

**Regional Transit Authority
Workshop Notes**

March 31, 1995

The meeting was called to order at 1:24 p.m. in Room 108 of the Student Union Building, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington by Chairman Laing. The Board Administrator called the roll and the following members were present:

Chairman:

Bruce Laing, King County Councilmember

Vice Chairs:

Dave Earling, Edmonds Councilmember

Paul Miller, Tacoma Councilmember

Pierce County:

Sharon Boekelman, Bonney Lake Councilmember

Doug Sutherland, Pierce County Executive

King County:

Martha Choe, Seattle Councilmember

Don Davidson, Bellevue Mayor

Mary Gates, Federal Way Mayor

Norm Rice, Seattle Mayor

Cynthia Sullivan, King County Councilmember

Jim White, Kent Mayor

Snohomish County:

Bob Drewel, Snohomish County Executive

Ed Hansen, Everett Mayor

The following Board members arrived after roll call:

King County:

Jane Hague, King County Councilmember

Greg Nickels, King County Councilmember

Washington State Department of Transportation:

Sid Morrison, Secretary

The Board Administrator indicated there was a quorum of the Board present.

Report of the Chair

Mr. Laing:

I will hold my report until "Other Business," at which time the Executive Director and I will advise the Board of testimony before the House Transportation Committee. The Executive Director will provide a status report on the materials being prepared for the next meeting of the Finance Committee. We will also discuss a few other matters at that time.

There have been people asking whether we would have a period for public comment today. I have advised them that this is a workshop and that they may submit comments in writing, but this is not a meeting in which the Board

intended to take public comment. Public comment will be accepted at the Board meeting on April 14. I wanted to make sure these remarks do not conflict with the majority opinion of the Board.

Discussion of March 14 RTA Phase I Ballot Proposition

Mr. Laing:

The Board has received correspondence subsequent to the March 14 ballot proposition in which two groups have addressed the Board. We have invited them to come to us in a non-argumentative setting to enter into a dialogue and to hear the points they want to make. The Board will be allowed to ask questions to help understand their input. The first presentation will be from the Families Against Congestion and Taxes (FACT).

FACT

Mr. Hil Hornung:

I am the Chair of the Expert Review Panel of the FACT. I am joined today by two other FACT members, Mr. James MacIsaac, founder of the largest traffic engineering in the northwest, and Mr. Bruce Nurse, president of a transportation planning firm. I would like to express our appreciation for your great courtesy in affording us access to the highest level of governmental leadership in the Puget Sound. I know that during the campaign you may have regarded us as adversaries. I think that is a mistake. There was a difference of opinion, but I hope we are all of one mind with regard to the end result.

Subsequent to the election we did not evaporate. We recognized we had an obligation to not only criticize but to contribute as well. In our letter we have outlined ten principles. I would like to note that in our testimony before the House Transportation Committee and the King County Council Transportation Committee you heard critics calling for the killing of the RTA. By contrast, we did not advocate that but we did advocate very enthusiastically a drastic expansion of your charter for not only rail and buses and the full spectrum of transit improvements, but for highway improvements as well. We were talking about the full gamut of answers. It is in that spirit that we recommend these 10 principles to your attention.

Speaking for myself, I have nothing but the highest regard for your Chair and your colleagues as public servants and in trying to work solutions to this complex problem. Least cost planning and integrated intermodal planning are what made me get involved. Least cost planning is just common sense. It is what the taxpayer is looking for when looking for mobility solutions. Within the transit industry I was founder of the Transit Performance Council in the early 1980s. This group was designed to bring some rational way to compare performance indicators. I also spent time working for the Snohomish County PUD where least cost planning was necessary in the wake of the WPPSS disaster. To us it was a way of comparing costs per kilowatt hour to build a nuclear, hydroelectric or coal plant, compared with conservation costs, etc. I am convinced it is equally applicable to the transit solution.

With regard to integrated, intermodal planning, in the campaign we enumerated a range of alternatives we felt were appropriate and worthy of consideration. Some of those were dismissed. I urge you to reconsider that position. For example, this week there has been a proposal from Chuck Collins, and others, calling to take the fares off the buses in Puget Sound. I think that is the kind of thing you should look at. Chuck Collins is the best transit director Metro ever had. I had personal experience with such a program in Denver in 1978. In February, the fares came off in the five county RTD area. The increase in ridership was dramatic, although not all of the side effects were wonderful. If Seattle considered doing this, you would have to anticipate those side effects. This was far and away the most cost effective step they had or have taken to stimulate transit ridership. I commend that kind of approach to your attention.

The other 10 principles are listed in our letter. I am sure some of my colleagues will touch on them and we can then answer questions.

To conclude, the reason I have become involved is not because I was as much disturbed that your rail proposal didn't reduce congestion and not because it was too costly for the benefit you achieved. My objective was that using up every

discretionary dollar for a rail system, you would have pushed off the question of a cheaper and more effective solution. We are very disappointed that Seattle would have been the last city to invest public capital dollars in an obsolete, 19th century technology. We thought it was a bitter irony that we should forego the opportunity to develop the world's first geographical and electronic access network. We would like to have people coming here to see how to do it. That was my motivation. I would be glad to discuss any details.

(Board member Hague arrived at this time.)

Mr. MacIsaac:

That is the problem here. I think back to 1950 when we would have seen 50% of the population living in the City of Seattle. In 1990, only 22% of the population lived in Seattle. The automobile caused the suburbanization of the region. That was why in 1960 we hastened toward developing a radial transit system to bring those people from the suburbs to the centralized employment areas. Since 1960 the automobile has caused employment to decentralize. Seattle contained 60% of the jobs in 1960; today less than 30% of the jobs are in Seattle. The downtown area contains less than 15% of the jobs. Employment has decentralized. The vast majority of the employment is now out in the suburbs. The transit crisis is not to better serve the central cities. If this meeting were held in Kent, I would challenge you to be able to arrive by bus. 83% of the transit routes today provided by Metro and those by neighboring transit providers all begin and/or end in Seattle. Only 17% of the routes begin and end outside Seattle. Over 70% of the jobs are outside Seattle and 85% of the jobs are outside downtown Seattle.

One of the major objectives was to provide an alternative to the private automobile. The plan proposed replaced express bus routes with rail service. That was 90% of the price tag. It didn't do anything for the suburban mobility crisis. I-405 is filled to capacity. It operates at 70% of the traffic on I-5. The valley freeway is jammed to Auburn and beyond. Those people are trying to get to the businesses outside Seattle.

Look back at the Phase I option, particularly Option I which is looking at capitalizing on the rubber-tire system we have been building for the last two decades. I think Metro has been the envy of transit providers throughout the country. We were able to split labor shifts in order to provide service more effectively. We brought dual-mode articulated buses into this country. We have the most park-and-ride spaces in the country. We will have more lane miles of HOV lanes than any other city in the country. We have been working toward a phenomenal system and I was disappointed to see this plan dump that two decades of planning to improve service to the central city.

I have created a paper some of you may have seen. It is focusing on the growth of this region and how to decentralize. It is focusing on the need to get out to the 75% of the trips in the suburbs not served today and not served by the proposed plan. We will be sure you all get a copy. I do hope you will give serious thought to the mass majority of the problem, which is the suburb to suburb movement. Do not exclude the bus. It is one of the most flexible and accessible vehicles we have for transit service.

I believe you should go back and take a hard look at the bus and suburban service in the plan. I hope you will see a bigger challenge of serving an unserved transit population.

Mr. Bruce Nurse, Bellevue:

I come to the table today as a participant of FACT. I spent three years in the Transportation Discussion Group focused on the alternatives that came forward from the Metro Planning Committee and the JRPC. I also participated as an officer and director of the Eastside TPC. The views I express today are my own, and not that of an organization.

