

## **Commute Trip Reduction Board**

Meeting Summary

January 23, 2009

Intercity Transit  
HQ Commission Board Room (1D2)  
310 Maple Park Ave SE  
Olympia, WA 98501

**Board Members Present:** Brian Lagerberg, Ted Horobiowski, Aurora Crooks (via conference call), Kim Becklund, Matt Hansen, Charlie Howard, Liz Warman, Joyce Phillips, Bill Roach, Marilyn Young Skogland, Mike Harbour, Peter Hurley, and Lynn Frosch.

**Board Members Not Present:** Page Scott, Matt Ransom, and Robin Rettew.

**WSDOT Staff:** Keith Cotton, Kathy Johnston, Michele Villnave, Robin Hartsell, and Jef Lucero.

**Audience:** Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Joan Cullen, Office of General Administration; Monica Whitman, City of Kent; Andrew Austin, Transportation Choices Coalition; Diane Wiatr, City of Tacoma; Kris Fransen, Intercity Transit; Christopher Aiken, Intercity Transit; John Keefe, City of Olympia; Megan Wolfe, King County Metro.

### **Introductions and board business**

Brian began by noting WSDOT has hired a new data manager, Kathy Leotta. She will begin working for WSDOT in February. Brian then noted that WSDOT has selected a contractor for RideshareOnline, although the particulars of the contract are still being completed. Brian mentioned a House bill introduced last week that would eliminate several boards and commissions, including the CTR Board. He added that the board is relatively inexpensive, and its elimination would not amount to much of a cost-saving measure. Matt asked Brian to talk to the board members' employers to advocate on behalf of the board and its benefits.

Kathy went over the action items from the previous meeting. The group then discussed the logistics for next month's videoconference. Bill asked whether we should hold the videoconference in February, given that the legislature will be in session. Charlie noted that Poulsbo City Councilman Ed Stern has been heavily promoting this meeting. Charlie added that he moderated a session at the TRB conference last week in DC. He noted that the number of references to the State of Washington and its CTR programs was significant, and that this state is a model for CTR implementation. He added that the session was recorded and should be available for viewing on the TRB website.

### **December meeting summary**

**Motion:** A motion was entertained to approve the December meeting summary. The motion carried.

### **Public comment**

Diane Wiatr announced that the annual Pierce County Summit Awards banquet will be held next week in Tacoma, at which Brian will be a speaker.

## **Legislative Update**

Keith began by going over the comparison between the board's funding request and the Governor's budget proposal. One dramatic difference is that the TRPP program will not be funded in the Governor's proposal- funding instead will be redirected to other programs. Kim asked about marketing for the tax credit, which will not be funded in the Governor's proposal. Keith replied that if some of the other proposed increases go through, those would provide for state technical support, which could include developing marketing tools for the tax credit.

Marilyn asked if the deferred credits are eliminated in the Governor's proposal. Keith replied that he will get confirmation from DOR on the deferrals and promotions. Kim mentioned that Senator Fred Jarrett really likes TRPP and wants to see it kept in the program. Kim would like for a "middle ground" column to be added to the spreadsheet.

Bill suggested the board seek some flexibility within the language of these proposals for additional incentives for vanpools. Brian asked Kim if it was feasible to look at flexibility language for vanpools and other programs. Kim replied that she didn't think legislators would go for it, but that we could test it out. Mike added that he didn't think this is the right time to ask for something like that, noting that several transit systems have frozen their vanpool programs due to lack of funds. Bill clarified that he's only asking for flexibility, not for an actual diversion of funds.

Peter commented that pilot projects were not funded in the Governor's budget, adding that he would like to explore the possibility of the STARS program being integrated as a technical support component of the GTEC program. Kim added that while reviewing HB 1490, she thought about the pilots and whether they could be incorporated into that legislation.

