

Publication of All Aboard Washington
A Not-for-profit Consumer Organization
"Moving forward... On Rail."

Dr. Curtis Horne offers AAWA a vision to move our organization and our cause forward

Dr. Curtis Horne, a retired educator and a consultant on how organizations can succeed and be viable in an ever-changing world, spoke at All Aboard Washington's Sept. 12 meeting in Tukwila. He noted he has strong positive feelings about railroads, being born in a small railroad town in North Dakota.

Horne started off with a story about the Cross Pen Company. They made the



Dr. Curtis Horne speaking at the Sept. 12 AAWA meeting. *Photo by Zack Willhoite*

finest pens in the world but people moved away from using fine pens and then away from using pens as much with the advent of personal computers. The company conducted a study and discovered they were no longer in the pen business but in the gift business, selling pens for life events such as graduation. They changed their entire business model and culture, and moved forward with a positive attitude.

Change is not good or bad; it's real and it's inevitable.

All Aboard Washington needs to clearly understand what changes we will have to make to continue to be successful. Who are we? What is necessary to serve the needs of our members?

The life blood of every organization is active members. How do we respond to change in order to engage our members

and grow the organization? That is our challenge. We must address it. Look at fraternal clubs like the Elks or American Legion, or golf clubs: their membership models no longer attract enough people to grow or even maintain membership levels.

Horne talked about the massive change in our country that was the westward expansion and how the railroads were instrumental in making it happen. After the Louisiana Purchase President Thomas Jefferson saw the need to start settling the territory before other countries did. Legislation such as the Donation Land Claims Act and the Homestead Act offers people the opportunity to become land owners by clearing and farming the land. Then came land grants and loans to encourage the railroads to build to the Pacific.

The railroads were the beginning of what our country has now become. They were huge agents of change. Once the railroads opened their lines they needed to figure out how to create revenue. And the way to do that was to convince people to migrate west. Their revenue came mostly from passengers but over the course of a century the revenue model completely flipped and now most railroad revenue comes from freight. The government now funds the passenger trains.

Serving our members leads us to being the voice of the passengers. We must work to see that passenger need are met by the various rail operators.

AAWA President Karen Keller will lead the organization in continuing to analyze the results of the SWOT survey as we develop goals and plans to activate and engage our members and lead us to more fully be advocates for rail passengers. Join us at our Oct. 10 meeting in Tukwila as we continue moving forward.



Jim Mathews, NARP president, speaks at the Aug. 8 AAWA picnic.

Photo by Zack Willhoite

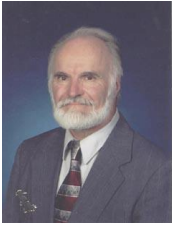
The Aug. 8 All Aboard Washington picnic meeting was held at Lacey's Rainier Vista Park. We were welcomed by Sen. Karen Fraser (D-Olympia). Jim Mathews, NARP president for just a year now, was our main speaker. Mathews likes to get outside the DC bubble and meet with rail advocates all across the country. He has been on the road a lot so far. His enthusiasm for his new job and for passenger rail is contagious.

There is strong and building support for transit and rail. The US House put forward a horrible Amtrak reauthorization bill. However, the Senate, with major input from NARP and others, unveiled a [much stronger bill](#). It passed the full Senate 65-34 on July 30. Prime sponsors are Sens. Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Cory Booker (D-NJ).

Mathews is concerned that PRIIA Section 209 – which moved most of the costs of shorter corridors to the states with no funding – is a stealth move to undermine the long distance network. He praised the sustained efforts by WSDOT to make its relationship with Amtrak work. Other states have not had that level of success.

Mathews called for a robust seamless national intermodal transportation network.

He welcomed everyone's input and listened to all questions and comments made by the more than 60 attendees.



*From the desk of
the Executive
Director
by
Lloyd H. Flem*

Passenger Rail and the “Not Enough Population Density!” Myth

A superficially credible case is made by North Americans who praise the excellent and ever growing passenger rail systems of much of Europe and East Asia, but repeat the “not enough population density!” myth as the reason passenger rail won’t work in North America. These folks quote the per-square-mile population density of say, Japan or Switzerland, compare that to a significantly less dense USA or Canada, and then smugly conclude that passenger trains are useful there, but not here.

