

## **Commute Trip Reduction Board**

Meeting Summary

October 26, 2008

WSDOT

HQ Commission Board Room (1D2)

310 Maple Park Ave SE

Olympia, WA 98504-7387

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

**Board Members Not Present:** Matt Hansen, Charlie Howard, and Robin Rettew.

**WSDOT Staff:** Katy Taylor, Keith Cotton, Hiep Tran, Chris Simmons, Casey Kanzler, and Jef Lucero.

**Audience:** Joe Hyer, Olympia City Council; Lon Wyrick, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Kathy McCormick, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Joan Cullen, GA; Sophie Stimson, City of Olympia; Laura Ritter, City of Olympia; John Keefe, City of Olympia; Lindsay Bailey, Kitsap Transit; Christopher Aiken, Intercity Transit; Bill LaBorde, Transportation Choices Coalition; Monica Babine, WSU; and Peter Thein, WSTA.

### **Introductions and Board Business**

Brian began by introducing the board's newest member, Lynn Frosch. He then talked about the proposed videoconference the board intends to hold in next year, either in February or March. Aurora and Ted, who both have to negotiate their way over the mountains in order to attend the meetings, agreed that February would be better. Brian noted that the Legislature will be in session at that time, which will need to be considered.

Brian then offered a brief climate change update. He commented that the T-1 recommendations will be sent to the TIWG for full consideration on the 28<sup>th</sup>, then to the CAT for its review. Peter asked Brian to share the recommendations with the board. Lon Wyrick noted that the Department of Ecology will make many of these formalized recommendations available on its website. Bill requested that he be added to any formal distribution list for the recommendations. Katy replied that she would take care of it.

Brian announced that Chris Simmons will be leaving WSDOT in November. Brian credited Chris with getting the RFP for Rideshare Online out two days ago. Chris will be staying on with both the Reauthorization Task Force and the Association for Commuter Transportation.

### **Olympia GTEC report**

Casey Kanzler began by introducing the presenting Olympia GTEC representatives: Sophie Stimson, City of Olympia; Joe Hyer, Olympia City Council; and Lon Wyrick, TRPC. Joe began by noting that the Council has significant, if not personal interests in the GTEC program: four members of the Council work within the GTEC boundaries, three members own businesses in the GTEC, and one member lives within the boundaries of the GTEC. He added that the Council understands the importance of the GTEC program, and that it helps the city achieve its goals of greater density and more people downtown, but fewer cars. He noted that CTR and the GTEC are helping the city meet

its sustainability goals while also helping to reduce maintenance to existing infrastructure. Joe went on to say that Olympia has really taken these programs to heart, wants to set the best example, and wants to be seen as an innovator.

Joe noted that the basis for these efforts is in the RTP, the Olympia Comprehensive Plan, and the updated CTR plan. He added that the city is working to create dense and diverse land uses in the urban core— going up, not out— while moving away from suburban sprawl. Joe added that the city needs to continue to develop a multi-modal transportation system, investing in all modes equally. He added that better use of the existing system wherever possible, rather than expansion of the system itself, is less costly.

Sophie went over the boundaries of the GTEC, which encompasses 548 acres and covers 20,000 employees. About 7,000 of those employees work for smaller employers, while approximately 13,000 are with affected employers. She added that downtown Olympia has the greatest mix of employment and housing density in Thurston County, which made it a natural fit with the GTEC concept. Sophie noted that the state has called for Olympia to take a leadership role on CTR. The downtown core is also home to many commercial tenants, and is serviced by four different transit agencies.

Sophie then spoke of the parking management system in Olympia. The city manages on-street parking and several lots downtown. Priority is placed on customer and visitor access. The city has just launched a carpool parking permit program, allowing carpools to park at metered stalls for discounted rates, and vanpools may park for free at long term stalls. Sophie added that the new City Hall will have almost no employee parking, further encouraging the use of alternative commuting. She noted that the city's six-year Capital Facilities plan includes \$13 million in projects that support trip reduction within one mile of the GTEC, including transit improvements.

Joe then spoke on the business case for GTEC. He commented that he is here today not only as a Council member, but as a business owner as well. He noted that the GTEC program is a great way to reach small employers and get them involved. Historically, CTR programs have been geared more toward larger employers, as they were the ones who could afford to start programs. Yet those most in need of incentives, Joe added, are the employees of smaller businesses (coffee shops, restaurants, retail stores, etc.).

Joe then turned the focus toward parking in the downtown core. The city wants most of its downtown on-street stalls to be for short-term use, for customers, employees. He has heard from some of his customers that they don't have a problem with paying for parking— or for tickets, for that matter— provided the money is going toward something worthwhile, such as pedestrian improvements. Joe noted that fewer employee trips equate not only to less congestion but safer streets to walk on. He added that a 200-stall parking facility would cost the city an estimated \$8 million, at \$40,000 per stall.

