

By this time, Stone and Webster had sold PSP&L to another "Boston Syndicate," Engineer's Public Service Company, although most of the corporate officers did not change. In 1934, the Securities Exchange Commission ordered the "new" owners to divest PSP&L. By the time J.D. Ross took his seat on the SEC, his old antagonist, Stone & Webster, had been regulated out of existence.

Puget Power's new "home rule" board of trustees retained ownership of North Coast's interurban railway and stage lines, but the former was nearing the end of the line. When Seattle began abandoning its street rails, which were shared by the North Coast's cars, it sealed the fate of the Seattle-Everett interurban.

The final run to Everett left Seattle at 11 p.m., February 20, 1939. The handsome interurban coaches, once the pride of the Puget Sound region, were scrapped or, a worse indignity, converted into roadside diners for the hungry motorists whose appetite for the automobile had doomed the railway.

North Coast continued to expand its stage service and was operating a fleet of 165 buses over 520 route miles between Portland and Vancouver, B.C., by 1947. Taking a leaf from Stone & Webster's play book, Puget Power built its bus lines into a regional monopoly. The company actually owned its only titular competitor, ironically named Independent Stages. This drew the scrutiny of federal anti-trust investigators, and Puget Power sold its stage lines to Greyhound in 1947 and closed the book on more than half a century of hegemony over the region's public transportation.

The last chapter in its struggle with City Light was written three years later. Facing the expiration of Jacob Furth's original Seattle power franchise in 1952, Puget Power reluctantly negotiated to transfer its Seattle facilities and customers to City Light for \$26.8 million. The deal was put to a referendum on November 7, 1950, and 130,000 voters went to the polls. The purchase was approved with a razor-thin majority of 754 votes.

The great war of public versus private power was finally over. Not quite one century had elapsed since the arrival of Seattle's first white settlers.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Public ownership of Seattle's original mass transit system developed as a skirmish in a larger contest between City Light and the forerunner of Puget Power for control of the region's electricity. Puget Sound's utility and transportation wars were not unique. The early politics of Los Angeles, for example, was defined by intrigues over irrigation and street rail. That city's Pacific Electric interurban transit system was dismantled through collusion, later proved in federal court, among automobile interests and highway contractors. LA's infamous freeways, smog and suburban sprawl are the result.

Substitute electricity for water and Stone & Webster's "Green Monsters" for Pacific Electric's "Red Cars," and movies like *Chinatown* and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* could have been made about the politics of Puget Sound's early development. Conspiracy theories cannot tell the whole story, however, for the people were as complicit in these events as any politician or corporate executive.

During the first half of the 20th century, the nation witnessed a massive reorganization of transportation capital and personal behavior. Rail was the paradigm of mobility between the Civil War and the Second World War. It was capitalized and managed by centralized utilities, public and private. Trains, streetcars and interurbans operated on fixed routes and schedules. People came to the system for service on its terms; it did not go to them.

If the organization of transportation utilities was sometimes arbitrary, service was generally reliable. Under the benevolent dictatorship of transit operators, users had little to worry about except finding car fare, getting to the station on time, and voting on the occasional bond issue. The street and interurban railways were also remarkably safe; fewer than half a dozen passengers perished in accidents over a half century of service in greater Seattle.

With the advent of the automobile, a new paradigm of mobility was established with astounding rapidity. The first motor car arrived in Seattle in 1900; by the time the last streetcar was retired, nearly 100,000 machines clogged the city's streets. In this transition, individuals gladly assumed the capital, maintenance and operating costs for their own transportation. They paid in other ways with little protest: billions in taxes for highways, the degradation of the environment, and tens of thousands of traffic deaths and injuries. But people calculated that the price was worth the ability to travel wherever and whenever they liked.

Street trolleys and interurbans are now the object of much nostalgia, although their

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contemporary users didn't hesitate to abandon them for the perceived convenience of the automobile -- if they could afford one. Fifty years later, the chrome-plated promise of the car has lost much of its luster, but freedom of choice in personal transportation remains a powerful force and a daunting challenge in planning fixed-route mass transit.

The transportation decisions described in this section defined much of today's land use and population distribution on Puget Sound, but the slate was not entirely clean when the first roads and rails were laid. Water pre-ordained the pattern of habitation; street railways and interurbans filled in the blanks. Although the tracks and streetcars have long since rusted away, they left a legacy of city parks, broad avenues, and self-contained neighborhoods which might not have come into being under a different transportation technology. Street rail also left behind the dominance of north-south routes which still guides most public transit.

Yesterday's transportation planners faced the same kinds of choices we now confront. They argued over growth impacts, and risked millions of public and private dollars on their decisions. They did not always win their bets. Merely laying a trolley line did not necessarily guarantee development or fares. Many rail-real estate entrepreneurs went broke when too few home buyers and passengers followed their tracks. In Puget Sound's first century of transportation planning, not every egg hatched.

