

**Regional Transit Authority Board
Workshop Notes**

March 24, 1995

The workshop was called to order at 1:40 p.m. in the sixth floor conference room of the Puget Sound Regional Council, 1011 Western Avenue, Seattle, Washington by Vice Chairman Earling. The Board Administrator called the roll and the following Boardmembers were present:

Vice Chairs:

Dave Earling, Edmonds Councilmember
Paul Miller, Tacoma Councilmember

Pierce County:

Sharon Boekelman, Bonney Lake Councilmember
Ken Madsen, Pierce County Councilmember

King County:

Don Davidson, Bellevue Mayor
Mary Gates, Federal Way Mayor
Jane Hague, King County Councilmember
Cynthia Sullivan, King County Councilmember
Jim White, Kent Mayor

Washington State Department of Transportation:

Sid Morrison, Secretary

The following Boardmembers arrived after roll call:

Snohomish County:

Bob Drewel, Snohomish County Executive

King County:

Gary Locke, King County Executive
Norm Rice, Seattle Mayor

Pierce County:

Doug Sutherland, Pierce County Executive

The Board Administrator indicated a quorum of the Board was present, and also made announcements regarding the location of restrooms, public telephones, etc.

(Boardmember Drewel arrived at this time.)

Public Comment

Mr. Mike Vaska:

I am a resident of Issaquah, and live outside the RTA boundary. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. Included in your materials today should be a letter signed by me, as Treasurer of the Citizens for Sound Transit, and by Lynn Clouden, Secretary (copy on file). We have not spoken to you since the election last week, and we wanted to share our thoughts about where we are and where we are going.

(Boardmember Rice arrived at this time.)

We are disappointed about the results of the election, but we hope no one is disillusioned. We shouldn't have been disillusioned about how difficult this would be. Many good things came from the election. We got 47% of the voters in the district to vote yes on the largest single public works project attempted in the Northwest. We got people, such as those in Seattle, to vote overwhelmingly in favor of the proposal. Residents of places like Magnolia and Queen Anne, who were not directly served by a rail system, voted in favor of the proposal. People realize this is a regional problem with a regional solution, even if they were not directly benefited by the rail system. We engaged the public in a dialogue that we have been discussing for six years. We did so in a very short campaign. We raised the public's awareness of the needs and potential solutions.

I was also pleased to find a broad spectrum of support for the regional transit project and the RTA. Many business, civic, environmental and labor groups, when they looked at the proposal, endorsed it. I am also pleased that the opposition to the proposal acknowledged the need to find a solution to our regional transportation problems and transportation needs.

In talking to people in our coalition and part of the campaign, we have found there were some general thoughts emerging about where we are. It is the general consensus that the RTA should not go back to the public with substantially the same plan, but with a smaller or less expensive plan. That may be controversial for you, but it is not for us. We would urge you to move swiftly to develop a timeline that would allow, if appropriate, to bring a regional transit plan back to the voters this fall. We are concerned that if we do not move swiftly, we will lose some of the important gains we have made. We would urge you to give the citizens an opportunity to help you redraft the plan. As I and others have done as part of the coalition, we would once again offer our assistance in finding a plan this region can support. We have plans to meet among ourselves over the next few weeks to talk about how the proposal could be reshaped and made smaller and less costly so that more of the region can support it.

I was provided with a copy of a letter to Mr. Laing from FACT. I do not agree with many of the comments. I would draw your attention to one point that you should think about hard in reshaping the plan: FACT, in their March 22 letter, says any plan must take into account the realities of federal and state funding. The uncertainty of state funding was a problem at the end of the campaign. Must we approve a plan before we know what the state funding will be? If we are counting on state funding, how do we know how much will be available? I would urge you to consider not including, as a significant component of the plan, state funding of the plan. These dollars, as FACT pointed out, are all our dollars. That gives us significant reason to attempt to fund the local and state portion from newly raised taxes in this region, with federal funding aside. I think this project could be a magnet for significant federal funding. On the state level, I think voters understand these dollars are our dollars.

