



Oversight Committee Convening Meeting Transportation Concurrency Analysis, State-Owned Facilities

**Tuesday, July 11, 2006, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.
WSDOT Headquarters, Commission Board Room (1D2), Olympia**

Meeting Notes

Committee Members in Attendance:

Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen
Sen. Joyce Mulliken
Sen. Craig Pridemore
Jay Balasbas (representing Rep. Lynn Schindler)
Rep. Dean Takko

Rep. Beverly Woods
Rep. Alex Wood (calling-in)
Ashley Probart (AWC)
Eric Johnson (WSAC)

Staff:

Paula Hammond (WSDOT)
Brian Smith (WSDOT)
Elizabeth Robbins (WSDOT)
Eric Phillips (WSDOT)
Karena Houser (WSDOT)
Jason Beloso (WSDOT)
Joyce Phillips (CTED)

Kelly Simpson (Senate Transportation Committee)
David Bowman (House Transportation Committee)
Genevieve Pisarski (Senate Govt. Operations
Committee)
Ethan Moreno (House Local Govt. Committee)
Joseph Backholm (Senate Republican Caucus)

Audience:

Julie Sexton (WSAC)

David Tanner (WSDOT)

Paula Hammond and Brian Smith made introductory remarks and Elizabeth Robbins began an overview of concurrency.

The committee members shared their thoughts on the reason for the proviso. The group discussed that in contrast to previous studies, the focus of this analysis is on state-owned transportation facility impacts. Paula Hammond framed the basic policy question for this study: whether to apply concurrency to state-owned transportation facilities. Mary Margaret Haugen stated that concurrency has applied to Island County for a number of years but it hasn't made a difference because the levels of service just get lowered to accommodate increased congestion. She suggested that this study should look at what is and what isn't acceptable in terms of level of service. Joyce Mulliken indicated that she would like the outcome of the study to be a four-caucus, bipartisan, WSDOT-supported legislative proposal.

The committee advised that potential solutions be flexible in recognition of the different transportation needs on the east and west sides of the state. The group stressed the importance of

addressing impact fees in the analysis and one member suggested that Regional Transportation Planning Organizations could lay the groundwork for any proposed solutions. The group discussed the terminology of concurrency and suggested that clarification might be needed of the definitions of concurrency and levels of service for state-owned facilities. Paula Hammond noted that WSDOT is moving away from traditional level of service terminology toward measures more easily understood by the public such as travel time and trip reliability. Brian Smith suggested that the analysis look at what is working and what is not working with the concurrency process.

Elizabeth Robbins and Eric Phillips continued the overview.

The committee discussed transportation concurrency and state-owned facilities. The group noted that communities include the required information about state-owned facilities in their comprehensive plans to different extents and that WSDOT does not always use that information consistently. Another idea brought forward was that while the intent of House Bill 1487 (the Level of Service Bill of 1998) was that local jurisdictions and WSDOT would partner in addressing transportation facilities and services that are not of statewide significance, in practice this process does not seem to be working well.

Paula Hammond requested a map of the state highways indicating the levels of service established for different segments. [Note: study staff will prepare this for our next meeting].

Eric Phillips continued the overview.

The committee discussed how local jurisdictions address state-owned transportation facilities in current practice. The committee discussed the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and its relationship to the Growth Management Act (GMA) and state highways. Several members of the group noted that the extent of SEPA analysis varies widely depending on the local government, the size of the development, and even the location of the development. SEPA seems to work best for larger developments but does not account well for the cumulative effects of a number of smaller developments. Members of the group commented on some of the challenges of SEPA. For example, local governments are not required to collect SEPA mitigation for the state and SEPA does not address planning issues such as the impact of local zoning decisions and the encroachment of development on the cost of right-of-way acquisitions for state highways. The committee sought clarification of the relationship between SEPA and the GMA and the potential of SEPA as a tool for integrating local land use decisions with state highway function and investment.

The group talked about the participation of state agencies in the local comprehensive planning process and the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) certification process. WSDOT staff noted that while there are a variety of opportunities for participation, limited resources have resulted in inconsistent WSDOT participation in the local and regional planning processes. The committee requested clarification of the role of state agencies in local land use planning.

The committee suggested that the RTPOs may not be working effectively due to limited funding, lack of interest by elected officials, and the absence of clear requirements or guidelines for standards. The committee felt that some RTPO meetings are attended mostly by public works staff and it is important for the planning staff to also be involved.

A question arose regarding which counties have transportation modeling capability for infrastructure planning and if they do, whether they input the impacts to state highways into their models. Ashley Probart replied that the larger governments do very sophisticated modeling while smaller governments may not do any modeling at all.

There was some discussion of the federal role in transportation concurrency. WSDOT staff clarified that there is a good deal of overlap between federal Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and the RTPOs created by the Growth Management Act, but there are no federal level of service standards for highways.

The committee discussed some additional issues related to the current practice of concurrency. The group suggested adding to the list of issues: inadequate funding for concurrency, the difficulty of addressing the traffic impacts of neighboring jurisdictions, the fact that skill sets are not equal across communities, fear of sanctions, and that because moratoriums are limited communities are faced with the politically difficult choices of lowering levels of service standards or spending money they don't have on development-related transportation improvements. The committee also discussed expanding the list of concurrency issues to include the dilemma that concurrency discourages development in urban areas where development and density should be encouraged. Also, one member commented that over-congested state highways can push traffic onto local streets.

The committee discussed US 2 as a potential case study. The group suggested analyzing the comprehensive plans of selected local jurisdictions, determining how the access management plan for US 2 is working in Monroe, and addressing how WSDOT has participated in the review of local plans and development regulations and the SEPA mitigation process.

The committee discussed potential analysis products. There was general agreement that the study should generate policy options, the pros and cons of those options, and the potential outcomes of those options. There was also consensus that both the Growth Management Act and its relationship with the State Environmental Policy Act should be analyzed in the study.

The committee requested that the meeting materials be available a few days in advance of future meetings.

SUMMARY:

Issues Identified for Additional Analysis

- What is and what isn't acceptable in terms of level of service?
- How might potential solutions apply differently in different geographic regions of the state?
- How might RTPOs be involved in potential solutions?
- Does the terminology associated with concurrency require clarification?
- What is the relationship between SEPA and the GMA?
- What is the potential of SEPA as a tool for integrating land use decisions with state highway function and investment?
- How do state agencies practice their roles in local land use planning?
- With respect to selected case studies, how have the local comprehensive plans, access management plans, and WSDOT's participation in the local land use process influenced the development of state highways?
- What are the policy options, the pros and cons of those options, and the potential outcomes of those options?

Additional Requests

- Map of state highways indicating the levels of service established for different segments
- Ensure meeting materials are distributed in a timely manner

Case Studies

- Consensus on using US 2 as a case study
- SR 410/Bonney Lake also mentioned