Washington State Public Transportation Plan

Meeting Summary

Partner's Meeting April 9, 2015

PSRC Board Room

1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500, Seattle, WA 98104

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Attendees

In-Person:

PTAC Members:

Geri Beardsley, Washington State Transit Association
Roland Behee, Community Transit
Justin Bergener, Medstar Cabulance, Inc.
Renee Biles, People for People
Michael Cardwell, Quinault Indian Nation | Tribal Transportation Planning Organization
Gil Cerise, Puget Sound Regional Council
Barb Chamberlain, Washington Bikes
Celeste Gilman, University of Washington
Matt Hansen, King County Metro
Paul Parker, Washington State Transportation Commission
Bruce Tabb, City of Ellensburg
Kevin Futrell, City of Yakima

Project Team:

Keith Cotton, WSDOT
Evan Olsen, WSDOT
Stan Suchan, WSDOT
Rita Brogan, PRR
Sarah Shannon, PRR
Rachel Lee, PRR

Call-in:

Carolyn Newsome, Intercity Transit
Kathy McMullen, Ben Franklin Transit
Tom Hanson, WSDOT
Kathy Murray, WSDOT

Welcome/Safety Orientation/Introductions

- Meeting Summary 3.12.2015 Approval
    - No additional revisions received

    - Revisions, comments, and discussions are still welcome. Contact Sarah Shannon (sshannon@prrbiz.com) for any comments
- Meeting Objectives:
    - Get input to guide revisions of first three sections of the draft plan (Introduction, Public Transportation in Washington State, and Planning Framework)
    - Get input to guide revisions of draft messaging

Draft Plan: Discussion and Input

- Rita Brogan began the discussion noting that this initial draft of the first three sections of the Washington State Public Transportation Plan is still in a very early draft phase. The team welcomes all input, including suggestions about more recent data sources and images that might be included. Of note, the project team is in the process of updating data used from the WTP 2030 with WTP 2035 data

Introduction

- Rita Brogan stated that this introduction "sets the table" for the plan. The current layout is an initial design and will be revised as the draft process moves forward

- PTAC members offered the following suggestions:
    - The text pop-outs are actually part of the copy. Since they are not repeated within the general text, it confusing to follow
    - This plan needs to be compelling and drive people to understand the changes that need to be made
    - Talk more about connections between different modes. Focus on the stories of the issues that are pointed to
        - Don't assume everyone uses linear logic and rational thought
        - Stories are important → there might be pictures or icons
    - There should be a balance between the plan as a policy document vs. an advocacy document
    - The Washington State Transportation Commission is expecting this plan to be in part, an extension of WTP that was adopted in December of 2015, and there is currently little reference to it
        - Three critical things:
            - Funding
            - Freight movement
            - Public transportation and the state's role
        - Needs to be reflected in this document that this was made a priority in the WTP
            - Key transportation corridor
            - Special needs
            - Connectivity to communities
            - Expanded local option funded authority
        - There needs to be a graphic that lays out the connection between the various modal plans and the larger WTP
    - It was noted that the introduction may be too data heavy

- Questions that could be addressed in the introduction:
    - What's the story?
    - What's the end goal?
    - Who's the audience?
    - Why are we doing this?
    - What are we trying to influence?
- Consider starting with the problem statement versus presenting a picture of the future of public transportation
- Overall, the general consensus was that there needs to be clearer picture of what public transportation looks like in the future presented in the introduction, with the problem statements being outlined in later chapters
    - Within the first few pages, include a pull-out box that discusses the state's interest in public transportation
- Special needs should be defined → look at RCW
    - Demand for special needs transportation is growing faster than population growth due a variety of reasons:
        - Baby boomers are aging
        - People are living longer
        - Poverty
        - Health trends (obesity, age)
        - Income
        - Veterans
    - Look at exploring these trends in more detail to present this picture more clearly
    - On page five, the two bullet points on traditional funding needs to be clarified and expanded on as the gas tax does not directly fund public transportation. It was noted, however, that the instability of gas tax funding for roads and highways is important, because it supports that need for a multi-modal way of thinking about how the State's transportation infrastructure is utilized.
        - Explain that the funding cycle for public transportation is a two-year cycle and this can be an even shorter cycle for non-profits
- Bikes and pedestrians should be better acknowledged as part of public transportation
- Non-profits and brokers that are providing public transportation are also not included enough
- Additional plans to reference: WTP 2035, RCW, Washington's Bike and Pedestrian Plan, Washington State Rail Plan, Human Services Transportation Plan
- Consider including the various plan links in the appendix rather than in the body of the Plan
- The Transportation Commission is starting to keep track of strategies outlined in the WTP and how they are being implemented, which will be shared with the legislature → keep this in mind as the action strategies are laid out in this plan

Public Transportation in Washington State

- Rita Brogan started the discussion of this chapter, currently called *Public Transportation in Washington State*, by explaining that this section is intended, at a high level, to provide a description of conditions and trends that provide the rationale for the goals and action strategies later in the plan document.