I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Sullivan:

I have been pondering this for the last couple of weeks. I believe people are willing to pay for value. We saw that in the school issues in Seattle. I think it was profoundly demonstrated with the RTA vote. Those receiving substantial value voted for the proposal, overwhelmingly. Where people did not see, in my view, the comprehensiveness of the program and the long-term benefits, they voted against it. I don't necessarily think the proposal needs to be made smaller; I do conclude it needs to be perceived as a higher value in more places. That is not necessarily done with a smaller system, but by looking at another alternative that would assure that value was more evenly distributed throughout the RTA district. Did the Citizens for Sound Transit discuss this?

Mr. Vaska:

We have been careful not to talk about specifics. There is a period of mourning. We have talked in generalities about what we think the plan needs in order to have broader support. The \$6.7 billion price tag is too much for Phase I of the plan. I think the voters are concerned about value, but if you look at the election returns, people who you thought were getting value, in that their community was directly served by commuter rail or light rail, such as in Federal Way, didn't support the proposal, even though directly served by rail. I don't think the answer is to

provide more rail to more communities; I don't think the answer is to grow the rail community. It doesn't mean it should not be part of the answer. The jury is out on that question. I believe it is part of the question. I think value is what the voters want here.

Ms. Sullivan:

I think we might get crosswise with what has been a very good idea if we look at dollar amounts instead of value. I would encourage all of us to do that, including the Citizens for Sound Transit. The \$6.7 billion is a lot of money, but it is not so much if you perceive you are getting value for it. I think that is the question we need to answer.

Mr. Earling:

This is a period for public comment. Part of the discussion will unfold next week. Are there any other short questions from Boardmembers?

Mr. Davidson:

The tenor of your statements was that we are still right and the public may just not understand. I think we should take the tenor that the public was right and we should sit and understand what they were saying and not continue to defend a program that failed dramatically in some areas. I would worry if we continue along a dialogue that we are right and the public is wrong. Your comments, Mr. Vaska, had that tenor. Maybe we should suggest the public was right and we should go out and try to serve the public.

Mr. Vaska:

The public has spoken. We have the definitive poll in the \$6.7 billion mostly rail plan. I think many of us are trying to determine what message was delivered. You represent constituencies throughout the region and the messages may vary. The difficulty will be to determine if we can learn the lessons to revise the plan. I am extending an offer from those of us who have been involved to assist in trying to determine what the public does want. It is pretty clear to me that people do want a regional solution. They do want to see something done. They are not sure this was the answer. A fair number of people thought this proposal was the answer, but maybe not in this package. We should think hard about the lessons they want us to draw from this. I don't think that is a reason to stop the process. I would hate to see you withdraw into a lengthy multi-year process. We have more knowledge now than before the election as a result of the campaign and from the efforts of our opponents. Hopefully I did not suggest that we were right and the public was wrong. That is not my intention.

Mr. Douglas Turley, Vision Seattle:

My letter set out some of the reasons for providing service to the University District. That link would be the backbone upon which to match our 20 year capital development plan.

I have been following this closely and I am concerned about the involvement of Foster, Pepper and Shefelman. I believe you should add to your membership additional members from the state. Work with Seattle and Bellevue separately to begin a bus-based planning effort complimentary to the RTA and proceed regardless of the results of the RTA vote.

Mr. Roger Belanich:

I am here at the request of the Snohomish County Transportation Association or SKIT. We have been responding to transportation issues in Snohomish County since 1985. We are made up of business people largely. We also respond on certain matters on behalf of the Snohomish County Economic Development Council.

