

Meeting Summary

ATTENDEES

Working Group Members

Carol Moser, Transportation Commission
Elmira Forner, Transportation Commission
Latisha Hill, Transportation Commission
Bill LaBorde, Transportation Choices
Elizabeth Robbins, WSDOT
Brian Smith, WSDOT
Robin Rettew, Office of Financial Management
Christina O’Claire, King Country Metro (representing transit agencies)
Charlie Howard, Puget Sound Regional Council
Nancy Hiteshue, Washington Roundtable
Karen Schmidt, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board
Gordon Rogers, Whatcom County Council of Governments
Gary Rowe, Washington Association of Counties
Gary Chandler, Association of Washington Business
Amber Carter, Association of Washington Business
Walt Olsen, County Road Administration Board

Scott Keller, Port of Benton, Benton County
(representing public ports)

Joyce Phillips, Department of Commerce
Bob Saunders, Department of Ecology
Chris Townsend, Puget Sound Partnership (by phone)
Natalie Zukowski, Committee Assistant, Senate Transportation Committee

Transportation Commission Staff

Reema Griffith
Paul Parker

Consultants

Bonnie Berk, BERK & ASSOCIATES
Allegra Calder, BERK & ASSOCIATES

AGENDA OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTIONS

Paul Parker welcomed the group and introduced Bonnie Berk, consultant and facilitator. Bonnie welcomed the group and asked members to introduce themselves and their organization, and to state why they are specifically interested in the WTP project and serving on this Advisory Group. Key points made were:

- My hope for this process is that it will help us identify and prioritize across competing priorities.
- It would be good to put an emphasis on connecting the state Plan to regional plans.
- CRAB noted the importance of local roads – most trips start and end there.
- Transit would like a greater role in the process. It was ignored in the last planning process.
- Group members would like a short, one paragraph update on the planning process that they could tailor and add to their upcoming annual reports.

- Members of the Joint Transportation Committee are likely to want a briefing on the process during the session.

ALIGNMENT WITH WSDOT PLANNING

Questions were asked about WSDOT's current highway system and multimodal planning efforts, and how they align with the WTP. Specific questions were identified and discussed regarding the timing and sequence of the various plans, and whether the multimodal plan will address local, county and transit needs. A concern expressed was that the strategies and policies identified through this process should not conflict with published lists of projects developed through the highway system or multimodal plans. It was also noted that some agencies are growing weary of the multiple requests for information that come out of these various planning processes. Key discussion points were:

- WSDOT will be reaching out to local, county and transit agencies to get data to conduct a trends analysis to discuss the condition of the system. There are statutory requirements for all these various plans – aviation, ferries etc. but the WTP is meant to be the broadest, overarching plan.
- RTPOs and MPOs don't necessarily buy into the state plan and there is a disconnect between urban and rural areas.
- MPO/RTPO plans are generally in synch with local comprehensive plans – they are required by law to be consistent, which helps.
- How do we integrate the new reality of climate and VMT into all these planning efforts?
- Make sure that the Legislature has their hands on WTP development, otherwise it will be ignored. Does this Plan have the statutory teeth to get WSDOT and others to plan under this umbrella?
- Support the legislative vision; their priorities are out there. Freight has good data for corridor planning from DOT and the counties but not the cities.
- If we can bring the cities and counties along that will help gain legislative support
- Regarding PSRC Vision 2040, the transportation strategy is being worked on now and should be adopted in May 2010.
- There was a project a few years back to streamline planning. Why can't we have the WTP and then the WSDOT modal plans, why is WSDOT now doing a multi-modal plan?
- After 2003-05 not much was done multi-modal wise. There are new aviation and ferries plans but the data in the other plans is outdated and the work has changed. WSDOT needs to communicate what priority investments need to be made and we don't want to rely on old data or the old federal authorization plan.
- At the federal level, the trend is for performance-based measures. We also need to reflect the state and federal climate change efforts.
- The state multi-modal plan is only reflective of facilities of state interest; it will not address all city/county road needs and issues.

ADVISORY GROUP OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Bonnie talked the Group through the proposed Operating Principles. There was general agreement on the principles as written, with the addition of a principle stating that all materials will be posted to the WTP website.

The Group also talked specifically about the issue of achieving consensus. The draft Operating Principles state that consensus is not expected, given the diversity of issues and interests being represented. Participants suggested that the Group should aim for consensus about the Plan vision, and at the policy issue and general policy direction level, but expect that at the implementation level there will be differences. After brief discussion, the Group agreed with this concept, and with the draft operating principles as presented.

