

## **Commute Trip Reduction Board**

Meeting Summary

December 7, 2007

WSDOT HQ Commission Board Room (1D2)

310 Maple Park Ave SE

Olympia, WA 98504-7387

**Board Members Present:** Brian Lagerberg, Aurora Crooks, Charlie Howard, Joyce Phillips, Marilyn Young Skogland, Matt Ransom, Mike Harbour, Peter Hurley (via conference call), Linda Ballew, Kim Becklund, Robin Rettew, Page Scott, Bill Roach (via conference call), Ted Horobiowski, and Matt Hansen.

**WSDOT Staff:** Robin Hartsell, Keith Cotton, Kathy Johnston, Amber Nguyen, Casey Kanzler, Anne Criss, Evan Olsen, Ed Hillsman, Michele Villnave, Lorri Riches, and Jef Lucero.

**Audience:** David Lantry, King County Metro; Genesee Adkins, Transportation Choices Coalition; Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC); Gloria Newby, City of Redmond; Diane Wiatr, City of Tacoma.

### **Introduction and Board Business: Brian**

Brian brought the meeting to order at 10:05. After leading group introductions and a safety briefing, he acknowledged outgoing Board secretary Lorri Riches for her service before introducing her replacement, Jef Lucero. He also introduced new WSDOT staff members Casey Kanzler, who will be working on GTEC funding; Evan Olsen, whose specialty is Park & Ride policy; and Anne Criss, who's been brought in to address climate change issues.

Brian then touched on his response to an email sent to the board by Ron Kusler at Spokane County, who had expressed disappointment at the lack of funding for more of the GTEC's at the last board meeting. Keith and Brian spoke with Ron to address his concerns. They relayed to Ron that the board's activities as they pertain to the GTEC's are to implement policies already developed by the board. They also reiterated that WSDOT is committed to both technical support and measurement support for the funded and unfunded GTEC's. Brian indicated that Ron was satisfied with the response.

Brian then gave a quick update on the Climate Action Team, which held its last substantive meeting earlier this week. Rather than presenting final recommendations to the Governor's office in February, the team will spend more time to develop themes and strategies to work through climate change-related issues, which the group will present in December. The team has developed eight themes for the report, three of which relate to CTR board: minimizing SOV use, reducing the "carbon footprint" through state resources, and improving the efficiency of moving people and goods. The group also discussed early actions, namely the SEPA application amendment process, and a measurement bill drafted by Ecology on greenhouse gas emissions. Brian was to receive a more detailed summary of the meeting today, and offered to share it with any board member that might be interested.

The discussion then turned briefly toward the strategic plan. Mike asked whether the timeline for the strategic plan will in fact be six years. Robin replied that it shouldn't be longer than six years. Mike then asked what the timetable is for developing the plan. Robin answered that we need materials sooner than later, but did not set firm deadlines. Ideally, we'll have a rough draft available by the next meeting in January, with a final draft ready to go in February. Brian added that we shouldn't push something through expressly to meet a deadline.

**Action Item:** It was agreed upon that the committees would report back in January, with reviews due by February, having the plan ready for rollout by March.

Matt Hansen then suggested that the committee chairs take a moment- perhaps at lunch or after the meeting- to catch each other up.

### **October Meeting Summary: Brian**

**Motion:** A motion was entertained to approve the October meeting summary, with one minor change. The motion carried.

### **Public Comment:**

No public comment.

### **CTR Plan Reviews**

Keith got things started by offering the board a brief overview of the CTR plan review: how it got here, what the board's role is, what WSDOT is doing, and how WSDOT staff approached their reviews. How it got here: the CTR Efficiency Act was signed into law by the Governor in 2006, which established numerous changes to the law, including this new planning framework. To that end, we worked on both the rules and guidance for all local jurisdictions and RTPO's. After receiving funding from the Legislature, the local plans were submitted to the RTPO's for review and evaluation for consistency, then submitted to the board for approval. WSDOT has reviewed four regional plans, with two more (Central Puget Sound and Clark County) due in January.