I believe the most recent proposal did not respond well to our transportation requirements in Snohomish County and other suburban areas. We see the need for a different priority than was presented. We would like to

participate in a revision of the plan. We would like to participate first hand to develop a plan that prioritizes suburban areas, such as Snohomish County. We would like to participate in an overall transportation strategy. We would merge the RTP with other transpiration requirements, such as roads and highways. I don't think the recent RTP had a macro-Puget Sound strategy. We need a coherent strategy.

Generally, we believe the strategy must include an understanding of the economy, what makes it run, where it exists, and how a transportation strategy with an RTP can help sustain the economy. The economy is the issue that transcends the matter of equity. We must fulfill the intent of the growth management plan and we believe that is a substantial issue. We are asking to participate with the RTA and we ask you not to rush into another plan. We are asking to participate first-hand in the formulation of a transportation solution with other community participants. We think we can achieve, together, a plan that will be endorsed by the public.

Report of the Chair

Mr. Earling:

Boardmembers have received copies of a letter from Everett Mayor Hansen, indicating that the City of Everett will seek dismissal, without prejudice, of its pending lawsuit against the RTA. (copy on file).

Report of the Rules Committee

Mr. Earling:

My only other comment has to do with next week's meeting, which will be held at the University of Washington. Last week in Tacoma we had a discussion about the Board's desire to do an outreach to the various groups who would like to make comment to the Board. The Rules Committee this last week reviewed a list of 40 to 60 groups who probably would like to have some input into the process we are about to embark on. If we are to invite all of them, we could probably guarantee each 1-1/2 minutes of discussion. It was the recommendation of the Rules Committee, in conjunction with Mr. Laing, that at next week's meeting we have testimony and conversation with the two regional groups that organized opposition and support for the ballot issue. We would suggest that we invite FACT and the Citizens for Sound Transit to bring forward any comments and allow Boardmembers to ask questions. In addition to that, with Mr. Vaska's comments today, the Board has also received communication from FACT outlining a ten point plan. The Committee felt inviting those two groups to next Friday's meeting would be appropriate. Then we would recommend we hold smaller group meetings with five to six of them at one time with two or three Boardmembers. We have agreed on that and recommend that process to the Board.

Mr. Drewel:

I am supportive of that concept. We have heard briefly today that we need to spend considerable time deciphering the message from the public. Next Friday we should spend some productive time listening to those two groups and determining how we can get back on track here.

Mr. Earling:

I assume this is agreeable to the Board and that is the direction we will take. We can discuss the schedule for the small group meetings next week.

Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Matoff:

As you may know, most of the RTA activities are funded primarily through HCT grants received from the state. For the most part, they are passed through to the three counties who supply the local match and fund our activities. At the present time, it is unclear as to the size of the grants that will be received after the end of the state fiscal year

on June 30. Consequently, there is some concern about funding activities of the RTA at the present level of effort. Accordingly, we are taking steps I will advise you of. We are reviewing all current contracts and potentially will be issuing halt work orders for all non-essential work currently under way. Some of these contracts stretch back many years and were engaged in by our predecessor. We will continue work on short-term essential contracts. We will try to amend the contracts, where possible to proceed on a work order basis and a task by task basis to respond to the Board's needs for data as you go through the process over the next few months. We are not cutting off the ability to get the information we think you may need; however, given the level of uncertainty about the continued flow of HCT grants, we think it is essential to be very cautious about the rate of expenditures. I have directed staff to review all contracts and to clamp down on spending. We will discuss this with the Finance Committee on April 6. I wanted you to be aware of this situation.

(Boardmember Sutherland arrived at this time.)

Related to that is the nature of continued HCT grant programs at the state level. Next Tuesday the House Transportation Committee will have a hearing to discuss the Authority's future needs for these grants. We will be looking forward to having some Boardmembers and key staff representatives address the Committee to explain to the state how these grants are used and to continue the work of this Authority. Later today the Finance Director will be presenting alternative budgets to you showing illustratively how the HCT grants will be required in association with future election dates. It is those alternatives which will be used to illustrate the potential need. We will be looking forward to some direction from the Board to proceed to this hearing next Tuesday with some authority from the Board.

