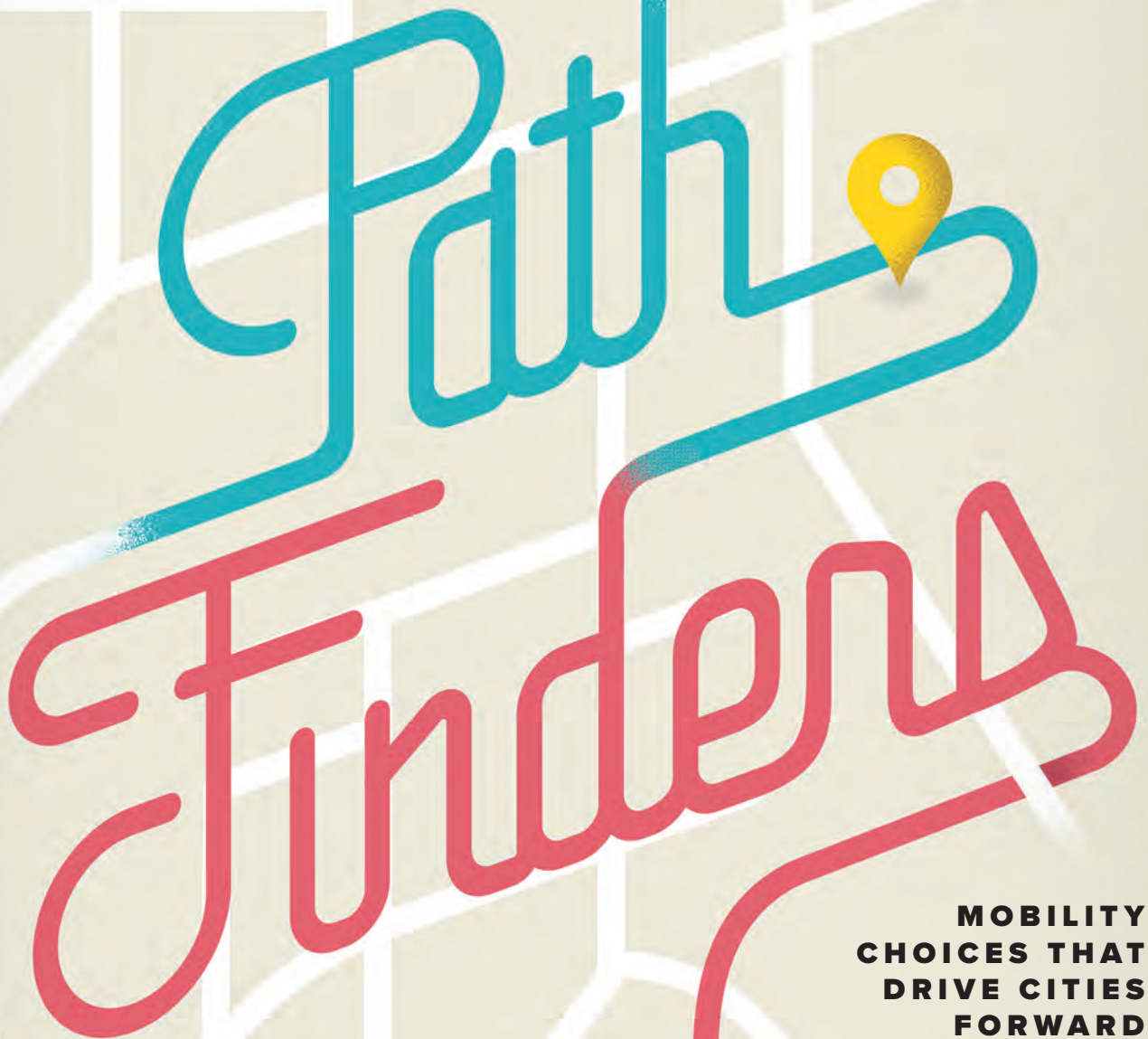


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Transportation infrastructure is the largest investment we make in our communities, and it affects every aspect of our daily lives. Many cities

are experiencing the challenges of addressing new development, redevelopment, and maintenance of aging infrastructure, combined with finding sustainable funding. We must also balance the community's desire to embrace new technology and transportation innovations with respect for our history and heritage.

Many of us have had great success through strong partnerships and community visioning, aligning the priorities of transit, public safety, schools, businesses, and everyday citizens. Our transportation plans, planning documents, and zoning changes are helping to implement that vision, for example through mixed-use development or by connecting neighborhoods via multimodal options, like bike and walking paths.

Another exciting challenge is staying abreast of emerging technologies and anticipating what those changes will bring. We are already incorporating plans for electric vehicle charging stations and are starting to bring autonomous vehicles and their impacts into the conversation.

While our visioning and planning efforts are robust, nothing can be undertaken unless we can pay for it. With rising costs and the unpredictability of some

funding sources, such as state and federal grants, many cities have to face policy decisions such as increasing fees or creating new revenue sources in order to meet the vision. Without new revenue, funding gaps require us to make really tough choices among lowering maintenance standards, dedicating more general city funds to transportation maintenance (which means reducing spending on other priorities), and reducing or postponing future projects.

Given the magnitude of infrastructure investment, the necessary planning efforts, and the future impacts on the vibrancy of our cities, we need to continually engage our communities on our transportation projects and future needs. They will be affected, whether we can fully implement their vision or transportation plans cannot be fully funded. Handled thoughtfully, these ongoing transportation conversations—like good transportation projects themselves—can help bring our communities together.

Sincerely,



Don Britain
Mayor, Kennewick

Cityvision

1/2.19

1 WELCOME NOTE

5 CITYBEAT

Our many-sided look at the transportation improvement process: identifying a problem, finding the right solution, helping the public navigate change. And in our popular **NOTED** feature, we assess the impact of Transportation Benefit Districts.

11 CITYSCOPE

Bremerton Mayor Greg Wheeler on why sidewalks are as important as roads for the work of a city's streets department

14 feature
COURSE CONNECTION

Washington cities use transportation improvements to set a path for their communities' futures. **BY TED KATAUSKAS**

21 CITYWISE

Expert perspectives on integrating autonomous vehicles, exploring a shift to road usage charges, and ensuring that transportation funding is both adequate and efficiently spent.

28 CITYSCAPE

The means may change, but the impact is the same: smart mobility options help build great communities.

Construction for Sound Transit's East Link light-rail line into the City of Bellevue
COURSE CONNECTION,
P. 14



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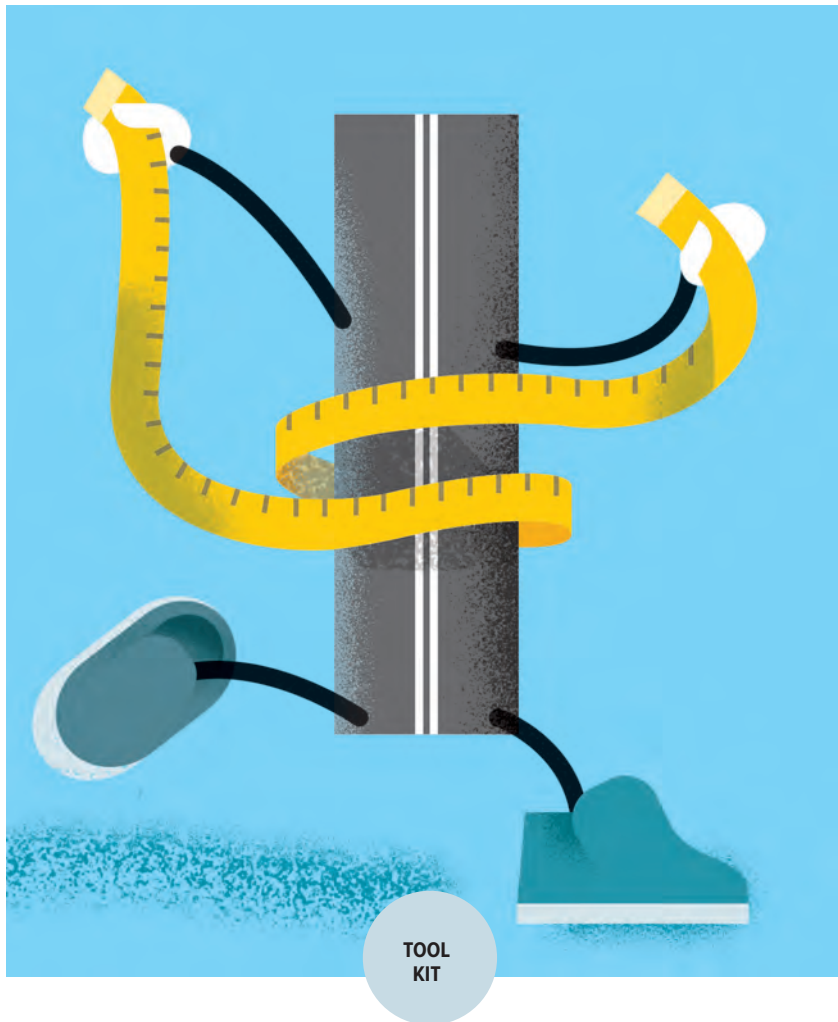
Surviving the Seattle Squeeze

ON THE EVE of the permanent closure of Seattle's Alaskan Way Viaduct in early January, Kris Rietmann, like many Seattleites, is grappling with how she feels about it.

