

**DRAFT**  
**Commute Trip Reduction Board**  
Meeting Summary  
July 25, 2008

Urban Mobility Group  
Rainier Square, Third Floor conference room  
1301 Fifth Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98101

**Board Members Present:** Brian Lagerberg, Aurora Crooks, Matt Ransom, Kim Becklund, Matt Hansen, Charlie Howard, Liz Warman, Ted Horobiowski, Marilyn Young Skogland, Bill Roach, Joyce Phillips, Mike Harbour, Peter Hurley, and Page Scott.

**Board Members Not Present:** Robin Rettew.

**WSDOT Staff:** Kathy Johnston, Keith Cotton, Casey Kanzler, Ed Hillsman, Hiep Tran, and Amber Nguyen.

**Audience:** Karen Parkhurst, Thurston Regional Planning Council; Jennifer Hass, Community Transit; Mark Melnyk, Community Transit; Debbie Anderson, Community Transit; Steve Gerritson, Enterprise Seattle; Grace Crunican, Seattle DOT; Mike Estey, Seattle DOT; Maggi Lubov, City of Tukwila; Kevin Desmond, King County Metro; David Lantry; King County Metro; Anne Ward-Ryan, King County Metro; Emily Allen, King County Metro; Peter Thein, WSTA; Monica Whitman, City of Kent; Ryan Bayne, Downtown Seattle Association; Dave Dillman, Downtown Seattle Association/Urban Mobility Group; and Diane Wiatr, City of Tacoma.

**Introductions and Board Business**

Brian began by going over “Reinvent Your Commute” a new public education campaign WSDOT is developing with WSTA, businesses, and other partners. The five elements to the program are a media campaign; park and pool lots; a do-it-yourself commuter guide; the Governor’s Commute Smart Awards; and the Rideshareonline.com upgrade and promotion. The reinstatement of the Governor’s Commute Smart Awards will take place at Public Transportation Conference on September 10. Sponsorship opportunities for inclusion in the campaign are available. If anyone should have any questions about the campaign, they should speak to Keith for any further information.

Peter asked about the Rideshareonline.com upgrade. Brian replied that his understanding was the WSDOT’s procurement contracts office was to give its final comments by noon today.

**Seattle GTEC report**

Matt Hansen introduced the GTEC representatives: Ryan Bayne, Vice President of the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA); Grace Crunican, Director of Seattle DOT; and Kevin Desmond, General Manager of King County Metro.

Ryan began by discussing the Downtown Transportation Alliance (DTA), a partnership between DSA, Seattle DOT, King County Metro, and Sound Transit. The DTA serves as a venue for the downtown business community and transportation agencies to come together to discuss transportation policy and strategy. Specifically, the DTA has established a goal of a six percent reduction in drive-alone rates in what Ryan calls “center city Seattle”. As he pointed out, the Seattle central business district is already the

largest and densest in the state, and is expected to generate another 69,000 jobs in center city by the year 2020.

Roughly half of downtown employees use an alternative mode to get to work. However, even if downtown Seattle maintains its 50% employee drive-alone rate, it'll have neither the road space nor the parking space to accommodate the 20,000 additional SOV's projected by 2015. With the looming possibility of the removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, this reduction in drive-alone rates is imperative. Ryan also talked about a parking program that allows employees who generally drive alone every day to purchase half-month parking passes and receive a transit pass to use for the balance of the month.

Grace then spoke on the importance of land use in the implementation of the city's transportation policies and strategies. She also mentioned that the city and its partners continue to develop ways to make mass transit a more convenient and attractive alternative to driving and parking in the downtown core. Grace added that the DTA maintains regular communications with downtown developers, keeping them apprised of transportation strategies as they relate to land use policy. She reiterated that there is a plan in place to deal with removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

Kevin began by noting that a big piece of developing these public/private partnerships fell into place once the business community— developers, real estate, and downtown employers— began to embrace the idea of alternative transportation strategy. It was then, he added, that they realized how important public transit is to their success. Kevin said that this partnership with the business community can be traced to the success of the statewide CTR program, with the GTEC program serving as the logical extension between them, furthering the interests of the business community and the city.