There will be a hearing next Thursday morning by the King County Transportation Committee. Our interlocal agreement with King County will be discussed. The Board approved the interlocal agreement in January, and it was forwarded to the county for action by the Committee. This is the key agreement underlying our activities and it is very important. We have been incurring costs since January against the budgeted amount, but the apparatus governing the flow of funds is, in fact, the interlocal agreement and it has not been approved yet by the King County Council. We anticipate several Boardmembers appearing on the RTA's behalf. If there are any Boardmembers who are able to attend, we would look forward to your support.

Review and Analysis of Where We've Been and Where We Are Now

Mr. Earling:

The Board needs to come to grips with a series of decisions, including any changes we might think we need to make to the plan. We know, based upon conversations with legal counsel, that we can do things now that we couldn't do before the first effort: We can redraw the boundary lines. We need to figure out the financing. We can seek a new election date and outline a timeline and design a work plan to go along with it. We need to figure out to what extent we need public involvement. With that in mind, we have asked staff to make a series of brief presentations to try to give us some information to begin our discussions.

How Did We Get to This Point?

Ms. Dezarn gave this presentation.

How Has the Public Been Involved?

Ms. Dougherty gave this presentation.

(Boardmember Locke arrived at this time.)

Mr. Davidson:

I agree it was a very involved public involvement process. Are we doing any evaluation of that process? The outcome of the election didn't pan out. Is there something about the public involvement process where we only heard what we wanted to hear? Do we ever evaluate why a public involvement process as involved as this didn't signal the right answer?

Ms. Dougherty:

I would agree that evaluation of the public input process is as valuable as an evaluation of the plan itself. What method of public input provided the most useful information to the Board? Most of the public involvement was designed to get input to design the plan. The results of the vote seem to call into question the effectiveness of the input.

Mr. Rice:

It is hard to evaluate, after a campaign, the public process, given there is a media campaign discrediting everything you have done with the public. Unless you did a focus group, it is kind of difficult. Once you overlay a campaign with anything, it takes away from the original public effort.

Mr. Davidson:

Are we here to do the public's business or not? Do we hear what we want to hear? My concern is focused on the next step so we don't make a mistake twice. We didn't pass what we thought we should pass.

Mr. Rice:

I think you want to look at the survey, but not necessarily at the public involvement plan.

Mr. Drewel:

I am not sure if this is the appropriate time to advance a process I have in mind. Perhaps this would be better later on, but I would ask us to listen to this debate in the context of trying to reach public judgment. A judgment means you need a decision. It means you have criteria, you have meaningful alternatives or suggestions. I am deeply convinced we need to spend some time getting to a public judgment and out of the opinion business. Then everyone can step forward and develop decision packages so we can get on with the public work.

Mr. White:

I approach this, and where we go from here, with an open mind. I heard from the public in South King County that what we were proposing was the greatest thing, and then they didn't vote for it. I think I was hearing from people who thought it was a good plan, but not from those who were not supporting it. Whether we expand or shrink, there is one basic question: Do we want a plan? I am trying to approach it being as wide open as possible.

Ms. Gates:

I heard from those who liked the plan. I have heard in the last ten days from people who hated it and they want to talk about it. They are my constituents and they want to be helpful. I don't think they were involved in the public involvement process. I don't think you can create a process that would bring them in. The fact this has been out once means people know there is a lot going on and people are thinking and coming forward. I have many meetings scheduled next week. Someone told me we had a problem because we didn't have anything that appealed to his heart or a name that they could love. It was a really interesting comment. Technically this information was wonderful. I thought that message should be forwarded.

Review of Election Returns of March 14, 1995

Mr. Baker gave this presentation.

Mr. Earling:

I would like to emphasize staff's thanks to the county auditors for pulling this information together for us. This is not, in all cases, a finalized product.

