

Appendix M Environmental Justice Public Outreach Summary Report



**TRANSPORTATION 2040
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Environmental Justice Public Outreach Summary Report

Fall 2009

Prepared by PRR, Inc and
The Puget Sound Regional Council
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Contents

Public Outreach Overview	5
About Environmental Justice	6
Transportation 2040 Environmental Justice Outreach Approach	7
Summary of Findings.....	9
Preferred Alternative	9
Key Themes	10
Meeting Summary Notes	16

Public Outreach Overview

In May 2009, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Transportation 2040, an update of the region's transportation plan. Transportation 2040 will address congestion, mobility, environmental sustainability, and transportation finance in central Puget Sound. The DEIS for Transportation 2040 analyzes six transportation plan alternatives to address forecasted population and job growth in King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties in Washington state, as well as funding sustainability and climate change. The plan covers all modes of travel, including aviation, ferries, walking, bicycling, roads, and public transit.

PSRC will adopt a final Transportation 2040 Plan in 2010. Ultimately, it will serve as the transportation plan for the entire central Puget Sound region.

In accordance with PSRC policy, PSRC and its consultant, PRR conducted environmental justice outreach in Snohomish, King, Kitsap, and Pierce counties. The purpose of the outreach was to evaluate the extent to which the benefits of each transportation alternative are evenly distributed and whether the consequences of each alternative fall disproportionately on low-income or minority populations.

The public involvement process is designed to provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and support early and continuing involvement of public agencies and citizens to ensure input will be incorporated into the decision making process for the adoption of Transportation 2040.

PSRC is committed to working with citizens, affected public agencies, users of transportation services and facilities and other interested parties to ensure early and continuous public notification about and participation in major actions and decisions by the PSRC. Citizens and interested parties have extensive opportunities to interact with and receive a response from appointed and elected officials on issues of interest or concern.

A **low-income person** is an individual whose annual household income falls below the federal poverty guidelines, as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For 2009, the federal poverty guideline for a household of four living in one of the 48 contiguous states and Washington DC is \$22,050.

According to federal guidance, member of a **minority population** is an individual who identifies himself or herself as Black (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa); Hispanic (a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race); Asian (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); American Indian/Alaskan Native (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition); or as more than one race.

About Environmental Justice

The concept of environmental justice is rooted in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. In response to a concern that low-income or minority populations bear a disproportionate amount of adverse health and environmental effects of public projects, and to reinforce the fundamental rights and legal requirements contained in Title VI, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898: *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (1994). It directs each federal agency to make environmental justice part of its mission.

Following Executive Order 12898, The United States Department of Transportation issued Order 5610.2: *USDOT Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (1997). It provided guidelines for how environmental justice analyses should be performed and how environmental justice should be incorporated into the transportation decision-making process. The USDOT Order requires federal agencies to do the following:

1. Explicitly consider human health and environmental effects related to transportation projects that may have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low-income or minority populations.
2. Implement procedures to provide “meaningful opportunities for public involvement” by members of those populations during project planning and development (USDOT 1997, §5[b][1]).

Transportation 2040 Environmental Justice Outreach Approach

To best understand the possible effects of the elements of any of the six plan alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement report on low-income or minority populations, PSRC engaged PRR to facilitate five roundtable discussions with community leaders in the four counties that are members of the Puget Sound Regional Council – King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

Although the public was welcome to attend any of the roundtable discussions, we extended specific invitations to community leaders representing low-income and minority populations. Consistent with PSRC policy, we also extended invitations to community leaders representing elderly, special needs populations, limited-English proficient (LEP) residents or business owners, people who are completely reliant on public transit, and social service providers.

We held the roundtables at ADA-accessible facilities. PSRC announced the discussions on the PSRC website and through a regionwide mailing to leaders identified in PSRC's contact database that represent minority and low-income communities. This database has been created over the years by PSRC as it has conducted outreach activities. PRR also made follow-up telephone calls and emails to community leaders to encourage attendance and participation.

We held the roundtable discussions during the formal public comment period for the DEIS, which began on May 28, 2009 and concluded on July 31, 2009. In addition to taking minutes at every roundtable discussion, we distributed copies of the DEIS and comment forms and encouraged participants to submit comments. PSRC also held an open house and formal public hearing on July 9, 2009, at which the public had an opportunity to speak with PSRC staff and make comments on the DEIS report.

PSRC and PRR held the following roundtable discussions:

Monday, June 8, 2009 *11:30 a.m.*

Pierce County

Cross Cultural Collaborative of Pierce County
The Korean Women's Association at International Place
1701 East 44th Street
Tacoma, WA 98407

Tuesday, June 16, 2009 *3 p.m.*

King County

Seattle Public Library Rainier Beach Branch
9125 Rainier Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98118

Wednesday, June 17, 2009 *3 p.m.*

Kitsap County

Kitsap Regional Library – Sylvan Way Branch
1301 Sylvan Way
Bremerton, WA 98310

Wednesday, June 24, 2009 *9 a.m.*

Snohomish County

United Way of Snohomish County
3120 McDougall Avenue, Suite 200
Everett, WA 98201

Thursday, June 25, 2009 *3 p.m.*

King County

King County Library System – Auburn Branch
1102 Auburn Way South
Auburn, WA 98002

Summary of Findings

Nearly 60 people representing more than 40 organizations and local governmental units participated in five facilitated roundtable discussions on the Transportation 2040 DEIS. Nearly a dozen key themes emerged from the discussions as critical concerns for low-income, minority, elderly, special-needs, and populations with limited English proficiency.

Preferred Alternative

One of the central purposes of a public comment period on draft alternatives is to solicit input that will help decision makers to develop and select a preferred alternative. More information about the alternatives that were evaluated in the DEIS can be found at <http://www.psrc.org/transportation/t2040/t2040-pubs/trans2040-deis/>. Although no clear consensus emerged from the roundtable discussions to support one plan alternative over another, many participants agreed on the following:

- Use tolling revenues to expand transit service and connectivity throughout the region.

Accordingly, participants seemed to favor elements of plan alternatives 4 and 5 more than any of the other plan alternative options. At the same time, almost everyone who participated in the roundtable discussions had a negative reaction to tolling local roadways and arterials. They viewed this element of Alternative 5 as inherently unfair and burdensome to low-income and minority populations.

Participants in the roundtable discussions in Snohomish and Kitsap counties expressed support for some elements of plan Alternative 2. Although this was a minority opinion, supporters of elements within Alternative 2 viewed this alternative as more compatible with the needs of rural communities. Generally, these participants also held more traditional views of how and when to use tolling revenues to support the region's transportation network; in other words, they preferred to use tolling revenues only to pay for new construction or in the transportation corridor where it is raised.

Key Themes

Two paramount themes emerged in every session:

- The need to coordinate land and transit use planning.
- The need to ensure equity and fairness in tolling practices.

Other issues surfaced during the roundtable discussions, including:

- Widespread mistrust of and lack of confidence in government.
- The need to dramatically expand transit service and improve travel connectivity and convenience.
- The desire to reduce congestion.
- Strong reservations about tolling arterials.
- The need to preserve and improve air quality in low-income and minority communities.
- The need to explicitly evaluate whether adverse human health effects of the plan alternatives will disproportionately affect low-income or minority populations.

Following is a description of each of these themes. We also asked participants for their recommendations for how these issues could be addressed.

The need to coordinate land and transit use planning

During all five roundtable discussions, participants observed that there seemed to be little connection between land use planning and transit planning.

