

## **Summary of the Transportation Strategic Plan Public Involvement Process**

This Appendix outlines the entire scope of the public involvement that the Strategic Planning Office (SPO), Seattle Transportation (SEATLAN) and the City Council Transportation Committee have undertaken on the Transportation Strategic Plan. Our outreach efforts break down into the following categories.

- Distribution of Draft Transportation Strategic Plan and Plan Summary
- Public Forums
- Presentations to Interested Groups
- Internet Access
- Public comment period on Mayor's Recommended Transportation Strategic Plan
- Survey of Seattle citizens

These efforts are discussed in more detail below. But first, a brief reminder about the history of our outreach is also helpful. An earlier version of the Draft Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP) was finalized in June 1997. Because the City had just placed a transportation bond measure on the November 1997 ballot, public involvement on the Plan was postponed until after the election; an active public involvement process could have been construed as supporting the bond measure. However, copies of an abridged Draft Plan were mailed to neighborhood planning members in July. In addition, a full copy of the Draft Transportation Strategic Plan was available upon request.

The official Public Review Draft of the Draft Transportation Strategic Plan was released on March 3, 1998 with public involvement scheduled through the end of May 1998.

### ***Distribution of Draft Plan and Plan Summary***

The Executive distributed over 1,500 Draft Plans and thousands of summaries in response to requests, as part of presentations, and through many City government offices, other government agencies, and outside organizations. Examples include neighborhood planning meetings, the Seattle Public Libraries, Neighborhood Service Centers, over 40 different community meetings, and the Seattle Planning and Design Commissions.

### ***Public Forums***

The Executive held six public forums on the Plan at locations around the city in Ballard, Lake City, Capitol Hill, Columbia City, West Seattle, and Downtown Seattle.

### ***Presentations to Interested Groups***

In addition to holding the Public Forums, the City made presentations to interested organizations to reduce the burden on people having to come to us to comment on the Draft Plan. City staff made presentations to over 25 organizations around the city.

### ***Internet Access***

The entire Draft Transportation Strategic Plan and the survey were available to download from the SEATRAN web page. The address is [www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/seattle/td/tsp/strategy.htm](http://www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/seattle/td/tsp/strategy.htm). People could also comment electronically at [TSP.comment@ci.seattle.wa.us](mailto:TSP.comment@ci.seattle.wa.us).

### ***Incorporating Public Comments***

In addition to testimony received at the Public Forums or other presentations to interest groups, the Executive received over a hundred written and e-mail comments from individuals and organizations.

The public comments were organized in a matrix by TSP chapter and strategy. Staff from SPO, SEATRAN, the Department of Construction and Land Use, and other involved departments studied the comments thoroughly to develop appropriate changes in the Plan. The Mayor's Recommended TSP changed substantially from the Public Review Draft, in response to comments and suggestions. Due to the large number of comments received, the Executive is not responding directly to everyone who submitted comments.

### ***City Council Public Comment Period***

The City Council Transportation Committee held two public hearings on the Mayor's Recommended TSP on September 1 and 3, 1998 and also accepted written comments on the plan. These comments were incorporated into the adopted TSP.

### ***Survey of Seattle Citizens***

The eight-page Summary of the Draft Transportation Strategic Plan highlighted the major issues and strategies in the longer Draft Plan. The Summary's main purpose was to notify and educate the general public about transportation problems and solutions in the TSP. The Summary also contained a survey with fourteen questions to elicit feedback on the policies in the Draft Plan.

The Summary and Survey were mailed to a random sample of 36,000 registered voters living in Seattle. The survey used a business reply mail permit so that people could return it without postage. The Survey and Summary were mailed out during the third week of May 1998.

In an effort to increase survey response, we contracted with a consulting firm to phone a subset of people that received the Plan Summary and Survey. We reached about 5,000 people by phone with a short reminder to mail back the survey.

In total, we received back about 3,360 survey responses out of the 36,000 surveys mailed out, a return rate of almost ten percent. This response is completely remarkable for a voluntary survey.

