Joint Transportation Committee
January 5, 2010
Mayor Lewis's Comments

Good morning, For the Record, my name is Pete Lewis and I am the Mayor of Auburn. I am just starting my third term as Mayor; I am also Immediate Past President of the Suburban Cities Association, Founder of Valley Cities Mayors and newly elected to the Puget Sound Regional Council Operations Committee.

Auburn is a 118 year old community of approximately 68,000 people located in the Green River Valley halfway between Seattle and Tacoma along SR 167. Auburn is located in that area from Fife to Tukwila which is the 4th largest manufacturing and warehousing area in the nation.

So let's just say I work a lot on local government transportation needs!

<u>City wide overview:</u> There are several statistics about traffic in cities worth noting:

1. City infrastructure Statewide, comprises approximately 17,000 centerlines miles of the state transportation system. (Over 83,000 total centerline miles in the state). The JTC report illustrates how reliant State revenues are on Motor Fuel taxes at 38% - at the City level in 2007 the motor fuel tax made up only 7% of a typical city transportation budget. This illustrates how cities have already become reliant upon local funding sources.

2. Bringing it closer to home, Auburn's 2009 review of our City's system concluded:

   a. The cost to bring all non - freight city streets up to a PCI of 70 would cost $4.6M per year over a 10 year period, to put that in perspective that would be about 10% of the City's General Fund budget. There is no other source of funds for us for preservation. Preservation off of the freeway system has never been a state goal and the process that develops the scoring for road projects must change to reflect the priority of preservation.

b. In addition the cost to bring all future freight and transit routes up to truck standards will require an additional $4M per year over a 10-year period.

c. The JTC Study stated that City traffic comprises about 1/4th of the traffic carried in the state; cities do not receive a proportionate share of state revenues.

d. Our city transportation system is growing-Mostly due to annexations. For Auburn our idea of "new capacity" frequently means **upgrading county & State roads** that have been annexed into cities which were never constructed to carry modern freight loads. To accomplish this Auburn needs a new source of funding realizing that the gas tax will continue to diminish while our needs are growing.

<u>I would also like to share a few comments on the report and how it relates to future city investment strategies/needs:</u>

As cities look at future funding investment strategies we tend to think in three broad categories:

1. **Continue direct distribution of transportation revenues and we do appreciate recognition of this in the report, however:**

    a. It's vital for the state to continue to include locals as a part of any future statewide transportation revenues. For cities over 25,000 in population in particular, state highways that serve as "Main Street" are largely improved through local funds or grant funds.

    b. Since the state continues to emphasize "in-filling" and multi-modal choices, reducing our carbon footprint, etc., there is an expectation on behalf of cities to receive direct state funding support.

2. **Grant Assistance**—many transportation projects simply cannot be fully funded locally. Cities with a small tax base need state assistance. Many projects are regional in nature.

Action 1 (Grant funding) appears to recognize this and is appreciated. For Auburn's M Street Grade separation Project – a project that benefits the region by serving the local ports' freight needs, the City needs to raise some $22.4 M to complete this project before BNSF expands Stampede Pass. Regional projects of this nature continue to warrant the need for grant assistance from FMSIB and TIB.

3. **Local Tools** –Auburn strongly supports the report for **Action 2 (Street Maintenance Utility), and Action 3 (TBD flexibility).** With regards to the Street Maintenance Utility:

    a. **It could be enacted in 2010 and immediately provide cities such as Auburn a bondable revenue source that can raise over a period of 10 years the level of resources that Auburn needs to fulfill its growth demands for infrastructure maintenance.**

    b. **And the Street Maintenance Utility is probably the most equitable and reliable way to spread transportation costs among the various classes of system users.**

In closing, as the Mayor of a growing Urban Center I would like to leave you with several General comments about future investments strategies:

1. **Capacity vs. Preservation:** Cities like Auburn that have inherited from the State and the County roads that were originally built in the early 1900's. These roads were never built to a pavement standard to withstand modern freight loads and now are in a failing condition, many of them requiring major rebuild to sustain modern freight loads. When the state and federal government thinks about future investment and increased demands on our system, the traditional thinking of "capacity" may need to change. The total transportation network is not likely to change much-most changes will occur in terms of ownership between city streets and county roads. The description of "new capacity" might need to be presented as simply meeting safety standards or urban standards. Auburn is concerned that if we cannot find the funding to rebuild our existing routes used by freight, we may lose capacity that for lack of funding could have otherwise been salvaged.

