

Commute Trip Reduction Board

Meeting Summary

June 27, 2008

Tacoma Municipal Building

747 Market St

Tacoma, WA 98402

Board Members Present: Brian Lagerberg, Kim Becklund, Charlie Howard, Liz Warman, Ted Horobiowski, Marilyn Young Skogland, Bill Roach, Mike Harbour, Peter Hurley, and Page Scott.

Board Members Not Present: Aurora Crooks, Matt Ransom, Robin Rettew, Matt Hansen, and Joyce Phillips.

WSDOT Staff: Kathy Johnston, Keith Cotton, Casey Kanzler, Hiep Tran, and Jef Lucero.

Audience: Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Louise Bray, Pierce Transit; Eric Anderson, City of Tacoma; David Graybill, Tacoma/Pierce County Chamber of Commerce; Daphne Tackett, Pierce Transit; Sharon Stockwell, Pierce Transit; John Keefe, City of Olympia; Amber Carter, Association of Washington Business; and Diane Wiatr, City of Tacoma.

Introduction and Board Business

Brian began by talking about the most recent Transportation Implementation Working Group meeting, at which the group listed its top three priorities based on the strategies developed by the CAT. T-1, the public transportation and ridesharing strategy, received the most votes. WSDOT and WSTA will now go back through T-1, and refine it, and then bring it back to the next working group meeting. The other two strategies the group will prioritize are T-3 (transportation pricing) and T-4 (promotion of compact and transit-oriented development). Each of the strategies that made it through the CAT process will be examined, but these are the three the group will address first.

Brian, Keith, and Secretary Hammond met with Leo Bowman and Carl Adrian to discuss the Tri-Cities' CTR implementation strategies. The Secretary asked that they send WSDOT a letter requesting that the statutory exemption be extended another year. The letter was sent this week. WSDOT will now submit a recommendation to the Governor's office in support of the extension. If it's to happen, it will likely have to be within a budget proviso.

Brian recently helped rewrite a section of an Executive Order on sustainability, which is slated to be rolled out this fall. This Executive Order calls upon all state agencies to meet certain CTR-related goals, including reductions in petroleum consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. There is also a section which relates to commuting. All state agencies are to meet the requirements of the statute, and the Governor will assume a leadership role to see that the goals are met.

May Meeting Summary

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

Public Comment

None.

Do electric scooters count as an alternative?

Brian began by noting the three criteria for CTR eligibility: improving air quality, reducing fuel and energy consumption, and easing congestion. He added that we could try either of two things: we can call it a non-SOV mode, or we can treat it in a survey process in order to demonstrate its eligibility.

Liz (Marilyn?) noted that we would need data which supports the notion that charging electric vehicles is a reduction in energy consumption. Bill said this is a larger question than just scooters, that down the road we'll have to look at all plug-in vehicles. He added that we should step back from making a decision now until the market catches up. Ted said this has to be handled comprehensively.

Brian said we'll spend some time framing the broader issue. Marilyn said that we need to determine whether meeting all three criteria is still our objective, adding that we should be careful not to say that any of those criteria is less or more important than the others. Kim added that the US Department of Energy has potentially set 2010 as a timeline for developing plug-in vehicle regulations, which could affect the way this board considers its determinations.

Tacoma GTEC update

Diane Wiatr introduced the GTEC representatives: Eric Anderson, Tacoma City Manager; Louise Bray, Vice President of Policy Planning and Public Affairs for Pierce Transit; and David Graybill, CEO of the Tacoma/Pierce County Chamber of Commerce. Brian said that this is our first opportunity to sit down to talk with GTEC implementers.

Eric began by saying that the city has embarked upon a number CTR-related initiatives that have expanded into many facets of Tacoma's policy strategies, including economic development and service delivery. The Tacoma City Council has assembled what it calls a "green ribbon task force", a group of citizens charged with looking at the city's carbon footprint. The city has adopted as an operating concept the idea of "complete streets", streets that accommodate many different modes of transportation.

The city is developing a parking system based on market. With almost no paid parking in the downtown core, the city can design what it wants. Officials are looking at zoning requirements as they relate to parking. Tacoma is working on a streetcar system- as well as an expansion of its existing light rail system- with several partners. The idea is to encourage people to park on the city's periphery, and then come into the downtown core using other modes.

