

## MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee

### Meeting Summary for May 18, 2010

#### 1. Introductions

#### 2. Chair Report – Jeff Wilkens

Jeff informed members that the General Accountability Office (GAO) is visiting Washington State and some of the RTPOs, including NCRTPO as part of a fact-finding mission on non-metropolitan transportation planning, use of performance measures, and statewide planning issues. Jeff sent the GAO MPO questions to the MPO/RTPO directors.

**Action:** Jeff asked MPO/RTPOs directors to send any suggestions to him

NOTE: WSDOT submitted answers to an electronic version of the survey.

The February 23, 2010 Meeting Summary received consent approval.

#### 3. Federal and Legislative Updates

##### a. What's happening in D.C./National Organizations – Lon Wyrick & Charlie Howard

A brief discussion took place on reauthorization, with some in the room expressing an opinion that there may not be a new federal surface transportation bill before 2013. This creates a severe financial situation as the Highway Trust Fund cannot sustain the SAFETEA-LU level of spending.

Update on JOBS 2 and TIGER II – Kathleen Davis

The first step is developing the information for the pre-applications required by USDOT to determine eligibility for TIGER 2 funding. The following projects were selected to move forward towards TIGER 2 applications:

- Keller Ferry Replacement - \$9.6M
- Stormwater retrofit across the state - \$10M
- Livable Communities Projects (rural) - \$13M
- US2/Cascade IC Planning grant - \$2M
- King County is also planning to submit an application for the South Park Bridge replacement.

No movement on JOBS II.

The local ARRA panel is picking another tier 3 project for \$300k made available because of cost savings on existing projects.

Paul Ingiosi at OFM is working on the 2010 performance report for measuring the attainment of the state transportation policy goals. The [Department of Transportation Performance Report](#) was finished in early 2009; this version is due in October 2010. OFM is looking to expand this to an assessment of all transportation in the state.

**Action:** August agenda item

b. State legislative session debrief – Julie Rodwell

Several important bills were introduced during the 2010 legislative session. These include:

- SSB 6577 – added Economic Vitality to the state transportation system policy goals.
- E2SHB 2658 – Department of Commerce reorganization –the Governor vetoed Section 404 related to energy (for specifics see veto message at end of bill).
- SSB 6611 – GMA deadline extension SSB 6661 may affect MPO/RTPO processes
- Julie introduced two Transportation Benefit District (TBD) bills:
  - 1) 2SSHB 1591 – Extended bonding timeline
  - 2) ESSB 6774 – Multi-jurisdiction - TBDs can use MPO/RTPO; lot of interest in Spokane, split 70/30 between maintenance and regionally significant projects
- ESHB 2538 – Encourages certain cities under GMA to include compact development in Comp plans and requires a non-project EIS.

Additional information and bills are available in the [2010 WSDOT Bills of Interest](#) and [2010 Growth Management Bills of Interest](#).

c. Jerry Ayres reported on WSDOT Public Transportation Division (PTD) progress on existing and new transit grant programs, including:

- Over the last six months the PTD assisted rural agencies throughout the state with several capital assistance programs created by the federal Recovery Act, Jobs for Main Street and TIGER grant programs.
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) eligibility requirements allow recipients of FTA Section 5307 funding and tribes to apply directly for these grant funds. Rural area projects must be submitted as part of a consolidated state application.
- In February, the PTD applied on behalf of two rural transit agencies for funding to build new facilities through the Bus and Bus Facility Livability Initiative Grant Program.
- Also in February FTA announced a call for capital projects through proposed Jobs for Main Street legislation. The PTD anticipated the rural Washington share of Section 5311 funding to be about \$8.4M.
- PTD hosted a call for projects and competitive process and received requests from rural transit, non-profit agencies, tribes, and for-profit agencies for \$9.9M in projects.
- At the end of April TIGER II with a clean fuels/bus and bus facility component grant program was announced.
- On May 4th another FTA grant program was announced; the State of Good Repair Bus and Bus Facility Initiative. \$775M is available nationally through this program.
- PTD staff are using the competitive list developed during the JOBS call and the asset management plans developed by rural agencies to apply for rural capital projects under these two discretionary grant programs. Both federal programs anticipate a September 2010 announcement of grant awards.

- In addition to these grant opportunities, during February and March the PTD assisted eight rural transit agencies with grant requests, totaling \$21.5M, through the annual federal (FFY 2011) appropriation process.
- Finally, through a budget revision to the May STIP Amendment, the PTD is reassigning \$1.4M of ARRA-FTA 5311 funds, previously assigned for State Administration, to pick-up the purchase of 4 more vehicles and communication equipment for our state's rural transit service providers.