"It's exciting—I think it's a lot of things," says Rietmann, the communications director for the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) whose agency was charged with averting a traffic meltdown and orchestrating a public farewell for the closure of one of the Emerald City's most loved and loathed pieces of urban infrastructure. "The viaduct has such a long history; for a

lot of native Seattleites, it's a part of their memories of the city."

For more than a half-century since opening in 1953, the viaduct has shunted more than 90,000 vehicles daily off of I-5 and Seattle surface streets and circulated them around the city's center. The brutalist, concrete double-decker highway may have cast an unwelcome shadow on the city's waterfront, but it got the job done until the 2001 Nisqually earthquake severely damaged several sections. A decade later, as a two-mile-long replacement tunnel was bored beneath the city, WSDOT has spent years working with a multi- **CONTINUED ON P.10** ▶



Fit & Trim

Carnation narrows its streets for broad community impact.

BY TRACY HOWARD GARTON

ROAD REPAIRS. No city is immune, and while widening to add traffic capacity or other transit lanes is often the objective, the small city of Carnation, 30 miles east of Seattle, has taken the opposite approach. Joining a trend in major cities worldwide such as Melbourne and San Francisco, the 1.2-square-mile community, population 2,155, has embraced skinny streets.

“We wanted that rural, small-town feel,” says City Clerk Mary Madole of the decision to go narrow. “The city has been here for more than 100 years,”

City Manager Amy Arrington adds, “and the idea of skinny streets really fit the original Tolt plat where they’re going in.”

Designed by Jorge Garcia, at the time an engineer with H.W. Lochner, Carnation’s skinny streets trim the original blacktop to 20 feet of roadway with adjacent gravel parking, landscaped medians for stormwater infiltration, and meandering asphalt pathways for neighborhood pedestrians. “It’s not a new idea,” says Arrington. “It’s just bringing back a classic design and updating it for modern times.”

And though the streets are small, the improvements are huge. “The most recent skinny street conversion was on an established road with houses nearly as old as Carnation itself,” says Arrington, noting that the age of these houses means they were built without garages. “Before we did the project, cars were parking everywhere—some parallel, some pulled straight in. It was a real mess. But since completion, the gravel parking has really made a positive impact on both traffic management and giving people a place to park their cars when they get home.”

“PRIOR TO THE SKINNY STREETS, THERE WAS NO PLACE FOR SCHOOLKIDS FROM THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT THE END OF THE BLOCK TO SAFELY WALK OUTSIDE THE TRAVEL LANE.”

Pedestrians are also feeling the perks. “The streets of Carnation were constructed in 1912 with long boardwalks for sidewalks, which rotted away so long ago very few people even knew they existed,” says Madole. “Prior to the skinny streets, there was no place for schoolkids from the elementary school at the end of the block to safely walk outside the travel lane.”

The initiative launched in 2014, and the city recently completed its third skinny street, thanks in major part to grant funds from the Transportation Improvement Board, or TIB (“Without their partnership, there’s no way we’d be able to do these projects,” says Arrington), with hopes to trim up the streets of the rest of the original plat over the next decade. Carnation is so committed, in fact, that the skinny design is now a part of the street standard for that neighborhood, meaning any future road projects or improvements within the designated area must match the model.

“We have a design now that not only improves the street and accomplishes our goals of pedestrian safety and stormwater infiltration,” says Arrington, “but also fits the character of the community and brings such a positive impact to the neighborhood.” **C**



ELECTRIC AVENUES

Reducing emissions and creating efficiencies in Washington

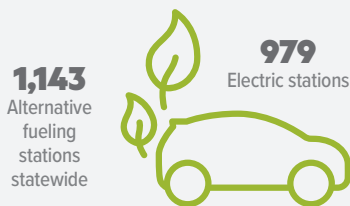
Electric Vehicles

Registered plug-in electric vehicles in the state in 2018

41,091

50,000
Statewide goal by 2020

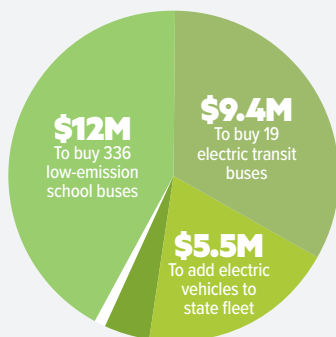
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Sources: WA Dept of Ecology Air-Climate, WA Dept of Transportation using Dept of Licensing data



TRESTLE MANIA

A bottleneck creates mayhem in Lake Stevens.

BY TRACY HOWARD GARTON

IT'S 8 A.M. ON MONDAY MORNING. Brake lights stretch as far as the eye can see. Blaring horns punctuate an already stressful commute. And you've barely left the house.

Sounds like the gridlock of Los Angeles or midtown Manhattan, except that it's not. Welcome to the nightmare traffic in Lake Stevens, population 33,000. Why the backup? The trestle: an elevated, two-mile portion of Highway 2 that stretches over marshy wetlands and the Snohomish River, forcing the blind convergence of three major roads onto a shoulderless, two-lane bridge that connects more than 80,000 vehicles daily with I-5 for travel into Everett and Seattle. It's a headache on a good day—and hugely dangerous at its worst.

"It's a mess," says Lake Stevens Mayor John Spencer, who has called the area home for the past 35 years. "It's caused traffic issues since it was built in 1968 but has gotten exponentially worse over the past two decades."

ONE LOCAL COMPANY SAYS IT COSTS THEM ONE TO TWO FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES A YEAR JUST TO HANDLE TRESTLE TRAFFIC.

"The congestion backs up several miles before the trestle, clogging residential streets and making it hard for people to even back out of their own driveway," says City Administrator Gene Brazel. Even nearby schools are affected, with school buses starting routes as early as 6 a.m. to get students to class on time.

But a snarled commute isn't the only disruption. "We're really seeing a local impact on business," says Spencer. "If you want to be a manufacturer or supplier to Boeing, it's going to cost you more time to bring

your raw materials here and more time to get them out." One local company says it costs them one to two full-time employees a year just to handle transport through trestle traffic.

And of course, there's the issue of safety. Accidents at the bottleneck are a frequent affair, and with the trestle's lack of shoulders and narrow lanes, first responders waste precious time no matter where in the area an accident occurs. "We transport nearly all of our patients across the trestle to the hospital," says Lake Stevens Fire Chief Kevin O'Brien. "So when traffic is at a standstill, it delays responders both going to the hospital and coming back." O'Brien says if he could wave a magic wand, the lanes would be doubled tomorrow.

Still, despite the traffic, Lake Stevens is growing, thanks to its highly rated schools, new city parks, and tight-knit community feel. And city leaders are confident a trestle solution is coming. A Washington State Department of Transportation finance study puts the cost for widening at more than \$1 billion, though it also shows funding as feasible thanks to the state's gas tax, and State Senator Steve Hobbs, a Lake Stevens resident, plans to propose a long-term funding package in Olympia this session.

For now, though, all the city can do is wait—much as they do every day, in traffic, trying to cross the trestle. **C**



For more information:
lakestevenswa.gov



TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT DISTRICTS

96% of the state's gross domestic product occurs in cities. 69% of all jobs are generated in cities. (Source: US Metro Economies Annual GMP Report June 2018)

36.73.010 – Intent.

The legislature finds that the citizens of the state can benefit by cooperation of the public and private sectors in addressing transportation needs. This cooperation can be fostered through enhanced capability for cities, towns, and counties to make and fund transportation improvements necessitated by economic development and to improve the performance of the transportation system. [...]

Authority for these special districts that can be formed to fund local transportation projects passed in 2005.

36.73.020 – Establishment of district by county or city.

(1) The legislative authority of a county or city may establish a transportation benefit district within the county or city area ..., for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, providing, and funding a transportation improvement within the district that is consistent with any existing state, regional, or local transportation plans and necessitated by existing or reasonably foreseeable congestion levels. The transportation improvements shall be owned by the county of jurisdiction if located in an unincorporated area, by the city of jurisdiction if located in an incorporated area, or by the state in cases where the transportation improvement is or becomes a state highway. [...]

Over \$100 million is raised annually to maintain, repair and expand city transportation projects. These funds are often used as a local match to obtain state and federal funds.

Since Transportation Benefit Districts were authorized in 2005, more than 100 cities have created TBDs.

36.73.040 – General powers of district.

