

MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee—SSB 5412 Subcommittee Meeting
Meeting Summary
July 29, 2008

Elizabeth Robbins and Brian Smith opened the meeting by welcoming members and guests. Everyone introduced himself or herself.

SSB 5412 Subcommittee Working Purpose—Elizabeth Robbins

Elizabeth began by saying the subcommittee had not met for a few months so she asked them to review the group's [working purpose](#), determine if the working purpose aligned with the subcommittee's needs, and if they wanted to discuss or make changes to it.

Anne Criss wanted to know if [ESSHB 2815—Greenhouse Gas Emissions Bill](#) would cover the intent of SSB 5412. Elizabeth Robbins and Brian Smith said that ESSHB 2815 was more specific than [SSB 5412](#) and would therefore cover SSB 5412's more general policy requirements.

The members agreed the working purpose met the needs of the subcommittee with the understanding that the group would be leaving "Develop strategies to gradually reduce the per capita vehicle miles traveled based on consideration of a range of reduction methods" to the Governor's climate change committees.

Confirming the [Subcommittee's Work Plan](#)—Elizabeth Robbins

Elizabeth asked the members which activities specified in the legislation does the subcommittee want to work on. She then used the [policy goals handout](#) to review each of the bulleted items. WSDOT staff provided brief descriptions of resources, like databases that are currently available, to help determine if the organizations are interested in accessing these resources or assisting in further development or creation of resources.

- **Maintain an inventory of the condition of structures and corridors in most urgent need of retrofit or rehabilitation**

Pat Morin described a variety of inventory and condition databases that WSDOT maintains (such as for pavements, bridges and structures, culverts, electrical systems, safety rest areas and weigh stations, and unstable slopes among others) and said WSDOT had added quite a lot of data to its inventories of our assets. Elizabeth said the MPOs/RTPOs could access WSDOT's data through the "Planning & Environment GIS workbench."

The subcommittee members said they did not need to work on this issue but they did want the data and how to access the GIS workbench shared at an MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee meeting.

- **Develop long-term financing tools for ongoing maintenance and preservation of the transportation system**
 Brian said this was probably not the place to try to accomplish this. He said the group could spend a lot of time coming up with ideas, but this was not the forum to see the ideas come to fruition. **The subcommittee agreed not to work on this issue. [We may want to invite the Governor's Office and the WSDOT Economics and Budget offices to future meetings periodically to update everyone on the progress of developing these funding tools.]**
- **Balance system safety and convenience through all phases of a project to accommodate all users of the transportation system to safely, reliably, and efficiently provide mobility to people and goods**
 Gordon said that at the local level the MPOs/RTPOs wanted to partner throughout the life of a project and that the organizations can be communications resources with their membership for WSDOT projects. He said it was not enough to consult with the MPOs/RTPOs at one or maybe two phases of a project, but needed to be an active partner during the entire process. **The subcommittee agreed not to work on this issue; Elizabeth proposed inviting WSDOT's Design Engineer and Construction Engineer to a meeting with the organizations to have a discussion with them on how project engineers can tap into MPOs/RTPOs as communicators.**
- **Develop strategies to gradually reduce the per capita vehicle miles traveled based on consideration of a range of reduction methods**
 The subcommittee requested Lon Wyrick and Jeff Wilkens give updates on the Governor's climate change committees at the MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee meetings. **The subcommittee agreed that this activity will be addressed through other groups, primarily the ESSHB 2815 committee that the Public Transportation Division is staffing.**
- **Consider efficiency tools, including high-occupancy vehicle and high-occupancy toll lanes, corridor-specific and systemwide pricing strategies, active traffic management, commute trip reduction, and other demand management tools**
 Brian said Paula Hammond had taken Washington State's transportation system forward with "[Moving Washington](#)." Brian said Moving Washington was a three-part strategy to reduce traffic congestion in our state. The strategy emphasizes (1) adding road capacity strategically, (2) operating the system we have efficiently, and (3) providing choices that help managing the demand. **Brian offered to talk about "Moving Washington" at a future meeting.**

Gordon said he was not being critical, but WSDOT was not as advanced in IT as other states. It appeared WSDOT was doing less now than when it began its IT initiative.

Brian explained that before full deployment, some IT program funds were exhausted or removed to other purposes. This meant WSDOT was not able to complete all of its planned IT programs. Brian agreed with Gordon that IT funding need to stay a priority.

