

UNSOUND RAIL TRANSIT: THE BATTLE IN SEATTLE



John S. Niles

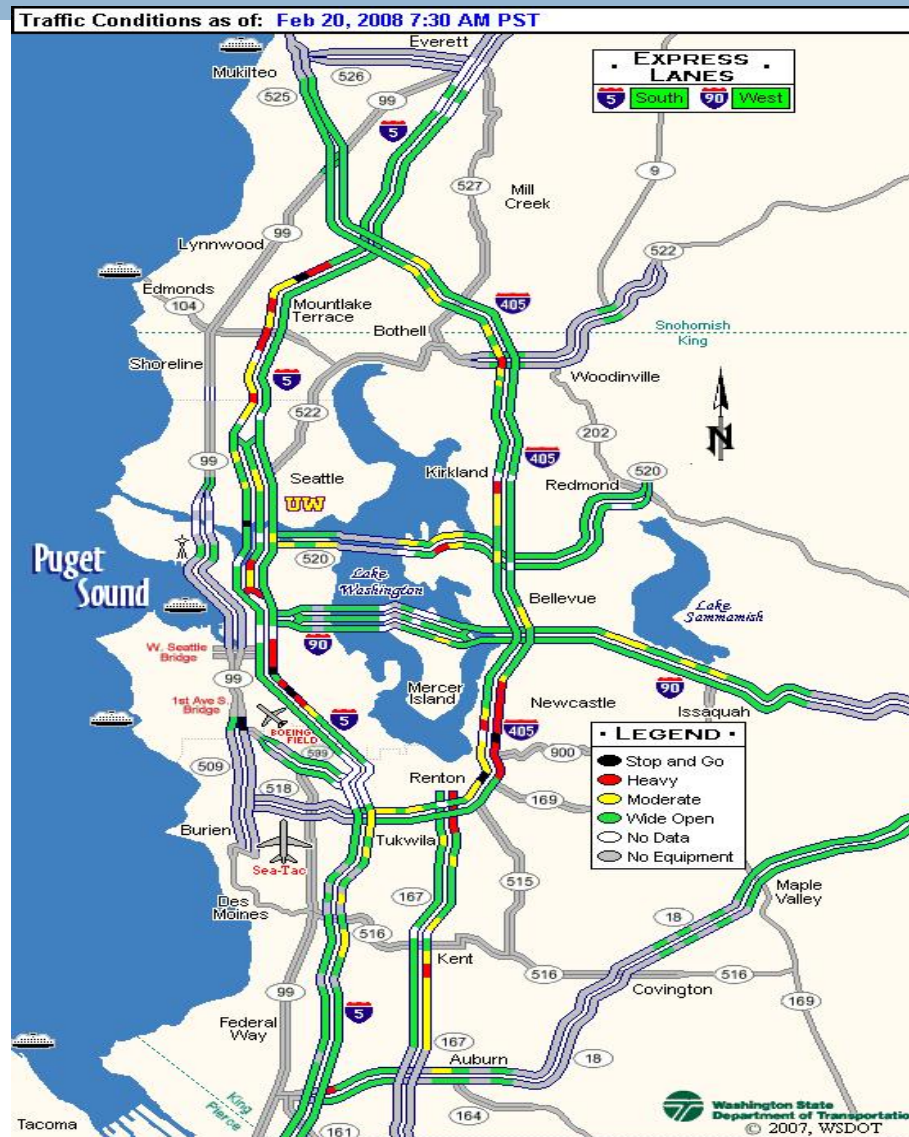
Public Interest
Transportation Forum

www.bettertransport.info

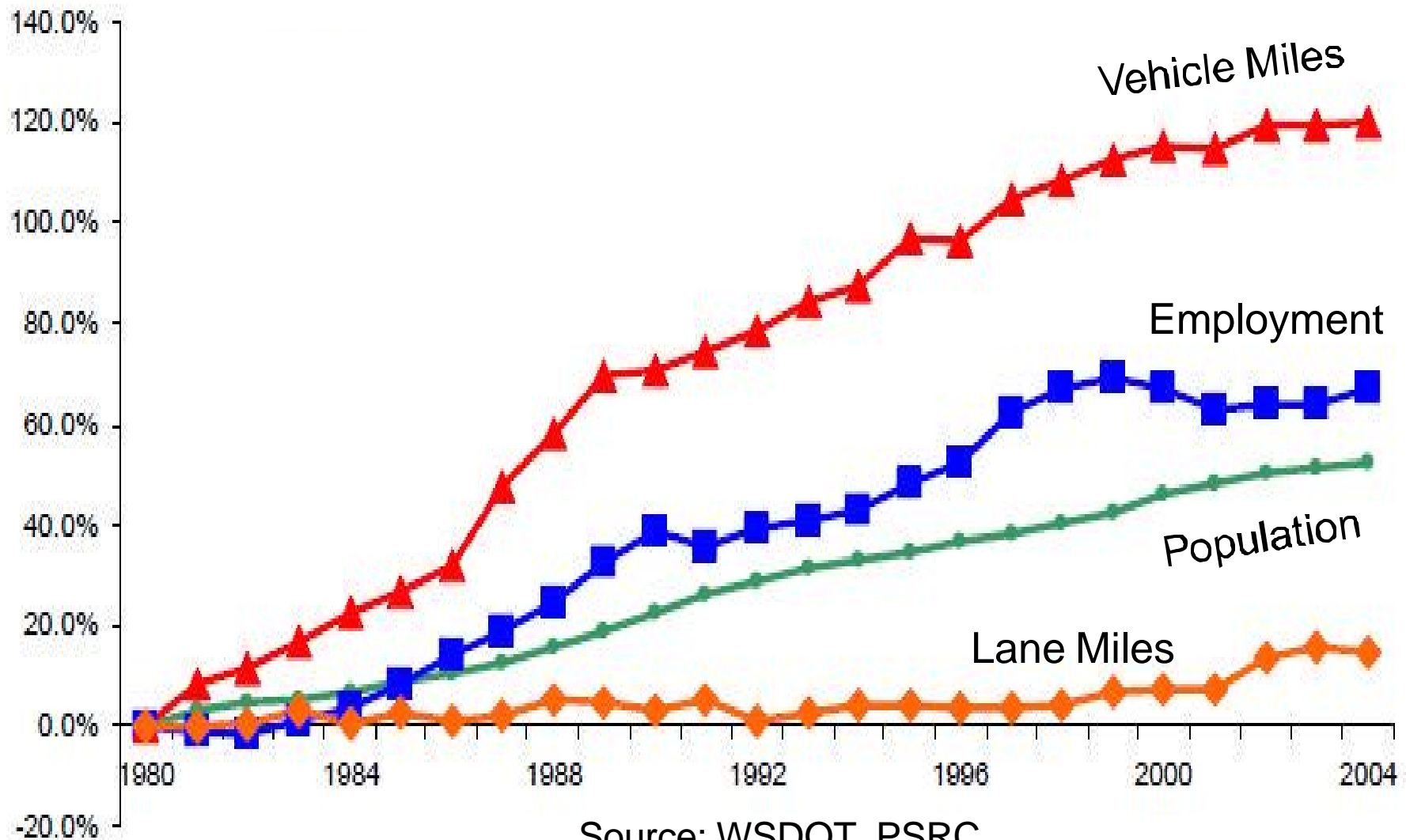


Conditions on the Ground

Traffic Conditions as of: Feb 20, 2008 7:30 AM PST



Little growth in highway lane miles



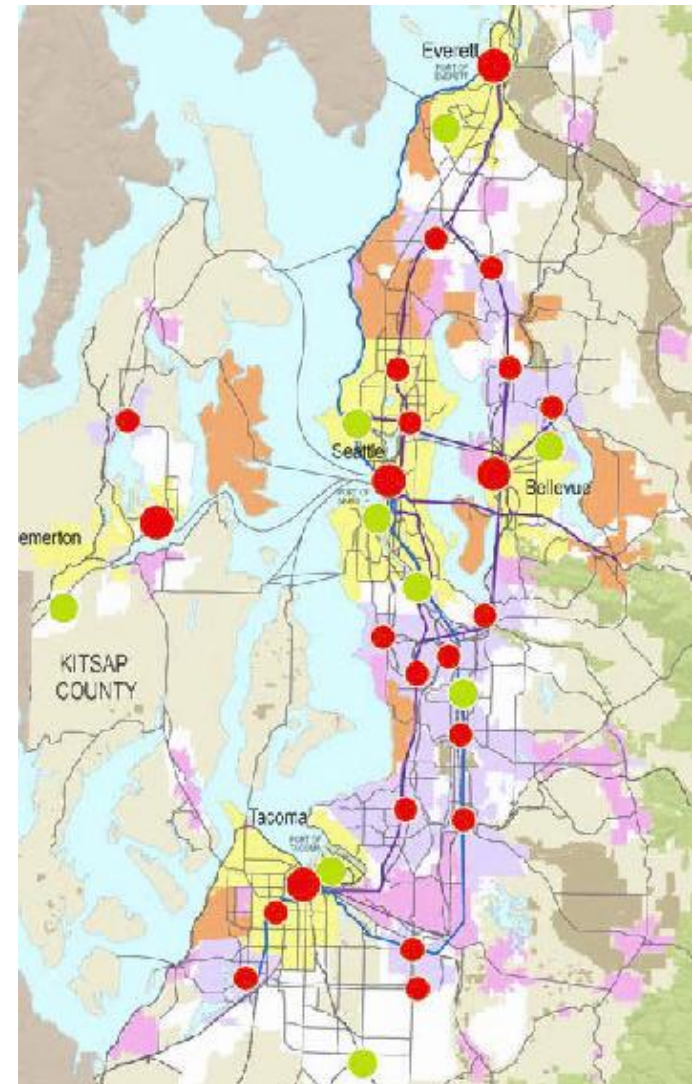


Official Transportation Plan

Rail-Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Pedestrian-friendly urban centers connected by light rail service are meant to increase the transit market share.

