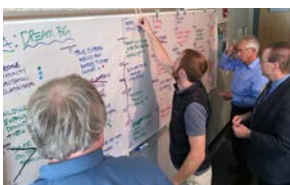
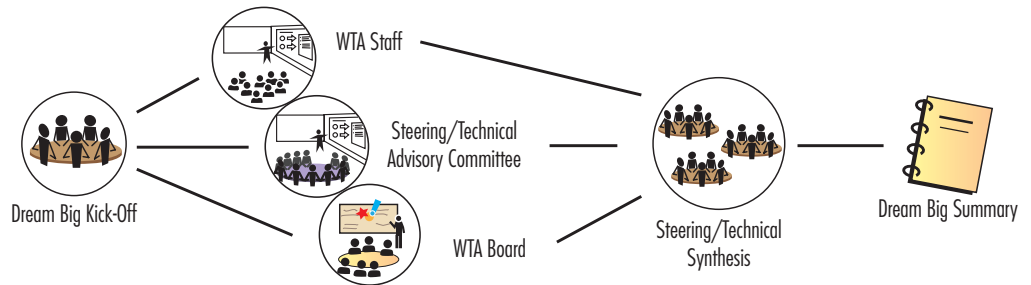


## SUMMARY

As a compliment to the technical work on WTA’s 6-Year Strategic Plan, those involved in the process also conducted a series of unrestrained creative exercises. Over the course of four meetings (guided by the stakeholder Steering Committee), participants named 4 Guiding Lights, 4 Big Dreams, and 73 Pretty Good Ideas.

## INTRODUCTION

WTA’s 6-Year Strategic Plan update includes extensive technical analysis of current conditions, technological advances, and challenges. To help everyone think beyond the constraints of existing issues, 2015 Board Chair Mel Hansen asked the planning team to conduct an exercise that was designed to invite everyone to “Dream Big,” and put forth their ideas about what WTA might do if money and other barriers could be overcome. The process included brainstorming sessions with the WTA Board of Directors, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, and WTA Staff, followed by a work session with the Steering and Technical Advisory Committees to reconcile and expand the big ideas.



At three successive meetings, WTA staff, committee, and board members put forward big ideas that WTA might consider if resources were not barriers. Once everyone’s ideas were explained, debated, and sometimes revised, each participant used stickers to identify one top choice, two second choices, and three third choices. This exercise produced lively discussion in each group, and the results were tabulated and compared among groups. The final work session reconciled the various lists and refined the discussion into the conclusions presented here.

### WTA Staff – October 16, 2015

Top issues identified during the WTA Staff exercise were “transit like we mean it” (making the transit experience competitive with the driving experience); solar panels on all WTA roofs; and substantial transit center improvements.

### Steering Committee / Technical Committee – October 27, 2015

Top issues identified during the joint Steering / Technical Advisory Committee’s exercise were regional and multi-modal partnerships, education and transit system integration, bike sharing, and complete access for vulnerable populations.

### WTA Board of Directors – November 12, 2015

Top issues identified during the WTA Board’s Dream Big exercise were restoring service levels to before 2010 cuts; cross-county connections; smart rides and increasing north county ridership.

**Joint Steering Committee & Technical Advisory Committee Work Session – February 29 2016**

During the joint Steering Committee / Technical Advisory Committee work session on February 29, 2016, participants reviewed the tabulations from the previous exercises, reviewed various analyses, and discussed the results. In the end, they agreed on four over-arching objectives (or Guiding Lights) and four Big Dreams for WTA services, while also agreeing that the many good ideas from the process should be kept at the ready for when opportunities emerge in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

**4 GUIDING LIGHTS**



**EQUITY**

Participants identified equity and equitable access to WTA services as priorities. This includes providing the underserved with access to education, employment, housing, and other important destinations. At the same time, the group agreed that WTA must act in a fiscally responsible manner, and acknowledged that providing access to WTA services to populations with highly individualized needs is expensive.



**ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

Strategic Planning participants are strong advocates for environmental stewardship. This means making the streets safer to use by reducing the number of cars, and allowing the public to make environmentally sound travel decisions. It also means reducing the region’s carbon footprint by getting cars off the road, using sustainable technology in WTA operations, and building a responsible ecological and economic legacy for future generations.



**ACCESS TO EDUCATION**

Another theme was access to education, with a vision to network educational institutions with the communities they serve, and with one another. Access throughout the county is vital, as are frequency and expanded hours; ranges of ages; services outside of normal school hours; and non-traditional educational facilities. WTA also needs to demonstrate its services to educational institutions, such as the recently successful FREE 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Bus Pass program.



**SYSTEM AND REVENUE GROWTH**

The Steering Committee is adamant that WTA is an outstanding asset, and should grow to attract more people, in more ways, and at more times. The Steering Committee had a number of ideas for growing WTA revenue with traditional and non-traditional sources include: municipal and private parking taxes; fuel and auto registration surcharges; added building permit fees and institutional levies such as business and other organization fees; advertising revenues including the website and shelters; tiered-fares; a Transportation Benefit District; a carbon tax; pass distribution and pricing to support sales of quarterly, semi-annual and annual passes; and personalized stored-value passes to capture data and enable customer targeting.