Seattle's early transportation entrepreneurs also gambled on new technology. The rise and fall of street and interurban rail constitute one of the most extraordinary episodes in the industrial age. Within the average life span of a human being, an entirely new form of transportation appeared, swept the nation, transformed the American city, galvanized billions of dollars of public and private investment, and then disappeared forever.

Forever? That remains to be seen.

Routes

Part II: The Roads Not Taken

False Starts and Forward Thrusts, 1950 to 1970

The 1950 census enumerated 733,000 residents in King County. Of these, 468,000, or nearly two-thirds, lived within Seattle's city limits which then extended from their present southern boundary only as far north as 85th Street. Four other incorporated cities existed in the County as the decade began: Bothell, Houghton, Kirkland and Renton. The bulk of the population of unincorporated King County clustered immediately north and south of Seattle, and a mere 32,900 citizens resided on the "Eastside" between Lakes Washington and Sammamish.

This pattern began to change quickly. Seattle pushed its border north to 145th Street in 1954 and added nearly 100,000 residents during the decade. The new cities of Bellevue and Clyde Hill incorporated in 1953, followed by Beaux Arts in 1954, Hunts Point and Medina in 1955, Yarrow Point in 1959, and Mercer Island in 1960. Meanwhile the number of "special districts" for various utilities and services in unincorporated areas multiplied to 138 and earned King County the dubious distinction of ranking second only to Chicago's Cook County in the number of its units of local government. During this same period, the population on the Eastside doubled and King County gained more than 200,000 citizens, an increase of nearly 28 percent.

The pace of this change and the mounting confusion in local governance provided ample grist for the mills of government reformers and urban visionaries. As roads filled with traffic and suburban development pushed outward beyond the reach of adequate infrastructure, problems of water quality and transportation climbed the political agenda. Something had to be done, but what, how, and by whom?

Dress Rehearsal: the 1952 County Charter Fight

The struggle for "good government" has long been led by the Municipal League of Seattle and King County. Inspired by Theodore Roosevelt's National Municipal League, the Seattle group was founded in 1910 to provide a forum and a fulcrum for the area's active progressive

movement. From the outset it was a leading champion of public ownership of transit and electric power utilities described in Part I of this essay.

The "Muni League" initially allied itself with labor and social reformers, including movements for women's suffrage, the 8-hour day and Prohibition, but after World War II it became more establishmentarian. The group came to be dominated by attorneys, technical experts and business professionals who shared John Dewey's faith that reason could solve social and political problems. Thus the League focused its advocacy on promoting "scientific administration" in government through such reforms as a professional civil service, nonpartisan elections, comprehensive planning, and, especially, the city manager form of municipal government.

After several tries at persuading Seattle to adopt a city manager government, the Muni League settled for a 1946 City Charter which created a strong nonpartisan council and a weak but independently elected mayor (state law shifted the balance in 1966 when it granted the mayor control of the city budget). The League and its allies decided to zero in on King County's government, then led by three commissioners who acted as both legislators and administrators of selected departments. Another seven elected positions controlled key functions: assessor, auditor, clerk, coroner, prosecuting attorney, sheriff and treasurer. This system created enormous opportunities for favoritism and patronage, and Democrats and Republicans alike vied to control the trough.

The League conducted a successful lobbying and electoral campaign to amend the State Constitution in 1948 to permit adoption of "home rule" county charters. Amendment 21 grants voters the power to define the scope and internal organization of county government within broad limits. The process requires the election of citizen "freeholders" who draft a home rule charter for submittal to the voters.

The League persuaded county voters to elect 15 freeholders, most of whom were members of a League slate, in November 1950. The freeholders in turn hired a young attorney named James Reed Ellis as their counsel. A product of Franklin High School, Yale University and the University of Washington Law School, Ellis personified the Muni League ideal of a modern day Cincinnatus who put aside his daily duties to take up the people's business in a selfless spirit of public service.

Inspired by attorney John Rupp, who was a personal hero, Ellis joined the League in 1949

and soon made his mark as a passionate and intellectually rigorous participant in the League's many studies of government issues. He was only 32 when League President Ben Erlichman tapped him to serve as the freeholders' counsel.

This assignment put Ellis under the titular supervision of Charles O. Carroll, King County's formidable Republican Prosecuting Attorney. Ellis recalls "serious differences" between the two men over the following year and a half as the freeholders wrote and codified a radically different kind of constitution for King County government. The effort was resisted at every turn by political parties and County employees, who even sued to invalidate the freeholder election and block payment of Jim Ellis' salary. Ellis and his wife Mary Lou had to subsist on fish caught in a river next to a family cabin in Issaquah until the courts disposed of the anti-charter challenge.

