

Commute Trip Reduction Board

Meeting Summary
January 25, 2008
SeaTac City Hall
4800 South 188th Street
SeaTac, WA 98188

Board Members Present: Brian Lagerberg, Aurora Crooks (by conference call), Charlie Howard, Marilyn Young Skogland (by conference call), Matt Ransom, Mike Harbour, Peter Hurley, Page Scott, Bill Roach, Ted Horobiowski, and Kim Becklund.

Board Members Not Present: Linda Ballew, Matt Hansen, Robin Rettew, and Joyce Phillips.

WSDOT Staff: Robin Hartsell, Keith Cotton, Kathy Johnston, Amber Nguyen, Casey Kanzler, Michele Villnave, Chris Simmons, Ed Hillsman and Jef Lucero.

Audience: Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Monica Whitman, City of Kent; Debbie Germer, Pierce County; Diane Wiatr, City of Tacoma; David Lantry, King County; Gloria Newby, City of Redmond; and David Ward, citizen.

Introduction and Board Business: Brian

Brian brought the meeting to order at 10:05. He began by announcing the new, Governor-appointed board member, Liz Warman, who represents the Boeing Company. She was appointed to the board last week and could not adjust her schedule to be here today.

Brian then mentioned that the Tri-Cities have a requirement to have their CTR plans in place by September, 2009. Brian and Keith will go to the Tri-Cities February 5th to meet with officials about CTR implementation and what it means to their area.

On the topic of climate change, there have been a lot of bills relating to climate change in the current Legislative session, but little as it pertains to CTR. One exception is a bill coming up in the Senate next week, a telework enhancement bill sponsored by Senator Ken Jacobsen, who sponsored a similar bill last year. We talked to him last year and recommended that the board should work with him. Brian will meet with the senator Monday to go over the new bill.

On the invitation of Aurora, Brian attended a CTR recognition ceremony in Spokane last week. While there he was reminded of the Governor's Commute Smart award and wondered whether we should bring it back. Brian also sat in on two presentations that were especially interesting, sharing a few of the highlights with the group.

Action Item: Brian mentioned that he spoke with one of the presenters to see about citing some of his information in the CTR Legislative Report, but hasn't yet received an answer. Aurora mentioned that she might be able to help with follow-up, and also offered to send Brian an article about CTR which appeared in yesterday's Journal of Business. Brian then mentioned he would send the PowerPoint presentation to the board members.

December Meeting Summary: Brian

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

Public Comment

No public comment.

CTR Plan Review

Keith Cotton got things started by identifying the two plans up for approval today: the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) plan and the Clark County plan. The PSRC plan is a little more complex, so it's broken out by the four counties it includes: King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap. The four county plans were summarized by WSDOT staff assigned to review them. The reviewers presented an overview of each summary, followed by voting on each county plan. Once the board ruled upon all four of the county plans, a vote would be taken on the regional plan. Keith also stated that WSDOT recommended all four county plans be approved by the board.

King County

Keith then delivered the overview of the King County plan review (*please see handout*). After walking the group through the summary, he reiterated WSDOT's recommendation for approval of this plan.

Bill mentioned that King County in particular has a very complicated set of issues, and suggested that it would be useful to discuss this plan specifically, and then go on to the others. He went on to compliment some of the jurisdictions for putting together plans which, in his mind, did an excellent job of putting packages together that we're looking for, plans that speak to land use and barriers as they pertain to transportation. He cited Redmond, Bellevue, and Tukwila as three jurisdictions that made the most use of the opportunities where better connections could be made, then expressed some disappointment that other jurisdictions seemed only to be "going through the motions". He suggested that we need to work with these jurisdictions to raise the bar and tell them what we expect and what we need to work on with them, as we have a real opportunity here to make these plans as useful as possible. He added that the board and WSDOT staff should explore better strategies for bringing these jurisdictions and their transit agencies together in a more effective way.

Page asked whether WSDOT staff had heard back from the jurisdictions as to whether time constraints were an issue in plan development. Keith replied that both time constraints and confusion about the guidance are two issues raised by some of the jurisdictions, and that those are two things WSDOT will address for the next cycle. He also mentioned that, as we prepare for the statewide CTR plan, we will apply some of the feedback, recommendations, and lessons learned as we move from the local view to the state context.