Joe also touched on the topics of incentives and subsidies. He commented that Olympia's GTEC program allows small employers the opportunity to provide their employees with incentives, such as free bus passes. He added that these incentives can help recruit and retain new employees. He mentioned other benefits for businesses, such as promotion of health, fitness, and environmental leadership.

Mike briefly spoke on the topic of partnerships. He noted that Olympia as a community recognizes well the importance of land use and transportation connections. The city, the

state, the planning council, and the transit agency here compliment each other, creating a fluid sense of partnership. Public transportation is well-represented in many areas of local government: three local mayors are former Intercity Transit Authority board members, and a fourth is an advocate for public transportation; two of the three county commissioners are former ITA board members as well.

Mike and Sophie also mentioned some of the current programs geared toward commuters, including the Downtown Commuter Program; Capitol Commutes; the Bicycle Education, Encouragement and Enforcement Program; and the Bicycle Commuter Contest. Sophie added that the Washington Commuter Calendar is being piloted in this GTEC.

Lon Wyrick spoke on the base CTR program. He noted that by having a strong base program in place, it allows for the opportunities to expand toward enhancement programs like GTEC. He added that when the local and regional plans were crafted, it provided the chance for coordination and consistency checks with all the jurisdictions. Lon noted that the jurisdictions are responsible for passing the land use ordinances.

Casey noted that the city is one of the best examples of the board's stated desire to promote strong partnerships, and that GTEC, TRPP, and CTR are all working seamlessly in a way that embodies the vision the board set forth when it created this program. Brian asked Joe for a 30-second explanation of GTEC. Joe replied with the following:

*"We need to get people out of their cars and into other modes all around the state. A GTEC allows us to take where we have the most people working and the most ability to affect it and leverage that and get the most done with the least investment. That's a GTEC."*

Bill stressed the importance of the business case, adding that it would be great if Joe could be available to talk to legislators to tell this story. Joe replied that he'd be happy to help. Katy emphasized the importance of telling the story, adding that in order to achieve TDM goals, the growing involvement of the small employers will be critical.

Aurora expressed that she was happy to hear the emphasis on the base program, adding that she sees many new opportunities for the growth of Spokane's GTEC program. Peter mentioned that he was pleased to see the integration of the policy work with the education outreach. He then asked that the group submit a list of future needs, challenges, and next steps for refining the program.

Peter also suggested the city conduct some exercises based on the \$8 million parking facility to determine what types of CTR-friendly programs the city could potentially invest in, perhaps even for less money. He added that the city could create an annuity for sustainability. He then suggested that the board at some point consider changing the term GTEC to GTEP, for Growth and Transportation Efficiency Partnership.

Page asked about the Washington Commuter Calendar and under which agency's purview it falls. Sophie replied that WSU built and manages the calendar, WSDOT funded it, and the coordinators of each of two commuter programs administer and track the data. Brian added that many of the pieces of the calendar are in place, but that some of the administrative details are still being worked out.

Bill asked the group for suggestions or ideas for CTR as it relates to schools. Kathy McCormick from TRPC replied that one of the big issues statewide is where schools are sited. She added that in order to be successful, you need to have a supportive school district, an interested principal at the school, funding partners, and regular communication, but the number one thing is the need to be able to implement without adding program responsibilities to the schools themselves. Keith noted that the schools portion was funded out of the TDM for Schools study.

### **September meeting summary**

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

### **Public comment**

None.

### **CTR funding policy**

Keith began by noting that the proposed base allocation isn't enough to get the board to its new goals. Page mentioned that unless the overall program grows, there's not going to be enough to achieve the goals. She added that this creates a minimum threshold. Matt Ransom mentioned that his interpretation is that we need funds to achieve performance rather than to satisfy administrative responsibility, adding that we can address the administrative responsibility question with the existing allocation, but we might not achieve the goal at the current funding level.

Marilyn asked whether we are inadvertently set up an incentive for people to only set high goals so that they get access to more funding. Keith replied that, although the board is establishing a good incentive, the board should also look to update the planning guidance to allow for greater accountability and oversight.

Lynn asked about the model for how employers' performance goals and baselines are measured. Brian replied that employer baselines have been historically been established when they entered the program. However, it was making less sense to go back and determine performance on a model that no longer corresponded to the original baseline. He added that, by adjusting the baseline, we are trying give flexibility to the jurisdictions for how to implement their programs.

Matt Ransom suggested that what should be done with number 4 is to allocate it based solely on the state minimum goal. He added that employers that want to do more, will do more, but by doing the split on numbers 3 and 4, we are separating performance goals from the minimum goals. Brian replied that the language of number 4 should be changed from "trips to be reduced to meet *local* goals" to "trips to be reduced to meet *state* goals". Peter suggested that the language be changed to include VMT in number 4.

Brian noted that the funding allocation only takes place once the plan has been approved. He added that the revised policy indicates that the board is taking a more aggressive stance on the CTR plans and their approval. Peter replied that the principle is evident that jurisdictions will not just simply receive funds, and that a more critical, judicious examination of the plans must be made to better ensure they can achieve success. Keith replied that this principle— that plans will have to be updated if they're not making adequate progress— will be incorporated into number 5.

