



SOUND CITIES ASSOCIATION

36 Cities. A Million People. One Voice.

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City of Auburn

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Amy Walen
Mayor
City of Kirkland

Executive Director
Deanna Dawson

January 16, 2015

The Honorable Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Rep. Frank Chopp
Speaker of the House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Sen. Mark Schoesler
Senate Majority Leader
PO Box 40462
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Rep. Dan Kristiansen
House Minority Leader
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Sen. Sharon Nelson
Senate Democratic Leader
PO Box 40434
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: 2015 Legislative Session Priorities for the Sound Cities Association

Dear Governor Inslee and Legislative Leaders:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Board and the 36 member cities of the Sound Cities Association (SCA) to express our priorities for the 2015 Legislative session.

As you know, the Sound Cities Association (formerly the Suburban Cities Association) was founded in the 1970s to help cities in King County act locally and partner regionally to create vital, livable communities through advocacy, education, leadership, mutual support, and networking. Collectively, our 36 member cities represent nearly one million constituents in King County.

In this legislative session, our cities have expressed strong support for three priority issues:

1. Comprehensive Statewide Transportation Package

A healthy transportation system is a critical foundation of our state and local economies and our quality of life, as well as our global position as the nation’s most trade-dependent state. Our transportation system is suffering from disrepair, with a backlog of maintenance and preservation needs. Data shows that without new investments, more than half the pavement on our state roads and highways will be in poor condition by 2023. Failing roads and bridges, congested highway corridors, and bottlenecked interchanges undermine the mobility of vehicles, transit, and freight-carriers to transport people and goods, and this in turn poses a real threat to our economy. Investing in maintaining and upgrading our transportation system is a positive step the Legislature can take to catalyze construction jobs, enhance freight mobility for our Ports, and create a pathway for retaining and growing new jobs for key industry sectors. Simply put, our transportation system is in crisis, and failure to act this year puts our local, regional, and state economy in jeopardy. A document detailing the specifics of the transportation projects that are the highest priority for our cities and their residents is attached to this letter.

2. Sustainable Public Health Funding

We recognize that public health services are needed to ensure the health and safety of all of our residents and urge the Legislature to create a stable and dependable revenue source for public health. Funding for public health services has been unsustainable since the passage of Initiative 695 in 1999, which resulted in elimination of the motor vehicle excise tax (MVET). A portion of these revenues had been dedicated to public health funding. Since then the state has partially backfilled the loss of MVET revenue for local public health with contributions from the state's General Fund, but flexible funding is at risk each year given shortfalls in the state's budget. A tax on e-cigarettes and "vaping" devices has been proposed as one possible source of funding for public health. While this alone would not provide truly sustainable, long term, stable funding for all of our public health needs, this would be one way to start addressing this critical need. Without a funding source, we risk the closure of clinics serving our most vulnerable families. Action is needed now to avoid clinic closures.

3. Providing Cities with Adequate Tools to Provide Needed Municipal Services

Under the 1% property tax limitation, cities have been dealing with a gap between revenue and the cost of services to residents. The costs for many cities are rising 3-5% a year and it is difficult for cities to keep up with the rising costs of providing critical municipal services to residents, including police, fire, parks, and roads. While cities have been working hard to find efficiencies, inflation and population growth have meant that expenses rise faster than revenues in most cities. Raising the property tax cap would give cities a helpful tool to continue to provide the services that citizens expect from their cities.

The above three priorities are the most critical to our cities. They are necessary for our communities to continue to thrive and meet the basic needs of our residents in this growing economy. In addition, we have adopted three other important priorities in the coming legislative session. These include:

1. Funding for Youth Athletic Facilities

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is requesting a capital appropriation of \$12 million to fund the Youth Athletic Facilities grant program with general obligation bond funds. Our cities support this request, but we are concerned that \$12 million is not enough to address the need throughout the state. Communities across the state asked for nearly \$40 million in state grants to fix local athletic fields and other outdoor sporting facilities. To that end, we urge you to consider increasing funding for Youth Athletic Facilities above the \$12 million request to deal with the need throughout the state.