Bill asked Kevin about the lack of transit system capacity. Kevin replied that the Sound Transit vote this fall could help. Secretary Hammond offered an amendment yesterday which will expand service by adding 30 buses to key roadways in the region. However, Kevin noted that transit will not be able to keep up with demand at its current funding level.

Charlie asked Ryan if we have a good idea who constitutes the 35-40% SOV market share in downtown Seattle. Ryan replied that the first phase of the GTEC process is to study the identifying characteristics of SOV drivers. Grace added that they may be able to identify buildings or worksites where people drive alone rather than individual employees. She also commented that leased parking is going down, while its cost is going up.

Charlie asked about the residential component of the equation. Grace replied that they are working with developers to eliminate the longstanding policy of parking minimums for new developments and are moving instead toward parking maximums, adding that parking space requests at the newer developments are going down. She noted that the pedestrian master plan is being developed and the bike master plan is being implemented.

Kim asked that this panel compile a list of employer and business contacts that they could present to the board. That these contacts could potentially function as champions of the GTEC cause in downtown Seattle as the board moves forward with its legislative agenda.

Dave Dillman of both the DSA and the Urban Mobility Group (UMG) offered the board an overview of the GTEC area in downtown Seattle. There are 55,000 residents, 235,000 employees, and 8,000 businesses represented in center city Seattle. Approximately 250 square blocks of downtown constitute the GTEC. The marketing and communications plan is in its final draft, and is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

Matt Hansen then touched on the four identified tiers of the market audience: all commuters, affected CTR employers, unaffected CTR employers, and the buildings themselves. The goal is to construct a way of contacting all commuters, as they— along with the buildings that house their offices— represent the biggest opportunity.

Dave stressed that the group has everything in place to be able to effectively reach the goals laid out in the GTEC agreement. The city and UMG initiated the GTEC contract in April. UMG has also just hired a new executive director, who will begin working in August. A tag line for the campaign has been created— “Commute Seattle: Live More, Drive Less”. Surveying efforts continue and are on pace to meet the deadline laid out in the goal. The business roll-out will take place in September, with both Mayor Greg Nickels and King County Executive Ron Sims expected to participate. At the roll-out forum, downtown business executives will be asked to take a pledge to promote commuting alternatives.

Matt Ransom asked about the organizational structure of the UMG. Dave replied that the new executive director will handle all of the operational duties. Also, there are a manager and two support administrators who handle all of the GTEC work. It’s those staff, Dave added, that will be “on the ground”, working one-on-one with unaffected employers. Matt Hansen added that the UMG is working collaboratively with CTR-affected sites as well.

Peter asked if there are future plans to move GTEC from outreach and education to policy and infrastructure. Dave replied that the survey period could go a long way to helping identify those kinds of next steps. Dave also offered to send the marketing plan to the board.

### **June meeting summary**

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

### **Public comment**

None.

### **CTR Tax Credit assessment**

Keith began by noting that there is a board requirement written into the CTR law stipulating it look at the tax credit and make recommendations on funding levels as part of the legislative report. The board has three main questions: what is the effectiveness of tax credit (performance of employers that take the credit vs. those that don’t); should we reduce the size of the maximum credit an employer can apply for; and should we limit the credit to new applicants vs. ongoing applicants.

Hiep Tran then walked the group through the data findings from analysis provided by the Department of Revenue (DOR), compiled from 2004-07. The data indicates that there is a

very high percentage of employers applying for \$1-5K. Brian noted that the data we get does not come to WSDOT with CTR sites identified, so this represents our best estimation. Ed Hillsman commented that the credit isn't always applied to an employer's affected site, and that we can sort this data only by employer, not by worksite. Keith noted that the size of the credit does not necessarily correspond to the size of employer. He added that the program has changed from more of a "first come, first served" model to a model in which qualified applicants receive a prorated amount with the balance deferred to later years.

