

MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee—SSB 5412 Subcommittee Meeting
Meeting Summary
February 12, 2008

Brian Smith opened the meeting by welcoming members and guests. Everyone introduced themselves. Brian remarked that he expected the discussion to be fairly free-flowing rather than structured. **Charlie Howard** summarized his interest in this subcommittee by saying that with PSRC's plan in update, he wants to be aware of how SSB 5412 would affect that metropolitan transportation plan.

SSB 5412 review—Elizabeth Robbins

Elizabeth explained how the five main policy goals of the law apply broadly to all transportation agencies and how the various legislative assignments are broken out by areas of responsibility among WSDOT, the Transportation Commission, and the Office of Financial Management. The draft shows how the law relates the MPOs, RTPOs, and others to these assignments. She also indicated how the areas of responsibilities and those responsible for those areas relate to each other in regard to the policy goals.

Office of Financial Management's status of attainment report and discussion of ways to collaborate with MPOs—Robin Rettew

Robin discussed the draft 2007 baseline report OFM provided to the Legislature and said the legislative response to the report has been positive. She characterized the report as a high-level, statewide perspective, not by agency or a report card on agencies. She indicated it contained mostly WSDOT performance measures this time around but eventually it would cover all agencies. She also indicated that future reports could cover all modes with a focus on whether investments are effective in achieving the policy goals. She requested the group review the document and provide her office feedback.

Robin explained that eventually the policy goals needed to link with all organizations' transportation plans. In recognition of this, WSDOT has already begun linking the policy goals and transportation plans by requesting the MPOs and RTPOs consider the policy goals when developing their next Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Discussion on the policy goals of the law focused on whether and how the organizations should incorporate these into their plans and how to interpret the goals so as to be relevant to each organization. **This will be a discussion item at the next meeting of the subcommittee.**

Robin said OFM needed a core group of people to look at data collection, statewide data sources, and to be on-point for each of the policy goals. Measuring congestion, land use coordination, and economic development are all issues of emphasis right now. However, currently, a central location for accurate data, accessible by all jurisdictions, doesn't exist which is a statewide concern. Also, different areas of the state require different solutions. One size does not fit all.

Climate Change— Brian Lagerberg/Anne Criss

Brian Lagerberg said there are several bills moving forward in the legislature related to climate change that includes goals for vehicle miles traveled and commute trip reduction. As investments in climate change demands continue decisions of where to spend the money becomes more difficult. Brian Lagerberg described how with current levels of traffic and the proportion of that commuting traffic, even dramatic improvement in commute trip reduction will not be sufficient to drive the kind of VMT reduction envisioned by some. Employment of land use tools at local and regional levels and linking the budget to performance will be necessary. He also predicted that in the future we could experience a problem with a shortage of vanpools as companies try to reduce their carbon footprints. If a shortage happens, we will need to decide which goal takes precedence – congestion relief or reducing fuel use. If congestion relief is more important, the priority location of the vanpools is urban. If reducing fuel use is more important, then rural locations should take priority for vanpools. Brian Lagerberg also mentioned that we have learned a lot from construction—created delay and managing delivery during construction. We should be able to apply those lessons for permanent gain on the system.

Anne Criss described the Governor’s Climate Advisory Team (CAT). She said the CAT is reorganizing. The workgroups will shift to implementation groups and transportation should be among them. There have also been discussions about whether WSDOT should be a formal member of the CAT this time around. The Climate Advisory Team will recommend to the Governor how to reduce greenhouse gasses and they will be asking for input from the transportation community on this issue, including the MPOs and RTPOs.

Internally WSDOT has a Climate Change Team that will be reaching out to transportation partners and the MPOs and RTPOs will be a part of that outreach.

The climate change discussion included VMT as a measure for GHG emissions vs. congestion vs. revenue. Charlie Howard noted that there is a need for better data, not just trips (non-home-based, non-work-based) but also trip-chaining or “tours.” Brian Lagerberg noted that we need the forum of this subcommittee to move the discussion of appropriate measures forward. **The subcommittee will discuss this further, but meanwhile at the February 26, MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee meeting, the Chair will ask for volunteers to be a resource group for the internal WSDOT Climate Change Team.**

In the discussion on data and strategic investments, Pat Morin described WSDOT’s stewardship agreement with FHWA on using federal funds more effectively to address safety problems where they occur. This could be a useful model to expand to local jurisdictions for safety and more broadly to other areas beyond the safety goal. **This will be a discussion topic at the next meeting of the subcommittee.**

Washington State Transportation Commission's current practice and discussion of ways to collaborate with MPOs—Paul Parker

Paul described the latest Annual Report of the Commission as how the Commission is structuring its conversations with legislators and others. He summarized the Annual Report's contents as priority policy issues and an assessment of progress on achieving the Commission's Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) "investment guidelines" plus SSB 5412's stewardship policy goal. He indicated that the Commission will be reviewing previously adopted policies prior to developing the next policy plan.

Lon Wyrick noted that it would be interesting to see the historic positions or policies together and determine whether there are contradictions or whether there is conflict between state agency policy directions.

Charlie Howard asked about the Commission's work plan and timeline for the update. Paul indicated the Commissioners will discuss the topic at their February meeting and will come to the May MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee meeting to discuss process and schedule with the MPOs and RTPOs. Paul said it will probably be 2009 before all of the pieces fall into place for updating the WTP. He indicated the Commission would probably continue focusing on the same themes it emphasized in its Annual Report:

- Revenue
- Climate change
- System integration
 - governance levels (federal, state, regional, local)
 - modal issues
 - land use/transportation/economic development

Charlie remarked that all the organizations are in different stages of updating their own regional/metropolitan plans, so he hopes the Commission recognizes that when they draw upon those, they will reflect wherever each organization is, at that point.

Lon remarked that the "start-stop" nature of the previous update lost partners.

Paul concluded by saying that part of the next iteration will include "What did the last plan say and how well are we achieving it?"

Next Steps

- Have "climate change" on the agenda at the February 26 MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee meeting
- Work on how to cascade the policy goals
- Work on how to get statewide data sources
- Discuss WSDOT safety stewardship agreement—model for cities, counties, other issues
- Meet again after the 2008 Legislative Session

Meeting Attendees:

Jason Beloso	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Daniela Bremmer	WSDOT Strategic Assessment Office
Anne Criss	WSDOT Public Transportation Division
Craig Helmann	WSDOT Urban Planning Office
Karl Herzog	WSDOT Strategic Assessment Office
Charlie Howard	Puget Sound Regional Council
Leslie Jones	Northeast Washington RTPO
Katherine Klockenteger	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Brian Lagerberg	WSDOT Public Transportation Division
Judy Lorenzo	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Pat Morin	WSDOT Program Development Office
Kathy Murray	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Paul Parker	Transportation Commission Staff
Robin Rettew	Office of Financial Management
Elizabeth Robbins	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Julie Rodwell	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Gordon Rogers	Whatcom Council of Governments
Brian Smith	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Ted Trepanier	WSDOT Traffic Office
Brian Walsh	WSDOT Traffic Office
Lon Wyrick	Thurston Regional Planning Council