

Date: 5-21-15
To: Wa. Co. Transportation Futures Study Advisory Committee, Project Staff,
Elected Officials and the public
From: Steve Larrance, Study Advisory Committee member
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Subject: Concerns about study methodology to date

The purpose of the Study Advisory Committee is to be the voice of the people who live, work or travel in Washington County. At our last meeting we identified five definitions of success for our group and two of those were: 1) "That we accurately identify current and future transportation needs and trends." And 2) "That we have a robust public conversation" about transportation.

In the scope of work for the consulting team it is mention that we will not be looking at the current AM Peak traffic movement, the most intense congestion of the day, and the movement that causes the most intrusive "cut through neighborhoods" movement of the day. We will only be using data from the PM Peak when people leave work at various times and often do not go straight home. I requested that AM Peak data be included in our study, and was told "no" by project staff. This is the movement where most commuters are going straight from home to work thus causing the most congestion at intersections along their routes. This is the movement when school buses are part of the mix. If we never look at AM Peak use then we will not be including any options for solutions to remedy this dangerous and time and fuel consuming time of the day within our future plans. And we will be over looking new routes for transit solution options that make sense financially because they serve the most users. It will not cost more to include this big piece of the data puzzle in our analysis. What would your friends say to you about agreeing to not include it a complete analysis of today's and tomorrow's transportation picture and the impacts to their neighborhood livability caused by omitting this data? I say we must include AM Peak usage in our analysis.

My second concern is also of great importance. We have now received the results of the public survey. In the coming months we will be asked to "grade" future transportation options and solutions against the yard stick of these survey results. It appears that there were approximately 300 responses to the survey. That is a very small percent of the County's population and an even smaller percent of the system users. We know that at least half of the people who work in Washington County do not live here. We were presented with zero information about who the respondents were. How many of those were the same person responding multiple times? Were the respondents an accurate cross section of the people who live, work or travel within Washington County? In the out reach to the communities who are generally under represented how were these questions presented to them and what specifically did they say in response? Was this an accurate cross section of all under represented people who live, work or travel in Washington County? Was there any effort to solicit participation from the traveling public who daily fill our roads? I requested that they be included by placing signs near busy AM commuter routes listing the WCtransportationfutures.org site and asking for survey participation but was told by staff that this will not be done. The County uses signs within the right of way to announce all things related to transportation but somehow this Transportation Study is not within those guidelines.

I feel that we must insist that this process does not continue without both: A much larger population sample on a rewritten survey that has clear measurable language where the public grades the effectiveness and safety of the present transportation system and an open slate of possible future options. And we can't continue without an agreement that we will include AM Peak usage data in our analysis. What are your thoughts?