



2000

TRANSPORTATION

STRATEGIC PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT



April 2001

To the City Council and Seattle Citizens:

I am pleased to present the 2000 Transportation Strategic Plan Annual Report. It was a very productive year and much good work is reflected in this report.

The City of Seattle adopted the Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP) in 1998. It outlines strategies and actions to help achieve our Comprehensive Plan goals, including maintenance of transportation infrastructure and making transit, biking and walking more attractive choices. The Annual Report measures our progress.

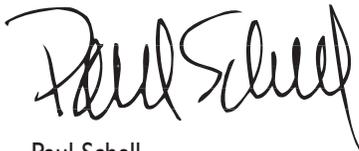
Since 1995 we have made a more than four-fold increase in our General Fund contribution to transportation. Last year that meant setting aside \$30 million of the City's General Fund, even as other non-City funding sources declined.

Highlights of 2000 include paving and chip-sealing, signal upgrades, bike and pedestrian improvements and more. Significantly, we also completed major seismic retrofit work that held us in good stead when the Nisqually Earthquake hit in February.

What will the coming year bring? We are looking to the State Legislature to implement recommendations of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation for needed investments and revenue sources. I recently released my Transportation Blueprint, a three-step program that would connect our neighborhoods to each other and give people more transit choices. And for Sound Transit's Link light rail, we'll be seeking consensus on key adjustments to the plan to allow us to move ahead with bringing light rail to the Puget Sound region.

We continue to make important investments in our transportation system and infrastructure. Please feel free to contact us at any of the addresses or phone numbers listed on the last page, and let us know how we're doing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Schell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" being more prominent than the last name "Schell".

Paul Schell
Mayor

Introduction

In October 1998, the City of Seattle adopted the Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP), which outlines strategies and actions to help achieve the city's Comprehensive Plan goals, including the maintenance of the transportation infrastructure, and how to make transit, biking, and walking more attractive. The intent was that the TSP assist in long-range transportation planning and decision-making, and that it be an evolving and "living" document, updated regularly to ensure that it stay relevant. The City Council asked Executive staff to report back on progress made in implementing the TSP on an annual basis, focusing initially on nine specific strategies; the 1999 Annual Report (published in April 2000) devoted considerable detail to those nine.

With this 2000 Annual Report, staff have attempted to make the report an easy reference source. The 2000 Annual Report highlights key accomplishments within a handful of broad groupings, to better tie complementary investments to each other.

This pamphlet shows that much has been accomplished in the past year: from signal synchronization to the completion of Phase One of the Bridge Seismic Retrofit Program; from Phase I of the Seattle Transit Study to the introduction of innovative trip reduction projects; from arterial paving to securing new transit funding.

Yet despite the City's increasingly robust General Fund commitment to transportation, a continued depletion of State resources leaves the City far short of the funding required to properly maintain its current infrastructure and make significant enhancements to mobility. The rainbow which appeared on the horizon at the end of 2000 came from the release of the recommendations of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation. After two years of work, the Commission identified \$150 billion of recommended statewide investments over 20 years, as well as necessary reforms and efficiencies, benchmarks,

fundamental investment priorities, and funding options to implement the recommendations. The 2001 State Legislature offers the hope that we can begin to close the funding gap with new, sustainable sources of necessary revenues.

Overview

Taken together, the Transportation Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan lay out a long-term transportation vision for Seattle – one that provides for efficient access to jobs, education, shopping, recreation, and social life; one that is smoothly integrated with the regional bus and light rail systems; and one that quickly gets freight and goods to and from markets. The TSP is the City's guide for managing Seattle's transportation system and maps out policies and investments to achieve a healthy, efficient transportation network.

At the department level, Seattle Transportation's (SeaTran) own mission and vision provide the foundation and guidance to help the City achieve those broader long-term goals. SeaTran's mission is:

- To create and maintain for Seattle a safe and reliable transportation system which enhances neighborhoods, the environment and the economy.
- To be the most innovative and responsive transportation agency in the region.

To measure the City's ability to implement the program necessary to achieve the vision, SeaTran has established the following key performance goals and benchmarks:

- I. Achieve optimal cost-effectiveness of maintenance and rehabilitation of city streets through selection of correct projects at the appropriate time; and to attain smoother, safer streets as measured by Pavement Condition Index rating of 63 by the end of 2002.

2. Operate an effective structure inspection, maintenance, and operations program.
3. Achieve more efficient traffic flows on selected corridors, attaining a target per vehicle mile travel time average of 3.3 minutes per mile traveled.
4. Achieve a 2 percent annual increase in travel by targeted populations – including persons with disabilities, pedestrians, bicyclists, and commuter and transit riders – measured at selected locations.
5. Improve pedestrian safety, reducing collisions on targeted corridors by 10 percent.