Participants frequently shared observations and anecdotal examples of how low-income people are relegated to the fringes of urban areas or isolated in rural communities, as affordable housing in urban centers becomes more rare. Typically, affordable housing lacks sufficient access to transit services or employment. Furthermore, affordable housing may not be in close proximity to the goods and services that a family needs to manage daily life. For example, we heard from participants in the Pierce County roundtable discussion that many people living in affordable housing in Tacoma had to drive several miles to get to a grocery store. Community leaders representing special-needs populations noted that the problem is even more acute for the populations they represent (e.g., medical facilities with no transit access).

Participants reported that low-income people are spending up to several hours during each day to get to work, school, or errands. Transit service and land use patterns reinforce the need for people to own cars. Many times we heard that low-income populations may be more car dependent than others because of the lack of public transportation and accessible goods and services in low-income areas, and the distribution of the region's jobs.

Strategies suggested by participants:

- Transportation 2040 should demonstrate close coordination with VISION 2040, the region's adopted growth management, environmental, economic and transportation strategy. It should emphasize linking transportation investments with transit-oriented development and affordable housing.

The need to ensure equity and fairness in tolling practices

Many participants seemed to understand the financial dilemma faced by public officials in identifying adequate funding for current and future transportation projects. Many recognized that tolling could provide sustainable sources of revenue for transportation projects. However, most participants still expressed concern or reservations about tolling practices and how they would affect low income populations.

The most common sentiments expressed during the roundtables related to how tolling would limit mobility for low-income, special needs, youth, and elderly populations, "forcing them out of their cars and onto buses." Many participants felt the current transit system was too fragmented and not a viable alternative to driving.

Others characterized tolling as an "unfair tax" on low-income populations. One social worker pointed out that many hourly low-wage jobs require applicants to have a car in order to qualify for employment. She wondered how tolling would further erode their ability to earn a living.

An advocate for special needs populations spoke about how tolling might impact her agency's ability to maintain service levels for their clients, as most services are delivered by volunteers who drive and are compensated for travel expenses, which would burden either the driver or program.

Some participants from Kitsap and Snohomish counties said tolling was unfair to rural communities. They expressed concern that they would have to pay tolls but would realize little benefit, as most of the revenue would be invested in urban areas.

In Kitsap County, some participants argued that tolling should not be used indefinitely and only to pay for the construction of new transportation infrastructure. Others in Kitsap County argued that tolling proceeds should remain in the communities where they are generated to fund local transportation projects. (It should be noted that four of the seven participants in the Kitsap County meeting represented Kitsap Alliance of Property Owners. According to their website, the mission statement of KAPO is:

1. To free private property from unreasonable government regulation.
2. To work for responsible wildlife habitat protection and for conservation of natural resources.
3. To support those who defend the rights guaranteed to owners of private property by the U.S. and WA state constitutions.)

Strategies suggested by participants:

- To the extent that a planning-level document can do so, Transportation 2040 should demonstrate how investments of tolling revenue would serve specific communities. This would allow people to better evaluate what they are getting for their investment.
- At the very least, Transportation 2040 should include a planning principle that the benefits of tolling revenue should be distributed fairly, to reassure low-income, minority, and rural communities that they will see real benefits from tolling revenue.
- Transportation 2040 should provide a list of recommended strategies that tolling authorities should implement to mitigate for the effects of tolling on low-income populations and social service providers. For example, Transportation 2040 could recommend special provisions for social service providers, such as rebates for work-related tolls.

Mistrust of and lack of confidence in government

During most of the roundtable discussions, we heard a lot about the lack of trust and confidence people feel in government. For example, although most participants agreed that there is a desperate need for increased transit service levels – including ferry service – few felt confident that they would ever see better transit service in their communities, particularly in rural areas.

Many participants expressed frustration that several transportation-related taxes did not deliver on promises. For example, in the Seattle–King County roundtable, participants complained that the opening of Sound Transit Link light rail offered some real benefits to the Rainier Valley, but questioned the wisdom of planned cuts to King County Metro bus service along adjacent corridors heavily used by low-income and minority populations.

Strategies suggested by participants:

- As described earlier, Transportation 2040 should be as specific as possible in outlining the benefits that specific communities will experience in return for revenue collected.

The need to dramatically expand transit service and improve travel connectivity and convenience

Most participants agreed that transit service continues to be a necessity for low-income, special needs, youth, and elderly populations. However, they expressed strong concerns about the lack of connectivity between transit routes and different transit providers in the existing regional transit network. Others talked about the long travel times between cities and the need for multiple transfers. Most participants agreed that the region needs expanded transit service, but it also needs better connectivity.

Representatives of special needs populations in every roundtable discussion talked about their clients frustrations with paratransit services. Paratransit service is an alternative mode of flexible passenger transportation that does not follow fixed routes or schedules. Typically vans or mini-buses are used to provide paratransit service, but also shared taxis and jitneys are important. Most recounted stories about clients who found it difficult to travel between jurisdictions using paratransit services.

Strategies suggested by participants:

- Select a plan alternative that reinvests tolling revenue in transit and paratransit and focuses on improving connectivity and convenience.

The desire to reduce congestion

Most participants acknowledged the need to reduce congestion in the central Puget Sound region. However, some questioned whether or not tolling was the remedy for the problem. A few participants questioned the outcomes of the High occupancy/toll lanes (HOT lanes) pilot project on SR 167, wondering if it was alleviating traffic gridlock in the corridor. HOT lanes are a road pricing approach that toll motorists in single-occupant vehicles who choose to access high-occupancy vehicle lanes (or "HOV lanes"). Other asked if PSRC had researched other metropolitan areas to learn from their experiences with tolling and HOT lanes, and whether traffic flows improved. Some participants expressed skepticism about the reliability of traffic models in accurately forecasting improvements to congestion.

Strategies suggested by participants:

- Provide data to support the use of congestion pricing in Transportation 2040. Use data collected on similar congestion pricing efforts in other jurisdictions, rather than theoretical traffic models. Conduct a public education campaign about the experiences other regions or countries have had with similar systems, and how those projects improved the transportation system while ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and costs.

Strong reservations about tolling arterials

Based on the input from the round tables, in general tolling arterials was not a popular element of the plan alternatives. In addition to other concerns, participants worried that drivers would use residential streets to avoid tolls.

Strategies suggested by participants:

- The Final Environmental Impact Statement should evaluate the extent to which tolling arterials will cause diversion of cars to local neighborhood streets, especially those with substantial proportions of low-income or minority populations.
- If Transportation 2040 includes tolling of arterials, provide real world data from similar tolling efforts in other jurisdictions to demonstrate that tolling will not cause high levels of traffic diversion onto residential streets.

The need to preserve and improve air quality in low-income and minority communities

Discussions about air quality and carbon emissions did not top the list of discussion topics at any of the five roundtables. However, some participants did express concerns about how the regional transportation plan would address both air quality and how it might impact their communities and the larger issue of greenhouse gas emissions and its impact on global climate change. Universally, participants agreed that measures to improve air quality should be included in any adopted transportation plan.

Several participants expressed concern that low-income and minority communities tend to bear much of the burden of poor air quality associated with transportation system. They asked how this plan would protect their communities from experiencing more environmental hazards and how this plan would *improve* air quality in *their* communities.

Strategies suggested by participants:

- Demonstrate how Transportation 2040 will avoid or minimize high and adverse disproportionate effects to air quality in low-income and minority communities.
- Demonstrate how Transportation 2040 will offer measures to improve air quality in low-income and minority communities.

The need to explicitly evaluate whether adverse human health effects of the plan alternatives will disproportionately affect low-income or minority populations

Some participants expressed concern that the DEIS evaluates environmental justice and human health separately. Environmental justice originally emerged because of concerns that low-income and minority communities bear disproportionate burden of environmental hazards, such as air pollution and chemical exposure. For this reason, environmental justice analyses should consider the extent to which a plan or project will create environmental and human health hazards that will disproportionately burden low-income or minority communities.