(1) A transportation benefit district is a quasi-municipal corporation, an independent taxing "authority" within the meaning of Article VII, section 1 of the state Constitution, and a "taxing district" within the meaning of Article VII, section 2 of the state Constitution.

[...]

(3) To carry out the purposes of this chapter, and subject to the provisions of RCW 36.73.065, a district is authorized to impose the following taxes, fees, charges, and tolls:

- (a) A sales and use tax in accordance with RCW 82.14.0455;
- (b) A vehicle fee in accordance with RCW 82.80.140;
- (c) A fee or charge in accordance with RCW 36.73.120.

However, if a county or city within the district area is levying a fee or charge for a transportation improvement, the fee or charge shall be credited against the amount of the fee or charge imposed by the district. Developments consisting of less than twenty residences are exempt from the fee or charge under RCW 36.73.120; and

60 cities have a license fee, generating over \$52 million in 2017; five cities have both a fee and a sales tax.

(d) Vehicle tolls on state routes, city streets, or county roads, within the boundaries of the district, unless otherwise prohibited by law. However, consistent with RCW 47.56.820, the vehicle toll must first be authorized by the legislature if the toll is imposed on a state route. The department of transportation shall administer the collection of vehicle tolls authorized on state routes, unless otherwise specified in law or by contract, and the state transportation commission, or its successor, may approve, set, and impose the tolls in amounts sufficient to implement the district's transportation improvement finance plan. The district shall administer the collection of vehicle tolls authorized on city streets or county roads, and shall set and impose the tolls in amounts sufficient to implement the district's transportation improvement plan. [...]

More than 40 cities have imposed a sales and use tax, which generated over \$56 million in revenue in 2017.

No TBDs have implemented tolls.

I-970, which qualified as a 2019 initiative to the legislature, proposes to repeal this authority.



THE QUESTION

WHAT IS YOUR CITY'S TRANSPORTATION VISION?



With the recent construction of the Ilani Casino along I-5 adjacent to the city, La Center anticipates commercial and industrial development and has a master plan of new streets and commercial buildings for this anticipated growth. Housing development is occurring throughout the city, and a new roundabout has been constructed at the entrance to the city to provide better maneuverability and access to and from the city.

—TONY COOPER
City Engineer, La Center



Tonasket is working on funding to create a downtown core where people want to congregate: a place that will entice travelers to stop and shop and will spur private investment, create business opportunities, and diversify the local economy from its fading agricultural industry into a vibrant retail, commercial, and hospitality industry. Proposed improvements include new landscaping, benches, bicycle amenities, wider sidewalks, ADA accessibility, and better parking.

—CHRISTA LEVINE
Councilmember, Tonasket



Waitsburg is a very small rural community situated at the intersection of two state highways. Maintaining a high level of service on roads, streets, sidewalks, and paths is an ongoing priority and challenge for us, as is managing the pass-through traffic in a way that encourages patronage of our local businesses and promotes our wonderful community to visiting travelers.

—KC KUYKENDALL
Councilmember, Waitsburg

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- 20** **Retro Volunteers in Public Organizations**
Webinar
- MAR**
- 6** **WA Paid Family & Medical Leave** Webinar
- 12** **D&A Supervisor Training**
Pullman
- 13** **D&A Supervisor Training**
Zillah
- 14** **D&A Supervisor Training**
Leavenworth
- 19** **Elected Officials Essentials**
Webinar
- 19** **Retro Safety Training**
Webinar
- 20** **Healthy Worksite Summit**
- APR**
- 10** **Retro WorkSafe Employer**
Pullman
- 25** **Retro WorkSafe Employer**
Gig Harbor

TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

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THINK GREEN.

Citybeat

Tunnel Vision *continued from page 5*

agency team to develop a gridlock-prevention outreach plan for a three-week highway closure that would be required to realign State Route 99 from the decommissioned viaduct and into the mouth of the tunnel.

WSDOT convened a strike team of executives from an alphabet soup of local and regional agencies and

“IF I WERE TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO OTHER TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO FACE, I WOULD SAY, ‘YOU ARE NOT IN IT ALONE, AND YOU CANNOT BE.’”

civic organizations who conferenced monthly, then weekly, then daily as the hour and day of the viaduct closure neared: 10 p.m., January 11, 2019.

“It really is all hands on deck,” says Rietmann. “If I were to speak directly to other transportation organizations that have something like this to face, I would say, ‘You are not in it alone, and you cannot be.’”

WSDOT focused its outreach efforts on drivers and employers, urging businesses with offices in the city center to adopt alternate workday schedules and support telecommuting during the three-week closure, among other things. Public outreach encouraged commuters to think about their habits and try new things, be it joining a vanpool, biking or walking, or giving the King County Water Taxi a go.

To get the word out, WSDOT and partners used their combined social media presences and a catchy hashtag (#Realign99), tweeting out daily updates and a blog topped with a countdown clock, with ideas for alternate commutes, detailed maps, links to resources, and other information, translating the page into languages from Spanish to Somali to Tagalog.

“What’s really key here was that being able to do something this large and impactful requires a lot of planning and you have to be incredibly inclusive,” Rietmann says. “We used every tool in the toolbox.”

Such intense interest only reinforced the wisdom of a two-day coming-out party at the conclusion of the closure in early February, with STEM activities for kids, a ribbon-cutting, a fun run/walk and a sold-out bike tour transiting both levels of the tunnel. The event, which was financed mostly by corporate sponsors, attracted more than 100,000 curious Seattleites.

“They had heard about the tunnel for so many years, we wanted to give them an opportunity to not just drive through it, but to take time to really see this tremendous piece of engineering work,” Rietmann says. “This was a turning point and a milestone, but there are a lot of different construction projects on the horizon that will change the landscape of the city, which has incredible plans for what the waterfront will be.” —Ted Katauskas



Cityscope



Walk of Life

Bremerton Mayor Greg Wheeler on why sidewalks are just as important as roads when it comes to the work of a city's streets department

Mayor Greg Wheeler on a newly redeveloped sidewalk in downtown Bremerton

What brought you to Bremerton?

This is my hometown. I was born in Longview, but when I was three months old my dad found work in the naval shipyard, so we came up here. Except for my time in the Navy, I've been a lifelong resident.

What was your job in the Navy?

I was a boiler technician on the *USS America* aircraft carrier; we were part of the task force in Beirut in 1983, and we were part of the air raid in Libya in 1986. I came

home to Bremerton after that and found work in the naval shipyard.

How had Bremerton changed during your absence?

When I left in 1980, we still had a full-service downtown. When I came back in 1986, the downtown had died—there were a lot of vacant buildings. That was probably the biggest change: the migration of businesses away from Bremerton.

CONTINUED ON P.12 ►



You served on Bremerton’s planning commission in 2007, were elected to the city council in 2010, served three terms as council president, then became Bremerton’s mayor in 2018. What drew you to local government?

This is my hometown: I understand the fabric of it. It’s a Navy town with a shipyard and a lot of defense workers. I know folks in this town: they want to work locally, they want see jobs created and housing set up responsibly, they want to maintain their identity as Bremertonians. Even our many residents who work in other industries or commute to Seattle for employment want to see our area support local jobs and respond to housing needs in our community.

One of your priorities has been reviving Bremerton’s business districts.

Our business districts are a top priority in the city. In March, we’re breaking ground on a \$100 million waterfront redevelopment project in downtown with a hotel, an apartment complex, open public spaces, and a restaurant. We’re also working on a new public plaza for music and performances named after Quincy Jones, who discovered his love of music as a youth in Bremerton. Other revitalization plans include the Charleston business district, the Wheaton Way commercial corridor, and Eastside Employment Center.

In 2019, the city’s streets maintenance department will be fully operational



“PEOPLE SITTING ON THEIR PORCHES AND BEING ABLE TO WALK THROUGH THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS—THAT’S WHAT BUILDS COMMUNITY AND UNITY.”

again for the first time since 2007. What happened to the program?

Cities were already struggling because one of their main revenue sources had been removed, so in 2007, with the recession’s first dip, streets took a huge hit. Public safety was the highest priority, so our streets department became a pothole-filling department.... It wasn’t really functioning as a streets department.

How did you revive it?

In 2018, my first year in office, we did a beta test: Let’s find out if we have the skill set and if it’s cost-effective to do it ourselves. We dusted off our old equipment, paved our streets, and repaired a few sidewalks internally, and three-quarters of the way through, we found out that we were pretty good at it. We can do this just as good, and cheaper, than if we contracted it out. So we got to work and

developed our own streets program, and slowly ramped it up. Now we have a solid program (funded at \$8.7 million) that the council can fully get behind.

Now that Bremerton is maintaining what it already has, what new projects are on the horizon?

We’re going to install a roundabout on the west end of our downtown that will increase traffic flow tremendously. We’ll be upgrading Washington Avenue along our waterfront with 10-foot-wide sidewalks, a bicycle lane, new lighting, and a complete street redo. It’s a \$3 million-plus project that will connect our downtown transportation center with two of our city parks that are about two miles apart from each other. It’s all about connectivity, walkability.

