

Chronology of the Transit Planning Process

- 1884 The first horse-drawn **street railway was constructed.**
- 1889 The first cable car line was placed in operation and electrification of transit begun.
- 1892 By this year over 70 miles of track in Seattle and West Seattle were operating under management of over a dozen different companies.
- 1901 Stone and Webster, a Boston engineering firm and owner of the largest electric power company in Seattle area, received permission to acquire all transit companies in the area and create a monopoly.
- 1918 The city of Seattle purchased the portions of the transit system within its borders from Stone and Webster.
- 1939 Seattle's three-man Transit Commission was established to operate the Seattle system.
- 1952 James Ellis led a campaign to restructure King County to provide for home rule and authority for metropolitanwide improvements. The proposal was defeated.
- 1953 The Washington State Toll Bridge Authority was authorized to construct the Central Freeway as a toll facility.
- 1955 The Seattle Transit Commission's request for inclusion of rapid transit facilities in the median of the proposed Central Freeway was denied by the Toll Authority.
- 1956 Following passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act, responsibility for construction of the Central Freeway was transferred to the Washington State Highway Department.
- The Metropolitan Problems Advisory Committee, chaired by Jim Ellis, was appointed by the mayor of Seattle and the Board of King County Commissioners.
- 1957 In January, the Seattle Planning Commission issued a report recommending transit on the Central Freeway.
- In February, Seattle Mayor Gordon Clinton appointed a committee to consider rapid transit operation on the Central Freeway.
- In April, the Transit Commission published a report recommending future rail provisions on the Central Freeway with interim use by express bus.
- In June, in response to recommendations of the Metropolitan Problems Advisory Committee, the State legislature passed the Metropolitan Municipal Corporation Act, which enabled the establishment of corporations for solving metropolitanwide problems.
- In October, the Puget Sound Regional Transportation Committee was formed to determine the scope and procedures for a regional comprehensive transportation study.
- In November, pursuant to the State enabling legislation, a new citizens' organization chaired by Jim Ellis, the Metropolitan Council Action Committee, began a major promotional campaign supporting creation of a municipal corporation for the Seattle area.
- The Puget Sound Governmental Conference was created by the elected officials of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties to serve as the area's Voluntary Council of Governments.
- 1958 In March, the Metro concept, covering sewage disposal, public transportation, and comprehensive planning, was

presented to the voters. It failed to pass by a small margin of 16,000 votes out of 187,000 votes cast.

In September, voters approved a stripped-down Metro as a single-function agency responsible for sewage disposal.

In October, the Puget Sound Regional Transportation Committee employed Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Hall and MacDonald to determine the scope and procedures of the proposed comprehensive transportation study.

1959 In April, the final report of Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Hall and MacDonald was submitted.

1960 In July, the prospectus of the proposed study was approved by the Technical Committee of the Puget Sound Regional Transportation Committee.

Later that year, John Mladinov became director of the Puget Sound Regional Transportation Study (PSRTS). A delegation of civic groups requested that Mladinov consider rail rapid transit as part of the basic transportation network, Mladinov was not cooperative.

1961 In October, the Metropolitan Transportation Committee, including Jim Ellis, was created to determine the best means to provide rapid transit for the Seattle area.

1962 In February, in response to the Metropolitan Transportation Committee's recommendation that Metro should perform the transit function, a promotional committee was formed called Citizens' Committee for Metro Transit.

In September, despite an intensive campaign, a measure to include public transportation as a function of Metro was again defeated by the voters.

1964 In June, after the city leaders' dissatisfaction with the PSRTS transit efforts, PSGC authorized DeLeuw, Cather & Company to undertake a transit study and recommend a regional transit plan.

In November, DeLeuw issued its first interim report, recommending that rapid transit facilities be incorporated into a Lake Washington bridge (the **I-90 Bridge**).

1965 In November, DeLeuw, Cather issued its second interim report on the feasibility of rapid transit operation in the Seattle area. It recommended a two-line transit system connecting the CBD to the northeast portion of the city and to Bellevue. A Rapid Transit Advisory Committee, appointed by Mayor Braman and headed by Jim Ellis, endorsed the plan, and PSGC adopted it as an element of a total regional transportation plan.

