

Transportation Demand Management Executive Board Meeting Minutes



December 20, 2023
10:00M – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

TDM Executive Board members:

x	Roger Millar, chair	x	Celeste Gilman		Kent Keel		Lua Pritchard
	Dave Anderson		Eric Hansen		Charles Knutson	x	Matt Ransom
x	Ken Casavant		Kirk Hovenkotter	x	David McFadden	x	Melanie Truhn
	Christine Cooley		Ric Illgenfritz	x	Susan Meyer		Laura Watson
x	Katie Garrow	x	Laura Johnson		Chris O'Claire	x	Anna Zivarts

TDM Technical Committee members:

x	Marshall Elizer, chair	x	Angie Coulter		Heidi Speight		Tiff West
x	Alan Adolf	x	Jennifer Hass	x	Kim Stolz		Bryce Yadon
	Mary Anderson	x	Olivia Kahn		Michael Villnave		
	Zach Carstensen	x	Veronica Jarvis	x	Dustin Watson		
	Carol Cooper	x	Staci Sahoo				

WSDOT staff present: Maya Agarwal, Steven Breaux, Thomas Craig, Ricardo Gotla, Patrick Green, Carol Thompson (consultant), Brian Lagerberg, Stan Suchan, Christina Noddings

Roger Millar convened the meeting at 10:02 PM.

Opening remarks

Roger welcomed the board, committee members, and partners. He congratulated Kirk Hovenkotter on his new position as Transportation Choices Coalition Executive Director and looks forward to his continued service on the board. Roger is hopeful that Commute Seattle's new ED serves on the board.

Public comment

None

Transit trip planner panel discussion

Staci Sahoo, Hopelink; Matt Hansen, King County Metro; Justin Deno, Sound Transit; Thomas Craig, WSDOT; Ricardo Gotla, WSDOT, moderator

Discussion summary:

State of Trip Planners in Washington State:

Thomas, WSDOT: Why are trip planners important and relevant to the Executive Board? Mobile trip planners have been a primary trip planning tool since 2005. Riders don't necessarily flock to agency-sponsored apps. Google maps and others have the greatest market share. Nonetheless, transit agency custom trip planners are in use and are growing. GTFS data feeds, the backbone for trip planners, is ubiquitous, but data feeds are not all created equal. Corporations are not incentivized to provide equal access for all travelers; needs of people with mobility challenges are often not considered. Local initiatives are focused on moving us forward to better serve these and other vulnerable populations.

Staci, Hopelink: Hopelink has a custom trip planner targeted to their customers. Originating from an "inclusive planning grant," Hopelink's transit planner focuses on improving access for targeted population to food, social services, medical appointments, and information for accessing resources. This focus was lacking in standard trip planner apps provided by Google, Apple, and others.

Matt, King County Metro: Many people use KCM's custom trip planner. Developed in partnership with Trapeze and informs 400,000 trips per month. KCM is working on increasing their trip planner capability. There are barriers to utilizing it such as language and technical accessibility. It's expensive to maintain and difficult to staff. It requires constant care and feeding to maintain the data that feeds it. Up-to-date data is critically important and adds to maintenance costs. The trip planner only shows fixed-route service, and KCM would like to demonstrate non-fixed route and flexible services.

Justin, Sound Transit: ST developing new trip planning and way finding tools. Legacy trip planner is based on Open Trip planner, which ST is rebuilding with a vendor. Improvements include data integration for regional partners, improved experience for rural riders, better experience for event and sports focused trips, and tourists. The goal is for the new trip planner to serve regional transportation systems.

Question: What's the best opportunity for streamlining or reaching out to riders?

Matt – awareness of the tool + usability (getting from A to B for all travelers and understanding of features) + real-time information.

Staci – expressed gratitude for the state in supporting data development. Dozens of planners are now integrated, even from small areas. Providers operate on slim margins, so data needs to be current/accurate, accessible, and maintained, so that people with a variety of disabilities may continue to access the information.

Question: Given free access to Google Maps, why have a custom, agency sponsored option?

Justin – customer service staff have ability to adjust data. A third-party trip planner cannot integrate locally specific issues. Google collects data and does not redistribute to the provider. ST wants a direct relationship with the customer.

Matt – Google and others free transit planner apps collect user data and monetize it. KCM has an issue with this. KCM routes change a lot (almost daily) and private sector apps do not necessarily change in time to communicate that information to riders. KCM is working to develop real time trip data and developing a “single source of truth.”

Question: What do you see as the solutions to address the issues raised?

Staci – Inclusive planning must be prioritized; critically important to have community members and experts on board and include in outreach as we develop solutions. Also, it is essential to coordination among local partners who are invested in this effort to ensure priorities align.

