

Lynnwood's new taxing tool

The city could collect higher sales taxes or vehicle registration fees to fund transportation projects.

By OSCAR HALPERT
Herald Writer

LYNNWOOD — The city may soon have a new way to boost funding for transportation-related projects.

That's because the City Council last week agreed to form a new

taxing district that by next year might collect additional sales taxes or vehicle registration fees to pay for transportation projects.

The state Legislature in 1987 authorized cities and counties to form a Transportation Benefit District. In 2007, the state amended the rules to allow local governments to collect sales taxes or vehicle registrations to pay for transportation projects.

The city of Edmonds began collecting a \$20 car tab fee in September 2009 after forming a benefit district.

"The Legislature has robbed cities of their gas tax monies to help fill out their budget but gave us an opportunity to impose taxes through the license fee or (create) an additional sales tax," City Council President Ted Hikel said.

Sometime within the next couple of months, the newly created district board — comprised of all council members — will hold a public hearing and may decide how much of a fee to charge.

So far, city officials have not decided whether to collect a fee or impose the additional sales tax,

Hikel said.

By law, the council can then approve a car tab fee of up to \$20 a year. Fees of more than \$20 must be approved by voters. If the council approves the fee set by the district, the city would likely begin collecting the money next year, said David Mach of the city's Public Works Department.

Lynnwood officials estimate a \$20 annual car tab fee would bring \$420,000 to the city each year.

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AROUND THE COUNTY

Everett: EMS levy passes, official says

The Snohomish County Auditor's Office confirmed that voters passed the Emergency Services Levy, allowing the city to boost property tax up to 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. A simple majority was needed to approve the measure, and 66 percent of voters said yes. A total of 13,566 people voted on the measure, according to the Snohomish County auditor. The city of Everett has 45,523 registered voters.

Help for homeless to connect with agencies

Project Homeless Connect, an event to help the homeless with on-site services and connect with agencies that can help them, is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 29 at Cascade High School's auditorium, 801 East Casino Road.

Among the services available that day will be haircuts and free lunches, dental, vision and hearing screenings, services for veterans and even services for pets such as food and vaccinations.

EvCC will host Juneteenth celebration

Everett Community College students are hosting a community celebration for Juneteenth from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday at EvCC's Parks Student Union multipurpose room.

Juneteenth is one of the oldest nationally celebrated commemorations of the end of slavery in the United States.

Originating in Galveston, Texas, in 1865, the observance of African-American Emancipation Day spread across the United States and beyond. The celebration emphasizes freedom, education and achievement.

EvCC's Juneteenth celebration includes music provided by a local DJ, hot dogs, light refreshments and a raffle. The event is sponsored by EvCC's Black Student Union and the EvCC Student Activities Programs Board.

More info: 425-388-9311 or 425-388-9106.

Darrington: Culvert removal to aid salmon

The Skagit River System Cooperative recently removed an 80-foot-long, 8-foot-tall, 12-foot-wide culvert from Texas Creek, a tributary to the sediment-heavy, glacier-fed Suiattle River. The clear creek is used by several salmon species.

The culvert had provided vehicle access across the creek on a U.S. Forest Service road, but it was a barrier to resident fish species and was at risk of failing and sending sediment to salmon habitat downstream, said officials at the Skagit River System Cooperative, which is the natural resources arm of the Sauk-Suiattle and Swinomish tribes.

The culvert removal was part of a three-year project in partnership with the Forest Service to upgrade and decommission approximately 18 miles of forest roads in the Suiattle River basin.

Marysville: Classes get donated life jackets

The Marysville/North County Family YMCA has received a donation of 30 life jackets, valued at \$1,000, through a grant from West Marine. The devices will be used in YMCA swim lessons and other activities.

The donation will increase the organization's ability to cover boating safety during its swim classes. Many children don't own their own life jackets and aren't able to participate unless the YMCA can provide the appropriate equipment.

More info: 360-653-9622.



PHOTO BY CHRIS GOODENOW

A biker passes by as construction workers discuss a new pedestrian bridge over 44th Avenue West in Lynnwood.

Project's street closures end

Lynnwood's pedestrian bridge, which will cross 44th Avenue West and link up with the Interurban Trail, is 75 percent complete.

By MINA WILLIAMS
For The Herald

LYNNWOOD — Construction-related street closures caused by the 44th Avenue West and Interurban Trail pedestrian bridge project have concluded with the positioning of girders over the street.

This milestone marks the project as 75 percent complete, according to Jeff Elekes, public works deputy director and city engineer for Lynnwood. Still to come is interior connection work, paving of the deck, adding handrails, installing lighting and grading work.

The construction will bridge a missing link in the Interurban Trail across 44th Avenue West in Lynnwood's city center.

Currently, users of the trail are routed through a labyrinth of crosswalks and sidewalks. "This will make (the trail) its own corridor again," Elekes said.

Completion of the project is expected later this summer, an event the city plans to celebrate with a ribbon-cutting. As part of festivities, the city is holding a contest awarding the winner the ability to be the first individual, or group, to cross the bridge on



Construction workers Matt VanLier (left) of Allied Construction Associates in Everett and foreman Rich Bovard of Seahurst Electric move materials where a pedestrian bridge over 44th Avenue West in Lynnwood is being built.

foot or bike.

To enter the contest, complete the entry form along with a short essay explaining why the bridge is beneficial to the city and why you should be the first to cross it. The deadline to enter is June 25. Contest details can be found at tinyurl.com/24j9lej.

The \$3.9 million project received \$2.9 million in state and federal

grants. The project has been under development for more than a decade.

A second pedestrian bridge project affecting Lynnwood traffic is under way at I-5 and 196th Street. A small bridge, over the southbound offramp, will connect to the Interurban Trail and back down to the sidewalk east of the intersection of 195th Street and

36th Avenue.

Intermittent traffic closures and traffic lane modifications will be necessary to build this project, expected to be completed this summer.

Both projects are being built in partnership with the state Department of Transportation serving as the construction management team.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Arlington Planning Commission, Arlington Airport Commission, joint workshop meeting, 7 tonight, City Council chambers, 110 E. Third St. The commissioners plan to talk about the airport's land-use compatibility program. State Department of Transportation aviation planner Carter Timmerman plans to participate.

Gold Bar City Council, 7 tonight, 107 Fifth St. The council will

hear reports on public records requests.

Monroe City Council, 7 tonight, City Hall, 806 W. Main St. The council will return to the subject of a contested cell-phone tower.

Snohomish City Council, 7 tonight, School Administration Center, George Gilbertson Boardroom, 1601 Ave. D. The council will hold a public hearing on establishing a liquor advisory

committee.

Sultan Planning Commission, 7 tonight, 319 Main St.

Snohomish Planning Commission, 7 p.m. Wednesday, School Administration Center, George Gilbertson Boardroom, 1601 Ave. D.

Sultan City Council workshop, 7 p.m. Thursday, Sultan City Hall, 319 Main St. The council will begin discussing proposed changes to its long-term plans.

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KRISTI O'HARRAN

Kristi O'Harran is on vacation.