The proposed charter was unveiled on July 28, 1952. It called for a seven-member Board of County Commissioners, with three members elected by Seattle residents, three elected by the balance of county residents, and one member elected by the entire county. This ratio gave Seattle citizens an effective majority of 4 to 3, which roughly reflected that time's ratio of 468,000 Seattle residents to the 265,000 living in the balance of King County.

The freeholders also proposed to create an appointed County Administrator comparable to a city manager, and they eliminated all other elected functionaries except the prosecutor (which was exempted by Amendment 21). They also codified the civil service as part of the charter and mandated professional qualifications for new officers such as the County Engineer, Airport Manager and Budget Director. As to the county's mission, the draft charter was significantly silent for it assumed that the new government could and would act with the broad latitude of a municipality.

As the reader can imagine, the two political parties were horrified by this plan since it would effectively banish them from the Court House. They viewed the League, whose membership peaked in 1952 at more than 5,200, as a competing third party disguised behind a mask of political altruism. Democrats and Republicans formed a coalition with organized labor to oppose the charter, and *The Seattle Times* later reported that County employees were "coerced" into contributing to the anti-charter campaign. Fearing for their jobs, most county employees likely felt genuine antipathy towards the new charter.

The League's enthusiasm notwithstanding, support for the charter was muted. Many

progressives feared that the new County Administrator concentrated too much power in a non elected office and more vocal critics warned against enthroning a County "dictator." Comparisons with communism were even published; McCarthyism was at its height at the time, after all. Even the League of Women Voters, a traditional Muni League ally, expressed reservations about the scope of the proposed change, but it joined with the Jaycees to advocate adoption.

Faced with a well organized and financed opposition, the charter's friends made little headway in convincing a skeptical electorate before the election on November 5, 1952. To no one's real surprise, County voters rejected the new charter by 111,000 votes to 59,000. The result was probably less an informed verdict on the merits of the charter than a proof of the old political maxim: when in doubt, vote no.

This election was a watershed in several respects. First, it sharpened the antagonism between progressive factions in business and the professions on the one hand and the forces of organized labor and traditional political parties on the other. The former came to view the latter as reactionaries and obstructionists; the latter saw the former as usurpers and dilettantes. These sides would rub each other the wrong way in every subsequent campaign for metropolitan reform.

Second, the campaign established a leitmotif of "professional" versus political management of government which would resonate in future debates over Metro and Forward Thrust. Insulation of government from the give and take of politics, especially partisan politics, was promoted as a civic virtue by reformers, and condemned as elitist and antidemocratic by their opponents. The latter were not necessarily agents of the status quo; they merely esteemed different values, both liberal and conservative, in their own ideas for improving government services.

Third, the results of November 1952 steered Jim Ellis and like minded "good government" advocates in a new direction. In the wake of the charter defeat, Ellis recalls that his wife Mary Lou posed a fundamental question: "If it doesn't help people in their daily lives, is it really a reform?" Ellis and his allies realized that merely tinkering with the structure of county governance could not address the most pressing needs for regional planning, facilities and services. If they could not win a frontal assault against county government, they could outflank it by creating an entirely new kind of agency to benefit both city dwellers and residents of unincorporated areas.

Thus was born the idea for the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle.

The Birth of Metro

In the first of a series of seminal speeches over the next two decades, Jim Ellis delivered an address on metropolitan needs to the Muni League on November 20, 1953. He outlined the challenges facing the region: urban decay, aging infrastructure, suburban sprawl, air and water pollution, mounting traffic congestion, and the inability of a crazy quilt of 180 local jurisdictions within King County to plan or deliver a coherent response to metropolitan problems.

Ellis called for a special study group to explore options for reform. These included expansion of Seattle through annexation, more city-county agencies such as the Seattle-King County Health Department, or a new kind of metropolitan government. For his part, Ellis had already seen the future in Toronto's recently instituted two tier metropolitan government, and it worked.

The League convened a "Metropolitan Problems Committee" to study the issue and met for two years under the chairmanship of attorneys John Blankinship and, later, C. Carey Donworth. It delivered its report, titled "Metropolitan Seattle The State We're In," in April 1955. The League then shifted its attention to possible remedies with the aid of the U of W's Bureau of Governmental Research and Services. It published "Metropolitan Seattle The Shape of Things to Come" in June 1956. In response, Governor Langlie appointed a special committee to advise him on "metropolitan problems."

After three years of education and agitation in behalf of a new agency to tackle regional problems, and the participation of hundreds of citizen participants, Seattle Mayor Gordon Clinton joined with King County Commissioners to appoint a more formal "Metropolitan Problems Advisory Committee." With Ellis at the helm, the 75 member committee conceived the idea of a metropolitan municipal corporation to handle six basic services: sewage treatment, solid waste disposal, water supply, mass transportation, regional parks, and comprehensive planning. The new agency was to be governed by a 15 member council including county commissioners, mayors, and city councilmembers (with a majority of 8 reserved for Seattle), plus an appointed citizen to serve in the chair.

