

Commute Trip Reduction Board

Meeting Summary
February 22, 2008
Intercity Transit
526 Pattison Street SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Board Members Present: Brian Lagerberg, Joyce Phillips, Aurora Crooks, Charlie Howard, Marilyn Young Skogland, Matt Hansen (by conference call), Matt Ransom, Mike Harbour, Peter Hurley, Page Scott, Ted Horobiowski, Liz Warman, and Robin Rettew.

Board Members Not Present: Linda Ballew, Bill Roach, and Kim Becklund.

WSDOT Staff: Cathy Silins, Robin Hartsell, Kathy Johnston, Anne Criss, Michele Villnave, Ed Hillsman and Jef Lucero.

Audience: Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Monica Whitman, City of Kent; Diane Wiatr, City of Tacoma; and Ed Stern, Poulsbo City Council.

Introduction and Board Business

Ted brought the meeting to order at 10:05. He began by introducing the newest board member, Liz Warman, who was attending her first board meeting. She took a few moments to talk about her professional experience as it relates to the work of the CTR Board.

At a previous CTR Board meeting, it had been requested that WSDOT staff provide the board with an updated organizational chart for the Public Transportation division. Cathy Silins, who along with Brian is the division's Assistant Director, spent the next few minutes going over the latest version of Public Transportation's org chart, as well as that of WSDOT's executive hierarchy.

January Meeting Summary

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

Public Comment

No public comment.

Climate change/Legislative issues

Anne Criss, climate change specialist for WSDOT, offered an overview of the agency's involvement in climate change-related legislation during this year's session. She also illuminated several of the key initiatives, strategies, milestones, and timelines currently being developed by WSDOT, as the agency continues to broaden its focus on climate change issues (*please see handouts*).

Anne noted that one of the things she'd like to hear from the board is what the best means of communication between the CTR Board and WSDOT would be. She offered to report

back with updates, and also mentioned that Keith would be well suited in the role of climate change liaison to the board.

Charlie asked who is going to manage VMT reduction goals and strategies. Anne replied that WSDOT and the Department of Ecology have already taken the lead on that and will continue to do so. Anne added that she is meeting with several other different groups in an effort to better coordinate on climate change issues, and that one of WSDOT's goals is better engagement with its transportation partners to better determine whether these strategies make sense, if they work, or if anything is missing from them.

Charlie noted the differences between the VMT goals in the GTEC agreements and those in the VMT bill currently in the Senate. Anne replied that WSDOT is closely watching that VMT bill, which will be heard at 1:30 today on the Senate floor. Ed Hillsman added that the VMT targets in the bill almost offset the rate of expected growth in population. Charlie noted that VMT rates per capita have been flat since about 1990.

Liz asked about affordable housing and job centers and their place in the discussion. Anne replied that there is still a GMA bill alive in the session, and that the next hearing for it is scheduled for February 26th.

Peter noted the differences between the overall carbon reduction goals in this legislation and those in the Executive Order. Anne responded that the target benchmarks in the bill may not get us to the Governor's goals. She added that we have pushed for additional language amendments to that section that might allow for the reevaluation of those benchmarks to see if they are the appropriate criteria.

Matt Ransom inquired as to the near-term effect of these proposed policies. Anne replied that VMT and GMA issues are being addressed this session. The recommendations may need refining, in terms of policy language, but to that end, efforts will ramp up in the coming year. Peter added that over the next 10 months, the board has a great opportunity to get its legislative agenda together for 2009.

Joyce commented that a regional Cap & Trade framework is expected to be rolled out at a summit this August in order that it be introduced before the Legislature next year. Anne added that there is also a Western Climate Initiative involving several western states as well as parts of Mexico and Canada, so we are seeing a huge regional effort right now.

Charlie stated that PSRC has been selected as a national demonstration site for a new EPA model for measuring greenhouse emissions. They are going to test the model as we update our transportation planning. He also mentioned that there will be a National Peer Exchange sponsored by the Transportation Research Board on climate change at the PSRC offices March 6-7.

The conversation then moved toward the shifts in political and social perspective on the topic of climate change. Anne stated that there has been a fundamental shift as to how climate change issues are received in the Legislature over the last couple years. Cathy Silins added that the conversations are changing, that the culture is shifting not only politically but socially. Diane Wiatr noted that the local jurisdictions are taking the lead on climate change, and that it's happening on a grass roots level.

