

Commute Trip Reduction Board

Meeting Summary
September 26, 2008

WSDOT
HQ Commission Board Room (1D2)
310 Maple Park Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98504-7387

Board Members Present: Brian Lagerberg, Charlie Howard, Aurora Crooks, Matt Ransom, Kim Becklund, Matt Hansen, Joyce Phillips, Marilyn Young Skogland, Mike Harbour, Peter Hurley, and Robin Rettew.

Board Members Not Present: Liz Warman, Ted Horobiowski, Bill Roach, Page Scott, and Lynn Frosch.

WSDOT Staff: Katy Taylor, Kathy Johnston, Keith Cotton, Casey Kanzler, Hiep Tran, Michele Villnave, Tonia Buell, and Jef Lucero.

Audience: Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Debbie Germer, Pierce County (on phone); Joan Cullen, GA; Gloria Newby, City of Redmond; Monica Babine, WSU; Christina Sanders, DGSS/ WSU; David Lantry, King County; Bill LaBorde, Transportation Choices Coalition; and Diane Wiatr, City of Tacoma.

Introductions and Board Business

Brian shared the department's new Moving Washington folio, then spoke briefly about the newest board member, Lynn Frosch of Microsoft. Lynn could not be here today but will be at the October meeting.

Brian recapped a meeting yesterday between OFM, GA, and WSDOT to discuss, among other things, the role of the Governor's office in CTR implementation strategies. Brian then mentioned the four-day work week pilot project as mandated by the Governor's office. Joyce added that CTED is a participant in the pilot. Mike noted that a number of transit riders have already contacted IT to inquire about adding service to accommodate them as they transition to their new work schedules.

Brian mentioned that he's been approached by Ed Stern from Poulsbo about the board meeting via videoconference. Aurora asked that we aim to do one during the wintertime so as to avoid travel in inclement weather.

Tonia Buell from the WSDOT Communications office then offered a cursory overview of the agency's Reinvent Your Commute media campaign, focusing on the website's interactive modules. Peter asked if there's a mechanism in place for tracking the campaign's overall effectiveness. Tonia replied that the campaign points everyone to the website, through which WSDOT can compile statistics and gauge its effect and reach.

August meeting summary

Motion: A motion was entertained to approve the August meeting summary, with two minor changes. The motion carried.

Public comment

Monica Babine from WSU spoke about telework and the spike in interest her office has noticed on the subject. WSU has contracted her to determine statewide need for telework, find funding sources, and to develop an outreach strategy, all within the next year. Brian noted that Monica is involved with the Kitsap County telework demonstration. He then asked if there's a work plan for the WSU assistance in place yet, and whether it's expected the CTR Board will have a role in this process. Monica replied they've only just started into the process. She's already had meetings with Joan Cullen from GA to discuss the needs from the state government standpoint.

Charlie asked about WSU's role. Monica replied that they've been involved in many ways, including policy development, technical assistance, training, and consulting. Brian mentioned that it would be great if WSU took the lead on this and became the definitive point of statewide contact on any issues related to telework. Matt mentioned that he's been involved in this in King County. Monica replied that she'd like to follow up with Matt to discuss travel markets and the City of Seattle's efforts and how they might tie in at the county level.

Marilyn mentioned she's already trying to determine how best to implement some of this at the small-employer level. Monica replied that she'd like to follow up with her after the meeting. Kim mentioned that the Association of Washington Cities should be involved and that she'd help with that. Brian asked that Monica report back at a future board meeting with her progress to date.

Legislative outreach

Kim began by passing around the "match list," which will pair the board's committee members with members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees for outreach meetings. The second item she discussed was the development of some key messages as the volunteers begin to sit down with legislators. Charlie, Mike, Matt Ransom, and Matt Hansen all volunteered to help with messaging.