They ignore the important geographic concept of scale. To cite an extreme example, British Columbia has a population density far less than that of the state of Washington, yet Vancouver’s West End has one of the highest population densities in the North American West. Conclusions about population density of any geographically variable phenomena are based significantly on the scale of observation.

A medium scale of observation, larger than Vancouver’s West End yet smaller than the whole of Canada or the USA, can depict that of North American regional transportation corridors with population densities equal to almost anything in Western Europe. In these regions, passenger train transportation is not only possible, but essential. (A few “not enough” critics concede the Northeast Corridor (Boston-New York City-Washington, DC) may alone warrant passenger trains.)

But many regions outside the Northeast, including our Northwest Rail Corridor, have sufficient population density to justify public (and possibly private) investments in passenger train service. Several years ago then-AAWA President Loren Herrigstad and I did detailed research on the Southwest German Corridor (Frankfurt-Stuttgart-Munich), the most prosperous part of Europe’s largest economy. Then we compared it to our Northwest Corridor for size and shape, total population, the locational pattern and size of cities, population density, transportation infrastructure and the role of passenger

rail.

The results were extremely similar patterns for all our criteria except one – the role of intercity passenger rail. The Southwest German Corridor does have a slightly greater population density. But that marginal difference did not explain that we have five (seven in 2017) passenger train round trips daily between Seattle and Portland and there are over sixty between Stuttgart and Munich! Let me emphasize our Northwest Corridor is better off than much of North America (thanks primarily to the State of Washington’s commitment to rail investments). But Southwest Germany having about twelve times the passenger trains as the Northwest is the result of political choices made over time, not



Zack Willhoite enjoying a German ICE train south of Frankfurt in 2009.

Photo by Jim Hamre

because the Southwest German Corridor has a slightly greater population density.

To a further argument against the “not enough population density!” myth: Population density and economic development are very often the **RESULT**, not the **CAUSE** of transportation infrastructure! The late Professor James Vance of UC-Berkeley’s Geography Department illustrated that with the examples of English canals, 19th Century American railroads, and the then (late 1960s) emerging Interstate Highway system. A glance at a map of population and industrial development in England before and after the canal building era gives graphic visual evidence that investment in the canals (and later, railroads) was what led to the strong industrial and population growth in north-central England.

To our shores: What if Abraham Lincoln’s advisors had insisted, “Mr President, it’s wasteful to encourage and give land grants to railroads to build west from the Mississippi River; there is absolutely not enough density and economic development there!” Fortunately Abe had better advice, knowing that the railroads would literally develop the West. (That this

process of Manifest Destiny, before and during the “railroad era,” was unjust to Native Americans is another matter.)

Simple observation shows the American Interstate Highway system has caused massive changes in the pattern of economic development and population growth at the metropolitan scale. Some would argue these changes have caused considerable social and environmental costs, as well as benefits. But the point remains, the development following the Interstates was essentially a result of these Interstates’ chosen routes and interchanges.

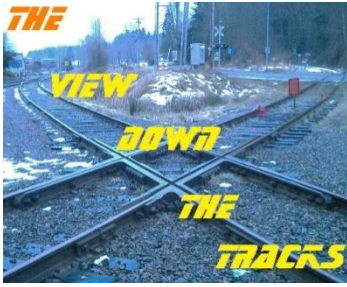
(Less change has occurred following construction of the German autobahns, as regulations inhibiting scatteration and sprawl tend to be stricter in Germany.)

A similar case can be made at the metropolitan scale for regional (commuter) rail and rail transit. While in many cases, there is sufficient population density now to justify investment in urban/metropolitan passenger rail, the public investment in passenger train services will bring about private investment, with additional economic and population growth along the rail lines and at stations.

