Statewide Public Transportation Plan

Meeting Summary
Puget Sound Regional Council
Seattle, WA
December 18, 2014

Attendees

In-person:

Roland Behee, Community Transit
Keith Cotton, WSDOT
Kevin Futrell, City of Yakima
Celeste Gilman, University of Washington
Brian Lagerberg, WSDOT
Stephanie Postier, WSDOT
Stan Suchan, WSDOT
Bruce Tabb, City of Ellensburg
Matthew Kunic, WSDOT
Carol Hunter, WSDOT
Karena Houser, WSDOT
Barb Chamberlain, Washington Bikes
Matt Hansen, King County Metro
Kathy Johnston, WSDOT

Rita Brogan, PRR
Rachel Lee, PRR
Charlie Tennyson, PRR
Sarah Shannon, PRR

Call-in:

Brent Meldrum, Coastal Transport
Dennis Bloom, Intercity Transit
Geri Beardsley, WSTA
Colleen Kuhn, WSDOT

Welcome/Safety Orientation/Introductions

- October 22 PTAC meeting summary
  - No revisions received
  - Revisions, comments and discussions are still welcome. Contact Sarah Shannon (sshannon@prrbiz.com)

- This is Charlie Tennyson's last PTAC meeting, moving to UW Transportation Services in January. Sarah Shannon and new staffer Rachel Lee (rlee@prrbiz.com) will be primary consultant staff going forward, supporting Rita Brogan as the lead facilitator

Meeting Objectives

- Share broader plan outline to provide context for specific work done with goals and objectives
- Get feedback on the plan outline
- Flesh out objectives and action strategies
  - PTAC will break into small groups to review and refine objectives, action strategies and measures for five goals

Plan Update

Table of Contents for WSPTP

- Rita Brogan led a review of the revised Table of Contents for WSPTP

- The Effective Decision Making goal has been incorporated into an earlier chapter in the Plan in order to help frame the remaining five goals. The Committee thanked Matt Kunic for his leadership on developing content for this section and Stan Suchan confirmed that the Effective Decision Making section is still part of the plan

- Rita Brogan provided a brief update on a series of November and December meetings led by stewards of the Plan's five goals and their respective objectives, action strategies and success measures. PTAC to review and provide feedback on the progress made on each goal during breakout sessions after lunch. Revisions will be sent via email to the rest of the committee

Chapter 6: The State of Public Transportation

- Rita asked if WSPTP is missing any major issues or trends:
    - Are there data resources that PTAC would like the Plan to include?
    - Are there issues that should not be addressed here?
    - Deadline for PTAC review and feedback on overall outline is January 9th
- Brian Lagerberg and Keith Cotton provided brief overview of WSDOT's Corridor Sketch planning methodology
    - Once fully developed and successfully tested, WSDOT's new planning methodology called the "corridor sketch" will become the essence of planning at WSDOT and a primary tool for sustaining engagement with partners and a long term linkage to supporting communities in Washington State. WSDOT has begun testing the corridor sketch plan concept and will work closely with partners and communities to refine it
    - Brian and Keith are working on more detailed information about the corridor sketch method to provide in the WSPTP

- Dennis Bloom asked where the report will address funding issues
    - In Chapter 6 "The State of Public Transportation," section 4, the Plan will include an overview of public transportation funding in Washington and address deficits, trends, and also discuss funding strategies. PTAC will have dedicated discussions to this section of the report at future meetings.

- Barb Chamberlain asked why congestion wasn't called out in the outline more explicitly, as legislators will be listening for a congestion fix and the word "congestion"
    - Brian Lagerberg responded that we may not solve congestion with the Plan. Congestion, while highly visible, is highway-focused and not what we are trying to address. The focus on improving the performance of the entire system is more closely related to access of goods and services.
    - Stan Suchan added that this Plan should reframe the conversation and steer away from conventional terms and concepts like congestion, and one strategy could be specifically calling out the term congestion and explaining why the Plan does not use it.
    - Celeste Gilman recommended using Brian's example – or one similar – of how shutting down I-5 entirely would solve congestion, but would entirely eliminate access through highway-based modes
    - Kathy Johnston suggested framing reduced congestion as a benefit of greater access

- Matt Kunic informed the group that RTPO/MPOs he works with have been more actively engaging transit agencies on their boards and that the WSPTP schedule should work nicely for the planning efforts he is involved in with these regional groups – good opportunities for feedback

- Brent Meldrum thought one omission from the latest WSPTP table of contents/outline was a dedicated look at conflicting standards between agencies. Including a policy goal to address standardization should be included. He added specific examples:
    - Vehicle inspections
    - Licensing
    - Insurance requirements
    - Training for operators
    - Special needs services
    - Standards for partnerships and doing business with the State for local/regional agencies
    - Colleen Kuhn added CTA Northwest is doing work on standards
    - **Action:** Rita Brogan suggested including standards as an action strategy to the appropriate goal. PRR staff will catch up with Brent to find the right place and wording in the Plan