2. City Representation on the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) Board of Directors

In 2014, the Board of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) proposed to raise "dues" to cities in King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap counties by 44%. Our cities had little ability to object to this dramatic increase, because only the largest city in each County is represented on the Board under existing State law. While our cities and the cities in Pierce and Snohomish County were ultimately able to persuade the Board to adopt this increase over two years instead of all at once, this experience highlighted the need for other cities to have representation on the Board. There are 39 cities in King County, and the majority of residents in King County live in cities other than Seattle. But under current state law, only Seattle is allowed a seat on the Board. This is unfair to our cities and the majority of residents in our County, and we along with cities in Pierce and Snohomish County urge the Legislature to amend RCW 70.94.100, and to provide that there be Board representation from other cities as well as the largest cities in each County.

3. Amendments to the State Recreational Immunity Law

In the recent case of Camicia v. Howard S. Wright Construction Co. and City of Mercer Island, the Washington State Supreme Court created a disincentive for recreational facility investments in its interpretation of RCW 4.24.210, the state's recreational immunity statute. The Court's interpretation of the nature and role of bicycling and bicycle paths, as applied to RCW 4.24.210, creates the type of potential liability for local government, policymakers, and private landowners that discourages any investments in bicycling or other recreational trails and facilities and encourages decisions to revoke existing access privileges. This outcome is counter to the recreational, economic, and health policies and objectives of the state that underlie RCW 4.24.210. We urge the legislature to clarify the scope of recreational immunity in Washington State, and clarify that potential dual purposes of land do not reduce the scope of immunity provided by RCW 4.24.210.

We appreciate the fact that the Legislature has a lot on its plate in this session, including funding education and mental health services, and addressing conflicts between the state's recreational and medical marijuana laws. These are also issues of great importance to our cities, and we are committed to working with you to address these and other shared priorities in this session.

We thank you for your service, and for your consideration of our cities' priorities. If you have any questions about these priorities, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director Deanna Dawson at (206) 433-7170, or at Deanna@SoundCities.org.

Sincerely,



John Marchione
President, Sound Cities Association
Mayor, City of Redmond



Matt Larson
2015 Incoming President, Sound Cities Association
Mayor, City of Snoqualmie

c.c. King County Legislative Delegation
SCA Board of Directors



2015 City Transportation Priorities

A healthy transportation system is a critical foundation of our state and local economies and our quality of life, as well as our global position as the nation's most trade-dependent state. For the last several years, our cities have forged a strong partnership with business, labor, education, environmental groups, human services providers, and other civic leaders to urge the legislature to take action and to pass a comprehensive transportation package in order to keep our region strong and competitive.

Our state and local transportation system is suffering from disrepair, with a backlog of maintenance and preservation needs. Data shows that without new investments, more than half the pavement on our state roads and highways will be in poor condition by 2023. Failing roads and bridges, congested highway corridors, and bottlenecked interchanges undermine the mobility of vehicles, transit, and freight-carriers to transport people and goods, and this in turn poses a real threat to our economy. Investing in maintaining and upgrading our transportation system is a positive step the Legislature can take to catalyze construction jobs, enhance freight mobility for our Ports, and create a pathway for retaining and growing new jobs for key industry sectors.

On October 31, 2014, the Sound Cities Association (SCA) convened a meeting of city leaders in King County to discuss our local transportation needs. Present at the meeting were 46 mayors, councilmembers, and key staff members representing 24 cities, the Sound Cities Association (SCA), the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), and the Association of Washington Cities (AWC). While each city had its own individual transportation priorities, a number of consistent themes were heard:

- Each city noted the importance of transportation to the local economy. The importance of freight mobility, the importance of connecting the Port to warehouses, and the impact of transportation to job creation were cited by numerous cities;
- Safety is another major concern for cities. Safety concerns included sidewalks for safe routes for students, seniors, and other pedestrians; crumbling bridges; and a need for grade separation at railroad crossings;
- While each individual city noted state highway projects that were critical to their cities, each city also had critical local transportation infrastructure needs;

