

MUNICIPAL LEAGUE OF KING COUNTY

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MUNINEWS

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LEAGUE WEIGHS IN ON TRANSPORTATION FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE

In response to concerns about safety on our aging highways and bridges, traffic congestion, and an incomplete transit system, as well as inefficiencies how our region manages transportation resource, the Municipal League has expressed its support for the major portion of ESHB 2871 that would clear the way for Central Puget Sound to move forward with a regional transportation ballot measure.

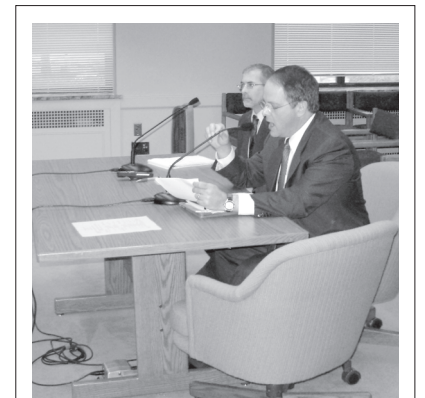
Currently, the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) and Sound Transit are discussing a cooperative proposal for high priority investments. ESHB 2871 would grant new authority for flexible transportation funding, for alignment of the RTID and Sound Transit boundaries, for more descriptive ballot titles and for expanding the list of eligible RTID projects.

“Regional transportation reform will succeed only if adequate tax revenues are available,” said Muni League Transportation Chair Bob Klein. “Despite the misleading arguments of its opponents, the motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) represents sound tax policy because it is a progressive user fee appropriately linked to the services and facilities needed by the people who pay it.”

While expressing its support for giving regional voters a local option to use the MVET as a funding source, the League also urged the legislature to make the MVET a viable tool by replacing the existing MVET valuation table – which overstates car values – with a new, accurate valuation table that citizens will know is fair.

The Municipal League expressed some reservations, however, with the portion of ESHB 2871 that would create regional transportation governance reform commission. “While the Municipal League endorses the transportation governance reform commission approach embodied in ESHB 2871, we believe that the bill is too prescriptive when it directs the reform commission to recommend a new regional transportation government to the Legislature by January 1, 2007,” said Klein. “By dictating the specific result – a unified, elected regional transportation government – the bill could undermine the collaborative regional process that should occur in shaping meaningful governance reform.” Rather than dictating the result, the Municipal League has recommended a careful process of regional consultation to secure the necessary support of stakeholders, municipalities and the public.

The Transportation Committee will continue to monitor issues related to transportation funding and governance, both during and after this year’s legislative session. For further information about the activities of the Municipal League’s Transportation Committee, e-mail Bob Klein at rklein@mcnaul.com.



Municipal League Transportation Chair Bob Klein testifies before the House Transportation Committee about the motor vehicle excise tax.

INSIDE:

- Scoop on Muni Leaguers
- State Drug Policy Project
- City Light Advisors
- Civic Award Nominations

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE! CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEAGUE AT
WWW.MUNILEAGUE.ORG OR AT 206-622-8333**

FOUNDATION ADOPTS 2006 WORKPLAN

The Municipal League Foundation has taken on new life under the leadership of chair Beth Arman. Working closely with the Municipal League’s Issues Management Committee and Development Committee, the Foundation is seeking funds to support countywide forums on issues related to comprehensive planning, civic engagement and government accountability. “We are particularly interested in identifying ways in which we can engage younger people in the civic process,” said Arman.

Arman added that the Foundation “will also be developing grant applications to support our educational programs and organizational infrastructure. One of the benefits of contributing through the Municipal League Foundation is that all donations are tax deductible.” For more information on the Municipal League Foundation, go to www.munileague.org.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION...

MUNINEWS and the votersguide are produced by the Municipal League’s Communications Committee and published by the Municipal League of King County. The Municipal League is nonpartisan and welcomes all points of view. If you have any question or would like information on joining the Municipal League, call 206-622-8333 or send an e-mail to muni@munileague.org.



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The Municipal League of
King County

empowered citizens. informed choices.

MUNI LEAGUE BRIEFS ... MUNI LEAGUE BRIEFS ...

Welcome to the **Municipal League's new Boardmembers:**

**Angela Avery ■ Dan Berger ■ Bill Breitenstein ■ David Brentlinger
Albert Israel ■ Eric Martin ■ Ramsey Rammerman ■ Norman Sigler
Will Smith ■ Kent McKinney**

The League would also like to welcome **Jason Thibaudeau**, our new **Operations Manager!** Jason is working half time at the Muni League office while he completes his graduate studies at the Evans School for Public Affairs. Call him at 206.622-8333 for information on how you can get involved.

Municipal League committees are in full swing and seeking volunteers in the area of communications, candidate evaluations, development, civic awards, and issues.