Why is walkability important?

People sitting on their porches and being able to walk through their neighborhoods—that’s what builds community and unity. Doing this work allows people of all ages and abilities and income levels to appreciate the environment of Bremerton and connect with their neighbors.... It’s more than a structural investment; it’s a social investment.

Safe to say Bremerton’s mayor walks the walk?

I walked to work in the shipyard every day my entire career, and that hasn’t changed. I walk to city hall every day. When I have business in Seattle, I walk from my office to the ferry terminal to meet with my peers. When I’m walking, I’m not just getting exercise, I’m checking in, I’m taking the pulse of our community. **C**

Bremerton

Cityvision looks at how Bremerton keeps the city and its citizens moving.

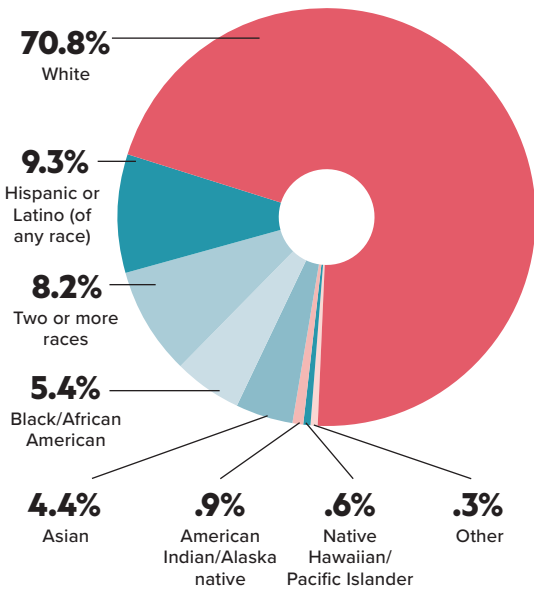
POPULATION

POPULATION DATA FROM THE 2010 US CENSUS, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

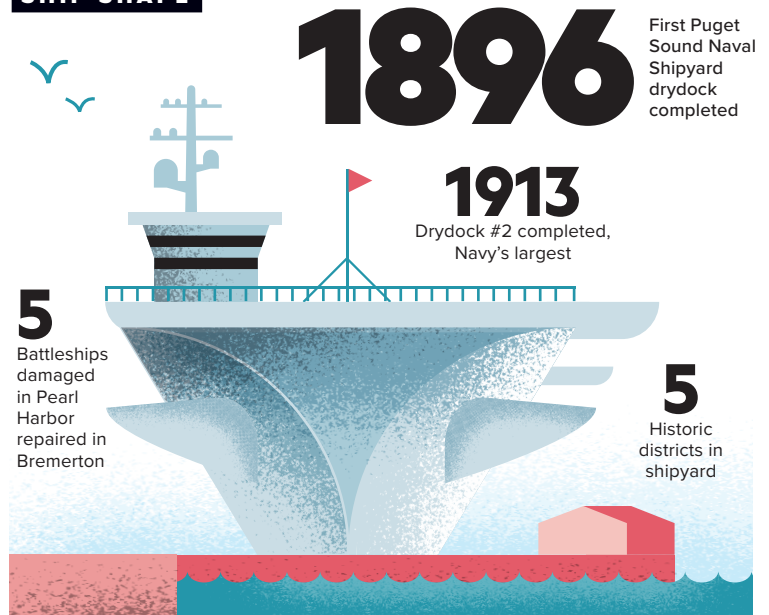


2018 SOURCE: WA OFM

DEMOGRAPHICS

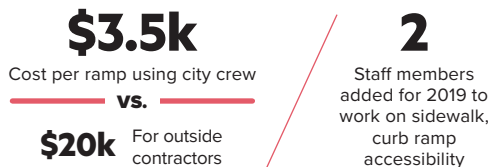


SHIP SHAPE



SOURCE: PUGET SOUND NAVAL SHIPYARD

RAMPING UP



SMOOTH MOVES



SOURCE: CITY OF BREMERTON

TERMINAL GRAVITY



SOURCE: KITSAP TRANSIT

WASHINGTON CITIES USE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS TO SET
A PATH FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES' FUTURES.

course connection

by **TED KATAUSKAS**
photographs by **JOE TOBIASON**

When Jay McGowan relocated from San Francisco to Cle Elum as a young man in the late 1960s, the commercial hub of upper Kittitas County, like a coasting rocket on a parabolic trajectory, had just nosed over into freefall, captured in an inescapable gravity well of change.

At the city's apex in the 1940s, when local coal mines and timber mills were booming, the population of this Cascades outpost, flanked by lakes and alpine forest 30 miles east of Snoqualmie Pass, had swelled to over 3,000. Cle Elum's blue-collar workforce spent their paychecks on First Street, a state highway that doubled as the city's main thoroughfare, which boasted a bakery (established in 1906), a butcher (est. 1887), a tavern (est. 1902, by a former mayor), and car dealerships representing every major domestic brand. But the last mine closed in 1963, and already by the time of McGowan's arrival, the city's population had plummeted to 1,800, where it remains today.

Joining his brother, who had moved to Cle Elum in 1965, McGowan found work as a mechanic at the Studebaker garage. That led to work as a millwright, repairing logging machinery, a career he has stubbornly maintained over a half-century, even as the city's working-class foundation crumbled around him.

"Basically, I'm the village blacksmith," says McGowan, 71, who also draws a modest paycheck as Cle Elum's mayor, serving the final year of his first term. "I chose this place mostly because I had friends here. I lived off what we had left of logging, which is pretty much gone."

Just a few months before McGowan's brother arrived in Cle Elum, in October 1964, city leaders gathered on a bypass that had been built between the city's business district and the Yakima River to celebrate the opening of Interstate 90, a

superhighway connecting Seattle with Spokane that rerouted through traffic from Cle Elum's First Street, a.k.a. State Route 903, formerly the region's primary east-west highway.

"That point there was really the beginning of the end of the traditional economy of the upper county," says McGowan, who notes that more than 40,000 vehicles a day now bypass Cle Elum on I-90 on an average Friday. "All those cars going past and not stopping has had a real dramatic effect on our town, but it's the same kind of demise that most small towns throughout the nation have been going through. Our downtown gradually faded away. We did all kinds of studies and efforts to figure out some kind of other economic base here, but nothing happened, nothing changed. The community just stalled."

The most promising of those initiatives happened in 2000, when Cle Elum's council, which by then included McGowan, workshopped a downtown redevelopment plan. The plan sought to lure pass-through motorists into town and out of their cars by revamping a half-dozen blocks of First Street, a concrete chasm that yawned as wide as a 10-story building is tall from storefront to storefront on opposite sides of the street, into a soulful small-town Main Street. But with public safety expenditures consuming half of the city's modest general fund budget, that ambitious plan went nowhere.

"Lots of people got involved; we did a whole downtown study with bulb-outs and all this stuff to slow down traffic," recalls McGowan. "It just sat on a shelf. There was no way. We couldn't get it off the ground."

Meanwhile in 2003, on a 6,400-acre tract of pine and fir forest on the banks on the Cle Elum River two miles west of downtown, developers broke ground on Suncadia, a destination resort with an inn, a lodge, a spa, swimming pools, restaurants, golf courses, and vacation homes; in 2004, 500 single-family

Cle Elum Mayor Jay McGowan with a scale model he built in 2013 of a proposed beautified downtown





From left: CWU senior Isaac Anzovar, Cle Elum Mayor Jay McGowan, City Planner Lucy Temple, and HLA Engineering project engineer Ben Annen on First Street in Cle Elum

homesites sold, generating \$125 million in gross revenue. As Suncadia was built out, within a decade the community attracted a mass migration of Seattleites over Snoqualmie Pass to Cle Elum, quadrupling the area's summertime population. Although these new part-time residents occasionally made trips into town to gas up their cars, treat themselves to bear claws from Cle Elum Bakery, and splurge on T-bones from Owens Meats, they spent more of their time (and money) in established touristy places like nearby Roslyn or Leavenworth, 50 miles north.

In 2013, hoping to attract more of these newcomers to First Street, Cle Elum's council dusted off its 13-year-old downtown revitalization plan and initiated another round of citizen workshops, reimagining First Street with broad sidewalks appointed with street furniture, shade trees, and other amenities that would encourage visitors to stroll and linger.

"I was on the council and I worked with the citizens committee, trying to get everyone to envision a walkable downtown," McGowan recalls. "I said, 'We need to make a model!' I have a shop with saws, and I'm a pretty handy person."

Using photographs of the existing streetscape, McGowan retreated to his workshop and painstakingly created a four-square-foot diorama of an entire square block of Cle Elum's beautified downtown, an elaborate scale model every bit as detailed—down to tiny plastic pedestrians strolling along the sidewalk—as Marwencol in *Welcome to Marwen*.