Witness the massive development in Portland’s Pearl District and near Vancouver, BC’s Skytrain stops. Private investors have put their dollars where they know the transportation infrastructure and patterns of movement will grow and not greatly change for at least several decades. Call it “induced demand” or even “if you build it, they will come.” Transportation infrastructure, including passenger and freight rail, highways, major airports and water facilities, is the most important single factor guiding the economic and population landscape in industrial societies

“Not enough population density!” for passenger rail investments in the Northwest Corridor and its metro areas is a myth without rational basis for both the reasons illustrated above. Population densities already exist along our Northwest Rail Corridor and in the metro areas of Vancouver, Seattle and Portland to justify the public investments in passenger rail **AND** these public investments will result in further development after the infrastructure is put in place. Critics of passenger rail need to find other excuses for inaction or limiting public transportation spending to only roads.

And that’s the end of today’s college lecture in economic geography!



WITH
JIM
CUSICK

A Toll for Whining About Tolls

I know that one should not go to the Internet to find meaning in one's life, and certainly not in the comments section of the online news organizations.

I just can't help myself.

With the Tolls on I-405 being implemented at the end of September, I am thoroughly amused at the way people hate the idea of actually paying for the lanes they need.

I know those of you who have followed my prognostications since the time when I served on the I-405 Corridor Program Citizens Committee actually could see this coming

...

One thing about that program when it was being developed back in 2001 was that at the time, NO FUNDING SOURCE was identified.

The decision to add two General Purpose lanes in each direction was decided based on the costs and benefits known at that time. Whether funding came from a gas tax increase or tolls didn't matter in the calculation.

I for one am quite pleased that two of the originally planned four GP lanes are toll lanes (one in each direction).

This allows part of the cost of construction of more capacity for those who wish to drive at speed during the commute hours, to be paid for by exactly those individuals.

When you hear the old tired refrain of "[insert non-SOV-mode here] should pay for itself," then why is it such a hard concept that drivers do exactly that – Pay for the roads they want built?

Please do not increase the tax on the rest of us, that is, those who do not need to travel on a 10 lane superhighway at high speeds during the commute hours, to pay for their pleasure.

I'm happy paying gas tax for ongoing maintenance and reconstruction of aging highway infrastructure on a statewide or federal basis.

What I've never been happy about is paying extra taxes on un-voted capacity increases.

Which brings us to the age-old question:

Transit Requires a Referendum; Why Don't Highway Mega Projects?

In the 1990s Californians passed two referendums which allowed them to upgrade and enhance their statewide rail systems.

Propositions 108 and 116.

They funded all sorts of things, such as platforms, stations, equipment, track

THINK BIG!

I hear it all the time!

People are looking for additional and better travel options.

People are getting excited about the two additional Seattle-Portland roundtrips planned for the Amtrak Cascades service in 2017.

People really want a daytime train between the eastern and western parts of the state.

work, and also included Thruway bus connections operated by Amtrak California.

Yes, I understand that the State of Washington has stepped up to the plate with support of the Amtrak *Cascades* service, and I applaud that.

I was even hanging out at the State DOT when it was happening.

And I was getting paid ... to hang out.

I was even working on TRAINS then.

Okay, at the time I was a Y2K contract programmer, and I was working on one project at WSDOT, the accounting software package they used – TRAINS.

But what about funding more of the real thing?

How would we fund it, and more importantly how much should we fund it?

If it was such a struggle getting a transportation package passed, for fear of it meaning we would have to raise taxes, what happens now?

Now that we have finally come to an agreement on a state transportation

budget, that in itself is a tremendous milestone, but I haven't seen where a statewide voter approval of the gas tax increase is required.

Would it pass?

What if it didn't?

Hey there I-405 Drivers!! Buck-up and drive solo in those toll lanes.

You can call it an INVESTMENT in your driving future.

A Statewide Rail Referendum, Would It Work Here?

As Seattle Subway testified to Sound Transit about what should go into the next Sound Transit ballot measure - ST3:

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People really want a better way to get through downtown Seattle on their way to the airport.

The North Corridor High Capacity Transit portion approved in 2008 for ST2 (a.k.a.

"Lynnwood Link") can't come soon enough.

If you watch how people are now approaching the Sound Transit Board wanting rail service, in some cases where it can be argued they need it even less than other neighborhoods and municipalities, you realize that the tide is turning.

We've moved on from the perception that a local/regional rail system is an expensive, but long-range need, to one now of the realization that we here in region are way behind the curve in supplying alternative transportation modes.