Some representatives of public health organizations pointed out that improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities will support human health, whereas a plan alternative that emphasizes automobile travel over bicycle and pedestrian travel could harm human health. The environmental justice analysis for Transportation 2040 should consider whether low-income and minority communities will benefit or experience adverse effects as a result of the preferred alternative's mix of transportation investments.

Mitigation strategies suggested by participants:

- The FEIS should document whether low-income or minority populations will experience disproportionate high and adverse effects as a result of increased air pollution, chemical exposure, or other threats to human health in the plan alternatives.
- The FEIS should consider the extent to which low-income or minority populations would be helped by improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities in their communities. Conversely, the FEIS should examine the extent to which low-income and minority communities might be harmed by a mix of transportation investments that favors automobile travel over bicycle and pedestrian travel.

Meeting Summary Notes

Meeting Date:	June 8, 2009
Meeting Location:	Korean Women's Association – Cross Cultural Collaborative Meeting of Pierce County
Number of Attendees:	30
Facilitator:	Jamie Strausz-Clark (PRR)
PSRC Staff:	Ben Bakkenta and Mary Pat Lawlor
Note-taker:	Jennifer Sandberg (PRR)
EJ Populations Represented:	Racial and ethnic populations, elderly, special needs populations

Attendees:

The Cross-Cultural Collaborative of Pierce County (CCC) is a group of social service organizations and individuals who meet monthly for the purpose of reducing health disparities among diverse populations, building collaborative efforts, disseminating information, reducing tobacco use, and improving the health of minority populations. The group is facilitated by the Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department.

Representatives from the following organizations attended the roundtable session in June 2009:

- Korean Women's Association (KWA)
- Indo Chinese Service Center (ICSC)
- My Service Mind (MSM)
- El Camino
- Samoan National Nurses Association (SNNA)
- Puyallup Tribe
- Building Bridges
- St. John Church, Tacoma
- Pierce Transit
- Pierce County AIDS Foundation (PCAF)
- Metro Parks Tacoma
- Centro Latino
- Community Health Care (CHC)
- Gov. Interagency Council on Health Disparities
- Catholic Community Services (CCS)

- Pierce County Housing and Development
- People of Color Against Aids Network (POCAAN)
- Pierce County Community Services
- City of Tacoma
- The Evergreen State College

Summary of Findings

Five primary themes emerged from the two-hour discussion with members of the Pierce County Cross Cultural Collaborative. Key among them are concerns about equity and fairness, a lack of trust and confidence implementing a tolling system, travel connectivity and convenience on public transit, coordinated land and transit use planning; uses of tolling revenues, and economic stress.

Equity and fairness of tolling

Participants expressed a desire for an equitable and fair tolling system for those among us who may be disproportionately impacted by tolling. Specifically, participants were concerned about youth, the elderly, special needs populations, and people living in rural communities. Some people felt that tolling may unfairly penalize the poor, “forcing them out of their cars and onto buses.” There was a general sense that a fragmented regional transit system with infrequent service, particularly off-peak, is not a viable alternative to driving.

Although most participants felt tolling might ultimately prove to be unfair for low-income populations, several participants recognized the value of replacing existing funding sources with tolling to enable greater investment in public transit. This element of the plan alternatives seemed to be a mitigation measure for the practice of tolling.

Trust and Confidence in Government

Some participants were incredulous about the gas tax being phased out if Alternatives 4 or 5 were adopted. Others were skeptical about the motives of a tolling program, commenting that they thought tolling would only disperse poorer people from roadways. Some participants expressed general reservations about public participation processes, viewing them as perfunctory rather than intentional and substantive. However, they were grateful to PSRC for coming to their organization to solicit feedback and comments. In fact, the Collaborative invited PRR and PSRC back for an informal follow-up discussion.

Travel connectivity and convenience

Although most participants favored more transit options as an element of future planning efforts, some were also critical about the shortfalls of the current transit regional network. The lack of connectivity between routes and systems was viewed as a major deterrent to transit use. Many participants talked about the need to commute between cities within the region. Long commute times, infrequent schedules, and multiple transfers were viewed as primary reasons transit is perceived as inconvenient and burdensome at times. Despite the perception, most participants universally agreed that transit is a necessity for many low-income, elderly, and special needs populations and should be a cornerstone element of future regional transportation planning efforts.

Coordinated Land and Transit Use

Land and transit use were also major themes of the discussion. Many participants pointed out that employment centers and affordable housing options do not frequently coexist in central Puget Sound, forcing poorer people to commute greater distances. There was a general sentiment that transportation planning should be closely linked to land use planning.

One participant spoke about difficulty of traveling more than 40 blocks from a Tacoma Housing Authority development to a grocery store with fresh vegetables. He and others challenged PSRC to think “creatively” and use the opportunity to improve transit with transit-related developments that add value and quality of life to communities.

Meeting Format

The meeting was organized into a roundtable discussion group format with a brief formal presentation. The presentation was followed by a facilitated open discussion on tolling and transportation.

General Presentation

During the formal presentation, PSRC staff presented a PowerPoint slide presentation that highlighted:

- The DEIS process
- Key Issues driving the Transportation 2040 plan
- Overview of demographic trends in region
- Elements and benefits of the six plan alternatives under consideration
- Sustainable funding
- Air Quality measures
- Mobility and congestion analysis
- Use of user fees within each alternative
- How to comment on the DEIS and to influence the process

Comments from participants

- Views on Tolling
 - Jamie, the PRR facilitator, first reviewed the alternatives chart to highlight the benefit distribution of the tolling alternatives; asked group to state their feelings on tolling, mobility and connectivity
 - Audience member responded that tolling roads – including major arterials – unfairly penalizes poor people, forcing them out of their cars and on to the bus.
 - Jamie suggested that the current method of transportation funding – the gas tax – may also be more costly for low-income people.
 - Jamie asked the commenter if the transit system were better and did not require multiple transfers, would that seem more fair.
 - The same commenter responded that if tolls were used to improve transit her community and other low-income/multi ethnic communities would likely feel that it would seem fairer.
 - A woman who travels from Kitsap to Tacoma commented that she has no choice but to drive as there is only one bus that makes the trip at inconvenient times. She asked if it is realistic to ask people in similar situations to take the bus as an alternative to being tolled.
 - Another commenter elaborated on the situation of his constituents by saying that tolling will create an even bigger burden for low-income families who are already under great budget stress.
 - Jamie explained that, theoretically, tolling could replace declining revenues from gas, sales, and real estate taxes.

- Another participant commented that he does not believe that the gas tax will go away, even when a toll is implemented. He also expressed concern that tolling will only get the poor off the roads and benefit the rich
- There was mention of the disproportionate affects of tolling on those who live in more rural communities (like Kitsap) especially youth, elderly, and ADA communities.
- A woman representing Catholic Community Services mentioned that everyone needs options. She works with people who live in their cars. She posed the question, when their car is their home, how can we try to force them out of it with tolls?
- Views on transit and travel options
 - A participant commented that as much as she would like to make more environmentally friendly transportation choices, her commute from Des Moines does not provide viable options. Parking and riding takes twice as long.
- Views on transportation and community development
 - A participant expressed concern that too often, tax revenues support improvements and construction of new structures that split up and hurt low-income communities.
 - Amy Bates, facilitator for the Cross-Cultural Collaborative commented that planners cannot be passive on their approach to addressing transportation injustices. EJ populations have experienced too many adverse effects of transportation development. She said that if the PSRC really wants to be equitable, the final plan will avoid placing any more burdens on EJ populations. She also said that more attention should to be paid to unintentional effects of transportation development on low- income communities.
 - A participant said that she values connectivity and wishes that more could be done to improve connectivity in different communities.
 - The same participant mentioned that low-income residents of this community (Salishan, which was developed by Tacoma Housing Authority) have to travel 40 blocks to a grocery store to get asparagus but corn dogs and fast food are available at the corner store. Public health is sacrificed for convenience. She values local planning.
 - Another comment concerning health, connectivity and options focused on the addition of bikes lanes being unrealistic on already cramped roads; Ben commented that some of the plan alternatives address bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
 - One commenter mentioned that as the economy slides into a deeper hole, transportation revenues will only be enough to maintain the system that we already have.
 - Another commenter mentioned that this transportation plan is missing creative, out of the box thinking. He suggested that PSRC consider examining public/private partnerships as one option for improving communities and making them more livable, so people won't have to travel as much. He also commented on the poor distribution of grocery stores and says that the situation is damning the poor to eat fast food.