By making strategic investments in transportation, and measuring those results, the City will be better able to preserve and maintain the transportation infrastructure, improve safety, and enhance mobility by providing transportation choices.

Key Accomplishments in 2000

- About 60 lane miles were paved.
- Of the city's 975 signalized intersections, re-timing has been completed for approximately 575.
- About 2,000 new bigger, brighter stop signs were installed.
- For the South Spokane Street Viaduct, SeaTran installed a new center median barrier.
- Major maintenance and seismic retrofit work was completed on the Fremont Bridge. This marked the last of 25 bridges to be strengthened as part of the City's Bridge Seismic Retrofit and Major Maintenance program (Phase I).
- Bicycle lanes were marked with new non-skid thermoplastic bicycle legends. A Seattle Central Business District bicycle survey showed that between 1992 and 2000, ridership into the downtown area increased by 57 percent.
- SeaTran began construction on a series of street, pedestrian, and signal improvements along California Avenue SW between SW Admiral Way and SW Edmunds Street.
- Transit signal priority was installed along Rainier Avenue South, and initial data shows noticeable improvements.
- The City set aside about \$30 million of General Fund spending for transportation.

Infrastructure Improvements

A commitment by the Mayor and City Council to increase the level of General Fund devoted to transportation purposes helped make up for some of the revenue losses incurred after statewide passage of I-695 in November 1999. This injection of local dollars permitted SeaTran to better realize a long-term capital improvement plan designed to continue funding operations and maintenance needs, especially preventive maintenance, and increase its commitment to paving.

Bridges and Structures

SeaTran operates and maintains over 150 bridges throughout Seattle, including four movable bridges. One of SeaTran's key Goals - Actions - Results - Measures (GARMs) is that no additional weight restrictions be placed upon any of the city's vital bridges due to their condition, and SeaTran was again able to meet that goal in 2000.

Major maintenance and seismic retrofit work began on the **Fremont Bridge** in June 1999, and was completed in the spring of 2000. This marked the last of 25 bridges to be strengthened as part of the City's **Bridge Seismic Retrofit and Major Maintenance Program – Phase I**, a \$25 million program to make key bridges more likely to withstand the force of a major earthquake. This program began in 1993 with the strengthening of several pedestrian overpasses, including the pedestrian bridge over Rainier Avenue South.

Many other critical bridges were strengthened through the program, including the Fauntleroy Expressway and Admiral Way Bridge in West Seattle, the Jose Rizal Bridge to Beacon Hill, the Dravus and Emerson Street bridges in the Magnolia/Interbay area, and the University and Ballard bridges. The City celebrated the completion of the Phase One program in April 2000. In the next several years, SeaTran will be looking for opportunities to begin implementing Phase Two (estimated cost: \$35 million).

The **Galer Street Flyover** project got underway in 2000. This effort involves the construction of an overpass over the railroad tracks and Elliott Avenue West at Galer Street, to the property at Terminals 88 - 91. This transportation improvement will provide better mobility through that corridor and enhanced access to the waterfront when it is completed in the summer of 2002.

Earlier in 2000, work was substantially completed on the **Garfield Emergency Slide Restoration Project**, as unstable trees and sections of the hillside were removed, drainage trenches dug, and reforestation accomplished.

SeaTran replaced the four aging bridges at the intersection of SW Spokane Street and Harbor Avenue SW in the **Harbor Bridges Project**, a two-year effort that began in 1998.



In a pioneering effort to immediately reduce the risk of head-on collisions on the **South Spokane Street Viaduct**, SeaTran installed a new center median-barrier. This low-cost, interim safety measure took only days to install versus the more permanent safety improvements that will eventually (2 - 3 year completion time frame) be part of the Viaduct widening project. Several accidents have already been avoided because of this center barrier installation.

Steel bridges in Seattle need to be painted every 12 years to reduce corrosion. The bridge crews normally paint one or two of these bridges every summer. The **Magnolia Bridge** is so long and costly to paint that the crews completed approximately 60 percent of the project in 2000, while the balance of the bridge will be painted in 2001.

In 2000, design for a new **Princeton Bridge** was completed. This bridge is a primary access route for the Hawthorne Hills and View Ridge neighborhoods, and will be replaced with a new, seismically sound structure in 2001. The existing structure is badly deteriorated and cannot be seismically retrofitted to current City standards.

The City awarded a contract for the **Ballard Bridge** project, which will involve a major effort to rehabilitate the electrical and mechanical systems for this movable bridge.

SeaTran also completed its annual **retaining wall and stairway programs**. Many of the stairway improvements were made to key pedestrian links between neighborhoods, schools, and bus routes.