Keith added that in the last two to three years, we've come a long way. Discussions at the local level are improved and ongoing; we've found newer and better ways to find funding; we've strengthened partnerships. So, we are summarizing these plans to determine how to take these plans to the next level. Keith also stated that WSDOT is recommending that all four plans presented today be approved by the board. He then gave way to Kathy Johnston, who delivered the talking points for the overview of the Thurston County plan review (*please see handout*). After walking the group through the summary, Kathy reiterated WSDOT's position for approval of this plan.

Bill shared a few of his observations, noting that park-and-rides are stressed throughout the summary but that there needs to be a specific recommendation for a park-and-pool, lease lot program, which worked very well in King County the 80's. He suggested Thurston County look into working with churches and shopping centers, until monies are set for park-and-ride expansion. This would be a very specific, practical, cost-effective solution. He also suggested setting specific staff resources aside for a one year program.

Charlie brought up the land use angle- whether any plans made land use part of the strategies. Kathy replied that all the plans spoke to the issue of connectivity without specific strategies, but overall the commitment is there on the part of the jurisdictions. Charlie stated that, to make this program successful in the long run, language specific to land use must be included.

Page asked whether the authors of the plans had yet seen these reviews. Kathy replied that TRPC staff had been given a copy of the reviews yesterday, but timeframes are somewhat limited and we're doing what we can to keep folks in the loop.

The board discussed the WSDOT staff suggestion to "approve with recommendations". Board members expressed that they did not want to add a new type of approval this late in the process. They also felt that the approval status should be simplified either to "approved" or "not approved".

The board also discussed the formality of the recommendations for plan improvements presented by WSDOT staff. Board members said that the recommendations should not be bound to the plan approval; rather, they should be communicated as recommendations from the board for improving the next round of CTR plans.

**Motion:** A motion was entertained to change the approval choices to "approved" or "not approved" and, if approved by the board, WSDOT staff recommendations for improving CTR plans would be communicated as recommendations from the CTR Board for future updates of the plans. The motion carried.

Subsequently, WSDOT revised its staff recommendations to be "approved" for all of the Spokane, Thurston, Yakima and Whatcom plans.

**Motion:** A motion was entertained to approve the Thurston County CTR plan. The motion carried.

Keith then introduced Casey Kanzler, who presented the WSDOT's Whatcom County CTR plan summary (*please see handout*). Upon doing so he reiterated the agency's position for approval of this plan.

Bill expressed that there seemed to be a lot of attention paid to barriers at sites yet no mention in this plan of strategies for accessibility if there are no transit options in the area. He suggested we highlight this early on in the process.

**Motion:** A motion was entertained to approve the Whatcom County CTR plan. The motion carried.

**Action Item:** Peter asked for a timeframe within which WSDOT staff will report back to the board regarding follow-up discussions with local jurisdictions (preferably in writing).

**LUNCH**

After lunch, Keith presented the WSDOT's Yakima Region CTR plan summary (*please see handout*). Upon doing so he reiterated the agency's position for approval of this plan.

Peter asked Keith to assess the likelihood of each region's ability to meet the goals. Keith acknowledged that the goals are aggressive, and what these plans do is identify additional resources needed to get closer to meeting the goals. Further, he said, the plans provide a good framework to move forward with employers and provide investments to make that happen. Keith added that a key question for the board and for WSDOT is, how many of the unfunded resources are going to get funding, and how will that play into the goals. One of the next steps for WSDOT staff, he added, is to compile all of the unfunded needs of these plans, categorize them in terms of cost and priority, and submit them to the board.

Peter then asked Page if the local jurisdictions have looked at individualized marketing strategies, such as a smart trips program. Page replied that there's not much push for anything that aggressive or elaborate right now- as far as marketing goes, it's more employer-specific than jurisdiction-specific. She added that one of the benefits of having a centralized CTR program is that they can better present a unified message, within which they can target specific employers with additional needs.

