

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Sonny Putter. I am a former Mayor and Councilmember for the City of Newcastle, Washington and a former member of the Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Board.

I want to make four quick points about staff's recommended funding policies:

1. The policy needs to explicitly state that substantial transit fare increases are a viable funding strategy. The ORCA LIFT program for low income riders was adopted by King County Metro Transit and may be addressed tomorrow system-wide by Sound Transit. This innovation by the two largest providers of transit in the region will give low income riders a great option to keep their riding costs low. King County riders average over \$70,000 per year in household income. Most transit riders can afford to pay much higher user fees for riding transit, just like those much higher user fees proposed for drivers through tolling and road usage charges.

2. The Draft Funding Recommendations assume that local jurisdictions will fully enact unused, existing transportation revenue authority in the short term. This is an unwarranted assumption. Many local jurisdictions have had the opportunity but have not used their existing revenue authority. The region needs to regionalize its existing revenue authority in one body, so that projects are planned, prioritized, funded and managed with direct accountability for outcomes. We cannot expect that over 100 separate governments in the four-county region will each take action to raise revenues. For many local jurisdictions, the political lift to raise revenues has been just too heavy! The Rice-Stanton Commission in 2006 saw this reality all too clearly.

3. The region's funding policy needs to provide for direct voter accountability on the decision-makers, not just on proposed project lists. We should be able to hold regional transportation decision-makers directly accountable for their transportation decisions at the ballot box. Direct accountability to the voters should be an explicit policy recommendation.

Making the Puget Sound Regional Council, which is a federated and appointed board, the regional decision-making body will not work and it will not be publicly accepted. I say this after having been a member of the Puget Sound Regional Council's Executive Board for 8 years.

4. Finally, the policy needs to de-emphasize the use of sales tax as a short term solution. The sales tax is among the most regressive ways of funding transportation. We drivers and transit riders need to take greater and direct personal responsibility for the transportation costs that we incur. Please don't put the burden of funding transportation on those least able to do so through regressive general taxes like the sales tax.

Thank you.

Sonny Putter