Mr. Locke:

What percentage of the special district population is represented by Snohomish and Pierce Counties? The margins of defeat in those areas were strong; what percentage of the total service area do these counties represent?

Mr. Baker:

Snohomish County represents 13% and Pierce County represents 18% of the entire RTA area.

Mr. Davidson:

In providing the information for King County, why are there four categories for positions 50% and over in favor of the plan and only one category for those areas voting less than 50% in favor of the plan?

Mr. Baker:

The intention was to have categories for 0 to 40% approval, 40 to 45%, 45 to 50%, etc. There was a problem this morning but that information will be developed.

Mr. Miller:

I assume you can correlate the colors to be the same for all three counties.

Mr. Baker:

That is correct.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Mr. . Matsuoka gave this presentation.

Mr. Locke:

With regard to election costs, does the RTA reimburse the counties?

Mr. Matsuoka:

The \$1.5 million in election cost has been provided for in a state appropriation. These costs will be covered. The costs of the next election, and the cost to sustain the operation of the RTA, are issues you need to concern yourselves with.

Budget Implications Related to Potential Next Election Dates

Ms. Hendrickson gave this presentation.

Mr. Davidson:

With regard to the loan from local agencies, what happens if we don't pass an issue? Are we on the hook?

Mr. Gunter:

These funds would then become a grant.

Mr. Miller:

This presumes, and I have to assume, all options are open. If the decision was to look at the fall of 1996 for a ballot issue, it would be a repeat of the second six months of 1996, similar to the second half of 1995.

Ms. Hendrickson:

That is correct. We would carry forward the costs associated with the ballot, which would provide us an envelope. These costs are what I would consider fixed costs, such as rent, office supplies and staff.

Mr. Miller:

You indicate other grant sources. If those grants are not forthcoming, would that indicate staff associated with commuter rail is where we would trim back?

Ms. Hendrickson:

That is something we might need to look at. I chose that particular grant application for illustrative purposes only. We applied for five grants and each has a different scope of work. Depending on those we receive, we will have to examine the scope of work to be sure we can meet it and bring it to the Board to be sure we have concurrence on what pieces of this we move forward with.

Mr. Miller:

It seems staff will be having to make presentations to the State Transportation Committee this Tuesday. I think we should give any instructions about how to format that budget. I concur with Mr. Matoff regarding the budget, which is we halt all contracts, if possible and to the extent possible, look at the staff we have. I know we have a loan of staff from King County, but we should look at trimming it to what is necessary to handle the needs of the Board and coming back with documentation to support that.

Mr. Earling:

We have had conversations with Representative Schmidt. I know Mr. Miller met with her this week. We are going down to Olympia next Tuesday and we will try to show we have taken a very reasonable and bare bones approach to our budget. If there is any other advice to the Boardmembers and staff going to Olympia, please raise them.

Mr. Davidson:

Can we work out a shared arrangement that they would help with some of the staff we have during this interim period? We do carry a very good-sized staff anticipating we would grow larger after the time of the election. Do we carry these people now until we get to another point or do we have an arrangement where those people could be utilized in the Metro/King County facilities to keep them off our payroll?

Mr. Matoff:

We could look into it. We need to take into account that the King County/Metro work is not in episodic needs, but overall needs. There may be opportunities to do some staff sharing; we will evaluate that situation.

Mr. Morrison:

As the team goes to Olympia, it is clear there have not been significant votes from RTA counties from legislators in recent years for a variety of transportation issues. I think we are paying a price for that. I would hope we could be as frugal as possible and make the case for continued use of the HCT funds. It appears they are frowning on spending any more money to support this organization.

Mr. Miller:

I believe Mr. Matoff has heard us. When I look at the \$2.5 million, we are talking about existing staff levels. It is hard to call that a bare-bones staffing level. I know there has been ongoing work on commuter rail. We may have to put some of that on hold. I know if we shift the level of staffing there has to be prior notice and agreement to take them back. I would encourage you to have a back-up plan that indicates where we stand with reduced staff levels based on the funding.

