Summit spurs conversation on linking rail with transportation network

On Tuesday, I hosted a leadership summit focusing on the future of rail in the Puget Sound region.

More than 125 regional leaders gathered, spending the morning discussing ways to incorporate rail into the county’s evolving transportation network. The issues discussed and ideas generated already have drawn positive reactions, including a recent editorial in The Seattle Times.

Making sure rail, especially on the Eastside, is part of our transportation planning makes sense in the long run. It will help relieve congestion by giving our residents more options, and it further sets Snohomish County up for increased economic development, such as landing the 737 supersite.

Presentations included U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen’s outlook on federal transportation spending and the importance of reauthorizing a six-year federal transportation bill. Other presentations, as well as a moderated panel discussion, looked at new innovation, rails-with-trails options, financing and successful multimodal hubs.

If you missed it, you can find all the materials a well as other news stories by clicking here. Take a moment, delve into this important material, and let me know your thoughts about how we can get rail moving even faster.

Sincerely,

West Lake Roesiger land purchase approved; park opportunities await
The state's purchase of nearly 2,900 acres near Lake Roesiger earlier this week will allow Snohomish County residents access to prime forest land for camping, hiking and more.

The purchase, with full support from Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, follows on the heels of the county's purchase of a 200-acre conservation easement on part of that land as well as an additional 40 acres for camping and parking. The remainder of the DNR land will be managed for timber.

“This cooperative effort has led to new recreational uses benefiting Snohomish County residents as well as those living throughout the state,” Reardon said. “This is one of the largest public land purchases in the county's history.”

The forest land is located west of Lake Roesiger between Dubuque Road and Carpenter Road – property that had once been planned for development and will now be open space.

Snohomish County has worked closely with the DNR and Cascade Land Conservancy (CLC) for months to secure this private property for public ownership. The CLC has served as an agent negotiating purchase terms to assist in the land's conservation.

“This is a great example of partners coming together to create a real win for our community,” said Gene Duvernoy, President of Cascade Land Conservancy.

The DNR will pay $6.6 million for its portion of the purchase followed by the county's investment of nearly $1.4 million. County funding comes from its Conservation Futures Program, which provides for the purchase of land for conservation, protection and preservation of open space, timber lands, wetlands and farm lands.

Snohomish County, through its Parks and Recreation department, will work closely with the DNR concerning future public uses of this property.

County opens gate to Mtn. Loop Hwy.'s recreational treasures

Snohomish County Public Works' crews have reopened the Deer Creek gate on Mountain Loop Highway, providing access to the Big Four Ice Caves, Barlow Pass and other recreational opportunities.

Crews finished clearing snow and downed trees Tuesday, substantially later in the season than typical due to late snowfall and lingering low snow levels.
“This is great news for residents eager to get to some of the best recreational areas Snohomish County has to offer,” said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon.

Just two weeks ago, Snohomish County road crews completed major emergency repairs to stabilize Mountain Loop Highway at the Waldheim Slide area, reopening both lanes with a gravel surface for the first time since the road closed in December.

Mountain Loop Highway is considered one of the best scenic routes in Snohomish County and offers access to U.S. Forest Service lands, the Big Four Ice Caves and more.

With access on Mountain Loop Highway restored, travelers are still encouraged to make sure end destinations are open.

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.