ITE Newsletter
Washington's community of transportation professionals

JANUARY 2018
VOL. 28 | ISSUE 3

ITE/IMSA ANNUAL JOINT MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12 8:00 AM - 4:00PM

SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS

Washington State Section ite and IMSA Northwest Section

SpotLight is a new series highlighting ITE Washington Member Projects. Each ITE Newsletter Edition will present selected submissions

Mission Statement explaining the projects objective.

Project Narrative to explain the proposed activities for the project.

Abstract describing the crucial aspects of the project

Summary on the accomplishment and benefits to the public

Submit all articles to Newsletter Editor itewaeditor@gmail.com. All articles will be reviewed and selected for publishing by the ITE Washington Board of Directors. The author is responsible and assumes all liability in obtaining permissions for publishing the content, photos, names, etc.

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ITE SUPPORT SPONSOR'S

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JANUARY

A happy (belated) New Years to our members!

As I write this, the army of volunteers led by Robert Acevedo and Carter Danne and the Board are working feverishly to finalize the details of the ITE/IMSA conference coming up next week. There are many great things about this conference; the vendors with new and improved equipment; the technical sessions sharing how to use new technology; case studies and lessons learned from projects; and the opportunity to interact with not only our membership but those of our sister organization, IMSA.

Every year, this conference allows us to look into the future and see what we can do to increase mobility and safety for all with tried and true, cost effective and innovative approaches. It's always an incredibly fun and exciting conference for our members.

Of course, the future really isn't a place we ever arrive at but instead a journey we are always on. I like to think of all the things we thought would be with us in the year 2018. For myself, who grew up watching the Jetsons (the 1980's reboot, by the way), I was expecting something close to flying cars by now. On one hand I'm a little disappointed that that hasn't happened, but I am also glad that our jobs aren't making cogs or sprockets, whatever those may have been. The Jetsons was created during the 1960's when the future looked bright and the space age was going to change how we lived in ways unimaginable. Half a century later, many of those promises have not let up, though they have adapted. Instead of flying cars, the future of transportation is one where all or most users are connected, autonomous automobiles drive around the city as part of a TNC yielding to smartphone-wielding pedestrians to alert them when to stop to either get in or to cross a road. This vision is very attractive- less delay as cars travel within inches of each other; higher degree of safety as computers communicate moves in advance; and, you can still listen to your favorite tunes while drinking a mocha with no fear of spilling!

Then, on the other hand, there are the drawbacks of this technology. We're coming out of the last century either modifying the infrastructure built solely for the automobile to become more multi-modal or even tearing it down and rebuilding it into a more dynamic place to accommodate businesses or multifamily residents. Will more driverless cars make this better or worse?

Like so many things we have seen in the past few years, we are finding that our industry is more integrated with other disciplines, some we didn't even think of. A recent tweet from Rik Adamski, a principal of planning firm ASH+LIME, said "Civil engineering is a physical science. It deals in inalterable laws of physics. Transportation engineering is a social and physical science. It deals in the interaction between human behavior and infrastructure, which is changing and fluid." I couldn't say it better!

Philosophizing aside, I am happy to announce that ITE International will be opening their election for the next vice president and president positions on February 14. If you haven't had a chance, both candidates, Randy McCourt of DKS Associates and Jason Crawford of the Texas Transportation Institute held an interactive town hall! If you missed it, it is available on ITE's website here: http://www.ite.org/candidates/default.asp. You can also follow Jason on Twitter at @j_crawford and Randy at @Randy4ITE. These will be the next leaders to take us into the future. Please look and see about both of these candidates and their plans for our organization.

With that, I look forward to seeing as many of you as I can at February's conference. Please take a look at the amazing products and services that the vendors are presenting. You will likely be amazed at where we are and where we are soon to be!

Mike Hendrix, PE PTOE

ITE Washington President

| vice-president / treasurer's report

Daniel Lai, PE
Vice-President/Treasurer

ITE December Treasurer's Chest

Washington ITE is proud to announce that as of October 19, 2017, we have been officially granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS. What this means is that any charitable contributions made to Washington ITE can be deducted under IRC Section 170. Please contact the Washington ITE Treasurer for future donations (not to be confused with membership dues) requiring an acknowledgement letter for tax filing purposes. Thank you.

| secretary's message

No January Report

Claudia S. Hirschey

Claudia S. Hirschey, P.E.
ITE Secretary

| student corner

Pablo Para, PE, PTOE
Student Committee Chair

2018 Western District Student Leadership Summit (SLS)

Wise Tales

en •gi•neer

[en-j*uh*-**neer**], n

1. a person who solves problems that you did not understand.
2. a person that has forgotten more about math than you'll ever know.