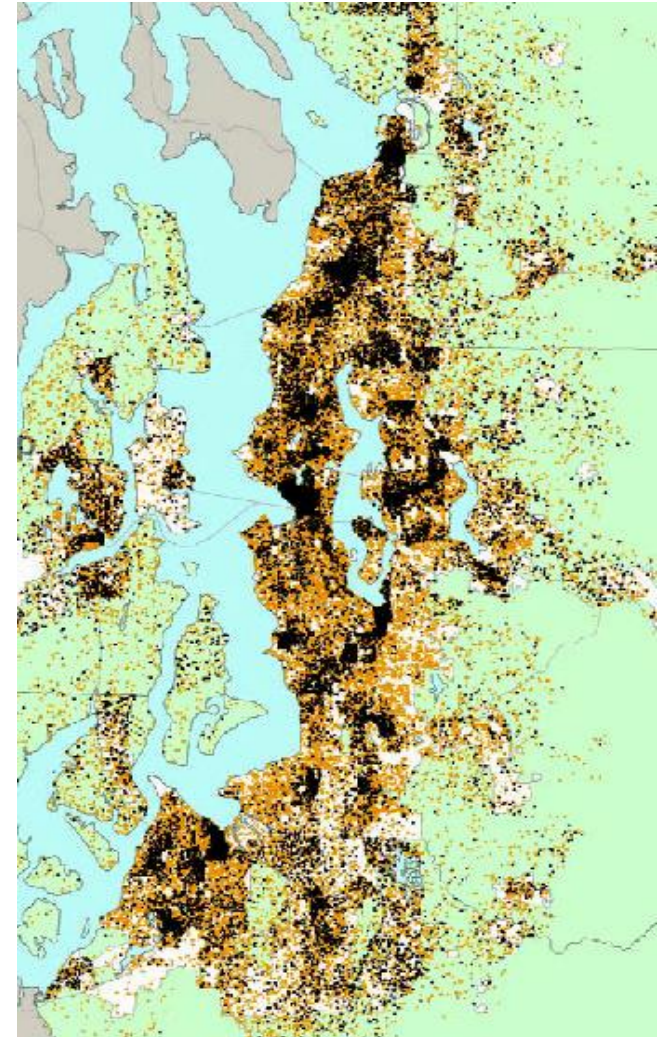
Map source: PSRC, Destination 2040



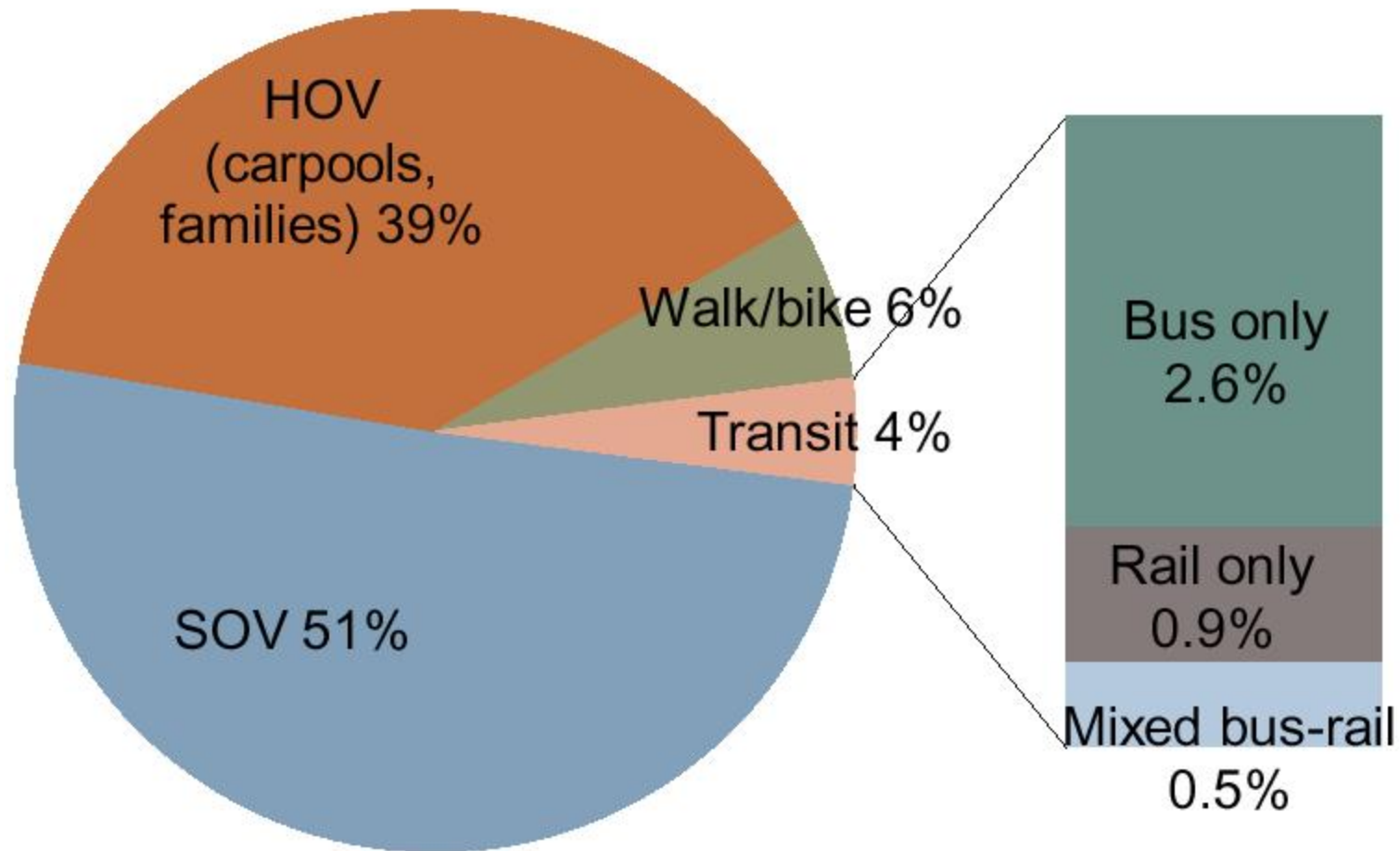
Problem with the TOD Theory

Future growth is not going to fit neatly into high-density TOD zones near train stations!

Map source: PSRC, Destination 2040



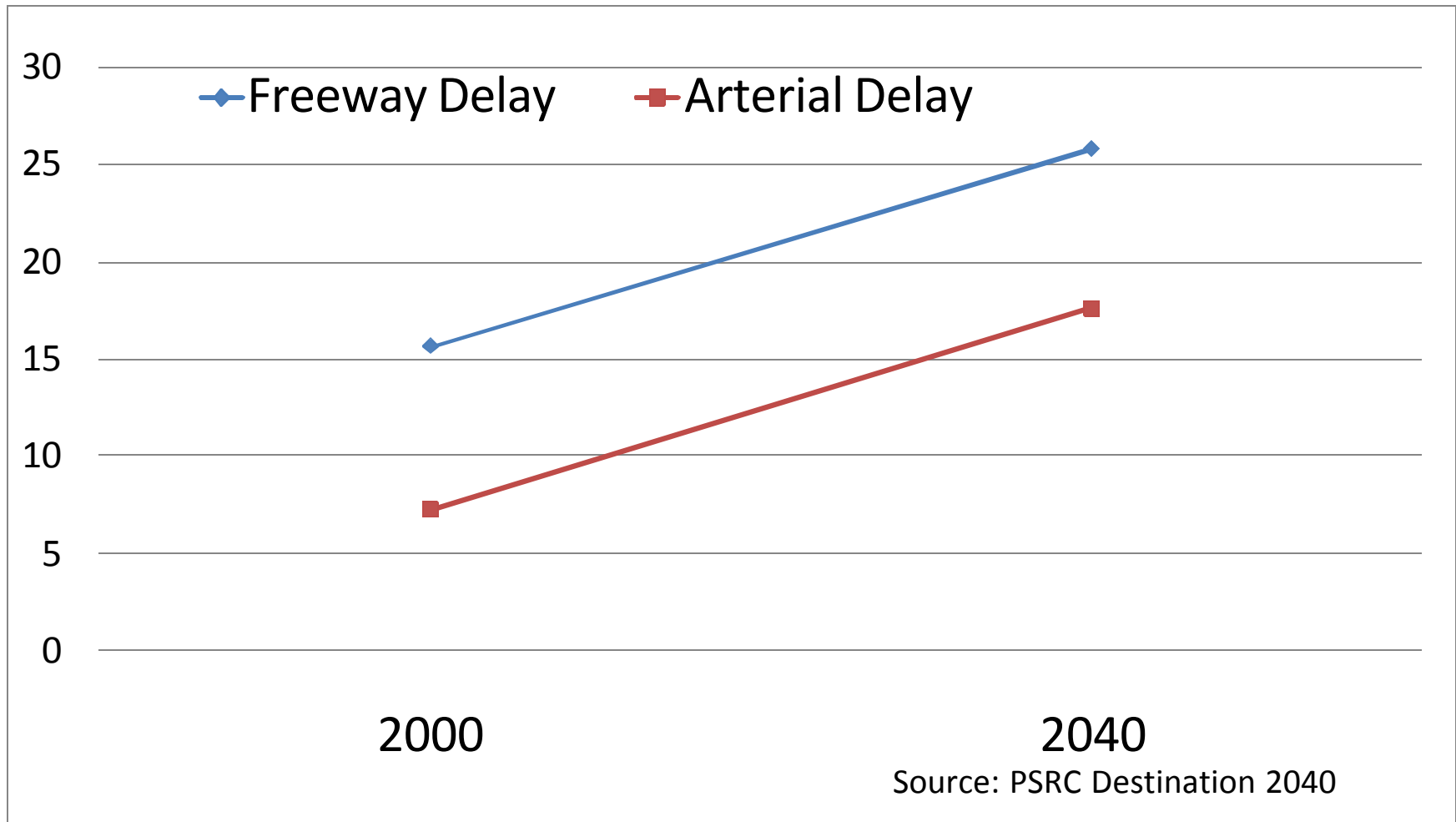
Market shares for modes in 2040 Puget Sound with 125 miles of light rail operating



