WASHINGTON STATE SECTION / INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERS

ITE WASHINGTON

Letter from the President

Jim Ellison, WA Section President

Planners and engineers: can't we all just get along?

Some of you undoubtedly are having the immediate reaction of, "Of course, why wouldn't we?" And there are others, both urban planners and transportation engineers , who are thinking, "Yeah, but if only *they* would…".

Personally, I have experienced both of those reactions. On one hand, as a young city traffic engineer, some of my best workplace friends were the city's planners. In those days, I often found myself as the only public works person invited to the planning department after-hour socials, and I enjoyed being part of the interaction and

(Continued on page 3)

In This Issue

Letter from the President	1
November Meeting	1
Technical Article: Bellingham Wins Award	4
Scribe Report: October Meeting Highlights	7
2012-2013 ITE WA Meeting Schedule	8
Training: Upcoming Training Opportunity	8
Traffic Simulation Roundtable Wrap-up	9
Safety Corner: Safety Committee Members	10
In Memoriam: Christopher W. Alm	11
Section Business	12

November Meeting

Downtown Bellevue Transportation Plan Update

Downtown Bellevue is an increasingly complex and dynamic urban environment, where residents, employees, and visitors demand a high quality environment and multiple travel options. The update to the Downtown Bellevue Transportation Plan will address mobility issues and challenges and support downtown growth and urban livability looking out to 2030. By 2030, 19,000 residents and 70,300 employees will spend much of their time in the downtown. They will want mobility for many purposes throughout the day – commuting, errands, shopping, recreation, etc. So the capacity of the downtown transportation system to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and auto drivers will need to be expanded. The question is how to allocate right of way and resources to achieve optimum mobility.

Kevin McDonald, AICP, is Senior Transportation Planner with the City of Bellevue and project manager for the Downtown Transportation Plan Update. Kevin will provide an overview of the project, summarize ideas generated through community involvement, and introduce preliminary recommendations to support future downtown mobility.

WHEN Tuesday, November 13, 2012 from 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

WHERE Bellevue City Hall, Room 1E-108
450 110th Avenue NE, Bellevue, WA 98009, 425-452-6800.
Parking can be validated. Carpooling is advised. The Bellevue Transit Center is one block away. (get directions)