**4. Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) 2030 – *An Integrated Statewide Transportation Plan for Washington***

**Part 1: Legislative Budget Proviso – Reema Griffith/Paul Parker**

The Commission staff already made a request of the MPOs and RTPOs for projects at the local and regional level in order to respond to the budget [Proviso](#). Many concerns were raised and the Commission was reminded of the major scale of the task if project lists have to be approved by city, county and regional organization elected bodies. Members' comments and questions include:

- The guiding criteria are not clear.
- Do the lists need to cross-reference the state's six policy goals and how each project addresses them?
- How far into the future do the lists need to go?
- Is it equitable to limit the list to only the top 20 projects from PSRC and QuadCo alike, when the former has 40% of the state's population and even a higher percent of the needs, and the latter has less than 100,000 in population?
- If the Commission plans to take these disaggregated lists and reaggregate them how will that happen?
- Does creating very detailed long-range lists incur a risk that the lists will be cherry-picked for earmarks regardless of the level of purpose and need analysis that has been conducted?
- Suggested organizing project list in biennial increments.
- Difficult to meet the September deadline.

**ACTION: Reema Griffith agreed to extend deadline until October and promised to provide a draft template by the end of May.**

**ACTION: Reema Griffith offered the MPOs and RTPOs a special meeting to discuss these issues.**

**Follow-up: Commission staff held a conference call with several MPOs and RTPOs.**

## **Part 2: Commission Policy Plan status - Paul Roberts**

Gordon Rogers, member of the Policy Plan Advisory Committee on behalf of the MPOs and RTPOs, commented favorably on the Commission's process, saying there are still challenges, but they do want to include the local perspective.

Paul Roberts of the Berk & Associates team provided an overview of the work to date for the Plan update. His primary question was: "What did we miss"? A discussion followed raising the following points:

- Emphasize metropolitan regions which represent the bulk of economy.
- Represent geographic needs and recognize agriculture, etc.
- Identify gaps between the first and last mile, e.g., Snoqualmie Pass and Seattle.
- Reauthorization may change funding distribution, e.g., gas tax compacts=new partnerships.
- Tribes are concerned about VMT reduction fairness.
- VMT reduction must be congestion related; not universal.
- Include the links with tourism, the state's fourth largest industry.
- Emphasize impacts, benefits, and needs for the economy from Eastern WA; don't just focus just on the metropolitan economy.
- Recognized the impact to highways if dams are closed on the Snake and Columbia Rivers; one wheat barge carries the equivalent of 260 semi truck loads.
- International trade should be focused on more than just Western WA ports. Don't forget about the volume of freight coming into WA from Canada.
- Meet with freight forwarders. They know what the sensitivities are.
- Provide guidelines for other areas that may develop Sound Transit systems in other areas of the state within the next 30 years?
- Clarify the role of transit in connection with underserved populations and land-use.
- Should address high speed rail.
- Freight mobility and restrictions must be included.
- Use the MTPs and RTPOs as the main/common source for needs; not the TIPs.
- Economic vitality is the number one concern.

**ACTION: Jeff asked how to continue the dialog, another meeting?**

The Commission has a new blog where members can make review and comment online:  
[WTP2030.wordpress.com](http://WTP2030.wordpress.com)

## **5. Highway System Plan (HSP) Update – Jay Alexander**

Jay Alexander informed members that WSDOT is reviewing all MPO and RTPO plans, current revenue streams, and considering breaking the projects into three categories: immediate (first 6 years), medium (6-12 years), and long-term (12-20 years).

Draft is scheduled for distribution in June 2010.

## 6. Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) – Paul Neal

Currently there are three primary transportation efficiency [studies](#) assigned to the JTC in the [2010 Supplemental Transportation Budget](#) (pages 12-14 – sections 5, 7, & 8):

- Local Agency Efficiencies – CRAB, TIB, FMSIB and WSDOT Highways and Local Programs (\$200,000)
- Transit Investments Blueprint Study (\$350,000)
- State Level Planning Evaluation (\$125,000)

## 7. WSDOT Update

### a. National Governor’s Association – Dean Lookingbill

In March 2010, Washington was one of five states selected by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices for a [National Governors Association Policy Academy](#) on developing new ways to implement land use and transportation planning. The project will generate an action plan for integrating state policy goals with regional and local plans and actions and will be piloted by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) during the scoping of their 2011 metropolitan transportation plan update.