I have attended Chamber of Commerce meetings on the Eastside and also in Seattle over the last five years, all working on this particular question. I think the people who participated in the Transportation Discussion Group are concerned that without a high capacity transit system, what would the alternative be? These are responsible people from the academic and business communities, the political community, as well as concerned citizens. It was not a specific geographical area meeting in Seattle and Bellevue. They were not really focused on one or the other.

As sad as it sounds, as we looked into it and the further we went, many tried to find some good in the RTP. The more detail we got into, the worse the program looked to us, resulting in the end campaign of "pro" and "con". Fundamental also to the issue, and this sounds so simplistic, is the equity issue. You can probably analyze voter maps better than I can, but in glancing at the colored maps, it appeared that the further away from the epicenter of Seattle you got, the less support the program had. I think that is an equity issue. I would urge you to begin to consider I-5 and I-405 as more equals. I think it would surprise people to know that the DOT figures will show the I-405 corridor carries 70% of the traffic that I-5 does. It merits serious discussion. If you couple that with what I reported on anticipated growth, the question of a more comprehensive analysis through the south county is necessary.

I would conclude with a discussion of what we hear about--a vision for the future. I have reconciled that we will spend the 1990s struggling with transportation solutions. We are wondering what we are going to do with anticipated growth, congestion and the environment. I think the problem we face is a large portion of our transportation solution is going to be the result of the assembly of technology that is all around us today. I don't see how it will respond to the demand factors that it will get the public out of the single occupancy vehicles (SOV) we know today. There are research efforts going on but they are not integrated. The federal government is working with state governments on intelligent systems, electronic motors. Research on hybrid batteries is being done in Japan and a personal rapid transit concept is coming forward. There is no silver bullet; with a combination of these technologies, we will get better results.

Fundamentally, the charter of the RTA is very narrow. The question is whether it becomes the RTA or do you go back and deal within the structure we have available to us in the transit agencies and the DOT. That remains to be seen. Hopefully we won't face a redo or rehash of what we faced on March 14. We should be more creative. I appreciate this opportunity to speak today.

Mr. Bill Popp:

There have been some very excellent points made today. I worked on the Metro plan in 1972 as part of the PSRC staff. I supported the two rail issues and the 1970 ballot proposal. The Metro plan was quite successful in many people's viewpoints. It carried us through the mid 1980s before we saw that system plateau. We started seeing empty buses in the suburbs. Part of the problem has to do with an HOV system anticipated in 1972 and a park-and-ride system that was to be in place by 1980. The plan developed in 1974 anticipated 136 miles of HOV lanes; we currently have 80 miles of HOV lanes. That was to be completed by 1990 or sooner. If they were in place, we would probably see a much different transit mode split. The buses get bogged down in transit. The same would have happened with the buses proposed by the RTA; this was stated in the FEIS.

I believe we should change the HOV system. We should allow it to operate and start measuring it. From that point we can decide if we want to move to high capacity transit. You need high capacity transit, the planners tell me, when you can't get buses through the most congested locations. Part of that system includes HOV lanes on the Evergreen Point Bridge. That is a crucial link not included in the RTP. This needs to be implemented in this region.

The next thing is to reinvest in transit. Transit has become a 19th century service. It presently costs \$70 per hour to operate a bus; that is the highest in the country and it is too costly. You can't run a bus, at a cost of \$70 per hour, in the suburbs and carry two to three passengers. We have to prioritize, to some extent. There are three merging cities starting to do this.

In New York they have given this service over to the jitney systems. Transit services should look to the private sector in instances where they really lose money. Technology is changing. I have received literature from an Israeli firm that is studying a zinc oxide battery. This will be used in German postal vehicles. I think automobiles will continue to improve. That same technology can be applied to buses, ultimately. That would also make them more attractive. Times are changing. This is not a good time to start dumping money into a heavy rail system. We need point to point service in the suburbs with smaller vehicles.

Mr. Laing:

I would like to hear your proposition regarding to what extent the RTA should go forward with the development of a revised first phase of a high capacity system as opposed to some other sequence of events. To the extent that FACT, or individuals, have a sequence of events they envision to come to a proposal to the public that we might all get behind, I would like to hear your comments. I understand that you are talking not only about a high capacity transit system, but a broader spectrum of transportation tools or modes that should be considered. Other entities are engaging in those other modes. We have made outreach regarding an interface. I am thinking about how you visualize the relationship of a major transportation authority as opposed to a transit authority relating its responsibilities to the other existing entities.

Mr. Hornung:

I am suggesting a regional mobility agency. We have identified four fields of exploration: electronic, telecommuting, isochronic, etc. Each of those would have taken more SOVs off the highway system than your proposed light rail system. Institutional changes are needed, and geographical solutions, such as transit and common sense highway solutions, are needed. We know it would be politically incorrect to talk about highway improvements, but many people will still be in their cars. Our scope is much broader than your current charge. We believe if events take the course they seem to be on, and that you are successful in securing \$9 million in HCT funds from the state and the necessary matching funds from the three counties, and you then proceed to try to come up with the maximum rail profile you can get past the ballot in the spring, the region will have gone into a state of suspended animation. You will gear up and we will gear up and the region will decide once again whether rail lives or dies. What we have proposed is that if that is the course the RTA is proceeding down, we oppose it. We enthusiastically support a broadening of your charter. This would be the first agency in the world to take a sweeping view of mobility problems.

Mr. Laing:

I would like to have a dialogue. We would need to convince the legislature to change the enabling legislation to broaden our spectrum. Such an agency would have to have some type of resources. We currently work with the HCT and matching funds and some grants from the federal government. I anticipate this proposal would take some additional time to apply the least cost planning model and to get to the point where actual investments would take place. Is the model we are on now what you are thinking about for funding this agency?

Mr. Hornung:

If we are confident that a newly reconstituted regional mobility agency would fully evaluate the full range of alternatives, we would be soliciting funds for such an enterprise. I think it would be easier to obtain these funds, not necessarily from the state level. The Democrats and Republicans at the national level agree on the technology revolution. Al Gore and Newt Gingrich are rushing to the door. I think you would have a good prospect of federal funding, as well as foundation funding and private sector funding.

This is an entirely new area in the campaign. We have said more of the work force telecommutes than takes transit. This is rapidly emerging. If we were to grant incentives to employers, I think you would get a much bigger bang for the buck.

Mr. Laing:

You mentioned reformulating to go back to the options studied in the summer, particularly Option 1. Even that option entailed some commuter rail and an initial light rail segment. Aren't you saying that is too far? You are saying we should do a total spectrum analysis first and we should consider what appears to be a significant time to analyze and develop a proposition to present to the public. Are you suggesting that regional investments might be accomplished during that time, such as the completion of the HOV lanes and bus improvements, commuter rail and starts with light rail.

Mr. Hornung:

I think it may be apparent to you that we are not a monolithic bureaucracy. We have come together in support of these 10 principles. I think what does bind us is we are mature enough to submit our proposed solution to least cost planning and say which is preferred. I don't object to commuter rail or light rail in the evaluation with other alternatives. Some of us have a deep concern about the analysis which has been given by the RTA and JRPC to non-rail alternatives. There are three sources for this concern.

I have had conversations with consultants who worked on the non-rail alternatives, and they were told it didn't matter what they came up with--rail was the preferred alternative. There are some deep throats throughout the transit bureaucracy who have voiced concerns about the analysis of non-rail alternatives. Some of the published reports and memorandums the RTA has put out are a source of concern. This was the memo which was given to the ERP which contained a trip table showing a supposed random comparison between bus and rail travel times. I think it is absolutely outrageous how it was skewed in favor of rail. These give me anxiety about how this will be conducted.