Charlie stated that we're seeing a noticeable transition from local to regional planning. Our approach, he said, is evolving, and by 2010 a stronger, more refined framework will be in place. Brian then stated that we as a group should decide where we should place the bar and how high it should be, as that would give specific direction to staff to follow. That messaging is very important, he added, and within our recommendations will be ideas for more integrated, more focused efforts for the next round.

Peter recalled an idea that came up last year while the board was working on the GTEC concept: the use of a flexible scoring system to potentially use as guidance with the jurisdictions, and suggested we consider putting some scoring criteria together. Bill added that, if we do create some scoring standards, land use should be one of the biggest scoring variables.

Peter suggested that WSDOT staff take a look at the possibility of posting some of the best plans to the website as models for how a plan should be developed, noting that doing so would also provide recognition for those jurisdictions.

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

Snohomish County

Kathy Johnston then delivered the talking points for the overview of the Snohomish County plan review (*please see handout*). After walking the group through the summary, Kathy reiterated WSDOT's recommendation for approval of this plan.

Bill asked about some of the cross-county coordination issues brought up in this plan, and what might be done about them. Kathy replied that there are some issues in terms of service provisions, and those issues have been there historically. Charlie added that this is not an issue exclusive to Snohomish County- other counties face similar issues and will continue to do so, as commuting across counties increases. Kathy stated that we need a longer look at improving integration and perhaps retooling some of the interlocal agreements.

Page asked about the collaboration efforts with the Snohomish County Health Department. Kathy replied that they are very involved because historically they have provided a lot of ADA-related transportation. They still work with the local transit agencies on many service issues, as they've sort of become part of the transit culture there, and it's something we'd like to see expanded to other jurisdictions.

Peter noted that the parking management strategies laid out in this plan indicate a certain openness at the local level and wondered whether there are opportunities for building upon that at the regional or state levels. Bill noted that, in the PSRC plan, Charlie's group really focused on parking plan issues. Marilyn added that she was pleased to see potential rewards for employers to use parking charges to fund trip reduction.

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

Pierce County

Chris Simmons then presented the WSDOT's Pierce County CTR plan summary (*please see handout*). Upon doing so he reiterated the agency's recommendation for approval of this plan.

Bill commented that the lack of park-and-ride space continues to be an issue. He noted that they are expensive; however, a "lease lot" program could be more effective, as it would provide immediate parking relief in a relatively inexpensive manner. He added that this is an area the state and this board could be of significant help, perhaps even taking a park-and-ride support bill to the Legislature in 2009.

Mike noted that park-and-ride space needs to be on the funding agenda for next year, and that Pierce County is a perfect example of demand for more capacity. He added that we need to determine who will pay for it. He commented that the state should, which is why we need to continue to push for it in the Legislature.

Page asked whether we have the ability to capture the data on pass-through traffic and users and usage of park-and-ride lots outside of ridership surveys, and whether we can compile it right now. If not, she added, it would be a good idea to ask the state for some resources or at least guidance to that end.

Bill noted that the survey process gives us at least the potential to look at park-and-ride demand, and that we should consider the survey process more closely on parking-specific issues for the next round.

Kim stated that it would be nice to do a series of workshops to inform people on parking management issues at the local level. She went on to say that, although it's not a popular view, she's in favor of charging at the lots. She added that to not at least look at it would be short-sighted, with so many tolling and security issues that are coming up now.

Charlie stated that we're trying to create market-based transportation planning, and that we need to better understand the market. He added that no one likes to fund data collection, but we need the data to better service the markets. He noted that there are too many planning strategies out there that don't work because they don't fit the market.

Brian suggested we compile these ideas and come back to them. Mike further suggested that we capture these suggestions in our strategic planning process. Keith noted several opportunities for WSDOT staff and the board to work collaboratively on data gathering: the state CTR plan, GTEC measurement reporting, and the statewide park and ride inventory.

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

Kitsap County

Chris Simmons then presented the WSDOT's Kitsap County CTR plan summary (*please see handout*). Upon doing so he reiterated the agency's recommendation for approval of this plan.