Mike mentioned that WSTA has already adopted the CTR legislative agenda as part of its own legislative agenda, and there are a lot of transit representatives that also have strong relationships with the Committee membership. Charlie suggested that someone from the board come to the next PSRC meeting and talk during public comment our legislative agenda. Kim replied that she'd be happy to do it, and asked Matt Hansen to accompany her. Mike added that WSTA will hold a meeting either November 5 or 6, and that it would be good if either Brian or Kim could present something at the meeting.

Draft CTR funding policy

Brian began by pointing out that this has been a long process but that we've made significant progress at the last couple meetings. Kathy noted that several changes have been made to the original 2002 version of the policy. She added that much of the original remains, but it is now much more closely tied to both the goals of the CTR Efficiency Act and the distribution of funds. Aurora mentioned that this is broken out into three main pieces: administration, maintenance, and enhancement.

Robin asked whether there is any language in the policy that speaks to transparency and accountability. Brian replied that it would be a good idea to put a statement in here from the board that we believe that those things are paramount in the use of state funds. Marilyn suggested (and the group agreed) that this language be added as a modifier to the

end of principle two. Brian noted that this represents a small but important part of the overall funding support for CTR.

Peter offered two suggestions: to the last sentence of the opening paragraph, include “(WSDOT) should allocate CTR **BASE** funding...”; and to principle one, include “reduce commute trips **AND VMT**...”. He then asked about the use of the phrase, “local flexibility” in principle two. Aurora replied that it gives the jurisdictions the opportunity to work in the areas that they think will be most effective.

Peter then also suggested a change to principle two to include “in how funds are spent **TO ACHIEVE VMT GOALS**”. Brian suggested a change to principle four to include “trips to be reduced **TO MEET LOCAL GOALS**”. David Lantry suggested that the board consider whether the policy should specifically clarify what constitutes a jurisdiction.

Debbie Germer from Pierce County had questions about the baseline goals and performance measures. Keith replied that WSDOT would follow up with her to help with any concerns she has.

Matt Ransom talked about principle four as the crux of the method we’ll pursue to create a formula, and would like to see it rewritten to better capture the administrative, maintenance, and enhancement pieces. He added that the enhancement component represents the biggest policy shift as we work toward the linkages between this policy and both the (state and local) goals and the allocation of funds. He also has worked up a draft on his own and will email it to the group.

Matt Hansen stressed the significance of this particular principle, noting that this is where the board can configure its concepts to better achieve the state and local goals. Brian added that the administrative, maintenance, and enhancement tasks were formulated after the funding committee looked at dollars per trip, and determined it wouldn’t take a lot of money. Kathy noted that these could also serve as good talking points for the Legislature.

Aurora then went over the three additional policy recommendations. She spoke about expanding to jurisdictions not currently identified in the Efficiency Act, as well as those which meet the criteria for being grandfathered in. Robin suggested that the board add a statement speaking to purpose and need, likely to be included in the first additional recommendation. Keith reminded that, as it’s written, the WAC does not currently fund any voluntary jurisdictions, but since WSDOT and the board are already considering other changes to the WAC language, we can consider making that change as well.

Peter commented that the new jurisdictions that develop their plans without state funding are demonstrating a strong level of partnership and commitment. Karen Parkhurst asked whether we’re still using the CTR definition of “affected,” and if so, whether it’s still considered voluntary when jurisdictions designate local worksites as such. Keith replied that, as it’s written, the WAC identifies those as voluntary, so they don’t count in the statewide allocation.

Brian recapped the discussion, noting that the group will get back together and make these suggested changes to the policy bulletin, send it out for another round of discussion and vetting, then put it before the board at the next meeting.

Draft TRPP recommendations

Hiep began by noting that WSDOT has developed a list of 12 recommendations for the TRPP program, which will be the focus of today's discussion. Kim mentioned that when she and Robin met with Representative Jarrett, he mentioned how much he liked this program and how different it was from other WSDOT programs. She suggested that Hiep compile a "top ten" list of successful TRPP awardees to present to the Legislature.

Recommendation 1: Keep the focus on creating a trip reduction market.