We recognize that the region must move forward. If there was a fair analysis of all options, I would give you my unqualified support.

You asked about the time sequence. It is very difficult for me to look at that as having an advantage. If this is just a way to make them happy, frankly, I do not see that as constructive. If that is the direction you are heading, it is a case of suspended animation. We don't want to do that. It may take longer, but there is an advantage to our proposal. If a fair analysis says rail is the way to go, I would step aside.

Mr. Davidson:

Are we limited by the process we have on board or should we come up with ideas for a new process? Your questions lead me to think you have come up with a solution. I think that has limited our thinking of what they are presenting to us. I think we have to ask if that is our solution, how can we change our process.

Ms. Sullivan:

Thank you for coming today. I started out on the RTA as a strong advocate of least cost planning and I remain so today; however, I came to a different conclusion. We are in least cost planning, not in the context of this agency, but it is going on in other places, such as the state or local government levels. The issue for me is growth management. The RTA is an interesting transportation or mobility issue. It is the principal implementing function for the growth management plan this region has agreed to. The problem I have seen inherent in flexible solutions is it does not cause a center based investment by this plan. which I think is necessary whether or not we engage in electronic telecommunication. People will want to come together for social reasons, if not for business reasons. I would love to hear you talk about that. I don't see the concentrated investment without a fixed asset.

Mr. MacIsaac:

I have studied the materials and I have not made a strong interconnection between the rail proposed and growth management. There are three centers in the proposal; there are 20+ centers. The plans we have been pursuing have been connecting those centers. We are at the brink of having an HOV system available and you then propose a plan that doesn't utilize it. A corridor is proposed to go across I-90 through South Bellevue; there is no major center in South Bellevue. It is a residential community. It ends at Overlake where Bellevue and Redmond have been in controversy about the density in the area. I cannot connect the transit proposal with any of the goals or wishes of the growth management plan. I think it would be good to do more research of a connection between the transit plan and the goals and desires for growth management. Seattle is projected for 50% growth. I was involved in the Seatac and Des Moines transportation planning. The difference in center city was 10% in employment.

Ms. Sullivan:

What are isochronic work hours?

Mr. Hornung:

This is a loop detector. The DOT gathers information including calibrating traffic by time periods. In knowing the peaks and valleys of the freeway system, you could give back some time to employees.

I would also comment on your growth question. We did address the issue in the campaign. We addressed a report by Parsons Brinckerhoff for the JRPC. Is there a connection between a massive rail investment and concentrated growth? They couldn't find one.

Ms. Sullivan:

I think that predated the growth management plan.

Mr. Hornung:

Does rail attract concentrated centers?

Ms. Sullivan:

I think we have a very different environment here.

Ms. Choe:

I would like to extend my appreciation to the FACT representatives. It is an important dialogue to have. I think I share some of your observations and frustrations about the scope of work. In looking at the three county area, we found there were some options we could have pursued, including some augmentation of roads where relevant. We look forward to working with you and the legislature to find possible solutions.

I want to respond to Mr. Davidson. I think, on the one hand, there is a practical question of if the choice is to pursue a broader transportation strategy, I think the practical side is it will be a lengthy procedure in getting the authorization changed in Olympia and coordinating issues you have articulated. The practical side is I hope we continue to have a sense of urgency. I think we continue to be committed to a regional solution, but the map and the message is a mixed one. The challenge is to interpret some of the messages. There was one clear message with a mandate with a 62% and 70% agreement to go forward. We need to listen to those voters and to challenge that with the message of the other areas. One size does not fit all. That continues to be an issue we have to address and to keep the momentum that was there and continue to have a sense of urgency. Thank you for your candor.

Mr. MacIsaac:

I am happy to see Mr. Morrison. In frustration, I found myself in Olympia saying whatever happened to the DOT? In that frustration I am addressing the role of the DOT. You have asked about the process. We are also talking about an organizational issue for the RTA or someone else. I don't pretend to have the answer. We have the PSRC, the RTA, the three counties and the DOT and the Office of Urban Mobility. What do they do and what are they capable of doing? There may be some money if we close the Office of Urban Mobility and give their funding to the RTA.

Mr. Miller:

I appreciate the opportunity for this forum. I agree there is no one element of the overall transportation package by itself that will be sufficient to solve the problem we face or significantly impact the future growth of congestion in this area. Given that there is no one alternative and we have heard your desire for an investment in a series of alternatives,

I want to understand. One of the arguments FACT made was that the proposal would not reduce congestion. No one disagrees with that. I think we are trying to work with a solution to relieving growth in congestion. Do you see, even with a myriad of solutions, the ability to actually reduce congestion are or we talking about a method for handling growth and not congestion.

Mr. Hornung:

My understanding of least cost planning is that you spend your money on the solution that costs the least until you run out of money or you solve the problem. With congestion I took the premise of the rail plan to be you are basically removing people from their cars and putting them onto trains because that is a superior way to travel. It relieves stress and traffic concerns. You ended up with a very minor increment in terms of people out of their cars, or 18,500. If that is the hypothesis, what can we do to get even more people out of their cars. That is where daily commuting came in. Mr. MacIsaac says that you have tens of thousands of seats crossing the ship canal during the rush hour. If we can fill them up, we have achieved the same result. How do we get people to share rides? We want to look at that on a fair basis.

Mr. Miller:

Given an implementation that involves all of those methodologies or those that make sense under least cost planning, do you see the ability to reduce congestion or keep it from getting worse.

Mr. Hornung:

With the current levels of congestion, all scenarios are not wonderful. It is a question of how much the public is willing to spend to hold that growth down. We may have a drastic change in how we live our lives. One of the reasons was because of a demographic mistake made in the 1970s. There was a large number of baby boomers entering adulthood, but you had a delayed entry into the housing market and the size of households was much smaller. The utility planners were projecting an average consumption of electricity based on the old model. What happened in the 70's and 80's was that energy demands were much smaller. All of these plans for electricity were based on a misunderstanding of what life would be like further down the line.

Mr. MacIsaac:

There will be an increase in travel. On the ship canal there is capacity for 96,000 seats. Over 50,000 of them are empty. Buses are going back empty. What we need to do is concentrate on filling the capacity that is already there. Adding 22,000 seats per hour doesn't assure we are moving that many people per hour. My copy of Option 1, Phase 1 has rail between Seattle and the airport x'd out of it. Seattle and the airport are two of the best served points in the region. We have great service in those areas.

In the materials prepared by the RTA, it said if we did nothing we would be moving 325,000 people per day by the year 2010. With the plan we would be moving 360,000 people per day by 2010. This is a 10% increase. I think Mr. Matoff's comment to Senator McDonald was that we would have a 50% increase in ridership if we removed the fares.

Mr. Miller:

My second question has to do with the expansion of the authority of the RTA or someone to do that planning. Clearly, to date we are very constrained in our focus. That has dictated the process and the end result. Given an expanded responsibility for the elements of a complete transportation solution, we could very easily be right back in the same scope and size and cost for a solution as what has been criticized and rejected as far too expensive. If the responsibilities of this body are expanded to look at all of those elements and to devise a financing package to accomplish a number of those elements, it must be cost effective and it brought us right back to a scope in size. Is that something your body feels it could support?

Mr. Hornung:

Our objective was expense relative to benefit. While I maintain I am willing to look at alternatives, the difference between rail and the other alternatives, I suppose if you went to a guided busway you could come close to a rail expenditure, is that they can be implemented incrementally. With bus you could build over time as you can afford them. With the rail system, you need a power plant and that is one of the disadvantages to rail that you don't have with the other alternatives.