The survey is also validated by its consistency with Census data for travel behavior from the 1990 Census. The Survey asked people to give the most common or typical transportation mode to work or school. The categories were SOV, Carpool/ Vanpool, Bus/ Train, Bike, Walk, and Other. The mode split results are presented here. Of the 2,845 respondents, 53 percent take SOV, 28 percent use Bus/ Train, 8 percent use Carpool/ Vanpool, 6 percent use walking, and 5 percent use Biking. These numbers are consistent with 1990 Census data for transportation mode splits for work trips.

The Survey is reproduced on the next page. Most of the questions offered six potential responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know. The questions were

intended to gauge people's response to major TSP issues, and whether people agreed or disagreed with the following:

- A general statement about the emphasis in the City's Comprehensive Plan on transit, walking, biking, and other non-SOV modes versus accommodating more SOV trips.
- Statements supporting 1. traffic signalization improvements, 2. bicycle, 3. pedestrians, and 4. transit facilities, 5. more parking in neighborhood commercial areas, and 6. moving freight and goods by rail and truck.
- A statement about raising taxes to pay for transportation improvements.
- People were asked to distribute \$100 among a list of transportation programs: maintenance and operations of city streets, pedestrian improvements, bicycle facilities, public transit improvements, transportation demand management programs, neighborhood transportation improvements, and truck and rail freight projects.

Most of the questions also provided trade-offs, so that people could put the question in the larger context of the City's transportation decision-making process.

### ***Data Results***

This section describes the survey findings. For Questions 1-8, respondents answered to what degree they agreed with the statement in a range from 5 (Strongly Agreed) to 1 (Strongly Disagreed) and Zero (Don't Know). Note that not all survey respondents answered all the questions, so the total number of responses for each question is given. Pie charts illustrating the results are presented here.

*Question 1 stated:* The City of Seattle should make Seattle a safer and more convenient place to ride the bus, walk, or otherwise get around, rather than accommodating single-occupant automobile growth.

Of the 3,290 respondents to this question, 85 percent strongly agreed and agreed with the statement. Only 8 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed. The average answer was 4.4.

*Question 2 stated:* The City should install traffic signal "synchronizing" systems that increase traffic flow on arterial streets, even if this might increase the time it takes for pedestrians to cross those streets.

Of the 3,261 respondents to this question, 37 percent strongly agreed, 33 percent agreed, and 17 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed. The average response was 3.8.

*Question 3 stated:* The City should put in improvements that make Seattle streets safer and more convenient for pedestrians (with measures such as installing pedestrian curb bulbs), even if they might slow vehicle traffic.

Of the 3,205 respondents, 26 percent strongly agreed, 28 percent agreed, and 21 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed. The average response was 3.5.

*Question 4 stated:* The City should expand the City's bicycle network in order to encourage more people to bike.

Of the 3,288 respondents, 40 percent strongly agreed, 26 percent agreed, and 16 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed. The average response was 3.8.

*Question 5 stated:* The City should push for improvements that make existing and new transit services faster and more reliable, even if these improvements might slow other vehicles.

Of the 3,272 respondents, 43 percent strongly agreed, 33 percent agreed, and 10 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed. The average answer was 4.1.

*Question 6 stated:* Neighborhood commercial areas need parking policies that provide additional parking, even if that might bring more traffic congestion to the area.

Of the 3,135 respondents, only 9 percent strongly agreed, 26 percent agreed, 26 percent was neutral, 26 percent disagreed and 13 percent strongly disagreed. The average answer was 2.9.

Questions 6, 7, and 8 were the only ones with “significant” agree, neutral, and disagree responses. Responses to most of the other questions leaned strongly towards the strongly agree and agree categories.

*Question 7 stated:* The City should fund transportation projects that promote truck and rail access to the city’s ports and industrial areas, even if the projects tend to be expensive.

Of the 3,026 respondents, 15 percent strongly agreed, 29 percent agreed, 31 percent were neutral, and 25 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed. The average answer was 3.2.

*Question 8 stated:* The City should increase taxes to fund transportation improvements.

Of the 3,166 respondents, 17 percent strongly agreed, 34 percent agreed, 23 percent were neutral, and 26 percent evenly strongly disagreed or disagreed. The average response was 3.8.

*Question 9 stated:* There are several ways the City can increase transportation revenues. All funds would be dedicated to transportation. Please rank the following three options in order of your personal preference (1 = highest preference: Local option county-level gas tax, employee parking tax, and a property tax increase.

