



CITY OF KENT

TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

Community Task Force
Meeting #6 Summary

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Task Force Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to present an overview of preliminary recommendations for Streets, Transit, and Non-motorized (Pedestrian and Bicycle). The information that was presented will be modified further after funding data are developed and more realistic plans are formed. This updated information will be presented to the public early in 2007.

Cathy Mooney, of the City of Kent, welcomed all members of the Task Force. She thanked everyone for their time and help with this study. Jodi Ketelsen, with CH2M HILL, indicated that all of the previous comments given by the Task Force have been delegated to the consultants. She encouraged the members of the Task Force to attend the City Council Meeting that is tentatively scheduled on December 5, 2006. She informed the members that the Draft Transportation Master Plan will be available for public review on the City web site and summarized in a newsletter to the community early in 2007.

Attendance

A total of 12 of the 24 appointed members were present. The Task Force members represent Kent's transportation system stakeholders, including businesses, industrial and manufacturing sectors, the school district, developers, and a diverse cross-section of residents.

Attendees: Dana Ralph, David Anderson, Debbie Eckley, Tina Busenius, Helen Shindell-Butler, Kristin Jensen, Manmeet Dhami, Marcelle Pechler, Mark Gagnon, Mel Roberts, Tom Sharp, Bob Whalen; *Community:* Joan Thompson; *City of Kent:* Cathy Mooney, Steve Mullen, Bill Thomas, Gary Gill, Monica Whitman; *Consultants:* Don Samdahl, John Davies, Jennifer Pearson, Jodi Ketelsen, Thomas Brennan, Andy Mortensen.

[\[As you read these meeting notes, please use the handouts for each of the modes to provide you with specific recommendations and information.\]](#)

Street Recommendations

Don Samdahl from Mirai Associates presented the existing Level of Service (LOS) and future roadway strategy. He reminded the Task Force that LOS, a technical term that indicates the level congestion, has the same implications of the letter grades used in school, where LOS F refers to a bad level of congestion. Then he introduced the concept of corridor LOS. Using this concept, Mirai Associates grouped intersections together and weighted their LOS to produce a corridor LOS. Task Members were given a set of maps related to the street

network analysis. Don started with the Existing Conditions corridor LOS map with the 12 corridors that had been studied.

John Davies presented the Task Force with a map that showed the locations of future improvements. He described the 2030 LOS for three scenarios:

- **Baseline:** This scenario contains only the projects that have funding.
- **Level I:** This scenario includes most of the projects in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), regardless of the current project funding.
- **Level II:** This scenario contains all of the TIP projects and some additional projects which have the purpose of decreasing congestion.

John reminded the audience that they were viewing draft versions of the maps and that street analysis is an iterative process. Don provided examples of ways in which the traffic might change in the future. For example, he mentioned that signs might be installed to direct drivers to use SR 516 instead of Meeker Street; this improvement is not currently shown in the model. Don also mentioned that the key factors in making transportation improvements include cost and the ability to afford projects.

Task Force Member Comments on Street Recommendations

- Tom Sharp suggested that we could opt for LOS that is not ideal but that is affordable.
 - ***Response:** Cathy Mooney responded by saying that it is a tradeoff and that the City Council will be in charge of deciding the appropriate LOS and will be provided with cost estimations.*
- Helen Shindell-Butler asked if the S 192nd/196th Street extension would create a high level of relief on S 212th and SR 515.
 - ***Response:** The S 212th Street/S 208th Street corridor did receive a significant benefit with the addition of the S 192nd/196th Street extension. The SR 515 corridor delay was reduced in the Level II study, although the improvement was not enough to substantially improve the corridor LOS.*
- Mel Roberts stated that he believed that there should be an improvement on S 248th Street because S 248th carries a lot of traffic.
 - ***Response:** Improvements shown in the Level II study intersections reduce delay along S 248th.*
- Tina Busenius was concerned that S 218th Street is primarily residential and is not wide enough to carry major vehicular volume.
 - ***Response:** Cathy informed her that there have been plans to widen 218th for many years, and after it has been widened 218th will have a higher capacity.*
- Mel Roberts wanted to know if the modeling effort looked at improving the intersection of SR 516/Reith Road/Meeker Street.