Mr. Miller:

One of the things I am struggling with is the message sent by the electorate. In talking to my constituents, there are 35 to 40 messages. In your letter you profess three reasons why the electorate rejected this proposal. I would ask the basis on which those three reasons were selected. They were major elements of the campaign in opposition to the proposal. Do you have a greater outreach to be able to narrow that down?

Mr. Hornung:

Our methods are far inferior to yours. Our campaign was based on an initial poll, and only one poll was taken. The swing issue was congestion. As people discovered your plan would not reduce congestion, they flipped. That is why our campaign was very consistent in focusing on congestion. We thought our message was heard.

Mr. Rice:

Thank you for coming here. I am troubled by a couple of things. I hear there is not a line of consistency that runs through your presentations. That says it.

The concern I have in what I have heard today and in the campaign is yes, I think congestion was one issue, but I also hear about what Seattle shouldn't get and someone else should get. I felt a lot of Seattle bashing going on. There was not, necessarily, a regional perspective. I don't know where you live and operate but we have to operate on a regional system. In making trade-offs we did look at those kinds of things. I haven't heard you talk about what is happening in other areas of the region and how voters felt they didn't get enough. People could argue there wasn't enough in the proposal. I think you need to spend some time with the history. I don't think least cost planning in transportation has reached the level of science it has with regard to energy. We took conservation into account in Seattle. You don't speak to that at all. We are concerned about saving natural resources and how it fits with the modes you are going to use and what things it reduces impact of air quality, run-off, water quality, etc. Those are real factors.

It is cheap planning instead of least cost planning. We need to really start articulating everything. It was on a dwindling supply of water and hydro electric power. It calls for alternatives. As you look at HOV lanes, those are big considerations. We have to look at it from a standpoint other than we run more buses on a concrete system.

Mr. Hornung:

You are on point. I did not express my analysis clearly enough. I didn't mean that least cost planning was a result of a mistaken projection in the 70's. Least cost planning was the way to clean up the problem that occurred. I take your point about conservation being a component of that. As far as least cost planning in the transportation field, the work done by Dick Nelson has advanced the state of the art of that. There has been discussion about the degree. Our analysis is that the electorate is looking for that rigorous cost/benefit analysis in transportation alternatives.

Mr. Earling:

I used to be a college music director. I always looked forward to going to musicology conventions and looking at theory. I would then leave that and go back to rehearsals, which was equally exhilarating. Our groups differ in that you agree on a set of principles. We had to do that too but we had to put forth a plan that the voters would have an opportunity to examine and vote on. I think what would help me would be if I could encourage you to move past the

principles and to deal with the same issues we did, which is putting forth a plan that would encourage the Board that the methodology you use would have the kind of impact that we sought to have. That is the bottom line for me. If you could give me information that would encourage ridership, reduce congestion, provide a better understanding of the mix of modes and how those mixes would have the impact we sought, and how we could take the theory arguments and go to the public who needs to get from point A to point B and get them to understand that there is a challenge to really reducing congestion. This would help us utilize the suggestions you have made.

Mr. Hornung:

Our response would be to seek needed legislative changes to broaden your authority to evaluate the full range of options.

Mr. Earling:

Your thoughts are intriguing to me, but I would like you to advance a plan.

Mr. Hornung:

We are a group of volunteers. We have put in personal time and frankly, we did not have access to the dollars to properly evaluate the kinds of hypotheses here. We think they are pretty well grounded, but to develop a plan would take more resources than we have.

Mr. Earling:

I understand your point. One of the frustrations the Board had to deal with is that we spent a fair amount of time identifying principles and putting together a plan for the next century. Then we have to stand back and watch grenades being lobbed at it and having to respect your right to do that and at the same time not hearing any alternatives, other than a series of disjointed propositions, and not having an opportunity to see you mold those principles into a cohesive plan so we could deal with some of the propositions you put forward.

Mr. Hornung:

I could make proposition I think we could support. I think you are looking for something more substantial. That kind of investigation needs some resources behind it.

Mr. Laing:

I would like to acknowledge the presence of Senator Dan McDonald, and point out the time of day.

Mr. White:

I have listened today and I am intrigued. One of the things that intrigues me the most is that had we been successful, FACT has said the proposed system would have carried 20,000 to 30,000 more riders per day than the present system. If we took the fares away, which would have side affects, we could double our ridership. I would be curious to know if we could double ridership by removing fares. This leads me to this basic question: Do we need a system? We have spent many years on this and we are not going to reduce congestion. Do we need a system?

Mr. Hornung:

That is not a bad question. That is the analysis we are looking for. With regard to your question about removing fares, in Denver in 1978 they removed fares from the five county area. The result was a February ridership increase of more than 100%. They were not prepared for the side effects and this surge of riders overwhelmed their resources. There were maintenance failures and travel times were slow. There were people on the buses you wouldn't want to

ride with and ridership counts had to be taken manually. This did attract ridership, and I am not saying you shouldn't consider this.

Mr. Davidson:

You suggest integrated intermodal planning. I was concerned that rail was the focus of our discussion. That means rail is only a piece of the solution. Do you think our focus on a rail system provided us with blinders so we could not approach a more balanced system or one that would be built in increments. Do you suppose our focus might have been wrong and maybe a slower increment would lead us to your conclusions?

Mr. MacIsaac:

On the Eastside during the public input process, I heard people crying for transit services to get from one suburb to another. I didn't see that being addressed by the plan. I think it was similar in the south county area. Both the south and east county areas asked for these connections but they were not provided in the plan. You have to ask yourself the questions about whether you had blinders on. We think there is a desire for rail, but we are missing the point that while the rest of the country has been building rail systems, the automobile has caused employment to disperse. We should look at where those jobs went and refocus on that.

To Mr. Rice, I may be the one who has caused the Seattle bashing. It is the opposite side of that coin. 83% of the routes go to Seattle; we want some service in the suburbs. 75% of the people in the region don't have a transit alternative. The plan focuses better service to the center city.

Mr. Rice:

Voters in Seattle think otherwise.

Ms. Sullivan:

I am going to honor you with my candor as well. Seattle produced the lion's share of the "yes" votes. If there had been 10% more turnout, it would have passed in all three counties. What I am hearing from you sounds like social engineering, which is remarkable, considering the source.

Second, what is there in your plan to get Seattle voters to come out and vote yes. Ms. Choe is right on. This is not a one size fits all situation. Older cities have different needs than the suburbs. I don't know how you take regional rail out of it and still attract Seattle voters to vote for this. I don't see any incentive for my constituency to vote for a proposal that you would offer.

Mr. Hornung:

I appreciate your candor. My response would be that we think the heavy pro-RTA vote was pro-rail or pro-transit. I don't know if that was sorted out. I would like to test a high quality transit alternative which is not rail based in a Seattle setting. I think a bus alternative has not been given a fair shot. I have operated bus systems in other areas. I don't believe buses have to be the poor stepchild of transit. They can be fast and comfortable and a system could be designed on a cost effective basis and it could satisfy your constituents.

Mr. Sutherland:

I have listened and read the newspaper articles distributed by staff today. I recognize some people react to this rather emotionally. I have read your 10 principles and heard you talk about how we should plan for the technology that the future will bring and we need to do that. How long do we wait until those new technologies are in place and proven and then we can say yes this can deal with the capacity on our roadways. I would also like to hear from you because I have heard a lot about I-405 and I don't find an I-405 in Pierce County. I would like to hear your version of what is

regional and to be able to explain the political realities we have to deal with on the question of what you deem to be equity. There is an equity mix already invested in assets on the ground and who should pay for them.

