

Comment Entered on Regional Transit Task Force Web Site

5/20/10

I'm concerned about the potential cuts to trolley busses. These are an important aspect of making dense urban areas more livable, from a standpoint of noise, air quality, environmental equity, and sustainability.

1. Noise and air quality are negatively impacted by diesel fueled busses.
2. Many of the trolley bus routes run through hilly areas, where diesel emissions and noise would have a larger impact on adjacent residents.
3. In my neighborhood (Central District), I know that many of the people living along the trolley bus routes are lower income. Lower income children are shown to be at higher risk of asthma. Diesel emissions are directly linked to increase in rates of asthma. (one study is available at <http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/167/5/505>) Replacing trolley busses with diesel busses in these areas would clearly negatively impact environmental equity for families living along these bus lines.
4. King County has been a national leader in documenting and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It's clear that electric trolleys result in better air quality and reduced carbon footprints. Replacing electric trolleys with diesel powered busses seems to be in direct contradiction with these efforts.

When considering whether to replace electric trolleys with diesel busses, King County should consider all the costs, not just immediate fuel costs. Consider emissions of each type of bus, lifespan of the busses, carbon footprint of the cost of replacing functioning busses with new busses, etc. All externalities (environmental equity, etc.) should be considered.

Please also consider how the change from electric trolleys to diesel busses will conflict with existing King County policies, goals, and work plans:

- *From the adopted 2008 King County Comprehensive Plan, Policy T-334:* "T-334 Through its own actions and through regional partnerships, King County will promote strategies to reduce emissions from the transportation sector. The county will promote new vehicle technologies and fuels and strategies to reduce emissions, including land use changes, provision of transit, promotion of nonmotorized travel, and other actions to reduce vehicle travel."
- *Comp Plan policy T-335:* "T-335 King County will be a leader in the use of transportation fuels and technologies that reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions from its fleets by buying hybrid-electric, electric and other clean transportation technologies; using clean fuels in its fleets; implementing demonstration projects that use alternative fuels; purchasing locally produced energy sources when practical; seeking local and federal support to expand the use of alternative fuels; and promoting best practices, innovations, trends and developments in transportation fuels and technologies."
- *From the 2009 King County Climate report, page 7:* "In King County, the primary sources of greenhouse gas emissions are gasoline and diesel used for transportation; secondary sources are natural gas and oil used for heating buildings....For King County government

operations, the largest source of emissions is Metro bus fuel, followed by landfill emissions, electricity for wastewater plants, and employee vehicles."

- 2010 planned mitigation, from the same document, page 17:
 - Expand the clean electric trolley network by extending Route 36.
 - Replace 93 old 40-foot buses with new hybrid diesel-electric vehicles that are 30 percent more efficient
 - Work on technology and infrastructure solutions that improve vehicle flow and reduce vehicle emissions"
- *From the Conclusion of the same document, page 19:* "King County will continue working toward its adopted goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent below 2007 levels by 2050...In these difficult economic times, the argument might be made that addressing climate change should not be a priority. However, many of the county's climate response initiatives—such as switching to hybrid buses and installing LED traffic signals—have saved the government money while reducing emissions."

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Shelley Bolser, Zip code: 98122