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

Keith then delivered the overview of the PSRC plan review (*please see handout*). After hitting the key points of the summary, he reiterated WSDOT's recommendation for approval of this plan.

Kim commented that she really enjoyed the land use side of the housing piece of this plan. She suggested that jurisdictions at every level could be doing more to create incentives to allow people to live closer to where they work. She added that she would like the board to create a political strategy on this with other interested groups.

Charlie noted that the subject of funding is a huge workplan issue. He added that much of today's discussion has been framed within the context of market-based planning and cross-county coordination, that our whole program is focused on borders and budgets and who pays for what. In light of this, he said, funding has to be at the top of our workplan agenda.

Motion: A motion was entertained to approve the Central Puget Sound regional CTR plan. The motion carried.

LUNCH

Casey Kanzler presented WSDOT's Clark County CTR plan summary (*please see handout*). Upon doing so he reiterated the agency's recommendation for approval of this plan.

Casey noted that the lack of vanpooling significantly affects the area and is a barrier to achieving a successful CTR program.

Kim asked Matt Ransom to discuss the timing and impact of the cross-river light rail extension. Matt replied that the impact of the light rail piece of the proposed new bridge may have minimal affect on CTR. He added that Vancouver is years away from a system that works its way into downtown Vancouver and points beyond in conjunction with the crossing. In the short term, he said, it may not have a significant impact for downtown Vancouver oriented commuters, because it's still a bi-state oriented system.

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

Clark County's CTR plan was the final plan to go through the approval process. With that in mind, Brian thanked and congratulated everyone who helped make these plans a reality, honoring their hard work and resolve as we mark the close of this process.

Kathy then went over the draft version of the approval letter. It is WSDOT's aim to get the letter out next Monday. Matt asked who the intended recipients will be. Kathy replied that it will go directly to either the local jurisdictions or whoever helped prepare their plans. Matt suggested that we deliver it to an upper level administrator, preferably an elected official or RTPO chair.

A few minor tweaks to the letter were then proposed by some of the board members. Charlie suggested we mention that the plans were "unanimously" approved. Page suggested that we include the approval date of each plan. Kim suggested we mention that the CTR Efficiency Act passed in 2006, and also recommended we add employers as a group with whom we will continue to work.

Keith spent a few minutes going over the next steps. Of a more immediate nature, we will send out the letter, then organize and discuss statewide and specific local or regional recommendations, organize some meetings, have some discussions, get some feedback from planners, put that all together, bring it back to a future board meeting, incorporate it into our CTR policy framework, and finally feed it into the statewide CTR plan.

Bill requested a new version of a WSDOT Public Transportation Office staff list. Brian replied that a new organizational chart will roll out next week. Once it's available, it will be distributed.

Legislative update: Keith/Kim

Kim has been in a few ongoing discussions with the Legislative committee. She mentioned that Genesee Adkins got us on the calendars of several legislators in advance of hearings. Our main message was thanking them for the Efficiency Act and the funding for the TRPP, vanpool, GTEC, and climate change programs. Secretary Hammond participated in the hearing before the House, which really lent a lot of credibility to our message. We were well-received in both the House and the Senate. Kim stated that one of the committee's next moves is to create a list of people we want to meet and/or follow up with.

Bill mentioned that Senator Jacobsen made a comment that many folks don't even know what CTR is. A number of other legislators had specific questions that need follow-up. They were engaged, they asked good questions. Bill noted that it was the most engagement he'd ever seen from the Legislature.

Brian then stressed the significance of Secretary Hammond's involvement in going before the Legislature. The Secretary very enthusiastically went with the board to present, and that's a very important and positive step. The Secretary presented her three steps to congestion relief: strategically add capacity, operate efficiently, and manage demand. Brian added that we should continue to support the Secretary in what she's trying to accomplish, as she is pledging her support for our message.

Kim then talked about the legislative perspective of the newly appointed member to the board, Liz Warman from Boeing. Kim mentioned that Liz will be a great addition, and that she has the ear of a lot of legislators.

Kim then touched on two other legislative opportunities for the board, the most immediate of which is the rental tax on the Flex car program. As the law is currently written, the program has to pay the same amount of taxes that rental cars do, which is an unintended consequence of the law. A bill trying to reverse that will be heard next Wednesday, and Kim suggested that the board should be on record as supporting it.

