

**Present:** Dwight Baker; Andy Bennett; Hans Brandal; John Coney; Dick Burkhart, Vice-Chair; Ray Day, Jr.; Dave Elliott; John Jensen, Chair; Sandy Paul-Lyle; Holly Plackett; Mike Taylor

**Excused:** Joan Sells; Anirudh Sahni

**Staff:** Barbara de Michele, Community Relations Planner; David Hull, Supervisor of Transit Planning

**Guests:** King County Councilmember Dow Constantine; Bruce Agnew, Cascadia Center for Transportation Development (Discovery Institute); Joe Dusenbury, City of Des Moines Harbor Master

John Jensen called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. He invited Councilmember Constantine, as well as Agnew and Dusenbury to sit at the table with TAC members.

### **Waterborne Transit Discussion**

Councilmember Constantine started the discussion by providing an overview of King County's waterborne transit study. He stated his hope that TAC would consider ferries as simply another form of mass transit that should be included in the mix of available options. In particular, he discussed the value of the Elliott Bay taxi to commuters and tourists, the Vashon Island passenger-only ferries as a vital congestion-reduction mode, and waterborne transit as a possible mitigation during construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and SR 520. He addressed TAC concerns about limited funding by saying that every study has proposed special taxing districts and public-private partnerships. Agnew emphasized that many of the world's best boat builders are located in the Puget Sound region, yet we have not taken advantage of their expertise. He also pointed out that the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) has made \$1.4 million available for a pilot program to test ferry service feasibility. Finally, Dusenbury discussed the City of Des Moines keen interest in developing their marina facilities and providing ferry routes to SeaTac and Seattle. He listed several counties, federal, state and local elected officials, and regional agencies, including Metro and the Port of Seattle, who are supporting Des Moines' pursuit of grant funding for proposed capital and operating development.

TAC members expressed several concerns and points of view. Members discussed the decreased funding and expanded need for Metro bus services throughout King County, saying that TAC members' first priority was supporting the development of the strongest bus system possible. Several members expressed skepticism about the financial viability of ferry services, or the willingness of users to transfer from one mode (bus) to another (ferries). "Secondary" consequences of waterborne transit, such as the need to provide additional bus service at ferry docks, needed to be considered very seriously. One member noted that two things seemed to have changed since the Metro study: more visible support for ferry service, and increased funding through the federal government. Others saw the need for ferry services as mitigation for the extended construction periods for the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the SR520 bridge. Members

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again emphasized that the regional need for transportation solutions required a focus on top priority projects. The pursuit of ferry service distracted the region from its main focus – the rebuilding of major transportation facilities and development of increased mass transit.

At the end of the discussion, Councilmember Constantine thanked members for their questions and concerns and Jensen, in turn, thanked the Councilmember for attending the meeting and engaging in the discussion.

### **Metro Budget**

Metro Finance Director Jill Kreklow thoroughly reviewed the 2006 budget. She provided TAC members with informative handouts and answered questions.

### **Waterborne Transit Letter**

Members edited the waterborne transit letter, but decided to wait until their January meeting to adopt a final version. Although the group maintained its position that King County should not be involved in the waterborne transit business, they acknowledged two exceptions: passenger-only service to Vashon, and ferries as mitigation for construction and/or emergency closures of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and SR520.

### **Committee Business**

Dave Elliott was elected vice-chair. He will serve as chair for April, May and June. Dick Burkhart will begin his term as chair in January. Because the meeting was running over time, the rest of the scheduled committee business was deferred to January.

### **Adjournment**

Jensen adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:45 p.m.