- Jamie said that, optimally, everyone would like to be able to work and live in their own communities; the commenter agreed.
- Another participant said that we need to be realistic about what can and cannot be done in Pierce County. He believes that Pierce County will never have strong employment centers.
- Someone expressed concern that alternatives 3, 4, and 5 create more impervious surfaces and have more environmental impact. Jamie explained that actually, alternatives 3, 4, and 5 create the fewest road miles and therefore have the least amount of impervious surface and adverse environmental impact.
- Views on trust in government and the decision-making process
 - The comments then shift edto trust issues. Why should the group trust Jamie or PSRC? Are we just paying them lip service when we ask them for their opinions, or will their feedback be considered in a meaningful way?
 - Jamie and Ben responded that we are committed to keeping the group involved. Although there will probably be some things about the final plan that people in this room do not like, the hope is that the final plan is equitable and addresses the needs of all PSRC constituents.
 - Amy Bates concluded the discussion with the comment that no one in their group or in other groups like them wants anything “sustained”, they want their communities and transportation options improved. She also invited PRR and PSRC to return in July for a follow-up discussion.

Meeting Date:	June 16, 2009
Meeting Location:	Rainier Beach Branch – Seattle Public Library
Number of Attendees:	13 participants
Facilitator:	Jamie Strausz-Clark (PRR)
PSRC Staff:	Ben Bakkenta and Mary Pat Lawlor
Note-taker:	Lauren Brisbo (PRR)
EJ Populations Represented:	Racial and ethnic populations, special needs, elderly, low-income

Attendees:

- Estela Ortega, El Centro de la Raza
- Margaret Casey, Aging and Disability Services – King County
- Mar Murillo, Filipino Community of Seattle
- Betty Patu, South Pacific Islander Education Support Services (SPIES)
- Nina Patu , SPEIS
- Stella Chao, City of Seattle - Neighborhoods
- Nicole Patrice, Washington State Ferries
- Stephen Hunt, King County Metro
- Glenn Gregory, Tabor 100
- George Northcroft, King County – BRED
- Gregory Davis, Rainier Beach Community Empowerment Coalition
- Kerry Wade, City of Seattle – DON
- Sarah Lowntin, Housing Resources Group

Summary of Findings

Five major themes emerged from the Seattle-King County session. Among them, equity and fairness, coordinating land and transit use planning, trust and confidence, localizing benefits, air quality and traffic management.

Equity and Fairness of Tolling

Nearly every participant expressed some view or frustration with the lack of equity and fairness in tolling as an alternative funding source for transportation improvements. Many of the group's participants viewed tolling as burdensome and unfair to low-income populations. In particular, they expressed concerns about special needs groups and people who regularly must access human services to survive. One social worker lamented that she works with clients who

regularly find it challenging to come up with basic bus fare to make necessary trips to access services they need. Another social worker pointed out that many lower-paying jobs require employees to have a car. Paying tolls would simply take that much more out of a weekly pay check that is already stretched to the limit.

Several in the group believed that applying a toll on all commuters was unfair. They wondered if there was some way to administer a toll using an income test, effectively exempting the poorest in society from having to pay the toll and collecting tolls from others based on their ability to pay. Many of the participants viewed tolling as a tax to pay for infrastructure improvements, effectively delivering those improvements on the backs of those who can least afford to pay. Furthermore, special needs advocates argued that so much of what they do with clients requires the use of a car, tolling would likely mean service cuts for special needs people.

Coordinating Land Use and Transit Planning

Participants shared a general sense that the further people live from employment centers the more they depend upon their cars for mobility. Many participants stated that poorer people spend more of their disposal income on transportation. The need to link land use with transportation planning is essential. Several participants shared stories about themselves, clients or people they knew who travel great distances each day to work, a basic health and human services, school and to shop for groceries.

Trust and Confidence in Government

Most participants agreed that greater investment in public transit is needed and thought that Plan Alternatives 4 and 5 would yield more transit service for low-income populations. However, few actually believed such a plan would be implemented fairly. Several participants observed that despite promises from government officials, they had not seen significant investment in public transportation serving low-income populations. Many cited King County Metro's recently proposed service changes in the Rainier Valley as proof that low-income populations tended to get the short end of the stick with respect to transportation investments. They commented that they appreciated that Link light rail is opening in the area, but they felt that the Metro bus service changes nearly cancelled out the benefits of light rail.

Localizing Benefits

Another participant spoke about her uneasiness with paying tolls. She felt she had been promised improvements in exchange for her taxes before but still has not seen any real benefits in her community. She asked, "How will tolls benefit *my* community?" Several others commented about the need to make sure people understand the real, tangible benefits their community will receive as a result of tolling.

Air Quality/Traffic Management

Despite the reservations expressed about tolling during the session, most participants were able to see clear benefits between tolling and managing traffic congestion and improving the area's overall air quality.

Meeting Format

The meeting was organized into a roundtable discussion group format with a brief formal presentation by Ben Bakkenta from PSRC. The presentation was followed by a facilitated open discussion on tolling and transportation.

General Presentation

During the formal presentation, PSRC staff presented a PowerPoint slide presentation that highlighted:

- The DEIS process
- Key issues driving the Transportation 2040 plan
- Overview of demographic trends in region
- Elements and benefits of the six plan alternatives under consideration
- Sustainable funding
- Air quality measures
- Mobility and congestion analysis
- Use of user fees within each alternative
- How to comment on the DEIS report and to influence the process

Comments from participants

- Jamie asked how different alternatives will affect the groups that participants represent; how do their constituents travel now and what kind of issues do they face?
 - Sarah mentioned that most of her constituents use public transportation because they make between minimum wage and \$18-20/hour and may not be able to afford to drive. Only half of these individuals own cars. She noted that the further people live from employment centers the more they depend on their cars for mobility. Public transportation and access to it is imperative. Her constituents are becoming savvy about considering the cost of transportation when considering housing alternatives.
 - Margaret noted that because her constituents are disabled and homebound, they rely on home visits. Home workers depend on the efficiency of the transportation system. Human services transportation is critical and completely underfunded—thus, ensuring mobility for social service providers and individuals with disabilities is imperative.
 - Estela reiterated that many of her constituents use vehicles because their jobs do not allow them to use public transportation. A plan cannot just address transportation, it needs to address land use planning as well. (Ben noted that VISION 2040 addresses land use and Transportation 2040 is intended to be consistent with VISION 2040)
 - Glenn mentioned that business owners (his constituents) generally live close to urban cores. However, their workers may live further from the city and have to spend more money on transportation.
- Views on Tolling
 - Glenn pointed out that his constituents do business with companies all over the region. They need to be able to travel far to conduct business. He is concerned that tolling may make it prohibitively expensive for people to travel around to do business and therefore hurt the economic vitality of the region. Glenn is concerned that the overall cost of doing business will go up due to tolling.
 - Margaret stated that she thinks that tolling is a tax. If you use tolling to achieve these transportation goals, you will put that special needs population at a disadvantage. He is concerned that tolling is not equitable and is unfair to low-income populations.
- Jamie asked how tolling can benefit populations?
 - Sarah suggested that by encouraging people not to drive, tolling could help air quality.
 - Stephen suggested that tolls may be used as a congestion management tool. He talked about the value of time and how tolls might save people time that they waste sitting in traffic.
- Lack of transparency, equity, and low confidence in government to manage funds appropriately.
 - Mar felt that if there is a need to pay, people will pay. There needs to be an emphasis that money is going to a good cause and will be used productively.
 - Betty was skeptical of tolls and expressed general distrust of where tax money is being routed. She felt that she has been promised improvements in exchange for her taxes before, but she never sees them (cites potholes in her neighborhood). She worried that people will