As an entirely new form of government, such corporations required enabling state legislation. A statute authorizing "metropolitan municipal corporations" was drafted and

introduced in Olympia in January 1957. It immediately met resistance from rural interests who feared that the precedent of metropolitan "supergovernments" would upset existing county administrations. Constituencies in southern King and Snohomish Counties feared that Metro would dragoon them into paying higher taxes for the urban problems they had fled to the suburbs to escape. Meeting and overcoming these objections was the task faced by State Senator and Democratic Majority Leader R.R. "Bob" Greive.

If Jim Ellis is Metro's father, Greive must be credited as the agency's delivering physician, or as Greive jokingly puts it, "Metro's midwife." He joined with Republican Senator William Goodloe to steer the Metro act to a 42 to 2 victory in the Senate. A freshman Republican Representative named Daniel J. Evans helped the bill navigate even rougher waters in the State House. Along the way, Metro sponsors had to accept amendments to limit the new entity to "AA Counties," i.e., solely King County, and to expand suburban clout by requiring "dual majorities" of voters inside and outside Seattle to create or expand Metro.

Even with these compromises the Metro Act seemed destined to fail on a tie vote in the closing days of the 1957 session, but House Speaker John L. O'Brien had one last move. He traded a promise to support an anti-Metro legislator's pet bill for his promise to leave the House floor "for an important phone call" before the final vote. Thanks to this gambit, the Metropolitan Municipal Corporations Act passed the House by a single vote on the last day of the 1957 legislative session. (Despite a fractious fight over redistricting, this same session approved the first funding for the Seattle World's Fair and construction of the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge.)

With state authorization in hand, the details of a Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle were quickly hammered out. The most pressing problem was that of sewage treatment. Lake Washington was choking on a daily discharge of 20 million gallons of sewage, which fed an odoriferous bloom of algae. Metro's creators also wanted to start moving on mass transit and comprehensive planning. They drew the original Metro boundaries to embrace the most populated areas of western King County from Puget Sound to Issaquah and virtually from the Pierce and Snohomish County lines.

The Metro plan was put on the March 11, 1958, ballot along with a one year levy of one mill to fund initial operations. Unlike 1952, press and political support was nearly unanimous. Opposition was centered in the suburbs and took the form of the King County Taxpayers' League Against Metro. Its chairman, Renton-based attorney Nick Maffeo, argued that Metro Council was

"an undemocratic body, not elected by you the people, which will be dominated and controlled" by Seattle and that it "replaces cooperation with compulsion" to solve problems manageable under existing governments. Jim Ellis recalls that Kirkland mayor Byron Baggaley also led the opposition among Eastside cities, many of which sought to protect their investments in new sewage facilities built since World War II.

Metro's opponents deftly manipulated the Achilles heel of the municipal corporation law: its requirement for dual majorities inside and outside of Seattle. While Metro passed by 76,000 votes to 59,000 in Seattle, it failed 7,200 to 7,900 in the suburbs. The negative votes were concentrated in Renton, Kent and south King County. The levy barely passed and failed to obtain the 60 percent supermajority required; it was moot in any case.

Metro supporters regrouped and decided to pare back their proposal to the most urgent issue of water quality. They also trimmed the Metro boundaries to exclude most of the south county precincts which had voted against the first Metro proposition. Taxpayers in suburban cities were mollified with a Metro pledge to purchase all existing sewage plants, and Seattle Mayor Clinton convinced skeptics on the Seattle City Council (who wanted to tackle pollution singlehandedly) by pointing out that "you can't clean up half a lake."

Metro published a brochure featuring the now famous photograph of five children standing on the shore of Lake Washington next to a sign on which is stenciled "WARNING: POLLUTED WATER. UNSAFE FOR BATHING." Opposition arguments that "treated effluent has no effect on fresh water and lakes" could not counteract the evidence of voters' own eyes (and noses) as they viewed Lake Washington's murky expanse. On September 9, 1958, Metro sailed to victory by 55,000 to 40,000 votes in Seattle, and 15,000 to 7,500 in the suburbs.

A companion levy again failed to win the required super majority, although it fared better outside of Seattle than it did in the city. The defeat was not fatal, for Metro could proceed with planning with fees from participating jurisdictions and use sewer charges to back the \$79 million in utility bonds needed for actual construction and operation.

The Metro Council met for the first time on October 1, 1958, and elected C. Carey Donworth as its chairman (he would serve until 1980). Three weeks later the new Council retained Jim Ellis and his firm, Preston, Thorgimson et al., to handle the details of its bond sales. In March 1959, Metro hired Harold Miller as its first executive director and got down to business.

The dream of planning and operating a metropolitan transit system was shelved for the moment, but it was not forgotten.