Process and Timeline to Consider Revisions

Mr. Earling:

The Board needs to have a dialogue about the issues raised by staff. I do not believe Mr. Laing and I have any necessary intent that we draw a conclusion today, but the dialogue must begin in order to set timelines and to consider plan revisions and how we want to set our course. I think the information we have been given so far is information we will need to study over time. I want to go home and look at the map of Edmonds. If any Boardmembers would feel comfortable with advancing any thoughts today, that would be helpful.

Mr. Drewel:

I would like to share with other Boardmembers a process we are suggesting in Snohomish County. I have copies of a letter I will share today (copy on file). I want to let you know what we are trying to do. The list of considerations is not intended to be exhaustive. It is going to take some time to appropriately respond to the regional concept. I think we need to listen hard. In Snohomish County I am suggesting that we gather a leadership group of elected officials, various economic development organizations, and SKIT to talk to major employers. This is an extension of comments made earlier that we try to use the valuable time we have. It is important for the public to learn what this is about and also important that the Board learn what this is about. The letter suggests the proposed plan was either too big or too small. The effort here is for us in Snohomish County is to suggest an orderly process to bring people together with adequate time to address things such as commuter rail, HOV lanes, bus lines and transportation. Another valuable group is the local transit agencies.

I did want to share this with you. I believe this is the approach we will take in Snohomish County.

Mr. Sutherland:

I think each of us will have an opportunity or obligation to begin meeting with and discussing where are we and where we need to go. I think we need to do this as representatives of our regions. I think it is important to begin a process of meeting with those who are part of the system but who are not part of the Board. I also believe this Board needs to pass along enough to assess some of the basic rules and responsibilities we may have. Part of the issues raised as reasons people should not vote for the plan was we did not address all of the transportation issues. Our charter did not allow us to address those transportation issues. I think we need to have serious conversations about what are the RTA's role and responsibilities. Is it just putting together a rapid transit program? A

transportation program? Or a combination? Where does this organization begin and where is DOT? Is there a clear delineation of those roles and responsibilities? I think we need to back up to that point and have those discussions in our areas and then come back together.

I also think it is important to meet with our state legislators so they do understand the need of this organization and how it fits with the PSRC and overall regional transportation plan and what the state is doing and where we can work with the federal government as well. There are so many players in all of this and we don't want to stumble over something directly in front of us in our rush to get something back before the voters.

Mr. Rice:

I appreciate the comments made by the Pierce and Snohomish County Executives. The only thing I would offer is that everyone will interpret the election. When you ask someone what they wanted, you find everyone wants access to the system. They want to be sure they can get there quickly. The nature of a regional system says not everyone can get to it quickly. Not everyone is going to derive the same benefit and you can't calculate that benefit except for those with quicker access who will use it. It makes it hard to sell the system.

What do you add to make someone see it as more palatable? They have to see their other choices being improved. Those choices usually are their existing transit. I had a long drive the other day listening to KPLU. People were saying their existing bus service didn't run as they would like so it was hard to understand what this would do. Until the existing system links with the stations, it is hard for them to see the regional system. We are sometimes faced with half an argument because we don't have control over all those other modes and other kinds of avenues for people to have choices in how to move. It will take some additional time for ascertainment. We have to go back to our constituency to see where we are. Are we providing service to our customers and we need to show how the existing system has a connection to the regional system. We keep stressing the word "regional." I know it would be easy to walk away and not look at a regional system but we are talking about Puget Sound from Tacoma to Everett. If we lose that perspective, we will have lost more than just this election. I think we should probably define in the process a length of time for some ascertainment and then come back to look at it. Before we lay off staff, I think we should be sure we know what we want to do. I don't know how long that would take. I think we should take time to be right instead of rushing.

