

City of Kent
Transportation Master Plan

Stakeholder Involvement Report 2007 Update



Prepared by:



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SECTION 1. PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

In the 22 years since the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) has been updated, the City of Kent's (the City's) population has nearly tripled, and the amount of non-resident traffic that passes through the City has also increased tremendously, stretching the transportation system. Over the past two decades, development has intensified—multifamily housing has increased dramatically, and some of the region's largest employers have located in the City. The heart of the City's economic base is now manufacturing, distribution, wholesale and retail trade.

Everyone living, working and commuting through Kent depends on the transportation network. Travelers using the transportation system experience both its benefits and shortfalls, and as a result form opinions on how transportation could work better for their needs. Although the City goes to great effort to maximize and measure safety, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the transportation system, *satisfaction* is determined by the users based on personal experience rather than statistical or technical evidence. The City will continue professional, sound practices, but planning for the future is an opportunity to receive qualitative (experiential) input. Therefore, developing a plan for Kent's future should include input from its transportation system users.

Moreover, the City wants to develop a TMP that is accountable to residents and other stakeholders. To fulfill this objective, the City identified key stakeholder groups within the community and provided avenues for the community to be informed, provide input and remain involved.

Purpose of the Stakeholder Involvement Program

The purpose of the TMP Stakeholder Involvement Program is to promote and provide a variety of meaningful forums for Plan stakeholders to communicate with the Plan's Task Force and the City. A list of known stakeholders and issues of interest is included later in this plan.

To the City, success will be achieved if stakeholders understand the planning process and feel that their input was meaningful. Stakeholders want to know that their comments were heard and that their input was used to develop the recommendations and the final plan. The community outreach activities developed for the TMP will:

- Gather community perspectives on transportation issues
- Inform City staff and decision-makers about the values and preferences of the community with regard to transportation and Kent streets
- Encourage communication of project information among interested groups and individuals and encourage people to offer input during the planning process

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- Engage community groups that have not previously been involved in City government decision-making processes

These objectives are predicated on the assumption that Kent can provide access to information and avenues for stakeholders to provide input equally. The diversity in Kent makes outreach efforts a challenge. To be inclusive, outreach efforts require consideration of the needs of cultural groups and identification of cultural and key business leaders who are willing to pass along information. This report provides a road map of how to potentially address these communication needs.

When the TMP is complete, and as projects and improvements identified in the TMP are funded, the City will need to maintain the channels of communication established during development of the TMP.

This Report summarizes the community profile, project outreach activities and results to date, and provides recommendations for future outreach based on the findings of these activities.

SECTION 2. KENT COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The Kent TMP will provide the framework necessary to balance the existing and long-term needs of people living or working in Kent: drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, goods distributors and transit users. The TMP is intended to benefit everyone, including children, senior citizens, all ethnic communities, business owners, commuters, people with disabilities, people with economic disadvantages, residents, employees, and visitors. In order to best understand these unique needs, public outreach efforts must be tailored to the unique characteristics of each stakeholder group. The following community profile helped the City to identify avenues and potential hurdles in structuring communication and outreach activities.

Community Profile

Kent is diverse in many ways, including its geography, land uses, residents and business community. This diversity is Kent’s success, but it does represent challenges in communication, and how best to create a TMP that will serve the greatest number of people. Exhibit 1 provides a snapshot of Kent in comparison to the overall State of Washington.

Exhibit 1. Kent Demographic Profile

Profile Characteristic	Kent	State of Washington
Location	South King County, Washington	Northwest U.S.
Geography	29 square miles	66,544 square miles
Population (2000)	79,524	6,131,445
Average Age	31.8 years	35.3 years
Cultural Diversity	White – 70.8% African American – 8.2% American Indian – 1.0% Asian – 9.4% Native Hawaiian/Pac Islander – 0.8% Hispanic/Latino – 8.1% Two or More Races – 5.4% Other – 4.4%	White – 81.8% African American – 3.2% American Indian – 1.6% Asian – 5.5% Native Hawaiian/Pac Islander – 0.4% Hispanic/Latino – 7.5% Two or More Races – 3.6% Other – 3.9%
Languages Spoken at Home	English Only – 78.2% Language Other than English – 21.8% Spanish – 6.6% Other Indo-European – 7.4% Asian/Pacific Island – 6.5%	English Only – 86.0% Language Other than English – 14.0% Spanish – 5.8% Other Indo-European – 3.2% Asian/Pacific Island – 4.4%
Median Household Income (1999)	\$46,046	\$45,776
Commute Travel Modes	Drove Alone – 73.5% Carpooled – 14.8% Public Transportation – 5.7% Walked – 1.9% Worked at Home – 3.2% Other – 0.8%	Drove Alone – 73.3% Carpooled – 12.8% Public Transportation – 4.9% Walked – 3.2% Worked at Home – 4.3% Other – 1.4%
Mean Travel Time to Work (Population over 16 Years)	28.7 minutes	25.5 minutes

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Exhibit 1. Kent Demographic Profile

Profile Characteristic	Kent	State of Washington
Persons Below Poverty Level	11.6%	10.6 %

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Geography

Kent is located in south King County, Washington. It is centrally located between the metropolitan areas and ports of Seattle and Tacoma. Communities surrounding Kent are Des Moines and Federal Way to the west, Covington to the east, Auburn to the south and Renton to the north (Exhibit 2), as well as areas of unincorporated King County. The Green River flows through the western and southern portions of Kent. Kent is characterized by a valley floor running north to south in the middle of the city, which rises steeply to hills both east and west of the valley floor (“East Hill” and “West Hill”). The valley is characterized by flat terrain and includes some wetland areas near the Green River.

One of Kent’s main assets is its access to a number of transportation systems. Two regional freeways run through Kent from north to south: Interstate 5 (I-5), and State Route 167 (SR 167). Five State Routes (SR) are in or on the borders of Kent: SR 99 runs north to south along the City’s western border, just west of I-5; SR 516 runs east to west through the southern portion of Kent; SR 181 and SR 515 run north and south through the middle of the City; and SR 18 passes just southeast of the City limits. Two rail lines run north-south through the heart of the downtown and industrial areas on the valley floor. The rail lines support both freight and Sound Transit (*Sounder*) commuter trains. Sound Transit Regional buses and King County Metro serves the City, and Kent continues to have a City-run downtown shuttle service. Many roads contain bicycle routes, but both bicycle routes and pedestrian sidewalks have missing linkages in places. The regional Interurban Trail runs parallel to the railroad tracks, and the popular Green River Trail follows the river through Kent. Finally, the regional Sea-Tac International Airport is less than 2 miles away from Kent’s northwest city limits.

Although access to regional transportation systems and other major destinations is good, the geography does affect the perception of accessibility within the City of Kent.

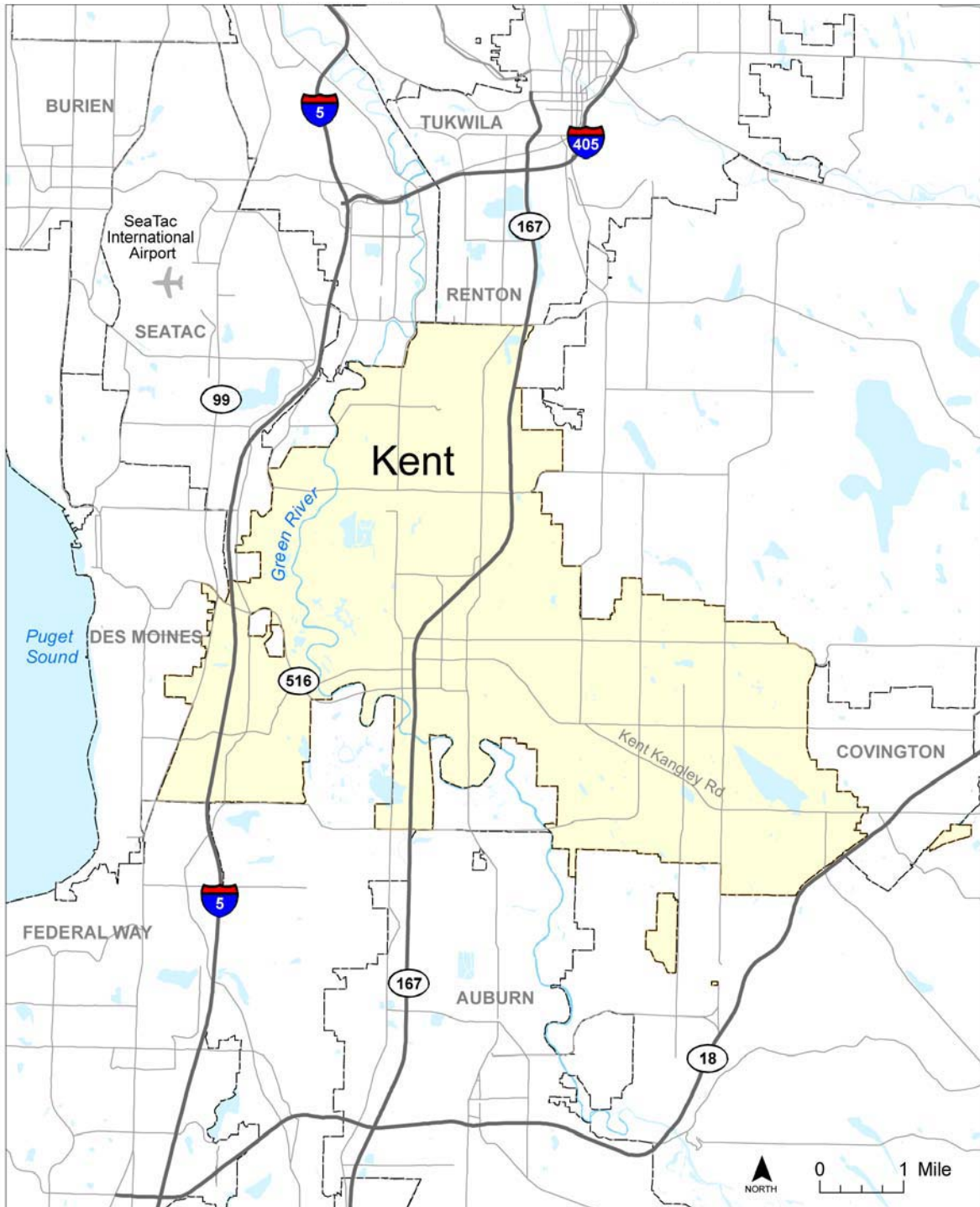


Exhibit 2. Kent and Its Surrounds

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Land Uses

Kent covers approximately 29 square miles and is composed of multiple land uses as illustrated in Exhibit 3. The Kent Urban Center is located toward the south and center of the valley floor and includes the Kent Transit Center. The City's redevelopment efforts, through its economic development initiatives and partnerships with local organizations, have created commercial opportunities in Kent. As a result, a vision of the downtown area as a growing, business-friendly destination has been able to attract developments such as Kent Station, which combines retail, entertainment, education, and accessibility for Kent residents. The City, working with the Kent Downtown Partnership, has found ways to connect Kent's historic downtown with new commercial areas to make the downtown a walkable blend of eclectic of old and new. Single-family residential uses are primarily located in the western and eastern areas of Kent, on West Hill and East Hill. Multifamily housing is primarily located in the southern and central portions of the city, near James Street and along Canyon Drive.

A new residential development is being planned for the northwest quadrant of the City. Commercial land uses are primarily concentrated along major roadway corridors, including between SR 99 and I-5; along East Valley Highway, Kent-Kangley Road and SE 240th Street; and off SR 167. The bulk of the industrial and manufacturing uses are located in the northern valley areas of Kent, between the West Valley and East Valley Highways. Corridors of mixed-use land uses (commercial and residential) are located along 104th Avenue SE and W Meeker Street. Parks and open space, including the Green River Trail, are located throughout the City.

Residents/Population

Kent's population in 2006 is approximately 84,275. Population is projected to grow to approximately 100,000 by 2030. Most of Kent's residents are concentrated in the east and west portions of the city (see Exhibit 3). Population density and its distribution can help when prioritizing transportation services and projects. The most dense populations are located north of Meeker Street and along Kent-Kangley Road. The potential Kent annexation area (to the northeast of Kent) is also notably dense, particularly near the Kent city limits.

Kent is perhaps the most culturally diverse city within King County. According to the 2000 US Census, Kent residential diversity is reflected as follows:

- 21.8 percent speak a language other than English at home
- 29.2 percent are non-white
- 16.9 percent were born in a country other than the United States, of which
 - 23.4 percent were born in Europe,
 - 43 percent were born in Asia,

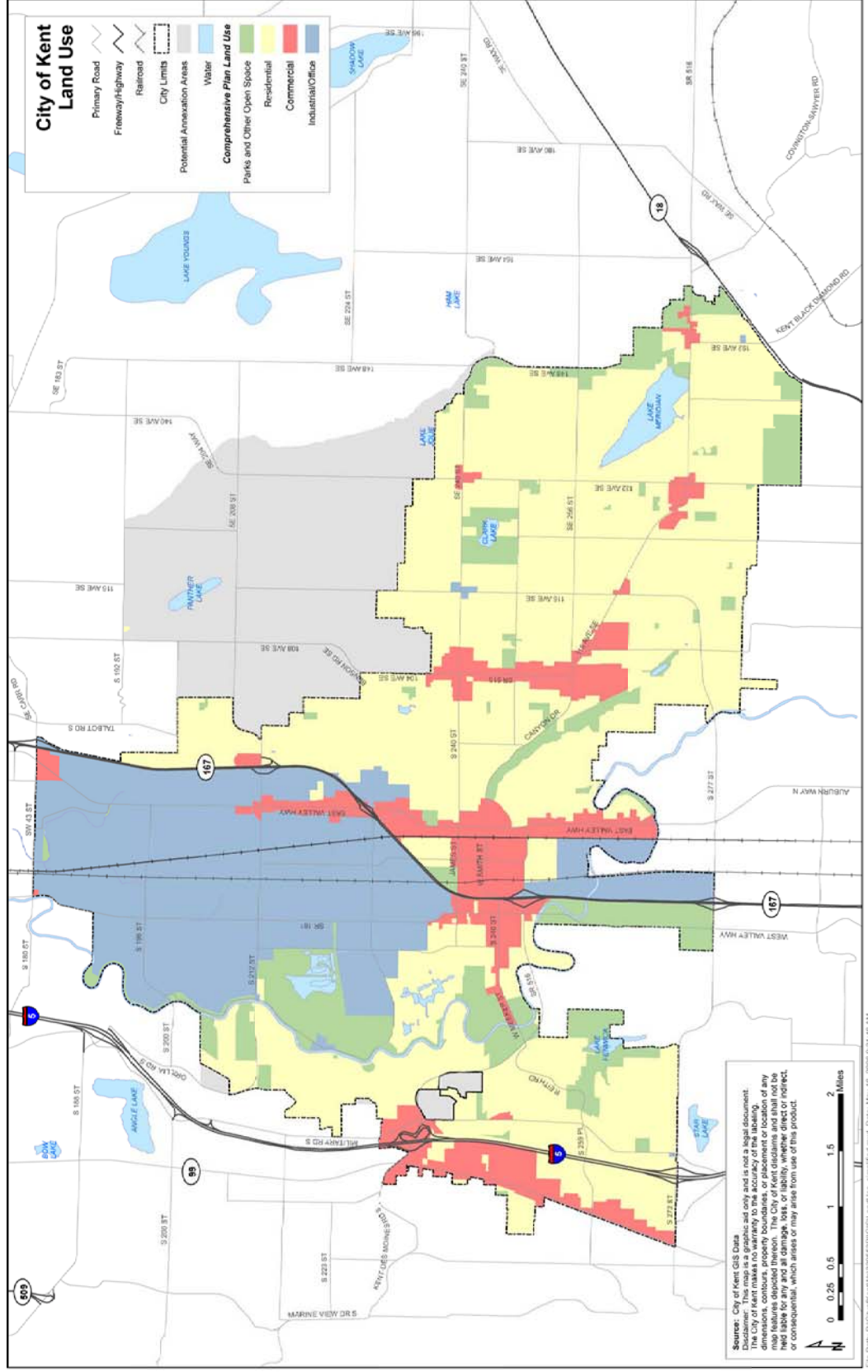


Exhibit 3. Existing Land Uses in Kent

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- 6.1 percent were born in Africa,
- 1.2 percent were born in Oceania,
- 22.5 percent were born in Latin America, and
- 3.8 percent were born in North America

This means that cultural sensitivity and language translations are factors to be considered in outreach to Kent residents.

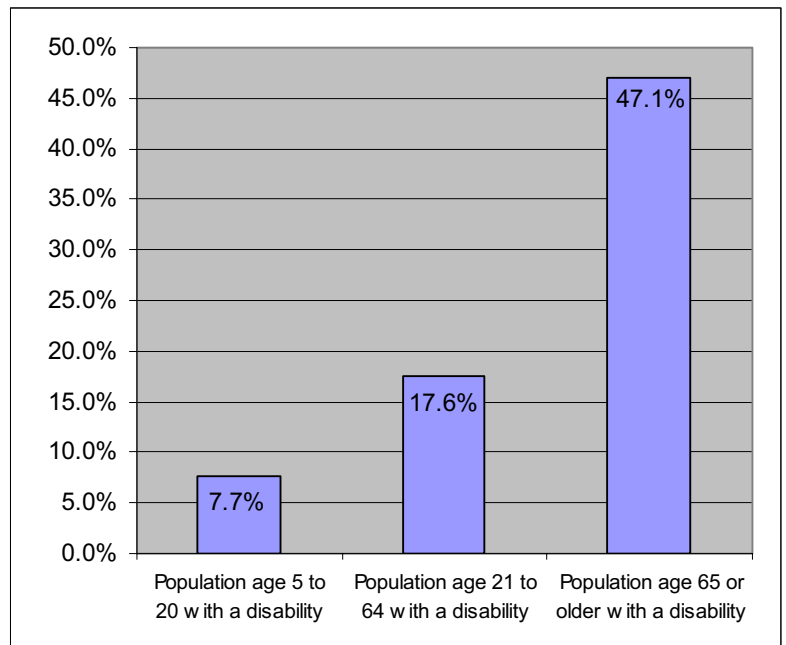
Kent residents also reflect a range of educational and economic backgrounds. The 2000 Census shows that:

- 86.6 percent of Kent residents over age 25 have high school degrees
- 24 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher
- 11.6 percent of Kent residents are below the poverty level, which is slightly higher than the state percentage (10.6 percent)
- 8.7 percent of families are below the poverty level; however, 17.6 percent of families with children under 5 years old are below the poverty level

Many Kent residents rent: 51.2 percent of occupied housing units are renter-occupied; while 48.9 percent are owner-occupied. The median age in Kent is 31.8 years old, which is younger than the state average of 35.3 years old; 11.2 percent of residents are age 65 older and 25.7 percent are under 18 years old.