Your comments regarding least cost planning are fascinating. I would like to explore that a great deal more. I would like to talk about least cost planning. Is it just the cheapest way to do it? As a general contractor myself, I have to ask when is it cheap and when is it least cost. I would also like to explore the idea of planning versus operations. Those of you from the private sector I would like to know where in the private sector do you separate operating from the planning. I would also like to talk to you about what is a jitney. Why isn't private enterprise already operating jitneys? They provide a market to the airport. If there is a market for this service, why isn't the private sector already there. I have been involved in Pierce Transit since 1979 or 1980. It is a product that came about as a result of the private sector not being able to compete.

You made a comment about the RTA absorbing every discretionary dollar. I thought what the RTA was asking for was additional dollars and that discretionary funds were being expended by the DOT and we would ask for additional monies from the DOT. The legislature has indicated they would have to go to the public to seek those funds. There are billions of dollars being expended that are discretionary. We are not tapping any of those dollars. I would love to have you join us to go to the legislature and convince them that the discretion they have, through the DOT, would be extended to a new organization you describe and assure them there is separation--that all dollars would be the responsibility of the RTA or some other organization. You could help us explain that to the folks in the legislature who represent people outside these three counties.

Mr. Laing:

Would you be willing to accept the proposition that we can enter into this conversation at a subsequent time?

Mr. Hornung:

I think Mr. Sutherland has raised many good points. I don't want to come off as appearing to have all the answers. If that was the case, I apologize. We are transportation professionals. We recognize the difficulties you are up against. The reason we are here is to accept your invitation to engage in this dialogue. We want the same things you want. The objective raised by Mr. Davidson is not insignificant. We would like to address them.

Ms. Hague:

My comments are more organizational. I think we are doing the right thing in trying to analyze what the March 14 results meant and putting forward the best course of action. I think it is appropriate to talk to FACT and the Citizens for Sound Transit. We need to have a dialogue with our partners at the state. In my analysis, we failed because we didn't have a certainty of funding from the state or federal governments for a large portion of our proposal. We need to have a conversation with the key players at the state and the legislature. I hope you will arrange a similar dialogue with the key state people.

Mr. Nickels:

I would add my thanks to those expressed to FACT for attending today's meeting. I appreciate your honoring us with your candor. I don't take personally your remarks that an honest analysis of the alternatives would have a different result.

There have been interesting ideas in the campaign and in conversations about the transportation crisis in general. I welcome conversation about the zero fare transit system. It is one I would like us to try. I have asked for a 25 cent weekend fare trial to see what that did.

I am trying to understand, in addition to your written principles, the basis for our ongoing conversation and dialogue. You are FACT, and this afternoon you said nothing on the table today or that you envision will reduce congestion. I think that is honest. We have had elected and appointed officials who have been willing to say this crisis will require

more resources and taxes for a solution. You are against taxes. To try the zero fare option, for Metro, would cost \$50 million. That would be a billion in Phase 1 of the RTA. Where does that billion dollars come from? If we were to try to accommodate the additional riders that would result from a zero fare, the increased expenditure could be another billion dollars. To take a step of creating a suburb to suburb connection that doesn't currently exist, that could cost another \$1 to \$3 billion. Where does that money come from?

Mr. Hornung:

The opposition was not to the dollar amount, per se. I have never said \$6.7 billion was too much. Our entire campaign was based on a cost benefit analysis. Your plan did not merit the expense the taxpayers were being asked to bare. What is the proper set point? I cannot answer the question because it is so vast. It will require greater resources than we have. We are a volunteer group opposing the RTA's proposal.

Mr. Nickels:

I think you are a bit modest. I am trying to get at that principle.

Mr. Hornung:

Our 10 principles are a sincere attempt to work through this. Speaking for myself, if a solution were put forward that required a contribution over and above what is asked today and provided a reasonable return, I would support it.

Mr. Nickels:

If, over the next few months or years, we come up with some answers and test them and honestly tell the public they will not reduce congestion but they will increase mobility and they will cost additional dollars, those factors will not automatically trigger your opposition?

Mr. Hornung:

Speaking for myself, no.

Mr. MacIsaac:

I would second that.

Ms. Gates:

Thank you for being here today. I have two questions:

1) If we move forward we will have to do more alternatives analysis. Presenting an idea of increased or eliminated fares and suburb to suburb service is an alternative. I have heard there are doubts about our analysis of the alternatives. What would be a credible alternatives analysis that would be acceptable? What constitutes an acceptable alternatives analysis?

2) I heard early in today's presentation a statement that things won't be changing much in 30 years. I look at the last 30 years and find I now represent the third largest city in King County. Our population is now 75,000, but 30 years ago it was less than 25,000. We need to be very careful in our projections. In our alternatives analysis we cannot imply it is a static world out there. It is very dynamic.

Mr. Hornung:

I couldn't agree more. This is why we felt a range of options was more appropriate. Rail is so inflexible and so wedded to the past. By looking at this, the quality of alternatives analysis, we have advanced that. Mr. Laing was

gracious enough to extend this invitation and we thought we should tell you what was bothering us. I hope that is satisfactory.

Mr. Laing:

I will use that statement as the basis for thanking you for spending time with us today. You have been very straight forward and I have heard a willingness to continue this dialogue and I hope that will work out. I would like to thank each of you.

At this time, I had planned to take a break but due to the late hour, I am suggesting we move ahead. I would ask the Board if they concur with the outreach suggested by Ms. Hague. Senator Dan McDonald is here and is willing to make some comments. Are we willing to devote a few minutes now to accommodate those comments?

Mr. McDonald:

I appreciate the opportunity to make some comments. I am not a member of the Transportation Committee and never have been. I took no position particularly on the RTA. I voted for the tax authority to allow the RTA to advance its plan and I voted for the RTA formation. I only started to think about this as I wonder whether this would or not. I do this as a citizen and commuter to downtown for 22 years as an engineer.

It seems to me, as a member of the community and an elected official, that I have been on the upside and downside of several votes. It is always instructive to look at what the people are saying. As I called some people before the vote, like Jim Ellis, for whom I have great respect, I asked for their counsel. Mr. Ellis suggested we look at what you think your hunch is about what people are saying and try to redesign the program and boundary and to do something fairly radical to give the people the idea that you are reacting to what they are saying. I don't think they are saying congestion is not a problem. I think the proposal was too expensive and they found it didn't take them where they needed to go.

Let me throw out what I have talked to many of you about. I also talked about it with Representative Schmidt and Senator Owen, the Transportation Committee Chairs. I have a suggestion about what your goals should be: try to double ridership by the year 2000, quadruple within that ridership the suburb to suburb commute and do it for half of what was proposed before. I would be willing to vote for a tax increase to fund such a proposal.

I think we should accelerate completion of the HOV lanes. The whole question of state and local roles is confusing because it is all the same money. If we tax it at the state level and ship it to Olympia, we spend only 60% of the funds in the three county area. If we got 60% back, I would be surprised. I say tax ourselves locally and build it locally and we get every dollar. It is a \$1.2 billion price tag with some exit and entrance ramp improvements.

I think we should go for saturation busing and a multi-hub approach. I think about doubling the fleet size and it would cost less than \$1 billion. You have to have park-and-ride and maintenance facilities. They called me Comrade McDonald, but I think elimination of the fares makes sense. \$50 million per year, which is the amount we collect, is probably 11% of the cost of operation and maintenance and capital when you net out what it costs to collect the fares. It is not that much and if you can increase ridership to 40 or 50%, that is what we are trying to do. The RTA was aiming at 45% transit ridership by 2010. I think we could do it.

