JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Evaluation of State –Level Transportation Plans

Presentation December 8, 2010

Consultant Team: Cedar River Group | Lund Consulting | BERK & ASSOCIATES | Wilbur Smith Associates

PURPOSE

The principle objective of this project is to improve the utility and minimize the cost of state-level transportation plans, and to clarify responsibility for their preparation.

Transportation Budget

The legislature has directed the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) to "Evaluate the preparation of state-level transportation plans. The evaluation must include a review of federal planning requirements, the Washington Transportation Plan and statewide modal plan requirements, and transportation plan requirements for regional and local entities. The evaluation must make recommendations concerning the appropriate responsibilities for preparation of plans, methods to develop plans more efficiently, and the utility of statewide planning documents. (ESSB 6381,Section 204, (7)(210)

OVERVIEW

State-Level Planning Complex

- Federal and state requirements
- Plans to be developed by Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Transportation Commission, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (11), and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations
- Statutes require a statewide transportation plan (2010 WSTC Policy Plan) and a statewide multi-modal plan and 11 WSDOT mode plans.
- Result is frustration and confusion – and an end product of limited utility

Focus -What the Legislature Can Do

- Legislature cannot change federal requirements
- Legislature does not administer the planning process
- Legislature can modify planning statutes
- Legislature can use the budget process

SITUATION ASSESSMENT: WHITE PAPER OCT.

Planning Requirements

- State requirements more extensive than federal
- State-long range plan
  - Federal – Require a 20 year long-range statewide transportation plan
  - State – Require two plans
    - Statewide transportation plan "policy plan" by WSTC
    - Statewide multimodal plan by WSDOT
    - Before 2010 update of Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) 2030 the WTP met both requirements
- Mode plans
  - Federal – Require rail, aviation, and strategic highway safety plan
  - Washington requires 11 mode plans
    - 2 state-owned (highway system and ferry)
    - 9 state-interest (3 meet federal requirements)

SITUATION ASSESSMENT: WHITE PAPER

Plan Integration

- State statutes require assistance and consistency & policy goals
- State-level plans are not integrated
  - Different schedules
  - No process for synchronizing MPO/RTPO plans with state plans
  - Progress in WTP 2030 process

Plan Utilization

- State mode plans – ferry, state highway, Amtrak mid-range, Target Zero – affect capital decisions
  - Clear, pragmatic, incremental choices that link policy & projects
- Ad-hoc processes for major funding packages

Planning Budget – 2009-11 Biennium

- $24.1 million state funds – includes planning, research, data, RTPO grants
- More than required for minimum state match

FUTURE DIRECTION – FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Congress expected to require a performance component in state transportation planning

- Transportation plans that are goal-oriented, built upon solid performance-based systems, evaluated with accepted performance metrics, and implemented over time to reflect a combination of state and national goals are more likely to coordinate with anticipated modifications to federal planning requirements

OTHER STATES

Seven States

- **Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Nevada, & Texas**
- **Either recently changed statutes, have independent commission, or recently updated statewide long-range transportation plan**

Other States ' Statutes

- **Less complex than Washington's**
  - Fewer plans required (max 3)
  - None reviewed require 2 statewide long-range transportation plans
- **Five of the seven have a statutory requirement for a statewide long-range transportation plan**
  - All five vest responsibility in department of transportation
  - Give independent commissions various roles – policy guidance to approval
  - Two states – Governor approves the plan
  - Two states – legislative review and comment before final

OTHER STATES

Plan Integration

- **Difficult**
- **Some adjust governance** (i.e. California programming authority to MPOs)
- **Innovations**
  - Framework planning process co-chaired by MPO and independent commission, staffed by department of transportation (Arizona)
  - Update MPO plans in same process as statewide long-range transportation plan (Mississippi)
- **All recognize importance of integrating state, regional, and metropolitan transportation planning in order to meet the most pressing issues**

RECOMMENDATIONS

What Should the Legislature Expect from State-Level Planning

- Provide a context that informs the broad range of legislative decisions
  - Recognize legislative direction
  - Understand mode-neutral, long-range performance alternatives for state transportation system
  - Link to shorter-term capital programming, policy, and financial decisions
  - Provide clear, pragmatic, incremental choices
- Flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances
- Aligned and integrated at the state, regional, & metropolitan level
- Technically competent, data driven, and federally compliant
- Result from a robust public participation process

Recommendation #1.

