. We filled in the chart for the years 1980 and 1990 using information from our periodic regional travel surveys. According to the 2000 census, 23% of Kitsap County's workforce commutes to other counties, with 14% commuting to King County.

Question 4: Does riders' perception of personal safety factor into Atlanta's mass transit system usage rates?

Response 4: We've not found any research to directly correlate the impacts of perceived personal safety on the use of Atlanta's MARTA rail system. According to Federal Transit Administration records, MARTA's crime statistics are in line with those of similar-sized systems, such as Bay Area Rapid Transit in the San Francisco Bay Area. An October 2, 2007 press release by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority reports ridership on the MARTA rail system during FY 2007 was up 12.2 percent over FY 2006, to 78 million passenger boardings.

Question 5: Re: Slide: *Non-SOV Travel to Work*: Do ferries fall under the "Transit" or "Other" category?

Response 5: The information on the slide comes from the 2006 American Communities Survey, which classifies ferries under transit.

Question 6: Re: Slide: *What We Heard During Scoping*: What was the % split between "Congestion/Mobility" and "Environment/Energy"? Why are they grouped together?

Response 6: We reported a combined total of about 60% of all comments were related to either congestion and mobility or energy and the environment. Comments related to congestion and mobility comprised 37% (353) of all scoping comments, and comments related to energy and the environment comprised 22% (214), which were the largest single topics among all comments received. They were grouped together to illustrate the high level of public interest on two issues which challenge us to improve mobility while protecting the environment. These goals were articulated in the Purpose and Need statement for Transportation 2040 (see the scoping report) and in the goals and policies of VISION 2040.

Question 7: Re: Slide: *Baseline Alternative Assumptions*: It needs to be clear that the slide doesn't imply additional Kitsap Transit passenger ferry service. Perhaps change to "Existing Kitsap Transit Sinclair Inlet service"?

Response 7: Thanks for your suggestion. We'll be sure to clarify what's included in the Baseline alternative related to the Kitsap Transit Foot Ferry across Sinclair Inlet: maintenance of the existing passenger ferry service. We've already revised this slide for future presentations.

Question 8: Re: Discussion of Alternatives 1 & 2: "If the HOT lanes were to extend from I-5 to Purdy, will the west-bound Narrows Bridge be tolled as well?" Clearly define the relationship between HOT lane user fees and bridge tolls.

Response 8: We're currently planning to test the HOT lane concept on SR 16 in both Alternatives 1 and 2. Under each alternative, the toll for the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge would continue as currently planned (toll is paid eastbound only), and drivers would also have the option to buy into the westbound or eastbound HOT lanes as well.

Thus, they would be paying the bridge toll when traveling eastbound (as all traffic would), plus they could choose to pay for use of the HOT lane. For westbound traffic the discretionary HOT lane charge would be the only cost since there is no bridge toll collected westbound. This HOT lane option is being included in the alternatives so we can test demand for the HOT lanes and to test their effectiveness. We won't know the results of either testing approach until the alternatives are finalized and we finish our analysis, which should be complete in early 2009.

Question 9: As part of Alternative 5, you mentioned that this alternative would probably lead to revising some of VISION's land use policy. A bit more detail would be useful.

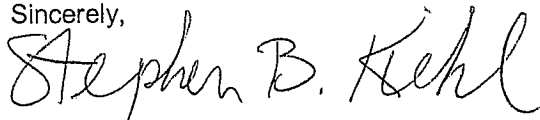
Response 9: I believe the discussion was centered on my description of how feedback from the transportation plan process could have future implications for VISION 2040. My comment was: after we evaluate alternative 5 we may find our analysis may show we've fallen short of the state's GHG goals and VMT benchmarks. If this were the case, we might consider revisiting VISION 2040 at some future time to tighten up the growth strategy, with the goal of improving performance relative to the GHG goals and VMT benchmarks. However, at this time, we have no plans to change VISION 2040 goals or policies, or to revise the regional growth strategy, as a result of the Transportation 2040 planning process. We're using VISION 2040 as the foundation and baseline for all the work we're doing on Transportation 2040. Of course, we won't know the results of our alternatives evaluation related to greenhouse gases and VMT until after we've finalized the alternatives and completed our technical analysis.

Question 10: Please provide information about shared ROW with transit and non-motorized traffic, specifically on the Hwy 305 corridor between Poulsbo and Bainbridge Island.

Response 10: Under the 18th Amendment, there is some restriction on the use of roads or roadway ROW for transit. Dedicated transit use, such as a transit-only busway or rail, is not allowed on ROW purchased with gas tax dollars – a transit provider would have to purchase the right-of-way to repay the gas tax investment. Buses can use the roadway, and agencies can restrict uses of lanes on roadways for transit and HOV (as long as carpools are part of the allowed mix). Sidewalks and trails used for transportation purposes (as opposed to recreational use) are allowed. The investment list for the alternatives includes an SR 305 Trail from Winslow Ferry Terminal to High School Road (proposed by Kitsap County in the existing Destination 2030) as well as bike lanes on segments of SR 305, again carried over from D2030.

I hope these responses adequately address the questions raised at the meeting. I'm hoping you'll share this response with your board members. Please get in touch with me if you or the Board would like further information.

Sincerely,



Stephen B. Kiehl, Principal Planner

Cc: Mark Gulbranson
Charlie Howard
Mike Cummings
Norman Abbott
Rick Olson
Bob Drewel