Capital Projects

SeaTran began construction on a series of street, pedestrian, and signal improvements along **California Avenue SW** between SW Admiral Way and SW Edmunds Street. The entire project is scheduled to be completed by early spring 2001. Improvements include the complete removal and reconstruction of sidewalks in The Junction, sidewalk reconstruction by Hiawatha Park, traffic signal upgrades to better facilitate both automobile and pedestrian mobility throughout the area, street and pedestrian lighting upgrades, and street resurfacing on both SW Admiral Way and SW Alaska Street.

Street improvements are coming to the **15th Avenue NW** corridor, an essential transportation route for residents, commuters, and visitors to Ballard. SeaTran is currently developing a scope of work for a

\$4.5 million transportation improvement project to improve safety, convenience, and mobility for all types of transportation (pedestrian, transit, truck, etc.). The project will include signal and transit facility improvements between West Dravus Street and NW 87th Street. There may also be opportunities for some landscaping and pedestrian improvements at some locations.

The City is working together with King County and the State of Washington to implement a multi-modal corridor improvement project along **Lake City Way NE**. Among other elements, the project is intended to improve transit operating efficiency and reliability, as well as improve vehicular safety and access to transit. Proposed improvements include asphalt resurfacing, transit signal priority, queue jumps, bus shelter improvements, a bus and business access lane during peak travel periods, and new curbs, gutters, and sidewalks.



The City will be making improvements to **Northeast 50th Street**, and elsewhere in the University District, to help reduce traffic delays during peak periods and for special events, and to improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians.

The **12th Avenue** street and sidewalk improvement

Paving

About 60 lane miles were paved in 2000, as indicated by this table.

Paving Activity	Description	Budget	Lane Miles
Arterial Paving by Contractors	Most arterial paving funds are used for projects bid out to private contractors.	\$3.48 million	20.5
Arterial Paving by City Crews	Some streets are paved by City street maintenance crews through the Arterial Major Maintenance Program.	\$250,000	2.1
Arterial Paving as Part of Larger CIP Projects	Some streets are paved as part of larger CIP projects that involve improvements such as signal upgrades, pedestrian enhancements, and drainage improvements.	\$275,000	1.7
Non-Arterial Paving	Though SeaTran does not generally pave non-arterial streets, limited funds are devoted to such areas as those used for "bus turnarounds" due to the extraordinary heavy loading and wear they receive.	\$397,000	4.2
Paving By Partnership on Arterial and Non-Arterial Streets	Occasionally SeaTran partners with other agencies, private businesses, and utilities to pave streets.	\$101,000	1.9
Chip Seal	One-fourth of the City's non-arterial streets are low-cost bituminous pavements, or "chip-sealed." Generally, a 10-year maintenance cycle of reapplying treatment is maintained. This is a relatively low-cost surface treatment for unpaved streets made of a thin layer of asphalt topped with chipped rock set in an asphalt emulsion.	\$752,000	30
Total			60.4



project is located between East Marion Street and East Columbia Street. The project will improve the pedestrian environment by adding curb bulbs, street lighting, and bike lanes. It will also include the rechannelization of the street for left turn pockets at each end. This will create a model street for future development on 12th Avenue for a more pedestrian friendly corridor.

The Duwamish ITS project contains improvements such as closed circuit TV, smarter signals, and variable message signs. WSDOT approved funding for a share of the Duwamish ITS project, adding to grant funding

already in hand. Duwamish ITS ranked fourth of 43 submittals across the state in the State's Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board's selection process. The list will be presented to the Legislature for funding decisions in the 2001 session. In addition, King County committed to \$375,000 in funding for the Duwamish ITS effort.

Urban Forest

SeaTran is a strong advocate for effective management of urban forest resources on City streets. About 2,000 street trees were planted to help achieve the Mayor's millennium goal of 20,000 trees planted citywide in 2000. The department combines educational and regulatory efforts to ensure proper planting, pruning and removal practices. Seattle has been recognized for 15 years as a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation, and as a Tree Growth City eight years in a row. Fewer than 1,000 trees have been removed along Seattle's streets in the past five years and almost 17,000 have been planted since 1989. Approximately 54 percent of the trees have been paid for by residents or volunteer organizations. The City of Seattle's General Fund, Capital Improvement Projects and federal grants have accounted for another 45 percent. The remaining number of trees have been installed by private developers. Today, approximately 120,000 trees exist along Seattle's streets.