DISCUSSION ISSUES: DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED, INTERMODAL WTP

The Group engaged in a facilitated discussion of current policy issues associated with developing an integrated, intermodal transportation system. A far-ranging, thoughtful discussion ensued, with diverse perspectives. As the discussion advanced, it became clear that the establishment of a framework will be critical to defining project parameters and moving the project forward to achieve the Transportation Commission's Plan objectives. The following comments and questions were discussed:

- We need to decide whether this is a comprehensive plan or a strategic plan – there are too many things on this list – what are the major things we want to address? Some suggestions: metropolitan mobility, financing, greenhouse gas standards, performance measures and outcomes
- The WTP historically has not addressed transit. Transit is a big piece of metropolitan mobility, but we need a more reliable and stable funding source than the sales tax – this is the major issue for transit
- Metropolitan mobility allows us to address VMT/GHG. In rural areas you don't have the same opportunities
- Rural safety is critical; this should be an issue in the Plan
- Connectivity with respect to geography is also important, it's not just about connections between modes
- We have an opportunity in this state because we currently have people in key positions in D.C. We need to align with the federal direction. The National Transportation Policy Project (NTPP) report, [Performance Driven](#) addressed housing, land use and transportation linkages. The best way to get federal funding will be to align with federal policy.
- Consider non-motorized transportation issues – bike and pedestrian. Also public health – the impact the built environment, including transportation choices, has on obesity.
- Metropolitan mobility is where VMT/GHG is concentrated so you have to address that. Not only in the WTP but in other plans as well. The proposed [Oberstar Transportation Bill](#) would have all MPO plans address GHG. Agree that we need a shorter, more strategic list of issues to be addressed in the Plan.
- We need a strategic agenda – a set of strategic issues that need to be resolved. A framework of policy goals and action statements. We should dig out the old Commission policies; those were similar to what we are talking about now
- What if we had a policy statement with the strategic issues underneath. We don't have to deal with everything but we could agree to work on a few things, like possibly performance measures
- Too much information will dilute the message. The [Oregon Plan](#) has three goals only. The federal government is focused on performance – what did we get for the money invested? Performance measures are hard, but maybe we can glean something from the NTPP. How do

you measure connectivity? There are some measures that are missing and it would be great if the WTP could move us forward.

- I like the idea of communicating: What? Where? And How to make it happen? How to measure success? What are the issues to integrate across modes and jurisdictions
- It would be helpful to talk to RTPO/MPO coordinators to find out what they think is missing
- Speaking of intermodal integration, getting King County Metro to meet a ferry is impossible because of the way they do their scheduling. For freight it is a different set of issues – getting from the port to rail to the distribution center. Zoning is a consideration as trucks going to grocery stores in different jurisdictions may have to send two trucks due to local restrictions on delivery hours. Better coordination of this type of zoning would help with GHG goals.
- Where does VMT fit into this strategy? How do we meet the goals set by the Legislature? I think it's a 50% reduction but PSRC predicts we may only get to 16%. This could be the elephant in the room
- We could focus on crosscutting issues: 1) climate change and 2) transportation and land use. Climate change really cuts across different sectors, including utilities. For example, if we electrify transportation then how do we pay for roads? Transportation and land use are often uncoordinated.
- We can't lose sight of the statutory requirement for the WTP to be comprehensive, but our work can be strategic. From our last meeting, there seemed to be points of agreement on the following issues:
 - facilitate freight movement
 - preserve/maintain the existing system
 - shift to other transportation modes (transit, walking) etc.
 - an alternative to the gas tax is needed
 - there will be different solutions for different parts of the state
- What if we established three policy principles similar to 1) livable healthy communities 2) a vibrant economy and 3) strategic investments; and put topics under each one, for example preservation.
- This raises questions like: how do you define livable and vibrant? How do you measure it?
- When you narrow it down to three, it could become so broad as to become meaningless or requiring so many specifics under each one that you are back to a long list.
- With respect to VMT, it is in the state law and this is transportation planning so we need to address this fairly prominently. GHG reductions could be achieved with clean vehicles. VMT is the nexus; a cross-cutting issue, and should be a focus
- We need to acknowledge that this is the first time we are looking at climate change, GHG, VMT etc. When I worked at the local level, I never looked at the WTP, so we definitely need to coordinate with RTPO/MPOs.
- GHG is the threat and VMT is one mitigation strategy. I worry about separating that. We have had tough discussions about how to talk to the public about reducing driving. What is the impact on our economy?
- The point was that we can't get the GHG goals without reducing VMT and since it's a transportation plan we need to emphasize this.