Mobility is an issue for those with disabilities. In Kent, the portion of the population with a disability increases with age, until it becomes a substantial percentage of the City's older population, as shown in Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 4. Percent of Population with a Disability



Employment/Business Community

Kent has a thriving business community, ranging from small businesses to large company headquarters, to warehousing and freight operations. Many large manufacturing companies and product distributors are located in Kent (primarily in the northern valley). Kent is home to 33 companies or agencies that

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employ over 100 employees (these businesses all have Commute Trip Reduction [CTR] programs in place per State of Washington law). Together these entities employ over 14,000 people in Kent.

In researching transportation needs for Kent, larger companies noted that they chose to locate in Kent because of its central location relative to the regional transportation systems, such as the ports of Seattle and Tacoma, and major freeways, such as I-5 and I-405.

According to the 2000 Census, of those 16 years or older in Kent, 71.7 percent are employed, 28.2 percent are not in the labor force (retirees, etc.) and 4.1 percent are unemployed.

The most common occupation for Kent residents is management, professional and related occupations (30.5 percent), followed by sales and office occupations (29.7 percent) and production, transportation and material-moving occupations (15.2 percent).

Traffic delays are increasing every year. The 2000 US Census reported the mean travel time to work for Kent resident workers over 16 years old was 28.7 minutes. Among workers, Census information also showed that:

- 73.3 percent drove alone to work
- 14.8 percent carpooled to work
- 5.7 percent used public transportation
- 1.9 percent walked
- 3.2 percent worked at home
- 0.8 percent used other means (including bicycles)
- 7.5 percent of housing units do not have vehicles available.

According to a transit survey completed for the TMP, of 401 Kent households surveyed, 65 percent of respondents commute to locations outside of Kent (34 percent to Seattle and 14 percent to Bellevue). Therefore, regional connectivity is important to the residential population as well as to the business community.

Community Profile Conclusions

The City of Kent must design public outreach programs that can reach a number of different sectors. Kent does not have the resources to provide a one-size-fits-all outreach program. There must be a conscientious effort to know the audience

and the objectives, and to make special provisions to reach the range of interests in Kent. Based on the community profile, the following conclusions are made:

1. Variety of cultures: Residents include many different cultures and language needs. Dominant cultures are Anglo-European, Asiatic, Slavic, Hispanic, and Somali, among others.
2. Variety of business: Businesses in Kent are all sizes with an equally broad range of transportation needs that span the 24-hour time frame.
3. Broad range of commuter groups: Commuters need connectivity internal to Kent as well as regional connections both north and south. Others need to travel through Kent while coming from and going to work or school.

SECTION 3. OVERVIEW OF OUTREACH APPROACH

The City's goal for its TMP is to reach out to as many people in the Kent community as possible. It is a City priority to understand the diversity of its community needs and issues to guide future transportation decisions. The community outreach approach for the TMP was spearheaded by the City of Kent and developed collaboratively to frame the critical issues and priorities that the TMP project team should consider throughout the planning process.

Community Outreach Objectives

Community involvement is critical to the development of a plan that truly reflects community values and wins public support. The community outreach project is designed to encourage interested groups and individuals to participate in the development of the TMP to address transportation planning for the next 20 to 30 years.

The following guidelines were used to design the community outreach approach for the TMP:

- Inform the general public and special interest stakeholders about the need for the TMP, and potential benefits of the project
- Create a variety of outreach activities that build early awareness of the project while categorizing the public's issues of interest, which can be addressed and incorporated into the planning process
- Solicit ideas and respond to concerns from the general public and special interest stakeholders throughout the planning process
- Provide clear, concise information about the project, its goals and the process for determining recommendations
- Distribute information via familiar communication networks and printed materials and explore ways to make information easily accessible for community members who may experience communication hurdles when becoming involved in city government processes
- Develop opportunities for divergent and diverse interest groups to have open discussions about issues directly related to the TMP
- Maintain open lines of communication with other agencies to improve coordination efforts and build interagency cooperation
- Provide input opportunities to the community through all stages of the TMP planning process and beyond

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Community Outreach Activities and Tools

When structuring outreach methods, the project team considered the community profile and Kent's past experiences in community outreach. The team selected methods that were broad-reaching and inclusive, yet cost-effective. The following outreach methods were chosen and are described in this report:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Citizen task force
- Newsletters
- Open houses
- Transit survey
- TMP web site
- Cable TV program
- Reports to the Public Works Committee, City Council, and Mayor
- E-mail updates/information distribution
- *IN BOX* utility mailing
- *Kent Reporter* (monthly community newspaper)

In addition to the community outreach efforts described in this report, the City of Kent Public Works Department continues to coordinate with other agencies and any public request via phone (253-856-5566), e-mail (tmp@ci.kent.wa.us), or in person at the Kent Public Works Department at 400 West Grove Street, on an as-needed basis.

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder involvement began by identifying key stakeholders and associations that could be valuable in the TMP process. Individual interviews and focus group sessions were organized to gather information regarding the community's perceived transportation issues and needs, what types of solutions might be effective and what methods of future outreach (for example, future phases of the TMP) would be most effective for the interest group they represent.

Individual interviews were held with representatives who are recognized leaders in the community, such as church leaders, chairs of volunteer associations, City Council members, and those who could not easily convene in a group setting. Focus group meetings involved interviewing 4 to 15 individuals with like interests or like situations, such as trucking associations, developers, cultural ethnicity or school district transportation staff. It is common to receive different types of information from groups than from individual interviews because of the

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different dynamics. The advantage of individual interviews is that people may be less inhibited and can express their opinions freely. On the other hand, groups can be advantageous because more ideas are triggered in interactive conversation with one another.

Through this process, several other stakeholders were identified. The interviews also were used to determine potential representatives to be on the TMP Task Force (see the Task Force description later in this section).

Several stakeholders were identified by City Council, City staff or by other stakeholder members. Interviews were intended to represent the diversity of residents and workers in Kent. Nearly 40 focus groups and individuals were interviewed during March and April 2006, at the beginning of the TMP process, and follow-up focus group interviews were held in September, October, and November 2007 to receive additional input and to apprise people who had been involved in the interview process of how their input would be used in plan development. A set of common questions and a standard summary form was developed to ensure some consistency across interviews, and to identify major themes covered by interviewees. We used these forms to develop this report and are holding them in confidence to ensure that interviewees felt able to express themselves freely. Representatives from the following groups were interviewed (see Attachment A for a full list of interviewees):

Exhibit 5. General Group and Individual Interviews

Group Interviews	Interviews with Individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity Advisory Group • Senior citizens/citizens with disabilities • Small business owners • Large business owners and operators • Downtown business associations • Ethnic communities (Slavic/Ukrainian, Somali) • Freight providers and truckers • Industrial/manufacturing managers • Developers and builders (master builders associations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood representatives/residential property owners • Indic community representatives • Asian community representatives • Transit users • Transit providers • Commute trip reduction staff • Journalists • Youth • Business community and trucking industry representatives • Bicyclists • School district • Economic development representatives • Kent City Council • Kent Land Use and Planning Board • Parents • Real estate professionals • Event planners • Other agencies

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Section 4 of this report includes the results from these interviews and information gathered.

Citizen Task Force

The City convened a Citizen's Task Force that would be involved in TMP development. Members of the Task Force provided input and feedback that helped the City prioritize projects that are recommended in the TMP. This important role helped build community trust and endorsement.

Task Force members also served as liaisons to the rest of the community; as the members of the Task Force gained more knowledge about how the City's transportation system worked and better understood transportation planning relates to community values, they also learned what accomplishing transportation goals required.

Task Force members were recommended by City Council members and the Mayor, based on comments received during community interviews. Members represented a very broad cross section of transportation system users in Kent, including neighborhood groups, parents, builders, freight interests, businesses, seniors, cultural community groups, transit users, and others.

The City set several goals for the Task Force:

- Identify transportation issues
- Build a collective vision
- Identify success goals and criteria
- Develop solutions that reflect community values
- Understand funding opportunities and limits
- Prioritize community needs
- Serve as liaisons to the community
- Endorse a plan that meets community needs

The Task Force met seven times over the course of a year. The topics and results of these seven meetings are summarized below.

Meeting #1 (April 11, 2006). The purpose of the first Task Force meeting was for members to understand the role of the Task Force and to identify transportation issues facing the City. The Task Force began its work by exploring the values, goals, and policies to be used as guiding principles and markers of the success of the TMP. The Task Force, with TMP staff, developed definitions of these three terms to match the purpose of the TMP Task Force:

Value: A principle, standard, or quality that is worth upholding and that may determine behavior or actions.

Goal: The purpose toward which an endeavor is directed and that guides the actions of the Task Force

Policy: A course of action, guiding principle, or procedure considered expedient, prudent, or advantageous, and which helps to fulfill the goal of the TMP.

The Task Force confirmed the values identified during the community interviews, which included:

- Traffic mobility
- Regional mobility
- Multimodal use
- Safety
- Pedestrian-friendliness
- Preservation of the environment
- Connectedness
- Support of businesses
- Neighborhood-oriented
- Efficiency of funding
- Attractiveness

Breaking into small groups that mix people with varying interests was a method used frequently to get people to think in different ways and look at things from other points of view. At the first Task Force meeting, the members broke into groups to clarify the transportation issues identified by the community, including vehicular congestion areas, key destinations, and areas needing transit, bike, and pedestrian improvements. Exhibit 6 shows some of the results of the issues exercise performed at this Task Force meeting.

Meeting #2 (May 10, 2006). At the second meeting, the Task Force discussed and evaluated the existing transportation conditions and developed a vision of potential solutions. The Task Force looked at several critical pieces of the transportation system and identified factors that would indicate successful improvement of each of these elements. This list was used to select and weigh the criteria for prioritizing TMP projects.

- **Traffic mobility:** Reduce congestion.
- **Regional mobility:** Coordinate with others municipalities and agencies to address regional congestion and multi-modal corridors to better serve

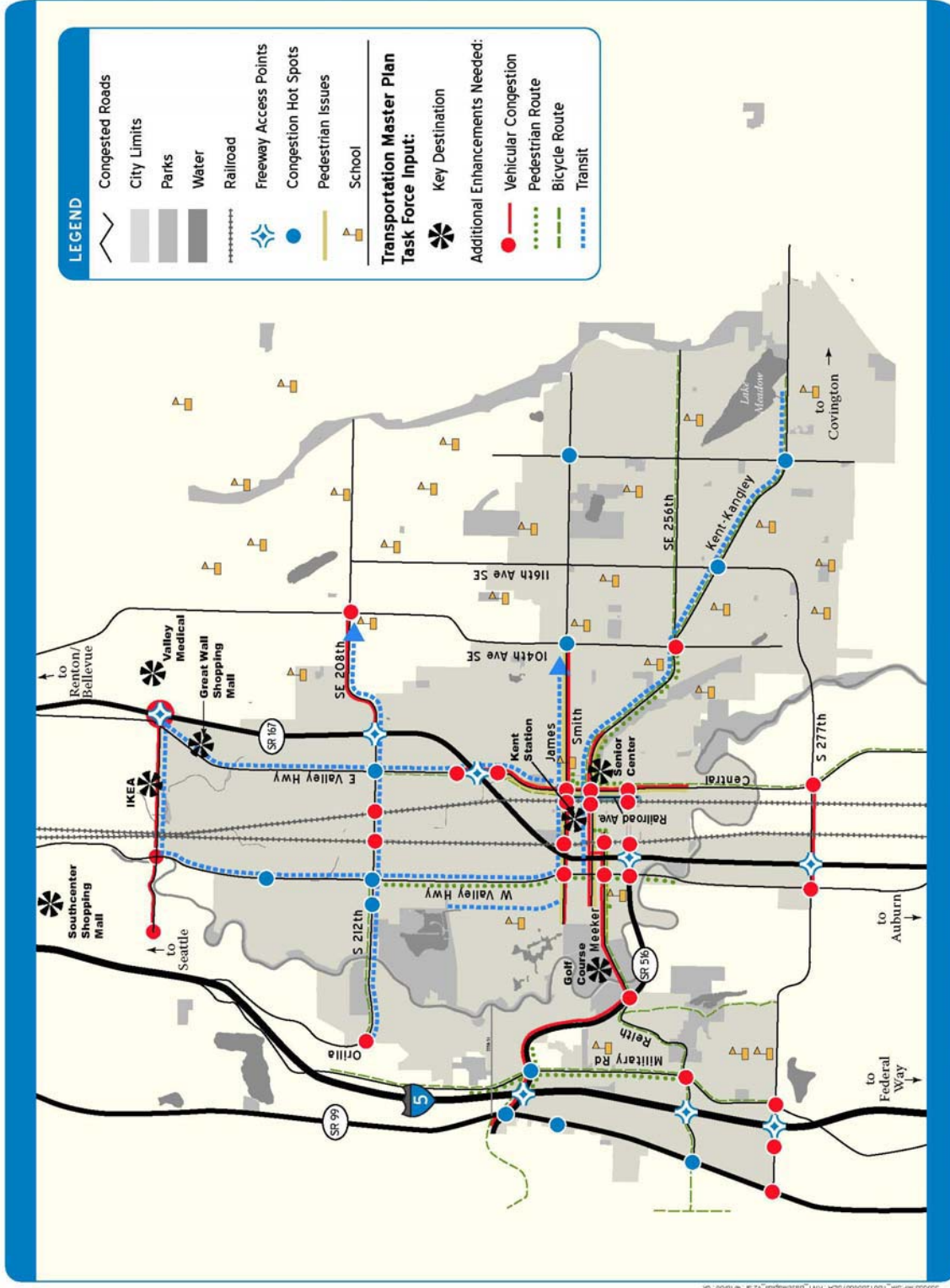


Exhibit 6. Issues Map Developed at Task Force Meeting 1

residents, walkers, bicyclists, commuters, freight, business, schools, and transit and to integrate regional transportation systems.

- **Multi-modal/mobility:** Recognize transportation needs of different users. Make sure that transit is accessible to all residents and achieve more frequent bus and Sounder train service. Maintain a balance among modes.
- **Safety:** Provide a safe place to drive, walk, bike, or take the bus; allow quick response by medical and other emergency services.
- **Pedestrian friendly:** Facilitate pedestrians crossing streets and walking to bus stops for all ages; limit the roadway footprint to keep small-town friendliness.
- **Environmental preservation:** Develop Kent's transportation systems with sensitivity to maintaining and enhancing natural resources.
- **Attractiveness:** Make the City more attractive by including street trees and maintaining medians/code enforcement; improve downtown appearance and infrastructure.
- **Connectedness/accessibility:** Connect residents and businesses within the City and provide connections to surrounding communities.
- **Business friendly:** Support the needs of retail, industrial, commercial businesses.
- **Neighborhood oriented:** Focus traffic on arterial routes.
- **Efficient use of funding:** Obtain and spend funds for transportation in an efficient manner.

Meeting #3 (June 14, 2006). At the third Task Force meeting, the group reviewed the existing transit and pedestrian elements of the City's transportation system. This information was used to develop priorities for use in the TMP. The Task Force selected the top five transit issues, which include more local service to residential neighborhoods, connections between industrial areas and Kent Transit Center, new midday and peak hour service on commuter rail, and pedestrian improvements to transit.

The Task Force identified the following as the top 5 transit issues (because issues were given numerical weights, there were several ties among the priorities):

1. Provide more local circulation service connecting residential neighborhoods to the Kent Transit Center
2. Add new midday service on the Sounder Commuter Rail
- 3 (tie). Improve the pedestrian crossing on 104th and Benson

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- 3 (tie). Add more peak hour service on the Sounder Commuter Rail
- 4 (tie). Improve sidewalk connections to transit stops
- 4 (tie). Provide more local circulation service to connect industrial area to the Kent Transit Center
- 5. Increase transit service to the rapidly developing areas around 108th to 274th that are currently underserved by transit

The Task Force also identified the types of destinations where it was most important for there to be safe and effective pedestrian access. The top 3 destination types identified were, in order, schools, transit, and lower-income housing. These priorities were used by TMP staff to weight transit and pedestrian projects for the final Plan.

Meeting #4 (August 9, 2006). At the fourth meeting, members reviewed the findings from the existing conditions analysis for streets and bicycles. Members examined the trade-offs to reduce congestion on the street network while balancing multi-modal needs.

Meeting #5 (September 13, 2006). Members met in small groups to clarify issues and concerns for all modes. This allowed discussion about the issues to be best addressed by the setting of TMP project priorities.

Meeting #6 (October 25, 2006). At the sixth Task Force meeting, City staff presented an overview of the preliminary recommendations for all modes—streets, transit, and non-motorized (pedestrian and bicycle)—and to take comments from Task Force members, either responding to them at the meeting or at a later date if the solution had not been considered.