After spirited debate, McGowan's diorama was shelved along with the 2000 plan, sidelined by a backlog of infrastructure projects deemed more important, including a retrofit of

First Street's antiquated stormwater system and upgrades to an I-90 interchange. Even with the dawn of opportunity brought by Suncadia, Cle Elum's revival seemed fated never to see the light of day.

Two years later, however, McGowan was elected mayor, and rejuvenating First Street became a mandate of his administration. To that end, he hired Lucy Temple, a former environmental planner from the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Union Gap office, as Cle Elum's city planner in January 2017, the first in a series of fortuitous circumstances that finally fast-tracked the city's moribund downtown revitalization project. Not long after starting the job, Temple was reviewing the city's plan to upgrade the stormwater system beneath First Street when Paul Gonseth, a former colleague who works as a planning engineer for WSDOT's South Central Region, phoned to let her know that the agency was scheduled to repave State Route 903 (a.k.a. First Street) in 2018. Temple told Gonseth about the stormwater project and asked if he could delay paving the road until 2019.

"I said, 'If you're going to repave, we don't want to rip it up after the fact,'" she recalls. "Paul said, 'If you do stormwater, that's the time you need to design what's above the ground.' ... Since the stormwater project needed to be in the ground before DOT paved in 2019, we put the gas pedal down."

But first, the city had to find money to jump-start the long-stalled downtown streetscape makeover.

“I WAS ON THE COUNCIL AND I WORKED WITH THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE, TRYING TO GET EVERYONE TO ENVISION A WALKABLE DOWNTOWN. I SAID, ‘WE NEED TO MAKE A MODEL!’”

—JAY MCGOWAN **MAYOR, CLE ELUM**

In fall 2016, after a planning meeting for the I-90 interchange project, Ben Annen, a project engineer with HLA Engineering & Land Surveying, the city’s longtime contract engineering firm, told one of Cle Elum’s councilmembers about the Transportation Improvement Board’s (TIB) Complete Streets Program, a fund the Legislature had established to provide grants to cities that agreed to give equal consideration to the safety of pedestrians, motorists, and cyclists of all ages and abilities in the design of infrastructure projects. In a bid to win a Complete Streets grant, at its next council meeting the city introduced and adopted a Complete Streets ordinance; in February 2017, the city received a \$125,000 TIB grant, \$100,000 of which the council earmarked to hire HLA to manage the First Street revitalization project’s public input and planning process and help the city secure funding for the project.

“What it comes down to is cash,” says Annen. “Small cities are so strapped for cash, it’s difficult to get anything accomplished. Cle Elum easily could’ve taken that \$125,000 and purchased several rapid-flashing beacons for crosswalk safety, and it would’ve been done with the money. Instead, they thought about the bigger picture: ‘How can we leverage that money and make something big with a minimum investment?’”

Temple used \$19,000 (cobbled together from her planning budget, a Department of Commerce grant, Suncadia Resort, and a private donor) to hire two interns she recruited from her alma mater, Central Washington University in nearby Ellensburg. In April 2017, with help from a CWU professor and their planning class, Temple convened focus group sessions at city hall, meeting with various community members, First Street business owners, and Suncadia residents, asking these stakeholders to articulate their vision for Cle Elum’s downtown revitalization.

“They wanted change, but not a lot of change,” says intern Isaac Anzlovar, a CWU senior majoring in public policy and geography. “A lot of citizens here didn’t want Cle Elum to lose its small-town feel and character.”

Based on that feedback, HLA’s designers and HBB Landscape Architecture sketched out three different streetscape concepts that were unveiled at a community workshop in May. Those concepts were further refined at a planning commission study session and public forum in June, which yielded a recommended plan: For six blocks, First Street’s 100-foot-wide concrete canyon would be whittled down to a roadway just 34 feet wide, with angled on-street parking and 16-foot-wide sidewalks. The sidewalks would bulb out into the right-of-way at intersections, to make crossing easier/safer for pedestrians and create funnel-like bottlenecks that slowed traffic; mid-block crosswalks

Access Granted

Q&A **CAROL WRIGHT KENDERDINE**

Carol Wright Kenderdine, assistant vice president for transportation and mobility at Easterseals, Inc., on why funding accessible public transportation should be a goal for cities large and small.



What does Easterseals Transportation Group do?

We’re based in Washington, DC, and were established more than 30 years ago as a national technical assistance center funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and administered by Easterseals. Today, we operate as Easterseals Project Action Consulting and as the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) in partnership with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. We provide technical assistance, education, resources, information, and referrals, as well as outreach and community grants, to make sure that people with disabilities and older adults and their caregivers have access to the kinds of transportation they need.

Easterseals Project Action Consulting coordinates Accessible Transportation Community Initiative Grants. How does that program work?

Each team selected receives a \$100,000 grant from a national foundation to work with local governments to provide additional accessible transportation options in their service areas. There

are 10 teams in the US, and 3 are in Washington state.

Talk about the Washington state grant teams.

One is the Snoqualmie Valley Transportation Coalition. They initially compiled a report of existing services in the Snoqualmie Valley from North Bend to Monroe and identified gaps in service. After holding focus groups and doing surveys, they added a new transportation service, a Duvall-Monroe shuttle. It’s a pilot project that in its first few months of service gave 300 rides to people who had no way of getting between those communities; they also did a video with four riders with difficult circumstances who talk about what having that transportation means to them and why it’s needed.

Another team is the Southwest Washington Accessible Transportation Coalition.

They conducted an initial survey to identify transportation resources, as well as needs and gaps, in five southwest Washington counties (Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, and Wahkiakum). They’re working to beef up ex-

CONTINUED ON P.19 ▶



Expanded sidewalks, LED streetlamps, and new benches and wastebins on First Street in Cle Elum

would reduce jaywalking. Street trees and landscaping planters would make the boulevard more inviting with a shady canopy, and street furniture from bike racks and benches to antique-looking LED streetlamps would evoke the city's logging heritage while adhering to a uniform design palette.

When Cle Elum's council unanimously adopted the plan at a session on June 27, 2017, it seemed like the entire town had come to witness a historic moment.

"It was standing-room-only, with people overflowing out of the room," recalls Temple. "It was outrageous; it was wonderful; we were very, very proud of our work and the collaboration that went into it."

The next hurdle was paying for the \$8 million project. After completing 13 funding applications and making several project presentations to Olympia-based funding programs, Cle Elum secured \$2.47 million (a combination of grants and a \$533,000 low-interest loan from the Public Works Trust Fund) to fund the first phase of the project: a single intersection at the easternmost end, anchored by three of the city's longest-tenured businesses (Cle Elum Bakery, Owens Meats, Mike's Tavern), that was completed with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in November 2018. If all goes as planned, the city will host another ribbon cutting before the end of 2019, with completion of a bookend intersection on the opposite end of downtown, plus six blocks of upgraded stormwater infrastructure. One final hurdle remains: extending the makeover from intersection to intersection so WSDOT can finally repave First Street, now scheduled for 2022, for which Cle Elum has requested \$4 million from the state Legislature's 2019 Supplemental Capital Budget.

As for the potential payoff of the Legislature's investment, Annen offers the example of a streetscape makeover HLA orchestrated for Grandview, a city of 11,000 some 100 miles east of Cle Elum.

"Going into that project, there were over 20 empty storefronts in the downtown corridor; you could go downtown on a weekend, and you may not see anybody," he says. "Two years after the completion of that project, there's one vacant storefront, and you can't find a parking spot on the weekend. It's difficult to put a number on it, but using comparatives like that, there's huge potential for Cle Elum to grow and be a thriving downtown."



A rendering of the four-acre greenspace proposed for the Grand Connection in downtown Bellevue

With a similar goal, on the rainy side of the Cascades, the City of Bellevue is mulling an ambitious \$120 million-plus plan to cover a two-square-block section of Interstate 405 in the heart of its downtown with a four-acre public park.

Dubbed the Grand Connection, the project was inspired by successful downtown freeway "lid" projects like Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, a 5.2-acre public space over Woodall Rogers Freeway that connects that city's commercial center with its arts district and includes a performance pavilion, parks for dogs and kids, a network of trails, and a 6,000-square-foot restaurant that pays for 20 percent of the park's operating costs. Since its completion in 2012, Klyde Warren Park has catalyzed over a billion dollars of nearby private real estate development, hosted over a thousand annual events, and boosted public transportation use in Dallas by 61 percent.

For Bellevue, the Grand Connection promises to be more than just another economic development project or a transportation initiative: it represents a step toward combining the best of urban living with the welcoming feel of traditional suburbs.

"It's about placemaking and community-building; it's about becoming the city of the future," says Community Development Director Mac Cummins. "If you look nationally, a whole bunch of suburban communities are reinventing themselves to stay relevant. It's a change in trajectory."