- PTAC members offered the following comments:
    - Definition of Public Transportation
        - Make sure the definition of public transportation developed for this plan is used consistently throughout the document
        - Funding for public transportation appears to be outlined differently in Chapter 2 than in the introduction. Look at the WTP to see how it describes public transportation funding
        - The three maps don't align with how the plan defines public transportation → remove these and recreate to match the broad definition being presented, or add an overlay of other types of public transit on it (tribal transportation, special needs, non-profits)
    - Include statistics that speak to the roles of transit within various communities
        - Annual summary of ridership → translating these data into something more meaningful for decision makers can be difficult
        - Look at data that are available and tell the story; then identify gaps and provide recommendations
            - A team at WSDOT is currently looking at performance measures and identifying what is currently available and where the gaps are. This information will be used to guide performance metrics in the plan.
    - This is an opportunity for multiple stories to be told, different stories for different places
        - Metro and Sound Transit are so big that you can't compare them to other public transit systems in the state. The next six smaller agencies are still considerably larger than other transit providers in this state.
        - As focus is brought to various corridors throughout the state, the diversity within these corridors needs to be presented as well (students, elderly, low-income, etc.)
    - Funding:
        - Gas tax vs. sales tax
            - Sales tax declined during recession → over a 16-year period, they anticipated a 10 percent drop, in reality it was a 20 percent drop in two-years
            - Gas tax revenue is not a good indicator. The paragraph on gas tax compares the 2009 projection over the next 16 years vs. reality that's unfolded over the last few years. The projection appears to be incorrect.
            - Gas tax revenue is flat, whereas sales tax revenue is unpredictable and erratic.
        - King County has a great map showing employment and ridership. Ridership went up as the economy went up.

- The rural section should not be framed in terms of the recession, as it implies that we were managing this well before 2009
    - Look at the challenges of rural transit instead as it is more helpful to have the broader framework
- Special needs transportation:
    - Create a pull-out box to discuss coordination for special needs in RTPO.
    - Rarely do plans talk about paratransit and the cost of recovery. The state saves money on most of the care that's given. It's very beneficial economically to provide these trips because of the cost of care.
- CTR:
    - What is currently being discussed in this draft of plan is only for nine counties involved in a certain program that is very Puget Sound focused. This should be clarified and might be presented as a snapshot
- Transit Technology: There were questions on whether or not on-demand transportation services, like Uber and Lyft, should be addressed within the plan. It was discussed that these could be mentioned to paint the future picture of public transportation
- Ferries:
    - Ferries are both a transit provider and highway system; this needs to be clarified in an endnote
- Vocabulary and general corrections:
    - Pg. 16, within funding: "operating subsidiaries" is a dated term. Instead, say "other revenue sources are needed." Should be "operating revenues"
    - Pg. 8, first sentence: the state's interest is referred to in different ways. The language was different. Clarify how they work together and make them the same
    - Pg. 15, bottom: Passenger trips is too in the weeds and too focused on the one PT mode. Vanpool and carpool are huge too
    - Pg. 13, table at the top: This is confusing. Provide additional explanation for this. Perhaps delete the second and/or third column. There's overlap within the three categories
    - Pg. 14, typo: "Reduct" should be "reduce"

Video

- Dave Radford from PRR presented the WSPTP video concept. The video will be a very brief stop motion format, with a similar look and feel to the example from Boston Brew that was shared with PTAC. It will be used during the Plan's public engagement process, including on the plan website.
- PTAC brainstormed the following concepts that could be included in the video:
    - Safety: Seat belts, protected bike lane, especially next to a bus, the moment of eye contact with smile and wave between drivers, hand rail on a bus, putting on bike helmet, shifting between transportation modes, paratransit, wheelchair, personal care attendant (PCA) – helping someone get into wheelchair, buses with lifts for seniors
    - Buses/modes that will show a variety and large number of riders: Federal Way Park and Ride, Everett, Cheney – more rural, WSU, Ben Franklin Transit, shuttle out of Moses Lake – health shuttle, connects to Wenatchee, Everett multi-modal center, King Street Station