Meeting #7 (May 2, 2007). At the last meeting, members received an overview of the final draft recommendations for all the modes. Different funding options were presented for discussion.

Members of the Task Force included David Anderson, Patrick Binion, Lea Bishop, Tina Busenius, Carol Carlile, Bill Castagno, Natalia Datskiv, Manmeet Dhami, Debbie Eckley, William Ellison, Robert Faamausili, Mark Gagnon, Roberto Gonzales, Emma Herron, Kristin Jensen, Marilyn Kielbauch, Omar Lee, Marcelle Pechler, Dana Ralph, Mel Roberts, Tom Sharp, Helen Shindell-Butler, Doreen Stewart, Grant Toschi, and Bob Whalen.

Newsletters

The newsletters provided project updates to the broadest possible cross-section of Kent residents. Two newsletters were mailed to every household in the City.

The project team developed the newsletters in coordination with City of Kent media specialists. They were printed using the City's printing facilities distributed via first class mail to all households within the Kent city limits.

The first, mailed at the beginning of the planning process, in spring 2006, provided information about the project, such as reasons for the TMP and information about the issues that had been gathered through traffic surveys, group and individual interviews, and the transit survey. It also directed residents to future involvement opportunities and encouraged feedback. The mailing of the first newsletter coincided with an increase in web traffic, e-mail feedback, and telephone feedback. To reach a larger portion of Kent's minority communities, the newsletter was translated into Spanish and Russian. Both translated versions were made available on the TMP web site. Additional copies of the newsletter were displayed at key locations within Kent, including City Hall, religious organizations, grocery stores, and the library. The translated newsletter was also distributed at Fiesta de Mayo.

The second newsletter, mailed in the summer of 2007, described the recommendations developed for the draft TMP in all modes and encouraged the Kent community to attend the open houses and provide comments. Because it was timed to coincide with the two open houses, attendance at both events was very good. In addition, a postage-paid comment card (shown in Exhibit 7) was inserted into the newsletter, and the information was used to help make final project prioritization decisions. The format of the comment card was duplicated online on the TMP web site (see Exhibit 8). As of October 2007, nearly 300 comment cards were returned. The responses to these comment cards and other related systematic feedback opportunities are summarized in Section 4.

Copies of the newsletters are included in Appendix B.

Open Houses

The City held two open houses and a neighborhood meeting in fall 2007 to explain the TMP plan and offer an opportunity for public feedback. Kent residents took advantage of these opportunities, and turnout was very good.

The open houses were held September 20 from 2 to 8 p.m. at the Green River Community College Kent Station Campus and September 25 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. at the Kent Senior Center. The neighborhood meeting was held September 26 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the City Council Chambers. At each event, stations were set up to present information on the existing and future conditions for each mode.

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Transportation Master Plan Comments

Rate the three types of projects described in this newsletter in order of importance to you, with 1 being most important and 3 being least important.

Streets Non-motorized
(Pedestrian and Cycling) Transit

Several potential projects are listed in this newsletter, and more are listed on the City's web site. Using the names of the projects as they appear, list the three projects for each mode of transportation that are most important to you.

	Streets	Non-motorized	Transit
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

Please write any other comments you have for us below, or visit the Kent TMP website (www.ci.kent.wa.us/transportation/tmp) if you have more to say.




Exhibit 7. Reader Reply Card Included with the Fall 2007 Newsletter

The open houses explained the current conditions, showed the growth that is expected by 2030, and the impacts on the transportation system. For example, stations offered information about plans for new sidewalks; streets; transit; bicycle facilities; and level of service. During the development of the TMP, the City identified several projects that are needed to accommodate growth; these were included in the Open Houses as part of a station featuring the Transportation Improvement Program.

The September 26 neighborhood meeting began with a short presentation about the TMP planning process and had a question and answer session before the meeting moved to an open forum where people visited the display stations and asked individual questions of staff.

Members of the City's Public Works Transportation Section and of the TMP development team staffed the open houses and the neighborhood meeting. As a result, residents had the chance not only to share their ideas and concerns but also to engage in discussion about those concerns with the staff directly involved in developing and implementing solutions to address those concerns. These concerns are noted on the web site and the comments were used in the finalization of the TMP. During these face-to-face opportunities, some of the

areas discussed included traffic signal, developer responsibilities, safer school bus routes, bicycle route connections, extended shopper shuttle hours, traffic calming measures, and issues associated with the Kent-Kangley "Y." The result of these in-person connections, then seeing their concerns noted on the web site or in the TMP, is the evidence that the City listens to and understands community concerns. This is a factor in community endorsement of the TMP, which was one of the City's goals.

Often, open houses are not well-attended by the public. However, Kent residents took advantage of these opportunities, and turnout was very good: 113 people attended the first open house, 40 people attended the second open house, and 23 people attended the neighborhood meeting. Note that these figures might be low by 10 to 15 percent, because not all attendees used the sign-in sheets.

In addition to the opportunity to talk to Kent transportation staff, comment cards were also provided and tables and chairs were set up to allow attendees to comfortably write down comments and concerns. Attendees of these meetings filled out 57 comment cards, and a summary of this feedback (along with responses to coordinated feedback from newsletter reader-reply cards, the TMP web site, and from other sources) is included in Section 4.

Transit Survey

The purpose of the transit survey is to provide a statistically valid sampling of citizen opinions regarding transit in and to/from Kent, meaning that enough people were surveyed to provide a reasonable approximation of the sentiments of the entire Kent community. This will help guide the development of transit service, routing and funding recommendations.

The transit survey, conducted in March 2006, included several questions regarding transit and transit usage among Kent residents, including where people go using transit and what citizens think of the varying components of transit (routes, frequency, length of trips, safety, location, etc.).

The transit lead for the consultant team developed and managed the actual conducting of the survey.

Trained survey professionals conducted the surveys over the phone with 401 randomly selected Kent households. The information will be used to determine effective improvements in transit service. In brief, results from the survey include:

- 65 percent of Kent citizens commute outside Kent: 34 percent to Seattle, and 14 percent to Bellevue

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- 34 percent had used a bus in the past year, while only 9 percent had used the *Sounder* commuter train
- 12 percent would like to use the bus, but there are no bus stops near their homes or destinations (work, hospital, housing developments, etc.).

In addition, a similar survey posted to the TMP web site was available, although because it could not be carefully controlled, the information gathered through it (and other online opportunities) was not statistically valid, though still useful for informational purposes.

TMP web site

The web site was structured to match the organization of the TMP. It includes pages for streets, transit, non-motorized modes (that is, pedestrian and bicycle), funding resources, and community involvement. It is linked to the City of Kent's web site and provides easy and convenient public access to project background, meeting summaries and upcoming project events. The TMP home page address is www.ci.kent.wa.us/transportation/TMP/.

The purpose of the TMP web site was not to serve as an independent, primary source of information. Instead, it served as a tool to support all other TMP outreach activities. The fact that it is a web site has no practical space limitation, that it can be updated easily, and that it's widely available at all times make it an ideal support tool. For example, when a statistical phone survey of Kent residents was conducted to gather transit use information, the web site offered a follow-up survey that provided valuable information that the team used to further support transit priorities, despite the fact that the web survey was not statistically significant (because the sample group could not be controlled or validated). When the newsletters were mailed to residents, not only was the web site used to provide verbatim copies of newsletter text, but it also was a source of comprehensive information that was referenced in the newsletter but that would not fit within the limited space of the printed page. For example, all street project recommendations could be shown on the web site and visual representations of the three types of bicycle facilities could be presented, whereas the newsletter provided information about a limited number of projects and only brief descriptions of bike facilities. The web site also provided access to PDF and html versions of the newsletters, and, in the case of the first newsletter, access to the Russian and Spanish translations.

The web site also supported Open House events, not only by providing information about upcoming events, but also by being used to post responses to frequently asked questions, providing a degree of connection to and interactivity with residents not otherwise easily available. The web site also served as a funnel

to bring feedback to TMP staff. It provided relevant phone numbers, click-access to e-mail addresses, and online feedback opportunities. Exhibit 8 is an example of a web based feedback opportunity, in this case created to provide more opportunity to provide feedback in coordination with the Open Houses and Fall 2007 Newsletter.

Upon completion of the TMP, the web site will provide online access to the TMP and supporting material, similar to the access provided for the City’s 6-Year Transportation Improvement Program document.

The web site was periodically updated as new information became available. A

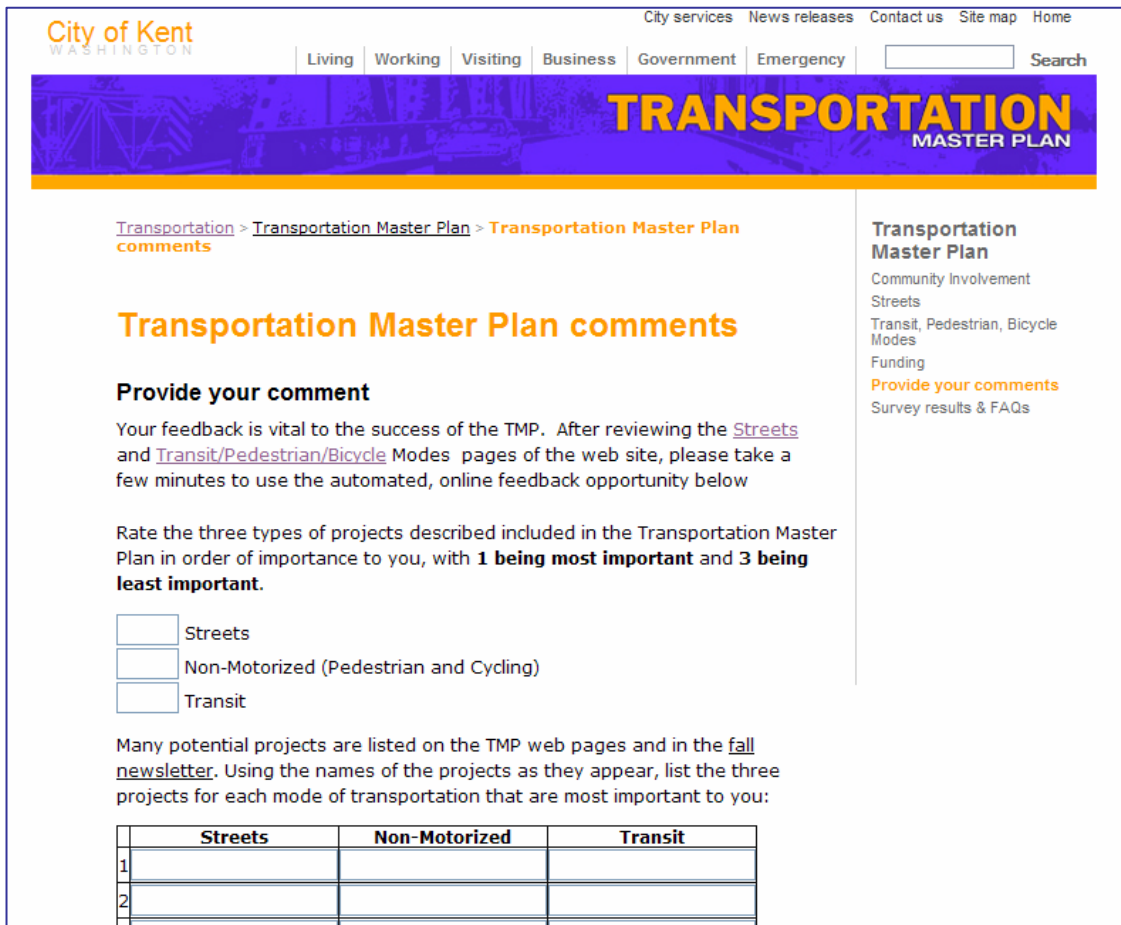


Exhibit 8. TMP Web Site: Automated Feedback Form

“What’s New” box on the TMP home page provided a quick way to find new recently added information.

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Cable TV Program

Kent Mayor Suzette Cooke used the May 2006, premiere episode of her “Kent Today” monthly cable television programs to highlight transportation issues.

The purpose of the Mayor’s “Kent Today” show is to educate the public regarding various local issues and to create opportunities for community dialogue. The first “Kent Today” episode featured several members from the community and the Mayor having an informal conversation regarding transportation in Kent. The format was designed to be educational and to provide information in an interesting way.

The “Kent Today” cable television show covered all aspects of transportation in Kent and was oriented toward what a community vision for transportation might look like. The shows ran on channels 21 and 77.

The first episode included the following participants:

- Suzette Cooke – Mayor of Kent, who was the host of the program
- Pat Binion – Kent resident and representative Alaska Distributors Company, a firm located in Kent
- Doreen Stewart – Transportation specialist with the Kent School District
- Russell Edwards – Kent resident
- Carol Carlile – Harrison House resident (representative of the senior citizen and disabled communities)
- Steve Mullen – City of Kent Transportation Engineering Manager

Topics discussed included the need for the transportation system to keep pace with the predicted growth of the City; the importance of access to the freeway system; the importance of transit to employers, employees and residents; the value of Kent’s shuttle service; sidewalk continuity, maintenance and safety for senior citizens, people with disabilities and school children; safety of bicyclists and pedestrians; and issues surrounding both the commuter and freight trains. The program concluded with an invitation for residents to learn about the TMP and to use the City’s traffic hotline.

“Kent Today” debuted on May 17, 2006, and this specific episode relating to transportation ran through June and was available for online viewing.

Reports to the Public Works Committee, City Council, and Mayor

The TMP was a standing agenda item for the Public Works Committee every other month. Each update included the TMP progress since the previous meeting and an overview of upcoming tasks. In turn, at the City Council meetings, the

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Public Works Committee delivered a committee report to the full council, including noteworthy developments in the TMP. These updates kept the Council regularly informed, maintained their engagement, and made sure that the City's elected leaders knew the TMP was on track.

TMP team members appeared on several occasions before the City Council to directly present TMP updates and respond to questions from the council members. These Council meetings provided an opportunity for the TMP team to explain the planning process and keep City leaders up to date about development of the recommendations that would appear in the final plan. They also provided an avenue to incorporate feedback from Council members and their constituents into the Plan as it was being developed.

Committee meetings and Council meetings are broadcast on Cable TV 21 and are available as streaming video on the City's web site, www.ci.kent.wa.us/kenttv21/online.asp

TMP staff also met periodically with the Mayor to discuss the TMP.

Exhibit 9 provides a list of these meetings with the Public Works Committee, City Council, and Mayor and their topics.

Exhibit 9. Presentations to City Council, Public Works Committee, and Mayor

Date	Venue	Subject
June 20, 2006	Council Workshop	Concurrency and Performance Standards
July 5, 2006	Council Workshop	Transit Plan and Non-Motorized Plan
July 10, 2006	Public Works Committee	Public Involvement Report
August 21, 2006	Public Works Committee	Streets Analysis and LOS Standards
September 5, 2006	Council Workshop	Transportation Funding Options
November 28, 2006	Council Workshop	Update on All Modes
February 9, 2007	Mayor's Office	Brief Mayor and Executive Staff on TMP Funding Options
February 27, 2007	Council Workshop	TMP Funding Options and Streets Mode
April 19, 2007	Mayor's Office	Brief Mayor and Executive Staff on TMP Project Priorities and Funding Options
December 3, 2007	Public Works Committee	GMA and Transportation Impact Fees

E-mail Updates/Information Distribution

The City used e-mail to quickly disseminate information to people who had indicated specific interests in the transportation system. A special e-mail address (tmp@ci.kent.wa.us) was set up, and everyone who used it was added to the distribution list. The distribution list also included members of the Citizen's Task Force, people who gave their e-mail address at public meetings, and anyone who left their e-mail address on the traffic hotline, as well as members of the TMP Citizen's Task Force and others. As more people expressed an interest in Kent's

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transportation system their names were added to the list, expanding the reach of City public outreach.

E-mail updates were also used to notify recipients of new information available on the web site, public meeting opportunities, new information about TMP development, and any other opportunities to participate in the public process. E-mail distribution was a key tool used to generate interest in the second TMP open house, which was not advertised in the newsletter.

IN BOX Utility Mailing

Kent's IN BOX pamphlet is mailed monthly to all residents who receive City water/sewer service, as a part of their bill. It is a way to cost-effectively send small pieces of information to a broad cross-section of residents. It is also available online at www.ci.kent.wa.us/News/InBox. It is only possible to include snippets of information due to the number of announcements included each month and the limited space in the pamphlet.

An announcement of the TMP (along with other transportation information) appeared first in the May 2006 issue of the IN BOX, as part of the *On the Road* section.

Kent Reporter

The *Kent Reporter*, a free newspaper mailed twice monthly to approximately 28,000 Kent households, is another opportunity to communicate information to the community about the TMP. The City has an arrangement with the publisher to provide four pages of collocated information in each issue of the newspaper; like the rest of the *Kent Reporter* pages, these four pages also include paid advertisements. As in the case of the IN BOX pamphlet, there is a great deal of information to fit into limited space. The Public Works Department Transportation Section, along with other departments, submits stories, limited to 150 words, to the marketing department, which selects the items that will be included each month. Information regarding the TMP appeared several times in this section.

In addition, the Transportation Section purchased advertising space to run on other pages of the *Kent Reporter*. The ads ran for twice a week for 4 consecutive months, starting in summer 2006, and included the message "Be Part of the Solution" and an invitation to visit the TMP web site.

The *Kent Reporter* also covered the TMP as a news event, including stories on the September 20 TMP Open House and a meeting held November 13 with business stakeholders. The *Kent Reporter* publishes two stories regarding the TMP, one on September 26 and the other on November 21, 2007.

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Appendix C includes copies of the news articles and the advertisement that appeared in the Kent Reporter.