- MPOs and RTPOs need to be the biggest advocates of technology shifts and clean fuels
- Every part of the state is different and will want a different approach. For Eastern Washington, VMT reduction strategies are threatening but if you had a menu of options you could talk about zoning for freight rather than reducing car trips. This approach could potentially help with legislative buy-off.
- VMT was singled out in [HB 2815](#) because it is a critical strategy. Everything we know about new/clean technologies and fuels (adoption, penetration, availability etc.) tells us that we need to tackle all three strategies – clean fuels, technology and VMT – this is why it is included in the federal reauthorization bill. In 2005, Washington passed California-style emissions legislation; in 2006 it was renewable fuels legislation; and in 2008, VMT was the third piece of legislation.
- This discussion shows exactly why this is a good issue. It's cross cutting and there are lots of opinions. I'm not sure what WSDOT, PSRC, WSTC can actually do about it since they lack authority to solve the problem.
- A tolling authority is one approach that could have some effect.
- Can the information on VMT be made available? I have no idea if improving connectivity would improve VMT by 1% or 10%.
- The 2008 Transportation Implementation Working Group (TIWG) [Climate Action Team report](#) is a good resource. Land use planning is important – it create nodes that can be served through transit. Implementation of tolling, Commute Trip Reduction programs etc. all reduce trips.
- What if we had strategies to address these policy statements, followed up with proposed incentives, such as grant programs, rather than a hammer. People are tired of paying taxes, tolls etc.
- Let's be bold and go to the Legislature with reasons why we want the Plan to be strategic and not comprehensive (more in line with federal direction, implementation can be done at the local level). We don't want to micromanage the MPOs and RTPOs
- VMT is also being discussed as a potential funding strategy. Freight VMT is currently down because of the economy, but our goal is to increase freight movement.
- Freight is specifically excluded from HB 2815.
- WSDOT is charged with looking at a number of VMT issues and will issue an interim report in December 2009. The report, [Moving Cooler](#), while controversial, has some good information. There is no magic bullet. The [National Academies of Sciences](#) is also a good resource. Providing incentives for good land use decisions is key, but we need to be aware of unintended consequences.
- The benefit of having all the players here is figuring out how the various interests can work for each other, rather than against each other. For example, increasing freight mobility and decreasing car trips where possible can work together.
- The [Land Use and Climate Change Committee](#) recommended focusing infrastructure money on areas where it makes sense to have growth (this included transportation and sewers and schools).
- Transit struggles with coordination. With the Viaduct project, we were brought in at the beginning which was great, but on SR 520 we are involved after the fact. We should help inform the process right from the start even though we are not state funded. Coordination should be

driven by something other than funding. We do work closely with Sound Transit and transit agencies will be presenting on the Viaduct as one voice.

- Choices are critical; some people have them and some do not. Eastern Washington has fewer choices for how to get around. People also make choices about where to live and where to work and we need to let them exercise those choices, not limit them. VMT is about limiting choices and we should work to expand choice.
- A clear argument for why transit is at the table needs to be included as we craft solutions for how to move people from place to place. We should consider how much will people pay for a way to get around. It might be that people will pay a premium for a service we have not yet thought of.
- Governance is key. The individual priorities of the various groups are not all in synch.
- Beyond our own priorities we all have an incentive to make our state system work. The reality check is how is it working for people?

CONCLUSION: ROUNDTABLE COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

The Group was asked for final thoughts or comments, either on today's discussion or the Plan itself.

- I would request that the Commissioners provide some direction. Set the vision statement; you are the leaders.
- I enjoyed the conversation and heard three concepts that we might be able to work with -- developing an action oriented menu of options approach.
 - Livable healthy communities (vision)
 - Reduce GHG (goal)
 - CTR strategies, land use, tolling, non motorized transportation (strategies)
 - Creating vibrant economies (vision)
 - Efficient movement of goods (goal)
 - All weather roads, preservation/maintenance (strategies)
 - Keeping people safe (vision)
 - Rural roads (goal)
- The Land Use and Climate Change Committee was tasked with looking at transportation and their [recommendations](#) dovetail with this. There are other materials on their [website](#)
- Can we narrow our scope down to some agreed upon number of strategies and then graphically depict the areas of the state (maybe quadrants) to illustrate where they would be viable and show that it is not a one size fits all strategy.
- The proposed summary is great and I agree about getting to agreement on a vision statement. Today's discussion was somewhat unfocused. The bottom line is funding.
- We need to develop policy measurement for the legislature to guide decisions.
- Short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals are a good blueprint.
- I would vote for a strategic approach over a comprehensive plan. We should ensure that we have some number of action items. I'm not sure if it's 3 or 6, though I'm pretty sure it's not 6. Geography is important – we'll need to acknowledge that.
- Let's weigh incentives versus a hammer carefully. When you create incentives, you get winners and losers and equity becomes a concern.

- Everyone has individual interests but the overarching vision of the state is the key. We are all tied to the economy and want a vibrant economy. The WTP can be supportive of that, and we need to communicate this to the Legislature. A policy goal on economic growth is not in the current legislation. Let's focus on the crosscutting issues – land use, climate change, performance measures.
- This is not a small job. Geographic solutions are important and there are some strange bedfellows – for example, island communities and Eastern Washington communities. Land use is a big topic so we need to be sure we bite off things that are chewable.
- I like the proposed framework. I think we should make an action item to add a 6th goal to the legislative goals so that we can get focused. We should be wary of being too prescriptive.

NEXT STEPS AND NEXT MEETINGS

Next Advisory Group Meeting

The next meeting will be in Seattle on November 24, 2009.

Next Steps

The next meeting will focus on discussion of the Plan framework and the findings from the Joint Transportation Committee's Funding Alternatives Study.