Board comments: It's important not to lose the innovation piece of this program.

Recommendation 2: Prioritize Moving Washington corridors for trip reduction.

Board comments: Does prioritizing projects based on Moving Washington make sense? Most of the current projects are within the CTR-affected urban growth areas, which roughly correspond with Moving Washington corridors. Would this change in priority make any difference? Alignment and integration with local plans and programs seems just as important as prioritizing certain corridors.

Recommendation 3: Base the cost effectiveness evaluation on the total project budget and TRPP funds.

Board comments: Evaluate both the TRPP fund portion and the total project budget. The purpose of this recommendation is to evaluate the total project cost effectiveness (other funding sources, plus TRPP dollars request.)

Recommendation 4: Remove the trip cap and prioritize cost effectiveness to let the market drive the cost per trip.

Board comments: No board comments.

Recommendation 5: Don't fund projects with potential for overlap.

Board comments: This would potentially hurt projects from small employers if jurisdiction projects rank higher in the selection process. This would probably limit the participation of entrepreneurs and businesses.

Recommendation 6: Test the incorporation of VMT reduction in project selection and performance payments.

Board comments: The board liked this idea.

Recommendation 7: Identify ways to broaden the focus of the program beyond commute trips.

Board comments: The program should provide some kind of benefit or compensation to those projects that include non-commute trips. If there is no benefit, projects will not include meaningful efforts to address non-commute trips. Can it be tied back to a criterion?

Recommendation 8: Improve the project selection process.

Board comments: Inviting applicants to present the project to the review committee is time consuming and may not be effective. Recommend revising the last bullet to read; “the committee may contact applicants to answers question they may have during the proposal review process.”

Recommendation 9: Provide approved measurement tools and direct projects to use those tools.

Board comments: Are the measurement tools offered user-friendly enough? Will applicants be precluded because of their proposal’s measurement method? What about locally developed calendars that are already in use? Don’t discourage participation by constraining the measurement options.

Recommendation 10: Pay for performance based on the project duration.

Board comments: The board liked this idea.

Recommendation 11: Provide best practices guidance for project applicants and implementers.

Board comments: The board liked this idea.

Recommendation 12: Update WAC, application form and training materials to reflect program changes.

Board comments: The board liked this idea.

GTEC update

Casey began by noting that WSDOT has now completed the baseline surveys, and that all the data will now be sent to the contractor next Tuesday, September 30. The goal is to complete preliminary data assessments by October 15, with VMT and SOV calculations included. WSDOT will also be conducting college student surveys in Tacoma and Spokane beginning in early October. Since the three schools surveyed are all commuter campuses, this data should be very useful.

Earlier this week, Casey reconvened a GTEC implementers meeting. The meeting allowed program managers to air a few concerns, namely funding levels, devoting staff time to revising and re-submitting GTEC plans, revisions to plans and requirements for council approval on changes, re-certifying plans through the RTPO, and maintaining program activities through a possible lag between biennia.

Casey then went over the funding level considerations. He asked that the board consider down the road contingencies for what might happen should the Legislature fund the program above, at, or below the current level. He added that, if we are to change the scoring criteria to reflect existing and new GTECs, we will then need to recompose the GTEC scoring committee.

Casey pointed out that funding levels should be determined sometime next April. May 1 will be the deadline for receipt of grant applications. At that time WSDOT and board would review and score applications with the scoring subcommittee, with full CTR Board reviews, recommendations, and final funding decisions due for the May 29 board meeting. Staff will then draft up contracts to be prepared by June 30. Marilyn noted that the May timetable may be difficult to achieve. Katy Taylor suggested separate processes for existing and for unfunded GTECs.

Casey then went over the WAC revisions: removal of references to dates and replacing them with “TBD by CTR Board”, addressing the use of public funds to provide incentives (borrow TRPP language), adding VMT goals into requirements, and updating and simplifying planning requirements.