Maintenance and Mobility Initiative

In May, Mayor Schell unveiled a Maintenance and Mobility (M&M) Initiative, funded by the release of \$2.4 million in Vehicle License Fee (VLF) revenues from 1999. The City Council approved the Mayor's plan in June. All of the M&M projects are strategies in the TSP. The M&M initiative represents several inexpensive, near-term projects, many of which are already providing tangible transportation benefits to the people of Seattle, with an emphasis on enhanced mobility and access. Maintenance is also a vital component of the package – once mobility elements are constructed, they need to be adequately maintained on an ongoing basis.

In 2000, M&M funding was made available for signal optimization, safety enhancements, and trip reduction measures, as well as for transportation planning studies and bicycle and pedestrian improvements highlighted later in this pamphlet.

Signal Optimization

M&M funding is allowing for synchronization of the city's traffic signals on an accelerated schedule. Of the City's 975 signalized intersections, re-timing has been completed for approximately 575. Of the approximately 400 remaining, about 270 are already contracted with a consultant for completion by the end of 2001, and the bulk of the remainder will be re-timed by current City staff.

Safety Enhancements

Over the summer, all the city's arterial lane lines were repainted, as were all bike lanes. In addition, new thermoplastic bike legends were applied and have been very popular with the biking community because of their high visibility and non-skid nature. New pedestrian crosswalk signs are in the process of being installed throughout the city, as are 2,000 new bigger, brighter stop signs and school crossings. As part of

these pedestrian enhancements, the City sponsored a public service campaign aimed at teaching children and their parents how to ensure safe walking to and from schools. The purchase of an additional speed watch trailer has helped bolster these efforts.



Way to Go, Seattle

Developed by the Strategic Planning Office (SPO), the first phase of the Way to Go pilot program offered 25 families a financial incentive to reduce car trips, equivalent to the cost of owning and operating their second car. Information was provided to help them reduce trips and rethink the way they use their car for commuting as well as for errands or entertainment by trying other transportation options (including walking, taxis, transit, and bicycling).

Participating families signed contracts to not use their second car during the pilot, keep a diary of their travel behavior and choices, and help SPO staff determine both the barriers and incentives to car trip reduction. The project results show that people can save money and enhance the livability of their communities by making more conscious transportation choices.

Transit Speed and Reliability

Low-cost corridor improvements will be made in 2001 to improve the speed and reliability of transit, building upon the work already underway through the Seattle Transit Initiative. Options include transit signal priority, signal optimization, transit queue jumps, facility improvements, spot parking restrictions, and pedestrian safety improvements. Any improvements will occur with the input and participation of adjacent neighborhoods and businesses.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

The ITS program will deliver real-time traffic images via closed circuit TV on the City's web site, building upon the Washington State Department of Transportation's current system.

SeaTran will take advantage of the fiber optic "backbone" being constructed along both Aurora Avenue North and Lake City Way NE, connecting to the downtown commercial core. This will provide for the placement of 8-10 cameras along Aurora Avenue North, Northgate Way, and Mercer Street.

Car Smart Community Challenge Grant Program

As part of Way to Go, Seattle, this program enables neighborhood residents to apply for a \$50,000 pool of small grants for projects organized by individuals or groups that reduce car trips by encouraging alternative modes of travel.

Seattle Transit Initiative

Transit funding was a major issue in 2000 for Seattle and our local and regional transit partners. Initiative 695 and subsequent legislative actions, passed in 1999, reduced funding for transit service in King County. The reduction required Seattle staff responsible for transit issues to spend a large amount of staff time in

late 1999 and early 2000 working with other jurisdictions and King County staff on potential service reduction strategies. A key focus was making sure that service reduction strategies supported City priorities as stated in the TSP. Later in the year, staff also worked with King County in developing proposals for a King County transit funding ballot measure. This ballot measure, King County Proposition 1, successfully passed in November 2000. Proposition 1 will not only replace the funding lost due to I-695, it will allow Metro to significantly increase transit service. The City will work closely with County staff to ensure these new services best meet the needs of Seattle residents, employees, and visitors and also support TSP strategies.



The Seattle Transit Initiative (STI) is a program developed and managed by the Strategic Planning Office that focuses on improving existing transit and developing new transit services. During 2000 STI began work on several new federally funded projects.

The **Seattle Transit Study for Intermediate Capacity Transit** is assessing the feasibility of developing new higher capacity transit services along various corridors throughout the city. These services

would focus on connecting Seattle neighborhoods to each other as well as to the regional high capacity transit system being developed by Sound Transit. Stage I of the study was completed in December 2000.

In partnership with King County Metro, **transit signal priority** was installed along Rainier Avenue South, and initial data shows noticeable improvements. A similar project along Aurora Avenue North is nearly constructed and should be operational by July 2001. In addition, City and Metro staff worked together to develop a workplan of prioritized future in-city corridors in which to install transit signal priority technology.