Bill commented that every attempt to map the locations of employers using the tax credit and where the money is going should be made. Ed noted that much of the information provided by DOR is proprietary, and that there are limitations to the data-sharing agreement between WSDOT and DOR. He suggested the board send a letter to DOR to address lack of information provided.

Mike asked if the employers will get the deferred credit at some point. Brian replied that the board moved in 2005 to stop the deferments because the amounts were getting too exorbitant, and that the deferments that exist today have been carried forward from 2005.

Keith then spoke on the question of the effectiveness of the tax credit for CTR employers that take credit vs. those that don't. He noted that there's not a significant difference between them. Marilyn commented that, despite the difficulty in measuring the tax credit's effectiveness, it is still something that can be used as incentive or marketing tool for employers.

Keith then spoke on the question of whether the maximum credit amount should be reduced. Right now, the statute limits the credit to \$200K per employer. WSDOT staff have worked up some alternate options geared more toward smaller employers. We've developed four options, ranging between \$10-100K. Keith noted that it still appears as though the 2007 applicants could all still be covered by these smaller amounts.

Keith then spoke on the question of whether we limit the credit to new applicants vs. ongoing applicants. In the 2006-07 cycle, there were very few new applicants. If we limit the credit just to new applicants, we'll be looking at a much smaller pool of candidates.

Aurora mentioned that, in Spokane County, many employers are opting to go with the federal tax credit. Peter noted that the Legislature has asked us to look at how effective the program is, and that we need to do a better job of presenting a compelling case as to why this program should continue to be funded. He added that we may want to consider putting money back on the table for other programs. Brian commented that the original purpose of the credit was to bring in smaller employers without having to implement the CTR statute, and asked whether we have other strategies in place—specifically GTEC—which serve the same purpose. Ted cautioned that we need to demonstrate a clear tie to benefits received if we ask for more money from the Legislature.

Bill suggested we look at ways to package the state credit with federal tax credit use them as a strong marketing tool, and a smaller sub-committee convene to look at it. Liz suggested that GTEC representatives be involved to help determine how this can best be marketed to smaller employers. Matt Hansen suggested the Legislative committee be the group to move forward with this.

### **Adopt Legislative package**

Brian began the discussion by noting some of the significant challenges we face in adjusting our Legislative priorities. The current financial reality is that we are facing significant shortfalls in the next biennium. He emphasized that we must be clear as we prioritize what we're asking for, we need a very well structured communication plan, and we must ensure our ask is in line with WSDOT's strategic plan as it relates to demand management. Our best chance for success, he added, is to compliment our current projects and WSDOT's initiatives. Mike suggested the opposite, that we "go for broke" with the ask, that we try for everything we can.

Keith then walked the group through the latest iteration of the package. Included in this version are estimates on VMT reductions, as requested by Peter; the addition of two pilot projects, the Mobility Efficiency Rating System and the Land Use and Transportation project; and broader policy and funding considerations for the following cycle.

(Joyce?) suggested we have a representative from the Cascade Land Conservancy come to a future meeting and talk to group about similar pilot projects they are doing. Matt Hansen suggested we look at what other entities might already be doing projects similar to these pilots. Bill suggested we look to partner with others in a better position to carry these pilots forward.

Ted suggested—and Kim agreed—we not drop the schools and telework pilot studies altogether, as the Legislature funded them last time. Keith noted that we can include language that those two studies will produce reports with recommendations within a certain timeframe.

The conversation then shifted toward the Park and Ride component, with that group generally agreeing that, even though the board is not obligated by the current statute to include Park and Ride in its agenda, it is of enough importance that we must continue to push for support and funding as best we can. It is also important we continue to seek out partners who are interested in helping. We should also look to determine how best to leverage the support of those partners as we develop the agenda.

**Motion:** A motion was entertained to adopt the package as a draft. The motion carried.

Kim suggested the Legislative committee meet to discuss prioritization strategies. We will look to have two meetings. The package will be sent out via email and comments are expected to be submitted in a timely manner. Kim also suggested we check on the formal formatting required for the official submittal.

### **Discuss CTR funding policy**

This item was deferred for further study.

### **Action items and next steps**

No discussion.

### **Adjournment**

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