

Commute Trip Reduction Board

Meeting Summary

June 26, 2009

City of Redmond
City Hall Council Chambers, first floor
15670 NE 85th Street
Redmond, WA 98073

Board Members Present: Brian Lagerberg, Matt Ransom, Kim Becklund, Liz Warman, Lynn Frosch, Marilyn Young Skogland, Peter Hurley, Joyce Phillips, Ted Horobiowski, Mike Harbour, and Charlie Howard.

Board Members Not Present: Aurora Crooks, Matt Hansen, Bill Roach, Page Scott, and Robin Rettew.

WSDOT Staff: Keith Cotton, Kathy Johnston, and Jef Lucero.

Audience: Mayor John Marchione, City of Redmond; Gloria Newby, City of Redmond; Erika Vandenbrande, City of Redmond; Jill Smith, City of Redmond; Mark Melnyk, Community Transit; Monica Whitman, City of Kent; Monica Babine, WSU; and Liz Kaster, City of Tacoma.

Introductions and board business

Brian began by introducing Gloria Newby, who introduced some of the City's staff who work on GTEC-related business. Brian then noted that all travel reimbursements must be submitted as soon as possible. He added that Kim and Matt Hansen's board appointment renewals from the Governor's office are on hold until further notice. They may continue serving on the board in the interim.

Brian then went over a few changes within the Public Transportation Division. The agency will announce its selection for the State Agency CTR Coordinator position, which was reallocated to WSDOT last legislative session. WSDOT will also publicly announce on July 1 two positions it intends to fill in the Public Transportation Division.

Peter asked if WSDOT plans to add construction traffic mitigation staff to its major construction projects. Brian replied that two staff in the division are funded out of two such projects, the Alaskan Way Viaduct and I-405. Peter suggested that after the next project report comes out for I-405, it would be useful if it could be presented to the board. Brian replied that the report has been updated and will go to Katy Taylor for review next week.

Public comment

None.

May meeting summary

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

Redmond GTEC report

Erika Vandenbrande began by talking about some of the results and impacts of the City's GTEC effort. She then introduced Mayor John Marchione, who offered an overview of the City's GTEC, which is based in the Overlake neighborhood. He noted that Redmond is in a unique position in that there are 52,000 residents, yet 85,000 jobs. The Mayor added that Redmond has two urban centers. One of those is Overlake, which has 44,000 jobs, making it the second-largest employment center in the state. In response to Overlake's rapid growth, the City Council has developed a growth management program that it will adopt at its next meeting. Redmond continues to develop and promote its bike corridors, while also focusing key marketing messages for transit. There are plans for a Sound Transit light rail station near the existing transit center.

The Mayor noted that Microsoft has established itself as an example among CTR employers, consistently reaching 35-40 percent alternative commute participation. Overall, the City's goal is to reach a 60 percent SOV rate. The Mayor mentioned R-TRIP, Redmond's incentive program developed in conjunction with GTEC, and Transit Now, the King County initiative that provides communities with more transit service and options. Partnerships with neighboring communities, small employers, and large employers such as Microsoft continue to foster the growth of the City's GTEC program.

Ted asked whether cooperation and coordination efforts between the local municipalities and jurisdictions are working. The Mayor replied that the efforts are working in large part due to the recognition that interconnection on the Eastside is more important than ever. He added that the number of residents that stay on the Eastside for work is much higher, which has forced the jurisdictions to expand their view of cooperation. Peter asked about the City's GTEC budgeting plan now that the program is no longer specifically funded. The Mayor replied that Redmond remains focused on a long-term vision. Erika added that partnerships between such partners as the City, the Chamber, and employers will move the GTEC concept forward.

Mike asked about Redmond's partnerships with transit, specifically what works and what could work better. The Mayor replied that City staff work diligently with both transit systems that service the city, adding that they are purposely more aggressive with KC Metro about what its routes should be. The Mayor noted that Redmond has developed a transportation master plan. One of the goals of that plan is better connectivity between the Eastside's urban centers, which will necessitate strong partnerships between the municipalities and the transit agencies.

Joyce asked if the City made any modifications to its zoning code before applying for the GTEC. The Mayor replied that Redmond determined that any GTEC or Sound Transit development had to be balanced within the existing infrastructure. Brian asked whether the City is developing plans for a residential component in its CTR approach. The Mayor replied that Redmond's focus remains on employers but should expand to the residential piece, adding that the City's commitment to bike paths and walkability will help incorporate those concepts.

Erika added that Redmond will be launching a residential initiative this summer. Brian replied that down the road the Board would like to hear about this program, as this represents a good learning opportunity not only for the City but for the board as well. Kim expressed that she would like for the City and some of its employers to participate in the next legislative process. The Mayor replied that he would be happy to help.

