

### Meeting Summary

#### ATTENDEES

##### Working Group Members

Carol Moser, Transportation Commission  
Elmira Forner, Transportation Commission  
Latisha Hill, Transportation Commission (by phone)  
Bob Saunders, Department of Ecology  
Amber Carter, Association of Washington Business  
Gary Chandler, Association of Washington Business  
Egils Milbergs, Washington Economic Development Commission  
Joyce Phillips, Department of Commerce  
Ashley Probart, Association of Washington Cities (by phone)  
Gordon Rogers, Whatcom County Council of Governments

Gary Rowe, Washington Association of Counties  
Brian Smith, WSDOT  
Karen Schmidt, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board  
Kirk Vinish, Lummi Tribe

##### Transportation Commission Staff

Paul Parker

##### Consultants

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

##### Other Attendees

Stephen Kiehl, PSRC  
Matthew Kitchen, PSRC

#### AGENDA OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTIONS

Bonnie Berk welcomed the group and provided an overview of the agenda. Members introduced themselves and their organization, and noted any recent transportation milestones.

#### UPDATE ON WTP BRIEFINGS

The group shared information on three recent WTP presentations that were made in November. The presentations were made by the Commissioners, staff and the consultant team, to the Joint Transportation Committee, the Washington State Association of Counties Annual Meeting, and the Washington Public Ports Association Annual Meeting. Comments from the meeting participants during the briefings included:

- “Pictures are worth 1,000 words,” and pictures received almost as much attention from the audiences as the text of the presentation. Based on comments received the WTP team will revise the presentation to include more photos of passenger rail, more cars, rural county roads, agricultural deliveries, and ferries.

- Adding an Economic Vitality goal to the five legislative goals was supported generally. House Chair Judy Clibborn commented that “everything we do in transportation is connected to economic vitality.”
- It was noted that the New York Times op-ed columnist Bob Herbert recently wrote about the viability of the nation as a whole and the importance of transportation. We need to help the general public understand why funding is important, and help them understand the connection between infrastructure and the economy.

## PLANNING CONTEXT – PSRC TRANSPORTATION 2040 UPDATE

Stephen Kiehl of the PSRC gave a presentation on the Transportation 2040 Preferred Draft Alternative. He noted that the PSRC started the update process in 2007, and is on target for adoption in 2010. This updates the 2001 plan and adds another 10 years to extend the Plan to 2040. The Transportation 2040 Plan is a long-range multi-modal plan that is organized by decades, with the first decade being the most concrete. Vision 2040, the PSRC regional strategy for accommodating growth, was adopted in 2008 and Transportation 2040 considers many of the same growth challenges. One challenge, for example, is the addition of another 1.5 million people and 1 million jobs to the region by 2040. Other points made include:

- The PSRC conducted a 1,200 person random phone survey to gather public opinions on the direction and issues, such as willingness to pay tolls, etc. The results of the survey are posted to the PSRC’s website; the survey findings turned out to be very close to what the agency had heard in public meetings.
- The PSRC is looking at a modest VMT charge in 2020, and considering increasing it over time. In the longer term, it was noted that if the region can implement full system tolling it can move away from the gas tax to a more user-based and predictable funding source.
- **Congestion and Mobility Strategy** is a 4-phased approach focusing on: Efficient land use patterns to lower demand for travel; Managing demand; Managing systems and operations to make it more efficient; and adding capacity strategically – leaning heavily on non-highway modes.
- **GHG Strategy** encompasses land use; user fees to facilitate changing patterns and behaviors; a broader range of non-SOV choices; and technology, including clean fuels, and changing fleets.
- **Land Use Planning** -- a strategy to integrate tribes and the military into the fold is needed to better coordinate planning across the region
- Some of the strategies will require changes in state and federal law. The PSRC has a legislative agenda and will work on that for 2011 session.

The following questions were posed by the Group, with comments and discussion points shown below:

*What strategies do you have for land use planning? And which ones will work outside King County?*

- We are relying on implementation of the regional growth strategy, focusing growth in urban places to concentrate demand for public transportation service. It’s a much bigger topic than we can cover now, we could get the growth management staff involved as well.