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Send comments to Newsletter Editor itewaeditor@gmail.com

Articles must be received by the third Thursday of the month to be considered for publishing in the next issue.

Annual Advertising Rates

business card ad ..... $*
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half page ad ..... $*
full page ad ..... $*
**** Ad rates will be published in the November Newsletter.***

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Ads run from January through December.

We will have Notice in November for 2018 advertising thru EventBrite.

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Darcy Akers, EIT
ITE Scribe

Seattle's New Era of Bike Share

November 2017 Meeting

By Darcy Akers

If you've walked down a street in Seattle this summer, you've seen them - orange, yellow and green bikes parked all around the city. This last year has seen a dramatic change in Seattle's bike share program: from the end of Pronto in March to the launch of the free-floating bikes in July. Seattle has seen a rapid makeover to its bike share system.

SDOT hosted this month's ITE meeting and Program Manager Joel Miller shared their experience with the new dockless bike share program. After Pronto ended in March, Seattle became one of the few large cities without a bike share program. But this clean slate had it advantages as several private companies approached Seattle with the idea of a dockless bike share program in April. By collaborating with bike share companies, Seattle quickly developed a temporary pilot permit that allowed the new system to hit the roads by July.

Lessons learned from the Pronto system have already helped guide the launch of this new system. (Like launching the program in the summer instead of the winter!) That experience helped Seattle develop a set of goals to guide the pilot permit – Safety, Parking, Operations, Data Collection and Fees. With the help of the UW Transportation Data Collaboration, they are collecting 6 months of data from July thru December. Early next year they will evaluate the pilot permit and bike share program itself and determine the next steps.

Miller explained how the dockless system presented new challenges and discussed some of the pilot permit requirements that tried to address them. One safety concern is bikes being parked in a way that blocks access to sidewalks and businesses. The permit defines that bikes should be parked in the landscape/furniture zone along the sidewalk and has requirements for the companies to address improperly parked bikes. The permit also defines the number of bicycles allowed, maintenance response requirements and how they should be spread throughout the city. The condition to share data will help Seattle understand and better manage the system in the future. Full details are available online.

There are many differences between the two programs - the biggest being the concept of stations vs free-floating. As a last mile solution, the free-floating system allows for more direct connections versus stations, which restrict where you can start and stop your trips. The number of bikes is also much greater - around 7000 now compared to 500 Pronto bikes. The new system covers the whole city rather than just the downtown core to UW. The capital cost is greatly reduced by removing the stations from the equation, which allows for bikes to be more spread out with larger and more flexible coverage.

Another important aspect of the bike share program is equity. Miller mentioned that SDOT is working with the companies to remove barriers that would prevent some people from using the system. For example, they are developing other ways to check out a bike besides the smart phone apps or using a pre-paid card rather than credit card. With the collected data, they will also look at the geographical spread of bikes, including use and availability. Additionally, targeted outreach in some communities may be needed, such as older populations, who might not understand how to use the system and also general education for new riders. As these companies deploy more bikes and expand their system, it will be interesting to see how it impacts mode choice as well as trip types.

The results so far have shown a much higher ridership, with over 3 times as many trips per bike per day than Pronto. They have also seen that the average trip length is over 20 minutes and 4 miles. But stay tuned for early next year when the data collection is complete and evaluation is done! It's an exciting time, for Seattle is the U.S. testing ground for this large of a free-floating bike share and will help shape it's future!

2018 ITE Washington

Dates are subject to change. Check https://wa-ite.org for current information and updates.

ITE / IMSA Annual Joint Meeting & Conference

The Washington Section Joint ITE/IMSA conference is only one week away. This year ITE and IMSA have brought together over 40 vendors featuring the latest in transportation products with 18 technical seminars showcasing new traffic products. We are excited to see a growth of over 25% in new vendors that are exhibiting at the conference with new product offerings this year. In addition to the premier exhibition offered in this region, this year's conference also brings together private and public sector technical presentations that cover topics in the following categories:

- Local Agency Improvement Projects
- Safety
- Advanced Technology and our Infrastructure
- Projects of Regional Significance
- Transit

Lunch Keynote: As a fellow from the Sightline Institute, Daniel Malarkey, will provide membership with his perspective on the implications of autonomous, connected, electric and shared vehicles and how we should prepare for them as transportation professionals at the lunch keynote address. Daniel has helped implement large-scale projects in infrastructure, technology, and energy in Washington for over 30 years. At Sightline, he thinks and writes about the same topics with a view towards sustainability. He gets excited about self-driving electric cars and how they could transform Cascadia cities for the better. Daniel recently wrote two articles titled "Your Car of the Future is No Car at All", which provides a thought-provoking review of how emerging technologies are changing our transportation industry.