Remember the saying – "All Politics is Local."

It's true, and if you want your elected officials, right down to your city council members, to know that it's okay to vote for something other than more road capacity, you simply need to ...

TELL THEM!



King Street Station Interior – Photo by Gordon Werner

Top 6 Ways to Improve King Street Station

By Zach Shaner

King Street Station's much needed \$55 mill. restoration did much to heal the decades of architectural and functional neglect that had turned the 1906 landmark into a 60s-era eyesore. The expansive waiting room is now beautiful and grandiose in an austere sort of way, the white and beige palette imposing a coldness nicely balanced by the warmth of yellow light.

But aesthetics alone don't make a good train station. Its primary function is as a transportation facility, to efficiently facilitate human travel while comfortably providing basic human needs such as restrooms, food, drink, and safety. On these counts, there remains much work to be done.

Here are my Top 6 ways to improve King Street.

1. Provide Retail Services

There is currently nothing for sale in King Street other than train tickets and vending machine soda, and this has to change. Space activation through commerce improves security and passenger flow, provides needed amenities to passengers, and gives private sector partners a stake in the station's maintenance and upkeep. The other great West Coast Amtrak stations – Portland and Los Angeles come to mind – are much farther ahead than us at activating their stations. Portland's Union Station has a small convenience store, [a full-service restaurant](#), and upper floor offices. Los Angeles Union Station has [a full-service bar](#) (and [a second on the way](#)) in addition to more standard fast food offerings. The Women's Waiting Room on the western wall of King Street Station would likely make an excellent café, and there is a possibility of a larger restaurant on the upper floors.

2. Fill the Upper Floors with Offices or Restaurants

When the Out of Sight art show [recently](#)

[took over the vacant upper floors of the Station](#) for a temporary exhibit, I wondered about the status of securing permanent tenants for those spaces. I checked in with Seattle DOT's Bill Laborde, who informed me that the city is preparing another big push in early 2016:

We made a big push last year to market the spaces on the 2nd and 3rd floor to commercial tenants. However, we have a big challenge in doing so because there are a minimum of about \$1.5-2 mill. total in tenant improvements that would need to be made to all the leasable spaces to make them habitable. The needed improvements include completing the bathrooms on the second floor, finishing the historic staircase that accesses the 3rd floor and completing floor and ceiling work on 2nd and 3rd floor spaces, as well as any walls the tenant would want to install. There is probably a pathway for the city to take on the cost of completing the bathrooms and historic staircase. The Women's Waiting Room on the 1st floor could also be completed and used as a space for a café. There are probably challenges to adapting that space or either of the 2nd floor spaces for the venting necessary for heavy cooking, though not impossible. We're preparing to make another big push on leasing these spaces, likely kicking off in early 2016.

Though the City's preference is for a Master tenant to renovate and manage all 4 available spaces, the city is willing to accept an office use on the 3rd floor and other individual uses on the 2nd floor. Here's hoping that in the near future something as simple as coffee, a sandwich and a newspaper will be available. Generating general foot traffic at all daytime hours will improve the viability of private businesses, as they'd be less dependent on the peaks and valleys of train passenger traffic.

3. Provide Sounder Access from within the Station

Nominally, Sounder serves King Street Station, but any access from Sounder to the station itself involves a minimum 1000' walk. From the Sounder platform, passengers have a choice of the south pathway (two staircases) or the north pathway (one staircase, two street crossings, and an-

other staircase). But why not provide access to the Sounder platform from the station itself? There is already an at-grade pathway to access the Sounder platform, but it is closed to foot traffic.

Providing access from the station to Sounder would only require allowing passengers to cross Tracks 2 and 3 at the north end of the platform. Such pedestrian crossing of live tracks is very common, for instance at all departures at Portland's Union Station. Trains on Track 2 never travel to/from the north, so crossing that track is not a safety issue. The pathway across Track 3 would only need to be closed during active train movements, which is roughly 6 times per day.

Having a staffer close the crossing for those 6 minutes per day to allow active trains to clear should be a minor safety and administrative matter.