- get tolled, but they will never see the benefits of the tolling. She wondered how the tolls will help **her** community.
- Margaret noted that there are a lot of people in rural areas who are paying a disproportionate amount for their share of transportation benefits.
 - Jamie asked if tolls made it easier and faster to get where you are going, would people think that it was worth the cost?
 - Stella asked why most of the alternatives focus on infrastructure rather than public transportation. Historically, we have not seen enough investment in public transportation that serves low-income communities, even though low-income and special needs communities frequently use the public transportation system. She cited Link light rail in SE Seattle. While she is happy that LLR is coming to that community, she is angry that the community is losing bus service.
 - One participant offered the idea that crime could be decreased if transportation system is improved. Health could be improved because people can reach emergency centers faster. The community needs to have a better sense of how the money is directly serving the community.
 - Another participant suggested that there are many carry over benefits of a well designed transportation system: public safety, access to jobs, etc.
 - A participant suggested that PSRC needs to find ways to communicate these messages that are not complicated. He suggested that we clarify for people what their dollars would be buying under each alternative.
 - Stella said the plan should find a way to toll people according to their level of income.
 - Others echoed Stella's suggestion. One participant said that there is an urgency to improve the transportation system, but there needs to be a way to do it so that low-income people do not accept the burden.
 - Margaret said that special needs and low-income people have the time, but not money. Money is the bottom line for many EJ constituents. (Refuting an earlier comment that time and money must be weighed as priorities when looking at transportation alternatives) Many participants appeared to agree.
 - Margaret mentioned that transit does not work for some groups. Special needs individuals or their caretakers are dependent on cars. These individuals do not have a choice.
 - Estella mentioned that she has a client who walks because she does not have enough money to take public transportation.
 - Stephen asked if people prefer alternative 5 and challenged group to dig deeper into why we prefer certain alternatives.
 - Sarah asked how the plan will affect which transportation projects are built. Ben responded by saying the final plan will help guide the choices that WSDOT, Metro, Sound Transit, local jurisdictions, and other agencies make about which projects to fund and build.
 - Margaret asked why all options are skewed toward tolling. Ben explained that traditional sources of revenue are unsustainable and tolling is being considered throughout the country as the best option for filling the gap and providing a sustainable source of funding.

- Stella wanted to see the dollar impact of alternatives—what is the actual cost associated with the EJ population bearing the brunt of tolling fees?

Meeting Date:	June 17, 2009
Meeting Location:	Sylvan Way Branch – Kitsap Public Library
Number of Attendees:	7 participants
Facilitator:	Kevin Thompson (PRR)
PSRC Staff:	Ben Bakkenta and Mary Pat Lawlor
Note-taker:	Lauren Brisbo (PRR)
EJ Populations Represented:	Special Needs Populations, elderly, low-income

Attendees:

- Kirsten Murray, Kitsap County
- Ann Kennedy, Paratransit Services
- Christie Scheffer, Paratransit Services
- Ron Ross, Kitsap Alliance of Property Owners
- Bob Benze, Kitsap Alliance of Property Owners
- Vivian Henderson, Kitsap Alliance of Property Owners
- Chuck Shank, Kitsap Alliance of Property Owners

Summary of Findings

Five major themes emerged from the Kitsap County session. Among them: equity and fairness; trust and confidence, transit use, traffic diversion, and allocation of funding.

Equity and Fairness of Tolling

More so than in any of the other communities we visited, participants were divided about tolling and whether the practice was fundamentally fair or not. Some expressed frustration and resentment about tolling in general, and felt it was an unfair tax and perceived as more regressive than the existing gas tax. One participant remarked that “special needs and low-income people are the ones who will ultimately bear the brunt of tolling.”

Participants expressed that tolls should not be indefinite. Revenues from tolls should only be used along the corridors where funds are collected and several thought the six plan alternatives did not treat Kitsap County fairly in that they wanted to see a greater level of auto ferry service included in the plans.

Others wondered if the concept of tolling was unfair to rural communities who typically experience different mobility issues. Some believed the region’s transportation planning heavily favored urban areas over rural communities. A few also expressed concern about the impact of tolling on social service agencies and special needs populations in particular.

Trust and Confidence in Government

Many participants shared a general distrust for the ferry system that seemed to transfer to all transportation planning efforts. There was a general sense of distrust for governmental institutions and a repeated call for more transparency in decision-making.

Transit Use

Perhaps the most spirited part of discussion was related to how much if any tolling revenue should be dedicated to transit. Some advocated none. Others thought Kitsap needed significantly more bus transit while others felt investments should be made in the state's existing ferry system to increase capacity and frequency. A few participants expressed support for using funds for bus shelters and other amenities to make bus service safer.

Representatives of special needs communities talked about the challenges their clients face in traveling across jurisdictional boundaries on paratransit services. Today, most services do not allow such trips.

Traffic Diversion

Most participants expressed some level of dislike for plan alternative elements that would toll arterial streets. Some thought it was unfair. However, most were concerned that it would force traffic onto less crowded residential thoroughfares. Preserving public access to arterials was viewed as an important value and principle that should be maintained.

Allocation of funding

Participants did not agree on how tolling revenues should be appropriated. What was clear was most favored some sort of allocation that keeps locally-generated revenues within their community. Participants talked about this as mitigation for building trust and confidence in the transportation delivery network.

Meeting Format

The meeting was organized into a roundtable discussion group format with a brief formal presentation. The presentation was followed by a facilitated open discussion on tolling and transportation.

General Presentation

During the formal presentation, PSRC staff presented a PowerPoint slide presentation that highlighted:

- The DEIS process
- Key issues driving the Transportation 2040 plan
- Overview of demographic trends in region
- Elements and benefits of the six plan alternatives under consideration
- Sustainable funding
- Air quality measures
- Mobility and congestion analysis
- Use of user fees within each alternative
- How to comment on the DEIS report and to influence the process

Comments from participants

- Kevin facilitated group introductions.
- Ben clarified the intention of the EJ discussion group, after Vivian raised concerns. Ben explained that the groups are intended to be a small gathering of community stakeholders who represent EJ populations.
- Ron mentioned that his main concerns are ferries and the tunnel in Bremerton.
- Ben explained that there are no new auto ferries assumed in the study; new passenger ferries are assumed.
- One participant mentioned that convenience in Bremerton is a big issue. Public transportation cannot be utilized unless it is easy and convenient for residents to use.
- Kirsten mentioned that the only way her constituents can get to work is by using public transportation. She works with special needs individuals who are completely reliant on Kitsap Transit, and they have had to cut back services. Most of her constituents work in the service industry and are looking for increased transportation services during the early morning and late evening hours. Additionally, her constituents want more security measures implemented on public transportation, including better lighting.
- Ann noted that most of her constituents use transit. She is concerned with Alternative 5, which will potentially push more people on to residential streets. Most of her constituents live in more rural areas, and she notes the lack of transit access in these areas. She felt that Transportation 2040 mainly caters to the urban core areas and is concerned about diverting traffic into more residential areas and clogging up these streets.
- Christie noted that public access is a critical lifeline to medical services, jobs, etc. She wanted to see more of these issues addressed by PSRC.

