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In this issue

- Halfway to a new bridge on I-405 in Renton
- Tukwila Station public hearing and open house
- More repair work ahead for SR 169 Green River bridge
- Metro fares increase; route changes proposed
- Commuters sharing their trips in Kent
- I-405 drivers pleased with faster commute

Halfway to a new bridge on I-405 in Renton

We're halfway to opening [new lanes on I-405 in Renton](#) that will help relieve congestion. Crews this week started placing the first of 36 girders for the new I-405 bridge over Oakesdale Avenue SW this week.

You might remember last summer when we shifted southbound traffic to the new bridge. This fall we'll finish the job and have a new bridge carrying eight lanes of traffic. You'll have three general purpose lanes and one carpool lane in each direction of I-405 between I-5 and SR 167.

Two cranes will place a dozen 170-foot-long girders – each weighing 87.5 tons – to build the first span of the new bridge. Next, crews will place 130-foot-long girders each weighing 60 tons. A final dozen girders will be added later. The new span was designed without a center support in the water to allow more natural flow in Springbrook Creek.

For the latest closure information check out the [I-405 construction page](#). This work is part of the [Renton Stage 1 Widening Project](#).

Tukwila Station public hearing and open house

Sound Transit wants to hear from you about the agency's plans for a new Tukwila Sounder station. The project will include 350 parking spaces, passenger platforms and shelters, bike storage and security.

To give feedback on environmental studies of the project, you can go to a public hearing and open house from 4-7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29 at the Embassy Suites, 15920 West Valley Highway, Tukwila, in the Santa Anita Conference Room. To read the documents and learn how to give feedback, go to www.soundtransit.org/environmental.

More repair work ahead for SR 169 Green River bridge

We're getting ready to award the contract for the [long-term Green River Bridge repairs](#). The repair work involves building a 160-foot-long wall to prevent an ancient landslide from putting pressure on the piers that support the bridge. Once the contract is awarded, it will take crews about three weeks to get construction supplies to the area.

This is complicated job. Local residents can expect to see workers in the area as soon as the end of February. The bridge closed to traffic Nov. 18 and we hope to reopen it in July. To get a closer look at the work zone, [look at our photos at Flickr](#).

Metro fares increase; route changes proposed

Pack an extra quarter for the bus: Most Metro Transit bus fares in King County [will increase by 25 cents](#) starting Sunday, Feb. 1.

The change will mean a two-zone peak-hour trip will cost \$2.50 and a one-zone peak-hour trip will cost \$2. The off-peak fare will be \$1.75. Youth fares, now 75 cents, and senior/disabled fares, now 50 cents, will not change. Fares for Access transportation will increase from 75 cents to \$1. Some monthly passes and ticket books also will cost more.

As for route changes, Metro Transit and Sound Transit are working together on where buses will travel in the future in Burien, Federal Way, Kent, SeaTac, Tukwila and the Tukwila Sounder Station. Proposed changes are [online at Metro's Web site](#) and comments will be accepted through Feb. 6. More than 1,100 people returned questionnaires or commented on the bus route changes. Metro revised many of its proposals after considering the comments.

Commuters sharing their trips in Kent

If you live or work in Kent, the city is working hard to help you find better ways to get to work. Kent works with 35 local businesses serving more than 15,000 employees as part of the city's commute trip reduction program.

Kent pays for a shuttle connecting Sound Transit commuter rail to worksites throughout the Kent valley. The commuter shuttle ([Metro Route 918](#)) serves about 3,000 riders per month and has continued to steadily gain ridership since it began in 2003.

Local businesses and their employees teamed up to increase the number of shared vans traveling to Kent worksites by 40 percent in 2008. There are now 58 vans on the road heading to Kent worksites. More than 60 percent of major employers in Kent provide transportation subsidies to their employees. This past year, major Kent employers including REI, Boeing Employees Credit Union (BECU) and Hytek Finishes won awards for their innovative programs. Hytek Finishes also was recognized as a Governor's [Commute Smart Award](#) winner.

For more information about Kent programs, go to the city's [Commute Trip Reduction Web page](#).

I-405 drivers pleased with faster commute

We hear from drivers all the time. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad. Either way, we like to know how we're doing.

Recently we heard from Tony Park who lives in Federal Way and commutes to Factoria on I-405. He told us that his commute has significantly improved after we recently opened a new northbound lane on I-405 between 112th Avenue SE and I-90. He said that his hour-long commute in the morning is now down to a little more than 25 minutes.

We've also heard from other drivers who've told us that the new lane has improved their commutes. One commuter from Renton even told us that his morning drive on northbound I-405 was the best it has ever been. These comments from drivers prompted us to take a closer look and see what traffic is like for northbound I-405 commuters. Travel times from [WSDOT flow maps](#) show that northbound I-405 is noticeably less congested as far south as I-5.

We're pleased with the positive response we've received so far and excited about the future benefits this project will deliver. The construction work Tony referenced is part of the [South Bellevue Widening Project](#). Besides the new northbound lane, we also will be adding two southbound lanes between SE Eighth Street and I-90. Thanks to those who take the time to contact us, and don't hesitate to let us know how we're doing. Write Steve Peer at Steve.Peer-consultant@i405.wsdot.wa.gov.

Comments, questions: Please e-mail me, Jeff Switzer, at switzej@wsdot.wa.gov or call 206-440-4700.

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