Justin: ST understands the merits of an investment that advances locally specific, flexible needs that match a user's profile and preferences and the importance of promoting local transit options. Example: Lyft or Uber can advertise on a Google-like platform. ST is working to elevate accessibility options, including routing options. Opensource options like Open Trip Planner can improve collective solutions.

Question: What are the main solutions to invest in?

Justin: ST accurate trip planning relies on quality data. Maintaining these feeds can be difficult. More work to be done on regional data quality. More funding to support education (toolkit) to support agencies. Improve equity and access for smaller and rural agencies.

Staci: WSDOT investment and technical assistance is very helpful. More is desired.

Private sector should be nudged to improve accessibility data and information.

Question: To what extent does access to sidewalk data improve access to walk/roll?

Thomas: Data uses the centerline of the roadway. Trip planners are not aware of sidewalk data. Regarding walk/role, data needs to reflect a complete streets framework.

Looking back, looking ahead (a small group exercise)

Activity purpose: collectively reflect on board's successes, missed opportunities, and identity improvements where needed.

Attendees broke out into small groups. Each small group session was followed by full group report out and discussion. This process was repeated three times.

Attendees addressed the following questions:

1. Thinking of the past couple years, what are some successes and missed opportunities for the board and committee?

2. Thinking about the most salient points you heard on question one report out, what themes or trends emerged and what's important about them?
3. Thinking of the past couple years, what are some successes and missed opportunities for the board and committee?

Discussion summary:

Successes:

- Learning.
- Influencing grant development.
- Seeding a lot of ideas.
- Elevating importance TDM plays in mobility, access, equity, and transportation network efficiency.
- Broadening leadership exposure to TDM professionals and organizations.
- Developing new TDM equity-focused grant program (Mobility Partnerships Grant proposal) for all travelers and all trip types.
- Updating CTR plan development guidelines and schedule.
- Discussing in real-time how COVID was changing transportation and mobility opportunities and the constraints.
- Grappling with how much new commute patterns and work from home are temporary or persistent.
- Starting to think about transportation demand management more broadly – beyond commute trips, affected-employers, mechanics of CTR Law.
- Forming of the Executive Board. Strategic level conversations.

Missed opportunities:

- Deepening engagement with private sector.
- Centering transportation work and projects on TDM, better integrate TDM into transportation projects.
- Improving coordination with WSTA between meetings, particularly when there are potential budget impacts.
- Focusing on vulnerable populations, center work on them.
- Focusing on what businesses are doing – events, expand CTR around the value of minimizing congestion in regions.
- Developing programs to address seasonality congestion.
- Developing more tools around compliance, upholding CTR laws, having more carrots and sticks.
- Challenging quarterly meeting cadence and convening. Hard to connect conversations. Adding value for those strategic areas we want to push on. Can we do more?

What's important?

- COVID has changed commutes: work from home is not the norm for many office workers. How do we encourage mode shift hotel, retail, and shift workers?
- The work of this group is important and needs to be sustained and continued. We've been through challenging times and need to be nimble as a TDM community.
- Get higher level private sector engagement.
- Need to connect on a deeper level than remote allows. Occasional in person meeting?
- Conversations about rural areas.
- Lean in more to the future, post-COVID, three-day commute, whatever the new normal might be. Dive deeper into the data and identify opportunities and gaps.
- Focus on [ALICE](#) (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) populations. People who work but aren't benefitting from CTR, people who most need help with mobility. Smaller organizations with lower wage jobs.

What's next? Now what?

- Need to better coordinate the committee with board; enhance integration between the two groups.
- In-person meeting with both groups.
- Need to talk about underserved populations and make sure transit works for people who work for smaller worksites or subcontractors, e.g., retail, warehouse, hotels. Vanpools? Transit pass for that group?
- All trips.
- Populations underserved by CTR in the past. Rural populations. CTR Law is limited and benefits of that could be expanded statewide. Being included in CTR should be seen as a benefit not a burden.
- Post-COVID changes and adapting to them.
- Create more geographically focused TDM organizations. Seattle, Redmond TMA.

Looking ahead to 2024 legislative session

Steven Breaux explained that the upcoming legislative session is a short session (60 days). Focus is on reworking minor issues in the budget (e.g., rebalancing funds, revisiting policy proposals).

More policy proposals have been introduced than is typical, e.g.,:

- Safety focus, such as automated cameras in work safety zones.
- Alternate methods to enforce speeds limits outside work zones.
- Autonomous vehicles and artificial intelligence.
- CTR tax credit is due to expire and there is an effort to extend it.

Closing remarks

Roger thanked the group for their support, participation, and engagement.

Meeting adjourned at 11:51 AM.