Louise then addressed some of the specifics of the GTEC. Not only did the city receive the GTEC grant, but the chamber received a TRPP grant. She added that these three partners- the city, the chamber, and Pierce Transit- are coordinating their efforts to ensure that its system delivery is efficient and effective, and the GTEC effort is helping to create those system deliveries.

Louise explained that Tacoma's GTEC group- comprised of eight Pierce Transit staff, Diane, and a representative from the Chamber- has been meeting weekly since January. They've developed the work plan and charter. Last January, the group hosted a transportation summit for local executives and managers to discuss downtown

transportation strategies for implementation. Another summit was held this month, with an audience of local CEO's and other business leaders. At the most recent forum, the group rolled out its "Downtown: On the Go!" slogan, a campaign which will begin this fall.

David spoke about the Chamber's role in this effort. The goal as set forth in the terms of the Chamber's TRPP grant is to reduce 300 trips in the downtown core. Several buildings in the downtown core which once stood vacant have been rehabilitated and are now home to various employers, several of whom have expressed concerns about parking and linkages. The Chamber is also in the process of hiring a CTR manager.

Diane offered an overview of the GTEC area, which includes the Tacoma Dome district, Hilltop, the St. Helens neighborhood, the Thea Foss Waterway, and all downtown employees (which number 43,000, including affected sites). Until very recently, UW-Tacoma had no transportation strategy to speak of, and that is now being developed. Residential CTR is being done for the first time in the St. Helen's neighborhood, which includes a lot of new condominium development. The transportation forums have been very helpful, as have the walking audits conducted at UWT and in the downtown core. The UWT student CTR program is in development, as are residential marketing materials for condominium managers.

Marilyn suggested that the Tacoma GTEC do some networking with the Bellevue TMA, as they have already done some condo association outreach, and their experience could be helpful. Liz suggested that, for the next funding cycle, it would be nice if the boundaries of the GTEC could be broadened.

Charlie suggested working with realtors' associations. Diane replied she has already hired someone expressly for that. Bill asked to what extent the city and the Chamber have engaged the legislators. David replied that an employee with the city is working with them for 2009. Bill noted that historically legislators from the Tacoma area have been supportive of CTR efforts. Diane has requested that Secretary Hammond speak at an upcoming CEO forum.

Brian mentioned that one of the things WSDOT is looking at is limited funding for marketing efforts for such programs as GTEC, lease-lots, and the Commute Smart awards. If we can get these models for success in front of business leaders, they will get behind them. Brian and Diane both agree that the partnerships being forged and built in this process are a huge success story.

TRPP program assessment

Keith began by noting that this is less about policy than about the overall direction of the program and what we want to do in terms of the new program model. We hope to return next month with the specifics of the new model. We were also hoping to do a tax credit update today, but the data isn't quite ready so we'll bring that back in July.

Kim asked for a quick history of the program. Keith replied that it was created by the CTR Task Force in 2003 to bring innovation to the concept of trip reduction. Private entrepreneurs were a big part of the program from the beginning, but it's since expanded to include CTR implementers, transit agencies, employers, and local governments. One of the bigger issues facing the program today is the natural tension that exists between the innovative nature of the program itself and the bottom line. One of the problems with

innovation is that there are certainly chances for failure; also, it's harder to measure. Some of the things we want to do this summer as we move forward with assessing the program is figure out what worked, what didn't, what we can change, what we can expand upon, and what we should eliminate.

Hiep Tran noted that the program is currently funded at \$2.5 million. Presently there are 30 program grants in place. Ted asked about the success rates of the grantees. Brian replied that the success rates of the individual projects vary broadly, but that overall the program has been very successful. He also noted that innovative programs don't necessarily fit a standard model, but that they can help us achieve a broader range of objectives.

By statute, the program is focused on employer-based commute trips. The question now is whether to expand the program to include all trips- or all trips in a peak period- or to maintain the focus on commute trips. Expanding beyond CTR would require a legislative change, so we have to look at that. We don't have the data to go beyond commute trips, so if we're going to look at non-commute trips, it's going to take a lot of time.

Peter suggested that if we do a pilot program, we do one that includes or integrates non-commute trips, rather than one that focuses on them entirely. Marilyn noted- and Keith agreed- that we have a handle on how to measure affected sites, but not non-affected. Brian said that the new commuter calendar in development will provide a significant advance to that end.