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- ***Response:** John Davies responded that various scenarios for that intersection were examined but that it is, first of all, a state highway, and secondly, the intersection actually works pretty well. There are problems on the Meeker Street approach because of the bridge and the Reith Road side because of lane choices, but the intersection is fairly effective.*
 - Helen asked if the improvement near 108th Avenue SE/Kent-Kangly Road is a high priority.
 - ***Response:** Yes. It is identified on the City's 6-Year TIP as a project to simplify the movement through that conflict point.*
 - Tom Sharp inquired about whether we were only looking at the LOS during the P.M. peak hour. He thought that we should also look at the A.M. peak hour and midday LOS. He was concerned that truckers would be forced to wait through unreasonably long delays in the midday and that our analysis would not show this fact.
 - ***Response:** We have studied the P.M. peak hour because it is typically the worst time of day for congestion. If we take care of the worse case, traffic at other times of the day would also likely improve.*
 - One member of the Task Force expressed his desire to understand the details of the process that was involved in the analysis and formation of recommendations for the street system.
 - ***Response:** Cathy said that additional information could be provided.*

Transit Recommendations

Tom Brennan from Nelson Nygaard presented draft transit recommendations. He reminded the audience that the City of Kent does not have the authority to control transit. However, it does have the ability to make routes more appealing for transit use and can influence some of the decisions made by King County Metro and Sound Transit. He also indicated that improving transit service is different from improving the street network. He gave members a handout with his slide presentation.

Tom presented a prioritized list of transit issues derived from Task Force member input gathered at the August Task Force meeting. Most of the improvements suggestions were to increase service; the first priority was to fill in the missing gaps, then to provide midday service where there is currently only peak service. Some of the improvements are Sound Transit projects that were not identified in the July 2006 ST2 set of three investment options or Metro's Transit Now plan. Tom noted the Task Force objectives, such as maximizing ridership potential and reducing reliance on the automobile for all trips, not just commute trips. He displayed the existing commute trip destinations and identified how these destinations would change in the future. He explained that studies have found that in most communities there is more transit demand during the day, especially in the late morning.

Tom provided service recommendations for individual route improvements and showed how the current system could be modified to meet future transit needs. He also presented several recommended capital improvements, such as bus stops and park and rides.

Task Force Members Comments on Transit Recommendations

- Helen Shindell-Butler stated that many people are influenced to move to Pierce County because of lower housing prices, but there are few transit routes connecting Kent to Pierce County Urban Centers.
 - **Response:** *There was a lot of consensus among the group around this point.*
- Helen was concerned about the current and future lack of bus service to Covington, especially because it is experiencing growth.
 - **Response:** *Tom replied that the regional Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) data did not show there to be a major travel market between Kent and Covington, but they will examine this further. Our focus here was for Kent priorities.*
- Mel Roberts indicated that there is a missing park and ride at SE 248th Street/Benson Road on the maps that were displayed.
 - **Response:** *This presentation only showed the five major park and ride lots owned by the transit agencies or the state. The smaller leased lots are less permanent but are all listed in the full Transit Report the Task Force received in June. A presentation about that Transit Existing Conditions Report is also on the TMP web page.*
- Mel asked if bus turnouts are beneficial for bus service.
 - **Response:** *Bus turnouts improve the operation of the street network; however, they do not assist buses because they must merge into traffic after boardings and alightings have occurred.*
- David Anderson was interested in the installation of a light pole at the bus shelter to signal to the driver that someone is waiting at the stop near Kent-Kangley Road/SE 256th Street to assist bus drivers in seeing passengers during the night.
 - **Response:** *Steve Mullen said that these are called "Eye Stops," and they are well received by both bus drivers and riders. If Mr. Anderson will let the City know which bus stop in particular needs this, the request can be passed along to Metro Transit.*
- Helen was interested in the use of Transit Signal Priority (TSP) near SE 256th Street.
 - **Response:** *Kent does not currently have facilities that allow for TSP, but a new signal system will allow this to occur within the next 5 years.*
- Tom Sharp wondered why there was no transit connection from the East Hill of Kent and Tacoma. He thought there should be a major park and ride lot and then express service to Tacoma. He reminded the consultant team that this is a regional problem not just a Kent problem.
 - **Response:** *Consultants and City staff agreed that there are no direct transit routes to Tacoma. Currently there is Sound Transit service to Puyallup and a possibility of express bus service to Tacoma in ST,2 but at the current time it requires two and possibly three transfers to take the bus from Kent to Tacoma.*

Non Motorized Recommendations:

Andy Mortensen from The Transpo Group presented the non-motorized transportation plan. He stated that there is ongoing modification to his work; therefore, it should be considered a work in progress.

Pedestrians

Andy presented the pedestrian portion of the non-motorized plan first. He identified the areas in Kent that have the highest demand for sidewalks based on the accessibility index. The accessibility index factors data such as whether or not the street is an arterial, the affluence of the surrounding neighborhoods, whether the street is on a school district bus route, etc. He also identified sidewalk condition. He produced two maps, one showing the "highest priority" projects and one showing the "medium priority" projects for new sidewalks using the functional classification of streets and factors of the accessibility index.

