

Summer 2017 Transportation Workshop Summary

During July and August 2017, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Washington State Commute Trip Reduction Board (CTR Board) more than 150 community experts to improve transportation at workshops statewide with a focus on transportation demand management, including transit, ridesharing, active transportation, telework and more. These workshops complemented other engagement efforts, including interviews with transportation demand management (TDM) practitioners, CTR Board meetings, CTR Technical Advisory Group meetings and more.

For more than 20 years, thousands of people and hundreds of employers around the state have worked together to make options like transit, walking, bicycling, vanpooling and telework more appealing. These local efforts have helped us grow our economy, preserve our environment, save money and keep communities livable. The transportation workshops built on this foundation.

Workshop goal

Bring together community experts and transportation users with different perspectives to generate ideas to make the most of existing transportation services and help communities and businesses grow and improve. These ideas are being used in development of various plans, projects and programs (more detailed information in next steps section).

What we learned

WSDOT staff analyzed all of the information gathered at the workshops and identified the following key themes:

- Active transportation
- Agency coordination
- Equity
- Education
- Flexible work options
- Freight
- Health equity
- Increased private investment
- Increased public investment*
- Infrastructure improvements*
- Investment prioritization
- Land use consideration*
- Increased marketing*
- Pricing
- Public-private partnerships
- Regulations*
- Technology
- Transportation network companies e.g., Lyft
- Transit pass subsidies and support
- Travel data

Workshop participants were asked to rate ideas during the workshops. The themes that receive the highest ratings are marked with asterisks.

Next Steps

2019-2023 CTR Strategic Plan

WSDOT staff and agency partners translated the ideas and themes generated during the workshops into concepts suitable for consideration for the CTR Strategic Plan. At a CTR-focused workshop on September 22, the CTR Board and local TDM practitioners will choose a few concepts for further development and possible inclusion in the strategic plan.

I-5 pilot projects in Thurston/Pierce and King/Snohomish counties

In September and October, the themes and ideas will be shared with transportation demand management and active transportation practitioners at workshops focused on developing near-term, multimodal solutions to improve I-5 performance at two pilot-project locations: Tumwater-DuPont and south Seattle-Mountlake Terrace.

WSDOT Public Transportation Division Practical Solutions work plan

The information will be considered by WSDOT staff as they develop a division work plan to support Practical Solutions. The division's work supports improved ability to work with community partners and deliver multimodal, multiagency projects and programs that improve transportation system performance.

Statewide Public Transportation early actions update

The information was shared with the team updating the Statewide Public Transportation Plan early actions and report and is influencing their work.

Additional projects and programs

The information is being shared with additional groups working on Practical Solutions and associated efforts including corridor sketch planning and integrated scoping; active transportation; management of mobility; community engagement; Washington State Rideshare Organization conference participants and more.

Workshop evaluations: here's what participants said

WSDOT sent a simple customer satisfaction survey to participants within 48 hours after each workshop. Information from these surveys helped guide immediate improvements for subsequent summer workshops. Here is a summary of the results:

TDM workshops, 2017					
workshop location	Seattle	Olympia	Yakima	Everett	Spokane
workshop date	July 18	July 25	August 1	August 16	August 22
average rating (0-5 stars)	4	4.5	3.9	4.2	4.1
1 and 2 stars	0	0	2	0	1
response rate	51%	51%	49%	37%	59%
number of responses	18 of 35	19 of 37	17 of 35	15 of 40	16 of 27

About the workshops

Five statewide workshops were held in the summer of 2017: Seattle, 7/18/17; Olympia, 7/25/17; Yakima, 8/1/17; Everett, 8/16/17; and Spokane, 8/22/17. All workshops ran from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

About the Workshop

A mix of 24 to 36 community and transportation experts participated in each workshop. The participants generated and assessed transportation improvement ideas with a focus on transit, telework, walking, vanpooling, bicycling and other community-based solutions.

The workshops were designed to empower everyone involved. Upon arrival participants were given nametags void of any titles so that affiliations were unknown and participants were on an equal playing field from the start; void of intimidation. There were chairs, but no tables or desks. The room was an open format with rotating configurations of chairs, engaging the participant's curiosity. Participants did not receive instruction prior to attending the workshop other than logistics and a brief agenda (below). They had limited preconceived notion of their duties prior to arrival. Participants worked in small groups; each person shared their expertise and perspective.