- Matt Hansen suggested adding a "State of Public Transportation Planning in WSDOT" section to the plan that would make a compelling case for more regional planning across county lines and include success stories of state-local partnerships where local providers/planners found solutions through partnerships and finding the right person or data at WSDOT.
    - Brian Lagerberg responded that the Plan is one way of attempting to integrate local agencies and WSDOT in planning processes. The Public Transportation Division of WSDOT does not have the staff or resources to oversee local public transportation needs for every corner of the state. A successful Plan, therefore, includes avenues or blueprints for collaboration that empowers local agencies and WSDOT to solve problems and make system improvements together

- Stan Suchan asked if the legislature was the core audience for the plan, and whether it was or not, for others to weigh in on the main purpose of the plan
    - Geri Beardsley and others responded that the legislature is one of many audiences, and that the Plan should help policymakers understand the system's challenges and our collective vision and ultimately be able to understand why PTAC would favor one solution over another
    - Colleen Kuhn added that plan integration should be a goal as well, and that the Human Services Transportation Plan updates and others should be consistent
    - Celeste Gilman asked about public engagement and the right way to talk to legislators about the concepts priorities in the Plan
    - Roland Behee added that the purpose of the Plan is to give everyone invested in improving the transportation system a starting point to go out and have conversations with other decision makers or anyone interested in learning about the role of public transportation

- Rita Brogan closed this section with a reminder that PTAC members should send additional comments and additions to the outline by January 1. The January 22 PTAC meeting will include updates on the public engagement process

Multi-Modalism in the 21st Century

- Keith Cotton provided a recap of a November 18 workshop focused on transportation technology trends and opportunities for Washington State. WSDOT convened a dozen tech-focused leaders to help frame the technology components of the Plan
    - *See supplemental handout for key points from November 18 workshop (slides 7 – 10)*

- Keith led a discussion by PTAC on general technology opportunities and challenges for public transportation

- Roland Behee attended the Nov. 18 workshop and explained a major theme was the fundamental paradigm shift in customers and how they use technology, data applications to make the system work better for them. From an operational perspective, real time data on ridership trends can only help make more informed decisions to increase capacity
- Colleen Kuhn talked about the wide range of uses for transit and rideshare technology applications that could be used to improve special needs services, like Veteran transportation and better linkages between systems to fill vehicles that are currently operating well below capacity
- Stan Suchan added that private sector is much better positioned to innovate because they can try and fail over and over again during development phase, while public agencies are accountable to taxpayers and customers to get it right the first time
- Roland Behee added to the list of challenges for public sector innovation, most of which were related to the aging, first generation technology tools and the maintenance and staff costs associated with all of them. After learning from some early deployments, are there pieces of the system/process that can be privatized while making sure we maintain an integrated system. But these are also great wins for the industry, and being able to count people and amend routes/schedules essentially overnight with ridership data has been a valuable tool
- Much like Ann Arbor and the USDOT connected vehicle safety pilot, Colleen Kuhn said that public agencies and providers could be great test beds and incubators for emerging technology, but standards between agencies for things like veteran services must still be addressed
- Government regulation and oversight lag behind innovation. You don't hear a lot about the state expanding to other cities. Is car sharing going to be the thing? Seattle thinks so, but if it doesn't take off, it'll lose a lot of money

- Keith led a follow-up discussion on answers to the question "What 21st Century opportunities are presented to Washington State?"
  - Matt Hansen described King County's latest transit trip planning application that saves your most popular trips and allows you to share them with your contacts
  - Barb Chamberlain commented on the great opportunity for multi-modal applications and solutions for trip planning *before and after* transit. The data that could be collected on first and last mile would be hugely valuable for planners
  - Stan Suchan said the main themes seem to be fare system integration, trip planning and trip information
  - Rita Brogan explained that cash-less fares had been a focus of discussion during the November workshop. She asked what the barriers were for introducing this solution to Washington:
    - Roland Behee talked about the flat fares philosophy, a $2 fare that could get you anywhere on a single system, as well as one medium/tool/card that could be extended beyond districts of regional and local operations
    - Matt Hansen said that Metro has a strategy to be cashless eventually and eliminate all paper transfers, and will be marketing a low-income far in a closed, proprietary system that would allow those well below poverty to ride for nearly half price. . . all of these innovations will eventually include a mobile ticket on your smart phone
    - Bruce Tabb talked about the limits on data for smaller systems. In Ellensburg the system uses automated announcements and automatic passenger counters, but not much additional technology despite its customers being fairly tech-savvy university students/staff/faculty. The plan could help smaller systems understand the technologies and applications that are available and how to prioritize them and understand the value each investment brings

  - What might be the 21st Century opportunities for local service providers?