SECTION 4. COMMUNITY OUTREACH RESULTS

The public involvement program offered several avenues for public input, including direct discussion at the project task force and community meetings, open house comment cards, reader-reply cards in the second newsletter, web site comment opportunities, a transportation hotline, and a TMP e-mail address. As a result of these opportunities, the TMP planners received additional evidence to support the recommendations of the plan.

Issues Identified Through Stakeholder Interviews

In citywide surveys, transportation has emerged as the top issue concerning Kent residents in recent years, prompting one elected official to say, "The City will know the TMP is successful when transportation is no longer the community's number one concern."

Most of the community's transportation concerns relate to congestion, safety, connectivity, community livability, desire for additional transit service and frequency, as well as an interest in more connected pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Over 40 interviews and focus groups were conducted with community and business representatives. Exhibit 10 records a summary of repeated themes communicated through these interviews, and indicates themes that were mentioned most frequently.

Both east-west and north-south transportation corridor congestion was the most frequently mentioned challenge. Other congestion issues included access to SR 167 and I-5, and challenges traveling across the valley to and from East Hill and West Hill. Citizens also identified challenges with transit availability, schedule, routing and frequency. Several mentioned pedestrian safety and the lack of walking facilities, especially sidewalks outside of the downtown area, accessibility for people with all types of disabilities and the lack of connected bicycle routes.

Information regarding specific transportation concerns was gathered from stakeholder interviews conducted during March and April 2006 at the beginning of the TMP planning process.

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Exhibit 10. Kent TMP Stakeholder Interviews Issues and Solutions Matrix

Issue	Most Frequently Mentioned Issues	Issue	Most Frequently Mentioned Issues
CONGESTION		TRANSIT	
East-West roadways	■	Access	■
North-South roadways	■	Frequency (bus)	■
104th Avenue	■	Frequency (Sounder)	■
116th Avenue		In-City Service	■
124th Avenue		Lack of routes	■
132nd Avenue		Language – need for translation	
SR 167	■	Regional service	■
208th Street		Safety/Security	■
212th Street	■	Stops (bus)	■
238th Street		PEDESTRIAN	
240th Street		Access	■
256th Street		Safety	■
277th Street		Crossings	■
312th Street		BICYCLE	
SR 516		Access	■
Benson Highway		Safety	
Central Avenue/E. Valley Highway	■	MAINTENANCE	
James Street	■	Cleaning/Mowing	■
Kent-Kangley Road	■	Lighting	
Meeker Street	■	Roadwork/Construction	
Military Road		OTHER ISSUES	
Orillia Road		Freight traffic – need to accommodate	■
Smith Street	■	Parking	■
W. Valley Highway	■	Safety/Security	■
Willis Street	■	Signage	■
Railroad Tracks (backups)	■		
Downtown Kent (general)	■		

Congestion

Congestion was an issue for nearly everyone interviewed. Getting into and out of Kent is one of the primary issues of concern. Ironically, several interviewees mentioned the difficulty in reaching Kent associated with congestion on the *regional* system (for example, SR 167 interchange with I-405, which is outside the City limits) as affecting access to and from Kent. Interchanges with SR 167 and I-5 are also seen as contributing to Kent's congested roadways as vehicles back up on city streets waiting to access the regional routes. One interviewee said, "Kent, Renton, Tukwila and SeaTac act like one city when it comes to transportation—a city clogged with congestion." Other specifics related to congestion that were heard at interviews included the following:

- North/south roadways are slightly less congested than east/west roads, but congestion seems to be prevalent in all directions throughout the city all day, especially during commute hours. This multi-directional demand makes traffic flow enhancements, such as signal progression, ineffective.
- Hours of congestion are expanding—some stated that congestion lasts from 2:30 to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays.
- Several potential causes were mentioned for congestion:
 - Slow-moving freight trucks clog the roadways
 - Traffic signals aren't coordinated in a given direction
 - Pass-through traffic from Auburn, Maple Valley and Covington fill Kent's roads
 - Trains back up traffic on busy downtown streets
- Streets with lots of congestion include SE 256th Street, Kent-Kangley Road (James Street - SE 240th Street), S 212th Street (SE 208th and Orillia Road), Central Avenue N (East Valley Highway), S 228th Street, S 277th Street, Benson Road (104th Avenue SE/SR 515) and around the Kent Transit Center, particularly when the *Sounder* commuter train arrives.

Streets

Community interview discussions encompassed everything from arterials to neighborhood roads.

- Many commented on the congested streets described in the previous section. However, other traffic locations were mentioned—Canyon Drive, Meeker Street, West Valley Highway, Orillia Road, Smith Street, 100th Avenue and Willis Street.

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- Both the 277th Street and 228th Street projects (providing a new east-west connection toward I-5) were described as moving in a positive direction to expand capacity on the street network.
- Many stated that more east/west connections are needed to move people to downtown Kent and to SR 167 (for example, a direct connection from East Hill to 228th). New roadway connections were suggested to improve east/west traffic.
- Trains stop traffic, and many interviewees suggested grade separations at rail crossings. When asked about the expense, some thought it was worth the cost.
- Interviewees mentioned vehicular circulation concerns on 272nd/277th Streets, Military Road and Meeker Street
- Truck routes were suggested by some as a way to keep trucks off certain city roadways and out of neighborhoods.

Transit

Transit issues were identified by many interviewees, including transit-dependent groups, schools, employers, and commuters. Major issues of interest include the following:

- People who work in manufacturing do not think of transit as an effective option for reasons that include:
 - Bus stops are located too far from businesses
 - Swing shifts end midnight or later, when buses are not running
 - Manufacturing shifts begin early, usually before transit can get workers to their work sites
 - Peak transit runs are northbound only and do not bring workers from other locations to Kent work sites
- Sound Transit *Sounder* did not make as big an impact as was hoped:
 - More frequent *Sounder* service is needed
 - *Sounder* schedules do not work for most businesses in Kent
 - There needs to be more feeder service (for example, buses) to/from *Sounder* at the Kent Transit Center
 - Headways between *Sounder* and buses are not well-coordinated
 - *Sounder* service from Seattle to Kent and from Everett to Kent would be beneficial
- There is not enough frequency of transit service, and there are too many transfers:

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- There needs to be better east/west service
- Both businesses and senior citizens identified transit frequency as an issue
- Several stated that there should be a an internal Kent transit route linking northern commercial areas with downtown; specifically, Kent Transit Center, Kent Station, IKEA/Great Wall Mall/Valley Medical Center, Winco, Costco and other commercial areas near SR 167
- Some interviewees mentioned a “hub-spoke” transit system: transit riders could arrive in downtown and transfer at one location for all destinations in Kent
- Interviewees did not want to see reductions in service to/from Enumclaw and Maple Valley
- Transfer waiting times are too long for seniors and there often aren’t places to sit or wait that are protected from the elements
- There need to be shelters to protect transit users from weather at transfer locations and stops that are known to serve many seniors/disabled riders (for example, Harrison House and Kent Senior Activity Center)
- Service is spotty to South County and Pierce County (for example, it takes 2.5 hours to reach Tacoma)
- There needs to be better service to Auburn and other suburban destinations
- Express routes to Seattle should be shorter
- Better service is needed to Eastside and South County job centers, as well as to Green River Community College
- Transit does not serve the immigrant population very well:
 - Bus stops are located more than a mile away from where most Ukrainians live
 - Buses do not accommodate enough bicycles
 - Buses do not run late enough for swing-shift workers to use (this was identified specifically by a Somali focus group)
 - There needs to be better translation of route and schedule information in multiple languages
- A downtown shuttle could serve more people:
 - The existing Route 914/916 circulating shuttle is very effective and should be expanded

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- It needs to stop at senior housing facilities, shopping centers and medical facilities
- It should move youth around Kent
- It should be better publicized
- It should coordinate with DART when possible

Pedestrian/Bicycle

Many interviewees focused on pedestrian needs for seniors, transit users, youth and others. More interviewees discussed pedestrian issues than bicycle issues.

- Concerns were mentioned about safe street crossings, especially near transit and trail crossings:
 - More crosswalks at bus stop locations are needed to improve pedestrian safety (for example, major arterial roadways, Benson Highway)
 - Pedestrian signal buttons need to be fixed so that those using wheelchairs, power chairs, etc. can navigate the street system
 - Crossing major downtown arterials feels dangerous (James Street, Smith Street, and west of Kent Commons near the ball fields were places most commonly mentioned)
 - Interurban Trail street crossings are dangerous (vehicles seem to be speeding)
- There were multiple concerns about safe sidewalks:
 - Pedestrians need better protection on Meeker Street, Central Avenue (near James Street/Smith Street), James Street, Military Road, Smith Street, Canyon Road (especially near Titus Street) and Railroad Avenue
 - Walking on Smith Street at night feels dangerous (lack of lighting, etc.)
 - Seniors need safe sidewalks with few obstacles to avoid falls (for example, no tree roots, cracks, steep angles)
- There needs to be more pedestrian and bicycle route continuity and connections to sidewalks and trails:
 - There needs to be north-south and east-west bicycle access for commuters and recreation riders to major trails (for example, Green River Trail and Interurban Trail)
 - Connections from the major bicycle trails to office parks are not complete

- There needs to be signage throughout Kent for pedestrians and bicyclists
- There needs to be more sidewalk continuity for strong pedestrian connections throughout Kent, and specifically near schools to improve walking conditions and safety for school children
- With the completion of Project Springboard downtown, connect all of the new development with good pedestrian links to Historic Downtown
- Interviewees mentioned the desire for creation of a pedestrian map for seniors and citizens with disabilities.
- Interviewees mentioned the desire for creation of a bicycle system map for users and to guide development and redevelopment of bicycle facilities.
- There need to be better links between downtown and other activity centers with Kent's residential neighborhoods for local bicyclists
- Several safety concerns were mentioned by interviewees:
 - East Hill has two-lane roads with no sidewalks or shoulders
 - Traffic in neighborhoods is a safety factor for pedestrians
 - There are issues at the Kent Transit Center—walking across Smith Street in the dark is hazardous
 - There needs to be better maintenance of vegetation overgrowth onto the sidewalks, and better maintenance of bicycle lanes/shoulders (for example, remove glass and other debris)
 - Drivers running red lights is a safety issue
 - Walking is dangerous in many neighborhoods because of speeding vehicles
 - Some interviewees feel a lack of security using the Kent Transit Center parking garage late at night

Safety

People are concerned about their personal safety in Kent, especially as pedestrians. Elderly and young citizens also mentioned safety. Safety issues primarily came up during discussions about streets, pedestrian and bicycle travel and congestion. The key thoughts include:

- There are safety issues on Central Avenue—specifically, many driveways, poor lighting, and a median used for left turns and u-turns. Some interviewees feel that new developments with closely spaced

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housing are affecting traffic and the livability of Kent. Children play in the streets perhaps because of the density of houses per acre with no yards.

- Drivers speed through neighborhoods.
- Roadway improvements should target high accident locations.
- Construction and locations under development need to clean roads at night, and this needs to be enforced.
- Angled parking on Meeker Street causes sight issues.
- Drivers are cutting through parking lots to bypass traffic (for example, Bonaci Jewelers), which puts customers and other vehicles in danger.

Freight

Truck traffic was identified by some interviewees as a factor in adverse traffic conditions within the City. It was noted that freight movement is important for the City's businesses and economy. Key issues raised include:

- Trucks do not belong in residential neighborhoods—need to make sure the rest of the system is adequate to handle their circulation:
 - 18-wheelers in neighborhoods are a problem
 - Trucks can encroach on the right of way in neighborhoods (for example, 132nd Avenue)
- Trucks can slow traffic—they take more room, and need start time.
- Some interviewees thought bypass roads for freight would be beneficial.
- Some felt that truck routes should be identified and enforced to keep trucks off neighborhood streets and keep freight moving.
- Signal timing is problematic for trucks making left turns.
- Every business needs truck deliveries of some kind and worries about truck access.
- There is a significant lack of places for trucks to park when waiting or for independent truckers to park at night.
- There is not much land left in Kent to build the kind of facilities trucking companies need.
- On four-lane streets with left turn lanes, trucks facing each other at the intersection cannot see behind the other, which can be dangerous.

Neighborhood Traffic

Most neighborhood traffic concerns relate to safety:

- Several expressed concern that narrow streets and on-street parking make it hard to see pedestrians and children that play in the street.
- In the East Hill neighborhoods and around the business district, traffic is congested.
- Some residents living along minor arterials do not want center turn lanes.
- Street maintenance in neighborhoods is an issue for some residents.
- Fire departments want wider streets and no parking in cul-de-sacs as opposed to residents' desires for narrower streets and parking.
- Cut-through traffic (especially speeding traffic) is detrimental for neighborhoods.
- Residents living along the entry of neighborhoods that have only one outlet must endure the in and out trip of every household on the interior of the development.

Parking

Parking issues were mentioned, specifically in regard to the Kent Transit Center and the downtown Kent area:

- Parking garages in downtown are too far away from Historic Downtown retail to be convenient.
- Parking is an issue for some downtown merchants.
- The park and ride lots are full or difficult to access because of congestion.
- Some Historic Downtown merchants feel that the free parking at Kent Station with no time restrictions could affect their businesses, because much of the Historic Downtown area parking is limited to 2 hours.
- People need to know where and how to use the Kent Transit Center parking garage.
- It is difficult to get in and out of Kent Station because of congestion.
- There are perceptions of night-time security issues at the Kent Transit Center parking garage.

Funding

Funding was discussed by some of the interviewees:

- Some felt that if the public does not want to pay, the City should not fix the roads.
- Property taxes are broad-based revenues; it is good to use these revenues for non-motorized improvements.
- Local Improvement Districts can be good for identifying specific projects and providing a reasonable funding time period.

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- Developers and builders have concerns about the equity of impact fees.

Issues Identified Through Open Houses and Comment Cards

Based upon comments provided via comment cards made available at the two open houses, the fall 2007 Newsletter, and on the web site, as well as through related conversations, e-mails, and phone messages, most Kent residents place the greatest priority on street projects, followed by transit improvements, and then by bicycle or pedestrian projects (non-motorized) (Exhibit 11). When asked to list the project type they consider to be of the second-highest priority, Kent residents listed transit projects most often, followed by non-motorized and the streets projects (Exhibit 12). The comment response forms asked respondents to list their preferred primary project types in order, so once a respondent listed one type, that type could not be identified again on the same form. Because so many people identified streets projects as their top priority, Exhibit 12 essentially shows prioritization preference between non-motorized and transit projects.

Among project types mentioned as third priority, 42 percent of respondents listed non-motorized, 36 percent listed transit, and 22 percent listed streets projects.

Exhibit 13 shows which specific projects received the most interest from people who attended the open houses. Each comment card provided space to include respondents' top three projects in each category. For all cards received, there

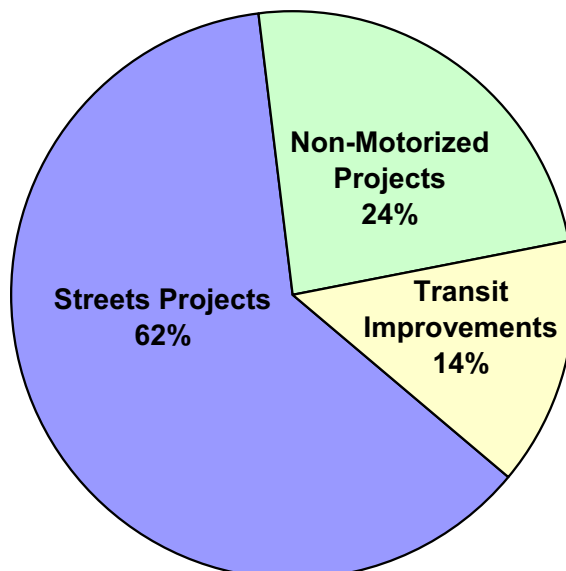


Exhibit 11. First-priority Project Types Based on Feedback from Kent Residents

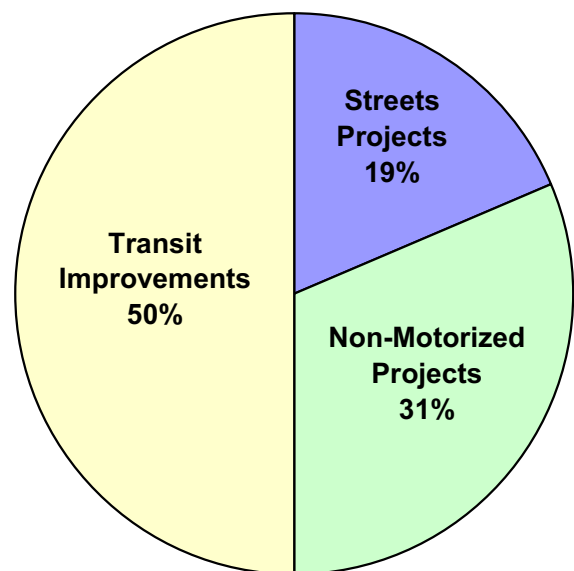


Exhibit 12. Second-priority Project Types Based on Feedback from Kent Residents

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were a total of 1,002 opportunities to list preferred projects in each category. Figure 2-4 shows all projects that were mentioned at least 20 times.

Railroad grade separation projects, when taken together, were the most often listed as high-priority projects, with 132 mentions. Exhibit 14 shows the percentage of total mentions for specific railroad grade separation projects.