Charlie added that, at a recent TRB meeting it was discussed that local agencies have led on this issue, while the state legislatures are just now getting involved- and it will

interesting to see what happens when the federal government comes around. Mike stated that he wants to see this state's government step up and implement the type of statewide CTR program that could serve as a national model, and that, as an employer, the state can and should do better.

Ted noted that there is a very short timeframe for the board to address some of these issues, and that we'll need to hear from the climate team often. Anne replied that she'd be happy to come back every month.

Legislative report

Robin began by thanking the board members and WSDOT staff for their comments, feedback, and hard work. He will send hard copies in the mail, since they are not available as of today. He noted that this is the interim report, that the full report is forthcoming, due about this time next year. For this version, we had a limited timeframe, so we would really like to focus on messaging and themes for the full report next year.

Matt Ransom asked if a press release would be a good idea. Robin replied that it would be beneficial, and that he will sit down with Michele Villnave to put it together.

Strategic plan update

Robin commented that the plan is in its final draft stages, and that draft plan will be out in time for the next board meeting in March. Robin then asked the three committee chairs to update their progress on their specific action items.

Communications/Outreach committee

Matt Ransom stated that this committee has identified three key tasks. The first is the need to develop a communications plan. The committee sees a benefit in hiring a consultant to help with identifying our audience as well as messaging, and the intervals for reaching our audience with that message. The second task is the creation of a clear master schedule of touch points or communication points by which to adhere.

Matt noted that we have an opportunity to get our messaging out, but we need to be sure we do it strategically. Third, we as a board should be the ones to lead the discussions. Are there forums or venues in which we can create opportunities to reach people, or can we convene a summit? Further, in so doing, can we elevate the influence, the reach of this board and its message?

Robin Rettew inquired as to any follow up steps. Brian replied that this is an important opportunity for the board to identify a working agenda. The next step is the agreement in the strategic plan that these are the activities the board will agree to do over the next two years.

Joyce suggested that the board continue to reach out to the unfunded GTECs. Charlie asked whether we have a set of slides that talk about exactly what the CTR Board and CTR program are, if only to keep the message consistent. Page added that we need something like that, but that we should be able to tailor the general message to specific audiences. Brian urged that, where we already have cities engaged, we need to push to keep the message going, so that those unfunded GTECs don't drop out of the program. Joyce added that she'd like to hear from the business community as well.

Assessment committee

Matt Hansen began by naming climate change and measurement as this committee's strategic objectives. On the subject of climate change, the board has been well represented in the CAT process at the state level. One of the things we'll have to look at is VMT reduction as a function of non-commute trips. As policy options move forward, we should define what role if any we want to play in non-commute trip reduction. On the climate change objective, we also need to prepare for the next step of the CAT process by looking closer at two pieces: travel markets and how much VMT they represent, and the rather static, almost monolithic status VMT has achieved. Do we need to define VMT?

On the measurement piece, Matt stated that our key takeaway is the importance of talking to specific communities to ask them about what we do. The Legislative report is a huge step forward in our ability to tell our story in an accessible way. Now, we need to take a queue from these communities to see if we can get more information to them that they care about.

Ed Hillsman then touched on the topic of data collection around ferry usage. Historically, ferries were treated as part of the highway system. Now, there is some interest in treating the passenger ferry component more like floating buses rather than bridges. Does the board want to change the way it's treating the ferry system? If it does, then we need to change the way we collect data, and now would be the logical time to make the change.

Robin Rettew added that there are many initiatives underway involving ferries. Before the Legislature will consider additional investments in terminals and fleet expansion beyond what are currently funded in the budget, existing capacity will be studied extensively. Right now, there is very little capacity for additional vehicles on the current sailings, but there the capacity for additional walk-on travelers is enormous. The Transportation Commission will conduct surveys in March on ridership habits and how the ferries are being utilized.

Brian suggested that we should interact with the commission staff to find out where they are in their process. If the timing is right, he added, we should bring it back to the next board meeting as more of an issue paper so that we can have a meaningful discussion. Brian said he would follow up with WSDOT staff for any necessary interoffice coordination.

