

Diaz, Julio (UPO)

From: John Niles [NilesGT@compuserve.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 30, 2004 6:13 PM
To: Hon. Gary Nelson
Cc: Hon. Julia Patterson; Hon. Jim Horn; MacDonald, Doug; Hon. Rob McKenna; Lund, Kjristine; Drewel, Bob; Eli Cooper; Hon. Edward Murray
Subject: Input from existing PSRC planning on RTID priorities (see attached one page pdf)



Transit&Roads(byNiles).pdf

Dear Councilman Nelson:

Stimulated by Senator Jim Horn's commentary about the RTID in the Times today, I want here to share with you a brief analysis extending his thinking, attached in one page, titled "Puget Sound Highways are Critical Infrastructure for Transit and Carpools (A working paper from John Niles, Research Associate, Mineta Transportation Institute, March 1, 2004)."

This paper documents that PSRC planning data from the Destination 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan support the importance of regional highways to our existing and future mass transit. The attached document uses screenline data from the PSRC computer models, provided through the good offices of Eli Cooper in PSRC. All interpretation and conclusions are my own.

(Attn Ms. Lund: Please consider the attached as a "public comment" for distribution to all RTID leaders and for posting on the RTID web.)

The data reveal clearly that transit supporters such as myself should be delighted with an RTID emphasis on road improvements, because of the vital support that roads provide to the largest components of transit and other HOV modes. Here is the main message, excerpted from the attached document:

The officially approved PSRC 2010 Action Strategy assumes light rail completion from Northgate to South 200th in SeaTac. The results of this Strategy [from Destination 2030, the PSRC Metropolitan Transportation Plan] show that even with trains in operation, the carpool and bus HOV modes in 2010 are forecast to move more than ten times the number of peak period travelers in the I-5 corridor than rail transit will carry. The mode share of bus transit is twice the mode share of rail transit.... [T]he 2010 peak period mode share for rail [in north-south rail corridors] calculates to a 4 percent average, while the bus mode share comes in at 9 percent and the carpool share at 36 percent. These percentages suggest that funding for the preservation and upgrading of roadways in the RTID package is critical to the importance of personal travel in modes other than SOV.

In the above, I am only describing corridors where trains are contemplated in the next decade. Many other corridors are going to be served only by non-rail transit that shares the highways with other vehicles.

Even the Alaska Way Viaduct now carries about 440 bus trips per day. The Initial Segment of Link Light Rail, in comparison, is planned to carry 272 trains per day in 2009.

So with Sound Transit already having plenty of unused taxing authority to build trains, I strongly urge RTID leaders to follow Rep Horn's suggestion to keep RTID focused on roads, or as I like to call them, mass transit guideways shared with SOV and freight traffic. Managed highways via intelligent T-Ops (traffic operations management) practices, such as HOT lanes and rapid incident clearance, with special HOV bypass ramps for BRT

to get around points of congestion, are Puget Sound's main strategy for world class transit and transportation, providing a 45% HOV mode share.

I'm always available to answer any questions you may have; see contact points below.

With appreciation for your service,

Respectfully,

John Niles

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