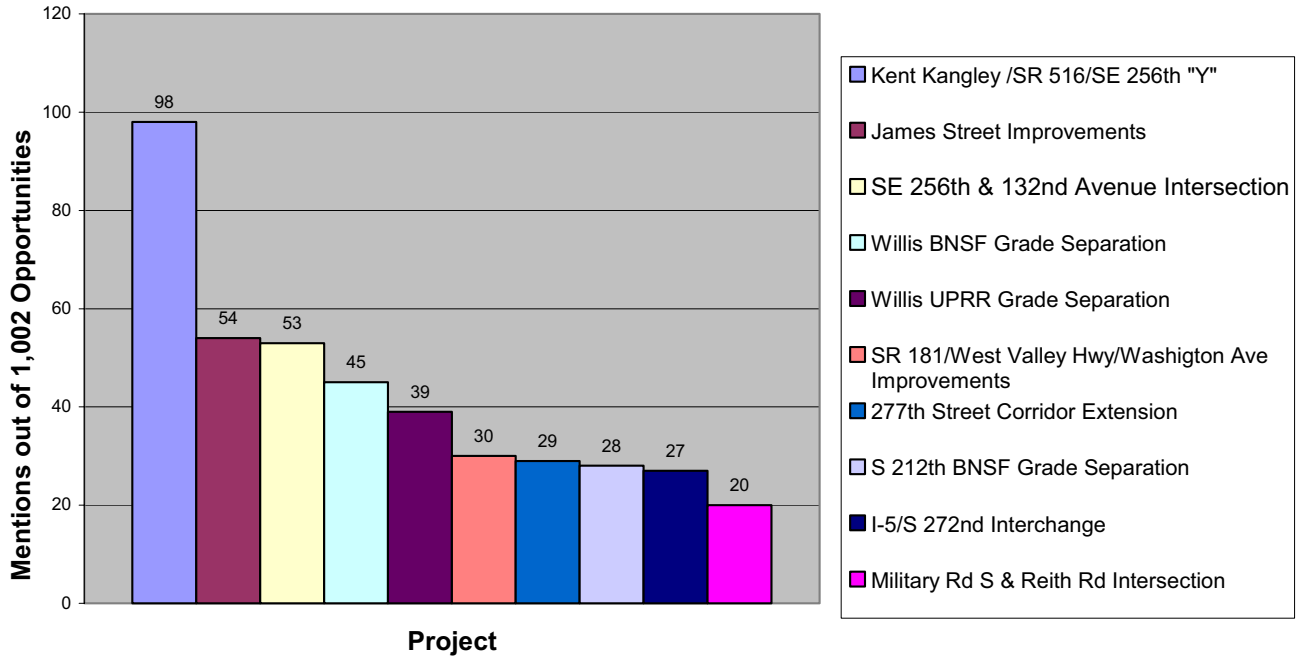


Exhibit 13. Number of Top 3 Responses for Street Projects Received through Citizen Feedback

Among the specific services mentioned for transit service, respondents most often listed improved local service; more trips to regional destinations, particularly South County; and greater capacity at park and ride lots.

Because the bicycling community was so well mobilized for the open houses and for other feedback opportunities, the feedback for non-motorized preferences could be somewhat skewed toward bike facilities. The most frequently mentioned preferences for bicycle facilities beyond generic requests for more shared-use paths, bike lanes, and shared lanes were facilities on 116th Avenue SE, SE 248th Street, connection to the Green River and City of Kent

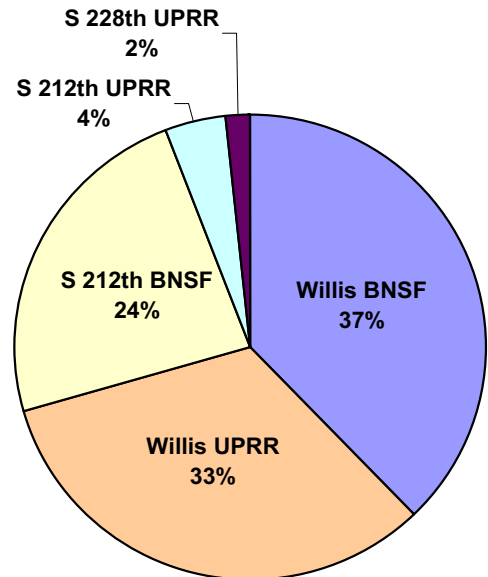


Exhibit 14. Proportion of Interest for Specific Railroad Grade Separation Transportation Master Plan

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Interurban trails, and overall contiguousness of bike routes.

Among pedestrian facilities, the most frequently mentioned concerns beyond general statements for installation of more sidewalks and overall safety improvements (such as overhead lighting), were sidewalk improvement on Military Road, Reith Road (particularly around 260th Avenue), 132nd Avenue, 116th Avenue, and 248th Avenue.

SECTION 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONGOING COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS

In order to build a TMP that reflects community values and to foster public support for the Plan, the City of Kent developed and implemented a proactive community outreach program to encourage interested groups and individuals to play an important role in developing Kent's long-range transportation plan.

While the public involvement program has lasted well over a year, the TMP is a long-range plan. Now that effective communication has been established, the City and the Transportation Section should build on the existing momentum. By maintaining proactive, open channels of two-way communication and remaining responsive to stakeholders, the trust that has been built with residents will lead to lasting public endorsement of the TMP as it is implemented over the next 25 years. This section describe each stakeholder group and lists their primary transportation issues and provides recommendations for effective ways to build on outreach tools established or explored during the TMP.

For the Kent TMP, stakeholders are broadly categorized as:

- **Residential community:** general population, senior citizens and cultural groups
- **Business community:** small/large retail, office, manufacturing/ industrial, developers and builders, distributors
- **Commuters:** local, regional and traveling through Kent
- **Other interested agencies**

Each category was divided into groups of like interest or communication needs. For instance, among residential stakeholders, there are many differing interests and communication challenges. The general population is the most general category of citizens made up of singles, parents, low- and higher income levels and education level. Seniors and people of special needs, such as those with disabilities, were another group with particular considerations. Finally, somewhat unique to Kent's population, there is an abundance of cultural groups that speak more than 40 languages, have equally diverse cultural backgrounds, and also include many who are non-English speaking.

Depending on the objective of outreach to Kent's residents, it is helpful to know how to best tailor the outreach effort to reach the maximum number of residents. The same can be said of communicating with the business community and the full range of agencies needed to make a TMP successful. Exhibit 15 is an overview of those communication methods that may be the most effective, listed

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by stakeholder category. A list of key contacts has also been provided to assist in future outreach efforts.

Exhibit 15. Effective Communication Channels by Community

Outreach methods	Residential Community			Business Community			Commuters			Other Interested Agencies
	General Population	Senior Citizens	Cultural Groups	Retail	Manufacturing/ Industrial	Trucking	Local Commuters	Regional Commuters	Traversing Kent	
Web Site	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Surveys	■	■		■	■	■	■	■		
Newsletters	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Public Access Television	■	■					■	■	■	
Public Meetings		■					■			
E-mail distribution	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Postings in Public Places	■	■	■				■			
Speakers Bureaus			■		■	■			■	■
Newspaper Articles	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	

Brief Overview of Outreach Options

Web Site

In today's hyper-connected age, many people want updated information that is easily obtainable 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Web site postings can be easily and frequently updated and reach all stakeholders who have access to computers, even via public libraries. One limitation is that web sites are not easily translated into multiple languages and therefore may not be the best option to reach the non-English speaking populations.

Surveys

There are several different kinds of surveys. Statistically valid surveys are those where more than 100 respondents have been selected randomly in order to best represent community opinion. Other surveys, such as web-based options or other uncontrolled opportunities, can be less representative but can provide valuable input from those most concerned about transportation issues. Finally, targeted surveys can be written and applied to one sector of the community in order to design transportation service for this group.

Newsletters

Newsletters are typically a broadcast of information material, mailed to all residents, property owners, agencies and key stakeholders—such as transportation companies. Newsletters are valuable for all stakeholder groups, except those stakeholders who travel through Kent and may not be on a mailing list.

Public Access Television

Public access television has difficulty competing with other primetime shows, so only a portion of the population that is committed to City issues may gain value from shows on public access television. Therefore, for the expense, other media may be more effective.

Public Meetings

There are several types of public meetings: workshops, general information, public presentation and comment meetings and public hearings. Public meetings are best when a transportation project affects a specific neighborhood. To avoid individual grandstanding, public meetings should be set up in an open-house format, where people can wander through different stations of information, ask questions one-on-one and give their input in a number of different ways, such as comment sheets, making a list on large tablets for others to see, or providing verbal input to a court reporter.

E-mail Distribution

E-mail distribution can be the most effective method of reaching agency, businesses, and worker stakeholders, as well as many others who receive communication and news through their computer. E-mail distribution requires someone to make a request either via the web site or in person in order to be placed on the e-mail distribution list. It is cost-effective and timely. Indirectly, the City may want to send notices through other established e-mail distribution lists, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Partnership or Rotary Club-type organizations.

Postings in Public Places

Posting are a low-pressure way to update people about their community. These are best for general interest information materials, not for time-critical information. Potential postings include libraries, civic buildings, bus advertisements, church centers, senior centers, community centers and school/university boards. Other options may be Commuter Trip Reduction board posting locations and large company break rooms and bulletin boards. Community grocery stores often provide posting boards as well.

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Speakers Bureaus

Speakers bureaus are a series of presentations at already-organized functions, such as Chamber of Commerce transportation committee meetings or the monthly Lions Club lunch meetings. Also other stakeholder groups, such as neighborhood groups, senior citizens and church groups, have regular meetings that City transportation staff could attend on occasion to discuss specific transportation issues, invite participation, gather feedback and publicize other communication channels.

This method is appropriate when the City is about to roll out a new plan or a regional strategy for which informing and building momentum are the top objectives. It is not the best method of gaining input, since routine meetings are focused on many topics and attendees are typically used to being in a passive, listening mode.

Newspaper Articles

King County Publications, Ltd., the parent company of the *Kent Reporter*, has journalists who are focused on particular communities. These journalists are often interested in receiving information on new planning and updated plans that may interest their readers. Maintaining relationships with the local journalist and other people involved with the *Kent Reporter* and King County Publication, Ltd., may be a valuable and cost-effective way to reach both residents and those who commute through Kent, as well as businesses and workers who have a personal interest in current events within the City.

Recommendations on Stakeholder-Specific Community Outreach Methods

Residential Community

The City's residential community includes three broad population groups:

- General population
- Senior citizens
- Cultural groups

General Population

Kent's general population resides primarily in the east and west portions of the city in several neighborhoods, including East Hill and West Hill, shown in Exhibit 3 in Section 2 of this report.

Outreach efforts revealed that at the top of the list of transportation concerns for the general population is congestion and ease of access to other parts of Kent. North-south traffic flow in general was listed as a concern for commuting traffic,

but east-west traffic seemed to be a barrier for destinations within the City. Transit and pedestrian safety were also frequently listed. Decreased travel time is the most frequently named measure of success as the City improves its transportation system.

Targeted Outreach Considerations

Because the general population as a whole is not particularly politically active, general public meetings are not the most efficient mode of communication. However, arranging presentations or sending announcements to specific events or groups that attract active residents would be an efficient use of communications resources. These groups include neighborhood associations, local community centers, Rotary/Lions Club, PTAs and school administrations. Generally the city receives good feedback from surveys, newsletters and increasing requests to receive e-mail updates.

Useful outreach methods include:

- Web site
- Surveys
- Newsletters
- Public access television
- E-mail distribution
- Postings in public places
- Newspaper articles

Finding general community representatives for input into the TMP has proven to be challenging, particularly when compared to finding representatives of more narrowly defined groups. However, now that the City has a neighborhood program manager in place, connecting with residents should be much easier in the future.

Senior Citizens

To reach out to the senior-citizen portion of the residential community, the City met with representatives from three locations that serve the senior community: Sunrise Haven, Harrison House and the Senior Center. Senior citizens (65 years old or older) make up 11.2 percent of Kent's population.

Chief concerns of the senior citizen community include pedestrian safety and transit, particularly transit within Kent, and frequency of buses, whether within Kent or to other regional destinations. Another is safe wheelchair access.

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Targeted Outreach Considerations

Senior citizens suggested using local gathering places to reach out to their community. Locations include the Senior Center located downtown and Harrison House, a 94-room facility that holds resident meetings the third Tuesday of each month between 6 and 7 p.m. In addition, many members of Kent's senior community attend church, so using church organizations would be an effective method of outreach. Generally, this population has more time available and is less hurried, so therefore respondents offer quality input. One important consideration brought up is disability access accommodations.

Useful outreach methods include:

- Surveys
- Newsletters
- Public access television
- Public meetings
- Postings in public places
- Newspaper articles

Exhibit 16 lists stakeholders who would be good resources for future outreach.

Exhibit 16. Senior Citizen Resource Individuals

Name	Organization	Contact Information
Carol Carlile	Harrison House	(253) 854-4497
Joan Thompson	Sunrise Haven	(253) 813-2096
Lea Bishop	Kent Senior Center	(253) 856-5150

Cultural Groups:

Cultural groups are subsets of the general population. Some of the largest cultural groups include Latino; Russian/Ukrainian/Slavic; Somali; Asian; and Indic communities. Kent is one of the most diverse cities in Western Washington. A substantial portion, nearly 17 percent, of Kent residents were born outside of the United States, and English-language ability among individuals within cultural groups ranges from perfectly fluent to non-English-speaking. Access to or use of the internet also spans the spectrum.

These cultural groups seemed to have three main concerns. The first was the general concern with congestion, an issue that spanned every group. The second was lack of access to and ineffectiveness of transit, which hampers access to employment, and the third issue involved the language barrier, which impedes

this group’s ability to take full advantage of transit and other transportation wayfinding instructions.

Targeted Outreach Considerations

Each of the ethnic communities has different cultural traditions that influence their comfort in offering input to civic matters. Those who were most resistant were the Slavic and Indic populations. Those who were most active were the Somali and Asian groups, especially those with business interests in Kent. This may influence the outreach methods employed with each group.

Those who shy from offering input must be reached in more passive methods, such as providing postings, newsletters and presentations to existing group gatherings. Active groups may be easier to gain input from via surveys, interviews or direct e-mail distributions. In any case, it is best to pass information through the community members who have been given leadership responsibilities in the community. These people are religious leaders or spokespersons for their neighborhood. Respecting these roles will make outreach more efficient and effective. Finally, several of the communities that have large populations of dual-language speakers have resources that provide translated materials or news leaflets. It would be mutually helpful to identify these resources and supply them with informational updates to distribute.

Useful outreach methods include:

- Newsletters
- E-mail distribution
- Postings in public places
- Speakers bureaus

Exhibit 17 lists stakeholders who would be good resources for future outreach.

Exhibit 17. Cultural Group Resource Individuals

Name	Organization	Contact Information
Ahmed Egal	Somali Community, Al-Mudark Grocery	(206) 251-2954
Gurey Faarah	Somali community, Center for Career Alternatives	(253) 639-1162
Daljeeb Singh	Indic Community Representative	(253) 630-0673
Oleg Pynda	Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce	(206) 369-6398
Omar Lee	Asian community, Great Wall shopping mall	(425) 251-1600
Roberto Gonzales	Mexico Lindo	(253) 854-5320

Business Community

Kent’s business community ranges from small businesses to large companies to warehousing and freight operations. The downtown area is home to a variety of smaller and service businesses, such as restaurants, banks and retail shops. Many

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large distributors and manufacturing companies are located in Kent beyond the downtown core, primarily in the northern valley. In the area around I-5 and Military Road, West Hill businesses include light industry, freeway-oriented retail and restaurants, among others categories.

Through outreach activities, it was discovered that many of these West Hill businesses feel disconnected from downtown and other Kent establishments. Due to their location, they often provide service to Federal Way and other regional clients. However, regardless of the location, small to mid-sized businesses are focused on the ease of access for clients to their establishment. Therefore, they consider parking, wayfinding and convenience in the local roadway network to be important.

Larger companies frequently site Kent's central location, close to regional transportation routes and seaports, as the reason they have selected Kent as their business location. Many hotels and other regionally oriented business have chosen to be in Kent because of the city's proximity to the key transportation routes I-5, SR 167 and I-405, as well as to Sea-Tac International Airport. This central location is one of the prime reasons that Kent has the largest concentration of distribution centers in the region, with more than 1,360 truck trips originating from Kent each day.¹ However, equal concern for frequency and ease of transit use was expressed by larger businesses that would like to attract broad-base of workers to their location.

Targeted Outreach Considerations

Many businesses were open and eager to gain information and updates on transportation issues in the City of Kent and about any regional influences on Kent. An effective outreach method for the future might be to inform business contacts via e-mail when information relevant to them becomes available on the web site. Several businesses are interested in postings in their break rooms and in receiving continued assistance for improving transit connections to their business location. In general, businesses were very open and pleased to gain more communication about City updates. By maintaining regular communication, the City would increase its opportunities to deliver good news, create open avenues of communication and create an environment in which stakeholders would be more likely to accept negative information.

Useful outreach methods include:

¹ The Washington Transportation Plan, 2005

- Web site
- Surveys
- Newsletters
- E-mail distribution
- Speakers bureaus
- Newspaper articles

Exhibit 18 lists stakeholders who would be good resources for future outreach.

Exhibit 18. Business Community Resource Individuals

Name	Organization	Contact Information
Jacque Alexander	Kent Downtown Partnership	(253) 813-6976
Jim Tutton	Washington Trucking Associations	(253) 838-1650
Bill Castagno	Key Trucking, Inc.	(253) 395-0686
Marcelle Pechler	Kent Chamber of Commerce	(253) 854-1770
Patrick Binion	Alaska Distributors	(206) 689-2617
Omar Lee	Great Wall Shopping Mall	(425) 251-1600
Pam Gibson	Exotic Metals	(253) 395-3710
Debbie Eckley	Horizon Air	(206) 574-4001
Marilyn Kiehlbauch	Oberto Sausage Company	(253) 854-7056

Commuters

According to a March 2006 random survey of 401 Kent residents, 65 percent of residents commute outside of Kent. Of these, 34 percent commute to Seattle and 14 percent commute to Bellevue. Most commuters use their own vehicles, but 34 percent used the bus in the past year, while only 9 percent used the *Sounder* train.