*User fees are intended to reduce VMT and through tolls or pricing to move people to non-SOV modes. But what about electric vehicles?*

- If you are driving an electric vehicle you may be helping with GHG, but it doesn’t help congestion and that is a big problem for this region.

*I think those are the right issues to address in the context of GHG, but there is a belief that the technology piece could leap us much further ahead.*

- Yes. Regarding sustainable funding, we will continue to rely on traditional sources for some time. We know that there will be tolls on SR 520, the Tacoma Narrows bridge and SR 167.
- Most of our planned costs are related to preservation, maintenance and operations, not to adding capacity. We are also proposing transit-related investments
- The strategy recognizes that we will have to do something else to keep pace with revenue needs. New thinking is needed about transportation financing.

#### *Other comments*

- My concern is that you talk about VMT but are you talking about freight? The public doesn't understand freight and its dependence on transportation but they expect the grocery stores to be stocked.
- The goal of the WTP is to have many people involved in the discussion to address the problems and help identify strategies to address our challenges.

### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION #1: WTP 2030 VISION**

The Group broke into small groups of 2-3 people and discussed the draft Vision statement approved by the Commission at their October 2009 meeting. That draft Vision Statement is:

*Washington's transportation network connects people and communities, fostering commerce and operating seamlessly across boundaries and modes as an environmentally and financially sustainable system.*

Revisions to the draft Vision by each group are below:

#### **Group 1**

*Washington's transportation network connects people and communities safely and conveniently, fosters commerce and operates seamlessly across boundaries and modes as an environmentally and financially sustainable system.*

#### **Group 2**

*Execute a plan that by 2030 connects people and communities, support the efficient and productive movement of commerce, operates seamlessly across jurisdictional boundaries is multi-modal and employs innovative technology as well as infrastructure improvements that are sensitive to the environment and is financially sustainable.*

#### **Group 3**

*Washington's transportation network connects people and communities, fostering commerce and operating seamlessly across boundaries and modes.*

#### **Group 4**

*We are in a time of change that presents unique opportunities and challenges. Therefore, we shall show respect for all communities in the state by reflecting their values in transportation decisions. We will accomplish by respecting the environment, supporting commerce, and sustaining the growth of the state.*

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION #2: PREVIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS & STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY GOALS**

The Advisory Group divided into three small groups to discuss the six policy goal areas. Each group was responsible for two goal areas. The groups started by brainstorming accomplishments since 2006, and then identified strategies for each goal.

### **Preservation and Stewardship Goals**

#### ***Accomplishments since 2006***

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 – state and local level projects
- Counties – maintained about 70% of their staffing level – preservation may be the only thing they are able to work on going forward
- Grey Note Book accomplishments include: operational improvements;
- urban partnership for 520, active traffic management; gas tax – state accomplishments
- Local option sales tax has been directed at transit
- There are local options that already exist – why are they not used? Political will? Voting requirements? This should be explored

#### ***Strategies***

- VMT as a potential replacement for the gas tax to pay for maintenance. Is it stable? As costs go up, VMT goes down similar to what has happened during this economic cycle.
- Tolls for operation - directed at improving the system and capacity
- Performance standards – define what you are trying to achieve, then measure and report on progress
- Bottlenecks and chokepoints – work to understand the cause and then fix them if they can be affected through transportation-related improvements
- How to improve the effectiveness of GMA?
- Funding for corridors implies an exclusive focus on state routes – this should not be the intention
- Recognize that this is a system with local and state roads and multiple modes
- Local and state planning should be well integrated; this includes transit and highways
- Better integrate the modes – force the breaking down of silos

### **Safety Goal**

#### ***Accomplishments since 2006***

- Downward trend in highway fatalities (may have increased in rural areas)
- Cable barriers installed
- Rumble strips
- Increased seat belt use
- Roundabouts – positive for many, but negative for freight and fire
- Private chain installers

#### ***Strategies***

- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Reduce roadside hazards
- Continue low cost improvements
- Adequate lighting
- Grade separation
- Improve driver education for teens and older drivers
- Invest in safe design

## **Mobility Goal**

### ***Accomplishments since 2006***

- Tacoma Narrows Bridge operating
- US 12 – 4 lanes
- Sound Transit Link Light Rail
- North Spokane Freeway