multi-modal center, Sounder to Tacoma, Fauntleroy, Edmonds, Skagit Valley multi-modal center, Kitsap
    - Modes: Vanpool, bicycles, bike lockers, bikes coming off Bainbridge ferry, Amtrak, Orca card being used between modes, HOV lane and carpool, family carpool, Uber/Lyft – don't use actual brand, cab, school bus – show family at bus stop, biking and walking
    - Audiences: Employees without cars, veterans hospitals in Spokane and Walla Walla – healthcare access, Commuter – Yakima to Ellensburg, baseball game attendees, CWU
    - Consider telling a story through the life of one rider, showing them growing up and using different modes throughout their life
    - Additional ideas:
        - Phone and computer apps – these will outdated pretty soon
        - Want people to feel welcome and safe
        - UW is second largest transit into downtown
            - Celeste Gilman will provide stats regarding access to bus and downtown from UW students
- Action: Dave requested that PTAC members provide ideas and specific examples of people to focus on in the video.

The Planning Framework

- Keith Cotton led a discussion on the chapter called *The Planning Framework*
    - How can we make the most of public transportation's contribution to the system's performance?
        - We can expand it
            - HOV lanes
            - Double decker buses
            - This approach is going to lead to within PT:
                - Partnerships that will be built
                - Integrated solutions
                - WSDOT Highway Plan
    - Purpose is to provide context for advancing the state's interest, state's role
        - Does it do that?
        - Should we take this forward?

- PTAC members offered the following comments:
    - With regard to how decisions are being made about the state's public transit system and its evolution:
        - We should note that most decisions are made county by county
        - There may be some confusion on who makes what types of decisions
            - ADA has overarching rules and regulations
            - There is also not any kind of standardized system across the state
            - The decision making process is often vague and it stems from above us on the federal level, etc. Many organizations higher up have trouble collaborating. It's not just a regional or local transit agency issue

        - Part of the state role should be to set a framework for some uniformity of expectations and delivery and filling gaps.
        - Whatcom Smart Trips program provides an excellent case study for success. There was no coercion in making that happen. It's a multi-modal program aimed at getting people to use a variety of modes to get around Bellingham and Whatcom County. This was coordinated by the Whatcom Council in collaboration with partners and was about filling the gaps in a corridor of a city
    - General feedback on the chapter:
        - Pg. 22, column on the state's interest: this does not need to say who works in certain designated areas
        - Pg. 23, right column: The sentence that introduces the quote doesn't fit with the actual quote
        - First paragraph
            - Should be more reflective of enhancing quality of life
            - Maximizing what we have
        - Pg. 25: List pedestrian networks within what you include in corridors.
            - The Transportation Commission recommended this approach be taken in the annual report in 2013. Sit down and look at the corridor and see what we can do to improve it. Can be applied in lots of places
        - Additional supporting points:
            - Include a graphic of corridors that are being studied
            - Include a ferry system, rail, and trail and bike maps in these segments. Public Engagement: Discussion and Input

Draft Messaging Platform

- Rita Brogan begin this discussion by explaining that this one page platform is intended to be used as the basis for public communications, such as the speakers kit, video, folios, and additional marketing materials
- PTAC members offered the following suggestions:
    - Voice
        - There was a question around using the term "strategic." How is a voice strategic?
        - Strategic was used because the plan is addressing long-term issues that will require a strategic approach
    - Elevator speech
        - We are doing the plan to guide our investments and decisions over the next 20 years. To better connect people to work and play, maximize, make the whole system work better
        - In the second sentence, clarify that it's the entire transportation system plan, not just public transportation plan.
    - Audience:
        - This is meant for someone who does not necessarily work within the transportation industry
    - We should explain why this plan is any different than any other previous plan

        - The state is looking to expand their role as there is a lot of transformation happening at WSDOT
        - The way public transportation is being approached is shifting; it is being positioned as more integral to the overall transportation system.
    - Key Messages
        - These are the three primary pillars that the plan aims to convey
            - There needs to be clarification with whether or not these align with what the plan is presenting
        - Innovation should be incorporated into the headings
        - Suggest that adaptive, integrated, and stewardship should be the three columns
            - We have to adapt to changing technology
            - Integration is a huge focus of the plan
            - Adaptive – one size does not fit all
        - Stewardship
            - It's not just about giving out more money. It's about the need to preserve and maintain the system
            - It's a long-term investment with an ROI

Next Steps

- Revise part one of the plan
- Roadshow:
    - Action: Sarah has requested PTAC send feedback within the next week or two. She is looking for events in June, July, and August.
- Draft/finalize speakers kit
- Video production
- Policymaker briefings
- Draft of part two of the plan
    - Beginning of May
- Revise key messaging
- Next meeting is May 13 at PSRC