- Local transportation priorities are not limited to roads. Cities' priorities also include transit, bike lanes, sidewalks, trails, and park & ride facilities;
- The need for additional transit service was a theme shared by virtually all cities;
- Many cities expressed support for funding not just city roads, but also county roads, which connect our cities;
- Perhaps the most commonly shared sentiment was the need for **stable and flexible funding** for transportation;
- We need to protect and enhance grant programs that fund infrastructure, including but not limited to the public works trust fund and TIB (Transportation Improvement Board) so that we can better leverage local dollars;
- Our transportation challenges are exacerbated by other fiscal challenges in our cities, including but not limited to the loss of state shared revenues and caps on local taxing authority;
- If the State is not willing to step up and pass a transportation package this year, it should give local governments the authority to raise revenues to solve our transportation challenges.

The State Highway projects most frequently mentioned at the meeting included:

- SR 18
 - The I-90/SR 18 interchange was also noted
- SR 167
- SR 169
- SR 202
- I-405
 - The I-405/SR 167 interchange was also noted
- SR 509
- SR 518
- Completion of 520
- SR 522
- SR 523

More detail and a map showing the location of these projects are attached below.

About the Sound Cities Association:

The Sound Cities Association (formerly the Suburban Cities Association) represents 36 cities of King County and provides a voice for nearly one million people. Our mission is to provide leadership through advocacy, education, mutual support and networking to cities as they act locally and partner regionally to create livable vital communities. The issues we tackle include transportation, economic and community development, land use, health and human services, government operations, the environment, and public safety, to name just a few. Our vision is to be the most influential advocate for cities, effectively collaborating to create regional solutions.

For more information, please contact Sound Cities Executive Director Deanna Dawson, (206) 433-71710, Deanna@soundcities.org.

Priorities noted by cities:

Algona:

- Completion of SR 167
- Stable funding for regional and local roads - Small cities need more time to secure local match funding and would like a guarantee that funding for their projects will be available.

Auburn:

- Completion of SR 167
- I-5 freight corridors
- Stable funding for regional and local roads – Local jurisdictions should be allowed to oversee funding mechanisms. Bureaucratic layers do not help facilitate funding to local governments.

Bellevue:

- Completion of SR 520
- Improvements to I-90
- Completion of I-405/SR 167 interchange – Top priority item.
- Support transit and light rail expansion to Bellevue and Redmond. Bellevue transit master plan calls for substantial increases in service to meet needs and growth.
- The Bellevue Mayor supports Sound Transit 3
- Additional authority for local road funding
- Supports additional funding for multimodal/bike/pedestrian facilities

Burien:

- Completion of SR 518 interchange at Des Moines Memorial Drive
- Stable funding for local roads
- Support local option revenue source such as a city equivalent of county road tax
- Support Metro Alternative Transit Service
- Restore transit service cuts (i.e. Route 139 to Highline Medical Center) and fund new transit service
- TIGER CUBS authorization under MAP-21
- Support funding for Safe Routes to Schools
- Support funding for the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)

Black Diamond:

- SR 169 corridor
- Improvements to I-90 and Highway 18 interchange

Carnation:

- Funding for more Metro service and Alternative Transit Service
- Funding for city road maintenance needs
- Funding for rural roads – Rural roads are the last mile to some, but the first mile to rural communities.

Covington:

- SR 516 corridor
- SR 169 corridor
- Improvements to I-90 and Highway 18 interchange. The improvements along this corridor would help address safety issues and remove truck traffic from I-405.
- Access to transit and light rail
- Cedar River Trail/ Soos Creek Trail bicycle improvements

Des Moines:

- Completion of SR 509
- Cities portion from a gas tax increase should be increased
- Local options – any local option should be flexible and allow cities to decide how to spend funding.
- Supports increasing funding for Metro to allow to expand and enhance service

Duvall:

- Supports a regional transportation package that includes options for county road funding
- Supports funding for transit that is flexible. Would like to see more cross-county coordination among transit agencies
- Supports funding the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)
- Supports funding the Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF)
- Supports local options that provide flexibility and allow for councilmanic and voter approval
- Improvements and expansion of I-405
- Completion of SR 520
- Improvement to SR 522
- Improvements to Highway 203; is a two-lane road that needs improvements to make the corridor safer.