- Vivian noted that she supports buses over light rail because you can reroute buses eventually. She added that ferries are imperative to Bremerton.
- Ann raised concerns over cross jurisdictional travel for American with Disabilities Act (ADA) clients. It is very difficult for ADA individuals to travel between counties because many vehicles cannot go outside of their jurisdictions. Special needs individuals have a very hard time traveling between counties.
- Chuck asked why there is a regulation on paratransit areas.
- **Ferries in Kitsap County**
 - Ron noted that it is very difficult to take the ferry unless you park or get dropped off very close. Kitsap Transit has very few covered bus stops and people get uncomfortable in the rain. He feels that Kitsap Transit puts too much energy and dollars into foot traffic ferries and not enough emphasis on bus travel.
 - Bob mentioned that the ferry system is mismanaged and it creates distrust in how public dollars are being managed.
 - Chuck explained that the ferry system is part of the highway system, but is operated like a mass transit system. The ferry system is Kitsap County's main access to the economic center of King County. As a state highway, Chuck feels that the ferry system is a failure.
- **Tolling and Transparency**
 - Vivian felt that we have already paid for the roads with taxpayer dollars.
 - Ben mentioned that further funds are essential for road maintenance, rehabilitation and improvements.
 - Christie mentioned that there is a high level of distrust within Kitsap County in regards to how transit has been managed. Although, she felt that as long as funds are managed appropriately, she agrees with tolling. However, she does not trust that this will materialize.
 - Ann mentioned that people want to know that their money is not going to be pumped into unnecessary projects. The community wants their dollars to be reinvested back into their community. She mentioned that there is no restriction as to how funds are used and appropriated. Increased accountability and transparency is imperative to regain the community's trust.
 - One participant mentioned that special needs and low-income individuals are the ones who ultimately bear the brunt of tolling.
 - Chuck mentioned that the philosophy behind gas tax is: the longer you travel, the more you pay. On the other hand, this logic is not expressed with tolling.
 - Bob did not agree with tolling when it is used to get more people off the roads.
 - Overall, the group expressed serious concern about money being spent inefficiently and a general distrust in the transparency of the government.

Meeting Date:	June 24, 2009
Meeting Location:	United Way of Snohomish County
Number of Attendees:	7 participants
Facilitator:	Kevin Thompson (PRR)
PSRC Staff:	Ben Bakkenta and Mary Pat Lawlor
Note-taker:	Jennifer Sandberg (PRR)
EJ Populations Represented:	Special needs, elderly, low-income and First Nation Tribes

Attendees:

- Nicole Mack, Catholic Community Services
- Bo Tunestam, Communities of Color Coalition
- Phil Sullivan, Senior Services of Snohomish County
- Darren R. Brugmann, Senior Services of Snohomish County
- Bill Brackin, Volunteers of America North Sound 2-1-1
- Jerri Wood, American Cancer Society
- Dave Koenig, City of Everett
- Casey Stevens, Stillaguamish Tribe

Summary of Findings

Eight major themes emerged from the Snohomish County two-hour-session held in Everett. Among them: traffic mitigation, land use, affordable housing, transit use, especially for ADA populations, public education around transit use, fears and perceptions about tolling, equity, and transit coordination.

Traffic Mitigation

Several participants seemed very interested in about tolling on SR 167. Participants voiced their concern that PSRC integrate findings from the SR 167 tolling experience into their final recommendations for Transportation 2040. Some participants wanted to make sure tolling was an effective method to manage traffic demand and hoped that PSRC would also draw upon research findings from other jurisdictions nationally to help frame the best solutions for the Puget Sound area.

Coordinating Land Use and Transportation Planning

All of the participants expressed some level of concern about land use patterns in our region and how they impact transportation choices, particularly for special needs populations, the elderly and low-income people. Most participants also recognized that the most affordable

housing choices tend to be on the fringes of urban areas, requiring people to commute greater distances to work, school, stores and basic services. Low-income people spend more time traveling than more affluent populations. Low-income people also have fewer transportation choices – many are transit-dependent and spend several hours trying to get to appointments or work. This problem is especially acute for special needs populations and the homeless.

Many participants talked about the need for more incentive programs to encourage development for low-income people along corridors that are more conducive to transportation and transit in particular. Some also discussed the need to help people better understand their choices for housing. The municipal and county workers in the group talked about their growing frustration with helping people understand why they cannot access certain government services when they live so far out from urban centers. They also noted that many of the same people who live so far out are more reluctant to pay higher taxes for additional governmental services needed in outlying areas.

Transit Use

Commute time on buses and the frequency of transit service were the main concerns expressed by participants. Time is a huge concern for residents of Snohomish County. People frequently travel between cities within the county to access basic services. Participants did not feel there was enough transit service to meet the county's growing needs. This issue is most acute with special needs populations. One participant representing social service agencies said that transit is not always a viable option for people in need. Transit doesn't always travel to where his clients need to go. Car transport is sometimes the only option. Paratransit service is limited because its users cannot travel across jurisdictions to get to destinations.

Because some special needs populations and other low-income people cannot always rely on public transit and must be driven by someone, tolling may have a big impact on these populations. The social service representative also noted that tolling may strain their agency's operating budget. Since many of the volunteer drivers are compensated for tolls, it may limit the number of rides their agency will be able to offer to its clients in the future.

Public education around transit use

Many participants acknowledged that more resources are needed to help immigrant populations and limited English-speaking groups better understand how the regional transit network operates and how and when to access it. More printed literature is needed. Better signage is needed.

Fears and Perceptions about tolling

The general sentiment of the group was cautious about implementing tolling. Several participants expressed a general concern that tolling would have more adverse impacts on society's most vulnerable populations, namely low-income people. Because they have less disposable income, they will have less ability to pay tolls. Several also noted, given the general state of the economy and the rise in gas prices, that tolling would be viewed as a burden despite the intended benefits that might be derived from new revenues to fund our transportation network. All participants seemed uneasy with the notion of tolling arterial streets. Many participants saw this option as totally inhibiting for low-income people.

Equity and Fairness of Tolling

Consistent with all the roundtables prior to Snohomish County, participants here expressed general concern about how equity would be achieved in designing and implementing a tolling program. Participants pointed out that the DEIS was based on 2000 census data, which is now nearly 10 years old. Many were concerned that this data could not accurately capture what communities really look like today. There was a general sense that making future transportation plans based upon older data sets might not accurately reflect how plans will really impact low-income, elderly, and special needs populations.

Participants were also concerned that the DEIS document spent more time on the distribution of possible benefits and not on the distribution of costs. Some participants wondered if low-income, elderly, and special needs populations might not end up bearing a disproportionate share of the costs for new transportation improvements and services.

Transit Coordination

Consistent with every other forum held during the review of impacts on low-income, elderly, and special needs populations, the need for better transit coordination was principal concern. The need to travel between jurisdictions across the region on public transit was a concern for participants. In the participants' view, coordination requires greater convenience and travel ease for transit users at an affordable price. All regional systems need to work smarter and harder to achieve this goal.