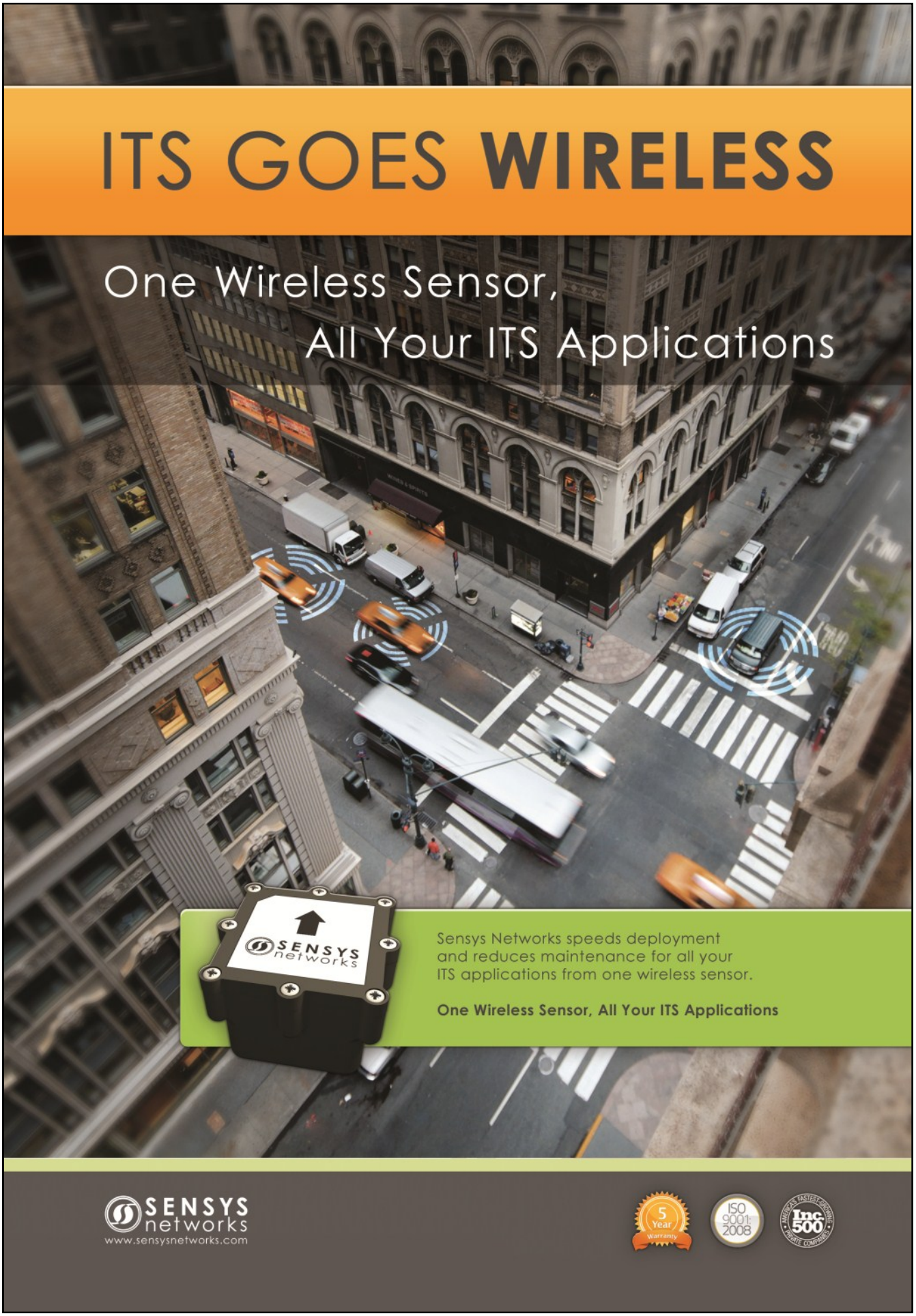
COST $15 for a boxed lunch. No charge if you bring your own lunch.

MENU Lunch box from Gretchen's Shoebox. Please choose from:

1. *Farmers Market Salad: Candied walnuts, blue cheese, dried cranberries, golden raisins, & diced apples on spinach & romaine w/ raspberry vinaigrette.
2. *Cobb Salad: Roasted chicken breast, bacon, avocado, blue cheese, tomatoes, scallions, & hard-boiled egg on garden greens w/ balsamic vinaigrette.
3. **California Club: Oven-roasted chicken breast, crisp bacon, avocado, blue cheese scallion spread, lettuce, & tomato on sourdough bread.
4. **Italian: Turkey, roast beef, salami, Pepper Jack, red & green peppers, onion, black olives, & pepperoncini on a baguette w/ balsamic vinaigrette.
5. **Turkey Havarti: Oven-roasted turkey breast, havarti, cucumbers, lettuce, & tomato on whole wheat w/ mayonnaise & mustard on the side.

* Choices 1-2 include a roll, butter, fresh fruit, oatmeal cookie, & water.
** Choices 3-5 include chips, fresh fruit, chocolate chip cookie, & water.

RSVP Please register with Carla Nasr at itewaregister@gmail.com by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 9. Those who register and select a box lunch and do not attend will be billed $15 to reimburse the caterer.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camaraderie within both the engineering and the planning groups. On the other hand, I have also worked as a traffic engineer for an agency where, at times, the public works and the planning departments did not always philosophically see eye to eye on the joint issues that we addressed.

The gap between well-meaning urban planners and well-meaning transportation engineers seems to stem from their different perspectives, on issues such as how roadway infrastructure can best serve the public and its communities. These sometimes conflicting viewpoints can lead to each forming generalizations and stereotypes about the other.