Bill asked whether there is demand for park-and-rides in the area. Page replied by relating the question back to vanpools: Yakima Transit is limited by local and regional policies. The vanpool program is further restricted by the relatively limited (though recently expanded) reach of Yakima Transit's service area. Page added that they are working on the park-and-ride issue, but that it falls as a lower priority.

**Motion:** A motion was entertained to approve the Yakima County CTR plan. The motion carried, with Page abstaining.

Keith presented the WSDOT's Spokane Region CTR plan summary (*please see handout*). Upon doing so he reiterated the agency's position for approval of this plan.

Aurora suggested a correction to the 'Requirements for major employers' section of the summary: each employer program will now be required to have at least two strong program elements to help them reach the goal. She also asked that this review be a bit more substantive before the final version is released.

**Motion:** A motion was entertained to approve the Spokane Regional CTR plan. The motion carried.

Kim asked that the group identify transit funding needs beyond these reviews as a larger issue in the next go-round, and that we compile more intelligence on the subject. Matt further suggested that this group seek out WSTA, perhaps initiate some dialogue with them regarding these ongoing CTR funding issues. Mike, who is on WSTA, noted that Brian has come to its meetings before, and now would be a good time for him to talk to WSTA again.

Matt suggested that we assemble funding matrices which detail funding gaps and deficiencies. Keith reaffirmed that, with the conclusion of the plan summary presentations at the next board meeting, WSDOT staff will begin the process of collecting needs, both at a statewide and jurisdictional level, with the intention of compiling them into a needs-specific report for the board.

### **Legislative Report**

Robin began the presentation by going over the revised schedule for the report timeline (*please see handout*). A draft of the report will be presented at the next board meeting, with a deadline for the final version set for the end of January. It will be published immediately after the deadline. Today's overview will focus principally on three areas of the report: CTR, Vanpooling, and GTEC funding.

Peter suggested that the school study piece be included up front in the report, or that we need to at least reference what we're doing. Bill also suggested that we include mention of GTEC and plan information. He added that it doesn't need to be long- perhaps just a paragraph- but we need to include it. Robin replied that WSDOT staff met with Legislative staff earlier this week to talk about the school study, and a write-up for the study is largely ready, but needs polishing. Kim mentioned that the board's Legislative committee is will soon reconvene to address its attendant issues.

### CTR

Robin then introduced Ed Hillsman, who led the board through the CTR portion of the Legislative report (*please see handout*). The data was broken out chiefly by commute mode and county/jurisdiction. He noted that some modes are trending up, others down; some are surprising, some are about what you'd expect. He duly noted, however, that SOV trips at CTR sites continue to decline.

Kim asked whether some context could be applied to this data, as some of the ridership numbers could be skewed by other variables, such as business size fluctuation. Ed agreed, but noted that we have to keep in mind that what we report to the Legislature should be measured from definitive baselines.

Bill inquired as to the rationale of putting the goal attainment data before the Legislature, and whether people would be able to understand it. Ed replied that this is the last measurement under the old program, and that it's important that we include it to bring about a sense of completion.

Peter suggested that more substantive data be incorporated into the report to reflect VMT numbers as a prominent measure. As he noted, it's a success story that we would be wise to tell.

### Vanpooling

Robin then introduced Kathy Johnston, who presented the vanpool portion of the report (*please see handout*). She related that one of the bigger issues we're now dealing with is a growing lack of funding for marketing and incentives. We need to redouble our marketing efforts, and we are strategizing improvements for campaigns and incentives. Kathy also named sustainability as a chief area of emphasis in the report.

Kim asked if we have data which speaks to the fact that people living in less populated areas are utilizing vanpools as a commuting option more than those in more urban areas. Ed replied that such data exists and is available, going on to explain that workers commuting the longest distances are most likely to utilize vanpooling as a desired and efficient option.