Task Force Members Comments on Pedestrian Recommendations

- A member of the Task Force questioned whether a street with shoulders but without a sidewalk would be marked as missing a sidewalk using the method of data collection that was used for this project.
 - ***Response:** Andy replied that all streets that did not have sidewalks were marked as missing a sidewalk, regardless of the presence of shoulders.*
- Marcelle Pechler asked if the City will replace sidewalks, or if it will depend on developers to replace them.
 - ***Response:** Andy responded by saying that the City does not have enough funding to fix all of the sidewalks, so they will use grant monies and development funds to replace sidewalks.*
- Helen Shindell-Butler asked if there will be a priority list for replacing sidewalks.
 - ***Response:** Andy answered that there will be a list but that it will not encompass the entire sidewalk system because there are too many missing sidewalks. He also said that it is hard to assign a sidewalk improvement project to an entire street because there may be many sections of poor sidewalks.*
- Mel Roberts identified the sidewalks along James Street to the east of Central Avenue N as being in poor condition although they were not displayed.
 - ***Response:** Andy said he would look at his notes after the meeting for the specific rating for the sidewalks on James and get back to the Task Force in a follow-up report.*
- Mark Gagnon asked why the E Valley Highway was not displayed.
 - ***Response:** Andy stated that he had already noticed that the map incorrectly displayed E Valley Highway and that that incongruity is being investigated. The reason the Valley Highway sidewalks did not indicate poor conditions is that this section of street was listed in the City's 6-year TIP. The global positioning system (GPS)-based data collection and rating program did not cover TIP projects, assuming that new sidewalks were imminent.*

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- Another Task Force member inquired whether property owners are required to maintain the sidewalks that touch the boundary of their property.
 - *Response: Yes they are.*
 - Don Samdahl asked if the plan that Andy presented contained devices such as signals to assist pedestrians in crossing major roads.
 - *Response: Andy replied that the database does not currently have signals and crosswalks. Crossings will be determined by looking at locations where pedestrians want to connect (going from here to there), based on safety warrants.*

Bicycle

Andy next presented the bicycle portion of the non-motorized plan. He stated that he has met with the City's Bicycle Advisory Board and has identified a draft bicycle system plan. He reiterated from previous meeting that while it would be ideal to have bicycle lanes along each major street, it is likely not feasible due to limited right-of-way and/or existing street width constraints. In order to provide bicyclists with a connected network of designated bicycle facilities, it will be necessary to designate shared lanes along some of the major streets. Such lanes are intended to be shared by bicycles and motorized vehicles, are typically indicated by signs and paint markings, and are designated on lower volume roads. There are some routes that require further study, perhaps in later updates of this plan.

Task Force Members Comments on Bicycle Recommendations

- Mel was concerned about the safety of bicyclists at the intersection of Kent-Kangley Road/SE 256th Street. He was especially concerned about the TIP project that would prohibit vehicles and bicyclists from crossing through the intersection traveling east. He asked if bicyclists could have special treatment at that intersection so that they would not be forced onto Kent-Kangley Road, where they would have to endure a faster speed limit and need to cross traffic in order to turn left in order to proceed on SE 256th Street.
 - *Response: Acknowledging that this is the most problematic intersection in the City's entire transportation network, with significant conflicts between automobiles, transit vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians, all working within an extra-large space, complicated with multiple access/egress points, it seems to make the most sense to utilize the existing business bypass route that connects two points of the existing bicycle facilities at Canyon Drive/97th Place S and back to S 256th at 108th Avenue SE. This would become the marked bicycle route. Those bicyclists who wish to ride with traffic could always take the more direct route with the automobiles.*
- Helen would like to paint a stripe down the middle of sidewalks to separate pedestrians and cyclists where sidewalks are 10 feet or wider.
 - *Response: Andy replied that mature bicyclists need the ability to use the roadway; they travel at speeds that would create a lack of safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. He said that painting a stripe down sidewalks to separate pedestrians and bicyclists would be an inappropriate design modification, based on national design guides and*

principles. For that reason, the plan will likely not recommend striping sidewalks in this way.

- Joan Thompson (visitor) asked if shared lanes will have special striping to indicate their dual purpose.
 - ***Response:*** *Andy answered by saying that it is difficult to restripe lanes on existing roads or to take away parking that already exists. Therefore, traffic planners and designers try to work within the confines of the existing roadway and make modifications with signs and markings on the street indicating that the lanes are to be shared with bicyclists. Both motorists and cyclists then recognize that there is a sharing of that space.*
- One member of the Task Force expressed the opinion that bicycles should be taxed if they use shared lanes.
 - ***Response:*** *Jodi Ketelsen reminded the member that bicyclists are taxed for the road system when they pay property tax.*

Summary

Task Force members were asked to take some time to look over the materials and think about these draft proposals. Remember that this is a 25-year plan and tries to identify City-wide system needs and consider regional needs of City residents and users. The City identifies specific projects on a year-by-year basis in its 6-Year Transportation Improvement Plan, which goes through public hearings each year. Also, this Transportation Master Plan will be reviewed for updates approximately every 5 years to see if the City is still on track, or if the community's vision for the future has changed. The important questions are does this look like your vision for your City? Is it realistic?

Next Event

November 28: The City Council Workshop at 5:00 pm

Next Meeting

Early 2007: Final Recommendations