State planning statutes should require a statewide long-range transportation plan. No other plans should be statutorily required.

- **This recommendation should not be confused with an effort to eliminate all other plans**
  - Federally required plans – rail, aviation, highway safety, and metropolitan – will continue to be done
  - State-level plans that are deemed essential and funded by the legislature will also be done - which could be a policy plan, a ferry plan, a bike and pedestrian plan, etc.
  - Means that planning initiatives would have to be justified on some basis other than that the plan is a statutory requirement
- **Assumptions**
  - Federal requirements do not need to be repeated in state statute
  - The development of state-level plans does not depend on statutory requirements
- **Alternatives Considered**
  - Continuing to require multiple plans – just update or sunset requirements
  - Require no plans

Recommendation #2.

Statutory requirements for the statewide long-range transportation plan should establish broad requirements, specify accountability for preparation and approval of the plan, and provide a link to statewide performance measurement and attainment reporting.

- **Requirements should be clear & encourage streamlining and efficiency, & specify that the plan:**
  - Is the federally compliant plan
  - Framed by the legislature's policy goals
  - Results from the continuum of state-level planning / based on on-going planning
  - Allows other state-level plans to be updated in the same process
  - Is to be outcome & performance based, consider mode-neutral alternatives, & integrate state, regional, and metropolitan planning, performance measurement & attainment reporting
  - Incorporate best practices in public outreach
  - Is to have clear financial assumptions, identifying the need for any new resources, provide a financial plan that can link to legislative budget decisions

Recommendation #2.

- **Responsibility for the plan should be fixed by the legislature and reflect governance, the need to integrate planning & cost-efficiencies.**
  - Question is how best to integrate WSDOT, WSTC, and MPOs/RTPOs
- **Option 1. WSDOT Preparation/WSTC & MPO/RTPO Review**
  - WSDOT accountable for plan preparation
  - Directed to base on WSTC policy forums & recommendations & MPO/RTPO plans
  - WSTC & MPO/RTPO comment to Governor and legislature before final
- **Option 2. Blended Responsibility**
  - WSDOT, WSTC, MPO/RTPO share responsibility
  - Process could be – 3 co-chairs (similar to Arizona framework process)
  - Or could be under Blue Ribbon Commission
  - WSDOT – federal compliance, planning
  - WSTC – policy, public forums, outreach
  - MPO/RTPO – planning, policy, outreach
- **Consultants Preference – Option 2**
  - Expand WSTC survey to statewide transportation survey
  - Consider additional role for Tribal Transportation Planning Organization

Recommendation #2.

- **Governor Approve Plan**
  - Role with all three parties
  - OFM could review financial assumptions/plan
- **Link to OFM Attainment Report**
  - Plan establish objectives and performance measures
  - Report on statewide transportation system

Recommendation #3.

The legislature should require: a comparison of the proposed biennial budget with the statewide long-range transportation plan's performance goals and financial plan; greater transparency of the state-level planning budget, including the use of federal planning dollars and the corresponding state match; and periodic reporting on the status of plans that it has funded, answering the question whether the plans are "on-time, on-schedule, and within budget."

- **Relate biennial budget to statewide long-range transportation plan**
  - Governor show link between 16-year financial plan & long-range performance goals and financial plan
- **Request more information on planning activities in WSDOT budget**
  - Include list of planning activities & plans to be completed
  - Match required and proposed
  - Information compiled for federal State Planning & Research Program
- **Performance reports on funded plans**
  - Similar to other on-going WSDOT performance reporting

STREAMLINE PLANNING

- **Recommendations would make state-level planning more streamlined and efficient**
  - Reduce the number of plans that are done primarily to satisfy statutory requirements
  - Sharing technical expertise and planning processes
  - Consolidating public outreach