The Coming of the Freeways

King County's total population grew by nearly 28 percent from 1950 to 1960. During the same period, suburban areas swelled by 43 percent, adding 113,000 new residents. The County's roads became increasingly clogged as car registrations almost doubled to 373,000 vehicles.

Keeping cars moving became the prime directive for transportation planning. The state adopted enabling legislation for "limited access highways" in 1947. A year later Seattle began construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct to divert Highway 99 traffic around downtown streets via the waterfront. It was completed in 1953, and while it effectively walled off the business district from the harbor, urban design protests were few and muted.

Completion of the Viaduct and Highway 99 provided the first leg of a system of "ring roads" envisioned in Seattle's comprehensive plan. This scheme was more like the stays of a girdle superimposed on Seattle's hourglass form. The north south supports were 99, the future Interstate 5 and an "Empire Expressway," later named for R.H. Thomson, to the east. The east west bands included expressways along NE 50th Street, Mercer Street, and a southern connection at Spokane Street.

Planning for what would become Interstate-5 began in 1953. The state originally intended to finance construction with tolls, but the State Supreme Court ruled this out in 1956, so the road was redesignated a "freeway." That same year Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act, which freed billions in aid for a system of "national defense highways." The central freeway was absorbed into the larger Interstate-5 plan.

While freeway construction became the state and city's primary transportation strategy, mass transit was not forgotten. Seattle's Transit Commission pressed the state to consider accommodating a rail transit system as part of the planning for the central freeway. In 1953, Seattle proposed incorporation of a 50 foot wide median for rail right of way, but the state would only accept the idea of express bus service on the freeway. The Transit Commission retained

consulting engineers to prepare such a plan.

Seattle renewed the idea of incorporating rail in 1957 and it estimated that the cost of acquiring the needed additional rights of way would cost \$16 million. The State replied that its plans and budgets were too far advanced to absorb the extra cost and effort. It did agree, however, to a preliminary "scoping" study by the engineering firm of Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Hall and McDonald, which was already at work helping San Francisco plan what would become the Bay Area Rapid Transit System. In 1958, former Seattle Transit director Marmion Mills penned a visionary rail and bus mass transit plan that included extensive "park and ride" facilities.

Around this same time, the State Department of Highways faced its first challenge on aesthetic and environmental grounds. Architects Victor Steinbrueck and Paul Thiry, who would later make their marks respectively as savior of Pike Place Market and designer of the Seattle Coliseum, objected to bisecting downtown with a deep trench for I-5. Their alternative was a "covered mall" which anticipated Freeway Park and I-90's several lids by a quarter of a century.

The need for a second floating bridge was also anticipated early on. Eastside growth skyrocketed during the 1950s and the County's feeble land use controls placed few constraints on the pattern of development. Forecasters fretted that suburban areas were growing 20 times faster than Seattle and that 700,000 new citizens, the equivalent of 53 Bellevues of that time would reside in King County by 1985.

As a response, the State favored building the Evergreen Point span while groups such as the Muni League argued for a route paralleling the Mercer Island bridge. When rush hour congestion on the original floating bridge prompted the installation of reversible lanes in 1960, it became clear that both spans would be necessary. In a particularly farsighted move, the League compelled the State to study the inclusion of rail transit on a new Mercer Island bridge.

There was no shortage of ideas and discussion about alternatives to or supplements for automobiles and highways in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The problem was the political mass aligned behind "private" transportation: car makers, road contractors, building trades unions, trucking companies, Teamsters, and individual drivers themselves. With billions of dollars in federal and state aid available for highways and only highways, the momentum for new and larger roads was inexorable.

Seeing the Region for the Trees

The creation of Metro was a great victory for the idea of reaching beyond arbitrary political jurisdictions and matching the scale of government solutions to that of the actual problems in the community. But Metro itself was limited by arbitrary, indeed politically motivated, boundaries and its function was confined for the moment to sewage treatment. Even Metro's own champions recognized that the agency encompassed only a small part of the true dimensions of the region and its needs.

By 1950, the predictions of a future "Pugetopolis" stretching from Tacoma to Everett, and eventually from Vancouver to Vancouver, had ceased to be the reserve of Sunday supplement speculation. Post war prosperity was fueling dramatic, and largely unplanned, growth in the Puget Sound region embraced by King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties.

The alarm was first sounded in October 1953 by the state chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Talbot Wegg, AIA civic planning chair, Harold Shefelman, a Muni League leader and chair of Seattle's Planning Commission, and Perry Johanson, principal in the architectural firm of Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johanson, helped to prepare a detailed scheme for a Puget Sound Regional Planning Council, which convened for the first time in April 1954. Thirty six representatives of local and county governments met quarterly over the following three years, and Wegg served as director.

