

Transportation IWG Status Update

July 7, 2008

Workgroup Goal

As charged in Section 8 of ESSHB 2815, the Transportation IWG will develop recommendations and a set of tools and best practices to assist state, regional, and local entities in making progress towards meeting the ESSHB 2815 VMT goals: 18% VMT-reduction by 2020, 30% reduction by 2035 and 50% reduction by 2050. The Transportation IWG will also, as time allows, develop recommendations about specific actions to reduce non-VMT greenhouse gas emissions.

Focus Areas and Progress to Date

The Transportation IWG has 2 overarching focus areas:

- Evaluate, explore implementation of, and recommend specific actions to reduce VMT, including measurement and funding recommendations.
- Evaluate, explore implementation of, and recommend specific actions to reduce non-VMT greenhouse gases.

The initial activity of the Transportation IWG has been to review WSDOT and other partner VMT-reduction strategies and ongoing activities to inform IWG deliberations and serve as a resource for future work.. In addition to building off of the work of the 2007 Transportation TWG, the IWG has reviewed and compiled materials covering a multitude of other potential VMT-reduction strategies and activities enacted by various partners. These resources are available on the website (www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/2008CAT_iwg_tran.htm).

The IWG has prioritized the following VMT-reduction high-level strategies (25 out of 29 workgroup members responded):

- **Transit, Ridesharing, and Commuter Choice** was identified as the highest priority. T-1.1 (Operating Support) and T-1.2 (Capital Grants) were consistently identified as the most important elements.
- **Transportation Pricing** was identified as a top priority. Road pricing, miles-based insurance, and parking-related management were consistently rated as the most important elements of a transportation pricing strategy. Several individuals mentioned a VMT-tax/Carbon-tax as a preferred funding alternative. Removing the restriction on the 18th Amendment (which currently limits the use of gas tax revenues to highway purposes only) has also been proposed.
- **Compact and Transit Oriented Development (TOD)** was also identified as a priority (while TOD was mentioned more times than transportation pricing, transportation pricing was consistently rated more highly; see the website for detailed results of the prioritization exercise). Several members coupled TOD with T-1, Transit, Ridesharing and Commuter Choice.

Many individuals cited the key decision criteria being funding – where is going to come from, can it be allocated, and what strategies provide most return on investment. Return on investment being broadly characterized as reducing VMT and GHG emissions, in addition to being a sound investment for the state.

The Transportation IWG has also begun to review potential existing and new revenue options for local and regional governments to finance VMT-reduction efforts.

Current Activities

At its next meeting on July 14, the Transportation IWG will:

- **Review VMT-measurement capabilities, baselines, gaps, assumptions, and targets.** The Transportation IWG is working to develop a briefing that describes current VMT measurement best practices, and identifies the relevant organizations that currently measure VMT with 1) a brief description of what they measure, 2) the relevance of their measurement to the VMT measurement needs as outlined in 2815, and 3) how they measure VMT. This will allow the Transportation IWG to propose roles and responsibilities for meeting the different 2815 requirements, including which parties should be responsible for meeting the requirements, where they will get that information, implications of the current measurement landscape on their ability to execute their responsibility, and any identified gaps of information. The IWG can then recommend any changes to current measurement practices, and better characterize the implications of the VMT strategies that the IWG will propose.
- **Continue to prioritize and specify costs for key VMT-reduction strategies in T-1** by evaluating and analyzing additional cost information, including: current funding levels and sources, what the program/strategy can deliver at the current funding level, the desired funding and potential funding sources (from either existing or new funding sources), and what the program/strategy can deliver at the desired funding level.
- **Begin delineating and prioritizing the appropriate Transportation IWG focus areas under T-4** (Compact and Transit-Oriented Development).

Future Transportation IWG Activities and Anticipated Outcomes

In August, the Transportation IWG will complete prioritization of VMT-reduction strategies, select proposed mechanisms for funding these prioritized VMT-reduction strategies, and develop a strategy/implementation plan for adequate measurement tools. The Transportation IWG will review recommended legislative or executive action needed to implement these VMT-reduction strategies.

By Sept 1st, 2008, the Transportation IWG will produce, for the CAT, a prioritized, draft set of recommended 2009 VMT-reduction strategies and actions to reduce VMT and GHG emissions.

In developing its recommendations to meet the VMT reduction goals, consistent with ESSHB 2815, the Transportation IWG will consider the economic and non-economic costs and benefits of the strategies and impacts on small business, low income residents, agricultural employers and migrant workers, distressed rural counties, and counties with a high proportion of public and tribal land. The Transportation IWG will also identify where contributions can be made to the clean energy job goals articulated in the Governor's Climate Change Challenge.

While the group intends to review and recommend non-VMT reduction actions as well, no work has been done on this to date. As time allows, the Transportation IWG will review existing non-VMT transportation policies recommended by the CAT and strategies already underway in Washington.

General Observations and Status

We have been impressed with the level of commitment of Transportation IWG members and their focus on developing useful products over a short period of time.

As the Transportation IWG begins deliberation on T-4, the clear challenge is assuring that the work of the Transportation IWG complements the work of the other IWGs, i.e., SEPA, Forestry, and the GMA working group. An explicit nexus is with the most promising VMT-reduction strategies from T-1; the Transportation IWG must clarify the opportunities and connections between the most promising T-1 strategies and their ramifications on Land Use.

The Transportation IWG has just begun talking about transportation pricing (T-3). This conversation is multi-faceted – how can transportation pricing itself be a VMT-reduction strategy and how can the revenue generated from these transportation pricing strategies be best leveraged.