The **Waterfront Pedestrian/Intermodal Connection** project has two components. The first is investigating the feasibility of extending the existing Waterfront Streetcar north along the waterfront to the vicinity of Galer Street. This study, which is led by the Strategic Planning Office, will be completed early in 2001. The second component of the project is development of a Waterfront Pedestrian Plan. This work will begin in early 2001 and will be led by City Design.

Light Rail Station Area Planning

The City of Seattle's Station Area Planning and Management Team is working to build communities around Seattle's 16 Sound Transit light rail stations that are great places to live, shop, and work. Sound Transit's Link Light Rail project will provide a safe, reliable transit system that will carry more than 100,000 riders a day by 2010. While Sound Transit is ultimately responsible for building and operating the light rail system, the City is committed to making sure that the best possible system is built for our residents, workers, and visitors. Seattle's future vitality depends on the ability to provide high-speed transit to connect our region's job centers and residential neighborhoods as well as to add capacity to the I-5 corridor.

Station Area Planning and Management staff work with

advisory committees and Sound Transit to build on the City's growth management planning (Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood planning) and to refine the neighborhood planning efforts of neighborhoods by focusing on the quarter mile around the proposed light rail stations. Strategies for land use, zoning, street and building design, housing and public safety will help integrate the light rail stations into the neighborhoods and make the most out of the Sound Transit investment. The result has been Concept-Level Recommendations adopted by the City Council in September of that establish a framework or blueprint for future development in station areas. These recommendations identify tools and strategies to turn neighborhood plans into reality and ensure that station areas provide safe places to walk, green space and parks, more choices for housing, and vibrant community businesses.



The Station Area Planning and Management staff continues to build relationships with key stakeholders in each station area as well as with Sound Transit staff. Sound Transit, the City, and the station area communities are working together to include transit-oriented development in all station areas. For example, staff undertook the McClellan Town Center development strategy with key business leaders,

residents and property owners. In response to the community's desire for a vital, mixed-use town center adjacent to the future light rail station, staff hired economic, design and transportation consultants to help stakeholders develop a vision for the town center that balances public and private investments as well as creative design with market reality. In the Northgate station area, staff has worked to help integrate several City and County capital projects into one planning process to take full advantage of over \$20 million dollars of public investment, slated for the Northgate core area in the next several years. These projects include a new library, community center, city park, enhanced bus transit center, and light rail station. The process also identified several alternative concepts for private development on the 12-acre Northgate mall south lot that would be adjacent to or mixed with these public facilities.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

The City is continuing to improve facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. Using Maintenance and Mobility (M&M) Initiative funds, bicycle lanes have been or will soon be installed at three locations identified as priorities in neighborhood plans, including along Linden Avenue North, South Othello Street and Delmar Drive East. Several other bicycle lane proposals are undergoing feasibility review, with funding available or implementation potentially in 2001. Also slated for 2001, SeaTran will construct a new section of the **Burke-Gilman Trail** from 8th Avenue NW to 11th Avenue NW and build a new pathway on the west side of Lake Union. These facilities will add to the City's 48 miles of bicycle paths and lanes. In the fall, SeaTran conducted a downtown commuter bicycle survey. Between 1992 and 2000, the number of bicyclists entering and leaving the Seattle Central Business District increased by 57 percent, from 1,104 to 1,737.

Bicycle helmet usage increased from about 70 percent in 1992 to over 80 percent.



Significant **pedestrian improvements** were made to the Central Area, the International District, and First Hill through the Jackson Street Multi-Modal Project and the Central Area Gateway Project.

Progress was made in understanding and designating both **Key Pedestrian Streets** and **Green Streets** in various neighborhoods. Council resolutions were adopted to establish work plans in 2001 to reconcile conflicts within existing policies and work closely with neighborhoods on resolving conflicts between existing policies and neighborhood requests.



SeaTran has been working with neighborhood groups to identify requests for specific **pedestrian pushbuttons** that need adjustment, removal or installation.

City Design is leading an interdepartmental team from City Light, SeaTran, SPO and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to help coordinate the many street projects where the normal street design standards may not apply so that opportunities for improvements on Green Streets and Key Pedestrian Streets are not lost as new development occurs.

Most neighborhood plans called out **crosswalks** as a priority. Putting in marked (painted) crosswalks is only one of the possible engineering measures that can provide safer crossings for pedestrians. SeaTran has been working on a draft Director's Rule to establish guidelines for the implementation of new marked crosswalks.