Some traffic engineers may be perceived as rigid, doing things strictly "by the book." When a planner starts eyeing recommendations for ten foot lane widths, on-street angle parking, or trees in the medians, the conversation with the engineer often leads to the subject of road standards, safety, or tort liability. As the planner strives for ways to build and enrich a strong sense of community, the engineer frets over safety and mobility, having to defend the agency on the witness stand, or worry about how to finance additional maintenance costs of newly introduced features in the road right-of-way.

Planning and engineering perspectives may collide in a variety of ways. Planning guidelines often prescribe planting trees in roadway planter strips at 30-foot intervals which, once the trees are mature, may compete with traffic signs for space and visibility. An increase in development density can generate pressure to widen streets for additional capacity, but can also enhance community vitality and use of alternative travel modes. Community planning groups may not understand how, or even why, the MUTCD specifies the color and shape of traffic signs, or the letter sizes to be used, when the conversation turns to creating a system of downtown way finding signs.

More often than not, planners and engineers both have well-founded concerns. However, each group may sometimes fall short in its ability to articulate to one another the basis for its concerns, to understand each other's perspectives, or to forge a reasonable compromise that works for both groups.

Enter the transportation planner. Transportation planners can find themselves in the middle, between the engineers and the urban planners. And therein lies a unique opportunity. Transportation planners have the background and credibility to understand the perspectives of both groups, act as a translator between them, serve as a conduit for information, and help facilitate compromise and reasonable solutions.

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With the help of urban planners and traffic engineers, transportation planners have played a vital role in the development of progressive innovations in our field, such as context sensitive design, complete streets, and transit-oriented developments, to name a few. Through their contributions to these concepts, as well as their continuing work in developing new approaches, such as multimodal levels of service and performance measures, the transportation planner is helping to bring planning and engineering functions together in a more cohesive manner to build stronger communities.

I salute those transportation planners who have helped bridge the gap between urban planners and traffic engineers. As a way of recognizing their efforts, I would like to dedicate this issue of our newsletter to transportation planners, in appreciation for their contributions to the transportation profession.

Technical Article

Bellingham's Planners Win Award for Innovative Urban Village Transportation Impact Fee Reduction Program

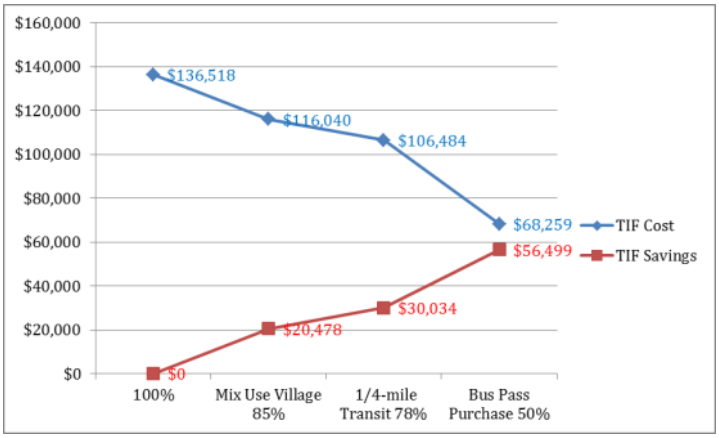
By Chris Comeau, AICP, Transportation Planner, Bellingham Public Works

On October 12, 2012, at Washington State's American Planning Association conference in Olympia, Wash., Bellingham transportation planners received the 2012 APA-PAW[1] Award for Transportation Planning in Washington State for Bellingham's Urban Village[2] TIF Reduction Program.

Since 1994, the city of Bellingham, Washington has assessed development for transportation impact fees (TIF) to recover a proportional share of the city's investment in transportation infrastructure to accommodate growth. Despite regular complaints from developers, business owners, and community activists suggesting that TIFs are barriers to infill development, Bellingham's TIF rate is low compared to the rates charged in other Washington cities. A 2010 study of TIF rates in 66 other Washington cities revealed that Bellingham's rates were in the lowest 30% and far below the average rate in Washington State.