Mike cautioned that the way he interprets the language is that the worst- performing jurisdictions will get more money. Keith replied that by resetting the baselines, that problem is eliminated. Matt Ransom added that the per-trip cost in lesser served counties is a lot higher than that of the cost for a reduced trip in an urban core.

Brian reiterated the importance of the change of linking performance to the plans, and that this will be a much more difficult process. Bill asked if WSDOT has the staff resources to get this out the door. Keith replied that the data has been collected and calculated, and with the CTR plans in place, everything is lined up, but it's difficult to forecast what things will look like in 2011, when this review process will take place. Brian added that the role of the RTPO in this process will need to be clearly articulated.

Keith noted that the optional language for 3B is being eliminated, then asked if the board's preference is to change the language in 4 from "jurisdictions" to "cities and counties". Aurora added that David Lantry had requested a clear definition of "jurisdictions" at the last board meeting, noting that changing this language should help with that.

With regard to number 6, Mike mentioned that adding a city within a participating county will not necessarily affect the level of funding, and that cities added at this point are likely to be modest-sized, and would create only a negligible change in cost per trip. He added that an opt-in city would be added at the county's discretion, not the board's. Chris Simmons clarified that the counties can make recommendations but are not given the authority under the state law to distribute the state funds, that only WSDOT and the CTR Board can make that decision. Keith noted that the CTR Board is responsible in statute, and that WSDOT carries out the decisions as made by the board.

In the interest of time, further discussion on the funding policy was tabled at this point until the next committee meeting.

### **Transportation Choices Coalition Legislative package**

Bill LaBorde began by noting that the TCC legislative agenda would normally be much closer to complete if not for several mitigating circumstances, such as the election and several initiatives on the ballot. He added that much of their agenda is pending those outcomes, but that it shouldn't be much different from what it's looked like historically: climate action, efficient movement of people and goods, and healthier and better transportation choices.

Bill noted that much of TCC's work will be a continuation of the work they did with Future Wise on VMT reduction goals with House bill 2815. He added that TCC has a five-point plan that's an offshoot of the CAT process. They are pushing a package that will amend the goal in the GMA to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through better planning. They are also working on accountability language in the RTPO statute, as well as some changes to the concurrency language in the GMA.

Bill noted that TCC may also pursue some lid-type funding for more transit-oriented development. They also hope to work with members of the House to alter some existing infrastructure funding, moving it instead toward lesser served by transit-oriented planning. They are developing placeholder language for the WCI, and will be working with the Governor's office on the 520 and AWV replacement projects.

Bill Roach commented that this is a very aggressive agenda, and asked for TCC's top three priorities. Bill LaBorde replied that transit-oriented communities, CTR, and sustainable funding for transit are the main focus. Joyce commented that at the last Land Use and Climate Change committee meeting, Bill LaBorde helped get a sustainable transit funding piece added to one of the recommendations.

### **WSTA Legislative package**

Peter Thein began by stating that WSTA represents 26 of the 28 transit agencies statewide. He added that WSTA's legislative agenda was finalized just last week. WSTA intends to ask state government to get back into the funding of operations on some level. As well, WSTA will ask that regional mobility funding be diverted to operational funding for a one-time only process, as a result of high fuel costs and dwindling sales tax revenue. Peter noted that the idea behind this is to keep existing transit service on the road.

WSTA is exploring a new capital program with the state as its partner for buying hybrid buses, and will start with an ask of over \$100 million per biennium. Peter mentioned that WSTA will ask for 500 additional vans, a \$14 million ask, and that the state provide additional funding for Rideshare Online. WSTA will also ask for expanded funding for Paratransit needs, CTR, and bike/ped programs.

### **Legislative outreach**

Kim began by thanking Bill LaBorde and Peter Thein, indicating that she'd be in touch with both to coordinate. She then noted that the committee had a conference call about two weeks ago, then passed around a list of requests. There's a placeholder for templates for the existing GTEC's. Kim added that she continues to compile the legislative match list, which she will email to the group once it's finished. She also has the TRPP "rock star" list she requested, as well as the "high performers" list from the commute challenge.

### **GTEC update**

Casey began by offering an update on the random sample surveying WSDOT has taken. The data has been compiled and is now being analyzed. He mentioned that WSDOT is currently working with OFM on its budget ask, and OFM has requested some compelling stories as they relate to the GTEC program. Brian added that WSDOT has been compiling some personal stories to share with the Legislature as we move forward with our ask. As a follow-up to Peter's comments earlier about changing the GTEC name, Casey proposed calling it the Partnerships for Efficient Transportation (PET) program.

Casey then went over the draft of the GTEC folio. Aurora mentioned that we need statewide stories in the folio. Casey replied that if Aurora can provide a personal story from the GTEC, he will work to include it. Aurora said she would provide one.

Casey asked the group for comments on the folio. Casey then mentioned that third quarter reports are due to the Legislature, which will go a long way to show progress.

### **Adjournment**

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