- There is a software developer in Yakima that set up a system to call special needs customers to warn them that their vehicle is coming, and give them a chance to be ready. He's looking for a grant
- Simply providing smartphones to riders with special needs could make the system much more efficient
- Google has offered to develop a system for $50,000 that would solve the special needs no-shows problem statewide. What happens if the solution is not widely adopted by providers and customers?
- Identifying the state's role in traveler information. Make data available and provide tools once developed. Developing technology takes longer, is more expensive, and doesn't function as well, which doesn't make the state look good.
- Some way to integrate transit or bike access to different community resources on web, similar to how you can see walk scores on sites like Yelp
- The state's role should be to get out of the way of innovation, but to make sure that applications and other advancements help achieve the state's goals. Facilitate the introduction of technologies to the local and regional systems that need them the most

Small Group Discussions

Small groups met for 90 minutes for a focused discussion on objectives and action strategies, including the following questions as primary considerations:

- How can these be made more useful to you?
- What else needs to be done?
- Are these the right measures of success?

Reports from Small Group Discussion

- Access
  - Objective 1: Collaborate to prioritize transportation investments from a system perspective to close gaps in service and create an integrated public transportation system for Washington State
    - Feedback was that it was unclear what the "gap" is referring to. Make it more explicit that a partnership and shared responsibility is needed between the state and the riders
  - Objective 2: Incorporate public transportation into planning design and management of highway and local roadways to increase multi-modal access
    - This objective is not about gaps, but rather about increasing multi-modal access and a focus on the State and around what the State can do for roadways.
      - Prioritize to prevent gaps in the system. The difficulty is the gap in service, and tax payers are asking the system to fill it
      - The State has some sort of role in facilitating and filling that gap – it isn't in our jurisdiction
    - Everybody should be investing to improve multi-modal access.
    - HOV: WSDOT will only do the HOV system – how do you separate out state from local? It's the same system. We can only make those changes if we have the capacity for the integrated multi-modal system. We won't do it unless our partners were already there. We have to protect state and local investment
      - Provide funding for that service itself, and it must be a partnership
      - Local transit should also be prioritizing to fill the gaps
    - We can capture this idea by adding the word "collaborate"

    - Objective 3: Provide tools that enable special needs travelers and lower income populations to understand and access their full range of public transportation options, including fixed routes
    - Objective 4: Develop metrics that demonstrate the relative cost-benefit value of public transportation and demand management strategies compared to other types of transportation investments
    - Objective 5: Facilitate the use of technology solutions that improve access and manage demand

- Customer Experience
    - Objective 1a: Educate people about the options that are available to them and why they should use them
        - Another way to educate the community: one call one click center. Connects with 211
    - Objective 1b: Encourage action by highlighting the financial, safety and environmental benefits and social impacts of various transportation modes
    - Objective 2: Identify innovative, customer-f0cused solutions by public transportation providers throughout Washington State and develop and share best practices
    - Objective 3: Capture and share data to assess public transportation performance trends statewide and provide local access to data to support local service planning and the development of innovative solutions
    - Objective 4: Emphasize efforts that improve the public transportation experience for customers

- Adaptive Capacity
    - The name has been changed to "Sustainable Capacity" to better reflect its direction
    - Objective 1: Consider alternative ways to provide people access to goods and services and encourage innovation and collaboration between organizations
        - The word "alternative" is always a red flag, perhaps use "different" instead. It's being used to imply a consideration for multiple modes of transportation
            - Alternative to the car is what it really means. This makes the car the default standard
    - Objective 2: Achieve maximum use of available capacity in corridor
        - Move the action strategy around surveys to the top of the action strategy list
        - There should be education around the concept of sustainability
    - Objective 3: Develop performance measures that reflect successful implementation of Sustainable Capacity strategies

- Stan noted that the goals and objectives are focused on what WSDOT can do for our partners, not what our partners and WSDOT can do together. How can we move towards goals and objectives that are more centered on partnership? WSDOT can't come 100% of the way.
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- The group elected to review the remaining goal objectives and actions after the meeting since we had gone over time:
    - Stewardship
    - Thriving Communities

Next Steps

- The next PTAC meeting:
    - January 22, 2015 from 10:00am-2:00pm
      1501 4th Ave, 3rd Floor Alki Room

- Project team will share updates on the public engagement plan at the next meeting and all of the ways that PTAC will be involved

- The project team will be focused on drafting the plan over the next several weeks. Updates on drafts will be distributed in sections for review by PTAC as they are completed

Action Items

- PRR staff to send the meeting summary and PowerPoint containing revised objectives and action strategies to PTAC for review
- Project team to incorporate standards as an action item for the appropriate goal, per Brent Meldrum's suggestion
- PTAC members to review The State of Public Transportation chapter outline and provide feedback regarding any issues that should be removed, nuances that are missing, and possible data sources to help support