Note: Registration for the lunch keynote session must be made through Eventbrite by Friday February 9, 2018.

Date	Topic	Location
FEB 12	**ITE/IMSA Conference and Exhibit Trade Show [8:00AM - 4:00PM]**	**DoubleTree Seatac Airport**
MAR 13	**TRAFFIC TRIVIA NIGHT! A social event with ITE [5:30PM-7:00PM]**	at WSP, Seattle
MAY 6-9	2018 Oregon Quad Meeting -Portland	
MAY 08	Student Night	
JUN 12	Washington State Section ITE Annual Meeting	

2018 ITE Washington Partner Events

APR 02-05	Oregon American Public Works Association Spring Conference	Eugene, Oregon
JUN 24-27	Western ITE Annual Conference	Keystone, Colorado
AUG 20-23	ITE International Annual Meeting and Exhibit	Minneapolis, Minnesota
OCT 16-19	Oregon American Public Works Association Fall Conference	Canyonville, Oregon

Washington Transportation Professionals Forum (WTPF)

Live Webinar Available

The Washington Transportation Professionals Forum (WTPF) is a member-owned group of local agency traffic, transportation, and public works engineers, planners, technicians, supervisors, managers, directors, mayors, clerks, council members, and related professionals. Partners of local agencies such as other organizations, consultants, and vendors are also members of the group. Members share information and discuss ideas about traffic-and transportation-related issues at free meetings, through a free email distribution list, and through strong resulting connections in the professional community.

WTPF holds free meetings that are organized and led by WSDOT Local Programs, with help from local agencies. Meetings are held live on both sides of the state and are available by live webinar to allow an exchange of ideas across Washington..

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/Traffic/WTPF.htm

Washington State Dept. of Transportation's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

LTAP Training Program provides local agencies access to relevant training opportunities. LTAP sponsors its own courses, directly targeting the training needs of local agencies receiving Federal funding, as well as gathering information about other valuable training.

Courses that are conducted by LTAP are specifically designed to help educate Washington State local agencies working with the Local Programs office and who are receiving Federal funds.

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/Training

ENGINEERING CAREERS

Please visit www.wa-ite.org for current job postings.

Submit new postings to:

Sherief Elbassuoni, PH.D., P.E.
Web Master
Associate Transportation Engineer
DKS Associates - Seattle, Washington
she@dksassociates.com

Postings should include company, position, brief description of responsibilities, requirements, contact information and posting timeframe.

SIGN of the TIMES

Contributed by:

Aaron Knight, PE
KPG Interdisciplinary Design

Chinese City Sets Up 'No Cell Phone' Pedestrian Lanes

In this photo taken Saturday, Sept. 13, 2014, residents walk on a lane painted with instructions to separate those using their phones as they walk from others in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality.

By Rishi Iyengar

September 15, 2014

Chongqing, a vast municipality of 28 million in southwest China, has come up with a lighthearted strategy to remind pedestrians of the dangers of looking down at a smartphone while walking — separate lanes for people using or not using their devices.

Signs and street markings appeared recently in a short section of paving in the city's entertainment district, indicating that one section of the sidewalk would be a "no cell phone" lane, the Associated Press reports.

"There are lots of elderly people and children in our street, and walking with your cell phone may cause unnecessary collisions here," said Nong Cheng, a spokeswoman for the district's property management company. However, she clarified that the initiative was meant to be a satirical way to highlight the dangers of texting and walking.

Many pedestrians have been stopping to take pictures of the markings and the signage, although Nong said most of them don't actually adhere to the guidelines.

The inspiration for the dual sidewalk came from *National Geographic* in the U.S., which created similar divisions on a section of pavement in Washington, D.C., in July as part of a televised behavior experiment.