### ***Strategies***

- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Reduce lane weaves
- Synchronize traffic lights
- Public transportation between and to job centers
- Limit local ordinances that reduce freight mobility
- Cross Sound transportation – improve reliability and capacity
- Develop high speed rail system between BC and Portland
- Improve east-west passenger rail service
- Grade separation
- Eliminate substandard bridges/underpasses on freight corridors
- 3 lane (or better) I-5 border to border
- Address equal treatment for private transit
- Higher median dividers to reduce looky-loos

## **Environmental Quality & Health Goal**

### ***Accomplishments since 2006***

- Executive Order on climate change
- VMT goals in legislation
- GHG goals in legislation
- Creation of Puget Sound Partnership
- Electric car demonstration project
- I-5 electrification corridor
- Electric car legislation

### ***Strategies***

- Move more truck loads to rail
- All RTPO/MPO plans should have components to address health – i.e. diabetes, asthma, obesity
- Promote “complete streets”
- WSDOT guidelines shall promote pedestrian movement
- All transportation plans must include non-motorized element, GHG component, and VMT strategy
- Accelerate transition to electric transportation system i.e. state and local government as early adopters for their fleets; maintain state tax credit for electric vehicles; leverage smart grid technology
- Develop world’s greenest freight movement network – enhance multimodal transfer; packaging weight; use of electric generators for airlines/ships/big users of diesel
- Tie land use to transportation – concurrency requirements

## **Economic Vitality Goal**

### ***Accomplishments since 2006***

- Selected 520 Option A
- Improvements to border crossings – improved commerce
- Sound Transit opening from Sea-Tac
- Another Amtrak run (north-south)
- Everett HOV lanes
- I-5 HOV exits
- HOT lanes 167

## **Strategies**

- Improve speed of project delivery; reduce delays in permitting, reduce regulatory requirements at state and federal level; bring stakeholders into the process early
- Statewide system of all weather county roads
- Better connectivity east to west, including high speed rail
- Establish freight corridors with priority
- Greater use of information technology to move people at the right time and place; GPS navigators in cars

## **CONCLUSION: ROUNDTABLE COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS**

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

- There is an interesting intersection between funding and climate change/environment – how to ensure they do not work at cross purposes?
- How can the statewide Transportation Plan effectively inform counties and cities? – this is part of the challenge.
- Connections between land use and transportation are important; this includes rural areas related to agriculture, tourism, the wine industry etc.
- Several groups had the very same bullets in group discussions. We need to key in on these and figure out how to address them.
- Financing and achieving GHG reduction and an efficient transportation system are starting to intersect -- we need to take advantage of opportunities to work on this
- This is a good group that has been assembled. We need to put the stake in the ground on the future vision. The goal around this room is to take a look at things in a new way – there are some real changes going on at the local level. To get there, WTP needs teeth and there needs to be a requirement that all other plans comply with WTP. This might take legislation and more work on the part of the Commissioners.
- I welcome the Economic Vitality goal. Freight mobility is critical to our future, and to a green economy. The transportation system is a strategic leverage point for going green; I think we are bringing together some important stakeholders, including energy and information technology. Regarding the Vision, how can we humanize it and connect it to real people. What does it mean to the average citizen or business?
- Most of these problems would be minimized with better communication across jurisdictions – I encourage getting the discussion going, most of the projects will require partnerships.
- The Statewide plan needs to tie into local plans; it frustrates people when plans don't align.
- Transit needs to improve if you want to get people out of their vehicles. Technology as a solution – let's not push it before it gets here.
- Thanks to the Commissioners for really graciously and actively recognizing the role that the RTPOs and MPOs play in the state.

## **NEXT STEPS AND NEXT MEETINGS**

**Next Advisory Group Meeting:** will be held in Olympia on Monday morning, January 25, 2010.

### **Next Steps**

We will take this information and incorporate accomplishments and strategies into the Draft Plan.

Kirk Vinish, Gordon Rogers, Gary Rowe, Joyce Phillips, Karen Schmidt volunteered to be part of goal working groups, provided that much of the communication can be done by email.