Lon Wyrick wanted to know if “Moving Washington” would mean new standards for local agencies. Brian said he did not believe that was the case.

The subcommittee agreed to continue to work with WSDOT on this issue.

- **Promote integrated multimodal planning**

Lon said he thought there was a disconnection between the different sections of WSDOT (especially between highways and ferries) and a disconnection between the different plans.

Leslie Jones asked what the relationship and job duties were between WSDOT and the Transportation Commission.

Elizabeth explained that the Legislature has set the policy goals (preservation, safety, mobility, environment, and stewardship) that all state transportation agencies are required to address. Under state law, the Commission is responsible to prepare a high-level statewide transportation policy plan to address SSB 5412’s policy goals. WSDOT is directed to support the Commission in the preparation of its plan. In addition, WSDOT is required in state law to prepare a statewide multimodal transportation plan for the same policy goals. The Office of Financial Management prepares an attainment report describing how the state transportation agencies are meeting the policy goals.

Brian added that he and Elizabeth have been in discussions with Commission staff to work out the details of how each agency would meet its statutory requirement and to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the two plans. Elizabeth acknowledged that it is important to WSDOT not to overburden the organizations and other stakeholders participating in any planning process.

The subcommittee agreed to continue to work with WSDOT on this issue.

- **Consider engineers and architects to design environmentally sustainable, context-sensitive transportation systems**

Lon said he thought this item should focus more on the local land use element and less on engineers and architects. He thought the “sustainable” element should also have more of a focus. Gordon said he thought it was more of a local, case-by-case issue. **The subcommittee wanted to hear more about this issue at a future meeting, but not have it as a work item.**

- **WSDOT shall use transportation demand modeling tools to evaluate investments based on the best mode or improvement, or mix of modes and improvements, to meet current and future long-term demand within a corridor or system for the lowest cost. WSDOT will participate in the refinement, enhancement, and application of existing transportation demand modeling tools to be used to evaluate investments**

Elizabeth explained WSDOT and the MPOs/RTPOs have used modeling tools, in the past, for their plans, but now with climate change coming to the forefront those tools were going to be of even greater value.

Gordon asked if WSDOT was going to develop a statewide model and Leslie said that a model that worked for a metropolitan area would not work for a rural area. Brian asked everyone to consider what kinds of modeling tools and for what purposes we all need them.

The subcommittee agreed to continue to work with WSDOT on this issue and to see how it ties in with climate change.

FHWA/WSDOT Stewardship Agreement as a Model—Pat Morin (WSDOT) / Don Petersen (FHWA)

Pat distributed a handout on “[Improving Highway Safety \(Capital Investment\)](#)” and explained how in 1995 WSDOT worked with FHWA to be more flexible in where to invest federal dollars and focus on solving known collision problems or locations with high risks. Pat said that by using data to identify fatal and disabling collision locations, and making highway improvements at those locations, Washington State has lowered its fatal and disabling collision rates. Pat further explained that by working with FHWA, using the stewardship agreement, and making improvements where the data indicated, WSDOT was getting good returns on its investments, i.e., solving safety problems and reducing fatalities and serious injuries from collisions. Before the stewardship agreement, WSDOT like many state DOTs around the country, were not-so-strategically bringing facilities up to standards when doing so might not address a safety problem. The stewardship agreement allowed WSDOT to target its safety funding to really solving problem areas.

Don Petersen added that SAFETEA-LU required a Highway Safety Plan and without the stewardship agreement, the dollars spent would not have seen as good a return in safety improvements as what WSDOT had been able to realize with the agreement.

Elizabeth suggested the subcommittee members review the stewardship agreement for other possible uses.

[Climate Action Team and Land Use Climate Change Committee](#)—Lon Wyrick (TRPC) / Anne Criss (WSDOT) / Joyce Phillips (CTED)

Lon is on the Climate Action Team and it has met twice. The Transportation Implementation Working Group has met six times. They have prioritized their work with three top items identified. They are (1) transit/ride sharing, (2) promotion of smart growth, and (3) transportation pricing. The working group is also looking at climate-friendly land use and short-, medium-, and, long-term timeframes. They are also looking at revenue, but at a high-clip level.