Source: PSRC, Destination 2040

Government transportation plan lets traffic congestion become worse

Seconds/VMT



Access to Jobs via Public Transit



**% of jobs the average household could access
within 30 minutes by transit**

Take a guess – what would over 200 miles of urban rail transit with a coordinated bus system feeding customers to train stations accomplish in the fraction of jobs brought within 30 minutes by transit to the average household?

50% ?

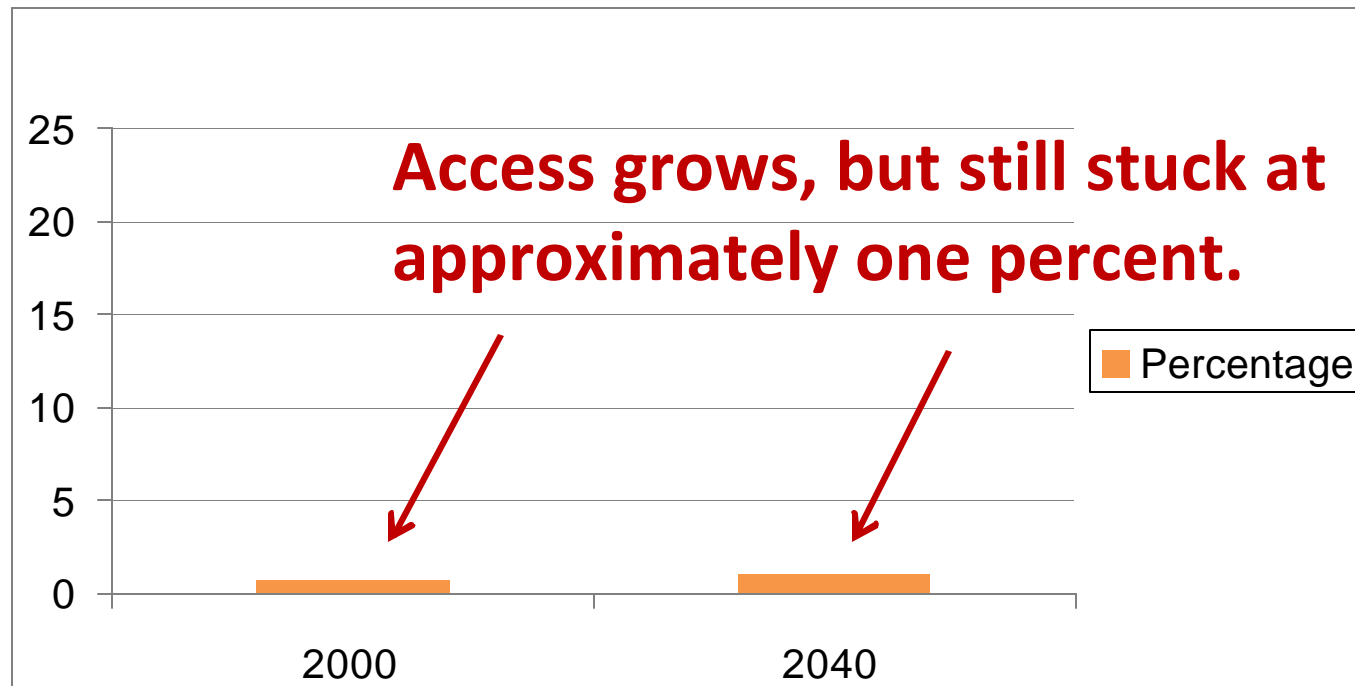
40% ?

30% ?

By 2040...

Access to Jobs via Public Transit

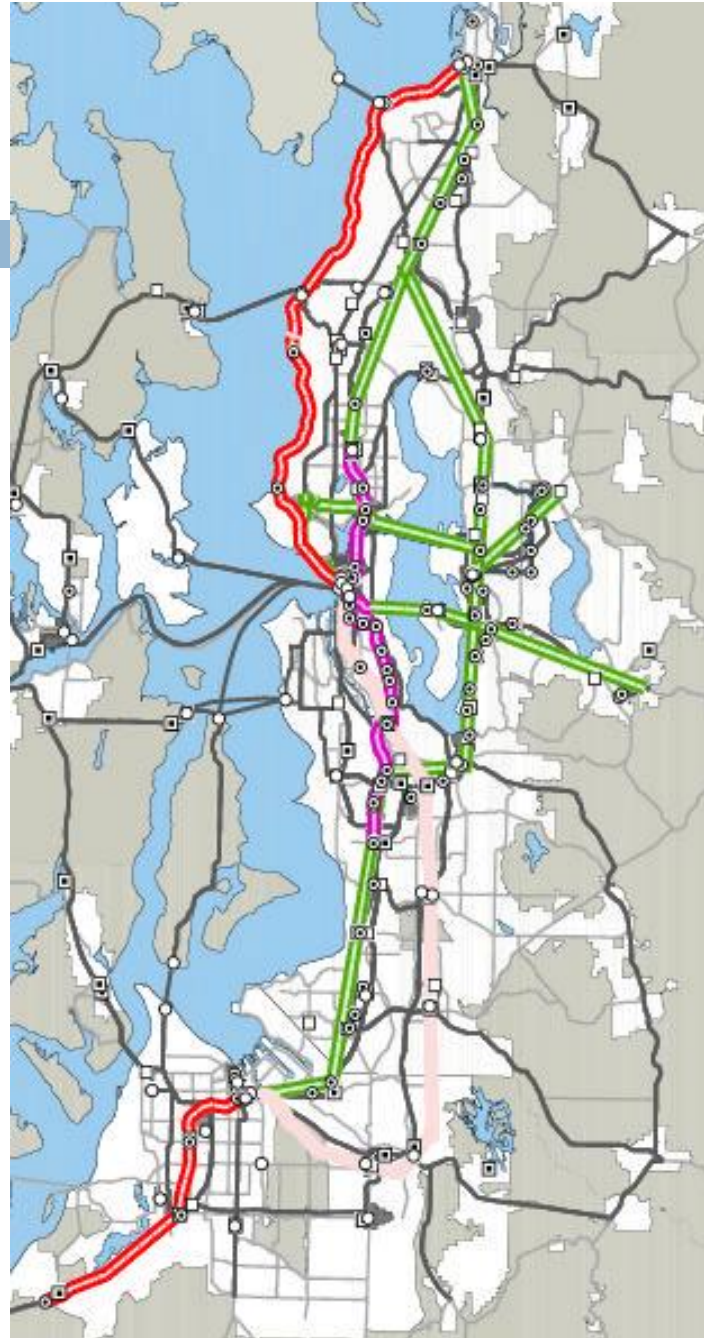
% of jobs the average household could access within 30 minutes by transit





The Rail Dream

Seattle
transportation
leaders want
to build a 200
mile urban
mass transit
rail network.