Congratulations to **former Mayor Norman B. Rice**, who has been appointed for a 3-year period to create and lead a series of public seminars on Civic Engagement for the 21st Century. "The principles of community engagement in public policy are simple: listening to and building on the community's needs, expectations and values," Rice explained. "The greater challenge is designing efficient processes to sustain that involvement in meaningful ways. That is how you build trust. Although ongoing input can lengthen the planning and execution of programs, it is critical to shared ownership and success. And that is what we're after." The seminars will be designed to facilitate participation nationally and locally.

Muni League boardmember and former Medina City Councilman Paul Demitriades has been appointed to sit on the Washington State Department of Transportation's Design Advisory Committee to assemble a handbook with recommendation that will guide design decisions in the coming years.

The **ML Transportation Committee** has begun its look at the Alaskan Way Viaduct. It expects to have recommendations later this spring, based on interviews and research.

Urban League CEO James Kelly has joined the **Municipal League's Board of Advisors**. The Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle is a 75-year-old organization dedicated to empowering communities and changing lives in the African American community.

ML JOINS STATEWIDE EFFORT TO DISCUSS DRUG POLICY

For the past three years, the League has been a member of the Steering Committee for the Drug Policy Project, a project sponsored by the King County Bar Association. The purpose of the project is to develop a more comprehensive, long-term effort to reform drug policy on multiple levels. The objectives of this effort are ultimately to reduce crime, improve public health, protect children, and invest scarce public resources wisely.

In January 2006, the Muni League adopted a resolution that supported the creation of a state commission to study alternative forms of regulating the production and distribution of psychoactive substances. With this resolution, the League joined a dozen other professional and civic organizations including the League of Women Voters, Washington State Bar Association, Washington State Medical Association, Washington State Pharmacy Association, Washington State Public Health Association, the Church Council of Greater Seattle, and many others.

Early in the review process both the House and Senate Committees approved a bipartisan legislation to create such a study commission. However, when the Ways and Means Committee reviewed the legislation for funding, it was not passed. While it wasn't funded this year, the Drug Policy Project Steering Committee is very pleased that it was heard and adopted by both houses and look forward to the 2007 Legislative Session. For additional information about the project please visit: <http://www.kcba.org/druglaw/>.

REFORM ROLLBACK AT CITY LIGHT?

Although the Mayor submitted a proposed Ordinance (CB 115467) continuing an independent City Light Advisory Board in its present form, the Energy and Technology Committee of the City Council, chaired by Jean Godden, allowed the Board to expire by failing to act on the Mayor's proposal before the Board's term expired on January 31.

The Council is now considering a revised ordinance that would replace the previous Advisory Board with an Advisory Committee with dramatically reduced "independence." The Board members would be explicitly barred from advocating on any issues, and they would be limited to working only on projects contained in a work plan that had received prior written approval of the City Council, the Mayor and the City Light Superintendent.

The Municipal League Board has opposed such amendments in a letter to the Council and in a presentation to the E&T Committee.

Since January of 2001, the City Light Advisory Board offered independent, expert advice to the Mayor, the City Council, and the new Superintendent to rectify management concerns at Seattle City Light associated with the energy crisis of 2000-2001.

"The League has been very impressed by the thoughtful analysis and recommendations of the Advisory Board," said Bruce Carter, Chair of the ML's City Light Subcommittee. "The significant reservoir of utility expertise on the Board has been very helpful in maintaining a longer range perspective on the well-being of the utility in the sometimes treacherous marketplace in which it operates."

Yet another proposal to continue the advisory function is now being prepared in the Law Department for Council consideration.

CALLING ALL CIVIC AWARD NOMINEES

The Municipal League has opened its nominations for the 2006 Civic Awards. Since 1960, the Municipal League has honored public officials, private citizens, and organizations who have worked to improve local government to bring attention to their often unappreciated efforts. The awards are also intended to inspire other public officials and citizens to become more involved in building healthy civic communities.

Each year the League solicits nominations from our members and the community at large. All of the nominees are evaluated by the League's nominations committee, which then makes a recommendation on each award for approval by the board.

Past honorees have included a diverse array of civic and community leadership.

Categories include:

- Citizen of the Year
- Public Official of the Year
- Public Employee of the Year
- Business of the Year
- Organization of the Year
- Governmental News Reporting of the Year
- Doug Mason Memorial for leadership by a person under 30
- James R. Ellis Award for Regional Leadership

Anyone wishing to make a nomination should download a nominations form from our website at www.munileague.org or call the League's office at 206.622.8333. Civic Awards winners will be selected in April and honored at the Municipal League's annual Civic Awards event, to be held this May.



**Let us know if you can help!
The Municipal League needs:**

- Volunteers for the candidate evaluation summer program
- Volunteers with events experience to assist with Civic Awards and other public forums
- Volunteers with communications experience to help write press releases and support communications with members
- Color laser printer & cartridges
- Microwave
- Silverware and dishes

Visit the League website for in-depth information about current issues facing King County.
www.munileague.org