2. **NON-Gas Tax funding will be vital.** As I just noted, the transportation network won't grow much over the next 20 years and preservation of the system will need to take on an increased awareness as a priority. **Use** of that same network will be overwhelming. If the state wants to ensure economically vital freight movement and statewide travel, state assistance for local and regional freight movement will be necessary. Because we will always have limited revenues, I'm not suggesting a blanket approach of: "Fund transit" "Fund non-motorized." Instead, think about state capital assistance that focuses funds on critical infrastructure essential to assure our transportation system can meet economic development needs. PSRC is already moving in that direction. Auburn is an Urban Center. We have accepted the growth assignments of PSRC with the assumption that the burdens of providing for larger populations would come with regional and state funds to help provide the transportation infrastructure needed to support the anticipated growth.

   Keep in mind that Cities like Auburn have annexed considerable miles of county roads that are very deficient in infrastructure needed to support transit routes. To make the switch to transit Auburn needs to invest in our older routes that can carry the heavy loads of metro buses and provide turning radii for buses to maneuver as well as sidewalks for pedestrians to safely travel to transit stops. To make this transition to accommodate future growth Auburn does need help from the State to provide maintenance and preservation funds. Please help us identify the new revenue sources we need to restore our deteriorating infrastructure and to remain competitive in supporting regional transportation needs.

Portrait of Valley Cities Industrial Center:

In 2007 the nine Valley cities, from Tukwila to Fife, performed a survey of pavement conditions using conventional methods to determine the **PCI (Pavement Condition Index)** of their arterials, population, zoning for commercial & industrial development and the state portion of Sales Tax generated within the industrial center that accounts for more than 65 percent of all industrial, distribution and warehousing in the Puget Sound Region. Combined the Center functions as what has become known as the Valley Cities Distribution Hub, an important and highly effective economic engine for the Puget Sound Region and the entire state of Washington. Currently, the Valley cities employ more than 85,000 people, have a population of over 250,000 and generate over $200 million in sales tax for the State. There are more than 12,400 acres of industrial lands, 164 miles of truck routes and 8,432 acres of commercial land in this economic region. The survey results are shown in a one page handout, (see Overhead monitor). The survey showed that for just our regionally significant arterials – those roads that support the Ports of Tacoma and Seattle and the 2nd largest regional warehouse center on the west cost, 4th largest in the nation, the combined deficit shared by Valley Cities for rebuilding and preserving these critical freight routes was **$ 95,731,733.** This level of funding is well beyond our local funding authorities and resources.

Clearly, if we are to continue to provide transportation services to support this critical part of the regions economy, the Cities need the Legislature to work with the Ports and the business community to find a way to provide a reliable source of revenues so that the cities can bond the work to rebuild these key arterials to truck standards to promote economic development.

TOTAL CENTERLINE DISTANCE OF VALLEY CITIES' REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ROUTES

OF THE TOTAL 253.28 MI THE FOLLOWING PORTIONS WERE FOUND TO BE IN THE FOLLOWING CONDITION:

Miles	Condition	PCI Rating	PRESERVATION NEEDS
163.07 MI	GOOD	70-100	Minor repairs
35.55 MI	FAIR	50-69	Thick overlay
36.24 MI	POOR	25-49	Deep Patching & Thick Overlay
18.13 MI	VERY POOR	0-24	Failure Rebuild base and Pavement

Jurisdiction	**ESTIMATED DEFERRED MAINTENANCE COST (2007$)**	**Centerline Miles of Deferred Maintenance**
ALGONA	$ 2,000,000	2.50 MI
AUBURN	$ 29,000,000	21.70 MI
FIFE	$ 5,200,000	12.20 MI
KENT	$ 10,000,000	17.00 MI
PACIFIC	$ 20,300,000	3.60 MI
PUYALLUP	$ 5,132,733	21.31 MI
RENTON	$ 16,449,000	65.00 MI
SUMNER	$ 2,700,000	10.55 MI
TUKWILA	$ 4,950,000	11.70 MI
TOTALS	**$ 95,731,733.**	