- Supports a statewide transportation package because if we do not address critical transportation needs, no one will want to drive to our communities and communities will slowly die away.

Federal Way:

- I-5 / SR 18 / SR 161 Triangle completion
- SR 509 Extension completion
- SR 167 Extension completion
- I-5 / S 320th Street City Center Access
- Should increase local agency dedication of statewide revenue
- Should provide more local agency revenue options
- Should provide adequate funding of local transit to restore services and keep up with growth in ridership
- Should provide additional revenue authority to Sound Transit to extend light rail to Federal Way
- Should provide additional revenue to the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)

Issaquah:

- Improvements to the I-90 corridor such as the Front Street interchange, over-crossing with the potential for direct access at 11th/12th Ave, and westbound/eastbound peak use shoulder lanes.
- HOT lanes along I-90
- Improvements to I-90 and Highway 18 interchange
- Support funding for multimodal transportation needs
- Stable funding for local roads
- Support local funding options
- Support funding for transit improvements and increased transit service hours

Kenmore:

- Improvements to SR 522 – Kenmore has spent \$15 million of city funding on improvements to a state highway and an additional \$12 million is needed to finish the project.
- City infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, sewer road widening, and bike lanes are needed.
- \$22 million is needed to address a structurally deficient bridge
- Restoration of transit service is needed especially on routes that served Bellevue/Redmond, 3 routes to Seattle, 1 route to UW, and 1 route to Shoreline.

Kent:

- Completion of I-405/SR 167 interchange
- Completion of SR 509
- Completion of SR 167
- Railroad grade separation improvements in order to address delays. Railroad crossings have impacted fire trucks, other aid vehicles, and freight trucks.
- Matching requirements for projects are out of reach for cities
- Supports funding for local street maintenance
- Supports Safe Routes to Schools
- Supports expanding the Sound Transit boundaries
- A stable revenue source for areas with warehouse districts is needed after streamlined sales tax severely impacted cities.

Kirkland:

- Protect shared state revenue sources and provide new revenue options and flexibility
- Supports long-term sustainability related to financial, environmental and transportation goals
- Maintain infrastructure investments. Keep funding for Public Works Trust Fund whole
- Supports local options funding mechanism to increase TBD fee from \$20 to \$40
- Transit agency funding flexibility
- Completion of SR 520
- Funding I-405/NE 124nd interchange ramp project in the Totem Lake Designated Urban Center
- Funding for the Cross Kirkland Corridor
- Multimodal safety investments and improvements
- Supports additional Sound Transit revenue authority and that such authority may also be used to fund trail development and alternative transportation along the Eastside Rail Corridor.
- Supports replacing the property tax cap with a cap that is indexed to both population growth and inflation.

Lake Forest Park:

- Improvements to SR 522 and SR 104 – The SR 522/SR 104 interchange poses a major safety concern and is a huge chokepoint for the city that restricts economic activity
- Bike/Pedestrian improvements along SR 522 are needed to address safety concerns
- Mitigation for SR 522 is needed to deal with the additional cars utilizing this route to avoid tolls on SR 520
- Light rail – Sound Transit needs to work with surrounding communities on access and getting people to the new stations. (i.e. 145th Street Station)
- Supports Safe Routes to Schools and other multimodal components

- Supports transit along key corridors, bus rapid transit and access to Park and Ride facilities. Possibly look into public/private partnerships for Park and Ride facilities
- Supports funding for culvert replacement
- A stable revenue source for cities is needed after streamlined sales tax severely impacted cities

Maple Valley:

- Encourages the State Legislature to pass state-wide transportation package. The City would like to see included in that package funding for a 2nd northbound lane on SR 169, from Witte Rd. to SE 240th St. SR 169 is classified as a Highway of Statewide Significance and as a T-2 freight corridor, which links up with SR 18, a T-1 freight corridor.
- Supports amending RCW 47.23, the state law requiring cities with a population of 25,000+ to take on increase maintenance responsibilities of State highways going through the City. Maple Valley would like to see amendments that would either increase the population threshold for this shift in maintenance responsibility, or require the shift to occur only when WSDOT has developed the highways within the City to urban standards.
- Supports the efforts made by other jurisdictions to see the four-lane completion of SR 18 south of I-90 and the improvements necessary on SR 167 to serve the Port of Tacoma. Both projects would enhance economic development opportunities for the Puget Sound region.