Ted asked if the board was able to take advantage of discounts on vans offered through the stimulus program. Mike replied that most of the state's vans are being purchased through a state contract. Brian asked Ted to forward any information he has regarding those discounts to the board and WSDOT staff.

Keith mentioned that the House will have a CTR briefing on February 3. Kim suggested the Legislative committee have a conference call next week to determine messaging for that briefing. Bill asked that the subcommittee discuss this today rather than next week.

A motion was entertained and seconded to support the Governor's budget proposal. A discussion ensued as to whether such a motion was necessary. Charlie suggested that it might be wiser to comment on the respective legislative budgets instead of the Governor's, since it's not likely the Governor's budget is going to get a hearing, so no official response may be needed. The motion was withdrawn. Kim added she'll put together some bullets today that the committee can review, discuss, and move forward.

Mike asked about the budget proviso for state funding for replacement vans. Keith replied that the proviso directs WSDOT to deliver a report by June 30 determining whether vanpool and regional mobility grant funding should be used toward the replacement of vanpool capital. Brian added that Secretary Hammond has expressed a desire for a better, more consistent funding and cost recovery model for vanpool.

Charlie said that the PSRC Executive Board announced its legislative recommendations yesterday. Karen Parkhurst mentioned that the board's recommendations are also included in TRPC's legislative agenda. Mike added that they're on WSTA's agenda as well, noting that WSTA has hired a lobbyist to work on legislative issues.

### **2009 Work Plan**

Kathy began by outlining the desired outcomes and the work plan elements for this year. Kim asked if a component can be added to look at qualifying Bellingham and Whatcom County for GTEC consideration. Matt Hansen requested an element be added to determine how the board treats plug-in vehicles. Kathy replied that electric vehicles and scooters are on the policy list. Peter asked whether VMT reductions within the CTR program can be incorporated into the plan.

Liz asked about other pilot projects involving plug-in vehicles. Peter replied that he would send some information to the board on ODOT's pilot programs for incentives for charging stations. Ted suggested bio-fuels be considered in the plan. Aurora noted that she is working with the Spokane Mayor's office and others to explore biodiesel on a county-wide level.

Keith added that policy change requires a two-fold approach, for both pre- and post-2011. He noted that the adopted goals now are focused on staying aligned through 2011, while the focus shifts more toward the Governor's VMT goals down the road. Brian asked about next steps. Kathy replied that she will put a chart together that links task assignments.

### **State Agency Leadership**

Joan Cullen began by offering an overview of the state agency CTR programs, noting the diversity of missions, cultures, and funding sources. She commented that the CTR program is housed at GA because that's how the law is written, and that state agencies have long been accustomed to working with GA, a central services agency. She added that her office resides with Real Estate Services (RES), which provides for good communication on worksite placement. Joan mentioned that she also works with RES on parking lease issues. She noted that GA and local governments in Thurston County have developed plans for preferred leasing areas, which have helped consolidate state services in the urban areas.

Bill asked about transit accessibility to the preferred leasing areas. Joan replied that the sites are required to have transit service. Peter asked if the state actively seeks to operate in LEED buildings. Joan replied that the state leases more offices than it owns, but that efforts are made to encourage developers to have LEED standards. Bill asked about the possibility of using parking fees to fund CTR. Joan replied that is funded through the facilities and services fund and is allocated to GA by the Legislature. CTR is not funded through the collection of parking fees on the capitol campus. She noted that the Interagency CTR Board encourages the use voluntary parking charges as a way to fund agency CTR subsidy programs.

Joan then discussed some of the impacts of the CTR Efficiency Act, such as the GMAP process and the creation of co-located worksites. She then talked about the CTR Interagency Board and its role in state agency leadership. Bill talked about parking as a financing tool for the state agency CTR programs. A discussion followed on the impacts parking fees could have on the state agencies' CTR budgets.

Peter suggested that CTR staff identify top recommendations with other state agency staff, on which the board could then weigh in. He asked if Joan could follow up in February or March. Joan replied that the interagency board could do that. She added that she's heard there are two ways the state can show leadership: one is by supporting the programs with subsidies, and the other is to have strong programs without them.