Currently, Bellevue's downtown office district is thriving. Home to corporate giants such as Microsoft, PACCAR, and Amazon and a cluster of video game development companies, it boasts a workforce of 50,000, but most who work there have homes far from the city center. Just across I-405 from downtown's office towers, however, is Wilburton, a low-rise commercial district with a few big-box stores surrounded by surface parking lots abandoned by departed auto retailers. In the heart of Wilburton, the city owns Lincoln Center, a demolished former coworking space and business incubator on 2.4 acres.

Bellevue would like to redevelop Wilburton, which will be a station stop on Sound Transit's under-construction East Link light-rail line (which also will include a station serving the city's



convention center and Bellevue City Hall just across the highway), as a high-rise residential district that could be home to some of those 50,000 office workers across the freeway, many of whom undoubtedly would like the option to walk or bike to work. But other than driving (or as of 2023, riding light rail), there's currently no convenient way to get across I-405 directly from Wilburton to downtown.

Enter the Grand Connection. As envisioned in its Grand Connection Framework Plan, which Bellevue's council adopted in December 2017, early concept art showcases a lid park that will revolve around a four-acre greenspace of rolling and sculpted

terrain spanning the highway between NE Sixth and Eighth Streets and include an observation deck, a playground, a climbing wall, and exercise stations, as well as a daylighted creek and a stormwater treatment plant that would double as an environmental education center and interactive art display. Tree-lined promenades would connect the park to the city's downtown and Wilburton's Eastside Rail Corridor, a former rail line King County is converting to a rec path connecting Bellevue with Woodinville to the north and Renton to the south. In addition to the lid park design, the Grand Connection Framework Plan includes less ambitious alternate designs (a conventional pedestrian bridge, and a "sculpted" linear park) that could be built for half the cost, but city leaders, currently debating which option to build, are captivated by the prospect of a crossing that would cap the freeway.

"In a word, it's transformational," says Cummins. "For the land use planning we are doing on either side of the freeway, going from single-, two-, and three-story buildings to up to 40 with at least 10 or 15 to 20 times the current density, there's going to be a need for a grand public open space where all of these businesspeople will want to congregate and community-build. That's the reason to want to do the park. . . . We also believe it will be the type of place that our children and grandchildren are going to want, but more importantly are going to need, to be competitive in the future."

As evidence, he points to a *Harvard Business Review* article from September 2017 and its lessons for city planners from an analysis of Amazon's HQ2 secondary headquarters search. At the top of the list of qualities deemed essential for cities to participate in the growing digital economy was "connected and sustainable placemaking," including "promoting walkability and connectivity between densely clustered buildings through sidewalks, bike lanes, trams, metro, bus, light rail, train, and additional creative options."

Not coincidentally, Bellevue's Grand Connection would satisfy many of these requirements.

"When we talk to companies, this is the type of amenity they say they want in a city—this is why they want to locate

isting volunteer driver programs where there is no public transportation to help older adults and people with disabilities get to where they need to go, at no cost.

What's one potential gap that group identified?

The coalition is exploring whether transportation for incarcerated individuals upon their release is also an issue in the region, and if so, whether funding to address their transportation needs can help these individuals be successful and avoid reoffending.

Washington's third grant team is a coalition of seven cities from Whatcom County; what's their primary initiative?

They wanted to ensure that their bus stops were accessible, so that's what they're concentrating their efforts on. It's a really creative model of how they formed a coalition of nontraditional partners—not just human services providers, but medical providers and mayors from all of the cities—and worked together to provide access to transportation.

What's the reality for rural communities when it comes to providing public transportation?

We all know that large cities are where public transportation is concentrated, but when you are in a small rural area with long distances and low population density, it's difficult to provide transportation for one person who needs to get dialysis three times a week. How do you find people to provide

that service and make it affordable?

So how does a small city make that happen?

You have to have a lot of coordination; you have to make sure everyone is working together so what little transportation is available isn't going to the same place at the same time; you can't have duplication of service.

Why is it important for small, rural communities to support public transportation?

It used to be that families stayed concentrated in the same area; that's not true anymore. Families move away, so you no longer have nuclear families where adults can depend on their children for rides. Also, baby boomers want to age in place: they don't want to move to a large city when they grow old just so they can get transportation service. You want to make sure that service is available for them to take advantage of so they can continue to live where they established their lives.

What's one question all city leaders should be asking?

What can we do together to make sure our community is ready for our aging population and people who are not able to drive? It's not just older adults. People don't drive for a whole variety of reasons: they might have a disability, they might not be able to afford to drive. We want to make sure our communities are accessible to all. Providing transportation is the number one way we can do that.



Bellevue Mayor John Chelminiak (left) and Community Development Director Mac Cummins at a viewpoint overlooking Sound Transit's under-construction East Link light-rail line into the city

“IF YOU KNOW YOU HAVE THE RIGHT PLAN AND YOU STICK WITH IT, YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN. . . . GREAT THINGS TAKE TIME.”

—JOHN CHELMINIAK
MAYOR, BELLEVUE

here,” says Bellevue Mayor John Chelminiak of the Grand Connection. “There’s a story about one CEO from a big corporation who said they had a \$5 million check from Texas asking them to relocate. We can’t do that in Washington, but what we can do is invest smartly in our communities.”

Chelminiak believes the smartest investment for Bellevue is the Grand Connection’s lid park design, despite its cost.

“The lid park connects not just places, but people. It instills a sense of pride in the city. It attracts people to come to your city, and when they come and enjoy it, they spend money, and that helps your tax revenue,” he explains. “One thing Bellevue has done well is set a large goal. If you know you have the right plan and you stick with it, you can make it happen. . . . Great things take time.”

Case in point: the revitalization of Cle Elum’s First Street, a plan 19 years and more in the making that’s already beginning to change the trajectory of the city’s fortunes.

“Cle Elum put itself on the map by the 1940s with coal mining and logging, and then for decades it was just a sleepy town with not a lot going on,” says Lucy Temple, who says that has shifted in the two years she’s worked there as city planner. “There weren’t any homes being built or people coming who needed them. Now people who were in Seattle are moving to Issaquah, and the people who were in Issaquah are moving to North Bend, and the people who were in North Bend are moving to Cle Elum.”

People like Shannon Weaver, who relocated from North Bend to Cle Elum in 2017 and purchased Mike’s Tavern, renovating the First Street landmark inside and out.

“It’s great for the city,” she says of the new paving, street furniture, and streetlights outside her business. “It’s been positive all around.”

What’s more, the nascent revitalization of First Street, with just one intersection complete, already has yielded unforeseen dividends.

“We’re seeing buildings that sat vacant or weren’t being used—all of a sudden they’re being sold or renovated,” says Temple. “We’re not sitting around and waiting for things to happen: things are happening now. It’s pretty incredible.”

The Cle Elum Downtown Association, inspired by the work in progress on First Street, has drafted a 93-page Downtown Master Plan. Developed in partnership with Washington State Department of Archaeology’s Main Street Program, it provides a blueprint for extending streetscape enhancements throughout Cle Elum’s business district, including a pair of pocket parks and a façade-improvement grant program—and significantly, wayfinding signs for tourists, who, instead of passing Cle Elum by for Roslyn and Leavenworth, are starting to stop and discover a mining and logging town reborn as a base camp for outdoor recreation.

“There are a lot of people coming from the west side of the mountains to recreate here. This is the first stop over the Cascades, there’s a huge lake, Lake Cle Elum, and creeks and rivers,” says Temple. “The real change has been a shift from an industry that no longer exists to recreational tourism.”

Which is fine by Mayor McGowan.

“When I moved here, this was a working town: there was work to do, fixing harnesses, welding stuff,” he recalls. “Really, all this community has to offer anymore is the outdoors. Cle Elum is the first sunny spot on this side of the Cascades. Once you blast out of Seattle, it takes 90 minutes to get here. People are bailing from Seattle and will start hanging out here.”

And like the shade trees soon to be planted along downtown Cle Elum’s pedestrian-friendly sculpted sidewalks, before long, he hopes, they’ll start putting down roots. **C**

Citywise



“

Starting in February 2018, more than 2,000 drivers from across Washington participated in a yearlong pilot project to test how a pay-per-mile system might work.

— CITY 101 P.24 ▶

22 PREPARING FOR AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES **24** EXPLORING A ROAD USAGE CHARGE
26 SEEKING EFFICIENT SOLUTIONS FOR MAINTAINING CITY STREETS



Sharing Time

Community or low-speed AVs travel at 10–35 miles per hour and include small robotaxis, pods, large shuttles, and retrofitted vehicles like golf carts and vans. See how some communities are piloting AV tech now:



Connecting to sports and entertainment

For a year, attendees at Cowboys and Rangers games in Arlington, Texas, escaped the heat and got to see AV technology for themselves.



Expanding public transit

Las Vegas trialed an on-street circulator, and Tampa will soon join, connecting transit stops. Denver, Houston, and Atlanta are on the verge of providing first/last-mile service to transit.