Mercer Island:

- Supports a statewide transportation package with local options
- Supports Safe Routes to Schools
- Supports funding for the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)
- Support Complete Streets
- Support transit service and Metro Alternative Transit Service. We need to find solutions/ideas that work for cities
- Supports regional tolling study proceeding at PSRC
- Supports a price on carbon; opportunity to act now since gas prices are low

Newcastle:

- Supports a state transportation package that is representative of the state's needs. A piece meal or balkanization approach will not work. We need to lean on state legislators.
- Supports increasing the gas tax so it covers the completion of SR 520
- Does not support tolling I-90 to fund the west approach of SR 520

- Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) is a great partner and crucial for cities. Funding for TIB needs to be increased and we need to prevent the Legislature from raiding their funding.
- Supports transit service that meets the needs of a growing city; current service to Newcastle is not adequate and will not meet future needs.
- Supports revisiting the Rice/Stanton Commission to consolidate regional transportation organizations so we get the best bang for our buck.

North Bend:

- Improvements to I-90 and Highway 18 interchange
- Supports local options for local roads
- Supports allowing cities to impose a street utility tax
- Supports authority for a local gas tax increase. North Bend needs assistance dealing with the truck traffic since they are the only truck stop in King County.
- Supports bridge funding - SR 202 Bendigo Bridge has a shortened span and a tendency to flood.
- Stable funding for regional and local roads
- Improvements to the public process are needed, so a project does not get delayed for years (i.e. an individual delaying a project for many years).

Redmond:

- Completion of SR 520 especially the access ramps at 124th and 148th. These improvements are important to the area and local employers.
- Supports funding transit priorities that connect urban growth centers to the last mile
- Sound Transit 3 is critical for Redmond
- Supports funding for Complete Streets
- Supports funding alternatives such as the Redmond Senior circulator to address some of the transit challenges
- Supports funding for trails
- Supports funding for maintenance and preservation and bridges
- Access to Park and Ride facilities. Park and Ride facilities are mini-urban centers and need to be part of the transit conversations
- The business community needs to be involved in transportation discussions

Renton:

- Renton urges the Legislature to enact a comprehensive transportation package
- Fix the worst first and finish projects already started; I-405/SR-167 interchange and the Renton-to-Bellevue segment of I-405
- Enhance grant funding for critical programs such as Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) and Complete Streets

- Provide direct distributions of new gas tax revenue and local transportation funding options to cities and counties
- Funding for local roads
- Improvements to SR 169
- Access to Park and Ride facilities; Renton has very little parking available and park and rides are beyond capacity
- Supports Funding for the East/West Freight Corridor along 188th/127th up to Tukwila (Strander Blvd)

Sammamish:

- Supports a statewide package that focuses on roads and transit
- Supports local options and a regional approach to funding transportation
- Supports fully funding the Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF)
- Supports funding for local roads – Front Street intersection needs major improvements.
- Supports improving transit. The Sammamish community dealt with major losses during the first round of Metro cuts. Metro and Sound Transit need to focus on building more Park and Ride lots in the north end to deal with demand.

SeaTac:

- Completion of SR 509. SeaTac has invested \$22 million of local dollars to make sure individuals can access the airport through the South via 24th/28th Streets. These improvements to SR 509 have allowed the city to be ready for Sound Transit expansion. SeaTac seeks state partnership to build a bridge now over future SR 509 to avoid costly disruption later.
- Ports of Seattle and Tacoma need to part of the transportation discussions
- We need to rethink how to reach out to legislators in order to make sure legislators on both sides of the aisle are in support of a statewide package. Cities need to be innovative when reaching out and telling their stories to the legislature.
- Supports Sound Transit 3
- Supports East/West transit connector routes

Seattle:

- Committed to supporting and advocating for a statewide transportation package
- The city has a long backlog of street maintenance needs; 35% of streets do not have sidewalks and 25% of Amazon employees walk to work.
- Supports bicycle infrastructure such as the 2nd Ave bike track
- Supports local options
- Completion of SR 520
- Supports funding for Sound Transit 3

Shoreline:

- Support improving SR523 (145th St NE) to improve the corridor for transit, pedestrians and bicycles to connect to the new 145th St Light Rail Station; SR 523 from I-5 to SR 522 serves as the link between the light rail system and SR 522.
- Supports including neighborhood mitigation planning in the design/construction of light rail stations.
- Supports a transportation package that prioritizes projects that maintain or improve the existing infrastructure for both people and freight; bicycle and pedestrian facilities; transit; and direct local distribution and local funding options.
- Concerned with lack of representation on the Sound Transit Board for the Shoreline and Lake Forest Park, particularly with two stations in Shoreline.

Snoqualmie:

- Supports Metro Alternative Transit Service and is hopeful service that was cut during the first round of Metro cuts will be restored.
- Supports funding for local roads. Snoqualmie roads are currently in good condition but roads are aging at the same speed and will require extensive work in the future.
- Supports funding for the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)
- Supports funding for the Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF)
- Supports lifting the 1% property tax cap
- Supports funding for SR 202 near Snoqualmie Falls. During the 2001 Nisqually earthquake, a portion of this road fell and slid. It has been fixed but may fall and slide if another earthquake or other natural disasters occur.
- Improvements to I-90 and Highway 18 interchange
- Innovate solutions should be considered and we need to reach out to local technology companies that might be able to help create/find solutions to our transportation issues.

Tukwila:

- Completion of I-405/SR 167 interchange
- Completion of SR 509
- Supports transit and light rail funding. Transit is the lifeline for the community and more routes/service hours are needed. (i.e. connectors/shuttles to connect communities.)
- Concerned with the PSRC transportation grant applications and the diversity measure
- Concerned with Sound Transit Board representation
- Supports lifting the 1% property tax cap
- Local communities cannot be left to suffer from neglect. We should meet with legislators that are not supportive of a transportation package.

Attendees at 10/31/2014 SCA Transportation Meeting:

Councilmember Dave Asher, Kirkland
Mayor Nancy Backus, Auburn
Mayor David Baker, Kenmore
Mayor Claudia Balducci, Bellevue
Mayor Bruce Bassett, Mercer Island
Kim Becklund, Bellevue
Mayor Jim Berger, Carnation
Josh Brown, Puget Sound Regional Council
Mayor Steve Buri, Newcastle
Kristy Burwell, SCA
Mayor Fred Butler, Issaquah
Lyset Cadena, SCA
Mayor Suzette Cooke, Kent
Deanna Dawson, SCA
Deputy Mayor Chris Eggen, Shoreline
Edie Gilliss, Seattle
Mayor Mary Jane Goss, Lake Forest Park
Deputy Mayor Dan Grausz, Mercer Island
Mayor Mia Gregerson, SeaTac
Kamuron Gurol, Burien
Andrew Glass Hastings, Seattle
Mayor Ken Hearing, North Bend
Alison Hellberg, Association of Washington Cities

Mayor Dave Hill, Algona
Charlie Howard, Puget Sound Regional Council
Councilmember Kate Kruller, Tukwila
Mayor Matt Larson, Snoqualmie
Doug Levy, Outcomes By Levy
Scott MacColl, Shoreline
Council President Hank Margeson, Redmond
Lorrie McKay, Kirkland
Councilmember Marlla Mhoon, Covington
Mayor Ed Murray, Seattle
Joyce Nichols, Bellevue
Councilmember Amy Ockerlander, Duvall
Council President Don Persson, Renton
Tony Piasecki, Des Moines
Scott Plusquellec, Seattle
Council President Dana Ralph, Kent
Nina Rivkin, Redmond
Deputy Mayor Catherine Stanford, Lake Forest Park
Terresha Torres, Kirkland
Mayor Tom Vance, Sammamish
Mayor Amy Walen, Kirkland
Ella Williams, SCA
Gregg Zimmerman, Renton