### GTEC funding

Marilyn suggested a minor change to a header on the funding selection table in the report, indicating that the reductions in commuting population are comprised of new participants in TDM strategies as part of the GTEC's program activities.

Casey Kanzler then presented the GTEC funding update to the group. The seven selected GTEC jurisdictions are in the midst of their formal designation period. WSDOT is also reaching out to those jurisdictions not selected for funding so as to better prepare them for the next cycle, should the Legislature continue its support. There is a draft GTEC contract in our legal department which WSDOT staff are eager to get back so that they can move forward with their recommendations.

Casey has also asked the jurisdictions to turn their plan's primary strategic elements into a project scope with specific deliverables, a timeline, and a budget, all to be performed within the biennium. These scopes will then be incorporated into the GTEC contracts. WSDOT staff will also be meeting with the jurisdictions to help determine how best to develop these project scopes. WSDOT has also contracted with a consulting firm to develop survey methodology and design to better formulate the baseline and progress assessment surveys. WSDOT staff will also be meeting with the jurisdictions to finalize the core questions they'll ask of each GTEC, as well as questions that can be customized for each particular GTEC.

Matt Ransom asked what the duration of the survey period might be. Casey indicated that it would be done by March or April. Matt Ransom then asked what our best distribution mechanism for the Legislative report might be. Brian replied that, since this isn't a legislatively mandated report, we have some flexibility with it. Still, Kim noted, we should have some sort of schedule in place, so having it done before we meet again in January would be optimal.

### **TRPP Report**

Robin began by noting that this report is still in draft mode. He is still welcoming any suggestions, ideas, and recommendations, and encouraged the group to send him anything they might have. At this stage the goal is to get this into the hands of the board members as quickly as possible, so that everyone has ample time to digest the information. As time progresses with this program, there will be more things we can do with this data. In the future, we'd like to take a look at what types of "staying power" these programs create within the jurisdictions or the work sites that these projects are funded for. We have data compiled across the last two biennia, which we'd like to incorporate into this report.

Peter suggested that the executive summary be included, if it's not already here. Bill then suggested that it'd also be useful if we could look at the whole, at what tends to be successful, or even what isn't. He further suggested that we might need more types of data points as we move closer to funding for the next biennium.

## **Closing**

Kim's three "takeaways":

1. We'd talked earlier about staff relationships between region and state- on that note, I'd really like to reconsider the idea of this group meeting around the state again. I think it would really help for broader, multi-jurisdictional perspective, elevate the profile, and hit the local level angle.
2. A new roster would be outstanding.
3. The funding piece as we're staging for 2009 and beyond. Let's further the talk of the idea of the transportation benefit districts created statewide a few years ago. They've become very useful tools, and I'd like to hear from WSDOT an assessment as it relates to the transit funding piece.

Ted noted that, in thinking about regional plan summaries, let's think the same way on the communication plan. We've opened up some dialogue with the regional jurisdictions, so let's really be sure we've got a direct link between them and the board. The regions should hear from us directly and specifically, not have it filtered through various staff channels.

Keith replied that WSDOT's intention is to follow the GTEC model as far as communication goes. The first step has been to draft a letter, perhaps sent directly to the RTPO to pass the messages on, with follow-up meetings at the regional level. Aurora noted that, if we truly want the process to be more collaborative, the letter wouldn't need to come from the RTPO; rather, that it came directly from the board. Matt Hansen agreed, but noted that this legislative report can be presented to others, such as the Transportation Policy Board.

Kim asked that we collect electronic versions of the board's individual signatures.

Ted noted that, in the earlier days of the board, we had employer forums in every jurisdiction- hearing from them directly was always very beneficial. He added that the board can't afford to cut off from the people who will be affected by our decisions.

Brian added that, as we continue to work on the strategic plan, we should all keep these types of questions in mind: how are we engaging the public, the employer? These are good questions to ask.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00.