The City recognizes the construction of **sidewalks** is an important issue for citizens, to strengthen the livability of residential areas and neighborhood business districts. Even after extensive analysis in 1997-98, the City still faces questions on how to fund and construct sidewalks when the costs, including related drainage improvements, are high and there are competing

demands on available funds. Funding for new sidewalks or repaired sidewalks is almost non-existent when compared to need, which is estimated to be close to \$1.2 billion citywide. Resources for a **Sidewalk Fund** in 2001 and 2002 have been set aside.

SeaTran has been looking at lower cost alternatives to sidewalks. Because drainage is a high cost, SeaTran has partnered with SPU to explore innovative drainage solutions. This was done at NE Blakely Street between 25th and 29th and will be monitored for effectiveness.

SeaTran has also been exploring alternative sidewalk treatments. In 2000, SeaTran installed an asphalt walkway along the north side of N 87th Street between Dayton Av. N. and Phinney Av. N. SeaTran took advantage of an opportunity to use this as a pilot project for testing a stamped / colored finish on the walkway to simulate the look of a brick sidewalk. The community has been very happy with the results.

Enhancing Neighborhoods

With Neighborhood Plan implementation well underway in 2000, SeaTran was able to implement over \$21 million dollars worth of improvements. This amount included \$6 million for the Galer Street Flyover, \$2.5 million for the South Spokane Street Viaduct improvements, \$1 million on a multimodal project, and almost \$2 million on bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety projects.

SeaTran has three geographic representatives who link SeaTran services with other City departments and the community and help them implement Neighborhood Plans. These representatives help communities develop ideas into feasible projects and identify possible funding opportunities. One such funding source, the **Neighborhood Street Fund / Cumulative Reserve Sub-Fund** is a cooperative effort between SeaTran and the Department of Neighborhoods (DON). In 2000, SeaTran worked with communities

throughout the city to fund \$1.5 million in neighborhood projects through this process. Projects included traffic circles, sidewalk improvements, and street paving.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming

SeaTran uses a variety of tools such as traffic circles, speed watch trailers and other traffic control devices to calm traffic on neighborhood streets. In 2000, 30 traffic circles were constructed through the **Neighborhood Traffic Circle Program**. Studies show that traffic circles reduce collisions by more than 90 percent. Through the **Neighborhood Speed Watch Program**, SeaTran worked with 13 communities and 13 elementary schools to re-educate motorists about safe speeds in the community. SeaTran staff continues to work with communities throughout the city to identify alternative solutions such as speed humps and chicanes to calm mid-block speeds.



Street Enhancements

To respond to community requests for innovative design approaches to address the absence of curbs on many residential streets and the lack of street trees, SeaTran, DON and residents developed a street enhancement plan for **Courtland Place South**. The project, employing dynamic community involvement,

created a partial curb line using concrete wheel stops and installed extensive landscaping and street trees. This project provided tangible benefits for a relatively low investment and served as a model for another location near Cesar Chavez Park. In 2001, City Council has targeted \$100,000 for streetscape improvement projects of this kind throughout Southeast Seattle.

SeaTran staff assisted the community in developing street designs for several other neighborhoods. These corridors include Union Street, N 55th/56th Street, University Avenue, Linden Avenue N, Bell Street, Vine Street, 12th Avenue, Pike and Pine, and several streets in the Ballard Municipal Center. In 2001, SeaTran will be working with DCLU and DON to determine the next steps towards implementation.

Trip Reduction Initiative

SPO and SeaTran implemented two projects under the Trip Reduction Initiative. One is a trip reduction demonstration project at Roosevelt High School, part of Way to Go, and the second is a transportation demand management (TDM) program with businesses in the Wallingford neighborhood.

The purposes of the **Roosevelt Way to Go Project** are to reduce traffic and parking impacts in the surrounding neighborhood and build student and staff awareness of transportation choices and the impacts of driving. Staff from Roosevelt High School and the Seattle School District, along with King County Metro, have participated in development and implementation of the project.

A transportation fair at the high school was held in the spring of 2000 to kick off the project. About 350 students signed pledges to walk, bike, carpool, or ride the bus to school three or more days per week. In follow-up surveys, 38 percent said they changed their travel behavior during the program.

The project started up again in the fall and will continue through the 2000/01 school year. Activities include incentive programs to reward students who walk, bike, bus, or carpool; promotion of subsidized transit passes; and incentives for staff. The project also includes a pilot effort that replaces some yellow bus routes with Metro bus passes. Early indications are that students are using the passes at a higher rate than they used the yellow busses. Some students are incorporating the Way to Go Project into their Service Learning requirements. Plans include development of a transit map for teens and research into transportation-related “factoids” to be posted around the school.