Human Health

Some participants pointed out that the DEIS document measures the impacts on human health and the impacts on equity as if they were mutually exclusive elements. Participants argued that the two are related that the discussions in the EIS should be grouped together so the totality of all impacts on environmental justice population can be understood.

Meeting Format

The meeting was organized into a roundtable discussion group format, with a brief formal presentation. The presentation was followed by a facilitated open discussion on tolling and transportation.

General Presentation

During the formal presentation, PSRC staff presented a PowerPoint slide presentation that highlighted:

- The DEIS process
- Key issues driving the Transportation 2040 plan
- Overview of demographic trends in region
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- Mobility and congestion analysis
- Use of user fees within each alternative
- How to comment on the DEIS report and to influence the process

Comments from participants

- One attendee asked Ben to explain HOT lanes again.
- Darren's Questions: HOT lanes on SR 167—how much of what we learned is going to be factored into the alternatives and the final plan? How is it REALLY affecting traffic?
 - A: Studies from other toll roads around the country and SR 167 are being considered by PSRC.
 - Mary Pat explained there's a difference for tolling to pay for a project and managing demand/use of system.
- Phil's Questions:
 - Low-income people are being forced farther and farther away — is this being considered?
 - Affordable housing is a key part to making these types of transportation systems work (Ben).
- Kevin wanted to start with community member experience with the current transportation system (what are essential ingredients for communities)?
- Darren said special needs (encompasses elderly, disabled, veterans, low-income) must be addressed in the plan. He saw the word "transit" — transit alone will not solve all of the special transportation needs.
 - The population is getting older and the need is getting greater.

- (Darren) It's harder for special needs populations to live in areas where transit, medical care and other services are available.
 - Not serviced by transit
 - Darren gets lost in the alternatives because they're not addressing special needs specifically.
 - Funding levels for special needs programs have all been drastically affected where special needs populations are concerned.
 - Moving a person from rural to urban areas is a constant problem in the current transit network.
- Phil thought that Alternative 2 best addressed expanding into rural areas
 - Said rural transportation is being cut by 50%.
 - Looked at DEIS maps and tried to coordinate what's best and he thought according to the maps the Alternative 2 was best.
 - Ben explained that Alternative 1 and 5 have the majority of funding for demand response service and that Alternative 2 will not increase funding for paratransit or other special needs.
- Beau expanded on the veterans' side – saying that many veterans have special needs because some suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and others are physically disabled. Many don't do well in crowded situations, and therefore can't take public transportation.
 - Many are stuck with vehicle transport so alternatives must address that need.
 - Immigrant and communities of color have particular needs (other languages). These groups need education on how to use public transportation.
 - Thought planning must include education for those with limited English proficiency and proper signage and literature for transit use. These limitations must be acknowledged and accommodated.
 - Beau was concerned that equity issues in the DEIS talk about the distribution of benefits and not the distribution of the costs (with all alternatives).
 - The DEIS is not clear about how construction impacts (road closures, noise, etc.) will specifically affects EJ communities.
 - Plan only uses the 2000 census data; wanted new information to be brought in as soon as it's available.
 - Ben addressed the old data as an unavoidable limitation; PSRC is required to update the transportation plan every four years – 2010 Census data will be available for the next update.
- Bill stated that he has worked with low-income and homeless people for 21 years, and over time he is very concerned that we are not solving these issues and we are creating new barriers to low-income people moving into the middle class. He worried that the plan will impose an income ceiling for driving that will impact low-income people.

- Tolling of arterials is totally inhibiting and limiting.
- Low-income live out in the “boondocks.”
- There need to be incentives for low-income people to live in desirable corridors or come up with something creative to encourage mobility in these communities.
- One of the biggest ceilings is the amount of time from place to place. Homeless blogs show that men and women have to travel around the city for hours to get one benefit and the wait lines are huge.
- Homeless have a hard time holding a job/traveling and paying for it.
- Basic point: give people the incentive to move up in quality in life instead of inhibiting them (based on the idea that public transportation is symbolic of a lower quality of life).
- From a planner’s perspective—tolling the majority of roadways—you’re going to force people into driving through residential areas. More walls will be built and cul-de-sacs to keep out traffic.
 - People would leave areas that cars are forced into.
 - Low-income communities will move in and deal with cars.
- Jerry mentioned that patients etc. care about the length of time that they have to ride from one city to the other.
- Nicole (from her program perspective) said they work with a finite amount of funding.
 - Volunteers would have to be compensated for tolls and decrease the amount of trips the org would be able to provide negatively affecting their programs.
 - A lot of her constituents are physically unable to sit and wait for a bus or on a bus for 30 minutes.
 - TIME is a huge issue.
 - Ben mentioned that tolling isn’t necessarily additive—it can reduce most taxes and additional fees.
- Beau mentioned that even though we would use tolls—it is still essentially regressive because it affects low-income in a more direct way that someone with disposable income. It has inherent negative aspects.
- Phil mentioned affordable housing and the need for more transit centers.
 - For them to be successful; PSRC and other plans have to be strong advocates for significant resources in affordable housing funding (no new projects).
 - Very exciting models for creating urban and transit centers—must have STRONG advocacy.
- Dave said that he agrees with Phil and that he thinks that PSRC needs to look into new funding elements.
 - New partnerships with HUD
 - Must give priority to projects with affordable housing.
 - In rural Snohomish County there’s going to be less resources—period.
 - It is a reality unless you want to pay more taxes.

- Response times and travel times are more because that is what you pay for when you live further from our urban core.
- Casey asked about the technology that might be required for tolling systems.
 - Ben explained the plan's assumptions.
 - Casey followed up with a question of whether the technology could be used to help those with low-incomes pay less or be exempted.
 - Ben said that would be a policy question about how to use revenues and whether to have different fares/tolls for different types of users.
- Dave mentioned costs of gas going up, providing an example of Camano Island residents paying \$200 a month for gas to commute. Gas prices will continue to go up.
 - Paying for gas and pay tolls will be expensive.
 - Boeing is the biggest employer in Snohomish County area – it takes cash and time to get to Boeing.
 - Ben said the alternatives do consider and make assumptions about fuel costs (especially if they take a drastic increase).
 - Dave said that recent studies show housing prices have gone down.
 - Snohomish County—the foreclosures are mostly in the unincorporated areas in the new developments.
- Kevin/Mary Pat asked if tolling could be advantageous or a trade off for other services for the group.
 - Darren addressed that there are many providers that offer paratransit services.
 - The Tacoma Narrows Bridge has benefited (through tolling) these people by decreasing congestion.
 - Negative side is people aren't traveling as much as in the past.
 - If transit is exempted from tolls; special needs trips should be also.
 - Phil said that he would trust and be encouraged if there were programs that mitigate negative affects on certain providers and populations.
 - Phil was concerned with the funding for current infrastructure.
 - Ben explained that this plan is not for a particular project designs, but to help build a framework for a new system to address the changing population.
 - Dave said it may be good to study what other community policies are doing to mitigate problems for EJ communities.
 - Casey asked about discussion at national level – if the region meets emissions standards—would the fed gov. provide additional funding assistance?
 - Ben said he doesn't know yet.
 - Bill mentioned that veterans population/tribes to get to rehab where they have to cross county lines.
 - Discussed Snohomish county shipping waste to Oregon.
 - Darren wanted to add on the advocacy line—special needs are focusing on transit (negative)—coordination and education and alternatives—problems

are they are some services but special needs people don't always know how to access these services.

- 211 and trip planner are great.
- Continue education on these plans.
- Needs to be better coordination in the Snohomish county bus system.
 - Especially for paratransit—too many transfers.
 - Very difficult to figuring out
 - Commit to a whole day of travel for a one hour appointment
- Beau mentioned that the EJ chapter in the plan (DEIS) needs to be integrated with the human health chapter.
 - These are not mutually exclusive and need to be considered together.
 - Helps to better highlight the true impacts on the EJ communities.