In 2010, in an effort to further promote comprehensive plan goals for mixed use urban infill and to create even more financial incentive and reward for new development in designated Urban Villages, Public Works transportation planners created Bellingham's Urban Village TIF Reduction Program. Importantly, the program is based on legally defensible practices using ITE trip generation methodology, research, and widely-accepted practices within the field of transportation planning and engineering.

Citywide, Bellingham awards 100% TIF credit for previous uses. In addition, Urban Village development is rewarded with an automatic 15% trip reduction for mixed use location and an automatic 7 to 10% trip reduction depending on proximity to high-frequency (15 minutes) public transit. Vehicle trips, and thus TIF, can be further reduced, up to 50% total, through purchase of bus passes, car share memberships, or other transportation demand management strategies.



[1] PAW stands for Planning Association of Washington.
[2]An urban village is a mixed use urban center that concentrates development to a compact area.

(Continued on page 5)

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Technical Article, continued

(Continued from page 4)

In 2012, the TIF rate for downtown Bellingham and other urban villages is 25-50% lower than for other parts of Bellingham, 25% lower than Lynden's rates, and 50% lower than Ferndale's Main Street TIF rate. This means that TIFs in Bellingham's urban villages are lower than any other significant population center in Whatcom County.

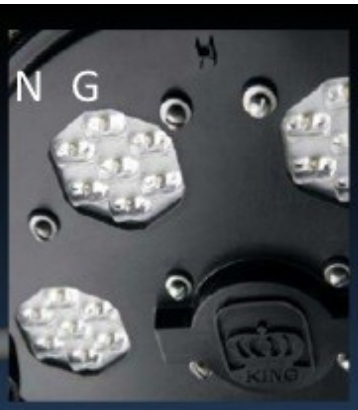
City	Population	2012 TIF Base Rate	2012 TIF Per Square Foot of Development	2012 TIF Central Business District[1,2]	2012 TIF Central Business District 50%[3]
Bellingham	77,000	$1,912	$1,931	$1,491	$956
Lynden	12,125	$1,997	$2,016	$1,997	n/a
Ferndale	11,681	$2,783	$2,811	$3,243	n/a
Notes:	1. Bellingham CBD and Urban Villages = 22% to 25% automatic reduction				
	2. Ferndale charges higher TIF for 443 acre area including Main Street (CBD)				
	3. Bellingham CBD and Urban Villages can reduce TIF up to 50% by Transportation Demand Management				

Since its implementation in 2011, Bellingham's Urban Village TIF Reduction Program has saved developers and business owners tens of thousands of dollars in TIF assessments, simply by helping to fulfill the community's adopted vision and policy emphasis on mixed use infill development and multimodal transportation.

This award from the State planning organization is unlikely to silence local activists who have their own theories about TIF. However, the award is clear validation from the planning profession that Bellingham has integrated goals for mixed use infill development, multimodal transportation, and economic development to create some of the most progressive TIFs in Washington.

Note: Chris Comeau, AICP, can be reached at ccomeau@cob.org or 360-778-7946. Chris presented "Bellingham's Experience with Transportation Impact Fees, 1995-2011" at ITE Washington's 2011 3rd Quarter Meeting at the City of Snohomish Library on October 11, 2011.

LED LIGHTING & ROADWAY SOLUTIONS



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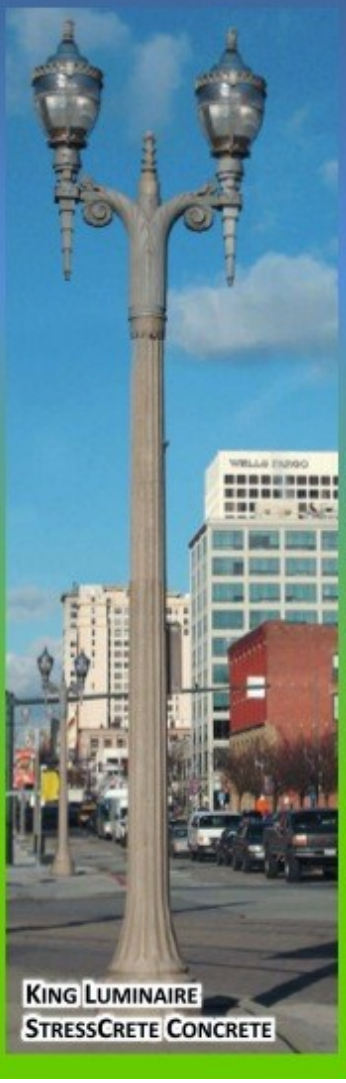