The **Wallingford TDM Project** will extend TDM programs that are primarily promoted to large, Commute Trip Reduction-affected companies to smaller neighborhood businesses. SeaTran has been working with the Wallingford Chamber of Commerce and the neighborhood plan stewardship group to develop the program. They administered a survey to employees in the area and used the responses to identify the types of programs that will encourage employees to use alternatives to driving alone.

In the fall of 2000, SeaTran signed an agreement with the Wallingford Chamber of Commerce to implement the TDM program. The agreement outlines funding and other support that the City will commit to the project, as well as the responsibilities of the Chamber and employers to implement the program. Elements of

the program include subsidized bus passes (costs shared by employers and the City), guaranteed rides home, installation of kiosks and bike racks, a neighborhood fun map (for walking, biking and transit), and promotion of the TDM program at neighborhood events. SeaTran and SPO are also working with the businesses in Wallingford to implement a parking management program to use the street space more effectively to meet the needs of businesses and their customers.

Parking Management

Virtually every city recognized for promoting transit-oriented development and sustaining economic vitality of its urban areas also possesses an effective parking management program. Released in August, City staff completed a city-wide **Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study** that collected parking data in 26 Seattle neighborhoods and examined various parking management tools intended to help a community use parking more effectively. Over the next few years, City staff will be working with various neighborhood groups to see which tools are most appropriately targeted to individual neighborhoods. Staff are looking at many low-cost parking management solutions including shared parking, better signs for off-street parking, parking validation, and signing on-street parking appropriately for those who most need it.

The City Council increased the City's **Parking Enforcement budget**, which had not been increased significantly in fifteen years. Demand for parking enforcement services has increased significantly in the recent past, for several reasons: Neighborhood Plans called for increased citywide enforcement in both business and residential areas; Residential Parking Zone implementation has grown rapidly in the past five years; and the City's recent parking study found that overtime parking is prevalent in many neighborhood business districts. Overtime parking reduces vehicle

turnover and adversely affects the overall conditions for businesses and residents.



The City Council changed the maximum time limit for parking on-street, the so-called 24-hour rule. City transportation policy encourages citizens to leave their cars parked at home and use other transportation choices to get to work. The 24-hour limit provided the opposite incentive to move a parked car on a daily basis. Now cars, other than abandoned “junk” vehicles, can be parked for 72 hours instead of 24 hours.

In late 1999, local media reported that many of Seattle’s **parking meters** were “short-timing” users. The Mayor asked SeaTran to accelerate into two months what had been previously planned for a three-year period. The meter shop worked overtime and weekends to replace, rebuild, or overhaul all 8,700 of the City’s parking meters, and met a February 2000 deadline.

Transportation Planning Studies

The Strategic Planning Office, with assistance from SeaTran, started a Transportation Planning effort with funding from the M&M Initiative. The area surrounding the University of Washington was selected to be studied first. The University area anticipates a high level of development activity (including the University of Washington’s proposed development of 3 million square feet over the next decade), as well as the planning and implementation of several major transportation projects (including Sound Transit and TransLake Washington Study). The study will build on existing planning to provide a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation plan for the University area, and will serve as a blueprint for financing and programming transportation improvements in the area over the next decade. A consultant contract was executed in early 2001, and the study will take approximately 12 months to complete.



Funding for two other studies was requested and approved in the 2001 budget. Like the University area, the South Lake Union area anticipates a high level of development activity and has existing and anticipated traffic problems. The Ballard area south of NW

Market Street provides an opportunity for a different type of transportation study, focusing on major arterials with concentrations of commercial, industrial, and residential uses connecting fast-growing communities to each other and to the downtown core. Both studies started in early 2001.

Freight Mobility

FAST Corridor projects within Seattle include the SR 519 Intermodal Access Project, the South Spokane Street Viaduct Project, and an East Marginal Way Ramp Project. With the completion of the State Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation work and the high emphasis on transportation in the 2001 state legislative session, there is hope that sufficient funding will be secured to move these projects forward.

Improving **SR-519** is the State Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board's highest-ranked project. The funded Phase I will provide grade-separated access between I-90 and the waterfront. The construction contract was advertised in December 2000 and bids were opened in early 2001.

Funding has been obtained to enable the City to proceed with the next phase of the **South Spokane Street** project. This phase will include the utility and surface street relocation and reconstruction required for the new viaduct project. Plans and specifications have been prepared and the contract was advertised in early 2001.

Transportation Funding

In 2000, the Mayor and the City Council continued their commitment to steadily increase the portion of the City's General Fund devoted to transportation purposes, setting General Fund spending for transportation at about \$30 million. This is a threefold

increase in only four years since the \$10 million level of funding in 1997. In 1996, the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee recommended that the City devote at least 4.7% of its General Fund to transportation. The \$30 million number in 2000 represented 6.3% of the City's budget.