Sustainable Transportation and Access Rating System (STARS)

Peter began by noting that the STARS group has been meeting to work on transportation standards inspired by the success the LEED program has experienced in the building construction industry. This rating system is designed to allow public and private employers the opportunity to compare their transportation programs, plans, and projects using a national best practices standard. Employers earn credits toward different levels of performance, such as carbon footprint and greenhouse gas reduction, incentives, and transit-friendliness. The idea is that the program be voluntary, have the potential to go national, and that it set a standard for a variety of transportation plans and projects, as well as employer programs.

Peter talked about the three different rating systems the group is now developing for plans, projects, and employers. He added that the idea here is to fundamentally rethink the purpose of transportation, to transform the transportation industry practice in order to improve access for all people, maximize benefit-cost, and cut transportation climate pollution. Peter noted that the idea is to have this be an online program.

Peter welcomed the board to offer suggestions and insights for the program, as it is still very much in the stages of early development. Kim replied that involving partners and other technical support groups should remain a top priority with the development group. She added that this program should also be put in front of Senator Jarrett, as he might be able to cycle this through academic channels. Liz suggested bringing USDOT into the discussion. Peter noted that he's had conversations with a colleague at AASHTO.

Ted asked about funding sources for LEED and whether a similar process could be used here. Peter replied that LEED funding came from both public and private sources as it was being developed, and that the certification process is now a large funding source. He added that the discussion is ongoing as how best to fund STARS.

Brian talked about the opportunity to align the GTEC rating system with STARS, noting that the Board might consider funding GTECs that achieve goals established within the framework of the STARS system. Charlie said that if there were a certified rating system, that'd be helpful. Matt Ransom talked about the need to integrate the incentive piece of the LEED process with STARS. Liz suggested the STARS group look into any possible implications that a national Cap and Trade program might have in this process. Joyce added that the small employer piece in STARS lends itself nicely to GTEC.

Peter closed by requesting that the Board consider a workshop to look at some of the credits and provide specific feedback. Brian asked that Peter provide updates to the Board, either as part of a regular routine or as they make sense.

Legislative Outcomes Meeting Update

Kim began by thanking those who participated in the conference call earlier this week, adding that the Board is rethinking the messaging, partnering, and packaging of its programs. On the conference call on Tuesday, Matt Hansen talked about moving the focus away from the individual programs and putting it more on where the Board fits among WSDOT's TDM strategies and vision. Kim also talked about Mike's suggestion of the need for stronger partnerships with transit agencies and other constituents as the Board retools its messaging for the next session.

Charlie asked about the GTEC renaming or rebranding effort, adding that the focus be more on the geographic areas than the employers. Mike suggested using ‘land use’ language in the name. Kim replied that the Board might want to consider a visual demonstration of how these things fit together in the next Legislative report, adding that climate change should also be a consideration in the rebranding effort. Liz replied that the focus might be better kept on land use and growth centers, at least in name alone. Brian suggested Lloyd Brown, WSDOT’s Communications Director, be invited to a future board meeting.

Kathy then went over the 2009 Legislative Report. She noted that there are specific policies which require discussions and decisions, such as the major employer definition, the RTPO role, and the Board’s role in Moving Washington. Kathy added that the timeline for this is very aggressive, as the report is due in December. She commented that she will continue to develop the organization of the report—highlighting partnerships with employers and the economic development connection—and will share an outline at the next Board meeting.

Ted commented that the economic development piece could be a very significant piece as this is moved forward. Peter suggested the report include a “headline” item. Kim suggested compiling the headlines and success stories for the communications plan. Marilyn suggested highlighting the local investment piece. Kathy replied that these are all things which will be incorporated into the outline.

Mike suggested that the audience be considered in more detail, adding that this needs a well-positioned, influential legislative champion. Brian cited 6088 as an example from this year’s session, which was moved through the legislative process by just one legislator. He added that the Board should consider engaging the Association of Washington Business (AWB) in this process. Liz said that she would look into arranging some meetings between board members and AWB staff. Kim and Liz will also meet with Senator Haugen. Kim also suggested that Mike be part of the next legislative meeting.

Mike said it would be useful for the Board to focus not just on messaging but on the ask. Brian replied that the focus should be more on sharing concerns at this point. Peter added that questions about the ask could still come up in these meetings and that we should be prepared to answer those questions. Peter talked about the perceived differences between CTR and the Regional Mobility Grants in the Legislature, and whether it is useful to tie the two together.

Action item review

- Peter will send the STARS presentation slides to Jef for distribution to the Board
- Kathy will add STARS updates to the Board work plan
- Jef will forward the PI story about Green Bikes to the Board
- Kathy will prepare a legislative report outline for the next meeting
- Jef will send out details about the next meeting which will be a videoconference
- Kathy will work out the travel details for Spokane and Vancouver in September and October
- Keith will work with Kim on visual options

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.