4. Display Basic Passenger Information

Walking into King Street Station is to walk into an information vacuum. Aside from intermittent, ad hoc audio announcements, there is not a single digital departure and arrivals board, and nothing to differentiate Sounder from Amtrak for the unseasoned traveler. Los Angeles has long had a comprehensive departure board, and Portland's Union Station has a makeshift digital display alongside their traditional mechanical display, but for some reason we have been content to have a lack any readily viewable information. But really, how hard could this be? Amtrak already maintains excellent real-time arrival and departure status via its website and mobile app, and displaying it for passengers inside the waiting room should be a basic part of any passenger service.

5. Open Boarding

California's *Pacific Surfliners* handle nearly triple the volume of Amtrak *Cascades* – 2.2 mill. passengers annually compared to our 800,000, and it does so with open, unreserved seating. Despite iPhone based ticket scanning and validation, actually *boarding* a *Cascades* train still requires standing in a 30-minute line for a seat assignment sticker to be attached to a small sliver of colored paper. As writers such as [Matthew Yglesias](#) and [the Economist](#) famously bemoaned, there is no reason not to allow open, commuter rail style boarding on Amtrak trains.

Unlike Portland, Amtrak passengers at King Street never cross an active track →

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All are evening numbers, except Lloyd's, which is available 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily.

Important Addresses and Phone Numbers

U. S. House of Representatives:
 Washington, DC 20515
 U. S. Senate: Washington, DC 20510
 Capitol Switchboard (all members): 202 224-3121
 State Legislature: State Capitol, Olympia 98504
 Hotline for leaving messages: 800 562-6000
 Amtrak Reservations/Information: 800 872-7245
 All Aboard Washington: AllAboardWashington.org
 NARP: www.narprail.org
 NARP Hotline: www.narprail.org/news/hotline/
 Amtrak: www.amtrak.com
 Amtrak Cascades: www.amtrakcascades.com
 Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org

to get to their train, so platform queuing shouldn't be a safety issue. Though *Cascades* trains may only open one or two doors at rural stations – necessitating a close grouping of Centralia-bound passengers, for example – this could be accomplished via platform level A-Board signs or by automatic car (but not seat) assignments. Forcing everyone to stand in line airport style makes no sense and worsens the experience for everyone. Imagine if boarding Amtrak were as easy as boarding Link or Sounder? Because it should be!

6. Using ORCA Between Seattle, Tukwila, and Tacoma

When RailPlus was first offered on Amtrak trains between Seattle and Everett, Sound Transit's Barbara Gilliland called it "one of the easiest agreements I've ever worked on." So why not down south?

Back in 2010 I asked WSDOT's Vickie Sheehan about allowing ORCA Pass holders to ride Amtrak between Seattle, Tukwila, and Tacoma, and she said that there wasn't enough capacity:

Current demand for travel on the Seattle to Portland route is much higher than between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. and is growing. Ridership projections do not show sufficient space on trains to make the Rail Plus fare an option to be pursued at this time between Seattle and Tacoma. In fact our projections show that we shall soon be in a position where demand outstrips supply.

Calculating average capacity for a segment is actually difficult, but you can readily get a ballpark idea. In a post a few months ago, [I charted Amtrak Cascades ridership by city pair](#). If you sum the passenger totals for all destinations from a particular city, subtract those debarking at a particular station, and divide by 4 daily trains, you can get a good sense of how full the train is between any given station.

So each Amtrak *Cascades* train would be able to accommodate approximately 35-50 Sounder passengers, instantly providing more de facto mid-day and reverse peak Sounder service without a single easement dollar paid to BNSF. This will make even more sense when Amtrak and Sounder share a platform in Tacoma just a couple years from now. Why not do it?

What else? What would you do to make King Street better?

This article was published by the Seattle Transit Blog, where Zach has been a writer since 2010. In addition to writing for STB, he owns and operates a small bike rental business, and lives in North Capitol Hill. See all the [article's pictures and graphics](#) on the STB website. Views expressed may not represent official views of All Aboard Washington.

Drive Less, Go More

Article & Photo By Karen Keller



Giving up driving your personal vehicle signifies a gloomy loss of freedom to some senior citizens. In order to put a positive, not a negative spin on driving less, Panorama City – a luxury retirement community in Lacey – planned an event named "Drive Less, Go More." It was standing room only in an auditorium that seats over 200 people. This clearly was information these senior citizens were ready and anxious to hear.