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Scribe Report

Making Progress with MAP-21 and other Highlights from the October 9 Luncheon Meeting

By Paul Cho, ITE WA Scribe, City of Redmond

Whether we are focused on it or not, progress or growth may happen in any organization. As I hunted for keys to fleet vehicles, I couldn't find a single one. Not even the keys to the one ton cargo van were available. I eventually made it to this month's ITE Washington section meeting in my personal vehicle only to run into co-workers that had already arrived in a fleet vehicle. We'll have to work on coordinating better for carpools to this month's luncheon meeting between our time spent progressing our departments. Please see me at this month's meeting and I'll let you in on the inside joke.

James Colyar from Federal Highway Administration talks about MAP-21
Photo by Dongho Chang, City of Seattle

The topic of the October 9, 2012 luncheon meeting was the new surface transportation bill passed by Congress, titled the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act. Located conveniently off of SR 169 and I-405, the Banquet Room of the Renton Community Center provided a warm and inviting venue for the topic and convenience for those traveling from the south. As the 36 registered members gathered boxed lunches and found their seats, section President, Jim Ellison started the meeting and requested self-introductions.

Following the introductions, Gary Norris, Safety Committee Chair, provided information on ITE Washington section's Safety Committee and requested volunteers to please contact him. Mr. Ellison then announced the tragedy of Christopher Alm, 24, son of Deby and Dave Alm who was involved in a fatal bicycle related accident. ITE Washington section will donate $1,000 to Western ITE Student Endowment Fund in Christopher's name. There may also be an emerging safety effort fueled by this tragedy.

Mr. Ellison then introduced James Colyar, Transportation Specialist at Federal Highway Administration, to speak about MAP-21. As the title implies, progress was the basis of the new bill, which was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012. MAP-21 extends the current law SAFETEA-LU (expired in 2009) to fiscal year 2012 and provides funding for surface transportation programs at over $105 billion for fiscal years 2013 and 2014.

Mr. Colyar packed an enormous amount of information in a tight timeframe as he provided overviews of MAP-21's goals, program restructuring, level of investment, and performance management. He also discussed its focus on funding for infrastructure and safety. For more detailed information, you may log onto: www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21.

After a brief question and answer session, Jim Ellison announced that a copy of the presentation would be made available on the ITE Washington section website. He concluded the meeting by providing information on this month's luncheon meeting on the Downtown Bellevue Transportation Plan Update, to be held on November 13 at the City of Bellevue. Please see page 1 for more details.

Meeting Schedule for 2012-2013

These upcoming dates for ITE Washington State Section meetings are subject to change depending upon availability of venues.

- Tuesday, November 13 – Downtown Bellevue Transportation Plan. See page 1.
- December (date to be announced soon) – Breakfast & training: New ITE Trip Generation Manual, 9th Edition Changes, additions, and mixed use trip generation methodology
- Wednesday, January 16 – Neighborhood Greenways: a new category of street that actively prioritizes walking and bicycling.
- Monday, February 11 – ITE/International Municipal Signal Association (IMSA)
- Tuesday, March 12
- Tuesday, April 9
- Tuesday, May 14 – Student night
- Monday, June 10 – Annual meeting
- Tuesday, June 11 – 25th Annual Golf Tournament

Training Announcement

Calibration of Micro-simulation Models Using ITS Data: Lessons Learned

In order for a traffic micro-simulation model to be effective, it must be able to replicate both supply and demand characteristics, as well as their interaction. That is, the micro-simulation model must be properly calibrated. The recent widespread deployment of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) in North America has provided an opportunity to obtain significant amounts of traffic related data on a point, link, and trip basis. In addition, there has been a corresponding increase in the quality and quantity of micro-simulation models that can be used to model transportation systems. A methodology for calibrating traffic micro-simulation models so that the simulation results, such as travel time, represent the observed distributions obtained from the field will be presented. The focus of the talk will be on lessons learned from various calibration-related research projects over the past ten years. The seminar will conclude with a discussion of current and future research initiatives in this area.