To help spur creativity, each group was assigned a future that differed from the other groups. This approach was based upon scenario planning techniques.

Workshop Recruitment

To obtain a mix of community and transportation experts, the following recruitment criteria were used, choosing four to six people from each perspective with accompanying qualities listed here:

1. Transportation demand management (TDM)/CTR expert: transportation management association (TMA), transit, cities, and counties, council of government (COG) and or CTR Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and/or CTR Board member.
2. Elected officials: city, county, state, federal elected official; or someone with the knowledge of these issues.
3. Employers: large, medium or small employers (both CTR and non-CTR affected) with robust TDM programs and/or those employers who don't have any background and/or experience with TDM.
4. Economic development: freight representative, chamber of commerce, business association, and/or property managers.
5. Traveler: transit riders, drivers, cyclists, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, students, millennials, seniors, parents, pedestrians, etc.
6. Transportation expert: transportation planners, transit operators, road/highway engineers, private and non-profit transportation operators (Microsoft shuttle, LYFT, human services transportation providers), health, environment, land use, parking

We also recruited participants with the following strengths:

- good listeners
- open to others ideas
- able to complete tasks within time allotted
- capable of talking about the future
- able to explain ideas in laypersons terms
- have a positive disposition and are solution focused.

Workshop Content

A. Workshop Agenda

Welcome	10:00 am
Introductions	10:05 am
Safety and Comfort Briefing	10:25 am
Develop Scenarios	10:30 am
Break	11:00 am
Generate Ideas	11:05 am
Working Lunch	11:55 pm
Assess Ideas	12:10 pm
Thanks and Next Steps	2:00 pm

B. Workshop Exercises

The workshops were highly interactive and used Liberating Structures techniques. We chose these techniques to:

- make better use of participants' time by providing opportunities for more people to engage and contribute
- provide participants equal status regardless of roles outside the workshop
- generate at least some ideas that differ from the status quo
- provide a satisfying experience

Following is a brief description of the exercises.

Introductions and warm up

Purpose: Get to know each other and start thinking and talking about the workshop topic.

Process: Participants had to find someone they didn't know, introduce themselves and discuss questions for two minutes. This process was repeated four times.

Discussion questions: Why did you choose to participate today? What do you hope to get from and give to this group?

Create Four Different Futures

Purpose: Get in a frame of mind to consider and generate ideas that differ from the status quo

Process: Participants created different descriptions of our state and communities five to six years in the future. Using scenario planning techniques, each group was assigned a future with the following characteristics:

- > healthy statewide economy / more government investment
- > healthy statewide economy / more private investment
- > weak statewide economy / more government investment
- > weak statewide economy / more private investment

Participants sat in groups of four chairs facing each other. They developed ideas individually, then in pairs and finally as a group. They then shared their description of the future with everyone at the workshop.

Discussion question: What do transportation and communities look like in five or six years in the future?

Generate Ideas

Purpose: Generate near-term ideas to improve transportation with a focus on transportation demand management (transit, ridesharing, walking, bicycling, telework, etc.)

Process: Participants became ad hoc consulting firms in groups of four or five people. Each consulting firm advised three different people designated as clients. Each client was assigned one of the futures listed above. Groups use previously developed descriptions of transportation challenges that will be faced in the assigned future and generated ideas to address those challenges.

Discussion questions: What would make transportation work better within the next zero to six years in your designated future? Will the challenges differ in rural versus urban areas? With some modes thrive and others not? Will some people thrive and others struggle?

Assess Ideas

Purpose: Generate and assess near-term ideas to improve transportation

Process: In small groups, participants identified some of their best ideas to improve transportation in the near term. They then created four different futures and named those futures. They then used the four futures to assess the ideas and find one good idea that worked well in all four futures (robust – capable of performing without failure under a wide range of conditions) and one that only worked or worked particularly well in one future (hedge – a means of protection or defense).

Discussion questions: What good idea would work well in many futures? What good idea is particularly important if a certain future happens?

Assess Ideas

Participants were asked to choose one idea to improve transportation in the next five or six years. Each idea was reviewed and scored by five randomly selected workshop participants. Participants then shared the ten highest scoring ideas with the group.