General Challenges to Rail Networks



- ❑ Costly to implement and operate
- ❑ Geographic coverage limited
- ❑ Many years to construct and put in service
- ❑ Acceptability of transfers & waiting

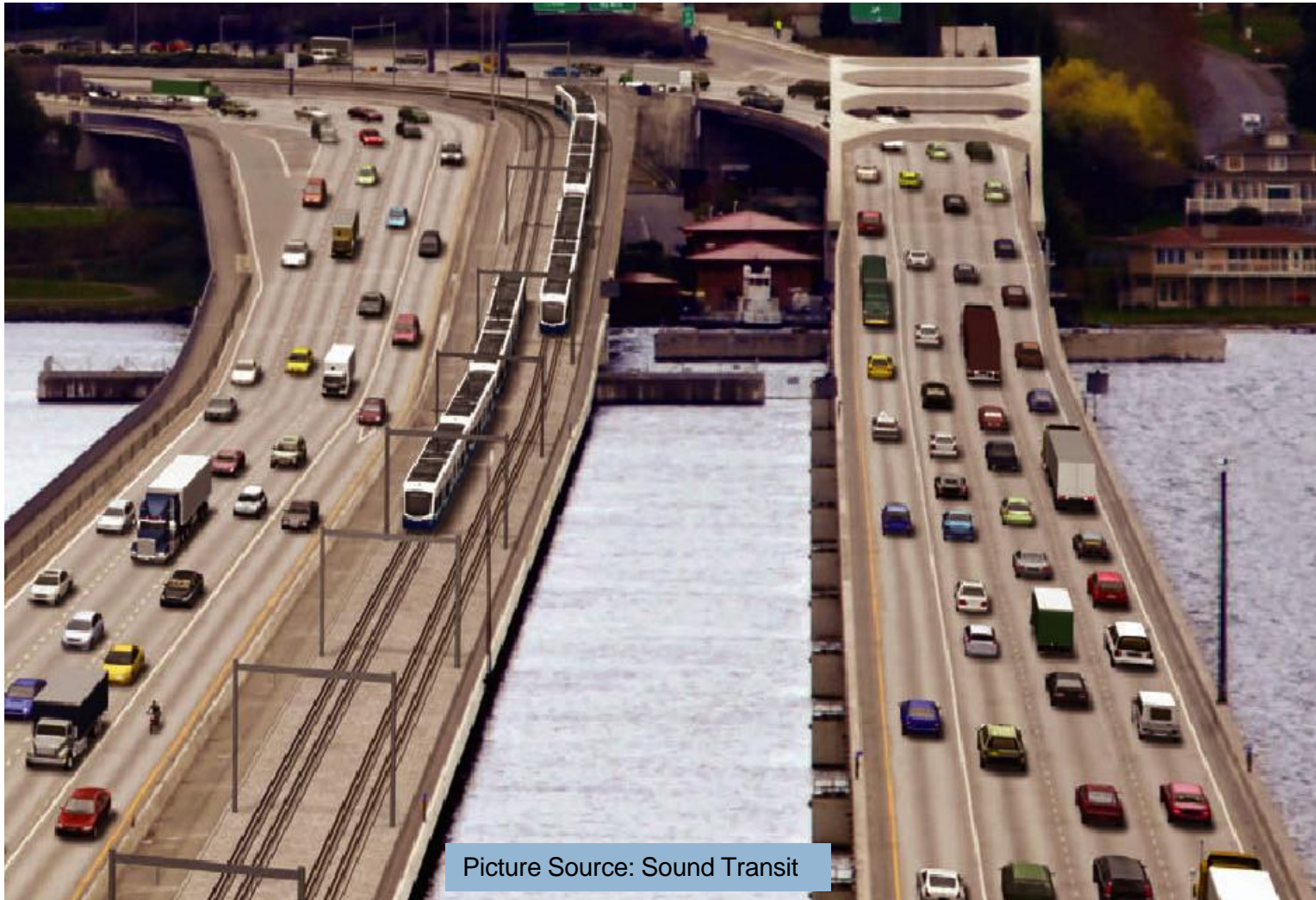
Feature: Six Mile Twin Tube Bored Tunnel



Phase Two

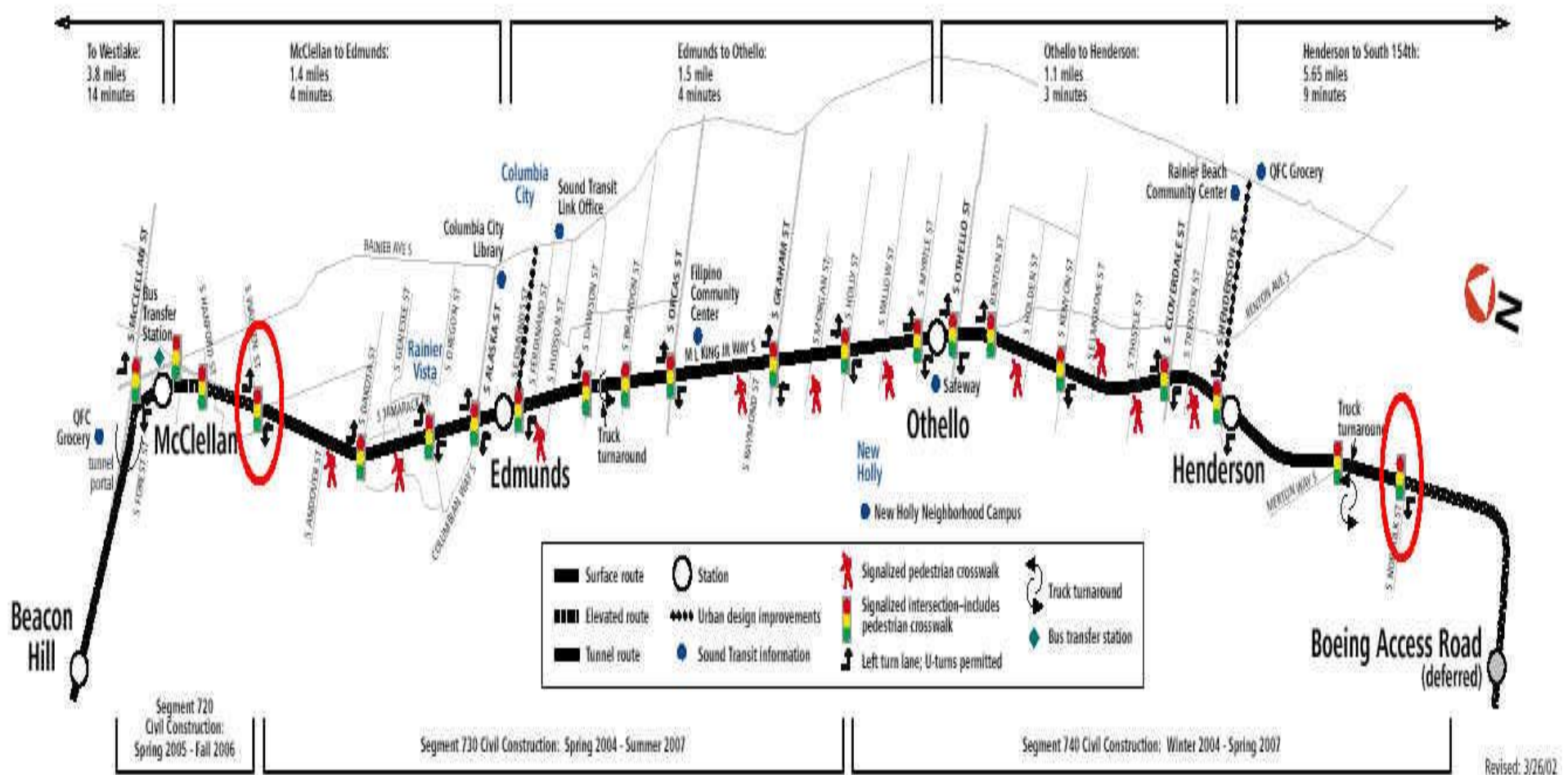
Phase One

Feature: Trains on a Floating Bridge



Picture Source: Sound Transit

Feature: 18 at-grade vehicle crossings in 4 miles for light rail traveling 35 mph



Feature: Trains intermixed with buses in downtown Seattle tunnel



Officials have proceeded to try to build a vast network

- 1970s planning begins
- 1988 pro-rail advisory ballot passes
- 1993 today's rail system plan sketched
- 1995 tax measure fails
- 1996 Sound Move tax measure passes
- 2000 cost overruns exposed in light rail
- 2001 light rail network shrunk
- 2003 construction begins on \$2 B light rail
- 2004 legal challenges turned back



2007: Proposition One

\$41 billion over 20 years

50 additional 2-way miles of light rail

93 added 2-way miles of road:

- **30 miles of HOV lanes**
- **4 Miles of transit access lanes**
- **152 miles of general purpose lanes**