Matt Hansen concluded by stating that we need to be mindful in our planning and realistic about what we can do well. He suggested we create a short list of action items with multiple objectives and focus on them. Charlie added that we need to be mindful of our time and that we need to focus on our job, which is the CTR program.

Policy/Funding committee

Mike laid out the committee's three strategic objectives and their attendant action items (*please see handout*). The strategic objectives are to engender state and local elected officials' support for CTR/TDM so that they are aware of successes and see opportunities; to integrate CTR/TDM into transportation and land use planning, project development, and funding; and to ensure sufficient staff and resources are available to meet the needs of the program including having all board positions filled.

Brian encouraged the group to look at the TIB website and the new funding criteria they've included on sustainability. Robin Hartsell concluded by stating that he hopes to bring a draft of the strategic plan at the next board meeting. In order for that to happen, all of the recommendations must circulate through all of the committees.

Action item: The deadline for the reviews to pass through each of the committees is two weeks. Robin will send an email including all three components of the strategic plan along with a timeline for completion of the process.

LUNCH

Telework Demonstration

Brian introduced Ed Stern, city councilmember from the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council (KRCC). Ed was on hand to ask for the board's support of a teleworking demonstration project in the House transportation budget. The project is a \$150,000 study attached to another bill. It is Ed's contention that this \$150K might be some of the most efficiently spent money in the history of transportation funding. He also asked that the board consider meeting by videoconference at least once a year, if only to lead the CTR cause by example. He concluded by inviting the board to partner with KRCC on this project.

Motion: A motion was entertained that the board will draft a letter in support of the proposal and will also help evaluate it if it is funded by the Legislature. The motion carried.

Funding

Cathy Silins recently reconvened the board's funding working group for a conference call this week to confirm the board's position as far as the framework the board is working under, what the board expects from the jurisdictions, and what options the working group would consider at this time. The funding question becomes, should we continue with the same funding allocations from last year to next- to the end of the biennium- or should we consider redoing the formula in the next two months. She explained each model as they are currently broken out (*please see handout*).

Aurora commented that everyone is so involved with the CTR plans and their implementation that it's easy to not give this its due attention, but we have to. Page added that this discussion has to take place again. She went on to say that the implementers need to be aware of any changes as they happen and, if we have to, we need to be ready to ask for more money from the Legislature, and we have to be ready to say why.

Matt Ransom stated that if this is the right formula, we need to make it dynamic. Right now, its static nature works against the credibility of the formula. He cautioned that we need to assess this now because March of next year might be too late.

Matt Hansen commented that it is important that as we prepare for our 2009 request from the Legislature, the board should reiterate to the TAG an expectation that we hear back from the implementers regarding the affected areas by 2011. He added that we need that information to make a case, and we don't have it yet.

Karen Parkhurst requested that the amendments to these contracts be specific- that this is based on worksite numbers for the specified year.

Motion: A motion was entertained that the board accept points three and four of the recommendations of the funding work group. The motion carried.

Updates

Benton County

Brian, Kathy, and Keith recently met with Leo Bowman and several others from Benton County, at the request of Secretary Hammond. Benton County was granted an extension for two years for the implementation of the Tri-Cities CTR plan. September 30, 2009, is their date for implementation.

Park & Ride Plan

Evan Olsen offered to the group a brief overview of WSDOT's Park & Ride plan. In December, he began establishing a statewide inventory, including location, capacity, and condition. The first round of the inventory is on the web now. The second round, which will include more data on park and pool lots, is being compiled now. An initiative was kicked off yesterday to determine the state's position on what actually constitutes a park and ride. It will be mid-April before that determination is reached. In April and May, we hold meetings with stakeholders and other constituents, and then we will begin to draft policy in June.

Congestion strategies

Brian then took a few moments to talk about Secretary Hammond's three steps to congestion relief: strategically add capacity, operate efficiently, and manage demand. He noted that managing demand is now being pushed toward the top of WSDOT's approach. What that means, he added, is that CTR is no longer a smaller issue off to the side of the agenda, but a key component to the agency's strategies for long term congestion solutions.

Charlie suggested that the three steps be expanded to include some language which speaks to land use. Other than that, he added, it's a great model.

Adjournment

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