Reardon: decision to seek death penalty the right one

On Tuesday, I stood alongside Snohomish County Prosecutor Mark Roe as he announced his decision to pursue the death penalty for the murder of Washington State Department of Corrections Officer Jayme Biendl.

I fully support the decision of the Prosecutor and will make certain that the necessary financial resources are available to prosecute this case to the full extent of the law.

We will work closely with the Washington State Department of Corrections as they have informed my office they will reimburse Snohomish County for 100% of the costs associated with the first chair of the Defendant’s legal counsel.

I commend the Prosecutor on a thorough review and evaluation of the requisite materials in this case. This somber decision aligns with the desires of the family of Officer Biendl as well as the best interest of justice for our community.

Sincerely,

Aaron Reardon

New ST freeway ramp improves daily commute near Mountlake Terrace
On Thursday, Executive Reardon helped open the new Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station project that as of Sunday will provide immediate Sound Transit Express bus access in the I-5 median at 236th Street Southwest.

Reardon, who is the chairman of the Sound Transit board, noted the project brings a much more convenient, reliable and safer transportation option.

Residents of Mountlake Terrace and south Snohomish County will have easy access to ST Express bus service, including weekend and evening service to Seattle. The project will increase bus speed and reliability for commuters and casual travelers, as well as a safe connection to the Mountlake Terrace Transit Center via a pedestrian bridge.

Express buses to Seattle will arrive at and depart from the new freeway station, while local bus service will continue to use Community Transit's adjacent transit center. Parking for nearly 900 vehicles in the garage and surface lot is available, along with bike racks, lockers and passenger drop-off areas.

The $35 million project includes the covered pedestrian bridge from transit center garage to station; weatherproof, fully accessible passenger platforms; and artwork by Muse Atelier with artists Nancy Chew and Jacqueline Metz.

The project – funded by Sound Transit, Federal Transit Administration, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and Washington State Department of Transportation, with planning assistance from the City of Mountlake Terrace and Community Transit – is just one way that Sound Transit is improving the lives of
Snohomish County citizens.

This and other improvements are part of Sound Transit’s mission to improve regional bus service including the construction of new park-and-ride lots, transit centers and high-occupancy-vehicle access ramps.

County honored for excellence in finance and accounting

Snohomish County was recently recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its excellence in financial reporting and transparency.

“Sound fiscal management has put Snohomish County in a positive position that few governments in Washington State share,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. “This award from GFOA represents a significant accomplishment and recognition of our commitment to sound fiscal accountability.”

The GFOA awarded Snohomish County the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence, the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting.

Reardon applauded the efforts of the County’s Finance department and their commitment to excellence. “During a financial crisis that has brought other governments to their knees, Snohomish County is in the black, fully transparent and meeting the highest levels of accounting standards,” Reardon said.

The GFOA established the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program (CAFR Program) in 1945 to encourage and assist state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles. The GFOA promotes transparency and full disclosure, and recognizes governments that succeed in achieving that goal.

Reports submitted to the CAFR program are reviewed by selected members of the GFOA professional staff and the GFOA Special Review Committee, which comprises individuals with expertise in public-sector financial reporting and includes financial statement preparers, independent auditors, academics, and other finance professionals.

The GFOA is a professional nonprofit association serving approximately 17,500 government finance professionals.
County initiative speeds project reviews, construction

Snohomish County’s efforts to speed up permit processing for complex projects, allowing those projects to begin construction work more quickly, is showing immediate results. Since launching Project Catalyst in February, timelines for project reviews have already been cut by more than 25%.

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon announced in February during his annual State of the County Address the creation of “Project Catalyst,” a fresh approach to reducing the regulatory burden of obtaining permits for a broad variety of projects working their way through the county’s planning department.

“The goal of Project Catalyst is twofold: to spur additional economic activity this year as well as to create a new baseline for complex projects at half the current timeline,” Reardon said. “We recognize that in today’s financial climate, the speed with which a project can move from concept to build-out is critical.”

The additional efforts by Planning and Development Services staff at this time of year will result in issued permits for a variety of development projects at the beginning of the optimum construction season. The planning department is utilizing a combination of targeted overtime, borrowed staff resources and critical path analysis.

“Minimizing the uncertainty of permitting in a development project’s timeline allows project proponents to focus on other aspects of a project, including financing, purchasing, and hiring,” said PDS Director Clay White.

“Seven years ago, we set about speeding up the process by which projects were approved, becoming one of the fastest jurisdictions in the region,” Reardon said. “With a short-term, targeted use of permitting resources, contractors will be able to go to work on an additional 70-plus projects during the 2011 building season, meaning more construction workers with jobs in Snohomish County this summer.”

Thank you very much for taking the time to read my electronic newsletter.

If you would like to send me your comments and feedback, or if you would like to unsubscribe, simply reply to this message.

You may also contact me directly by phone at 425.388.3460.