Data source: WSDOT



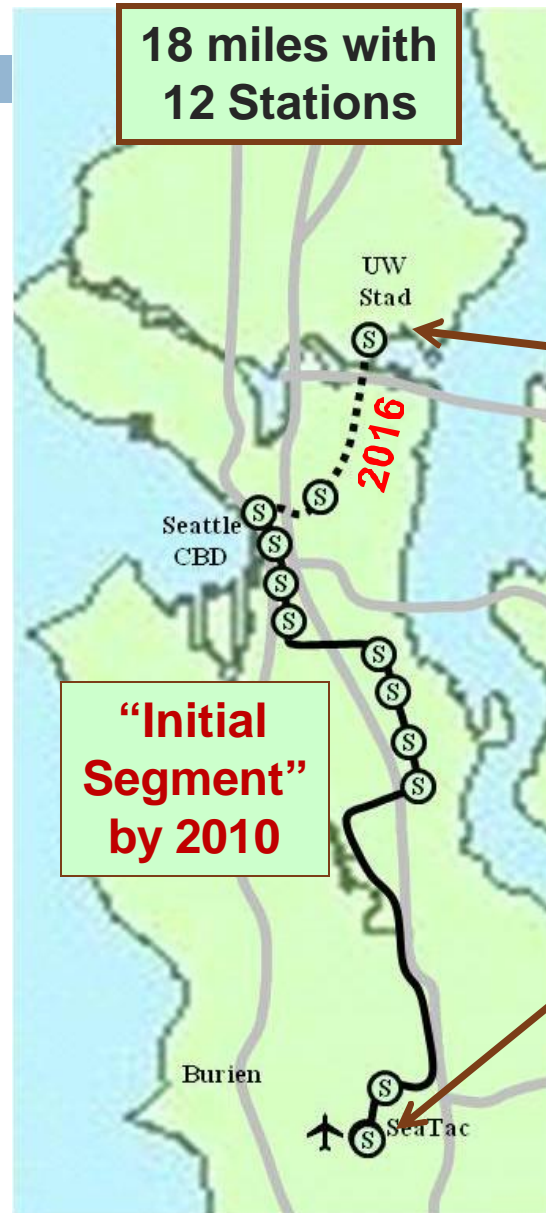
Map (excerpt) source: RTID

Sound Transit Light Rail

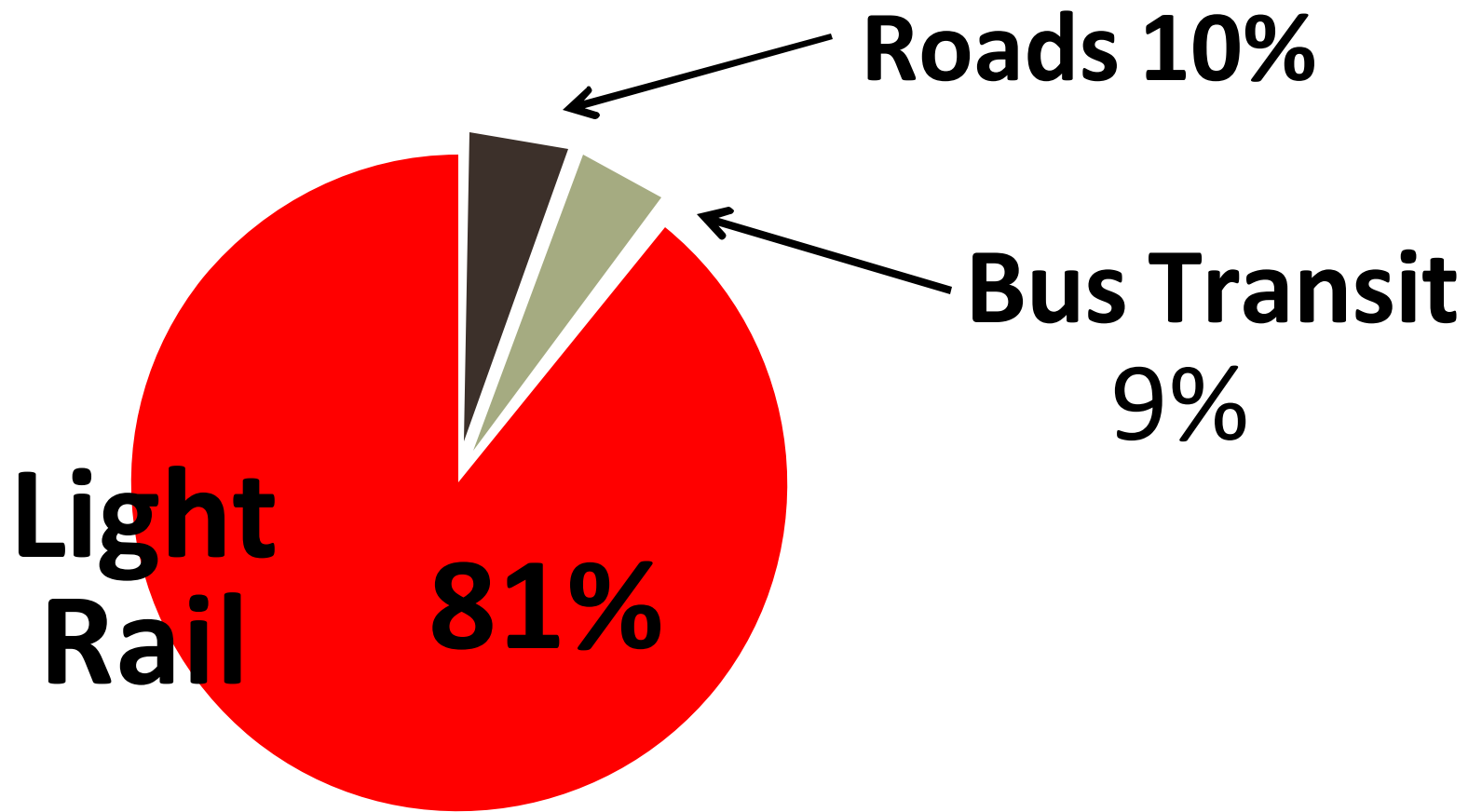
Proposed in 2007 at \$21 B

Promise at \$2 B

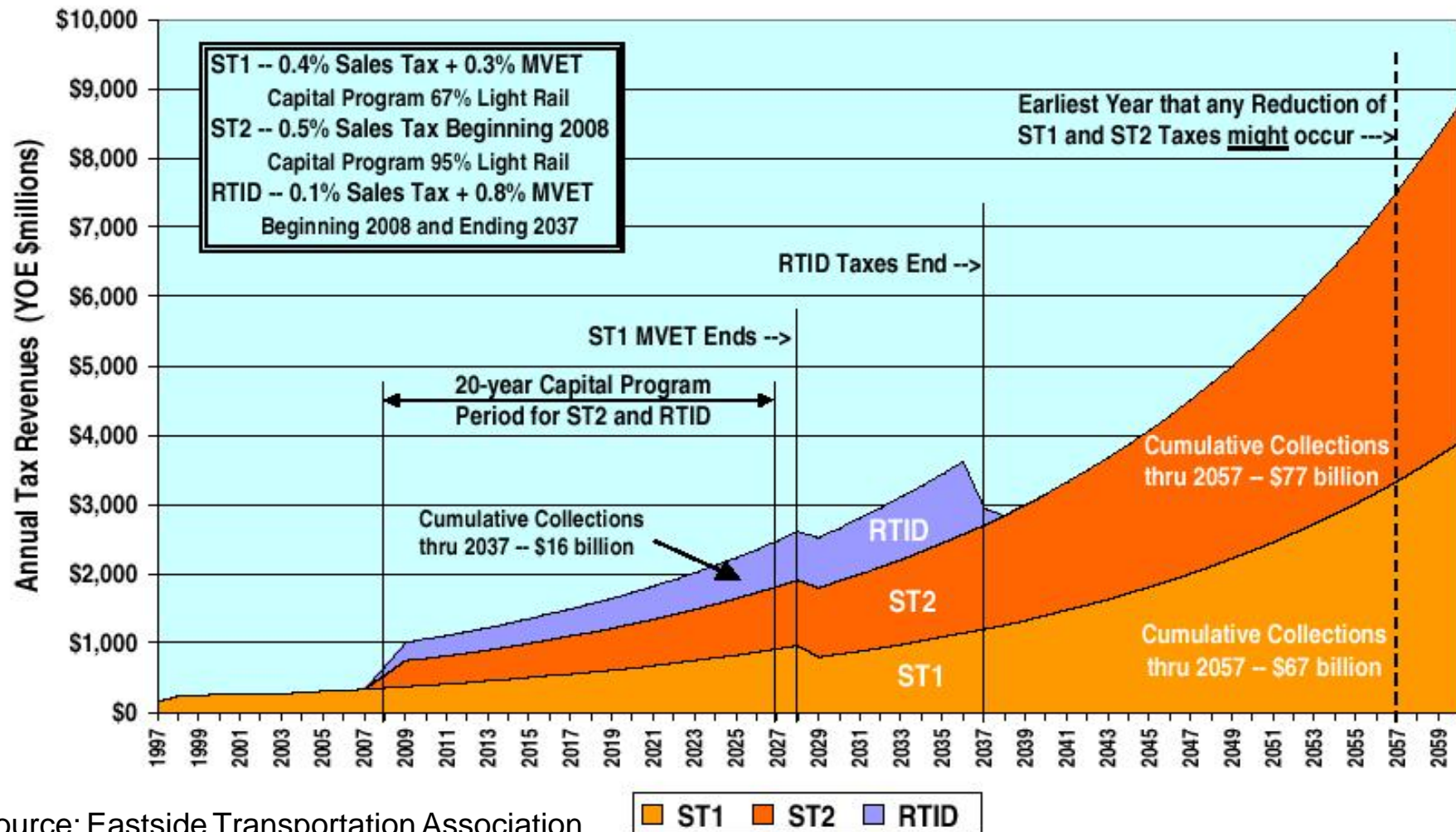
Coming in at \$4 B



Not a “Balanced” Plan



Transportation Taxes under Roads & Transit: \$157 billion over 50 years



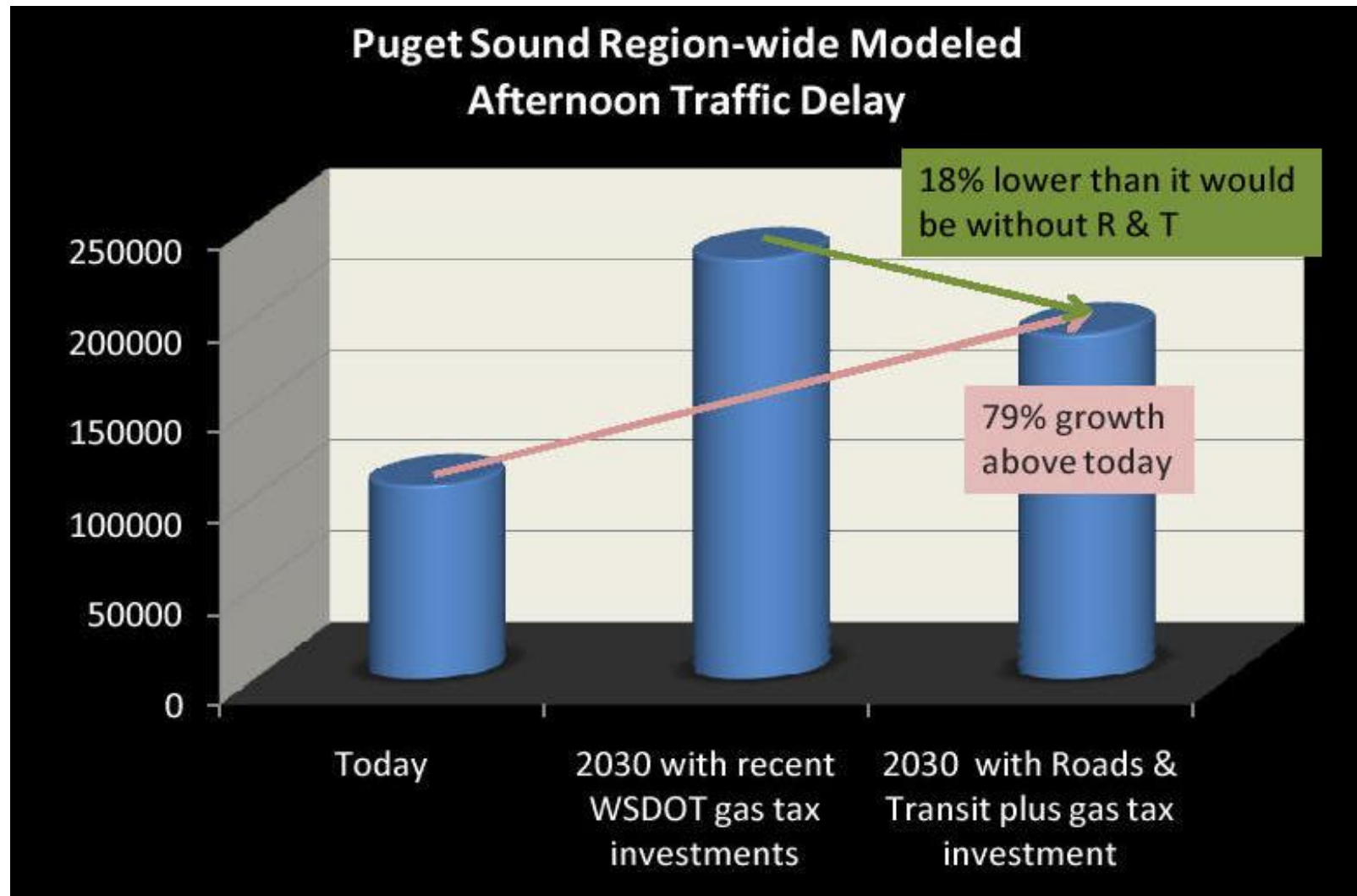
Source: Eastside Transportation Association

\$157 Billion Over 50 Years

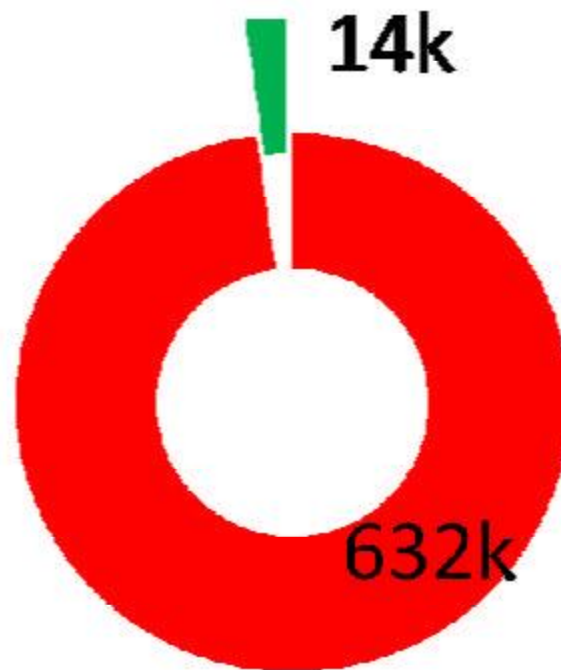


- Largest local tax increase in history
- Annual average tax per household \$2,000
- Sound Transit phase 1 taxes extended
- Prop 1 doubled transit portion of sales tax
- Doubled or even tripled car license tab fees

Traffic Congestion Worsens



CO2 Greenhouse Gas Generated by Light Rail Tunnel Construction



- CO2 of North Link Construction (7 years) - 632k metric tons
- Annual CO2 reduction during operations - 14k metric tons

Source: North Link Record of Decision



Campaign to Beat Prop 1

How was Prop 1 defeated?

- NoToProp1.org rebranded “Roads & Transit” as “Prop 1”
- Surprise attacked with radio and Internet banner ads
- Focused on the details of cost with journalists
- Facilitated a shaky alliance of diverse opponents
 - ▣ Greens said: Too many roads, not enough rail, causes global warming.
 - ▣ Road advocates: Too much transit, not enough roads.
 - ▣ Anti-tax groups: Sales tax is too much, regressive.
- A Sound Transit board member went from quiet to active opposition on Prop 1: “Costs so much and does so little.”

Pro and Con TV Ads



3

RTT-102
"Overview B"

September 7, 2007

Seattle Office: (206) 283-2888

OVERTON IS ELIGIBLE TO PLAY HOOPS FOR HUSKIES SPORTS D1

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

50¢

AHEADST NOW SPINER
BY STEVEN COHEN

FOOD

Love is better than daily bread

LIFE AND ARTS C1



PETS

CITY SAYS YOU MAY GET YOUR GOAT

SEATTLE B1



MUSIC

Amazon takes a bite out of Apple

BUSINESS E1

TOP STORIES

Cracking a mystery



The remains of a woman and child were found in three Northwest rivers, 20 years, and DNA evidence has been used to identify them at last. The search now is for the woman's missing husband. **B1**

Buzz Fiorini: 1915-2007

Buzz Fiorini, whose *Franklin Sparks* was a fixture in Seattle for decades, has died at age 91. Bill Gates and Neelstrom and McCaw children all passed through the school he founded. **B1**

Polygamist found guilty