### b. Brian Smith introduced Katherine Klockenteger with WSDOT. Katherine is working with Elizabeth Robbins and Karena Houser in the new [Community Transportation Planning Office \(CTPO\)](#). This office was created in January 2010 to more effectively coordinate local, regional, and state land use and transportation planning. A significant early accomplishment includes the successful nomination of Washington State as one of the five states chosen by the National Governors Association for a policy academy (see a. above). The CTPO is partnering with the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC), Washington State Department of Commerce, Governor Gregoire’s Office, and Portland Metro in Oregon to develop an action plan for integrating state policy goals with regional and local plans and actions in the context of RTC’s 2011 MTP (metropolitan transportation plan) update.

## 8. Executive Order 09-05 Working Group – Brian Smith

Energy, Transportation and Climate Change (ETC), [Executive Order 09-05](#)

The Executive Order Working Group is working on VMT Benchmarks, forecasts, and developed a white paper to spur discussions at the cabinet level.

The four MPOs (PSRC, SRTC, SW RTC, & TRPC) identified in the E.O. advised the first order of business should be to decide what to do and then develop methods of implementation.

Estimating VMT, however, has proved difficult. VMT forecasts are currently derived from gas tax and based on sales. These forecasts are only good for short term estimates, not for long term.

The Working Group recently reviewed over 30 formulas and released a VMT Forecast Work Group Summary on three key attributes: Employment, fuel costs and vehicle registration.

The E.O. benchmark (75 billion VMT) was derived using the same gas tax forecasting method.

The Working Group message at the cabinet level is, while the transportation sector contributes

the largest percent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and we are making progress, relying on VMT reduction alone will not achieve the goal. For example, one of PSRC's five SEPA alternatives prepared for the recent MTP (Transportation 2040) included all possible VMT reduction strategies (land use, transit, tolling, and pricing). When tested using EPA's new MOVES transportation emissions model (MOVES includes GHG emissions factors capability) the results clearly demonstrated that relying on VMT reduction strategies alone will not achieve the VMT reduction goals set in the Executive Order.

This message was received well by the Governor's representative.

**Member comments:**

- The state's program relies on a national program such as cap and trade.
- RTPOs are not responsible.
- Caution: we are still responsible for providing most efficient system.
- Helpful to have understanding that VMT alone will not meet objectives.
- Don't rely on state data for regional VMT forecasting. Many MPOs and RTPOs can contribute with regional TDM data.

**9. Announcements and Review of Follow-ups**

- Kathleen Davis: WSDOT's STIP Filemaker software update is scheduled for release in July 2010. There are new data fields required by FHWA/FTA, such as YOE.  
UPDATE: Postponed - The current plan is to deploy the new system in winter 2011. Full implementation of the new system along with training throughout the state is expected to take place early in 2011 in time for building 2012-2017 TIPs.  
**ACTION:** RCB, PT, H&LP discuss participating in training.
- Kirk received a grant to design an inexpensive teaching aide for engaging the public;  
**ACTION:** Megan Nicodemus plugged-in.
- Charlie Howard: PSRC's new MTP (Transportation 2040) was adopted on May 20, 2010.
- Judy Lorenzo: Introduced Bill Bennett as new TPO Policy Development Manager.
- Dean Lookingbill: RTC is expediting work to identify and prioritize Transportation Enhancement projects.
- Kathleen Davis: Encouraged members to expedite the process, stating, sooner is better. There is \$90-\$100 million available for obligated by end of year. This year the timeline is tighter due to ARRA.
- James Mastin: Announced that SMPO's is advertising for a planner/modeler.

**9. August Agenda Items:**

**Member Requests:**

- TSMO (Transportation Systems Management and Operations) ???
- National Governors Policy Academy Update Dean Lookingbill/Brian Smith
- Main street Kathleen Davis
- Attainment Report OFM???

- HUD partnership ???

**Standing Agenda Items:**

- Chair's Report
- Legislative updates Dillon Auyoung, Larry Ehl, Judy Lorenzo
- WSDOT report Brian Smith
- Executive Order 09-05 working group Brian S. & E.O. MPOs
- Public Transportation Division Report Jerry Ayres
- Highway System Plan Jay Alexander
- WTP/Trends report WSTC/Judy Lorenzo
- National Organizations (AMPO, NARC, AASHTO) Charlie H., Gordon R., Brian S.
- Highways and Local Programs Kathleen Davis
- Announcements and follow ups