Reprinted from Time.com and American Press

Metro: Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle

By Kit Oldham | Posted 6/18/2006 | Historylink.org Essay 7813

This essay made possible by:
King County

Metro promotional showing grownups who posed in 1958 as children in support of establishing Metro to improve water quality, 1988

Courtesy Sound Transit

Children posing in favor of a new METRO to improve Lake Washington water quality, 1958

Courtesy Seattle Municipal Archive

Concrete pipes used for treated wastewater

The Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle, commonly known as Metro, was designed to provide regional solutions for the problems of King County's fast-growing metropolitan area. In 1958, after rejecting a proposal for an agency with authority over a range of issues, voters approved a plan authorizing Metro to deal with a single pressing problem -- wastewater treatment. Over the next decade, the agency designed and built a coordinated sewer system that ended discharges into Lake Washington, dramatically improving water quality, and began treating sewage entering Puget Sound. In 1972, voters gave Metro responsibility over transportation, and Metro Transit built an innovative countywide bus system. Metro ceased to exist as a separate agency on January 1, 1994, after a court decision found the Metro Council to be unconstitutional, but the sewer and transit systems it created and its innovative achievements continue to impact life in King County.

"Metropolitan Ills"

The genesis of Metro can be traced to a November 20, 1953, speech that James R. Ellis (b. 1921) made to a forum held at the YMCA and sponsored by the Municipal League of Seattle and King County. Ellis, a young League lawyer, told the forum that some new form of government was needed to address regional problems resulting from population growth and suburbanization. He noted that "metropolitan ills" such as traffic congestion and pollution crossed existing political boundaries but were currently addressed on a piecemeal basis by some 180 separate, independent special districts and municipal governments within King County. Ellis suggested several possible reforms, including annexing the entire metropolitan area to Seattle, or creating a metropolitan district or government to handle regional problems, and urged the establishment of an advisory committee to determine the best approach.

The Municipal League made remedying the "metropolitan ills" that Ellis identified a top priority. At the League's urging, the King County Board of Commissioners and Seattle Mayor Gordon S. Clinton (b. 1920) jointly appointed a Metropolitan Problems Advisory Committee to study options for metropolitan government. The committee examined various metropolitan governmental schemes, and ended up focusing on one used in Toronto, Canada. With the Toronto plan as a guide, the Advisory Committee drafted state legislation that would authorize a metropolitan municipal corporation for King County.

Under the bill, introduced in the 1957 legislative session, voters could approve a municipal corporation that would perform one or more of six identified functions for the metropolitan area -- sewage disposal, water supply, public transportation, garbage disposal, parks and parkways, and comprehensive planning. The corporation would be governed by a 15-member board consisting of representatives from the County Council and city councils in the metropolitan area. The Legislature narrowly approved the bill on the last day of the session, but only after supporters agreed to an amendment conditioning approval on separate majority votes both within and outside Seattle.

The first attempt to create a metropolitan municipal corporation for King County foundered on this "dual majority" requirement. In March 1958, Seattle voters strongly supported a metropolitan district comprising most of western King County with authority over sewage disposal, mass transportation, and comprehensive planning, but the proposal failed because it fell slightly short of a majority outside Seattle.

Pollution Problem

Metro supporters responded by paring down the proposed metropolitan district in size (eliminating some south county precincts where the "no" vote had been strongest) and in mission, to focus only on sewage disposal. The need to do something about sewage was self-evident. With each city or sewer district responsible for its own waste, there were 10 different sewage treatment plants discharging effluent into Lake Washington. In storms, sewers often overflowed, releasing untreated

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Courtesy Metro

Seattle Metro tunnel

Courtesy Metro Transit

Metro Tunnel, downtown Seattle, October 2001

HistoryLink.org Photo by Priscilla Long

Renton Treatment Plant, 2000

Wastewater treatment plant at West Point built by Metro, 2000

Courtesy King County Department of Natural Resources

waste into Lake Washington and other county lakes. And in keeping with historic practice, untreated sewage was regularly discharged into Puget Sound at West Point below Fort Lawton (now Discovery Park) and other locations. Lake and Puget Sound beaches were repeatedly closed because of contamination, and even the treated effluent was slowly killing Lake Washington by flooding it with nutrients that promoted uncontrolled algae growth.

On September 9, 1958, Metro supporters used concern over polluted lakes and beaches -- memorably captured in a widely-circulated photograph of five children (the Block family) posed beside a Matthews Beach sign warning of polluted water -- to win overwhelming approval for creation of a Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle authorized to build and operate a regional sewage treatment system.

Metro was up and running within a month. C. Carey Donworth was elected chairman of the Metro Council and Ellis was appointed legal counsel; they served until 1980 and 1979 respectively. The 15-member Metro Council adopted a comprehensive sewage plan, most of which had been prepared jointly by King County, Seattle, and the state before the election. All 10 sewage plants discharging into Lake Washington were to be closed. Metro would take over other plants and existing systems from Seattle and other cities and sewer districts in 1962.