Getting around a community

A Florida retirement community and a solar suburb are using an on-demand taxi-like service now.



Commuting

Quicken Loans employees in downtown Detroit are making tens of thousands of trips from offices to parking sites.

JOINING THE AV CLUB

Lessons for cities on the future with autonomous vehicles

KELLEY COYNER & LISA NISENSON BOTH OF MOBILITY e3

THE ORIGINAL REPORT on this scenario planning exercise, held at the American Planning Association Research Symposium, appeared in *Mobility Express* under the pen name “Mobility Momma.” A hundred planners, engineers, and researchers gathered to understand the impacts of autonomous vehicles (AVs) and crowdsource how to plan for them. This “memo,” which has been updated, set the stage for the crowdsourcing strategies and resources. The “city manager’s response” reflects our research and practice since the symposium.

TO: CITY MANAGER
FROM: CONCERNED CITY COUNCILMEMBER
RE: MINI METROPOLIS — UNDER THE EIGHT BALL

No matter whom I talk to—new businesses, our financial advisers, the state DOT, concerned citizens—it seems like we are way behind! No one agrees on anything except that driverless cars, buses, shuttles, and maybe even riderless scooters are here now.

Waymo’s gone into production with a factory in Detroit. Dozens of cities will soon have shuttles with cute names like Milo, Olli, and Marlon, some operating on the sidewalk, in special lanes, and even in the middle of downtown traffic. (There is a big federal grant I would love to tap into for the university). Taxi drivers are still mad about Uber and Lyft.

Some say that AVs will siphon off ridership from transit, eliminate jobs, and lead to the bankruptcy of our bus system. The GM tells me that we need to learn from these new technologies now. The real estate developers say they are saddled with expensive parking spaces that won’t be needed in an AV world.

University researchers claim that the vehicles will be roaming the streets empty and people will “drive” longer and longer

distances. Plus, we won’t be able to support the UPS distribution center without a real digital infrastructure. We don’t even have good broadband internet access.

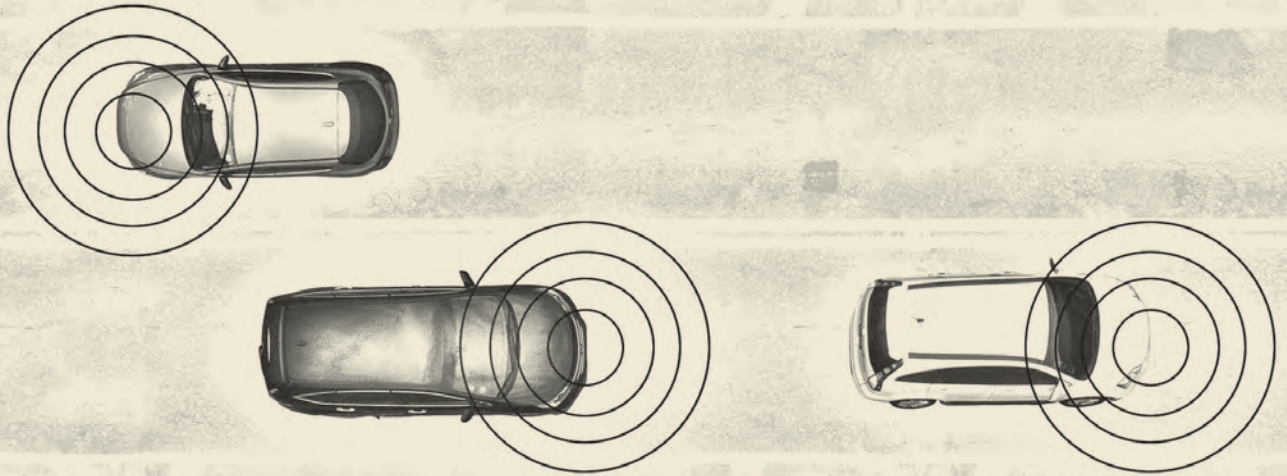
And then these advocacy groups say we’re going to convert streets and parks, widen the sidewalks, and add protected bike lanes.

We are promoting ourselves as an innovation hub, but how is it innovative if 75 percent of our citizens still say they’re scared to ride in AVs?

I would sure like to know what all the infrastructure is going to cost and how we’ll pay for it. Can you pull together some level-headed experts and figure out what Mini Metropolis should do?

TO: CONCERNED CITY COUNCILMEMBER
FROM: CITY MANAGER & DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
RE: MINI METROPOLIS — A CHANCE TO SHINE

Thank you for your patience, Concerned City Councilmember. There’s lots of speculation about when and whether we will switch over to autonomous vehicles. Let’s figure out how Mini Metropolis can get ready for AVs and shape this mobility revolution. Here you go:



1. MONEY TALKS: Focus on economic development, job loss and creation, and revenue loss.

Start by understanding the economic impact. Expanded and improved mobility choices and innovation are drivers of economic vibrancy and the ability to attract and keep jobs. Look at the impacts of AVs (what some people call “self-driving vehicles”) on revenue. And look at the impact of jobs creation and retention and increased autonomy for those who do not drive. Greater fuel efficiency and shifts to electric vehicles will accelerate the downward spiral of gas tax revenues. Changed ownership models also may undercut personal property tax. Decreased demand for parking may cut into parking revenues.

2. UNDERSTAND EQUITY.

AVs can dramatically improve opportunities for blind, older, and younger riders—if we consider those travelers in the planning and design. You need only try to find your Lyft or Uber at night in a crowded row of restaurants and shops to appreciate that we need to pay attention to the last 50 feet from home or restaurant to your ride. Also, let’s make sure that shared vehicles are universally designed starting with wheelchair access. You would think this would be a no-brainer, but look around to see who has a ramp and a way to fasten wheelchair riders

in securely. Meanwhile nationally, job and wage losses could hit transit and taxi drivers, delivery drivers, truckers, bus operators, and Lyft/Uber drivers disproportionately; we need to connect these workers to new jobs.

3. WHAT TO WORRY ABOUT: Favor safety gains, and protect against cyber dangers.

There are indeed real reasons to be worried about the vulnerability of automated vehicles to cyberattack. Address that risk, so as not to let it hijack automated technologies that protect occupants and people in the path of AVs, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, and people at bus stops. The sooner we start adopting automated technologies, the more lives will be saved—some of the 37,000 lives that are currently lost to human-caused crashes each year. Most traffic crashes are attributable to human error; from pilots of AI-fueled technology at Sound Transit, we now can help protect pedestrians and reduce less dangerous but still costly incidents.

4. THE INTERSECTION OF NEW MOBILITY AND LAND USE: Mobility-Oriented Development

We’ve worked on making places where people can live, work, play, and prosper. How might they change our affordable and workforce housing? Is

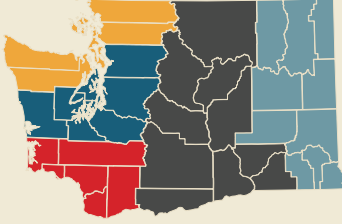
there a new paradigm for mobility-rich hubs that also include shared-AV drop-off areas, electric charging stations, and rich networks of walking and bike paths? Scenario planning with the stakeholders and the community is one way to explore how AV deployment could impact the city and what policy and planning tools we need to achieve our goals. Pilots of accessible, automated, connected, electric, and shared vehicles are another way to learn how to harness this disruptive set of technologies.

Conclusion: There are still many ways to maximize the safety and environmental benefits of AVs while guarding against increased congestion, sprawl, job loss, and the further weakening of public transit. Start by understanding AVs, and then move out with low-speed pilots that serve communities safely.

Let’s start now, working with the community to define what the technology revolution will look like on the streets where we live. **C**

Kelley Coyner, founder of Mobility e3, has taught at George Mason University and headed transportation agencies. She now advises CityTech on mobility innovation and is Mobility Momma.

Lisa Nisenson is an urban designer, smart mobility advisor, researcher, and founder of the award-winning smart city app GreaterPlaces.



Pilot Lights

This map shows the levels of participation in the pilot project compared to that area's percentage of Washington residents. For example, 60 percent of WA RUC participants are from the Central Puget Sound compared to that area consisting of 62 percent of the state's population.

Participants	Population	
6%	6%	Northwest Washington
60%	62%	Central Puget Sound
6%	9%	Southwest Washington
13%	13%	Central Washington
13%	9%	Eastern Washington

The state's road usage charge pilot project enrolled participants from all parts of the state and offered them a variety of tools for tracking mileage driven, including:

- Mileage permit
- Odometer reading
- Plug-in device with GPS
- Plug-in device without GPS
- MileMapper smartphone app

PAY AS YOU GO

Washington explores a road usage charge in the quest for stable transportation funding

REEMA GRIFFITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WA STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WASHINGTON STATE is exploring a potential gas tax replacement. The current state gas tax of 49.4 cents per gallon funds a large portion of the transportation budget that pays for maintenance of Washington's highways, ferries, and other infrastructure. As cars become increasingly fuel efficient and more electric vehicles travel our roads, the revenue used to support roads will decrease. To ensure stable, long-term funding for roads and bridges, the state is exploring options to change the way roads are funded.