The leader of a polygamist Mormon splinter group was convicted of being an accomplice to rape for forcing a 14-year-old girl to marry a 19-year-old. **A12**

ALSO IN THE NEWS

NATION/WORLD

Harsh words: Speaking at the U.N., President Bush lets his anger "brutal regimes" and Iran's "unbridled brutality" all over his face. The Seattle Council has a tool of "arrogant powers." **A3, A4**

Steve Forsett: Crews have a new focus for their search. **B10**

SEATTLE

Convicted: Ship-club owner Frank Calafato is found guilty of

PROPOSITION 1: PUGET SOUND ROAD AND TRANSIT PROJECTS



IF VOTERS SAY YES

in November, they will give the go-ahead to an

\$18 BILLION*

package

of transportation projects in the Seattle-Tacoma region.

* Construction costs for the projects as cited by Sound Transit and the Regional Transportation Investment District.

OR

Maybe it's a

\$47 BILLION**

package.

** The estimated cost of the projects when inflation and interest on loans are factored in.

OR

It could be a

\$160 BILLION***

package.

*** The amount the agencies will be allowed to collect in a variety of transportation taxes—including those authorized by Proposition 1—by 2057, according to critics, who fear that the taxes will never end.

It all depends on whom you ask, and what they're counting.

Then there's the question of what all those billions mean to the average taxpayer. Jim Mackinnon, a Bellevue transportation engineer who is a leading critic of the package,

Seattle home values hottest in U.S.

PRICES:

Up 6.9 percent over last year

BY AUBREY COHEN
P-1 reporter

Seattle-area home appreciation has been the hottest in the nation for 11 months in a row, despite steadily slowing for the last year and a half, according to data released Tuesday.

July's price for a typical home in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties was up 6.9 percent from July 2006 and 0.2 percent from June 2007, according to the S&P Case-Shiller Home Price Indices, which do not give actual sales.

The August median home price was \$489,000 in Seattle and \$415,000 in King County, according to the Northwest Multiple Listing Service. Both medians figured in condominiums and single-family homes.

FIVE THAT THRIVE

Here are the top five metropolitan areas in percentage appreciation in the price of a typical home between July 2006 and July 2007.

SEATTLE
+6.9%

LOANS:

Mortgages harder to get

BY AUBREY COHEN
P-1 reporter

Last month, Carol Allen was two months out of bankruptcy and set to refinance her Seattle home.