The next question raised in the TRPP program assessment centers around whether it be expanded to incorporate VMT. One good reason to do so is that it falls in line with the climate change initiatives, but the obstacles are measurement and capturing that data. Kim asked if there was enough lead time to make the proposed changes. Keith replied that if we get the assessment finished this summer, there will be enough time to make the changes to the WAC, as well as change the marketing and application materials.

Kim asked about the long-term goals of the program, in terms of the money that's been set aside for it. Brian replied that he is looking at this from the viewpoint of managing demand, that we can develop a robust model which we can implement as part of a highway project. Marilyn noted that one of the great things about this program is that it provides a point of conversation within the worksite, that it generates new ideas and conversations you wouldn't get otherwise. Kim asked if there were splits available across the history of the program of demonstrating the ratio of private employers versus local governments. Keith offered to bring those details back to the board.

The third question speaks to the two main goals of the program: nurturing innovation and maintaining a trip reduction market. Keith noted that these goals are sometimes in conflict with one another in terms of measurement, funding, and project selection. The question is whether to stay with those goals and, if so, how we can better integrate them so that they work more effectively.

Kim noted that this approach should work so long as there's flexibility in terms of how we award the grants. Bill cautioned that we shouldn't create a new bucket of money along the way. Peter suggested we integrate a trip capacity market, and that we determine how best to move toward that market within the overall framework of demand management. Ted suggested that it be made clear to applicants that there are more points

available for innovation. Karen Parkhurst suggested that there be more dialogue on the shift from the emphasis on local governments to regional governments. Peter noted that the most successful innovative programs are those that integrate several existing programs.

The fourth question deals with the allocation of TRPP funds. Currently, ten percent is set aside for the central Puget Sound region, another ten percent for the rest of the state, and the balance can be allocated anywhere. One idea WSDOT has considered is 20 percent splits for I-5, I-405/SR 167, the Spokane corridors, and the Vancouver corridors, with the balance going elsewhere in the state. It was widely agreed upon among the group that TRPP should be focused on the criteria of innovation, likelihood of success, and geographic diversity, and that we shouldn't allocate by corridor.

The next question relates to prioritizing projects in advance of construction. The WSDOT staff recommendation is to market the program along the corridor where the project will take place. Mike cautioned that we need to simplify, that we need to be careful of overlaps. Peter mentioned that he likes the "market to" language. Marilyn agreed, and added that that criterion is already built into the plan in another piece.

The final question touches on the TRPP cap and the definition of cost effectiveness. Right now, the cap on cost per reduced trip is \$460. The recommendation is to take the cap off and, instead, let the market decide at what level are the costs per trip of the most attractive proposals. The statute states that when you provide these grants, you must consider the cost of adding local capacity. Taking the cap off allows for the bids to reflect the difference in cost to construct in different areas around the state.

Bill noted that the number is good for giving employers a point of reference. Ted referenced the CTR report to the Legislature, saying that the numbers vary dramatically. Mike asked if we should revisit the \$460 number and whether it's still the accurate figure. The number was developed by Brian, modeled after a PSRC formula. Keith noted that coming out of the congestion audit we were told we should be paying more per trip, closer to \$1,000.

The next question asks whether TRPP should prioritize zero-VMT modes. The recommendation is to develop strategies to promote telework programs. Marilyn cautions against emphasizing one mode over another.

The final question balances maintained trips against new trips across multiyear projects. Our recommendation is to do away with the annual performance payment and just deal with the baseline and final measurement. Peter noted that we should be careful to promote sustainability and, within that, maintenance.

Keith concluded by saying that we'll come back in August with an update. Kim asked that we bring a sample copy of the application at that time.

Draft legislative package

Kim began by citing the efforts, time, and flexibility of several board members and staff. There have been about five meetings over the last several months, but a couple over the last month. We're trying to get everything together before August. We've identified and developed our core priorities- now we need to get ready to start packaging and messaging.

Keith suggested we work in terms of priorities, asking the board to identify at least a top two as we go through this. Peter's requested that we get the VMT data from Ed Hillsman. Keith wants to bring that data to the next meeting.