IN FEBRUARY 2018, MORE THAN 2,000 DRIVERS PARTICIPATED IN A YEARLONG PILOT PROJECT TO TEST HOW A PAY-PER-MILE SYSTEM MIGHT WORK.

Since 2012, the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) has been exploring a road usage charge as a potential replacement to the gas tax. Starting in February 2018, more than 2,000 drivers from across Washington participated in a yearlong pilot project to test how a pay-per-mile system might work. Participants reported their miles, received mock invoices based on miles driven, and shared feedback about their experience.

Drivers were mock-charged 2.4 cents per mile, which is the equivalent per-mile cost of the current gas tax for a car that gets 20.5 miles per gallon, Washington's average. Participants had the option to

choose between four mileage reporting options to record and report their miles driven, ranging from high-tech to low-tech and no-tech. Invoices shared insights about individual driving habits and compared what drivers would pay under the current gas tax with their potential road usage charge.

Throughout the test-driving phase of the pilot, participants had multiple opportunities to report observations made while participating and reviewing mock invoices sent at regular intervals. Test drivers also participated in focus groups and surveys, sharing feedback about topics like the convenience and user-friendliness of reporting options and invoices; the importance of principles such as privacy, simplicity, transparency, cost-effectiveness, and equity; and satisfaction with customer service and the pilot itself.

The test-driving phase of the 12-month pilot project ended in January 2019. Now that the pilot project is complete, all of the data and information collected will be analyzed and findings determined. The WSTC will issue a final report of findings and recommendations to the governor, the state Legislature, and the United States Department of Transportation by January 2020. At that point, the Washington State Legislature will be tasked with deciding if, how, and when a road usage charge would be enacted. **C**

Reema Griffith leads the Washington State Transportation Commission's work on state finance, toll and ferry fare setting, long-range statewide planning, public outreach and education, and providing advisement to the Legislature and governor on transportation matters.



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Building Bridges

Bridge repair and replacement projects are often out of scale with city budgets. In the City of Winlock (population 1,300), Olequa Creek splits the community in two, and bridges are essential transportation connections. The Fir Street Bridge closed in 2014 as unsafe, and the Walnut Street Bridge also needed repairs. Estimated project costs were almost \$4 million.

Federal Bridge Replacement Advisory Committee (BRAC) funding supports most major bridge repairs and replacements across the state, and Winlock received \$3.2 million for these projects. However, to receive federal funding, the city needed \$600,000 in matching funds. With limited local resources, there was a significant funding gap even with outside funding. Support came from the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) Small City Program, and with this funding the town coordinated a major repair of Walnut Street Bridge in 2017 and replacement of the Fir Street Bridge in 2018.

FUNDING DRIVE

Seeking efficient solutions for maintaining city streets

BRIAN MURPHY BERK CONSULTING & STEVAN GORCESTER PERFORMANCE PLANE LLC

EVERY DAY, WE SPEND TIME on city streets, whether driving, riding a bike, or walking. You may have taken a county road or a state route as you traveled to work or home today, but you likely started your day on a city street or used a city street to get to your destination.

City streets are an essential and basic part of our transportation network, connecting Washington neighborhoods and communities and supporting our economy. Altogether, Washington cities are responsible for about 17,000 miles of streets and about 740 bridges, carrying some 25 percent of statewide traffic each day.

The bulk of city investment in critical transportation infrastructure comes from local sources. While there are federal and state dollars that help with a range of projects, nearly 80 percent of city transportation funding comes from local sources, with the state contributing about 13 percent and the federal government covering the remainder. Within that local share, only a small portion of city investments come from funding sources dedicated to transportation, with the majority coming from general city funds. Transportation investments thus often compete for scarce public dollars alongside safety, human services, parks, libraries, and other city functions. Smaller cities with less general fund capacity to contribute to streets, such as Winlock (see “Building Bridges,” at left), become more dependent on grants for street maintenance and upgrades.

Funding raised for local transportation is spent in different ways. Public works and transportation departments have base administration and overhead costs, as well as costs for maintaining buildings, equipment, and vehicle fleets. They also have costs to maintain the existing system, including daily activities (such as filling potholes), as well as long-term preventative maintenance that extends the useful life of streets. Finally, larger

capital projects that enhance or expand infrastructure are also costs in a transportation budget, including all necessary financing and debt service costs.

These are all sizable costs to cities, and they are increasing over time. Washington cities spent \$1.4 billion on construction, maintenance, and preservation projects in 2017, according to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Over the past five years, this has increased on average by over 5 percent per year, adjusted for inflation.

These increasing costs have led to a greater gap between available funds and local needs. The reasons for these cost trends vary from community to community. Higher costs for labor and materials have been significant short-term drivers. Regulatory requirements and legal liabilities, ranging from stricter federal and state requirements for stormwater discharges to legal liabilities for fish passage barriers, have expanded the scope of transportation projects. Growth and development in many Washington communities have led to demands for expanding local transportation capacity to maintain desirable levels of service. Many of Washington’s cities and towns face maintenance and preservation backlogs and lack adequate transportation revenues to meet these needs.

Considering all of these factors, and recognizing that cities both large and small are striving to make wise investment decisions to preserve and maintain their street networks, AWC worked with the Legislature to ask the state’s Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) to explore the following questions as part of a new study:

- How much are different types of cities currently investing in streets? How do they fund these investments? How can state programs and local funding tools be most effective? Why do cities choose to use or not use certain funding tools?



■ How do transportation revenues and expenditures vary by city? How do city experiences differ based on local conditions, including cities with unique responsibilities such as bridges, commute corridors, freight corridors, or state highways?

■ How can new and existing data about our streets be used to ensure that our dollars are invested effectively in maintaining our streets, whether they come from federal, state, or local sources?

■ What factors drive the costs of maintenance and capital projects, considering such factors as the age of the underlying system, environmental mitigation, and desired social outcomes, as well as the underlying costs of labor and materials?

■ How do cities finance large transportation projects? What are the challenges

cities face in assembling sources of funding for major projects?

■ What potential alternative sources of funding could address existing gaps and future needs?

This study, which will conclude by the end of June, is being led by BERK Consulting, supported by Steve Gorcester and Pertee. Working with JTC staff and a staff workgroup, they will seek answers to the above questions through analysis of existing data, deeper investigation into several representative case studies (contact us if you would like your city's experiences to be featured as an illustrative example), and research into challenges and solutions found elsewhere in the country. (More information is available on the project webpage at leg.wa.gov/JTC/Pages/City-Funding-Study.aspx.)

In addition to providing an overview of what local communities are facing, this study will present guidance to the Washington State Legislature on future actions that can be taken to support cities in building and maintaining their transportation networks. Recommendations will not simply direct more state and local money at funding gaps, but instead suggest how current funding and current tools can be used more efficiently. **C**

Brian Murphy is a principal at BERK Consulting Inc., with more than 15 years of experience leading complex policy projects and working closely with decision-makers.

Stevan Gorcester is a 35-year career professional in public management, transportation, and capital finance who led the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) for almost 15 years before entering consulting.



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Cityscape



Mobile Networking

The means may change, but the impact is the same: smart transportation options help build great communities.

THE COVERED WOODEN BRIDGE: in one end and out the other. Simple and practical, not a lot of infrastructure money invested, but it was the right mobility solution at the right time.

Mobility has always been about how people move around their community and how they access goods and services. Mark Funkhouser, *Governing* magazine publisher, highlighted what he called a human-scale perspective on mobility, pointing out that it should bring people together in ways that build community. In a recent blog post, he shares people-oriented mobility goals from Pittsburgh's newly created Department of Mobility and Infrastructure:

- No one dies or is seriously injured traveling on city streets.
- Every household can access fresh fruits and vegetables within 20 minutes' travel of home, without the requirement of a private vehicle.

- All trips less than one mile are easily and enjoyably achieved by nonvehicle travel.
- Streets and intersections can be intuitively navigated by an adolescent.
- The combined cost of transportation, housing, and energy does not exceed 45 percent of household income for any income group.

Transportation planning and funding for many cities are often about improving the basics, especially for smaller communities. Yet even those basics have the potential to meet people's growing need for mobility options and to improve the quality of their travel. As cities add trending concepts like placemaking to their transportation planning, they're simply trying to make it easy for people to move and have access. That's still what it's all about. **C**

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March 20-21, 2019 | Lynnwood

Labor Relations Institute
May 1-3, 2019 | Yakima

AWC Annual Conference
June 25-28, 2019 | Spokane

Member Expo
October 17-18, 2019 | Chelan

City Action Days
January 28-29, 2020 | Olympia



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