

<p><b>TESTIMONY POINTS FOR COUNCIL MEMBER JEANNE BURBIDGE BEFORE THE RTID EXECUTIVE BOARD THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2004</b></p>
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FW City  
Hall

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and fellow Board members. I am Jeanne Burbidge, a Federal Way City Council Member. I am speaking on the City's behalf this morning, but I also serve on the state's Transportation Improvement Board and the South County Area Transportation Board. I am here today to urge you to do two things:

- 1) Move forward toward a Fall 2004 ballot; and
- 2) Construct a package that is sized to meaningfully deliver and complete projects

On the issue of moving forward toward a fall ballot measure, I can certainly appreciate the concerns of those who wish the RTID statute had a little more of this, or a little less of that, or could be changed just so. Fact is, we in Federal Way had our own ideas about how best to construct an RTID statute when the law was crafted in 2002 – and we didn't get everything we wanted.

But there comes a time when we as public officials have to do the very best we can with the tools we have, and reach as much consensus as we can, and *lead*, and tell the public about important investments that must be made. We feel that must be done with RTID – and that we should take a package to the fall ballot.

The RTID package we are working with is designed to address transportation problems, congestion relief, new capacity, and improved mobility that we have put off for far too long. Our state has really made only one significant investment in the state's transportation system in the last 15 years, and for all the adulation we gave to the Nickel Package, we knew it was only a small step and a start-up step towards the real needs.

We now have a package that invests in the biggest transportation challenges facing this Central Puget Sound region, whether they be on Interstate 5, Interstate 405, the 520 bridge, the Viaduct, or State Route 167. It is a package that seeks to blend roads and transit – and I should add that we see value in the RTID-Sound Transit marriage that's being contemplated. It is a package that *builds* things. It is a package that would be transparent to the public – they know exactly what they would be getting and what they would be asked to pay for. And it is accountable to the public, with the most scrutiny over costs – and a pledge to stay within certain cost estimates – that we have ever had.

To close on this issue, the alternative doesn't work for us. The alternative is to wait, and to do nothing. We can try and perfect the RTID statute some more. We can watch project costs go up some more. We can watch congestion and air pollution backslide some more. None of those things feel very appealing to us.

I would like to add one more point, and that is the issue of delivering a meaningful package to the public that delivers something real. In the City of Federal Way and

within our SCATBd group, we do not believe it is our job to tell you which revenue source you should select and which one you shouldn't. *There is a need that for balance in projects among areas - so I remind that South King County comprises 37% of King County's population.* But we have been emphatic about funding the RTID package at a level that will deliver projects, and complete corridors, and ensure the public that it is buying results. And that's why I urge you to ensure that if you decide to drop the 2.8-cent local option gas tax out of this package - which is your prerogative - that you are diligent in ensuring that the overall funding level you had heading into today is not compromised. *I also point out that the gas tax is a user fee.*

We don't have to look very far in this region and in this state for warning flags on this issue. I count myself as a supporter of Sound Transit, but there is simply no getting around the fact that the No. 1 criticism of Sound Transit is that it shrunk its pricetag enough to appeal to voters, and then over-promised and under-delivered. We can debate the Sound Transit issue for many hours, but that's been the biggest knock on the agency. Similarly with Referendum 51 - a measure I personally supported - there was withering criticism of it for setting aside funding for a whole slew of projects -- just not enough funding to *deliver* them.

We can't afford to repeat those mistakes. We have too many critical transportation projects THROUGHOUT our region that need attention, and we cannot nickel-and-dime them and tell voters they are complete, or that they make a difference, if in fact they do not. A perfect example is the Triangle interchange of I-5, State Route 18, and State Route 161 cutting through the heart of my community. You've heard from me before on this awful congestion mess, the 5<sup>th</sup>-most congested interchange in the State of Washington and a critical artery for Port of Tacoma-bound freight. It's a \$200 million project - and the No. 1 priority of our community, city officials and business leaders is to see it on the RTID list and to get it done. To compromise it by downsizing the overall funding level of the RTID package *does* the project - and most importantly, the public who depends on seeing it truly *fixed* - a ~~grave~~ <sup>grave</sup> disservice.

I'll close here, thank you for your time and attention to these issues, and make myself available for any questions you may have.