Although purely advisory, the Council impressed King County Commissioner James Gibbs enough for him to ask the Association of County Commissioners to study options for a more formal structure for interjurisdictional cooperation. One idea proposed designation of the Council as a "regional planning commission" for King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties, but elected county commissioners feared that this delegated too much power. Instead, they chartered a new Puget Sound Regional Planning Council in March 1957, and it was one of the first such bodies created in the United States. Membership was limited to elected officials of the four member counties and their central cities, but the original Council was retained as an advisory body.

The new organization's name was changed to the Puget Sound Governmental Conference (PSGC) in January 1958 in order to reflect a broader intergovernmental mission than just planning, and Pierce County Commissioner Harry Sprinker was elected as the Conference's first chair. The

Conference successfully lobbied for adoption of State enabling legislation in 1959 which granted "regional planning commissions" the same authority as counties, but without the power to enact "official controls." That same year, Seattle, Tacoma and Bremerton joined the Conference (Everett followed in 1963 and membership was opened to smaller municipalities in 1967).

While it was chartered to deal with a wide range of topics, transportation dominated the Conference's agenda from the beginning. As the pace and scale of highway projects accelerated in the Puget Sound basin, local officials felt they were being left out of the loop in federal and state decision making. They prevailed on the State Highway Department to join with the Seattle Transportation Commission, City of Seattle and King County in a "Puget Sound Regional Transportation Committee" in October 1957. The firm of Parsons, Brinkerhoff, Holland and McDonald was retained to prepare a "scoping study," which outlined a more detailed proposal for a regional transportation planning process in April 1959.

This led to the Puget Sound Regional Transportation Study (PSRTS), which has been cited as one of nation's the first large scale planning efforts to treat transportation and land use in a comprehensive fashion. The PSRTS was formally launched in July 1960 under the aegis of PSGC, the Washington State Highway Commission and Department of Commerce and Economic Development, and the federal Bureau of Public Roads and Housing and Home Finance Agency. John Mladinov was named to direct the \$1.6 million project.

PSGC and the PSRTS received an additional boost when the 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act mandated regional planning as a precondition for state eligibility for highway funds. It further dictated that such regional planning must be "comprehensive, cooperative and continuing." This requirement became known as the "three Cs" in planning cant, and it signaled a growing recognition that transportation, land use, pollution, open space, and other government actions were interdependent factors in the calculus of urban development.

The Shape of Campaigns to Come

While the PSRTS was hailed as a great step forward, transit advocates were quickly disappointed when study director John Mladinov rebuffed Muni League requests that he expressly include rapid rail transit in his studies. They were also sensitive to the intra regional jealousies already manifest in the politics of the PSGC and PSRTS, particularly the resentment of Seattle's

dominance, and they suspected that the State Highway Department was exerting undue influence on events. Under such conditions, Jim Ellis and his allies felt Metro had to take matters in its own hands.

In October 1961, Seattle Mayor Gordon Clinton joined with several of his suburban counterparts and King County Commissioners to convene a Metropolitan Transportation Committee chaired by Townley Bale. To no one's surprise, the mayor's committee concluded that Metro should activate its latent power for planning and operating public transportation.

The Metro Council could have taken this step unilaterally under its enabling State law by obtaining the formal concurrence of Seattle, King County and two thirds of the dozen suburban cities then within its boundaries. When Beaux Arts, Bothell, Lake Forest Park and Medina balked and filed formal resolutions calling for an election on the transportation issue, the Council was compelled in June 1962 to schedule a public vote on the following September's primary ballot. The specific proposition merely asked if Metro should "be authorized to perform the additional function of Metropolitan Public Transportation." Unlike the vote required for creating Metro, passage required only a simple majority of voters residing within Metro's boundaries.

Familiar antagonists lined up for the campaign. The Municipal League and its allies organized a "Citizens Committee for Metro Transportation" in February 1962. Nick Maffeo reappeared as head of a "Metropolitan League of Voters" to oppose the proposition. His side gained a powerful ally when the Automobile Club of Washington (AAA) joined the battle.

Metro advocates were deliberately vague about the ultimate form of any public transportation system. The new downtown Monorail, installed in 1962 for the World's Fair, inspired a lot of fanciful speculation about "21st century technologies" but transit boosters lacked the time and research for a detailed scheme. They also did not want to supply the opposition with the target of an expensive plan.

But opponents such as the Auto Club seized on the lack of specifics to accuse Metro of peddling "a pig in a poke." The Club and other highway interests suspected Metro would later try to impose "wheel taxes" (which had been suggested by Seattle Transit in 1960) or to plunder road funds to subsidize a new rail transit system. These charges were credible for many voters who received their first Metro sewer bills in July.

The transportation proposition failed by a vote of 57,000 to 39,000 on September 11, 1962. Carey Donworth told the press that the proposal had been "premature" and too complex. Metro had also roused some very powerful enemies who would have to be neutralized or converted if the agency were ever to assume a public transportation mission. Advocates of Metro transit went back to the drawing board.