## CONCLUSIONS

**4 BIG DREAMS****ALL ABOUT CONVENIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

There was widespread agreement throughout the Dream Big process that WTA should do everything it can to make transit very easy to use. This means regular, frequent, and efficient bus service, but it also means that everything about the service is convenient. Technology is deployed to make it easy to find the bus you need, to know when to expect the next bus, to make adjustments to your route and schedule in real time, and access to Wi-Fi on the bus. The rising generation expects to get information in this form. It could mean more GO Lines, more often; bus rapid transit; light rail; and/or increased frequency throughout the system. WTA staff called this concept “transit like we mean it” (as a viable alternative to driving).

**HUBS & STATIONS**

Many process participants are enthusiastic about offering a wide variety of supportive services at bus stations, such as dry cleaners, convenience groceries, postal services, car and/or bike sharing, and so forth. They also think it is important that bus shelters are plentiful, well lit, clean, and easy to reach.

**MORE THAN BUSES**

There was also widespread support for bike and/or car sharing as a supportive service to transit. Having shared bikes and/or cars available at bus stations and other points along WTA’s routes would allow bus riders to get more done without a car. A commuter could get to work a little faster by using a shared bike, or run a mid-day errand using a shared car. This would encourage people to leave their car at home. There is also interest in trolleys on the part of some Steering Committee members.

**ONE CARD WILL TRAVEL**

Another great convenience with broad support through Dream Big is a common pass for many forms of transportation (and other services). This might mean the ability to use your student or employee identification card as a bus pass, and/or information on how to obtain a universal pass from your employer, school, or place of residence. It might also mean using the same pass for WTA busses, and for intercity transit to Skagit County or all the way to Seattle or Vancouver.

## CONCLUSIONS

**73 PRETTY GOOD IDEAS**

There were a lot of great individual ideas generated during the Dream Big exercises. Some are grouped into the concepts on the previous pages, while others didn't get enough individual support to put them on the lists above, but still merit further consideration. All of the ideas are presented here, with the most popular choices at the top.

**Steering Committee &****Technical Advisory Committee**

- Multi Modal Transportation Partnerships, systems & Campus Community Zero Carbon
- Education and Transit and High school integrated system
- Bike Sharing
- Complete Access for vulnerable populations, Families, older adults, and Multi-lingual
- Want me out of my car make it worth it
- World Class Bus Stops
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Connect Transportation Hubs
- Ferndale Circulator
- Educational Party Bus
- Rolling Living Room
- East County Community Connector
- Total Transportation Network
- Where is the bus (Technology Locator)
- Bellingham Light Rail LINK
- One Card Multi Transit
- Rural Park and Rides
- County Ridership Blitz & Rider buddies
- North County Connector
- Beyond the pulse
- Levels of Service for Riders
- Cable Tram - Waterfront to University
- More Rapid Change
- Bus to Baker
- Dreams without Borders (Suenos Sin Fronteras)
- Grand Funding for ideas
- Higher Occupancy Travel

**Staff**

- Transit like we mean it; "Transit for all;" Competitive with driving
- Solar panels on all WTA roofs
- Community Center function around transit at all transit centers
- Building (Existing) Expansion Downtown & New Building & Community Facility
- Bus rapid Transit to 3 points
- Universal & Neighborhood passes with other entities
- Solar Powered, Electric Buses
- Re-Invent Roadways with transit only lanes
- Elder Routes
- Robust individualized Marketing & rider training program
- Jitney Uber Like Group Service
- Cordata Station 2.0
- WTA owned & Expanded Lincoln Creek Park & Ride
- Service to Airport
- Roundabouts
- True Express Service from Boarder to Everett (Unique)
- Increase Community Organization Relationships
- Micro Rapid Transit
- Electric Bike Share program
- Car share program
- Eliminate Flex Service in favor of other options
- Waterfront to Western aerial tram
- Be a true Multi-Modal Transit System (Regional)
- Free Fare
- Fresh Squeezed parking
- Non profit community use of fleet
- Downtown Bellingham Grid
- Eliminating inter-linements (No bus number change)
- Free Fare summer for kids
- Increase service to reduce congestion

**Board**

- Back to level before 2010 cuts (+ Plum Line)
- Cross County Connection Grid System
- Smart Rides
- Increase North County Ridership
- Bring Back Ferndale Circulator Plus
- Increase Frequency and Build on making our Service more Convenient
- WTA Car & Bike Share Program
- Evaluate WWU-WTA (Equity to all services)
- More Evening Hours
- Downtown Bellingham Circulator
- Regional Connections and Inter-State
- More Convenient Bus Passes
- 0.1% Sales Tax
- Custom Shuttle
- Air Conditioning on all Buses
- Sunday Service to Small Cities & Unincorporated County