

Complete Streets and Main Street Highways Task Force Meeting

September 19, 2011, 9:00 – 12:00 PM
WSDOT's Large Commission Board Room
310 Maple Park Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98504

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Attendance

Task Force Members in Attendance:

Randi Abrams-Caras, Cascade Bicycle Club
Craig Benjamin, Cascade Bicycle Club
Allyson Brooks, State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation
Barbara Culp, Bicycle Alliance of Washington
Carrie Dolwick, Transportation Choices Coalition
Doug Levy, Washington Recreation and Parks Association and cities of Everett, Kent, Federal Way, Renton, Puyallup, Redmond
Lisa Quinn, Feet First
Paula Reeves, WSDOT Highways and Local Programs
Blake Trask, Bicycle Alliance of Washington
Sophie Stimson, City of Olympia

Others Invited, but Unable to Attend:

City of Shoreline
City of Spokane/Spokane Regional Transportation Council
Washington State Department of Commerce, Growth Management Office
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition
King County Public Health
Association of Washington Cities
Washington State Transportation Commission

Introduction

WSDOT's Highways and Local Programs (H&LP) representative opened the meeting, thanked the attendees for traveling to the WSDOT Headquarters Building, and asked for any comments on the draft meeting summary from the first meeting on August 15, 2011. The group approved the meeting summary with minor changes including clarification that no list of projects would be included in the report to the state legislature due December 1, 2011, clarification of the strong leaning of the group to avoid a legislative approval process for a list of prioritized grant projects in order to enable grant recipients to have access to the funding as quickly as possible in order to coordinate with their annual construction schedules. Meeting notes are posted on WSDOT's website: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/Planning/MainStreets.htm>

Next the group reviewed the requirements of the Complete Streets Bill (ESHB 1071) and the budget proviso (ESHB 1175 Section 310) as follows:

"The department shall prepare a list of main street projects, consistent with chapter ... (Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1071), Laws of 2011, for approval in the 2013-2015 fiscal biennium. In order to ensure that any proposed list of projects is consistent with legislative intent, the department shall provide a report to the joint transportation committee by December 1, 2011. The report must identify the eligible segments of main streets highways, the department's proposed project selection and ranking method, criteria to be considered, and a plan for soliciting project proposals."

Task Force Discussion on Grant Program Development

The following section is a summary of the discussion organized by topics as the Task Force addressed them. It is not a transcript, but a summary of the discussion intended to capture key points and agreements.

Eligibility for Complete Streets & Main Street Highways Grant Program

Following the introduction, the group discussed the pre-qualification criteria or the requirement that a community have in place an adopted complete streets ordinance or demonstrated equivalent in order to be eligible for the grant program. Some felt that it would dilute the intent of the legislature and it would be a missed opportunity to get more of these ordinances in place if the process allowed communities without an ordinance in place to apply for the grants. Some felt it would be important to ensure that all communities with need be able to apply for the funding, especially if they could demonstrate equivalent policies and ordinances. The Washington Recreation and Parks Association and Puget Sound Cities representative offered hybrid language ultimately supported by the group that would allow communities to apply if they had complete streets ordinances or could demonstrate an equivalent consistent with national guidance. However, those communities with only a demonstrated equivalent at the time of application would have to commit to adopting a formal ordinance before the project was considered complete and within the recommended three year term of the grant. The Director of the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation supported this approach and said it was similar to the requirements for the Historic County Courthouse Rehabilitation Grants.

Project Evaluation Criteria

The Task Force asked for clarification of the discussion of site visits to be for priority projects only vs. all applications. They were confused by the attempt to include the State Transportation Policy Goals with the legislated goals for the program listed in the draft project evaluation criteria and suggested these be two different sections. The Washington Recreation and Parks Association and Puget Sound Cities representative suggested that a 90/10 point scoring be considered for the legislated goals (90) and the other considerations listed (10). The Director of the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation suggested alternative language describing the support and connection with the Main Streets Program administered by her agency to be overlap with nationally designated Main Street communities, Main Street affiliates, or National Historic Districts that are also community main streets.

Specific Project Selection Criteria

WSDOT H&LP representative shared a form from a similar grant program as an example to start the discussion about specific selection criteria that might be applied in a Complete Streets & Main Street Highways Program.

Some of the ideas discussed included:

- Change in the amount of certain facilities provided in the scope of the project (example – miles of sidewalk or miles of bike lane)
- How many more people biking and walking in the area (some felt this would be a data collection burden for grant recipients, especially small communities)
- Land use and transportation connections (example -- new connections in and area with a mix of housing and shopping)
- Decreasing speed in a downtown area
- Improvements to air quality and public health
- Conditions (example – size of street, lack of facilities, speed, collision data)
- Jobs created by the project/program
- Consistency with local economic goals

The Task Force felt that consistency with Regional Transportation Plans may be difficult to demonstrate as many of these plans don't have this level of detail, but some may. They agreed that scoring the four legislated policy goals equally would be important and did not want give any one of them more weight than another. They reaffirmed their desire to give small and large cities equal opportunity or as equal as possible through the grant selection process. The Task Force members agreed that economic vitality was an important aspect of this grant program. They recommended the development of a short one-pager to explain the Complete Streets Bill (ESHB 1071) and the budget proviso (ESHB 1175 Section 310).

Task Force Discussion on the First Draft Report

The Task Force walked through the comments received on the first draft and made some recommendations to reorganize content. The Bicycle Alliance of Washington representative suggested that the report should be an educational tool along with meeting the requirements in the legislation. They discussed some of the comments received specific to design and project approval for projects on Main Street Highways.

Project Design and Consultation with WSDOT on Main Street Highways

The Task Force agreed that local agencies need more flexibility in interpretation and application of design standards. Several Task Force members recommended that WSDOT conduct a training program for this program similar to the outreach and education that WSDOT has done in the past for federal Transportation Enhancement funding.

The Task Force reviewed the Complete Streets Bill, ESHB 1071, Section 4 again at the end of this second meeting. The Task Force discussed the importance of the Complete Streets Bill in calling out WSDOT as the responsible party for consulting with local agencies in this case vs. local agencies having the responsibility to consult with WSDOT. They suggested that some type of guidance be developed by WSDOT with broad involvement

Closing Comments – Next Meeting

WSDOT H&LP representative thanked Task Force members for attending and encouraged them all to attend the next meeting to be held on **October 24, 2011**. Additional information will be sent out via email soon. Meeting notes and other information will be posted on WSDOT's website:
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/Planning/MainStreets.htm>