Date: Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Time: 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Location: University of Washington, Husky Union Building (HUB) room 332
4001 Northeast Stevens Way
Seattle, WA 98195
206-543-2100 Parking information and Transit information

Speaker: Dr. Laurence R. Rilett, Professor of Civil Engineering at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Sponsors: The Pacific Northwest Transportation Consortium (PACTRANS) and the ITE Washington Traffic Simulation Roundtable

Register here: https://catalyst.uw.edu/webq/survey/mmackrel/182575

Contact for questions: Meghan MacKrell at mmackrel@uw.edu

Traffic Simulation Roundtable

October 4 Roundtable Wrap Up

By Matt Beaulieu, WSDOT and Tony Woody, CH2M Hill, Co-chairs of the Traffic Simulation Roundtable and Brian Woodburn, Parametrix

On October 4, 2012, the ITE Washington and ITE Oregon Traffic Simulation Roundtable groups partnered to provide a joint half-day workshop with speakers and participants from both states. Approximately 60 engineers, planners, managers, and modelers attended and listened to presentations on data sources, traffic flow theory, and dynamic traffic assignment. Following the presentations, attendees enjoyed taking part in an informative panel discussion about roundabout design, operation, and modeling. This was a well attended event with representatives of the public, private, and academic sectors sharing knowledge. Participants took advantage of the workshop to meet and catch up with other micro-simulation experts in the region. Although presentations continued through lunch, attendees networked during breaks and after the formal session ended.

Members from ITE Washington and ITE Oregon mingle and learn
Photos by Tegan Houghton, DKS Associates

Both roundtable groups would like to extend a special thanks to the skilled and entertaining presenters for sharing their knowledge, WSDOT's Southwest Region for providing the venue, and to the parent sections of ITE Washington and ITE Oregon for providing lunch.

The Washington Traffic Simulation Roundtable is a Washington State ITE subcommittee. Please check future ITE newsletters for upcoming events.

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Safety Corner

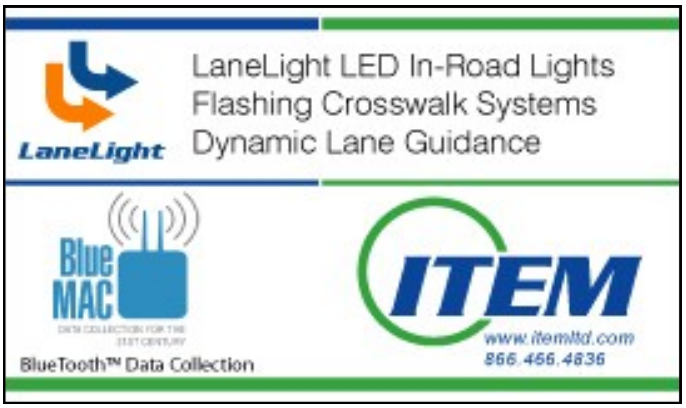
By Gary Norris, Safety Committee Chair, DN Traffic Consultants