If you need legislative authority, I will talk about it. We could continue to look at commuter rail, but the issue of giving B&O or MVET or TVM credits for having a fleet at the place of work to be used for personal errands during lunch time. This would eliminate one of the great reasons for driving your own car. If you eliminate fares, you eliminate one of the greatest arguments for allowing private enterprise to compete. I think there are many things we can do in a creative way.

I want to talk about political realities. I looked at the RTA and found it covers 22 legislative districts. Five of them passed the program. I don't think we can dismiss that. I also think people are willing, in the legislature, to look forward and to allow a fresh approach, but if we recycle the same thing, I think we have problems. The recent

editorial by the Seattle Times was interesting. It had some good approaches and said "...If the Board meets today and next Friday it should quit sifting through and start looking ahead. It should resist the temptation to wait and come back with the same package as though voters did not pay attention the first time." I think that is a reality. I think there is a great willingness by the Chairs at this late date to consider large changes to the charter to move forward.

Here is my concern. If we don't do that, we will have a year of recrimination and fingerpointing and unpreparedness that we cannot avoid. If we need a legislative solution, I am giving you an invitation to make those changes in the next three to four weeks.

Mr. Sutherland:

I don't know how much you heard of the prior panel's suggestion that the role of the RTA be expanded significantly. What is your best guess of any kind of major changes that would enable that to happen. How would you assess the probability of that?

Mr. McDonald:

I have seen some dramatic things happen when there is a perception of need and there is a relative consensus of what to do. I can't assess that but the fact that Representative Schmidt and Senator Owen are willing to entertain that and I have taken a private poll of the Senate members on the Transportation Committee and I think there is a willingness to do it as well.

Mr. Laing:

With apologies to the Citizens for Sound Transit, I would ask those representatives to join us at the table.

Citizens for Sound Transit

Ms. Lynn Claudon:

There is a reason Mr. Vaska has been the key spokesperson for this group--he is much more articulate. However, he is out of town.

Along with everyone else on the campaign, I want to thank you for all of your work. We do respect your hard work. I can tell today you have one of the hardest jobs in government in our region.

I am not here to debate the opponents. I am here to let you know we are ready to work with you and all of the communities while we develop a regional transit plan that voters can enthusiastically support.

I would request that as soon as possible you develop a timeline with specifics for a work plan that will lead us to another ballot. Those who support transit improvements need to know you have a clear process to move forward.

Secondly, I have talked to almost all regional employers and while they are very enthusiastic about supporting a campaign, they were not interested in doing that in 1995. They would be willing to do so in 1996.

I have people here who have more to say but I would like to volunteer that as the process moves forward, I would like to help and work with you and maybe go back to the communities you represent and instead of giving them a plan and explaining it, we could ask them what they want to see in a new plan. This would be community based. We could go back and ask them what they want to see in a new plan. I will now ask Ms. Eileen Quigly, President of the Municipal League, to comment.

Ms. Eileen Quigley:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on the question of what the RTA should do now that its Phase I plan failed to pass muster with the voters.

While the Municipal League supported the Phase I proposal, it has not had time to formulate ideas about where to go from here now that the measure has failed. Hence, these remarks reflect my own thoughts and not that of the League's Board of Trustees, its Transportation Committee, nor its members. Should the RTA come up with a new plan, the League will re-evaluate its support on the merits of that new scheme.

The RTA's resounding defeat at the polls two weeks ago presents us with a difficult challenge. The measure survived only in King County, and then largely because of the Seattle vote, but was rejected overwhelmingly by the voters in Pierce and Snohomish Counties. The lack of support in Pierce County is particularly disheartening given how much its residents had to gain with the plan.

However, selling the plan was always a difficult proposition. Its price tag, though significantly less than that of the JRPC's plan, was still so high; its effect on congestion fairly minimal, and the time in which to campaign so short. Four months for so complicated and pricey a plan would have been hard enough, but you had to contend with the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays and, perhaps most important of all, a stunning election in November in which voters nationally and locally sent a clear anti-government, anti-tax message. This was not a propitious time to ask citizens of the Puget Sound to vote for the largest public works project in the region's history.

Furthermore, the plan met with a well-financed and articulate opposition, whose simple message was highly effective: at every opportunity, opponents repeated the \$6.7 billion price tag and told citizens it would do little to abate congestion, the one thing that polls showed citizens cared most about. The corollary message was that rail was not the solution and that light rail in particular would actually contribute to congestion by snarling already crowded arterials.

Proponents called upon citizens to support the RTA in the name of regionalism. They pointed to the need for laying the groundwork today that would absorb tomorrow's growth. They argued that the system wasn't designed to address all trips, but to improve commute trips. They said that the price tag wasn't as high as it could have been and that there were checks in place to ensure that the RTA wouldn't go over budget.

But they fought an uphill battle before a distrustful electorate for a complicated and expensive plan that would take 16 years to complete.

So now what do we do? The debate seems to center around two questions: Do we shrink the boundaries of the RTA, to exclude those who said "no," and craft a predominantly rail-based plan that is acceptable to the voters who said "yes" on March 14 -- which is to say a King County-only system -- or do we abandon rail altogether, and choose a roads/bus solution? I would submit that neither of these approaches is the right course and that a creative plan that integrates rail, buses, and roads is what should be tried next.

As many of you know, I was active in the Sound Metropolitan Area Rapid Transit, or SMART, effort, which advocated a phased approach including a starter rail line heading south to SeaTac and east to Bellevue; completion of the HOV system in Snohomish and along the 405 corridor with increased bus service; and commuter rail at least from Edmonds to Lakewood.

The two driving impetuses behind the different scenarios that SMART presented were to lower the price tag and to start small so you could demonstrate to the taxpayers a rail system that worked, thereby shoring up their trust to return to them in future years for additional rail lines.

The system we envisioned paid attention to ridership and admitted that different parts of the region need and can support different types of transit solutions. Our ideas were rejected by policy makers as soundly as the RTA plan was by voters on the grounds that they could not pass the equity test.

Understandably, the RTA crafted as equitable a plan as possible, one that put rail in several places that couldn't always be justified by ridership projections so as not to leave any area out and to achieve a supermajority on your Board and support at the three county councils. The price tag climbed and the case became harder to make for the overall plan. Everyone said it wasn't a perfect plan, but it was the best we could do given the political circumstances and grudgingly gave their support.

Now you must decide how to go forward. In creating a new plan, I would encourage you to craft as sensible and defensible plan as possible. I wouldn't throw in the towel completely on a regional solution, but I would try to craft a plan that attempts to meet the different needs of the region appropriately. If the Eastside of King County wants buses and an improved HOV system, then I would encourage you to explore this option.

The citizens clearly want to see improvements to SR 18 and 522. The public/private attempts to address these problems with toll roads are not faring well in Olympia at the moment. Perhaps the RTA should look into finding ways of fixing these transportation solutions, and if that means changes to the enabling legislation, perhaps that should be explored. We've got a problem; it won't go away.

I would also urge you not to rush back to the ballot until you feel you have built more consensus. I suggest that you not spend your energies and resources studying different technical solutions, but instead get out to listen to what the public will support. At the same time, we all need to do a better job educating the citizenry that these solutions are complicated and expensive.

I know how disappointing the March 14 vote must be for you. You worked very hard under very difficult deadlines last summer and all to craft the best plan you could and now you have to go back to the drawing board. I know that I can speak for the Municipal League when I say that this issue is of paramount importance to our Trustees and members and that we would like to continue to work with you to fashion a reasonable plan that can meet with success at the polls. I wish you well in your deliberations and thank you very much for your time.

