



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works

123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800

www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

To: Dave Ramsay, City Manager

From: Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director
David Godfrey, P.E., Transportation Engineering Manager

Date: June 25, 2009

Subject: TRANSPORTATION 2040 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that has been released by PSRC.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

On June 2, PSRC staff addressed the City Council with a briefing on the Transportation 2040 Plan and the accompanying environmental documentation. Council asked the Transportation Commission to suggest the most appropriate of the five alternatives in the light of Kirkland's approved policies.

At their June 24th meeting, the Transportation Commission had a lively discussion of the alternatives. Although consensus was not achieved on all the issues, the group came to agreements on several points. The attached letter has been reviewed and edited by the Commission and reflects the key points of their discussion:

- Alternative 5 is appropriately bold
- There was concern by most members of the Commission that a completely tolling based funding mechanism could be established by 2040.
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements should be included in the alternative.
- A mix of funding sources is preferable to a single source of funding.
- Transit improvements are needed in the short term but funding through tolling may not be possible until the future.
- None of the alternatives meet the green house gas emission targets established by the Council

Attached is a handout that was prepared for the Commission. It shows the performance of the alternatives relative to the transportation related framework goals from the Comprehensive Plan and relative to the CO₂ targets adopted by Council.

Kirkland Goal	Measure	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5
FG-9 Provide accessibility to pedestrians, bicyclists, and alternative mode users within and between neighborhoods, public spaces, and business districts and to regional facilities.	New miles of off-road Walking and cycling facilities	147	146	141	146	458
	Description of transit connections, pedestrian and cycling facilities	See descriptions on pages 18-54 of Appendix A				
FG-10 Create a transportation system that allows the mobility of people and goods by providing a variety of transportation options.	Total Active Trans. Trips % change from '06	73	64	70	74	93
	SOV Mode split, all trips	43.4	44.2	43.4	43.0	42.0
	Total transit boardings % change from '06	133	105	115	122	153
	Total miles of new Freeways and arterials change from 2006	470	1158	812	690	463
FG-13 Maintain existing adopted levels of service for important public facilities.	Total change from 2006 in vehicle delay hours (per capita)	14	13	-2	3	-13
	Transit: % annual increase above baseline by service type Core/Community/Special	0/0/0	0.3/0/ 1.0	0.3/0/ 1.0	1.0/0/ 1.0	2.5/2.5/3.0
FG-14 Plan for a fair share of regional growth, consistent with State and regional goals to minimize low-density sprawl and direct growth to urban areas.	Land use assumptions and effect on growth management	Similar across all alternatives				
Emission reduction targets from Council Resolution R-4659 8/7/2007. Reduce CO ₂ levels to 80% below 2005 levels by 2050	Annual tons of CO ₂ (mobile sources) % increase from 2006 level	138%	140%	133%	132%	124%

July 8, 2009

D R A F T

Mr. Sean Ardussi
Puget Sound Regional Council
1011 Western Ave.
Seattle, WA 98104-1035

Dear Mr. Ardussi:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Transportation 2040 Draft Environmental Statement. We appreciate the efforts of the PSRC to plan for what will be a dynamic time in transportation for our region.

The City of Kirkland applauds the bold direction and aggressive nature of Alternative 5 to alter travel behavior and land use patterns in the region through use of roadway pricing and tolling. However, we have some concerns with its overall funding strategy and how it might be implemented over time.

While Kirkland's Roadway Pricing policy is supportive of broad tolling, we are concerned it is premature for the region to rely solely on tolling to pay for new capital improvements, while also being expected to address the funding shortfalls we already face in preserving our existing infrastructure. Instead, a mix of funding sources, combined with aggressive mode share goals, should be considered to also address identified shorter term needs. This would allow the additional time to help alter travel behavior and attitude towards such a fundamental change in transportation funding, and would avoid having some shorter term needs go unmet. It would be helpful if the Plan included a funding and implementation strategy that identified how the region would evolve over time from the current very limited tolling situations to tolling on many regional and local facilities.

We are also concerned that the general public, and federal and state policy makers, will have a difficult time setting a toll at a rate that will, by itself, cause drivers to shift from automobiles to other modes. Instead, the City of Kirkland supports an alternative that provides an improved mass-transit system that would be operational sooner than such a bold funding strategy identified in Alternative 5 would likely allow. We encourage you to identify an alternative very similar to Alternative 5 that will include investments in transit that can be implemented sooner. For example, Kirkland still relies on only a handful of local and regional bus routes as their sole transit option and need additional service and facilities to begin to change behavior. We are not able to wait for such a bold shift in transportation funding to take place before transit investments are made in our area.

We also support much more investment in a complete system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connect Urban Centers throughout the region as identified in Alternative 5. We believe, as identified in our Active Transportation Plan, that more investment is needed in our pedestrian and bicycle system to better promote healthy living, support increased transit usage, and shape the land use the region desires.

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In addition, we noticed none of the alternatives identify what it would take to meet the greenhouse gas emission targets adopted by the City of Kirkland and other cities, in addition to those targets identified by the State of Washington. It would have been useful to evaluate and understand the type of policies and projects necessary to reduce CO₂ emissions below 2005 levels.

Thank you for consideration of these comments. The next thirty years will offer not only challenges to our transportation system but exciting opportunities as well.

Sincerely,

Kirkland City Council

By James L. Lauinger, Mayor