Mr. Drewel:

I am suggesting a minimum of six months.

Mr. Davidson:

I have a major concern if we push to come back during an election period for local government officials. There will be many people running out there and I don't think you want another plan coming back immediately with the kinds of debates with people trying to get elected. One of the reasons I talked about sharing staff is so that we could concentrate on an election in the spring of 1996 so that we would have time to put something new and different and positive to the public and we would avoid any political messing around during that period. The negative is carrying staff that long, which is why I suggested a shared staff approach.

Mr. Drewel:

Notwithstanding the issues raised by Mr. Davidson, with an election this fall and the 45 day notice to place an issue on the ballot, I don't think that is a positive move. I have heard there are other issues that will come forward. I suspect that we are looking at February 1996 or some time later, at best.

Mr. Sutherland:

If we were serious about a September ballot, it would be sprinkling condiments on the road kill.

Ms. Gates:

I think we need to be listening for the issues not quite stated that were under the surface. In some of the suggestions, people felt we really never delved into certain issues but they would have liked us to analyze them to tell them why it wouldn't work in a given area. That is one of the reasons why I am concerned that we have staff available to provide answers in areas we have never touched. We haven't touched some of those areas because we were told by our staff and others that they were not worthy of further consideration. I think the public is starting to think about transportation and wonder why we haven't looked at some of these things. It is like a return to 1988 and I think it is necessary that the alternatives be brought to a level of a one page analysis so people know they have been looked at. I am concerned that we not become staff poor.

Mr. Miller:

I am in general concurrence with what has been said. We have yet to determine what the election has told us. There is a wide range that has been relayed back from a total distrust of government's ability to deal with a project of this size to it being too big or too small or that it didn't serve people's needs. We need time for the Board to reach out and get a better sense of what the message was. I would be very reluctant to believe we could do justice to either the system or the vote given us to rush to a vote this year. I would concur that rather than rushing, it would probably be a vote in 1996. The comments regarding staff would in no way reflect a desire to cut to a point we could not do the analysis and respond to public as necessary. I think there are some tasks that are taken on and continue based on a positive vote, particularly the area of commuter rail. I think we should be very cautious in moving forward. We should not severely cut staff, but we should look for areas to economize. I want to stress that if we are looking at a 1996 vote, we need to begin talking about the process and how to reach out to the public and holding discussions among ourselves.

Mr. Locke:

Given the vote, particularly in Snohomish and Pierce Counties and the very dramatic differences in votes in King County, we have to go back to the drawing board. This cannot be done easily or quickly. We need to take heed of the voter sentiments. They want more system with less cost. We will have to take time to develop a different package, probably for presentation in 1996. I am concerned about suspending operations of this agency until then. We need to look at paring back staff operation to the very essentials.

Mr. Matoff:

I would like guidance about which functions are likely to be dropped. We have only one full-time employee devoted to commuter rail; everything else is consulting. We have many people dealing with public outreach and a handful of planners. We have recently established a finance function. Perhaps the Board could give me some direction for developing a bare-bones staffing level.

Mr. Davidson:

As a member of the Finance Committee, I think when we work through the budget discussions, possibly through innovative ideas, we might come back within a month for that type of discussion.

Mr. Sutherland:

I would concur that that would be the appropriate place to begin that discussion. I think we should use forethought. I think the Finance Committee is the best way to do that.

Mr. Miller:

I would concur. I don't have an answer for Mr. Matoff. In having given a policy statement that the Board would like to trim staff to the best level possible, I suspect Mr. Matoff will come back and give us that information. You

may not find any savings. We need to demonstrate Tuesday that we have made the statement to trim staff as much as possible.