To replace the plants being closed and to expand capacity, Metro constructed new treatment plants at West Point, Renton, Carkeek Park, and Richmond Beach, along with large interceptor sewer lines around Lake Washington and along the Duwamish River and Seattle's Elliott Bay waterfront. With only a small staff of its own, Metro hired Metropolitan Engineers (a joint venture of four separate engineering firms -- Brown & Caldwell, R. W. Beck and Associates, Hill & Ingman, and Carey and Kramer) to design and build the sewage treatment system that the plan called for.

Improving Water Quality

Construction got under way on July 20, 1961, with the groundbreaking ceremony for the Renton Treatment Plant near Longacres Racetrack. The Renton facility, a secondary treatment plant, was completed in 1965. The smaller plant near the mouth of Pipers Creek in Carkeek Park was completed in July 1962 and dedicated with a children's beach party. Construction began later that year on the West Point plant, which was completed in 1966. The West Point plant provided primary treatment for sewage that had been flowing untreated from the West Point sewer outfall since its construction in 1913.

Massive tunnels and pipelines -- including a seven-mile underwater section built along the lake's north shore -- carried sewage that had discharged into Lake Washington to these new facilities. The first treated sewage was diverted from the lake in 1963 and the final plant discharging into the lake was closed in 1967. The results were immediate and dramatic. Within a year, water clarity and quality was significantly better, and it continued to improve. Nutrient levels declined and algae became rare. Water quality also improved in the Duwamish River, where dissolved oxygen levels increased, and in Elliott Bay.

Metro's success in improving water quality eventually helped win it authority to operate a public transportation system. In 1962 and as part of the 1968 and 1970 Forward Thrust proposals, King County voters rejected measures that would have given Metro that authority and funded transit through bonds paid by property taxes. However, in 1972, to the surprise of many, including Metro leaders, a transportation measure passed easily.

Several factors in addition to Metro's record of accomplishment prompted the change of heart. Existing bus service was suffering ridership declines and financial deficits. At the same time, the rising environmental movement sought alternatives to the automobile. Backers convinced the 1971 Legislature to authorize sales-tax funding (which did not require the 60 percent approval that doomed the 1968 Forward Thrust transit package). The 1971 legislation also extended Metro's boundaries to be co-

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extensive with the county and increased the size of the Metro Council (which had previously risen to 21) to 36 members including all nine King County Council members and representatives appointed by the County Council from unincorporated areas.

Metro Transit

On September 19, 1972, County voters authorized the enlarged Metro to operate a new county-wide bus system funded by a 3/10th of 1 percent sales tax. Following the vote, Metro managers whose previous experience had been operating a sewage treatment system had 103 days to ready Metro Transit for riders on January 1, 1973.

For the new Metro Transit, creating an integrated city and suburban bus system was just the first step. From the start, the new agency adopted innovative approaches to bus transportation. One of the first, introduced in 1973 at the request of Seattle Mayor Wes Uhlman (b. 1935), was the downtown Seattle Ride Free Area (originally dubbed the "Magic Carpet" zone).

A month after the Magic Carpet zone debuted, OPEC countries imposed an oil embargo. The resulting gas shortages and price increases boosted bus ridership, sending Metro in search of new buses wherever they could be found. Along with gas shortages, 1974 brought a strike by Amalgamated Transit Union members seeking better pay and benefits. More labor strife, including sickouts, arose in 1977 when Metro realized it could only achieve its ridership goals by employing part-time drivers who would work only during peak ridership hours. In return for a pay raise and improved benefits, the union finally agreed to give up previous contracts' guarantee of an eight-hour day for all employees.

In addition to flexible scheduling, Metro Transit introduced buses that were literally flexible, becoming the first American transit agency to order articulated (bending) buses. The first European-style articulated buses, which reduced costs by carrying more passengers per trip, arrived in 1978. The following year, Metro rebuilt and expanded its electric trolley system, purchasing the first new trolley buses built in America for many years. Other Metro Transit innovations included wheelchair lifts for buses, door-to-door van service for elderly and disabled riders, and employee vanpools.

Metro Transit's largest and most controversial project was the downtown Seattle transit tunnel. By 1980, rush-hour congestion on downtown streets slowed bus (and automobile) traffic to a walking pace. After debating various other solutions, Metro and City officials in 1983 approved a plan for a 1.2-mile transit tunnel under downtown. Construction began in 1987 and the three years of construction saw multiple controversies, from closing Pine Street and tearing up 3rd Avenue to the purchase of South African granite for tunnel stations in violation of County, City, and Metro policy. Nevertheless the tunnel opened for bus service on schedule in 1990.