Matt Hansen asked if there is any language in the ask pertaining to exemptions for employers within a GTEC. He also volunteered to help with drafting some if necessary. Casey and Keith replied that WSDOT would follow up with him and set up a meeting. Casey added that the folio is nearly complete, and will be ready in time for our legislative outreach effort, and that he is also working with implementers to compile success stories, quotes, media clips, and testimonials.

Climate change update

Keith began with an update on the T-1 strategies. There’s been a process to estimate the emission reductions from each of those strategies, but when presented with them, the TIWG indicated it was hoping for more substantial returns. Matt Hansen and Mike pointed out that the transit side of those strategies was somewhat misleading. Brian noted that there’s a fear of the overall cost of implementing climate change strategies, which may be hindering innovative thinking.

Katy then spoke briefly about her involvement with the CAT and its subcommittee, the TIWG, which she co-chairs. They’re now beginning to integrate non-VMT strategies into their strategies for reducing VMT and greenhouse emissions. She added that they are moving their short, mid and long term goals forward collaboratively through a strategic, scalable, and multi-year process.

Joyce then went over the WCI cap-and-trade framework, which was rolled out earlier this week. Legislation in our state will be coming from Ecology and CTED by December, with more WCI reporting requirements coming in 2009. She added that Tony Usibelli has offered to present a broader policy update at the board meeting in December.

Joyce also briefed the board on the activities of the Land Use and Climate Change Advisory Committee, which will meet for the final time on October 17. There are seven ideas being moved forward for a final vote at that meeting. The two overarching policy themes that the committee is working within are the conservation of resource lands and funneling new growth toward urban growth areas.

Peter asked whether WSDOT has looked funds generated by the “right to pollute” penalties would be restricted by the 18th amendment. Katy replied that the WSDOT Executive Team met last week (and will meet again later today) to discuss, among other things, questions and concerns about the WCI. WSDOT staff has gone through the WCI reporting recommendations very thoroughly, and our understanding is that 18th amendment is not limited, but we’re looking at getting that verified.

Peter then noted that the Land Use and Climate Change Advisory Committee summary doesn’t touch on land use, development, and sprawl within urban growth boundaries. Joyce replied that they haven’t talked about density, be it residential, commercial, or mixed use. She added that they’ve started to compile a list to determine what defines compact or climate-friendly development. One of the ideas that came out of the process was having the jurisdictions define it themselves.

Bill LaBorde added that focusing on sprawl within the urban growth boundary was the goal behind this land use process, adding that the committee is going after density that's transit-oriented. Kim asked Bill if he knew of other strategies that might prove useful for the board as it begins its legislative push. Bill replied that consistent reminders of CTR as a cost-efficient, climate-friendly means of reducing emissions are the way to go.

Sustainable Transportation and Access Rating System

Peter offered a brief overview of the STARS program he's helping to develop alongside Matt Ransom. One of the potential pilot projects on the legislative agenda, 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 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.

Action item review

- Kathy will provide an update on state agencies w/ Joan Cullen (December/January meeting)
- Jef will look into scheduling a board meeting via videoconference (preferably this winter)
- Kathy will ask Transportation Choices, PSRC and WSTA for presentations on their legislative agendas
- WSDOT staff will work with Debbie Germer to look at the 2007 baseline data and address her concerns
- The legislative committee will work on messaging, materials, and pick a date for a committee discussion
- Kathy will make suggested changes to the funding policy, then email to board members in advance of the next meeting
- Hiep will provide the Top 10 TRPP "Rock Stars" for Kim
- Casey will reconstitute the GTEC committee early next year
- Casey will bring the draft GTEC folio to share at the next meeting
- Casey and Keith will talk with Matt Hansen about the GTEC exemption for CTR employers idea
- Tony Usibelli will provide a WCI update to the board at the December meeting
- Peter will work on STARS and provide an update at a future meeting

Agenda for Next Meeting

- Olympia GTEC report
- Legislative outreach
- Adopt funding policy

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.