Participants included the services offered to Panorama residents, including on-campus transit, buses/vans to excursions and shopping, and incentives for walking or biking on campus. InterCity Transit had a kneeling bus and a bus with a lift on hand for res-

idents to try. Bus Buddies, a program for those who are insecure about riding alone and Rebels by Bus, an all transit/public transportation tour company were both big hits.

But, humbly I would have to say our presentation on intercity passenger rail was the most popular presentation. Lloyd Flem, Executive Director, and Berl Colley, new AAWA member and member of the Amtrak Customer Advisory Committee, were on hand with me to chat with folks and answer questions.

We had a full table of route guides, AAWA newsletters and rack cards, WSDOT materials, and national timetables. At the end of the day we were left with only three or four tattered remnants. All the rest had been scooped up by folks very, very interested in taking trains.

Generously, McMenamins Olympic Club in Centralia gave us two \$25 gift cards to give away. Seventy-two people signed up to win. Panorama City staff have planned an excursion on the *Cascades* to Centralia and back with brunch at the Olympic Club for November 10th and so far more than 40 people have signed up.

Whether this can be replicated in other senior communities we want to find out. It requires a lot of time and expertise. Having the blessing and cooperation of local transit agencies is also key. It also may translate easily to a college setting.

At the Tukwila Sounder/Amtrak station this passes for a passenger information display system so you have sort-of-an-idea which track your *Cascades* train will be on. The PIDS that WSDOT hoped would be in by this summer is delayed with BNSF starting third main track construction through Tukwila. WSDOT is developing a better interim solution.



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All Aboard News

October 10: All Aboard Washington board meeting from **noon-4:00 p.m.** at **Basil's Kitchen**, Embassy Suites Hotel, 15920 W. Valley Hwy, **Tukwila**. Most of our time at this meeting will be used for continuing discussions of the SWOT analysis and to develop plans and goals for the next year and into the future.

November 14: All Aboard Washington annual membership meeting from **1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.** in the community room at the **Centralia Amtrak Station**. We suggest lunch on your own before the meeting at the landmark McMenamins Olympic Club directly across Railroad Ave from the station. Kirk Fredrickson, WSDOT Rail Division, will be our speaker. Sen. Maralyn Chase (D-Edmonds) is invited. We will have books donated by founding member Jim Neal and several other items available for purchase at the meeting.

December 5: All Aboard Washington will travel to Portland on *Cascades* 501 to join our AORTA counterparts for their luncheon meeting. Details of the meeting are still

being determined. Check our website and social media in November or contact Lloyd Flem for more information. Return on the train of your choice.

All Aboard Washington recently welcomed the following new members: **Charles Mott**, Sun City West, AZ; **Mary Ellen Tenney-Lombard**, Olympia; and **Elaine Banks**, Pasco.

All Aboard Washington members contributing to this newsletter include Charlie Hamilton, Kirk Fredrickson, Zack Willhoite, Karen Keller, Lloyd Flem and Jim Cusick.



NOTICE OF ELECTION OF DIRECTORS OF ALL ABOARD WASHINGTON

ALL ABOARD WASHINGTON will elect four new members to its board. Each member of All Aboard Washington who is current in his or her dues and of sound mind is entitled to run for the office of Director and file a Declaration of Candidacy by November 7, 2015. The Declaration of Candidacy shall be in writing and shall include the full name and mailing address of the candidate and must be delivered by mail, email or otherwise to Rocky Shay, Secretary, 820 SW 356th St., Federal Way, WA 98023. (For Shay's contact information, see p. 5.) If no more than four candidates have duly filed for Director by 8 PM, November 7, 2015, all candidates who have filed Declarations of Candidacy will be deemed elected and the election will be canceled. If an election is required, such election shall occur at the General Membership Meeting commencing at 1 p.m. at the Centralia Amtrak Station, 210 Railroad Ave., on November 14, 2015. All members of All Aboard Washington (whose dues are current) are entitled to be present and vote for candidates for Director. The new Board members shall take office on January 1, 2016.