Secondary Treatment

While developing an innovative transit system, Metro continued to expand and improve its sewage treatment system. The Renton plant, by then officially named the South Treatment Plant, was expanded in 1985, doubling its capacity. Two years later, Metro opened an 11-mile pipeline under the Duwamish River and along West Marginal Way and Harbor Avenue into Puget Sound off Duwamish Head. The pipeline kept a promise made when the Renton plant first opened -- that the treated effluent, originally discharged into the Duwamish river, would be diverted if it began affecting fish runs.

Although the Renton plant provided secondary sewage treatment, Metro's other plants discharging into Puget Sound, including the large West Point facility, provided only primary treatment. When Congress passed the Clean Water Act in 1972, it initially mandated secondary treatment at all wastewater plants by 1977. When the deadline year arrived, Congress allowed sewer agencies to seek a waiver if they could show that the primary effluent was not harmful. Metro applied for waivers for its Puget Sound plants, which were tentatively approved in 1981.

However, in the early 1980s studies raised concerned about increasing pollution, especially toxic materials including heavy metals like lead, copper, and zinc, in Puget Sound. Recognizing that secondary sewage treatment would reduce toxic waste entering the sound, the state and federal governments decided to withdraw the waiver, and Metro agreed to plan to have secondary treatment in place by 1991.

That decision touched off another controversy -- where to locate the secondary treatment plant. The existing West Point plant appeared to be the obvious location, but fierce opposition from Magnolia residents and supporters of Discovery Park, which had been created on the former Fort Lawton site following construction of the initial sewage plant, led to years of controversy. Construction finally began in 1991 and the secondary treatment plant opened in 1995, after Metro had been taken over by King County.

In addition to secondary treatment, Metro worked to reduce toxic discharges by keeping toxic waste out of sewage to begin with. The agency worked with private industry to encourage recycling or proper disposal of hazardous waste. For residents, Metro first cooperated with other agencies to conduct household hazardous waste round-ups. The overwhelming response to these events -- hundreds of tons of material, some of it 50 years old -- led Metro to open two permanent household hazardous waste collection sites in Seattle and a wastemobile serving the rest of the county.

Biosolids Debate

Another Metro recycling effort won acclaim but aroused citizen ire. Beginning in 1972, Metro worked to recycle biosolids -- treated sewage sludge, which is rich in nutrients -- that other

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sewer agencies burn or place in landfills. Metro sold biosolids to be used in making soil compost and to enrich soil in parks, and spread or sprayed them on forest land belonging to Weyerhaeuser and other forest-products companies. When Metro acquired its own forest land for recycling biosolids in the late 1980s, it triggered fierce opposition from residents who did not want sewage sludge sprayed near their homes.

Actress Linda Evans and self-proclaimed channeler J. Z. Knight, who lived near Metro forest property in Yelm, Thurston County, supported a well-organized campaign that deterred Metro from using the Yelm site. Valerie Cunningham, from Cumberland in southeast King County, not only led the opposition to spraying biosolids in a forest near her home, but soon became the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit that brought Metro to an end. Despite the determined opposition, Metro continued to educate the public about the benefits of its biosolid recycling program, for which it won national recognition, and worked to reduce the amount of hazardous waste and pathogens in the biosolids. Recycled biosolids remain in use as a component of garden compost both in Western Washington forests and on Eastern Washington farms.

Opponents of biosolid spraying were not the only ones unhappy with Metro. Suburban communities complained that Seattle got the bulk of transit service, while Seattle residents felt that the West Point treatment plant and the bus tunnel had been imposed on the city for the benefit of suburbanites. The Metro Council had grown again, ballooning to 42 members, up from the 15 it began with in 1958.

For years, some reform advocates had argued that Metro should be merged into King County government. A proposal to do so was soundly rejected at the polls in 1979, when voters were happy with Metro's performance on sewage and transit. However, with the agency facing growing dissatisfaction and with the county government having less responsibility as more areas incorporated, merger proposals resurfaced within 10 years.

One Person, One Vote

Merger supporters got a huge boost in 1989 when the United States Supreme Court ruled in a case involving New York City's Board of Estimate that a governing body in which elected officials have equal votes although they represent jurisdictions with very different populations violates the constitutional "one person, one vote" requirement. When the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington, acting at the request of Democratic party leaders, considered if the Board of Estimate ruling applied to Metro, whose council also included elected officials from jurisdictions of very different sizes, they quickly concluded that it did.