The average answers for the gas tax, the parking tax, and the property tax were: 1.5, 1.8, and 2.6. The gasoline tax received the most #1 rankings, the parking tax received the most #2 rankings, and the property tax, by far, received the most #3 rankings.

*Question 10 stated:* If you had one hundred dollars, how would you spend it along these categories?

This question asked respondents to vote with dollars for eight transportation categories, with the following average responses: Maintenance and Operations and Public Transit Improvements received the two highest rankings at \$27 each. Pedestrian Improvements, Bicycle Improvements, Transportation Demand Management, and Neighborhoods received votes of \$10 or \$9. Freight Mobility received \$6. The Other category, where people wrote in a wide variety of transportation and non-transportation related programs, received \$2.

### ***Analysis by Mode Choice***

The Survey asked people to give the most common or typical transportation mode to work or school. The categories were SOV, Carpool/ Vanpool, Bus/ Train, Bike, Walk, and Other. The

mode split data can be compared to the Survey Questions 1-9 described above using cross-tabulation analysis. Particularly interesting is whether people that typically drive alone agreed with supporting alternative transportation mode choices.

*Question 1:* Concerning support for non-SOV modes over accommodating automobiles, all of the mode choices selected between Agree or Strongly Agree on average. People that drive alone (SOV) to work agreed to this statement (4.12 average).

*Question 2:* About synchronizing traffic signals, all of the modes ranged from Agree to Neutral. SOV (4.07 average) and Carpool/ Vanpool users were more likely to support synchronizing lights than non-auto modes, especially bicyclists.

*Question 3:* Concerning making improvements for pedestrians, all of the modes ranged from Agree to Neutral. The SOV (3.31 average) and carpool/ vanpool (3.35 average) users were less likely to support the pedestrian improvements, compared to bicyclists (4.16 average) and walkers (3.81 average).

*Question 4:* About whether the City should expand the City's bicycle network, all of the modes ranged from Strongly Agree to Agree. The carpool/ vanpool (3.77 average) and SOV (3.72 average) users were less likely to support bicycle improvements, compared to bicyclists (4.89 average) and pedestrians and transit users.

*Question 5:* On whether the City should push for improvements to promote transit, all of the modes ranged from Strongly Agree to Agree. Those people who bike, bus and walk all strongly agreed and SOV and carpool/vanpool users agreed.

*Question 6:* On whether neighborhood commercial areas need parking policies that provide additional parking, all of the modes ranged from Neutral to Disagree. SOV users were neutral (3.01 average) and the other modes disagreed, especially bicyclists (2.36 average).

*Question 7:* About whether the City should fund freight mobility transportation projects, all the modes were close to one another around Neutral.

*Question 8:* On whether the City should increase taxes to fund transportation improvements, all the modes ranged from Agree to Neutral. Bicyclists had the highest average (3.84) but the other modes were close to Neutral.

*Question 9:* Respondents were asked to rank the three transportation tax measures in order of preference and the responses were similar across modes.

Due to the question's complexity, Question 10 was not analyzed by travel mode choice.

### ***Analysis by Age and Sex***

Survey respondents were asked their age (Question 12) within the following categories: Under 18, 19-34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65 and over. Note that the Survey was sent to registered Seattle voters. The respondents age was closely split between most adult categories.

Survey respondents were asked their sex: Male or Female. The numbers were evenly divided between the two.

## *Conclusions*

Overall, the survey results appear to support the policies found in the Transportation Strategic Plan, the City's Comprehensive Plan, and other City transportation policies and programs.

The Transportation Strategic Plan contains a strong commitment to “making Seattle a safer and more convenient place to ride the bus, walk, or otherwise get around,” rather than accommodating the single-occupant automobile. This view was expressed by 85 percent of the survey respondents. The TSP contains a large number of strategies that support walking, bicycling, public transit, and parking that are intended to turn these Comprehensive Plan goals into reality. The TSP also responds to survey respondents' interest in installing traffic signal synchronizing systems that more efficiently control arterial traffic flow.

Several survey questions asked about how the City should finance transportation programs and projects. Survey respondents strongly endorsed transportation user fees such as a gas tax and parking tax over property taxes. These preferences are reflected in the TSP Funding chapter.