Also in November, Jim Ellis spoke before the Seattle Rotary Club and called for the creation of Forward Thrust to coordinate the finance of needed metropolitanwide capital improvements. Rapid transit, a sports stadium, arterial street improvements, parks and open space, and urban redevelopment were suggested to be considered as part of a unified 10-year capital program.

1966 In March, Mayor James D. Braman and King County Commissioner Scott Wallace appointed a committee to select a Forward Thrust Committee.

In April, the PSRTS summary report was issued. The report concluded that no strong recommendation could be made for rapid transit.

In July, the newly appointed Forward Thrust Committee of 200 was called together for its first meeting. During the same month PSGC contracted with DeLeuw, Cather to refine the transit plan and determine if additional routes would be required.

From September to December, meetings of the Forward Thrust Committee were held to conduct background surveys of capital needs of the metropolitan area.

1967 Between January and April, Forward Thrust sponsored legislation necessary to carry out its programs. Eighteen bills

- were passed, including one permitting Metro to do planning for a comprehensive public transportation system.
- From April to October, Forward Thrust analyzed previously recommended improvement programs in relation to funding availability and established priorities.
- In June, DeLeuw, Cather was contracted by Metro to conduct a number of detailed studies on the transit plan and to broaden the scope of its study to take into consideration architecture, urban design, economic, and other factors not previously covered.
- In October, after an endorsement by a blue-ribbon consultant review board, DeLeuw, Cather published the transit plan.
- In November, Forward Thrust began its promotional campaign for its 12 bond issues. The rapid transit proposal was the biggest cost-item—\$385 million out of the \$819 million total.
- 1968 On February 13, 7 of the 12 Forward Thrust bond issues received voter approval. Although transit received support of 51 percent of the voters, it failed to get the 60 percent approval required for it to pass.
- In March, the Forward Thrust Committee began a second effort to secure approval of the entire program.
- From September through December, background surveys were again conducted to reassess capital improvements needs.
- 1969 Between January and March, eight State bills sponsored by Forward Thrust were passed. One provided Metro and State financial assistance for mass transit.
- In March, DeLeuw, Cather & Company, this time retained under a contract signed by the city of Seattle and Metro, completed a comparative analysis of alternative transportation systems and again recommended the bus-rail concept.
- 1970 Between January and February, Forward Thrust successfully sponsored five pieces of State legislation.
- On February 19, a report was published by DeLeuw, Cather documenting the modified 1967 transit plan.
- On May 19, four Forward Thrust propositions totaling \$615.5 million were presented to the voters, with transit at a cost of \$440 million being the largest. All four proposals were defeated due largely to poor local economic conditions resulting from huge layoffs at Boeing. Transit received a supporting vote of only 46 percent. After the election, the Forward Thrust organization was disbanded.
- On September 8, the “Blue-Streak” demonstration express bus service went into service. It utilized priority freeway access and was well received.
- 1971 In September, UMTA approved a \$447, -000 study requested by the PSGC. PSGC employed Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall to prepare a short-term bus plan that would not require bonded indebtedness.
- 1972 On September 19, voters approved an 0.3 percent sales tax that provided funds for Metro to take over the Seattle Transit System, to buy out the suburban Metropolitan Transit Corporation, and to provide improvements in service and equipment as spelled out in the PSGC plan.
- 1973 **On January 1, Metro began operating the transit system.**
- In September, Metro introduced a free downtown area zone stimulating intra-CBD travel.
- 1974 **PSGC and Metro signed a cooperation agreement spelling out their respective roles. However, rivalries and competition between the two agencies continued.**
- Metro put out a request for proposals to develop an incremental approach to long-term transit planning.

1975 **After much difficulty in trying to obtain**
PSGC approval, Metro initiated its long-
term transit planning approach.

Controversy over the I-90 Lake
Washington crossing continued to
highlight the battles over transportation

planning in the Seattle area. Still at issue
is whether or not to build the highway
facility and whether or not to provide
new transit service across the lake. Also
at issue is what kind of transit is to be
provided (if any), and how its entrance
into the CBD is to be handled.