The ACLU found four plaintiffs, headed by Valerie Cunningham, and filed a suit alleging that the composition of the Metro Council violated the constitution. Federal District Court Judge William Dwyer (1929-2002) agreed, ruling on September 6, 1990, that the Metro Council was unconstitutional and requiring that it be reformed to comply with the one person, one vote principle.

Metro-King County Merger

After extensive negotiations, county and local government officials agreed on a solution, merging Metro into county government and expanding the size of the County Council from nine to 13 members. The merger proposal failed when first presented to voters in 1991, but in 1992 merger and a charter amendment expanding the Council size were approved.

The Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle ceased to exist on January 1, 1994, joining King County as the Department of Metropolitan Services. The former Metro remained a separate department within the County for two years. In September 1995, the County Council approved a new structure for the executive branch, which took effect in January 1996. Metro's former Water Pollution Control Department joined the County's surface-water management and solid-waste divisions in a new Department of Natural Resources (now the Department of Natural Resources and Parks). The former Metro Transit and the County's roads division formed the new Department of Transportation.

Although Metro no longer exists as a separate entity, many former Metro employees continue to serve King County, as do the innovative sewage and transportation systems that Metro designed, built, and operated over three decades. Metro's numerous achievements -- from the clear, swimmable waters of Lake Washington to the fleet of articulated, wheelchair-lift-equipped buses carrying passengers throughout the county -- continue to have an important impact on daily life in King County.

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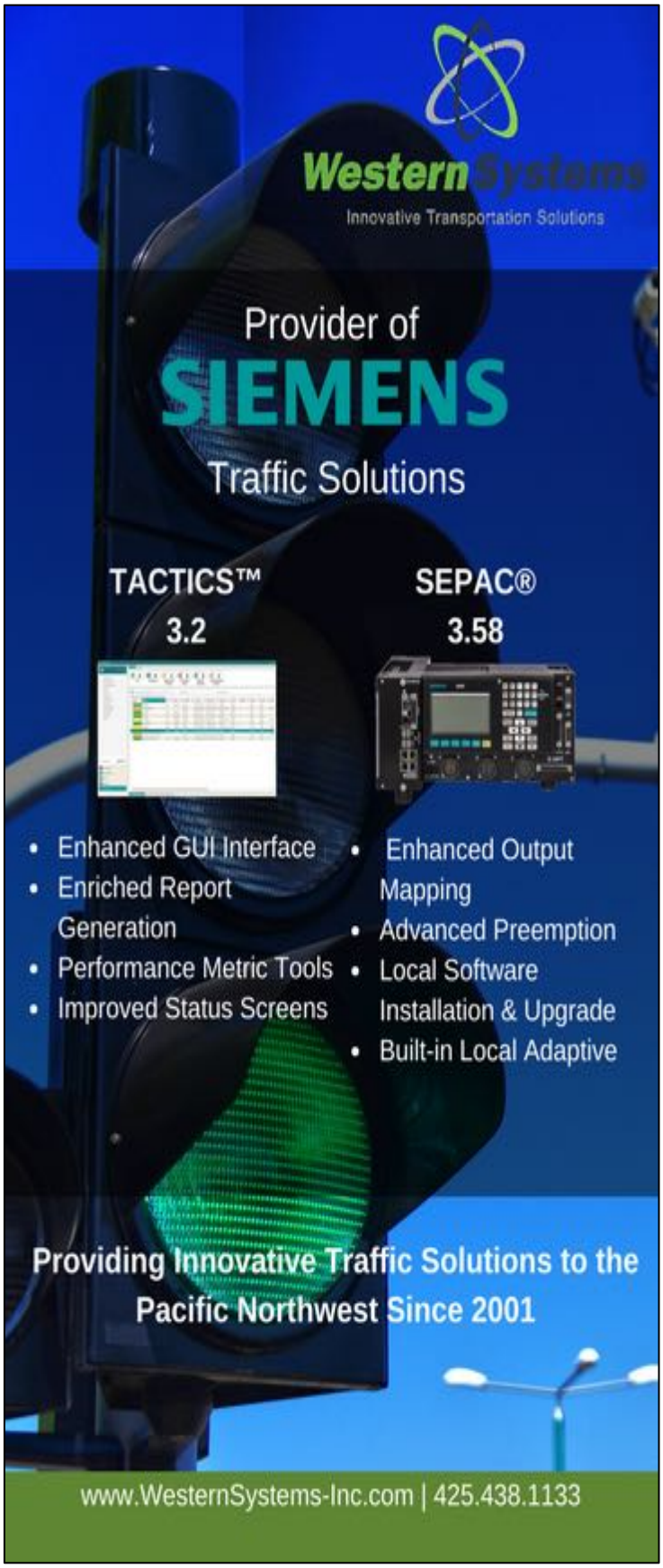