Mr. George Duff, Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce:

I want to underscore her comments. I have talked with the major businesses who are supportive and involved in funding; the word is to do what you are starting to do here. Listen to the customer and invite in everyone possible who wants to comment. I encourage you to listen to the customer. There is a tendency to want to tell people what it is they should want instead of asking them. You have a lot of expertise. You have done a great deal of study, but I encourage you to listen. Both the businesses who supported and opposed the proposal have indicated a desire for the right solution. I hope we can bring the business community together for those discussions. The Chambers did and did not support the proposal. I hope to bring them together for a consensus. I don't think there would be enthusiasm to resubmit that which was defeated without taking ample time to go out and be sure you are doing the right thing.

FACT raised some interesting points. I never thought I would hear Senator McDonald suggest that bus service be provided free of charge. It seems this is a worthwhile consideration. I think the reality and proposition of taking time to analyze what happens is important. I am not suggesting it should take an inordinate amount of time.

Mr. Preston Schiller, Sierra Club:

I believe transit is the commons of public transportation. It is publicly owned space in motion in our society. People can come together and a variety of needs are met. I am not surprised to be under attack by the same forces that want to roll back the growth management act and clear cut our forests. I appreciate Senator McDonald's remarks. He has given you one of the best reasons why the Puget Sound should not support the gas tax proposal because less comes back to the Puget Sound area and nothing is proposed for public transportation.

I have been following this for eight years, going back to the Metro Advisory Committee, which was a sounding board for the JRPC plan. Frankly, I didn't realize the speaker and writer was a mountaineer who was involved to write a position statement against this. I believe, over the years, the plan has improved. I think the planners and elected

officials improved considerably. It may not be perfection and I would encourage you to stay the course. We may have to make some adjustments. We may have to think about how to phase things in increments and to deal with financing.

I want to speak to two or three issues that should be on the plate. I would like to set the stage by noting that Mr. Hornung lives on Bainbridge Island. I assume he commutes to his rail bashing job on the state ferry system. Would Bainbridge Island even exist without such an amenity? Would he and his neighbors consider a daily SOB (single occupancy boat) commute? What would that do to Puget Sound? What about replacing the ferries with human powered paddle boats. That would be an interesting commute. How about a little SOB motor boat with motor boat jitneys slowed by the SOBs. At this point the residents might move to land and clamor for a rail commute.

Mr. Sutherland:

I have been friends with Mr. Schiller for many years. I would feel better if you would direct your remarks to our plan.

Mr. Schiller:

I believe the RTA can accomplish its vision and plans if it pays attention to a few important issues. One problem is the RTA law and the other is congestion thinking about congestion. Another is HOV lanes, which are non-solutions. The final is creating a Puget Sound vision and not a Houston vision. This week I testified to Representative Schmidt about why funds for high capacity transit should not be cut. I thank her for cosponsoring the RTA bill. Several years ago we worked the bill and we didn't foresee some of the problems in the legislation. We didn't want it to be a special authority but a body to better address land use and transportation issues together. We thought we could craft a regional solution. All would benefit through better management. We didn't anticipate the Christmas tree effect of the JRPC. We need to think about a more phased, incremental approach.

I applaud your candor on creating a transit alternative and solution to congestion. We need to educate people. Highway expansion increases congestion. That has been proven by research. An example of this is the I-90 bridge expansion which attracted 40,000 new trips daily. We are left with transit and transit management solutions. HOV is a non-solution for various reasons, including the fact that it is a form of highway expansion. EPA analysis and models have analyzed the effects of HOV lanes and conclude it increases driving and does not improve air quality. There are segments around the country that work. They work because it is convenient for transit to use them. I am not sure the way they are being built here is useful to transit.

One thing the RTA might address is whether we want a Houston solution. "Heading Down the Wrong Track" has a whole section on Houston. I called and did research with EPA; it turns out they were alarmed at the increase in driving occurring as a result of the freeway expansion and the increase in motor vehicle related solutions. It is not due to any highway expansion. If Houston wants to shut down its refineries, that may happen.

I urge you to keep up the good work in creating a phased plan.

Mr. Brad Jerkovich:

I have no formal remarks. I would just answer questions related to the campaign. Much of the analysis that has been done lends itself to comments about the outcome. One important remark by Ms. Hague is to consider the salient issues, which is taking away the question mark about funding. That would be worthwhile. The second is related to cost/benefit and legitimate revisiting of boundaries.

Mr. Sutherland:

You indicated that in looking at when we need to come back and place this before the voters, it should not be done in 1995. As we listened to the other panel, they wanted substantial justifications and study to determine a variety of innovative approaches. If we are to do that, it may take significantly longer than 1996. What is your sense of when this should be back before the voters? Spring of 1996?

Ms. Claudon:

I could make a case for each of those dates, including May of this year. I said the business community has decided they do not have the financial ability to participate in another campaign in 1995. To go back to the communities, we need more months than between now and the fall. While the opponents have many interesting ideas, I don't think there is a need for in-depth planning. I think you have a lot of good information that maybe needs to be spread out and discussed by non-planners.

Mr. Davidson:

Smaller increments could be implemented while we continue this work. Would that make sense to you?

Mr. Schiller:

Are you talking about a bus only increment?

Mr. Davidson:

I am suggesting smaller increments. This was a big increment to be built over 16 years. Maybe the first phase wasn't small enough.

Mr. Schiller:

I think we need a fair amount of discussion of this. I would defer to Mr. Rice and Ms. Choe, but I think a bus only solution would not find great enthusiasm in Seattle and the close-in suburbs. I think there are ways of doing some of the rail more cost effectively, but I think basically the persons in the region who use transit the most have voted for rail. I think the margins elsewhere can be debated. I think buses are an important part of the solution. Maybe we didn't amplify that well enough, but I would suggest five to seven years for a first phase with some bus and rail. I think the RTA has to decide who is going to stand back and support this from the sidelines to get it going so people see it and enjoy it around the region.

Mr. Duff:

We need to get to a regional solution. People need to be convinced something incremental is not intended to derail a bigger program.

Mr. Nickels:

I want to thank everyone for coming today. Thank you for the leadership you showed in advocating for this plan on the ballot.

I understand there were a few long faces at the meeting last Friday. I would like to have seen a 51% approval, but I would like to suggest that when you go in and look at the numbers, if the turn out had been 40% instead of 30%, it would have been passed. In many parts of the region where it didn't pass, the numbers would have been much closer or over 50% with a higher voter turnout. It would not have passed in Everett, but this is the case in south and east King County. This doesn't mean we put the same plan back on the ballot. The fact that there was such a discrepancy is a message we need to look at carefully and why a solution that made sense in Seattle didn't make sense elsewhere. We need to spend that time not in planning, but in listening and taking in ideas from the outside. I invite you to not only participate, but to help lead that effort.

Mr. Miller:

I would like to ask a similar question regarding the message you sense is being sent and what the predominant issue was that caused the negative vote.

Ms. Claudon:

We are not a monolithic organization.

Mr. Jerkovich:

There were so many messages. We hope to do more analysis in the next ten days. Again, one thing we battled was considered an absorption problem. That, with the \$6.7 billion price tag, was overwhelming. It is overwhelming to determine which part was a problem. From polling and some of the after polling, we found there was a price tag problem. That is a legitimate place to start. The other was the federal/state funding issue. The Citizens for Sound Transit asked and tried to assure voters that if there wasn't state money, you would go back to them for a vote. It would be good to take that uncertainty away as part of the formula in the future. Those things were factors, as well as an anti-Seattle vote because of the perception that a lot of this effort would be devoted to Seattle and the cost/benefit is not there for those outlying regions. Those are the broad themes.

Ms. Quigley:

I agree. I would also reiterate there was a very short period of time and that this was a poor time to run a campaign. There was not enough time to build momentum.