Joan then touched on the recent decision by DSHS to discontinue its CTR incentive program. Brian asked whether DSHS had actively engaged the local jurisdictions statewide before making the decision. Kathy replied that the model ordinance indicates that the process calls for agencies to have those discussions at the local level beforehand. Karen Parkhurst added that this situation presents a good opportunity to start a statewide dialogue to educate not just DSHS but other agencies and employers on what other CTR components might work in an era of tightening budgets.

Joan then discussed the role of the GMAP process. She added that this is one way each agency's highest management gets to hear, at least once a year, how the agency's CTR program is doing. Joan talked about the agencies' survey process and GMAP reporting. Upon completing that process, the information is passed on to Joan, who will roll it into both the GA report to the Governor's office and the CTR Board's report to the Legislature at the end of the year.

Joan briefly touched on some of the other GA programs, including the STAR Pass, Emergency Ride Home, parking guidelines, expanded telework and compressed work scheduling, and the new commuter calendar. She also mentioned the Governor's compressed work week initiative, noting that the results of the study come out in March.

### **RTPO Progress Report**

Kathy began by noting that this is the first RTPO report as required by the RCW for the Efficiency Act. This represents an opportunity for each RTPO to get guidance, feedback, and to ask for assistance. Kathy noted that timelines and limited resources have made it difficult for WSDOT staff to provide technical assistance. As well, some confusion persists among some of them with regards to program authority. Some of the common challenges WSDOT continues to hear center around funding and staff.

Joyce mentioned that she's heard through the planning associations about consistency between the comprehensive plans and the regional transportation plans. She added that CTED looked at a draft bill that came out of the Land Use and Climate Change Action Committee, similar in context and language to HB 1490. Keith mentioned that the bill analysis for HB 1490 came in just this morning, but staff have not yet reviewed it. Joyce added that she has talked about it with staff from the planning office.

Peter asked if, based on the reports, there is any action the board can or should take to address any issues that are raised. Keith replied that there's a list of recommendations at the end of the progress report document, including ideas to move the programs forward.

Kathy then talked about the implementation progress feedback each RTPO provided. She added that the board has made several recommendations on each of the plans, to which some of the RTPOs responded. Most of the recommendations will be deferred until the planning updates in 2011. Kathy added that lack of funding is biggest implementation concern.

Kathy then went over the consultation and financial portions of the progress reports. Some of them asked how demand management is being incorporated into the regional funding process, and if funding was sufficient to reach the regional goals. Kathy noted that funding gaps remain, with few solutions for filling them, and that limited funding and competing priorities continue to create implementation challenges.

On the GTEC portion, although not all the RTPOs have a GTEC program, those that do report sufficient funding is needed to test the GTEC concept, and that networking among the GTEC programs would be beneficial. Kathy noted that perhaps the most valuable component of the report is the consistent, almost universal feedback asking for more funding for implementation strategies, additional transit service, and technical assistance.

Kathy noted that one of the outcomes from this progress report process is that some follow-up discussions are likely necessary to address specific needs and concerns for the reporting RTPOs. Aurora suggested a meeting be set up with the Spokane Regional Planning Council to address issues specific to its progress report. Kathy added that staff have already identified improvements to the report template.

Brian noted that one of the possible staff outcomes from this process may be to better align organizational issues as they relate to work processes between the Public Transportation and Planning offices. Charlie commented that what may be missing from these reports is the regional part of the CTR program, and that some of the focus should be placed on the regional role. Kathy agreed, and said we need to have those conversations, perhaps at the RTPO meetings. Kim suggested that the board set aside some time this year to discuss the funding side of this process.

Kathy concluded by going over the next steps, the first of which is to follow up with the RTPOs to set up some ongoing forums to discuss and address issues. She added that the next report is due in June. Brian added that a number of these things will be in the work plan.