The Chicken and the Egg Return

Not long after the 1962 election, the efforts of planners and transit advocates received several important new tools from Washington, D.C., where leaders began to recognize that highways alone could not meet the nation's urban transportation needs. Washington's senior U.S. Senator, Warren G. Magnuson, led the fight to create the Urban Mass Transit Authority (UMTA) in 1964 to provide billions in federal aid to build and operate mass transit systems.

Seattle had already launched a new transit planning effort under the auspices of the Transit Commission. PSGC took this over in 1964 and retained the engineering firm of De Leuw, Cather and Company to "develop and refine a plan for public transit facilities to be coordinated with the regional highway plan, adequate to serve the Central Puget Sound region to the year 1985...."

This feasibility study was ostensibly an adjunct to the Puget Sound Regional Transportation Study, but in political reality it was a substitute for it was becoming clear that Mladinov would not endorse rail transit. As a counterbalance, Seattle's new mayor, Dorm Braman, appointed a Rapid Transit Advisory Committee headed by Jim Ellis. Braman had been a vocal foe of rail transit, and his conversion is credited to the evangelism of his deputy, Ed Devine. This committee and the City promptly endorsed De Leuw Cather's positive findings on transit when they were released late in 1965.

The PSRTS report followed in September 1966 and it painted a very different picture. For all of the impressive diligence with which PSRTS planners collected and sifted data, their conclusions relied on essentially straight line extrapolations of historical growth patterns. They forecast a 1990 regional population of 2.75 million and more or less uniform and generally low density regional development spreading outward from central cities. Their highway plan (including a highly controversial bridge between West Seattle and Vashon Island) therefore aimed to serve established travel patterns, not to alter them.

PSRTS also reinforced the "urban center development concept" of King County's new Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 1964. This plan, directed by Edward B. Sand, established "design standards" to accommodate most growth in urban areas outside of the Seattle city limits. The plan represented a break with Seattle-centric thinking, and it won national recognition as one of the original "policy plans" which tried to define general growth management goals before the adoption of zoning maps and other detailed "implementing measures."

Given such a "future" of more diffuse residential distribution, PSRTS planners argued (correctly) that mass transit could not attract enough riders to be financially viable. The PSRTS report concluded that "a clear cut and positive finding relative to the rapid transit was not possible from the analyses and evaluations..." It suggested monitoring future trends which might change the arithmetic in favor of rail transit. In the interim, the PSRTS supported development of a "long range local and express bus transit system" using existing and planned highways.

This was not what Seattle wanted to hear. De Leuw Cather took PSRTS's data but manipulated it on the basis of a fundamentally different assumption. Its consultants reasoned that construction of high capacity transit would alter future growth patterns by attracting development to those areas nearest the main transportation arteries. Their methods were essentially econometric, although the modeling techniques then available were relatively crude and some of the thinking seems downright wishful. By concentrating anticipated growth in nodes and corridors predetermined by transit routes and stations, De Leuw Cather's argued (correctly, also) that their "future" assured ridership and financial success for the transit system. From the point of view of Seattle and transit advocates, this was more like it.

Here again loomed the old "chicken vs. egg" dilemma of which comes first, location or transportation, but both visions were really self-fulfilling prophecies. Two simultaneous trends had already been established in the region: real estate economics promoted suburban decentralization of new housing on the Eastside while business economics promoted concentration of new employment in urban centers along the I-5 corridor. The real choice for government was which phenomenon to reinforce and accelerate through capital investment in transportation infrastructure, or more simply, which "destination" should drive transportation planning: home or work?

Work and densification won, at least for the moment. The business community and

Seattle's elected officials threw their weight behind De Leuw Cather's projections of transit driven land use. Their main forum was the PSGC, which was gaining power and stature as the PSRTS wound down. The 1966 Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, better known as "Model Cities," gave PSGC substantial federal funding and additional clout for regional planning. With completion of the PSRTS in 1967, PSGC assumed lead responsibility for transportation planning in the Puget Sound basin and committed itself to the De Leuw Cather plan for mass transit. PSRTS director John Mladinov was politically run out of town on a rail.

From Forward Thrust...

These federal and regional mandates provided a new foundation and fresh hope for the advocates of a Metro-directed transit system. Once again, Jim Ellis pointed the way with a series of visionary speeches. The first, titled "Transportation and the shape of the city," was delivered before the Seattle "Downtown" Rotary Club on November 3, 1965. Armed with De Leuw Cather's preliminary conclusions (and ignoring PSRTS'), Ellis outlined an ambitious rail transit system as part of a comprehensive set of major capital improvements to catapult the metropolitan area ahead of the growth curve in confronting the problems of mounting congestion, pollution and suburban sprawl. He called it "forward thrust."

