

# Transportation Demand Management

## Executive Board

### Meeting Minutes

December 8, 2020  
Teleconference



**Board members present (all remote):** Dave Andersen, Ken Casavant, Dr. Anthony Chen, Katie Garrow, Emmett Heath, Laura Johnson, Craig Kenworthy, Susan Meyer, Roger Millar, Chris O’Claire, Lua Pritchard, Matt Ransom, Tim Waldrop, Larry Watkinson, Laura Watson, Anna Zivarts

**Board member(s) excused:** Erik Hansen, Kent Keel, Dan Mathis, Dave McFadden

**WSDOT staff present (all remote):** Elizabeth (Liz) Bastian, Jacob Brett, Ricardo Gotla, Brian Lagerberg, Stan Suchan, Pamela Vasudeva, Debi Viniarski, Micheal Wandler

#### Meeting convened at 10:03 AM

##### 1. Welcome & Opening Remarks – Roger Millar

- Roger welcomed board members to the final meeting of the year. We are continuing to address racial equity and inclusion as a country, state, and agency. The board is doing some outstanding work in demand management, and we can make a big difference if we follow through on it.

##### 2. Public Comment

- Veronica Jarvis, Thurston Regional Planning Council: Veronica touched on the opportunity that the pandemic provided for TDM and telework. She is looking to the board and Roger’s help to think of strategies and next steps Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) can take for state employees to “maintain the gains” in telework. WSDOT has been an incredible leader in this, but there is not a clear path forward for other state agencies and employers to do the same thing. This can help address inequities in telework. What can we do more of? Do we need legislation?
  - i. Roger thanked Veronica for her comments, and shared that there is more to come on this topic.

##### 3. Board member roundtable – all

- Roger asked board members to share recent challenges and wins from their organizations.
- Dave Andersen: The Department of Commerce is going down to one building in Olympia, which will necessitate some people not coming into the office on a regular basis. Positions are being filled with geographic flexibility (i.e. positions do not have to be Olympia-based).

- Chris O’Claire: King County Metro had to cut about 30% of capital funds. Continuing RapidRide programs and bus electrification but at a slower pace. Ridership is still down, but both major and small businesses remain at the table and committed to transit.
- Anna Zivarts: Working on collecting stories from Washingtonians who are transit reliant across the state.
- Tim Waldrop: Amazon remains committed to the ORCA program, and is talking with Metro about how to support transit with telework. Seeing assigned parking applications going down, which implies that folks who want to telework post-COVID do not want to drive when they do come into the office.
- Matt Ransom: Presenting a joint statement to the legislature on Friday from 55 entities in southwest Washington and Oregon. One of the statement items is the digital divide and lack of broadband access.
- Laura Johnson: Trying to figure out how to be purposeful when we return. How does automation work with maintaining telework gains? How can we build equity into it? Struggling to figure out how all these pieces come together.
- Emmett Heath: After 41 years of public service, I am retiring on December 25. This is my last meeting as a board member.
- Roger and other members thanked Emmett for his service on behalf of Washington State.

#### **4. Statewide broadband initiative – Russ Elliott**

- Russ Elliott, Washington State Broadband Office Director, gave a presentation to the committee about the current effort to improve broadband office across the state. Presentation slides can be viewed here.
  - i. Russ noted that COVID-19 has accelerated interest in broadband expansion, as remote work and school does not work without a reliable network connection.
  - ii. Russ encouraged members and partners to take the state broadband speed survey: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/washington-statewide-broadband-act/speedtestsurvey/>
- Members had the following questions and comments:
  - i. How broadband expansion to non-urban areas could lead to sprawl and decreased transit efficiency.
    1. Roger noted that broadband expansion could allow small towns in Washington that used to have a resource extraction economy, and already have walking/biking infrastructure, to revitalize. But this will require proactive work.
  - ii. If the legislative priority is capital or policy-focused [it’s capital-focused]
  - iii. Focusing on equity issues in broadband access in urban areas

#### **5. Rethinking transit & mobility – Jacob Brett & Brian Lagerberg**

- Jacob presented the results from the Rethinking Transit & Mobility engagement effort. Presentation slides can be viewed [here](#).

- i. Roger noted that this will be shared with the governor, and potentially with the legislature, once the report is finalized.
- Members generally expressed interest in and support of the results, and had the following questions and comments:
  - i. The best framework for establishing a baseline level of transit service (minimum level of service vs. adaptive service deployment)
- **Next steps:** Members can send feedback to Jacob to be incorporated into the final draft. Results from the engagement will be incorporated into the statewide public transportation planning process. This conversation is just the beginning, and will be ongoing.

## **6. Legislative engagement – Billy Duss & Anna Zivarts**

- Billy provided a summary of a series of meetings committee and board members had with legislative members. Participants emphasized preserving multimodal funding and tell the story about what those funds actually do. Other topics included maintaining and expanding telework, and increasing flexibility for vanpool and CTR. The overall message was received enthusiastically, and representatives expressed willingness to support the work.
- Anna Zivarts echoed Billy's sentiments, and shared that what struck her as really powerful were the personal stories that participants brought to the table. The challenge is finding the funds. How can we make sure these investments happen? Is there anything the board wants to recommend or further understand about the multimodal account?
- Roger provided an overview of what happened to the multimodal account after the passage of I-976. Obligations to address fish passages and the current economic downturn mean the transportation budget is really stressed right now. More info will come once the Governor releases his budget. WSDOT will take direction from the Governor and legislature.
- Members discussed developing a joint letter with the TDM Technical Committee asking legislative members to keep the multimodal account for projects and programs that cannot be funded elsewhere (e.g. gas tax), and to provide specific recommendations on what multimodal funds should be used for.
- **Next steps:** Ricardo will work with a multimodal letter sprint team to draft a statement, and will follow up with board members once the governor's budget is released.

## **7. Closing remarks – Roger Millar**

**Meeting adjourned at 12:03 PM.**

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