

## JTI Rural Comments on PSRC Draft Regional Transportation Plan

The RTP is understandably focused largely on urban transportation. But rural area roads are unfortunately treated as extensions of the urban transportation network. **The GMA mandate to preserve rural areas requires more attention in the RTP to mitigating the impacts on the rural area of planned growth of intercity travel. This must be accompanied by changes in transportation funding and mitigation of growth impacts to address rural needs.**

### SITUATION

In King County (at least) the rural area is invaded daily by large volumes of commuter traffic between isolated outlying cities and the urban core area. Examples include Duvall and Enumclaw in King County and Monroe, Sultan, Buckley and Bonney Lake in adjacent counties. Such cities are separated from the urban core by rural areas, with road systems not equipped to handle urban traffic loads.

Intercity travel through the rural area now constitutes **75% of all travel** on rural arterials in King County. However, **these intercity travelers pay ZERO into the county road fund** to pay for maintenance of the rural roads they use. The affected counties and cities have no procedures to mitigate traffic impacts across jurisdictional boundaries, and their road funding mechanisms (taxes) are grossly inadequate.

### TARGET

The RTP should include more analysis and discussion of the impacts of growth on transportation conditions in the rural areas of the region, using criteria and standards that preserve the nature and quality of rural areas. Such analysis would then identify impacts of regional growth on rural areas and lead to mitigation designed to preserve and protect the rural area. **In order to achieve this goal, substantial reforms of transportation funding mechanisms must occur.**

### PROPOSAL

- The RTP should re-evaluate rural arterials using a level of service standard that **preserves access to and from side roads and driveways from a rural perspective**. This would significantly lower the allowable through volumes on arterials and identify greater deficiencies needing mitigation to preserve local access.
- Transportation improvements should employ a complete streets perspective emphasizing multi-modal solutions for long distance commuter travel in corridors, **which leads to less climate impact**. There are about ten such corridors in East King County.
- On individual roads, **traffic calming solutions** should prevail.
- Vehicle-miles-of-travel (VMT) should not only be the basis for replacing fuel taxes statewide, but also be the foundation of a **regionally uniform multi-modal transportation impact fee system**. This would transcend all jurisdictional boundaries, address all modes, and apply a single VMT-weighted fee schedule throughout a county. Funds generated would then be distributed to each jurisdiction according to the VMT impact of growth on the roads of that jurisdiction.