At the same time, the City still faces an overall funding shortfall because of the decline of other funding sources, especially revenues from the state gas tax. Because the gas tax is not indexed to inflation and has been spread more thinly across increasing number of newly incorporated cities, Seattle's share has declined. There has been a \$21 million loss in transportation purchasing power since 1992.

As a result of the passage of I-695 in November 1999, SeaTran's proposed 2000 budget was reduced by \$4.6 million, with about half of that amount coming from the paving budget. In addition, reductions were made in the sidewalks, street landscaping, and sign replacement budgets. In June 1999, the \$4.9 million vehicle license fee was released to fund increased paving, implementation of the M&M Initiative, and to solve a SeaTran cash management problem.

SeaTran underwent a Financial Management Audit, and a proposed plan of action was recommended. The Transportation Committee was briefed on the results of Phase I of the audit in early 2001, and SeaTran has begun scoping Phase II, focusing on project management, scope, budget, and TCIP prioritization process.

SeaTran dealt with two serious funding issues in 2000.

First, they developed a funding package that included a series of transfers, obligations, grants, and new sources of money to fill a gap caused by missing the 1999 cash target by \$4.6 million. In addition, overhead expenses and administrative costs were reduced significantly. On a positive note, in working with the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation, SeaTran was initially alleged to have an overhead rate of 36 percent. Through the diligent work of SeaTran's

Resource Management staff, SeaTran's actual overhead rate was identified as 9 percent. This information has been shared with the business community and elected officials, and has inspired greater confidence in the City's efficient use of resources for transportation.

Second, Puget Sound Energy made a decision to restore its own utility cuts, eliminating a significant amount of reimbursable work that funded a large number of Street Maintenance positions. As a result, over 20 temporary workers were released, and 22 Street Maintenance personnel were transferred to other work. Working in partnership with the affected unions, SeaTran avoided layoffs of any full-time regular personnel.

King County

In November 2000, voters in King County approved a 0.2 percent sales tax increase to fund improvements to the Metro transit system. The passage of I-695 and resulting funding losses had threatened Metro with the possibility of cutting back service as much as one-third. With the passage of the sales tax increase, current levels of service will be preserved (and enhanced in places), while also making possible a package of upgrades to the traffic signals to improve transit speed and reliability.

Washington State, I-695, and the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation

The Governor's **Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation** was formed in 1998 to address the State's long-term transportation investment and funding needs. After over two years of work, the Commission issued its final report in November 2000. As a member of the King County Transportation Coalition, the City worked closely with partner agencies on issues of transportation governance and funding, devoting particular attention to efforts to ensure the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations were consistent with the City's priorities.

In a September 2000 comment letter to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation's draft report, the City expressed support for giving regions more opportunities to help determine and address their own transportation needs. New regional transportation mechanisms would help plan, finance, and implement big-budget transportation improvements, as well as more modest but important regional priorities. This approach was reflected in the Commission's final report to the Governor in November.

The Blue Ribbon Commission's Final Report and recommendations make a strong case for bold action to address the state's transportation problems. The report synthesizes many themes that have long been discussed: the importance of maintaining the existing system; the need to balance new road capacity with improved transit service; and the opportunities to reduce transportation demand with programs and incentives to provide alternatives to driving alone. The Early Action Strategy 2001-2007 presents a very detailed plan to help focus the state's work on transportation problems. The Commission also carefully structured revenue options to balance flexible revenue sources that could be used for non-roadway purposes, as well as supporting the establishment of regional transportation authorities. City staff worked very closely with Blue Ribbon staff on a proposal to change the formula to allocate gas tax revenues more equitably to urban areas.

For More Information

Here are a few helpful phone numbers and web links:

Seattle Transportation (SeaTran)

206-684-ROAD | <http://www.cityofseattle.net/td/>

Strategic Planning Office (SPO)

206-684-8080 | <http://www.cityofseattle.net/planning/hometst.htm>

Department of Design, Construction and Land Use (DCLU)

206-684-8600 | <http://www.cityofseattle.net/dclu/>

Department of Neighborhoods (DON)

206-684-0464 | <http://www.cityofseattle.net/don/home.htm>

Mayor Paul Schell's Office

206-684-4000 | <http://www.cityofseattle.net/mayor/>

Seattle City Council

206-684-8888 | <http://www.cityofseattle.net/council/>

King County Metro Transit

206-553-3000 | <http://transit.metrokc.gov/>

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>

Sound Transit

<http://www.soundtransit.org/>

Elevated Transportation Company (ETC)

<http://www.elevated.org/>

Port of Seattle

<http://www.portseattle.org/>

Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

<http://www.psrc.org>

Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation

<http://www.brct.wa.gov/>



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