### **Commute Calendar Demo**

Robin Hartsell began with a brief history of the new Washington Commuter calendar, an online resource portal and commute log built specifically for commuter programs. It was built with a flexible architecture which allows for changes that won't affect existing data or the system itself. Designed to allow connectivity with other existing systems, the calendar could eventually become a one-stop CTR clearinghouse that can perform surveys, promotions, data gathering, and data sharing.

Robin then offered a glimpse into the system's capabilities through various examples illuminating the breadth of the calendar's limber, commute-specific capacities. He noted the relative facility with which one can negotiate the user-friendly interfaces. He added that this will be available statewide to any employer, jurisdiction, or state agency that needs it.

Some questions were raised about those employers and jurisdictions that already have commute calendars in place. Marilyn replied that the biggest barrier to incentives or subsidies has been the lack of a measurement mechanism. She added that having the state create this umbrella, ready-made program should help and the hope is that this calendar will address some of the more specific needs of those employers that haven't

had access to this type of mechanism before. Robin added that jurisdictions using existing calendars—such as Redmond and Whatcom County—will be able to share information without losing the investments they've already made in their tracking programs. He noted that WSDOT will function as a repository for and steward of all of this data. Robin cautioned, however, that there may be some proprietary issues.

Peter asked whether the system will allow a participant or a community to set its own commuter goals. Robin replied that widgets are being built in that would allow for that, but the responsibility for setting those types of goals would fall to an ETC or a calendar administrator.

Joan Cullen commented that the exciting thing for state agencies is that they can go out and get a statewide, bird's eye view of their agency's data. Brian added that the different ways of capturing snapshots of data will provide WSDOT, other agencies, local and regional jurisdictions, employers, and the board a much better perspective of how CTR is performing statewide.

### **AWV (Alaskan Way Viaduct) Moving Forward**

Matt Hansen introduced Megan Wolfe, who began with a brief summary of the construction history and the TDM plans, including how they relate to the GTEC and CTR. There have already been traffic impacts, though mostly minor in nature. The substantial impacts begin in the spring of 2010 with the south end of the viaduct, around which most of the plan is concentrated. The state is paying for additional transit and other enhancements. KC Metro's role is to operate new buses and service with the onset of the project. Metro will work on both the south end TDM portion as well as the downtown TDM portion.

Downtown Seattle's TDM goal is to reduce 2,500 trips. Mitigation pieces for this portion of the project include mitigating on-street parking loss; incentives, promotions, telework and flex scheduling options for employers; and Plan Your Commute sessions, targeted around major impact times. The south end's TDM goal is reducing 1,300 trips. Mitigation pieces for this portion of the project include residential outreach, carpooling, employer outreach, promotions.

Bill said that from a marketing or outreach standpoint, the project should be mindful of the need to look at this from the viewpoint of the consumer/commuter. Peter asked, based on the historical context of working on other King County projects, what has changed in the TDM approach to projects on this scale. Megan replied that having the target helps scale programs, and knowing the neighborhoods and populations is very beneficial. Matt Hansen added that just being able to collaborate is important. Brian added that allocating dollars carefully within the investment will only serve as a better measurement standard as projects such as this move forward.

### **Action item review**

- Jef will send out action item list
- Jef will send out videoconference details for February board meeting
- Keith will add another column to the comparison chart of the board's request and Governor's budget showing projected performance of the governor's budget and send it out to the legislative committee
- Kim will email TOD/Bellevue materials to the board

- Ted will provide vanpool info on federal stimulus package
- Peter will send out pilot programs info on plug-in models, etc.
- Joan and Kathy will follow up on Peter's suggestion that to talk to the CTR interagency board for the leadership piece
- Keith will talk to DOR about tax credit deferrals and how this affects funding for new applicants
- Brian will advocate to fellow board members' employers on the importance of the board's work and accomplishments

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.