Meeting Date:	June 25, 2009
Meeting Location:	King County Library Auburn Branch
Number of Attendees:	2 participants
Facilitator:	Kevin Thompson (PRR)
PSRC Staff:	Ben Bakkenta
Note-taker:	Jennifer Sandberg (PRR)
EJ Populations Represented:	Racial and ethnic populations, special needs, elderly, low-income and First Nation tribes

Attendees:

- David Hull, King County Metro
- Alexandra Davis, City of Auburn- Cultural Diversity Liaison

Summary of Findings

Five major themes emerged from the South King County two-hour-session held in Auburn. Among them: transit coordination, transit use, land use, fears and perceptions about tolling, and uses of future revenues.

Transit Coordination

The representative from the City of Auburn noted that there could be better coordination of transit services in South King County. She noted that many transit dependent people spend an inordinate amount of time traveling to and from work and appointments. She also spoke about the need for more intercity bus service to help people move more freely throughout the region.

The King County Metro representative noted many other transit properties now make more regional transit trips than Sound Transit. He also noted that the region's service is more geared towards peak hour service and that more service during off peak hours is needed. Finally, he suggested that the region needs to have a better definition for high-capacity transit and when it is to be used.

Transit Use

The City of Auburn representative said that transit is more heavily used by low-income and minority populations in southern King County. She noted that Plan Alternatives 4 and 5 would probably derive greater benefits for EJ populations in southern King County; however, she noted that both alternatives would be hard for EJ populations to accept or understand. The general state of the economy will be the largest obstacle.

According to our participants, transit in southern King County is viewed poorly by low-income populations. Service is not comprehensive. Headways are spread out. It is peak period-oriented and is difficult travel throughout the region. In short, it is not seen as reliable but as a necessity for those who are transit-dependent.

Coordinating Land Use and Transportation Planning

Both participants talked about the need to have affordable housing choices closer to major employment centers. Both noted that today, lower cost housing tends to be further away from major employment centers and people with limited resources find that housing options are not necessarily negotiable. People are restricted by their income in making housing options. This has huge impacts on transit service and our transportation network.

Fears and perceptions about tolling

The general state of the economy was seen as the largest impediment to successfully implementing a tolling strategy for the region. Both participants wondered how low-income people, especially those now unemployed or underemployed, will react to a tolling plan.

The City of Auburn representative also talked about the challenge of changing the culture's attachment to cars. She noted that over half the job advertisements she views for clients require daily access to a car.

Both participants wondered how privacy issues would be handled if tolling were to become more universal throughout the region. Similarly, both participants expressed some concern about tolling all arterials or even major ones. Both were concerned with diverting traffic onto other streets. The City of Auburn representative wondered if low-income people might react differently to tolling alternatives because the current funding process is more insidious. The gas tax is more regressive for low-income people, but the tolling alternatives were much more "in your face."

Use of Tolling Revenue

Both participants saw more benefits in plan alternatives 4 and 5 than the others under consideration in the DEIS report. Both thought alternatives 4 and 5 would be more equitable for low-income populations and both believed more public resources are needed to strengthen and broaden the existing regional transit network. However, without detailed project information specific to southern King County, it is hard to speculate about the long term benefits for the community.

Meeting Format

The meeting was organized into a roundtable discussion group format with a brief formal presentation. The presentation was followed by a facilitated open discussion on tolling and transportation.

General Presentation

During the formal presentation, PSRC staff presented a PowerPoint slide presentation that highlighted:

- The DEIS process
- Key issues driving the Transportation 2040 plan
- Overview of demographic trends in region
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- Use of user fees within each alternative
- How to comment on the DEIS report and to influence the process

Comments from participants

How will different elements of these alternatives affect EJ populations (or the communities you represent)?

- Alexandra said that one thing her low-income/transient community members will often travel a lot during the day to get to services or a job. They travel via bus (which is poor service) or by car. Tolling would be difficult but revenues from tolling will increase bus service.
- David Hull said that there are low-income communities all over the King County and that everywhere Metro goes people say they want more transit service.
 - Most people say that the base is too high, very likely that they're going to have to cut the system by 20% next year so growing at 1% will be difficult.
 - From an equity perspective it would be important to improve transit options in tolling scenarios (cost of riding the bus will continue you to go up to).
 - David said that low-income people have the same needs as everyone to get from A to B fast and easy.
 - Other thoughts from Alexandra: Auburn is projecting that over 80,000 residents that will live in Auburn by the completion of next census.
 - She thought that tolling arterials will cause a lot of strife for community members.
- Minority populations tend to use transit for more types of trips

- Alexandra talked about people who take trains and ferries along with bus service. Transit is often generalized for simply buses, and minorities and low-income people tend to take the bus more than the broader population.
- David said that more trips are taken on buses than trains. He was concerned that we minimize the idea of a local bus service, and posed the question: what is the difference between a local or regional trip?
 - Community Transit actually provides more regional trips than Sound Transit.
 - Mentioned that there needs to be a better definition of what exactly qualifies for HCT (High Capacity Transit).
 - New technologies may distinguish what qualifies for a regional trip.
- Alexandra said that Alternatives 4 or 5 are good choices, but it will be hard for the community to understand them.
 - Considering the economic crisis, people of color or low-income people tend to make more trips on transit.
 - It will cost an inordinate amount to get from an arterial to a highway to a bridge.
 - Living close to where you work is not necessarily negotiable.
 - She personally thought people will ask how will they continue living where they currently do. Will have to calculate a new set of COSTS?
- David Hull said that we're talking about a long range plan and gradually changing how we fund transportation. He knows that people will not accept the ideas of these alternatives right away but it will be a gradual process.
- Alexandra mentioned that the current funding scenario is less in your face, tolling would be more in your face.
 - David mentioned that privacy will be a huge issue with tolling being so universal.
 - Ben agreed, noting that technology and protocols are currently used in other countries and regions that have addressed the privacy issue. He also explained that the financial strategy will discuss how tolling might be phased-in.
- David said they would be concerned that local jurisdictions would be most affected if the tolls just stopped (alt 4) with the freeways as there would be a lot of traffic diversion onto arterials.
 - Alexandra talked about the Auburn area up to Muckleshoot and the White River area, and how the businesses will cope with a tolling system. She thought they will not readily accept it.
 - David agreed.
- It's difficult to have conversation of regional long range plan without a list of specific projects.
 - Ben said he understood because this concept is less tangible and hard to communicate.
- David mentioned that Alternative 5 will be have faster and more frequent local transit. He said the way the system works now is based too much on peak travel.
 - Alternative funding is needed.
- Kevin asked what elements of any of the six plan alternatives did they like?

- David Hull said that we have to start worrying about global warming with the transportation. He felt the alternatives do address this issue.
- He said that we can't assume what people will be driving in the future and what fuel costs will do.
- He liked the idea that we are moving to a system where you don't have to rely on a car.
- Ben responded that the climate change issue and offering additional mobility choices is addressed through the alternatives.
- Alexandra thought that increased bus service in tolled areas will provide the equity PSRC is looking for in a final plan.
- David stressed: It's important to communicate that we're not just going to continue doing what we do - we are going to do it better.
- Alexandra mentioned that it's important to remember that with people concerned about jobs, she's noticed that many job listings (she guessed 45%) state that applicants must have regular access to a vehicle.
- David Hull said that Metro is working on some sensitivity analysis
 - Is Alternative 5 doing better because of the tolling, or the additional transit service?
 - Is it because of HCT, or improved local bus service?