Commuters can be broken down into the following three categories:

- **Local commuters:** Commuters who live and work in Kent.
- **Regional Commuters:** Commuters who live in Kent but work in other cities or towns, or who work in Kent but commute from other locations.
- **Through-trip Commuters:** Commuters who neither live nor work in Kent but pass through on their way to work. Although TMP planning did not include outreach to these commuters, Kent residents recognize the issue and want to provide access to these commuters without negatively impact neighborhoods.

Although commuter traffic is a key consideration for several reasons, including its likelihood of occurring at times of peak traffic flow, its time criticality and its direct relevance to personal income, more than half of all trips in Kent are in fact non-commute trips. Although commuting is very important to the users of

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Kent's transportation system, people driving to pick up children at school, to participate in some type of downtown entertainment, to go shopping or visit a friend also must be well-served by the system. The TMP needs to consider all transportation users.

Targeted Outreach Considerations

With the exception of those commuters traveling through the City, most commuters are members of another distinct Kent community previously listed above. However, specific commuter issues voiced were commonly focused on regional transportation systems. The congestion on SR 167, I-405 and I-5 greatly impacts commuters coming into and out of Kent. Transit was another frequent issue of concern for commuters. The inflexibility and limited connections between the *Sounder* train and buses is unsatisfactory for many.

Commuters generally are time limited, and therefore methods of outreach need to be woven into existing activities and locations, such as group meetings, bus postings, newspaper articles and television.

Depending on whether the commuter is local, regional or crossing Kent, the following may serve as useful outreach methods:

- Web site
- Surveys
- Newsletters
- Public access television
- Public meetings
- E-mail distribution
- Postings in public places
- Newspaper articles

Exhibit 19 lists stakeholders who would be good resources for future outreach.

Exhibit 19. Commuter Resource Individuals

Name	Organization	Contact Information
Jacquie Alexander	Kent Downtown Partnership	(253) 813-6976
Jim Tutton	Washington Trucking Associations	(253) 813-6976
Bill Castagno	Key Trucking, Inc.	(253) 395-0686
Marcelle Pechler	Kent Chamber of Commerce	(253) 854-1770
Omar Lee	Great Wall Mall	(425) 251-1600
Ahmed Egal	Al-Mudark Grocery	(206) 251-2954
Debbie Eckley	Horizon Air	(206) 574-4001
Joan Thompson	Sunrise Haven	(253) 813-2096

Exhibit 19. Commuter Resource Individuals

Name	Organization	Contact Information
Carol Carlile	Harrison House	(253) 854-4497
Lea Bishop	Kent Senior Center	(253) 856-5150

Other Interested Agencies

Besides reaching out to residential stakeholders, the City has also established communication with external agencies and organizations that might have an impact or be affected by the City’s transportation choices. These organizations include:

- **Transit**—Sound Transit, King County Metro Transit
- **Railroad**—Union Pacific Railroad
- **Regional roadways**—King County, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- **Neighboring jurisdictions**—Auburn, Federal Way, Renton, Des Moines, Tukwila, Covington, SeaTac, Maple Valley, King County
- **Policy agencies**—Puget Sound Regional Council, WSDOT, King County, South County Area Transportation Board

Targeted Outreach Considerations

The City should continue to stay in contact with these organizations through personal contact, e-mail, mail and meeting attendance. For example, continued attendance of Regional Transit Committee meetings, Regional Technical Committee meetings, and South County Area Transportation Board Technical Advisory Committee meetings, as well as other staff opportunities, offer long-term communication opportunities. The objective is to gain access to greater regional resources and make Kent a city that is at the forefront when investment decisions are being made.

Useful outreach methods include:

- Web site
- Newsletters
- E-mail distribution
- Speakers bureaus

General Future Outreach Recommendations

As the TMP progresses into the next phase, the City should consider maintaining communication about the progress of transportation development with resident

Stakeholder Involvement Report

and business groups. This would be an important step in achieving the City's goal of not just developing but also implementing a TMP that is accountable to residents, as well as building trust for follow-through and commitment. People are rarely given credit if the message is not conveyed. The TMP offers an opportunity for the City to establish these communication connections and maintain them for future transportation projects, whether they are projects recommended in the TMP or not. It is important to build positive association of transportation improvements with being responsive to the needs of the community.

Minimal methods of keeping lines of communication open include the following:

TMP Web Site

The TMP web site (www.ci.kent.wa.us/transportation/TMP) is a living communication document. As the TMP moves into the next phase, the web site can be continually updated to provide the most recent information. Because the City is maintaining a list of e-mail addresses for people who want to know when new information about the TMP is available, and because the TMP web site offers a way for new visitors to request update notification, the web site offers the most flexible way to keep stakeholders informed and involved. In addition, when the TMP is concluded, the City can tap the list of e-mail addresses to keep stakeholders informed of any improvements or plans for improvements to the transportation system. The web site can also be used to funnel users to each of the other three recommended communication modes (newsletters, television and public meetings).

Newsletters

Several different stakeholder groups indicated that they appreciate being kept informed of transportation issues by newsletter. However, printing and mailing a newsletter is costly, so use of this medium is best reserved for times when blanketing all households is required, as it was for TMP development.

Mailing costs can be reduced or eliminated by distributing newsletters at predetermined locations, such as the library, community centers or gathering places (for example, Harrison House, Great Wall Shopping Mall, places of worship or City Hall), or events (such as Cornucopia Days or Fiesta de Mayo). Furthermore, newsletters can be downloaded directly from the City's web site as PDFs.

Also, three groups—the Ukrainian, Latino and Somali communities—indicated the desire to have newsletters printed in their own language (or alternatively in Russian in the case of the Ukrainian community). Future multilingual printed outreach might serve as a way to create involvement among stakeholder groups

that to this point have not been traditionally involved in transportation system planning. Alternative language newsletters could be distributed at specific locations or events instead of mailed.

Television

Kent Mayor Suzette Cooke used her first episode of “Kent Today,” a roundtable discussion-format public access television program, to discuss transportation issues. This topic was selected to tie into the TMP. Although future episodes of “Kent Today” will focus on a range of topics, the show could list useful web site updates and contact information to help publicize information resources as well as pertinent transportation updates as available.

In addition, the City may consider developing public access television programs on specific transportation topics to publicize upcoming transportation projects and safety awareness issues.

City Council/Public Meetings

The City Council meetings and public hearings provide an opportunity for the project team to explain the planning process and how recommendations were developed. While public meetings are rarely effective for the general public, special invitations to those interested representatives may increase participation. Also, these meetings and hearings can be promoted on the web site and through newsletters to invite residents concerned about transportation in general or about specific improvement projects to participate in political discourse.

SECTION 6. REFERENCES

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Stakeholder Involvement Report

Appendix A

LIST OF ALL PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

As part of its public outreach process, the City of Kent conducted interviews with the following people, either individually or as part of a group.

Ahmed Egal	Jacque Alexander	Garrett Huffman
Ahmed Isse	Jane Thompson	Gary Young
Bill Castagno	Jed Aldridge	Gene Warden
Bill Ellison	Jim Berrios	Grant Toschi
Bill Holt	Jim Tutton	Greg Worthing
Bill Wescott	Joan Thompson	Gurey Faarah
Bob Bonaci	Kirsten Jensen	Harnam Singh
Bob Kahl	Lea Bishop	Helen Shindell-Butler
Bruce Rommel	Lindsay McCabe	Henric Sortum
Burhan Hassan	Lisa Foster	Igor Bilas
Carol Carlile	Manmeet Dhami	Irene Kadlec
Cathy Peters	Marcelle Pechler	Ron Arnstxon
Charlene Shaw	Mark Albertson	Ron Conwell
Corey Hess	Mark Gagnon	Ruth Guttieries
Daljeeb Sighn	Matt Klein	Salim Bamito
Dana Ralph	Mel Roberts	Scott Creek
Danniel MacDonald	Mike Miller	Stan VanDerPol
Darrell Shull	Nichole Asino	Steve Kato
Debbie Eckley	Oleg Pynda	Suzette Cooke
Debbie Raplee,	Omar Hassan	Tim Clark
Deborah Ranninger	Omar Lee	Tom Sharp
Dek Muse	Pam Gibson	
Donald Walkup	Patrick Binion	
Doreen Stewart	Paul Morford	
Doug Johnson	Paul Ramos	
Doug Scharnhorst	Pavel Maslov	
Elizabeth Watson	Roberto Gonzales	

Appendix B

**SPRING 2006 AND FALL 2007 TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN
NEWSLETTERS**

Creating a Plan That Will Improve Transportation in Kent

The City of Kent is developing a **Transportation Master Plan (TMP)** for short—and wants your input! What do you think are the largest transportation challenges for Kent now and in the future? How do you think we should address them? Read on to see how you can help enhance the quality of life in our community!

Over the past 20 years, our population has nearly tripled! So TMP is needed to describe a vision for our transportation future, identify ways to help achieve that vision, and articulate a funding program to make this vision a reality.

The TMP is intended to:

- Gather information from citizens,
- Complete an inventory of roadway characteristics,
- Identify problems,
- Create solutions that address the problems (such as improving congestion through road widening, improving connectivity, or providing safe walking routes),
- Prioritize solutions to improve the transportation system, and
- Develop a funding plan to make sure projects happen over time.



Focus group members discuss transportation



Kent roads are congested. Kent has tripled in size over the past 20 years, and surrounding areas are growing too.

What People in Kent Are Saying . . .

Over the past two months, we have met with YOU—the people who live, work, and study in the City of Kent and gained insights about how to improve all aspects of Kent’s transportation system. We have conducted over 35 individual interviews and met with several focus groups to help define Kent’s transportation issues.

The people we interviewed represent the entire Kent community: parents, senior citizens, commuters, freight representatives, business owners, students, community leaders, transit users, citizens with disabilities, bicycle enthusiasts, developers, builders, fire and emergency workers, ethnic communities, and more! (*See inside for a map of transportation issues.*)

. . . And What We Heard

- Congestion occurs all day long – you are stuck in traffic!
- There are bottlenecks and congestion on east-west arterials.
- There is frequent roadway blockages by trains.
- There is lack of easy access to freeways (SR 167 and I-5).
- Need more pedestrian facilities and improved sense of safety.
- There is lack of transit service circulating within Kent.
- Need more frequent and convenient transit service between suburbs.
- Need connections of bicycle paths to major attractions.
- There are limited connections between the East Hill, the valley, and the West Hill.
- There are few connections between downtown and I-5.
- Conflicts between the needs of freight and passenger vehicles.
- There are not enough safe pedestrian crossings (Military Road, Central Avenue/84th Street, Kent-Kangley Road/SR 516).

MAPPING OUR TOP TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

A lot of people travel in and through Kent. We are truly a gateway city! This helps to keep our economy and culture vibrant, but it also means that transportation is a growing concern that needs to be addressed with a long-range plan. As part of the TMP, planners are modeling existing and future traffic flows and charting problem areas. The map on this page shows some of the results of our investigations so far. It lists the primary congested roads, traffic bottlenecks, and key areas of pedestrian concerns. The items listed below describe some of your concerns in more detail. The purpose of the TMP is to identify ways to improve many of the concerns shown on this page.

Roadway Network Issues

Getting into and out of Kent is a big issue, but getting around within the City is also difficult. Drivers become frustrated as hours of congestion increase.

Congestion occurs throughout the City due to:

- Backups from SR 167 onto local roadways
- Lack of adequate regional transit service
- Limited access to and from SR 167 and I-5
- Motorists using local streets to avoid SR 167 congestion
- Delays at railroad crossings
- Slow-moving trucks on busy streets
- Not enough east-west connections or alternate routes
- Lack of connections to Auburn, Maple Valley, and Covington
- Lack of signal timing and road capacity

Safety concerns are rising due to:

- Running red lights and lack of awareness about traffic laws
- High volumes on busy arterial routes, such as Meeker, Central, and James
- Lack of safe pedestrian crossings, especially on long blocks
- Speeding in neighborhoods

Pedestrian And Bicycle Issues

Safe crossings, continuous sidewalks, and connections to key destinations such as schools, parks, transit, and retail centers were common needs for users. Some things pedestrians and cyclists would like see more of:

- Pedestrian protection along Meeker, Central, James, Smith, and Railroad Avenue
- More sidewalks near schools
- Safe crossings across busy roads
- Separation between sidewalks and traffic
- North, south, east, and west bike routes for commuters and recreational bicyclists
- Pedestrian safety enhancements around Kent Transit Center
- Education/enforcement for drivers about pedestrian safety



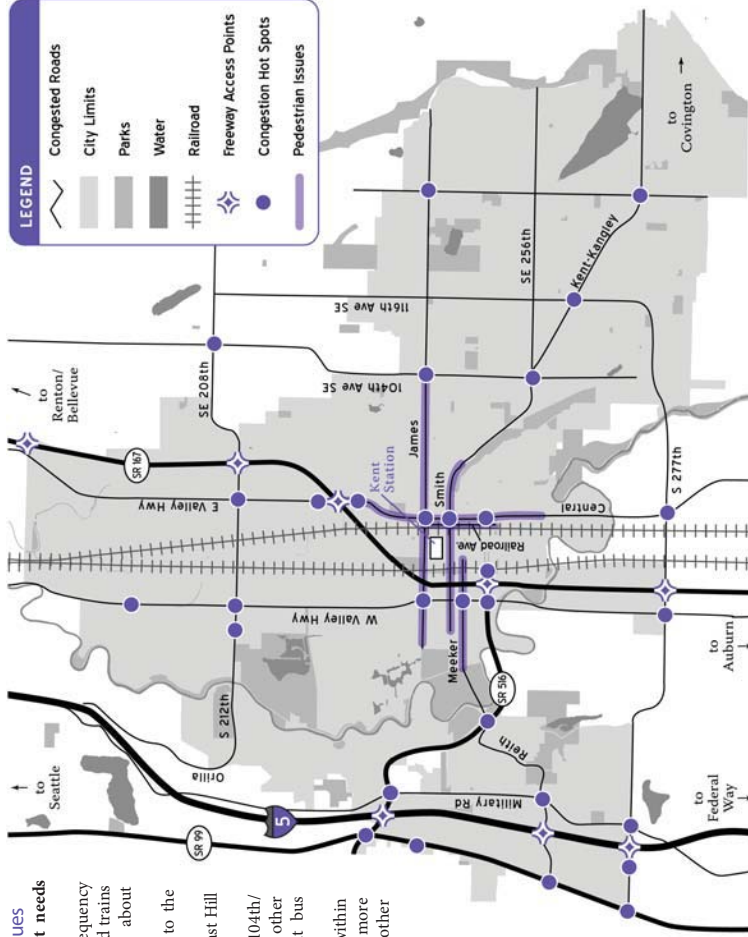
Transit Issues

Top transit needs included:

- More frequency of buses and trains
- Better information about routes and schedules
- Improved connections to the Sounder train
- Better coverage in the East Hill and West Hill areas
- Safe crossings along 104th/Benson Highway or other large roadways, and at bus stop locations
- Additional service within Kent as well as more connections to other suburban communities

And the Survey Says . . .

- During March 2006, we conducted a random survey of 401 Kent households to find out what residents think about transit. Results from the survey include:
 - 65% of Kent citizens commute outside Kent—34% to Seattle, and 14% to Bellevue.
 - 34% had used a bus in the past year, while 9% had used the Sounder train.
 - 12% would like to use the bus, but there are no bus stops near their homes or destinations (work, hospital, housing developments, shopping, services).



YOUR VOICE

TMP Task Force Selected to Represent Community Interests

Kent is dedicated to developing a community-endorsed TMP. To make sure we are accountable to you, we selected the members of the TMP Task Force to reflect Kent's community of neighborhoods, parents, youth, builders, truckers, seniors, cultural community groups, transit users, businesses, and others.

The Task Force will meet six times over the course of the next seven months and will learn about transportation issues, help develop solutions, rank improvement projects, discuss funding options, and make recommendations to staff and the City Council.

Meet Your Representatives on the TMP Task Force!

Mayor Cooke has invited the following representatives to serve on the Task Force: Igor Bilas; Patrick Binion; Tina Busenius; Carol Carlile; Bill Castagno; Debbie Eckley; Ahmed Egai; Bill Ellison; Robert Faamausili; Mark Gagnon; Roberto Gonzales; Kirstin Jensen; Marilyn Kielbauch; Omar Lee; Marcelle Pechler; Dana Ralph; Mel Roberts; Mammet Shami; Tom Sharp; Helen Shindell-Butler; and Grant Toschi.

Contact these volunteers at tmap@cityofkent.wa.us so they can better represent your voice!

Repeat Kent Community surveys show that transportation is one of your top concerns.
We're developing a plan to come up with the solutions!

Mailing Label: Name
Address
Kent, WA Zip Code

To receive copies of this newsletter in Spanish or Russian, call (235) 856-5566 or email tmp@ci.kent.wa.us

Improving Transportation Is a Priority for Kent

Mayor Cooke Talks Transportation on CityView TV Debut

On May 5, Mayor Suzette Cooke will launch *CityView*, a roundtable discussion between the Mayor and a small group of Kent citizens, on local cable TV. The first episode of this ongoing monthly series will focus on the City's top issue: transportation.



Mayor Suzette Cooke

The show will feature a conversation about keeping cars, trucks, pedestrians, buses, and bikes flowing smoothly and safely in Kent. You can expect discussions about congestion, safety, bicycle access, new construction, and transit service. But who knows what



will come up? Although the Mayor will be there to facilitate the conversation, the discussion will be determined by the participating citizens.