Option One Mortgage Corp. had approved a low fixed rate, plus money to remodel her kitchen and replace her broken-down truck.

Then, just before closing, Option One decided to "re-price" loans in its pipeline, adding 1.6 percentage points to her interest rate and about \$400 a month to her payment.

"I can't afford that," Allen said last week.

So the community health educator for Public Health—Seattle & King County walked away, sticking with her adjustable rate, more

Post-Intelligencer

50¢



DINING

WHERE'S THE (BEST) BEEF?

WHAT'S HAPPENING



AND PIERCE, SNOWBUSH, BLANCK,
THURSTON COUNTIES | KIRKLAND

MOVIES

Steve Carell charms in 'Dan in Real Life'

WHAT'S HAPPENING

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2007

INSTRUCK



ELECTION 2007

Roads vs. rails leaves greens split on Prop. 1

Effect of transportation plan on warming is inconclusive

BY USASTAFFLER
P. 1

If you want to vote pro-environment on November's transportation initiative, there's good news for you. Whether you vote yes or no, you get your wish.

It doesn't happen often, but on Proposition 1—the \$4.7-billion toll-free measure to pay for more roads and rails—the environmental community is divided.

They're all mostly for and against the same things when it comes to the measure. They want to see the light rail system extended beyond the Husky Stadium-to-Seattle line already in the works, and more money going toward bus service. They

They're all worried about global warming and the need to get more drivers—particularly solitary ones—off the roads.

Where they differ is whether they're willing to take the "good" (mass transit) with the "bad" (roads). Efforts to purchase numbers on the environmental effects of the projects by tallying up the greenhouse gas emissions lead to widely divergent figures based on debatable assumptions. Neither side has made a solid case as a result—it's closer to guessing than science.

Instead, it comes down to reading the political green tea leaves.

Those in favor of the proposition fear that if it fails, the option

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

50¢

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2007

KING, PIERCE, SNOHOMISH, ISLAND, JEFFERSON, THURSTONE COUNTIES | WWW.SPI.COM

BASEBALL

GMs back instant replays

SPORTS C2

PRACTICAL GOURMET

Nigella's fast, fab recipes

LIFE AND ARTS E1

HEALTH

A few extra pounds won't kill you, but ...

PAGE A5

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2007

Home prices down again – is it time to buy?

BY AUBREY CORBIN
PI reporter

Many prospective Seattle home buyers welcome signs that prices are declining.

"I think [prices] are way out of sight, and I'm glad to see they're finally coming down," said Steve Noah, while outside a Capitol Hill open house in October.

The latest evidence came Tuesday, when the Northwest Multiple Listing Service reported that the typical home in Seattle and King County sold for less in October than it did during the same

month in 2006. It was the second consecutive year-to-year decline in median price for Seattle and the first for the county after more than five years of monthly price increases, year-over-year.

Meanwhile, the city and county continued to have fewer sales and many more homes languishing on the market

than a year earlier.

The signs of a slowing market locally, combined with news of more serious declines in other parts of the country, clearly have made some local buyers cautious.

"I wouldn't want to overpay for a house right now," said Jessica Bora, who

has been looking at homes with her husband, Graham, for about a year.

Noah, who has been looking at homes for about two years, thinks prices are still too high.

"I think in the next year that we'll see

SEE HOUSING A9



Amanda Knox answers detectives' questions at her Perugia, Italy, apartment.

UW honor student a suspect in Italy death

Woman arrested after roommate raped, slain

BY LEVI FULKROHN AND CLAUDIA ROBE
PI reporters

Back home, those who follow Amanda Knox call her an outgoing Seattle girl, a University of Washington honors student, a young woman making the most of a year studying abroad.

None could have foreseen this: The 20-year-old from Arbor Heights placed squarely at the center of a case that's riveted Europe – the murder, the shocking rape and rape of Knox's female roommate.

Police questioned Knox late last week in connection with the violent attack that bloodied her apartment in the central Italian city of Perugia. Early Tuesday, after detectives interrogated her about inconsistencies in her account, she reportedly confessed to playing a role in the slaying.

Also under suspicion are Knox's Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito, 21, and Congolese musician Patrick Dya Lumumba, 37, who owned the hotel bar where Knox worked. All three have been arrested, with charges expected later this week.

Meredith Kercher, a 21-year-old British exchange student living with UW students at Amanda Knox in Italy, was found dead in her home Friday.

ROADS AND TRANSIT PLAN SOUNDLY REJECTED

VOTERS HIT THE BRAKES

YES 44%
NO 56%

SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

HARRIS 61%
VELAZQUEZ 39%



BURGESS 62%
DELA 38%



PROSECUTOR

SATTERBERG 53%
SHERMAN 46%



INSURANCE MEASURE 67

YES

Voters were approving a tool for challenging insurance companies in court. **YES**

TAX POLICY INITIATIVE 960

YES

The effort to limit the Legislature's power to raise taxes was leading. **YES**

ALSO: Godden, Clark win easily.

INSIDE: More coverage from King County races. A10-13



Proposition 1 supporters Jon Fain, left, and Jon Scholes, deputy campaign manager for the measure, King County Councilman Larry Phillips, Steve Mullins, president of the Washington Road & Transit Co., and King County Councilman Pete von Reichbauer watch returns Tuesday at the Westin Hotel in Seattle.

Most expensive proposal in history losing in 3 counties

BY LARRY LANGE
PI reporter

Voters in the central Puget Sound counties were rejecting the biggest transportation tax proposal in state history one designed to utilize transit and highway advocates to improve regional traffic congestion.

Tuesday night, it appeared that King, Pierce and Snohomish county voters were saying no to the measure, which combined a \$10.8 billion Sound Transit proposal to add 50 miles of light rail line over 30 years and a \$16.4 billion plan to build 186 miles of new lanes and ramps in the three counties.

The transportation ballot results appeared to follow a theme that voters were watching their pocketbooks during this election cycle. They rejected the proposed transportation taxes, approved a measure making it harder to enact new state taxes, voted to retain "super-majority" approval for local school levies and strongly approved a law that would penalize insurance companies that don't pay legitimate claims.

If the Proposition 1, the roads and transit

SEE PROPOSITION 1 A2



A Better Plan

Alternative Plan



- ❑ Freeze light rail transit expansion until Seattle CBD-to-Airport is completed.
- ❑ Continue expanding & improving express and local bus service that has brought Seattle area transit market share to 8th best nationally.
- ❑ Continue expanding the transit/HOV lane system on expressways and arterials and convert to HOT lanes.
- ❑ Propose transportation tax programs in smaller bites.

Buses Go Everywhere!

36

This?



←-- A rail “spine” with bus feeders and time consuming transfers for \$141 billion that overlays existing Express Bus services

A Truly regional “Web” of express bus routes serving the entire region and providing new transit services for those not served today for 1/5th the cost?

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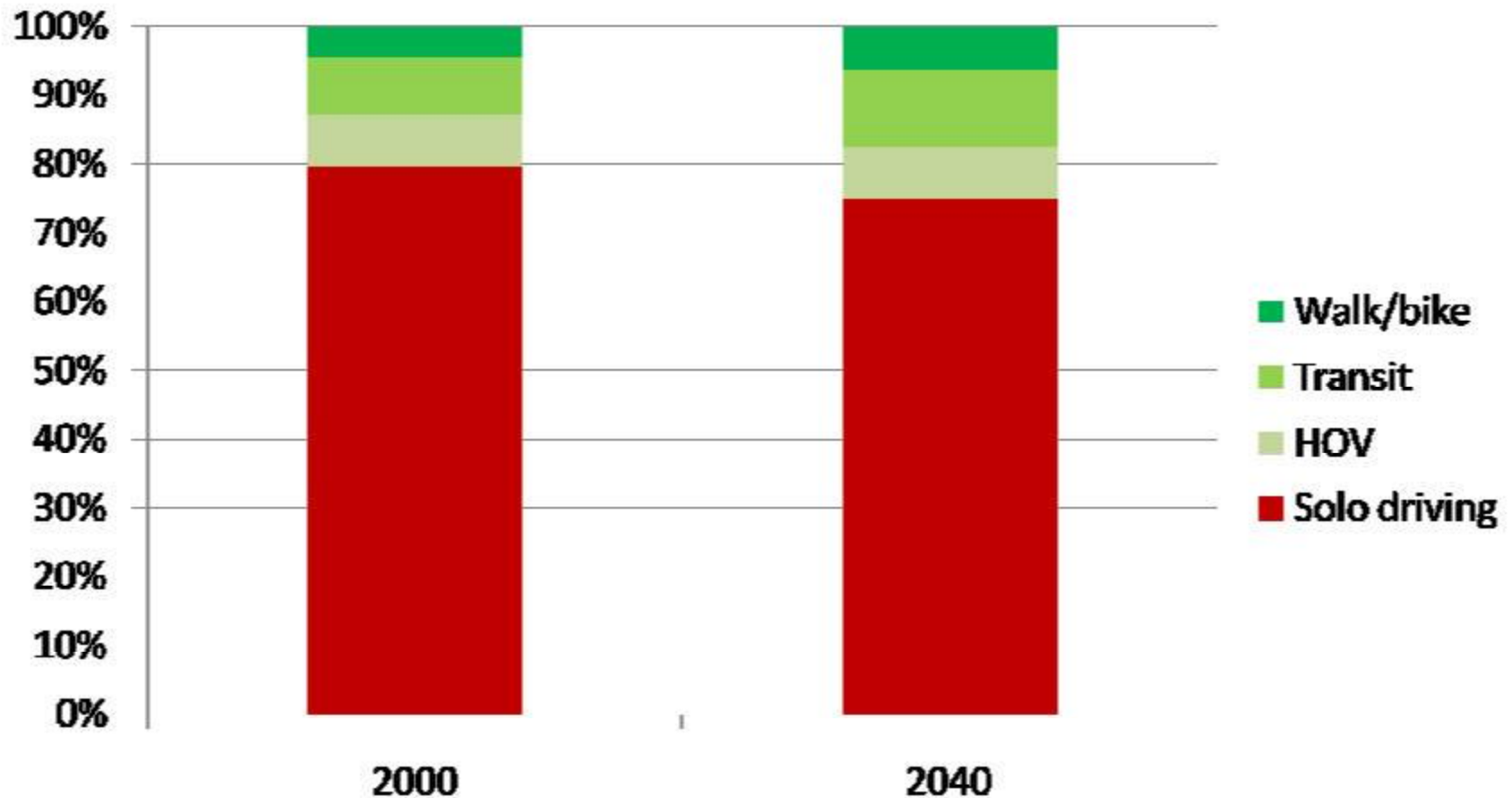
Or This?