Ms. Sullivan:

At the risk of raining on this parade, I will be optimistic. We seem to be forgetting this proposal passed in almost 70% of the district. That is something we are putting aside. It didn't fail overwhelmingly. I think it is premature to say in this year. One of the things I have learned from past experience in campaigns is that turn-out has a huge amount to do with the campaign. Even people who are enthusiastically supporting things have a hard time getting to the polls to vote to raise their taxes. You almost need to have a general election to get people to the polls. I also suggest the fact that we got so close on a first ballot should be encouraging. The \$50 million farm proposal took three times to pass, and it took twice to pass the open space bonds in King County. The Seattle school district levy took five times to pass.

To come to the conclusion today that we know where we want to end up in six months to a year is premature. We need to do more analysis to understand the electoral results. I encourage that very vigorous work over the next month and then maybe we can tell Mr. Matoff what to do with staffing levels for the longer term.

Mr. Morrison:

The morning after the election I was dragging into the DOT Building when a person came up to me and said, "Congratulations." He said he felt this way because when the JRPC started to lay the ground work, they predicted a positive vote of 45%; we had a 47% positive vote. Let's go back and analyze carefully what people are saying and go back with a thoughtful package with a higher understanding on their part. The Transportation Commission (chaired by Mr. Aubrey Davis) took an innovative thing to the public. People were given a menu of improvements they might like. They filled that out but then had to fill out how they would pay for it. The results from this process were dramatically different than the same people answering a survey where they were not forced to say how they would come up with the necessary funding. I hope that would be part of our outreach effort to help people recognize the real price of a true regional system.

Mr. Davidson:

I have another concern. Is there anything in the legislation that we need to fix this legislative session that precludes us from seriously looking at a coordination of transit agencies. The first period that might be heavily emphasizing that was opposed to rail. I really see that as a solution that really might be raised up and for the first phase. I don't know if that is a serious issue. Is there something we should fix in the legislature now so we can consider that possibility?

Mr. Morrison:

This would be a great way to raise the temperature on Olympia. I think the decision was to leave that alone because we have enough trouble already. If that is the key to getting it approved, it is interesting.

Mr. Davidson:

People I talked to would like to see a very integrated bus system in all three county areas. I would suggest if we could deliver commuter rail and maybe part of a future phase in the first phase, we probably would be successful. I am thinking when I really take the phasing down to that level, does it mean the RTA can't do it? I raise this now because the legislature is currently in session.

Mr. Morrison:

Could we utilize an RTA umbrella to coordinate regional bus service? I think that is what we are looking for. People have this vision of Community Transit buses deadheading back to Snohomish County. That is a negative

for all of us. I am sure that requires a change in legislation. There was a desire to keep local service local and separate the regional nature of express bus service.

Mr. Earling:

Since the RTA process started there has been considerable progress in discussions with Metro and Everett Transit to link lines to work in the way you have described. I am sure Mr. Drewel would like to revisit the discussion away from Snohomish County. It is an issue we have dealt with for a long time. I think Mr. Morrison's concept is we are already working on that and it would be best to approach it in a regional manner instead of a single system.

I am encouraged by the discussion today. We have not moved away from talks at a regional level. I am happy to perceive that the desire is to maintain our discussion at a regional level. I know that is important to the Snohomish County delegation. I am committed to moving forward with regional discussions.

One of the fears I have is that out of this election we would misconstrue that the public on the Eastside of King County and in Pierce and Snohomish Counties were not interested in solving transportation issues. I believe they are. I think, as Ms. Sullivan suggests, we need to vigorously challenge ourselves in making decisions over the next 30 days so we can begin to set our course here. I was reminded before this meeting that if we are to seek a May ballot date, we would have to reach agreement in a couple of weeks to set a timeline. I think we will need more time than that. I think it is important, over the next month, that we pay close attention to the groups we talk with because their feedback will give us definitive answers to the questions we have raised today.

Next Meeting

Mr. Earling:

The Board will hold a workshop on Friday, March 31, 1995 at 1:00 p.m. in the Husky Union Building, Room 108, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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