The other legislative opportunity is the new tolling bills. It's expected something will pass this Session at more of a policy level, and Kim mentioned that we should decide how we want to engage in the dialogue, if at all.

Mike mentioned that tolling bills have already been heard in both Houses. One of the good things to come out of the bill in the House was the elimination of the 10% limit on transit. Mike also supported the idea that someone from the board testify on behalf of the Flex car program.

Charlie expressed some caution about us taking on an advocacy role on behalf of the Flex car program. Our focus, he said, is the CTR plans and their implementation. However, Charlie added that on the whole, he supports the idea. Bill added that he also supports that we be at the table for the discussion on the Flex car bill. Page followed that by suggesting that we keep any potential discussion focused only on how it's important to CTR. Kim asked if WSDOT will weigh in at the hearing. Brian replied that he will find out whether he will testify on behalf of the board or WSDOT. Charlie added that the PSRC will pledge its support.

Motion: A motion was entertained that the board will testify in support of the bill as to the importance of Flex car and car sharing, as incentives for the CTR program. The motion carried.

Action item: Peter suggested that the Legislative committee meet to discuss the implications of tolling TDM. To that end, Brian asked Kim to chair a meeting next week.

Legislative report update

Robin Hartsell mentioned that everything in the latest iteration of the CTR Legislative Report is in the graphics office going through a final development phase. Most of what's in the draft handed out today will be assimilated into the final report. Robin mentioned that he will meet with Brian to determine how best to go about getting the board's approval. Robin has continued to work on incorporating various board suggestions into the document. He is still soliciting any comments, suggestions, ideas or any other feedback, and encouraged the group to keep reviewing this and send him any input.

Peter asked if there's one central message we want to convey overall with this report, if there's a "headline" or "pull quote". Peter also suggested making the graphs- which tell a great story- a little bigger. Bill followed that by suggesting that we get more editorial help to make the message a little clearer, or at least a little more attention-grabbing.

Action item: Brian asked that the board submit any revisions to Robin no later than 9 a.m. next Tuesday, when Robin's group will meet with the Secretary to go over the final draft.

Strategic plan update

Robin updated the group that two of the committees are on track to have the action items through the originating committee: the policy committee and the communication committee. The measurement committee hasn't yet met.

GTEC update

Casey has already met with all of the funded GTEC's and all but two of the unfunded GTEC's. He stated that there are strong commitments from the unfunded GTEC's for our offer of measurement support. The City of Kirkland is ready to designate its GTEC area. Currently, we are working through scopes. Casey indicated that the first finished scope is already on his desk awaiting his return this afternoon. He is hoping to have the bulk of the seven scopes in by the end of the month.

Brian asked what the deadline is for getting the contracts signed for the GTEC's. Casey replied that the window closes at the end of February. The jurisdictions need to either designate their GTEC or, preferably, sign the contract by then. Bill asked if there are any substantive issues. Casey replied that they are mostly contractual and procedural, and there are also some budget concerns for measurement.

Brian added that the board is pushing organizations to do things they've not done in the past. So, he reasoned, there might be some resistance, but for the most part the jurisdictions are doing their part. He added that, should they not follow through, they understand there are other GTEC's waiting to get this money.

Casey indicated that he recently flew to Spokane, where he was shown the city's GTEC. He added that they are looking at incorporating CTR strategies on the 3 college campuses there. Aurora mentioned that the college sites are already CTR affected sites.

Workplan update

Keith went over the "next steps" for the workplan. It outlines three main things through the end of the next year: completion of the local and regional planning process; assess and update the CTR policy framework, and develop the state CTR plan. He encouraged the board to review it and provide feedback. Keith will email it to the board members. Ted asked whether board turnover will impact the plan. Brian replied that it shouldn't, but that we will be adding four, maybe five new members by the end of June.

TAG update

Kathy said the TAG went through the model ordinance at its last meeting and the revised CTR survey report. Kathy added that, at the next meeting, the group will discuss the board's strategic plan and develop a workplan for the TAG.

Brian closed the meeting by addressing an email from Page on moving forward with the allocations for next fiscal year. He proposed that the board members who worked on it last time get together and go over it again.

Adjournment

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