The proposal is to increase base CTR funding to \$13.9 million for the next biennium. Liz reminded the group that revenues will be down. Page asked why the figures do not include funding for the RTPO's. Keith replied that this is just to fund the strategies, not the plans. Even though the RTPO's have an expanded administrative role in this proposal, there is no actual funding for them.

The TRPP program was funded at \$2.5 million last biennium. The recommendation is to continue funding at this level. There are presently no other recommendations, as the program is being reevaluated at this time. Peter asked what our timing for the TRPP evaluation is. Keith replied that we're tying in data from other programs to help apply context.

The tax credit program is currently funded at \$5.5 million per biennium. The proposal is to change the credit so that it's driven more toward smaller employers that haven't taken the credit before. Brian asked about deferrals, which he thought we'd done away with. Bill replied that this shouldn't be an ongoing benefit but something to get employers started with a program to provide employee incentives. The recommendation is to look at the range and figure out what makes sense.

The staff recommendation for the current Vanpool program model is to increase funding in the next biennium to \$13.8 million and to add an FTE. The sharp increase in funding is to an overwhelming need not only for more vans, but for maintenance as well.

The Park and Ride funding proposal is for \$1.8 million. Short term strategies, pilot projects, and staff support are all built into the request. Also, some 5,000 additional park and ride spaces are sought, and without building. The hope here is to fill this need using existing facilities through the lease-lot program.

The expanded program piece for vanpool funding needs further discussion by the committee and the board, so there are no recommendations here yet.

With regards to the TDM strategies for schools study, we are not looking at additional funding at this time. Kim, Brian, and Dan Carlson will meet with Senator Haugen on July 18 to discuss this program.

The final part of the package is the role of the CTR Board and whether we'll address VMT reduction and non-commute trips. Peter mentioned he is comfortable dropping this from the legislative agenda this time around. It was agreed that this is not the year for "rebranding".

The committee has identified its top two priorities, which are Vanpool and GTEC. At the time, Peter didn't weigh in on the straw vote, as he was hoping for more VMT data. He added that we need to package these and present them with an overall message that speaks to the issues of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. Brian noted that these are two very different programs in scope and purpose.

Kim voiced some concern about getting too much in one area and not enough in others, citing GTEC as potentially not fully developed enough for the Legislature's liking. She added that our supporting pieces need to be woven in carefully, because we don't want a lopsided, vanpool-slanted outcome. Page voiced her support for the base program.

Liz touched on land use planning. Bill emphasized that the demand is not being met, and that it's pricing that is driving the demand, as it's always been. He suspects the Legislature will go in this direction, because this provides solutions immediately, and they should understand the importance of that. Brian replied that we need to be sure we present a very balanced argument that addresses both the near and long term.

Mike emphasized that the base program should be our number one priority, but we have a tremendous opportunity to change people's behavior by getting them into the vanpools we can make available. Peter said we need to demonstrate how these pieces fit together: base, vanpool, GTEC, and TRPP, with mobility and greenhouse gas reduction as the driver behind them. These components fit together, and we must present it that way. Ted, speaking from a business-centric view, suggested putting this on one page, as concisely as possible, and that we pare down the pitch so that it becomes an easy argument to make. Kim suggested we demonstrate it programmatically, or perhaps by legislative district.

Bill said that we should also not turn away from the biggest source of trips reduced: carpooling. He suggested we reformat this chart to emphasize carpooling as an enormous part of the pitch. Brian added that transit is at capacity, and that we should emphasize vanpooling and carpooling. Marilyn reiterated that our responsibility to the Legislature is to present both near and long term solutions.

Keith stated this is a package we're mutually reinforcing. There's messaging that needs to go with the package- short-, mid- and long-term wins. He added that even if this is a package deal, we still need to determine whether we are prepared to prioritize. Peter emphasized that we have the metrics and leverage in place, based on what the Governor has put forth. He added that we don't just have to ask for it- we can demand it, because we've been mandated to do it. Brian suggested that we still be prepared to make a percentage split, because it's a contingency we're very likely to be faced with.

Motion: A motion was entertained for the Legislative committee to look at the messaging and terminology for support of a unified program, in time for the next meeting. The motion carried.

Board business

The WSTA leadership retreat took place over the last couple days. Mike brought a handout to share with the group, which was prepared by Katy Taylor.

The next board meeting will be held in Seattle. The Legislative committee will meet either July 8 or July 10.

Meeting adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.