Alternative Plan Ideas

- Promote ridesharing, van pooling, cycling, and commute trip reduction.
- Active, intelligent, telematics-based traffic management as practiced in Europe.
- Electronic road user fees providing incentives for smoothly moving traffic flows
- Focus on low-emission and zero-emission vehicles

By 2040... Still commuting mostly by car, alone

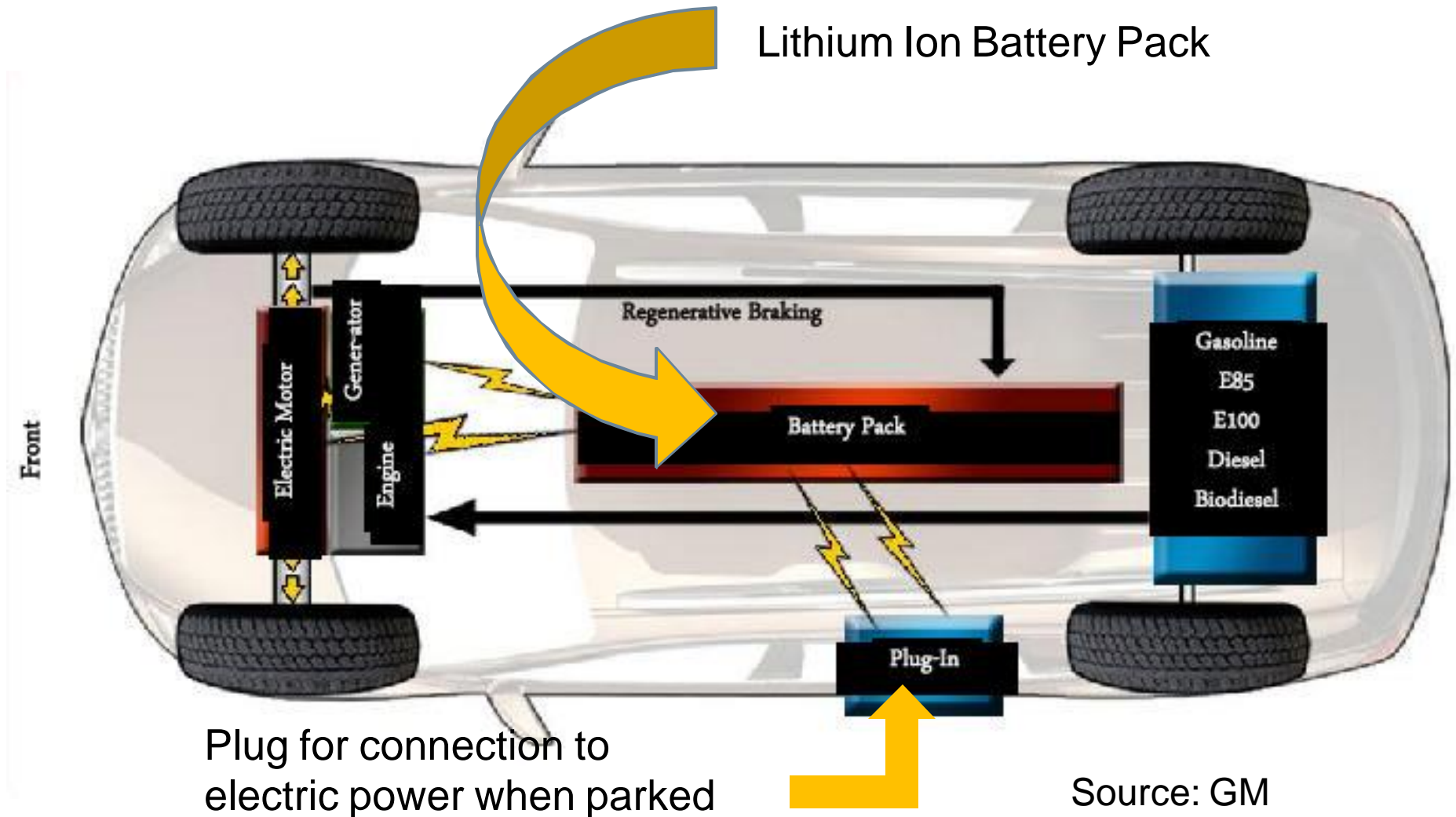


Why car usage dominates buses & trains. “Love affair” or “addiction” is not irrational!



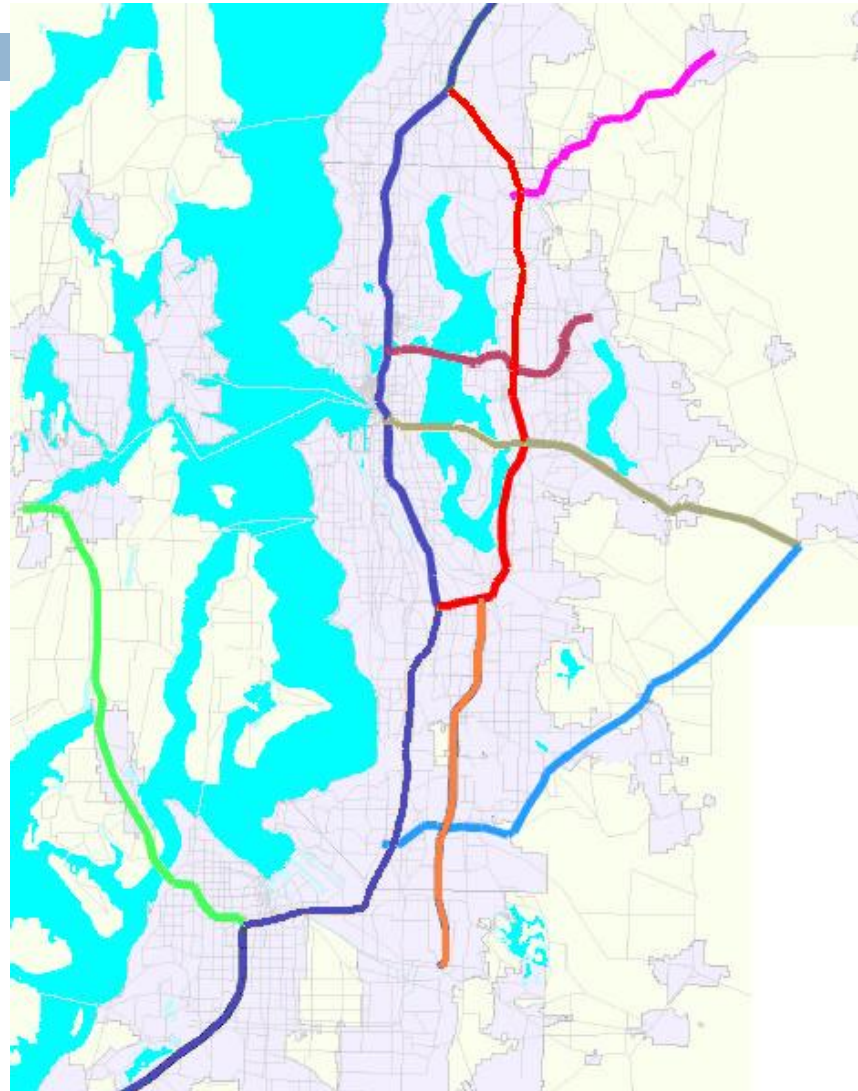
- ❑ door-to-door, any origin, any destination
- ❑ controlled, flexible routing & stops
- ❑ controlled, flexible start & arrival times
- ❑ private, customized space while traveling
- ❑ perceived higher safety & security
- ❑ ease of bringing family, friends, & cargo
- ❑ emotional sensations - control, style, wealth

General Motors E-Flex System Powering Future Cars



We must make roads work!

Needed: A
new highway
treatment to
increase
capacity and
reliability



Map source: WSDOT



Future Battles

Seattle ST2 Update Service Concept







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Posted at <http://streetcardays.com/photos/pic9.html>

Thank you very much! Any questions?