

**City of Bellevue Interest Statement
I-90 Two-Way Transit Operations**

April 19, 1999

The City will support options for the I-90 bridge that maintain general purpose capacity and freight mobility and that provide for 24 hour two-way transit and HOV operations.

Sustained economic vitality requires East King County and the Puget Sound region as a whole to maintain and expand its capacity for moving people and goods. Eastbound and westbound traffic flows across Lake Washington are approaching equilibrium. The I-90 bridge is a critical link between the City of Seattle and the rapidly growing economic centers on the Eastside, and it must continue to accommodate heavy freight movement, transit/HOV trips and general purpose traffic. Finally, the bridge must provide two-way transit and HOV capacity to serve users commuting both from Seattle to the high job growth areas of East King County and from the Eastside to the major job centers in the City of Seattle.

Any decision relative to the future of the I-90 center roadway should endeavor to improve regional travel times and ensure enhanced linkages between key park and rides and freeways.

The state and region have invested and will continue to invest significant resources in constructing a regional HOV system, including HOV lanes and direct access ramps that provide viable travel options for those choosing not to drive alone. Such a system is partially in place between the Cities of Seattle and Bellevue along I-90 and I-405, with WSDOT's ongoing design of the I-90/I-405 interchange and Sound Transit's work on the I-405 Downtown Bellevue Access Project. Cost-effective operational decisions for the I-90 center roadway must fit well with these other improvements and capitalize on work done to date.

Capital improvements and/or operational changes to the I-90 bridge should maintain flexibility for expansion of Sound Transit's light rail service.

The I-90 Steering Committee's recommendation to the State Transportation Commission will precede any regional decision about extending light rail service to the Eastside. At the same time, the current Trans-Lake Washington Study will be evaluating alternatives for cross-lake travel, some of which may involve potential rail alignments on one or both bridges. To the extent possible, changes to the I-90 bridge should not presume a rail alignment decision. Such a decision needs to be made within the context of an Eastside and regional transportation vision.

Seek design solutions that maintain safety standards appropriate to the effective functioning of the I-90 bridge.

As with any major transportation corridor, traffic "accidents" or "incidents" cause significant delay in traffic. As noted by the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, transportation gridlock can lead all too soon to economic gridlock. The City urges WSDOT to design improvements to the I-90 center roadway in such a way as to quickly and safely address handling vehicle break-downs to avoid traffic backups.