Episodes of *CityView* will run monthly on cable Channels 21 and 77. Tune in, and let us know what you think at tmp@ci.kent.wa.us

STAY INFORMED AND GIVE US YOUR INPUT

Look for Mayor Suzette Cooke's *CityView* TV show in May, and stay tuned for a program in the late summer focusing on the TMP.

Updated information, survey opportunities, and meeting announcements will be posted on the TMP Web site: www.ci.kent.wa.us/transportation/TMP/

E-mail us: tmp@ci.kent.wa.us.

Call us: (253) 856-5566

Mail us: City of Kent Public Works, TMP, 220 Fourth Ave. S, Kent, WA 98032

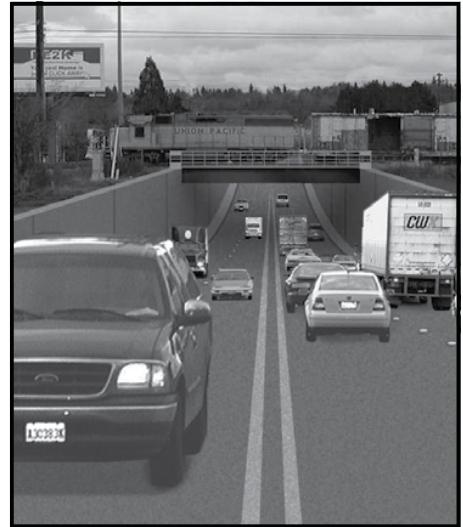
A Plan in the Making

Whether by car, mass transit, bicycle, or foot, we all need to get from Point A to Point B safely and reasonably quickly.

But transportation is about much more than just convenience. It affects our quality of life and our economic vitality. Improving our transportation system is one of the most important issues facing residents of Kent.

So last year, the City of Kent began to update our Transportation Master Plan (TMP for short). This TMP is a long-range plan that serves as a roadmap to guide planning and project selection for our transportation system. It includes all of the ways people generally get around our City, and it will be used to increase mobility, reduce congestion, and make it easier to travel safely around Kent.

The importance of the TMP cannot be overstated! Our TMP was last updated in 1984. During the intervening 23 years, our population has nearly tripled, and thanks to the sus-



Transportation Improvements Are Always on the Move: Improving transportation is an ongoing priority for the City of Kent. The S 228th Street Extension (pictured at left) was completed in 2006 and provides a more direct connection to major corridors for commuter and industrial traffic. The S 228th Street Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Grade Separation project (top right), planned for 2008, will keep traffic flowing where trains now cause backups.

tained economic growth of our region and City, the amount of traffic passing through Kent has also dramatically increased. As we deal with these realities, the TMP will guide our transportation planning and develop-

ment for the next 25 years, serving as the basis for how our transportation funding is spent and projects are prioritized over the next quarter century.

Continued on next page ►

Community Volunteers Involved Every Step of the Way

Several community members made a long-term commitment to help Kent plan for its transportation future by agreeing to volunteer on the TMP Task Force. This group of dedicated people, representing varying interests in Kent's transportation system, attended seven meetings starting in April 2006 and culminating in a session in May 2007.

Their roles required far more than just attending meetings, however. During the process, the Task Force

members increased their level of expertise and understanding of the transportation system beyond their own localized interests. For example, a representative from the downtown business community spent time examining congestion on Kent-Kangley Road, and a neighborhood representative from the East Hill learned more about pedestrian issues on Meeker Street in downtown Kent.

The result of their efforts is a Transportation Plan with community input and accountability that will better meet the long-term needs of all of our residents.

Thanks to all of our TMP Task Force volunteers!

David Anderson, Patrick Binion, Lea Bishop, Tina Busenius, Carol Carlile, Bill Castagno, Natalia Datskiv, Manmeet Dhama, Debbie Eckley, William Ellison, Robert Faamausili, Mark Gagnon, Roberto Gonzales, Emma Herron, Kristin Jensen, Marilyn Kielbauch, Omar Lee, Marcelle Pechler, Dana Ralph, Mel Roberts, Tom Sharp, Helen Shindell-Butler, Doreen Stewart, Grant Toschi, and Bob Whalen.

A Plan in the Making: The Five Steps to Prioritizing Our Transportation Improvements

Continued from previous page

We wrote the TMP using five steps. The diagram below shows how the parts of each step of the TMP process flow together, and the questions each step is designed to answer—all leading to projects that improve the way our transportation system works.

Steps 1 and 2. How Are We Doing and What is Important?

The first step of the TMP process was to learn how effective the City has been at providing a usable transportation system. TMP staff conducted interviews with community and business groups, mailed a newsletter to every household, established a citizen-based Transportation Task Force, and developed goals for the study. The Task Force and TMP staff prepared a list of community values—that is, qualities that the community considers important. These values played a critical role in guiding the evaluation of the transportation system and the recommendations for improvements. These values also helped us set the transportation policies that guide the way the City plans and implements improvements.

Step 3. What Improvements Should We Consider?

The TMP staff collected information about Kent's transportation facilities, such as roads, signals, signs, transit stops and service, bike

routes, and sidewalks. This information provided a snapshot of how well Kent's transportation system works. We then started to examine locations where improvements should be considered.

Step 4. What Improvements Should We Include?

All of this information was used to come up with strategies to target each issue. We developed strategies for each travel mode, including adding turn lanes at intersections, repairing sidewalks, adding bicycle lanes, coordinating traffic signals, and widening roads. These strategies were used to develop a list of projects to accommodate future land use.

Step 5. Finalize the Plan!

Finally, we prioritized the projects, using input from across the range of transportation users, and considering all the evaluation criteria and funding and environmental limitations. Because the TMP will serve as a road-map for transportation capital improvements for years to come, your continued feedback is important on the draft priorities and list of projects.

Next Steps

Now, you have the opportunity again to participate as we hold open houses to show all of the project priorities. Your comments will help as the plan becomes a reality over the next 25 years.

The Pieces of the Puzzle



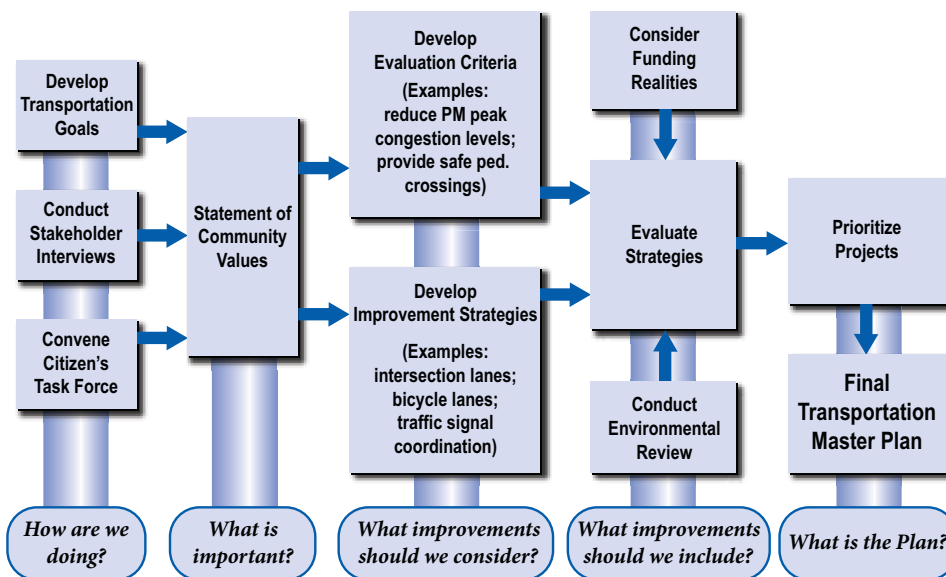
The three primary categories of the TMP are Streets, Transit, and Non-motorized, and the Non-motorized category is further divided into distinct bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel. We developed recommendations for these pieces of the transportation puzzle.

The maps on the following pages show many of our draft recommendations for all modes. While there is not space in this newsletter to describe all of the proposed projects in the TMP, the following three pages describe several representative projects.

For example, the Streets priorities show various roadway widening and intersection improvements, along with railroad grade separations. The Non-motorized page shows locations for high-priority sidewalk improvements and describes the three types of bike facilities that are recommended.

For the Transit priorities, several of the plans for regional and local bus routes are featured.

The maps have been scaled down and simplified to fit within this limited space, but visit the TMP web pages for more on each piece of our transportation puzzle.



Non-motorized Improvements: Walking and Cycling

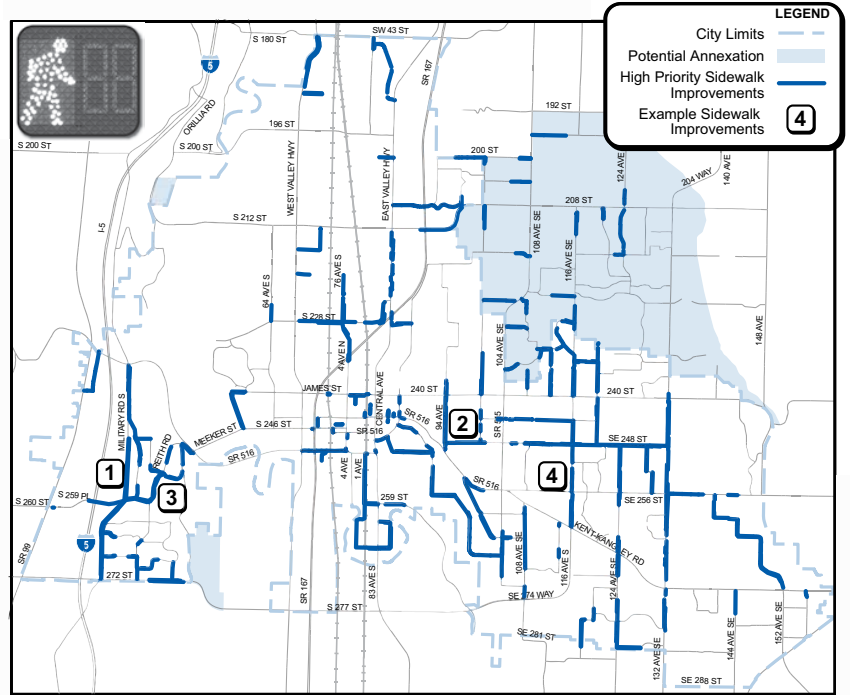
Walking

The pedestrian system provides the connections between all of the other transportation modes and connections between neighborhoods. This makes pedestrian travel a true measure of the accessibility of a transportation system! The first map on this page shows the planned high-priority sidewalk projects.

Also, keep in mind that many of the projects shown on the Streets map (on the following page) will also include new sidewalks. Finally, there are high-priority new sidewalk plans for residential streets throughout Kent—too many, actually, to be shown on this map. To see all of the sidewalk recommendations, as well as sidewalk rehabilitations, crosswalks, curb ramps, and pedestrian-accessible roadway projects, go to the TMP web site.

Some of the key sidewalk projects shown on the map include:

- 1 **Military Road (between S 272nd Street and SE 240th Street)**
- 2 **SE 248th Street (between 96th Avenue S and 100th Avenue SE)**
- 3 **S 260th Street/Reith Road (between SR 99 and SR 516)**
- 4 **116th Avenue SE (between Kent-Kangley Road and SE 256th Street)**



Bicycling

The priorities for the bicycle system focus on safety and connecting cycling routes wherever practical. There are three types of bike facilities that the TMP features: shared-use paths, bike lanes, and shared lanes.

1 Shared-use Path

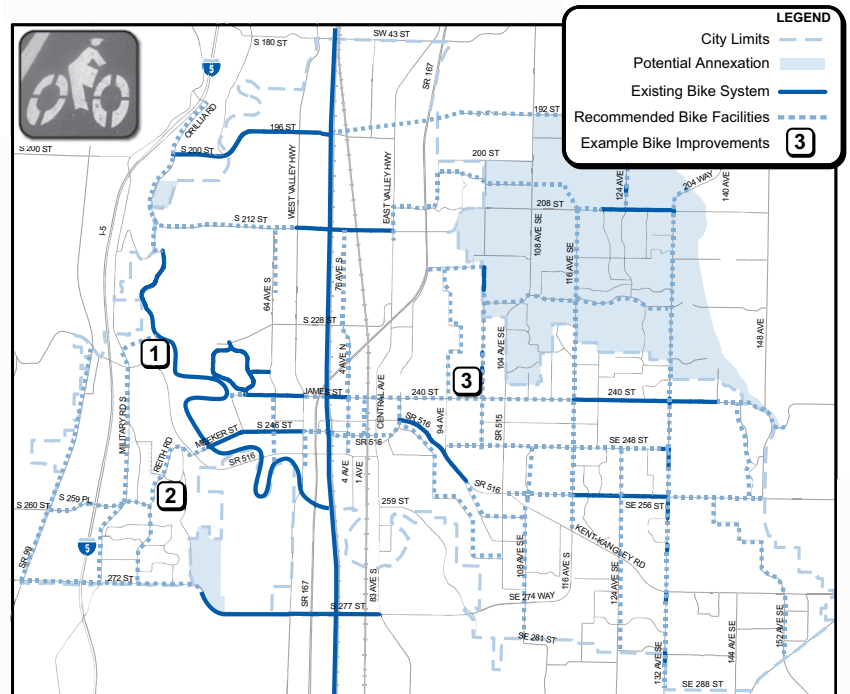
The Green River Trail Connector is an example of a recommended shared-use path, which provides a completely separate area for the exclusive use of bicyclists and pedestrians.

2 Bike Lane

Bike lanes provide one-way striped space on a roadway for bicyclists. S 260th Street/Reith Road between SR 99 and Meeker is one of the locations where a bike lane is recommended.

3 Shared Lane

Shared lanes, typically located on lower-volume roadways, are signed to indicate that bicyclists make significant use of the roadway. One of the recommendations in TMP is that shared lane signs be added to 100th Avenue SE.



Street Improvements: Intersections, Streets, and Railroad Grade Separations

Streets are the backbone of our transportation system. A street network that allows efficient flow of traffic helps the community function effectively, not to mention helping to prevent driver frustration! The TMP makes recommendations for street improvements in three categories: Streets, Intersections, and Grade Separations.

The TMP recommends 24 Street, 21 Intersection, and 6 Grade Separation projects. You can see the list of all of the recommendations at the TMP web site, but below we've highlighted several projects that topped the list of concerns we discovered through our community input and analysis.

Intersection Improvements

- 1 I-5 / S 272nd Street Interchange Reconstruction, Phase I**
Reconstruct the east half of S 272nd Street/I-5 interchange to provide transit and HOV direct access to the I-5 HOV lanes.

- 2 SE 256th Street and 132nd Avenue SE**
Add turn lanes and pockets and modify the traffic signals. The widening of the intersection would include reconstruction of sidewalks and allow for future bike lanes. This project complements recently completed and planned improvements along SE 256th Street and 132nd Avenue SE.

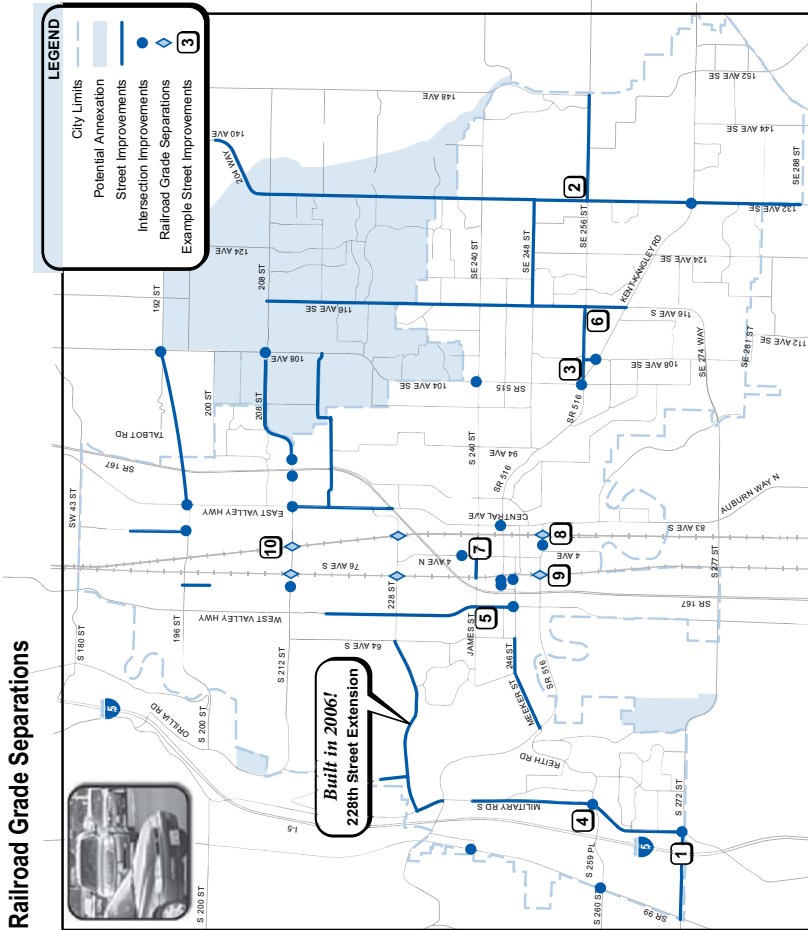


- 3 Kent-Kangley Road / SR 515 / Southeast 256th Street**
Reconfigure the Kent-Kangley Road / SR 515 / SE 256th Street intersection (known as the "Y") to provide better traffic flow. Add a new three-lane roadway along 108th Avenue from Kent-Kangley Road to 256th Street. Construct new curb, sidewalk, and lighting.



Traffic Management Center

As part of the new Kent Public Works Operations Center, the City will develop a Traffic Management Center. One of the important features of this project will be an upgrade of the City's traffic signal system that will allow active monitoring and management of intersections. The end result will be signals that are timed and coordinated to help traffic flow more effectively through Kent's intersections!