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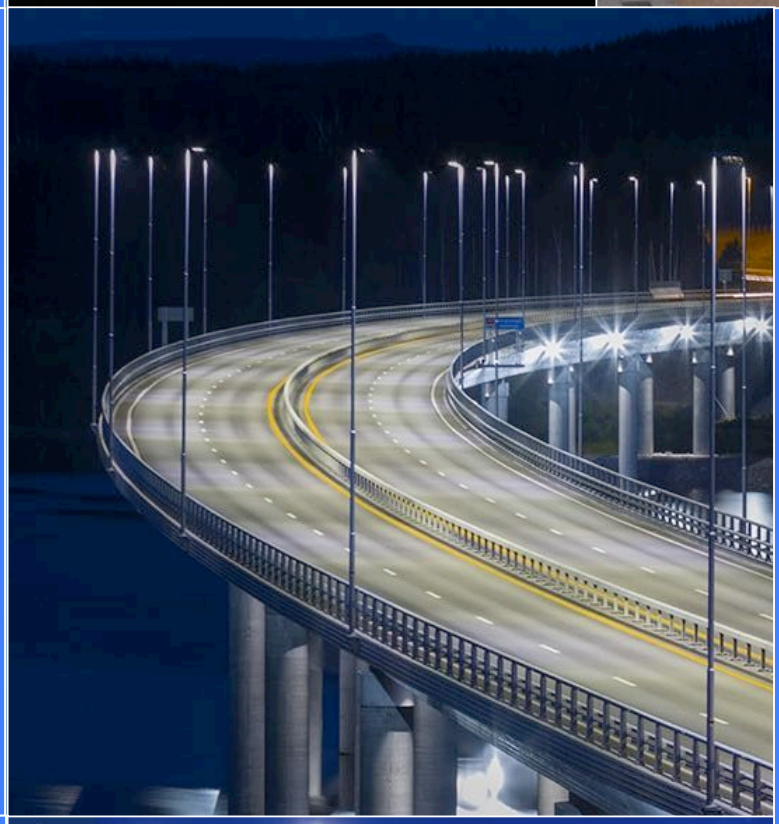

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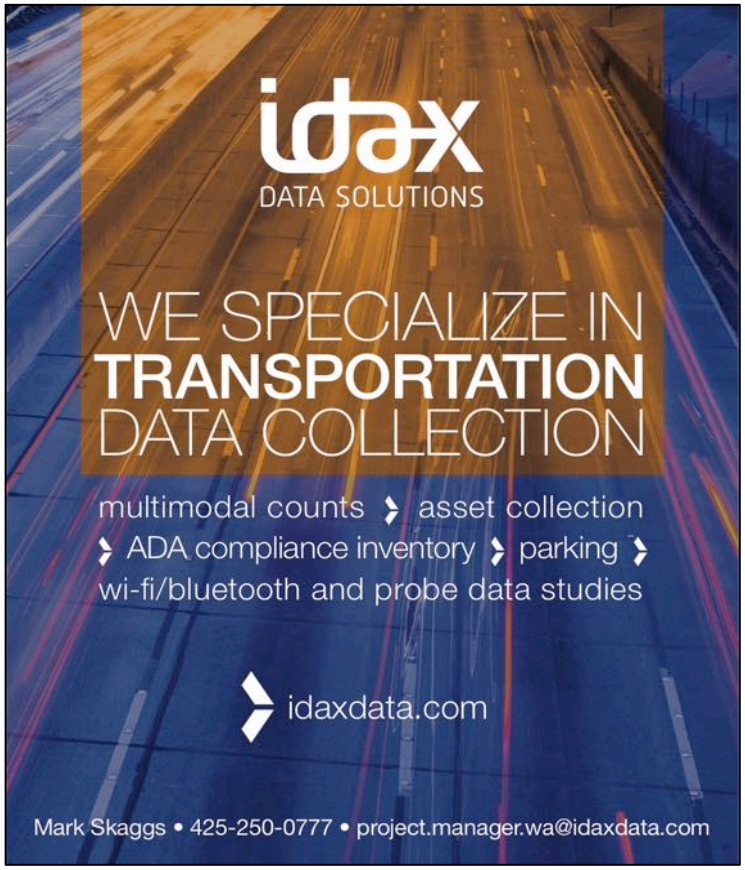
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