Mr. Schiller:

After hearing FACT attack the RTA before the House Transportation Committee and impune several members, I don't think it was a personal barb. People who would cross the Sound might think about what we are up against.

We have got to do a substantial job of dealing with this issue of congestion. It may not be soluble short of a mass exodus from the area, but it can be managed. It has made you vulnerable.

I think that the opposition should be forced to come up with a plan that can be analyzed and costed. If Houston is their vision, we should make that very clear. We should have the media show us how great it is.

To deal with the issue and get the opposition to come up with a plan that you can analyze and cost is very important.

Mr. Rice:

I am concerned if the solution to gaining voter confidence is more buses and amassing a tax structure for more buses. How do you convince the taxpayers if they are paying in each of the counties when they think they are getting more buses in the first place. It doesn't seem to me that we should ask the taxpayer to pay for more buses. It seems the state should allocate some of its resources to pay for that instead of the taxpayers being asked to do that. I hope those of you who are liking that notion get together around the question of who do you tax to do that. Some of us have paid and raised the MVET to get more service. There is a disproportionate burden. I hope in your quest to move away from high capacity transit and rail you join in and be sure the taxpayers aren't paying twice for a service they are getting. I think we have to talk about our mission and why we are here.

Ms. Gates:

I have been glad that we are hearing more ideas from more people than we heard before the election. I want to thank the Citizens for Sound Transit for starting the dialogue that we tried to start with our many meetings. I think at this time, what we have is an interest in transportation and an interest in transit that we didn't have six or eight months ago in the general public. I have someone telling me their new ideas every day. This is the challenge we face. What this campaign did was to begin the conversation and heightening of awareness of the possibilities. I would welcome an analysis of what people's ideas are now that they have been more interested in this. If we could have a measure of central tendencies, I think that would be very helpful.

Mr. Jerkovich:

You can look at the dollars spent on our campaign and the opposition and it was close to \$1 million. It is a great base to start from. I believe this group will attempt to go out and do some of that work to gather more of a feeling for a consensus for some of these ideas.

Mr. Davidson:

What I heard from people in my area is we are already paying a .6% in sales tax and where are the buses? People were not willing to do another .4% when they couldn't find the buses. The perspectives of what we are already spending are much different in different regions. I do like the dialogue and appreciate everyone being here today. I am encouraged hearing both panels.

Mr. Sutherland:

We do owe these groups our gratitude. They have done a lot and made the product better. I hope that will continue.

Mr. Laing:

Those are the sentiments of the entire Board.

Mr. Miller:

I would like to give thanks for the high road that the individuals took, including Board members. There is an opportunity and tendency to go at each other; what I felt today was a high road and I truly appreciate that.

Mr. Laing:

Thank you for your efforts.

Board members do not look ready to enter into conversations at this time. I am happy for the dialogue today and I want to remind you that the time line we are on now is that staff is taking direction from the comments made at the last meeting and preparing analytical information regarding costs and timelines for alternative election dates. This will be presented to the Finance Committee on April 7 in preparation for decision-making by the Board on April 14.

How do we finance it? There is a significant decision to be made by the legislature on the transportation budget, specifically the high capacity grant funds. In the hearing before the House Transportation Committee, the comments by the chair and committee members were not particularly encouraging to this group or me or Mr. Matoff about the \$9 million request we have made. We are responding to requests for more information. It is based on \$5 million in the first biennium, starting in July, and \$4 million in the second biennium. If the vote is in the first biennium, funding for the second biennium might be moot. Also related to that is the suggestion made by Senator McDonald and we need to have conversation in our own caucuses regarding these broad areas. If we are going to make input to the legislature within the time left in this session, April 14 would have to be a focus of discussion on fundamental issues. Had there been time we would have had caucuses today but that is not practical at this time. Between now and April 7 and the 14th we need to have those conversations within our caucuses and between Board members.

Mr. Hansen:

I did not attend the last meeting and I won't be here for the April 14 meeting. Are we still thinking about an election in 1995?

Mr. Laing:

This hasn't been brought to any formal closure. We need to include the question of what if there are no high capacity transit funds for the next biennium.

Mr. Hansen:

If we made a decision not to have an election in 1995, it might be easier to make a more specific request to the legislature. At the hearing a suggestion was made that we need to have dialogue with legislators because their comments indicate we need a discussion early in the process. To the extent the statutory mission of the RTA might be reviewed, maybe we should schedule a meeting with them.

Mr. Laing:

Were you thinking of scheduling this meeting during the legislative session?

Mr. Hansen:

These issues are all tied together. I think there was an invitation from the legislature to hear from us. It might be a good idea to discuss these issues, which could include statutory authorization for the RTA and whether it should be broadened.

Mr. Laing:

The question is to what extent do we need conversations among ourselves prior to meeting with the Transportation Committee. I am open to suggestions.

Mr. Drewel:

The real threshold inquiry is in following up on your comments. Without an election in 1995, that is a different threshold.

Mr. Laing:

The timeline now is to make that decision on April 14. Should it be earlier?

Mr. Drewel:

It should be done earlier, if that is possible.

Mr. Laing:

I could do some outreach to the Board, as Chair. Staff could submit its materials and I could then do some outreach.

Mr. Drewel:

Let's do that.

Mr. Morrison:

My suggestion would be it is not enough to talk to the Transportation Committee members. I think we lack support among general legislators. We got a sample of that the other day. We need to have other members of the legislature saying we need to give the RTA a chance and pour new life into it. Right now their proposal is in the Rules Committee and it doesn't have the votes to bring it out. You need to broaden your support. When you see legislators,

please mention this to them. The Senate Chair of Transportation is going through the process that will prepare the Chair's version of the Senate budget. That could come later on this week. Ideally we would have the Senate present a more balanced package. We won't know the final results for some time. It would be best to have a date for the next election cycle.

Mr. Laing:

Is there any other information?

Mr. Matoff:

I think you have covered it. We are preparing alternative budget scenarios, including ballots in November of this year and November of next year so the Board can see the budget implications. We are making assumptions for reduced staffing for the later date that would be useful to keep it going without engaging in too much planning and other unnecessary activities.

Mr. Hansen:

Staff is preparing a budget alternative based on an election in November of this year. Unless there is other sentiment, I got a message that they would not appreciate consideration of an election this November. I have heard this in many places. If our budget shows we are considering that, would we be shooting ourselves in the foot?

Mr. Matoff:

Unless there is additional high capacity transit funding approved, an election this year is the only one the agency can afford. Staff will show what can be done with existing funds and what can be done with additional funding. We will do what the Board would like.

Mr. Hansen:

It seems the sooner we can get past this decision, the better because the clock is ticking. If there is any way to get back to Olympia sooner, I would recommend it.

Mr. Matoff:

We have submitted a grant request for \$9 million for two years of funding, which would make possible the maximum range of options to consider. I urge you to support that grant application in Olympia.

Mr. Davidson:

I understand your various options would come to the Finance Committee. After that and communication with other Board members, I think it will become more clear and we probably could deal with it at that time.

Ms. Choe:

One of the key considerations for timing of the ballot is who can fund a campaign. In looking at the timing, we need to be practical in weighing that into our consideration. We may be ready to go, but without funds for a campaign, that is inconsequential.

Mr. Laing:

The only consideration regarding a 1995 ballot is whether the legislature decides there is no funding for the next biennium, which would make it reasonable to consider taking a proposition to the public this year. We may decide it isn't. After the Finance Committee meeting, I will do some outreach with the Board.

Mr. Miller:

Will the Finance Committee meet on April 7?

Mr. Laing:

This meeting will take place on April 6.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

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