Street Improvements

- 4 Military Road South at Reith Road**
Widen street approaches to this intersection and provide left-turn lanes for all approaches. Add right-turn lanes on northbound and southbound Military Road and on westbound Reith Road.
- 5 SR 181/West Valley Highway/Washington Avenue Widening**
Widen SR 181 to seven lanes. Install a traffic signal at the intersection of West Valley Highway and S 238th Street.

- 6 S 277th Street Corridor Extension**
Widen 116th Avenue SE to five lanes from Kent-Kangley Road to SE 256th Street. Also improve the lane alignment through the Kent-Kangley / 116th Ave SE intersection (currently in progress).



- 7 James Street Improvements**
Widen James Street between Union Pacific Railroad and 4th Avenue N to provide left-turn lanes, and install a traffic signal at the Kent Events Center and Regional Justice Center entrances.

The Long and the Short of It: TMP and TIP

While the TMP provides a long-range vision for our transportation system, the City's Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (referred to as the TIP) provides a short-range implementation plan. Both of them include a list of project recommendations. The TIP is updated annually, so right now it recommends projects out to 2013. The TIP also identifies revenue sources that are already secured or can be reasonably expected to be available.

Why do we have a TMP and a TIP? Because both a long-range and a short-range plan are required to compete for certain federal, state, and regional funding sources!

To see the TIP, go to www.ci.kent.wa.us/transportation/2008TIP.pdf.

Railroad Grade Separations

When a train crosses a roadway, it can have a significant impact on the amount of time cars, trucks, buses, bikes, and pedestrians have to wait at an intersection. As shown on the map, several grade separation projects are planned to allow traffic to move regardless of the passing trains. Among these projects are two four-lane underpasses on Willis Street and a six-lane underpass on S 212th Street.

- 8 Willis Street (SR 516)/Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad**
- 9 Willis Street (SR 516)/Union Pacific Railroad**
- 10 S 212th Street/Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad**



Making the Grade, Before and After: The top photo is a typical example of traffic waiting for a train in Kent, and the photo on the bottom shows what the Willis Street crossing will look like when completed. The grade separations that will send traffic on Willis Street beneath the UPRR and BNSF lines are scheduled to be constructed in 2011.

Riding the Bus: Transit Improvements

Buses, vanpools, and the Sounder commuter train are all parts of the public transit system in Kent. Your feedback showed us that you want better transit service within Kent, to Seattle, and to nearby suburban communities where many Kent residents work.



Transit is provided by Metro and Sound Transit, which are regional agencies. This means that mass transit decisions are not made by Kent officials. However, we provide considerable input on the priorities set by the transit agencies. With this in mind, the map shows existing bus routes

and some of the recommended transit routes and service improvements that could occur with your support.

1 Improve Local Transit Services

New local routes should provide more frequent connections within Kent and to other destinations. All-day service should be available on SE 240th Street between downtown and 116th Avenue SE. Similarly, service on the 104th/106th Avenue SE, 116th Avenue SE, and 132nd Avenue SE corridor routes should be expanded into midday hours.

It remains a goal of the City to expand shuttle service to more residential communities, and the Kent Industrial Area should also have additional service, including late evening times, to the Kent Transit Center.

2 More Trips to South County

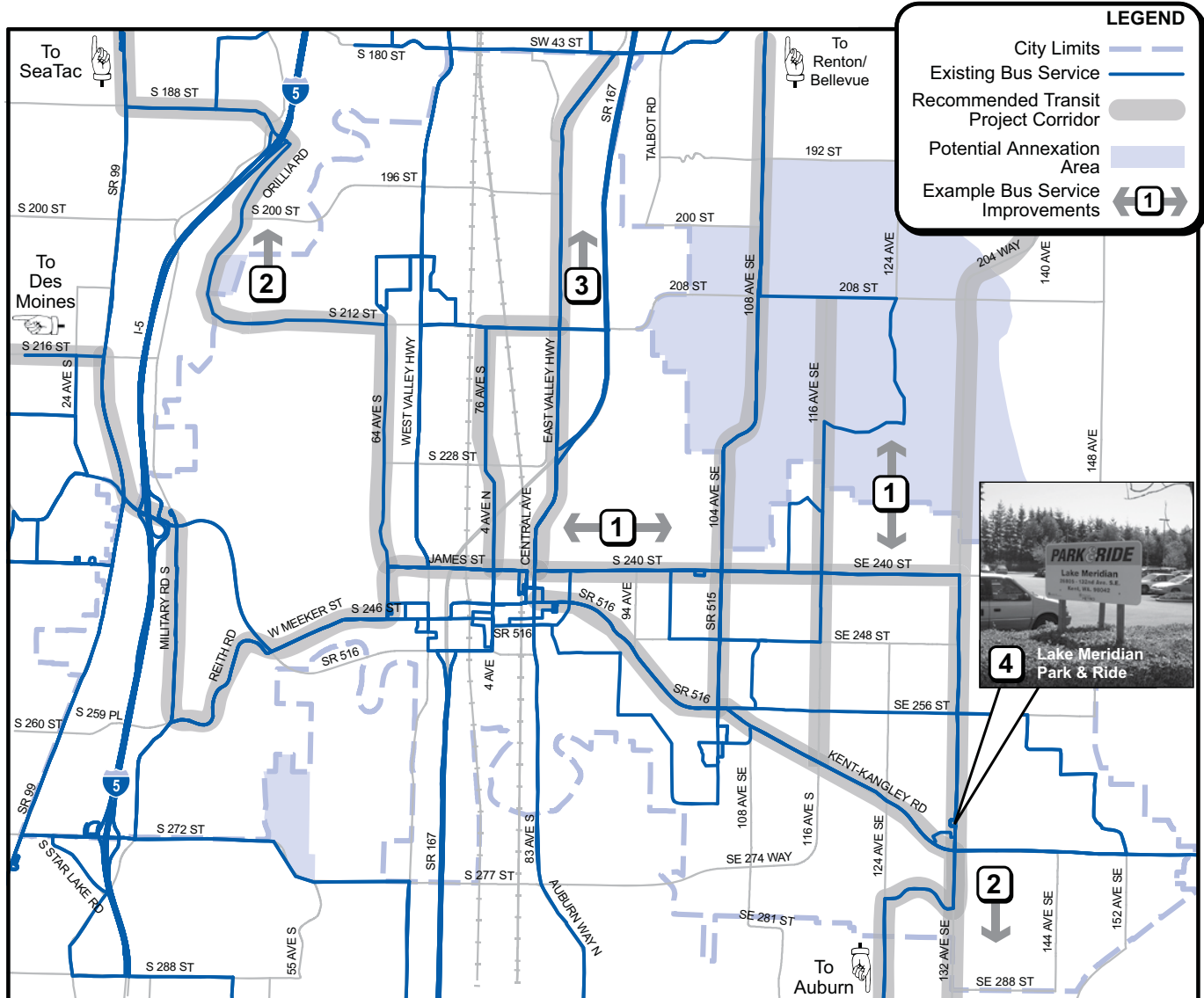
As an example, Bus Route 180 to Auburn and to SeaTac should increase in frequency to every 15 minutes and extend into the evening hours.

3 More Trips to Regional Destinations

Combined, Sound Transit and Metro should add additional trips to Seattle and other destinations including a mid-day express bus (short-term) and midday Sounder train (long-term) trips.

4 More Park & Ride Capacity

As an example, parking capacity at Lake Meridian Park and Ride should increase by 200 spaces to capture the transit trips closer to home and help reduce congestion at East Hill intersections.



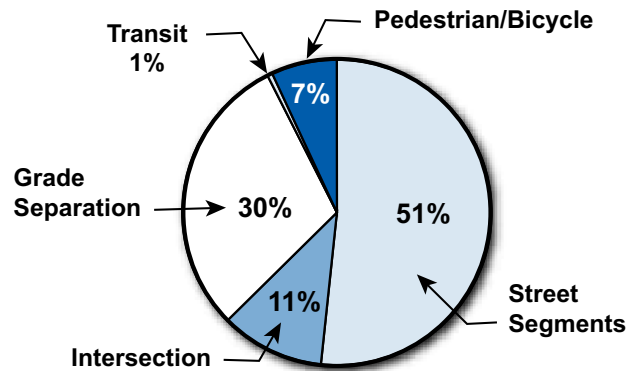
A Plan to Pay for It

Developing the draft recommendations in the TMP has required more than a year of careful study and planning. To implement all of the recommendations would cost between \$511 million and \$595 million, spread out over the next 23 years.

There are a variety of ways to pay for the projects. Here are some of the possible revenue sources the Kent City Council may consider:

- Local committed funding
- Federal and state grants
- Local improvement districts
- Street Fund
- Development impact fees
- Business license fee
- Voter general obligation bonds
- Real estate excise tax
- Utility taxes
- Motor vehicle fuel tax

As shown in the pie chart, the greatest portion of costs will be associated with improvements to street segments. Standalone pedestrian and bicycle facilities make up about 7 percent of cost, while the street projects would provide many millions of dollars more in sidewalk and bicycle facilities. Although the level of funding for public transit projects looks low, much of the funding for such projects is not shown on this chart because it will come from outside agencies such as Metro and Sound Transit.



The TMP is not a short-range plan. The recommendations in the TMP will be implemented over the next 2½ decades. However, our transportation needs change over time and this TMP will be updated periodically to accommodate our shifting needs, and some projects may be deferred until appropriate funding sources become available. For this reason, and many others, it is important that you continue to remain involved and let the City's Transportation Engineering Section know what is important to you.

It's Your Plan so Your Input is Essential!



Only with your help has it been possible to develop a draft TMP that meets your needs! You've attended meetings, responded to surveys, called our hotline, sent us e-mails, and visited us at community events. You have demonstrated that the way we approach our transportation future is very important to you. And it should be! The TMP will provide transportation solutions for our community for decades to come.

While it's true that the TMP is nearly complete, the City Council needs your input on the draft list of projects and on the transportation priorities that they will set. Providing a good transportation system is an ongoing process, which is why we want you to continue to stay involved.

Why not take a minute to use the Citizen Response Card inserted in this newsletter? Call us, e-mail us, and check the TMP web pages for even more opportunities to provide your input. And please take an hour to visit the TMP Open House this month. This is your Plan, and your input is essential!

Transportation Master Plan OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, September 20, 2007
2:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Green River Community College
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• Transit Priorities • How to Pay For It • Ways for You to Stay Involved

Feedback Wanted! Write your thoughts on the postage-paid feedback card you'll find inside. We want to hear from you!

You're Invited!

Come to the Open House at Kent Station. There you can find out more about the results of the Transportation Master Plan, talk to representatives from the City of Kent's Transportation Section, and share your comments about how we're shaping our transportation future.

Thursday, September 20, 2007
2:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Green River Community College
Kent Campus at Kent Station
417 Ramsay Way, Suite 112
Room 245

Tell Us What You Think

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Please call, e-mail, or write us with
any questions or comments about the
Transportation Master Plan.*

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Mail us: City of Kent Public Works TMP
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Kent, WA 98032

And don't forget to visit our project web page:
www.ci.kent.wa.us/transportation/TMP/

TRANSPORTATION
MASTER PLAN
NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 2, Summer 2007



Appendix C

**KENT REPORTER TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN COVERAGE AND
ADVERTISING**

Transportation Master Plan

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What is the future of transportation? City has a plan

Kent master plan covers road needs

By Steve Hunter
Reporter staff writer

Kent residents want to find quick routes between the East Hill and the valley, to avoid the wait for trains downtown and to have enough bicycle lanes and sidewalks in their neighborhoods.

City officials hope to resolve at least several of those issues over the next 25 years through the Transportation Master Plan.

The formation of the master plan began about 18 months ago. A task force of residents,

city planners and transportation consultants met for more than a year to come up with a draft plan in May.

The city had an open house last week to let residents know about the plan and to hear what transportation projects people want.

"People have been quite positive about the plans," Cathy Mooney, the city's senior transportation planner, said Thursday. "They are anxious for us to move forward."

Several projects are expected to start in 2008. Other projects won't begin until four or more years down the road.

Residents are tired of the wait for trains while trying to drive through downtown Kent on Willis, Smith and James streets.

The master plan includes two

projects to allow traffic along Willis Street to go under the two sets of railroad tracks. Those projects could begin in 2011.

The city will start work next year along South 228th Street to build an overpass to allow vehicles to go over the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad tracks at an estimated cost of \$23 million. An underpass below the railroad tracks also will be built along South 212th Street after crews finish the 228th Street project.

"The city looks to get grants for the railroad-grade separations," said Don Samdahl, a consultant with Mirai Associates of Kirkland hired by the city to help compile the master plan. "You have to assume that the city will pay for about half, so that's why the projects are spread out over 20 years."

Residents are quite interested in streets that go over or under the railroad tracks, which receive heavy usage from freight trains as well as Amtrak and Sound Transit passenger trains, according to Mooney.

"It's frustrating to wait for a train," she noted. Other projects in the master plan include getting rid of the "Y" intersection on the East Hill where Kent-Kangley Road, 104th Avenue Southeast and Southeast 256th Street meet.

City officials plan to extend 108th Avenue Southeast from Kent-Kangley Road to Southeast 256th. Drivers east-bound on 256th would continue on Kent-Kangley and take a left turn at 108th, because the short, left-turn jog at 104th would be eliminated.

"It's a nightmare at 104th,"

Mooney said of the scenario that currently exists. "People will be able to make left turns at 108th and there would be a left-turn pocket to hold the cars."

That project is slated to begin in 2012, but could be moved up because Kent-Kangley and 104th also are state highways (516 and 515), which could lead to state grants to help pay for construction costs estimated at \$2.5 million.

Even before the open house last week, Mooney was hearing complaints from West Hill residents about the need for sidewalks along Military Road.

The master plan includes a project to widen the lanes and install sidewalks along Military Road between Kent-Des Moines Road and South 272nd Street, with an estimated construction start date of 2011 at a cost of \$13.5 million.

City staff expects to send the Transportation Master Plan to the City Council for approval in early 2008.

For more information or to provide feedback on the transportation plan, call the city at 253-856-5566 or go to www.ci.kent.wa.us/transportation/tmp/.

Contact Steve Hunter at 253-872-6724 or shunter@reporternewsletters.com

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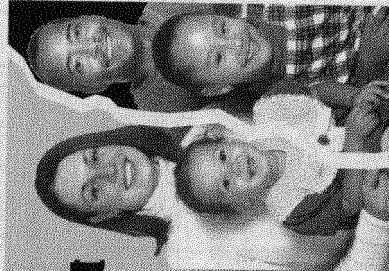
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news

Funding transportation: City considers options

by **By Steve Hunter**

Be heard

To view Kent's draft transportation plan or to provide feedback about the plan and funding options, call the city at 253-856-5566 or go to www.ci.kent.wa.us/transportation/tmp/.

No deadline has been set for submitting comments.

The city also will take public comment when the proposal goes before the City Council next year.

A business license fee charge per employee could be one new method the city of Kent may use to help fund a \$550 million draft transportation master plan over the next 25 years.

Vehicle license fees, impact fees, a real estate excise tax and voter-approved general obligation bonds are four other options the city could consider, to raise additional revenue to pay for streets, sidewalks and bike lanes.

A small turnout of four members of the Kent business community heard a report on funding strategies last week at the city's Centennial Building from Randy Young, a transportation financial consultant based in Redmond.


The City Council is expected to decide in early 2008 on the final transportation master plan, including how much to spend on the projects and how to pay for them. The draft master plan includes recommendations for 24 street, 21 intersection and six railroad-street grade separation projects.

"Redmond and Renton have business license fees and the business community fully supported it," said Young, who has worked with numerous cities

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on funding options for street projects.

Redmond charges a business-license fee of \$83 per employee, with 66 percent going toward transportation projects. Renton charges \$55 per employee with 80 percent earmarked for transportation spending.

Kent could raise an estimated \$73 million to \$98 million over 25 years from a similar fee, Young said.

Kent already has \$77 million committed to fund street projects through the six-year transportation improvement plan, which is updated annually and identifies revenue sources already secured or that are reasonably expected to be secured. Short-range transportation plans and long-range plans are required in order for the city to compete for certain state and federal grants.

Through existing revenue sources, the city could raise an additional \$149 million to \$307 million. The estimate varies depending on how much federal and state grant money the city can obtain for grade separation projects and how much property owners might agree to assess themselves for local improvement districts.

Up to now, grants have fronted as much as 85 percent of project costs, for grade-separation work in the city. But the city shouldn't expect to see more than 50 percent funding from future grants, Young said, noting local municipalities are now expected to shoulder more of the costs when it comes to grant funding.

The city's master plan includes two projects that will enable traffic along Willis Street to go under two sets of railroad tracks. Those projects combined would cost the city nearly \$50 million. The city plans to fund them through a mix of grants and other revenue sources with construction potentially starting in 2011.

Other revenue options include impact fees, where the developer of a new housing project has to pay so much per house. The impact fees would be used instead of the current Environmental Mitigation Agreements (EMAs) that are charged to developers based on three identified street corridor projects in Kent. The impact fee also can be charged to developers of new commercial buildings, with a fee of so much per square foot.

"The city could charge enough to collect as much as \$110 million," Young said. "If there are no

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impact fees, then the city will need to take away projects or up the money elsewhere.”

A new vehicle license fee could be as much as \$20 per vehicle and raise an estimated \$30 million to \$44 million. The City Council would need to identify a transportation benefit district to set up such a program.

Voter-approved bonds would be another way to pay for street projects and could raise anywhere from \$5 million to \$27 million.

Contact Steve Hunter at 253-872-6724 or shunter@reporternewspapers.com.