

Why were you eager to participate in these interviews?

I've been involved with transportation in California and Arizona, working with regulation for fifteen years and air quality management districts and later CTR/TDM programs for 20+ years. I am interested in understanding regional impacts of CTR/TDM programs and how they are used in different areas. I am interested in the role of ordinances and what size companies participate in programs, the impact of parking requirements and how even a good economy can have negative regional impacts if transportation is not well thought out.

What are the main transportation challenges in your community?

There are 100,000 people who leave Pierce County every morning to go to work in King County. This is an economic problem and a traffic problem. There is a lack of available transit. People aren't using what's available. There is a need for an economic development effort that addresses both workforce and mobility issues. I believe that an economic plan could build on South Sound assets; too much of which now commutes north for jobs. The mass commute north simply is not sustainable.

What would make transportation work better in the next zero to six years?

I appreciate this question being asked in this way. I am a big believer in rapid transit working in the absence of rail. Rail is fixed, confining and doesn't offer transportation to different employment nodes like rapid transit does. We must think about satellite work centers. There is a feeling that Seattle is working well and they don't want jobs to go somewhere else – but what about housing prices? Quality of life? Parks and amenities are nice in your neighborhood, but if you're commuting 2+ hours back and forth to work on top of an 8 hour day, you don't have time to enjoy them. Seattle can't be a sustainable city in an unsustainable region. Without multiple employment centers to distribute affordable housing and reduce traffic – this is fast becoming a problem that we can't sustain or grow out of easily. We don't need freeway expansion, we need alternate/complementary centers for employment. In trying to solve commuting, we are not looking at cause and effect. Alternative modes are thrown at the problem, but it's not solving it. There are simply too many people traveling to a small part of the Puget Sound to work. Between the "tech triangle" (Seattle, Renton and Bellevue) lies 75% of the economy. We are choking on that and can't sustain the model.

I would like to see additional state investment in active transportation infrastructure. The existing CTR program is solely focused on commute trips. It is time to open it up and look at other trips that often have more flexibility. It's time to focus on a more holistic approach and fund more innovative projects. It's time to open up funding to more opportunities to community based programs that are engaged in the work. Moving away from prized based rewards, which attract a small subset of people and trips, to a broader approach focused on neighborhoods. A higher engagement in community events like painted crosswalks; neighborhood based programs encouraging hands-on improvement projects for all trips and to make moving in the community safer.

Of those ideas, what one single thing would be your first task/step?

Alternative work centers. Before we talk about rail, we need to think more closely about rapid bus systems between nodes of employment instead of through everything into downtown Seattle. There comes a time when businesses see their negative impact. No business wants to carry that forward, knowing that their growth is causing housing affordability problems. We are pushing working class/middle class people out of the cities. Think about the problem regionally and plan growth to offset the 100,000 people commuting up I-5 from Pierce County. Identify employment centers. The Port pushed for over a decade in Tacoma to get 167 funding secured. It was supposed to solve the problem of mixing freight mobility and urban street congestion. What do they do? Now they want residential development there. If you build more houses, you are mixing urban traffic with freight again; exactly what they wanted to avoid. WSDOT needs to put their foot down and maintain the corridor for commercial development and not mix housing.

What question(s) are we not asking? (Is there an elephant in the room?)

Transit can't continue to follow jobs and people all the time, it simply can't catch up. TDM works when a regional system is in place as a complement. It is important to identify rail for what it is – a long-term solution. Again, I like how you asked the question in the next 5-6 years. Remember that regional rail is not happening in the next 5-6 years, and when it does come the costs will be higher. The problem is now; we cannot sit by and wait for a single solution.