Joyce Phillips said the Land Use and Climate Change Committee (LUCC) has a report due to the Legislature and Governor on December 1, 2008. Joyce explained the LUCC advisory committee is preparing recommendations for this report and has 13 voting members and 12 nonvoting members. A technical team provides background information for the committee and Jeff Wilkens represents the MPOs/RTPOs on the team; Brian Smith represents WSDOT on the technical team. The LUCC must address the following:

- Description of what locals are doing to address climate change
- Recommended amendments to the GMA and other related statutes, if any
- Description of computer models and other analytic/assessment tools
- Recommendation of state and local resources (financial and otherwise) needed to put the report's recommendations into action
- Consideration of positive and negative impacts to affordable housing, employment, transportation costs, and economic development that result from addressing climate change at the local level

Joyce said ideas that were gaining momentum for how local governments address greenhouse gas emissions reductions related too:

- Compact development
- Preservation of rural and resource lands
- How the State Environmental Policy Act may be used in a programmatic way at the plan level to help streamline development that follows
- The greater use of multimodal transportation planning
- Potential revisions to concurrency to be more multimodal in nature

She also said they only had five meetings to get everything done before the final report was due.

Gordon asked what changes to the GMA the committee might be considering. Joyce explained that the changes might have to do with requirements for local governments, requirements for RTPOs, and mechanisms for transfer or purchase of land development rights. Everything was still just a broad scope of ideas. Gordon asked what the reporting process was. Joyce said the committee's recommendations go to CTED and then CTED will develop a report for the Legislature and Governor.

Cascading the Policy Goals—Geri Beardsley (OFM)

Geri provided a [handout on the policy goals](#) and explained OFM had submitted performance measures to the Legislature last Session. She said state transportation agencies are incorporating the policy goals into their culture by using them in their strategic plans, performance measures, and budget submittals. She said that by having such documents structured around the policy goals it was easier for OFM and the Legislature to determine how each state agency was performing.

Lon asked if the policy goals would become TIP or UPWP emphasis areas. Brian Smith said they could be the construct for emphasis areas. It would make sense that the state and MPOs/RTPOs aligned. He said the next version of the policy goals would be at the performance level (not how many meetings you attend, but what you accomplish at the meetings you attend).

Elizabeth said another thing the MPOs/RTPOs produce that could align with the policy goals is their metropolitan or regional transportation plans. Some organizations have essentially done so since their plans were structured around very similar issues from the current WTP 2007-26.

Statewide Data Sources—Dave Bushnell/Chris Kemp (WSDOT)

WSDOT's [Transportation Data Office](#) has five branches (1) Collision Data, (2) Traffic Data, (3) Highway Data, (4) Travel Data, and (5) Technical Support. The Data Office also has a [Maps & Data Portal](#) that offers easy access to the agency's various requested data and information resources, including geodata distribution catalog, geodetic control monuments inventory, paper and digital maps, and the official state highway map.

Dave Bushnell said the Data Office collects, maintains, and analyzes data statewide. He said some of the data is restricted (proprietary and personal information) but the MPOs/RTPOs can access most of it, including the GIS workbench, by buying a Citrix Card.

Brian Smith described how the travel and trip information (VMT-type data) housed at the Data Office is vital for the climate change

Lon suggested a description of the Transportation Data Office and its products and how to access them be an agenda item at a future MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee meeting.

Next Steps/Possible Subcommittee Meeting Agenda Topics

- “Moving Washington” as an agenda item topic along with consider efficiency tools, including high-occupancy vehicle and high-occupancy toll lanes, corridor-specific and systemwide pricing strategies, active traffic management, commute trip reduction, and other demand management tools (also a potential agenda item for the Coordinating Committee)
- Status of statewide multimodal planning or other planning efforts
- WSDOT representative talk about environmentally sustainable, context-sensitive transportation systems
- Transportation demand modeling tools
- Session on “How to gain access” of Citrix Card, GIS workbench, other available WSDOT data

Meeting Attendees:

Geri Beardsley	Office of Financial Management
Jason Beloso	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Dave Bushnell	WSDOT Transportation Data Office
Aaron Butters	WSDOT Highways and Local Programs Division
Keith Cotton	WSDOT Public Transportation Division
Anne Criss	WSDOT Public Transportation Division
Leslie Jones	Northeast Washington RTPO
Katherine Klockenteger	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Pat Morin	WSDOT Program Development Office
Kathy Murray	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Don Petersen	Federal Highway Administration
Joyce Phillips	Community, Trade and Economic Development
Elizabeth Robbins	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Julie Rodwell	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Gordon Rogers	Whatcom Council of Governments
Brian Smith	WSDOT Transportation Planning Office
Karen Van Soest	Northeast Washington RTPO
Lon Wyrick	Thurston Regional Planning Council