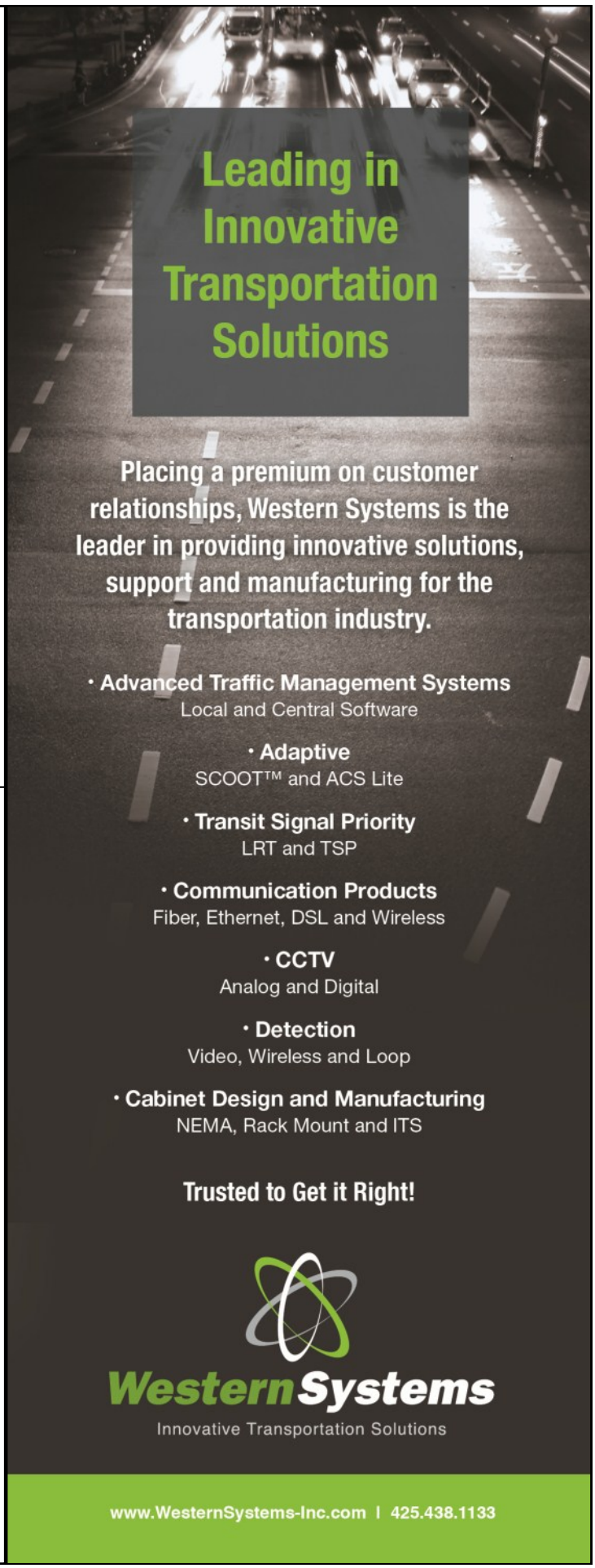
The Washington State Section Safety Committee held its first meeting on Thursday, November 1. The purpose of the meeting was to begin the process of developing a list of actions that the Washington State Section can pursue as part of our efforts to promote Target Zero, Washington State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Current committee members include:

- Michelle Brown
- Brian Chandler
- Matthew Enders
- Robert Shull
- Gary Norris, Safety Committee Chair

If you are interested in joining the Committee or have ideas for potential Section safety projects, please contact one of the committee members or me, the Committee Chair at 425-765-5721 or gary.norris@comcast.net. Thank you.





In Memoriam

Contribution to the ITE Western District Student Endowment Fund
In Memory of Christopher W. Alm

The Washington State Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers is contributing $1,000 to the ITE Western District Student Endowment Fund in the memory of Christopher W. Alm, beloved son of ITE Members Deby and Dave Alm. Christopher was only 24 years old when he lost his life in a collision while commuting to work on his bicycle on September 22, 2012.

It is our hope that this contribution might be used to further emphasize safety as the most fundamental aspect of transportation engineering. ITE must stress by way of educating our next generation that there can be no higher priority than safety.

Immediately after such a tragedy we wonder how it might have been prevented. Hopefully we may learn and rededicate ourselves to the cause of safety. Christopher carried this quotation in his wallet: "Do the right thing, for the right reasons, and have the courage to face it." It is our hope that ITE members will realize that putting safety first is always the right thing to do.

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