Ellis broadened this theme in an address to the Municipal League on January 21, 1966. He warned that uncontrolled growth was becoming a "cause for rebellion." His choice of words reflected the sense of social tension that was beginning to grip the entire nation in the early stages of baby boom youth movement, civil rights unrest, and the first protests against the war in Vietnam.

Demographic data indicated that King County would gain another 750,000 residents by 1985. Ellis argued that the metropolitan area would lose its quality of life unless a framework were built to steer development into selected areas, to protect open space and park lands, and to add key amenities and public facilities to foster urban vitality. For him, a mass transit system was the backbone for a coordinated, 10-year capital improvement program to channel growth into a denser pattern.

With the policy issues resolved at the intergovernmental level, transit advocates turned their attention to other constituencies. Their strategy followed the model established by the Metro

campaign, building consensus and support from the top down, but they resolved not to repeat the same mistakes. As a result, they made a few new ones.

The first step was taken in March 1966 when Seattle Mayor Dorm Braman and King County Board of Commissioners chairman Scott Wallace appointed a 24 member "organizing committee" to convene a community wide review of capital needs. This group, chaired by Jim Ellis, in turn recruited a "Committee of 200" (ultimately 225) to identify and evaluate a bewildering array of alternative projects.

The Committee of 200 was itself dominated by business leaders, professionals, and what Vance Packard dubbed "organization men," and it was criticized at the time and since as constituting a self-appointed "metropolitan ruling class." It was in fact an informal meritocracy, elected by energy and vision which preferred meetings in the downtown YMCA to the Rainier Club. The group was not above some old fashioned pork barrel politics as it sought in the fall of 1966 to enlist virtually every organization or constituency with an unfunded capital need. Ellis took particular care to placate the Auto Club whose opposition to Metro transit had been so decisive in 1962.

The Committee of 200 also identified changes in state law which would be required for implementation of a coordinated set of capital programs. It sponsored 18 separate statutes, including a doubling of King County's bonding capacity and authority for Metro to engage in transportation planning without further electoral hurdles. It is a testament to its new strength that all but one passed in the 1967 legislature.

With the paper work finished and most of its political ducks in a row, the Committee of 200 unveiled its preliminary Forward Thrust program on June 1, 1967. The \$2 billion capital potpourri included a new domed stadium (which had been rejected by Seattle voters the previous fall), arterials, parks, community facilities and improvements, and, of course, rapid transit. There was something for everyone.

The package was refined over the next year into twelve separate bond issues spread over three jurisdictions. All King County voters were presented with six propositions totaling \$340 million for a new Youth Service Center, stadium, community centers, arterial highways, storm water sewers, and parks. Seattle voters faced five proposals totaling \$94.2 million: neighborhood improvements and planning, sewer improvements (chiefly to separate storm runoff from sanitary

sewers), low income housing, new fire stations and equipment, and a new maintenance shop for city vehicles.

The centerpiece was a rapid transit system designed for Metro by De Leuw, Cather and Company, which essentially refined its earlier PSGC plan. The "Comprehensive Public Transportation Plan for the Seattle Metropolitan Area" was released on October 30, 1967.

The plan called for rapid rail trains operating on 47 miles of double track in dedicated rights of way. The system was designed chiefly to move people in and out of downtown Seattle; two northern branches brought workers in from Greenwood via Ballard and Interbay (shades of the old Pacific Northwest Traction interurban) and from Wedgwood via the University District and Capitol Hill. The southern line reached down to Tukwila and swung over to Renton, home of Boeing's main assembly plant. An eastern arm crossed the I 90 bridge and turned north to Bellevue. Future rail rights of way were also included for extensions to Kenmore, the Rainier Valley, West Seattle and Redmond, and for closing the loop between Renton and Bellevue. Further links to Sea Tac Airport, Auburn, Edmonds and around north Lake Washington were contemplated but not included in the funding package.

The rolling stock was not specified but it was expected to approximate the weight and capacity of San Francisco's BART trains. On this basis, it was estimated that during peak commuting periods, eight-car trains operating on 90 second headways would move 23,000 people per hour into and out of the central business district via a new downtown transit tunnel. Outlying stations were designed to accommodate "intermodal" links with feeder buses and private automobiles. Rail service was to be augmented with 90 miles of Express Bus routes and 500 miles of local bus routes.

The total capital cost was estimated at \$1.155 billion over 17 years. The federal government was expected to pick up at least two thirds of this tab. System revenues were projected to cover operating and maintenance costs, estimated to reach \$29 million per annum by 1990.

The balance of capital costs was to be raised by a \$385 million bond issue approved and financed by voters living inside Metro's boundaries, which then included only the corner of King County lying generally west of Lake Sammamish and north of Sea-Tac. The final element of the Forward Thrust package was a referendum on whether a seven member Metro transit commission