

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Port Townsend, Washington
Local Meeting Summary
May 22, 2013

The local meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on Wednesday, May 22, 2013, at the Port of Port Townsend Commission Building, 333 Benedict Street, Port Townsend, Washington.

CHAIRMAN WELCOME AND COMMISSION INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman O'Neal opened the meeting by thanking the organizers of the Tuesday afternoon tour. He then asked the members of the Commission to introduce themselves. Port Townsend Mayor David King welcomed the Commission to Port Townsend and thanked the Commissioners for their work on behalf of the state.

Commission Business

Commissioner Litt moved adoption of the April 16 & 17, 2013 meeting summary and Commissioner Parker seconded the motion. The meeting summary was adopted unanimously.

Commissioner Haley moved adoption of the contract extension for the Road Usage Study. Commissioner Tortorelli seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously.

Chairman O'Neal read Resolution 714 honoring Commissioner Richard Ford for his endless dedication, commitment, relentless perseverance and contributions to the State of Washington and its transportation issues and challenges.

Commissioner Cowan moved adoption of Resolution 714, honoring former Commissioner Richard D. Ford. Commissioner Haley seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously.

FINAL PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING ADOPTION OF NEW SR 520 TOLL RATES

Staff briefed the Commission on the tolling and traffic management requirements for SR 520 and informed the Commission that the State Treasurer, traffic and revenue and engineering consultants have certified that the financial obligations will be met under the proposed 2.5% rate increase, with rounding to the nearest nickel.

Commissioner Parker moved that the Commission approve the 2.5% increase, rounded to the nearest nickel. Commissioner Haley seconded the motion.

Paul W. Locke recommended that the tolls be applied to buses and carpools to collect additional revenue.

Commissioner O'Neal explained that on SR 520, the Urban Partnership Agreement with USDOT requires that transit and carpools are exempt from tolls. There are no toll exemptions on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

There was no further public comment.

The Commission unanimously adopted the toll increase as proposed.

[SR 520 Toll Rate Adjustment Briefing](#)
[Bond Covenant Certificate](#)

Action/Follow-up: None.

WSF & FAC-T FERRY FARE PROPOSAL

Commissioner Cowan provided a brief background of all of the work involved in developing the ferry tariff proposal over the last eight months – including several meetings of the Ferry Advisory Committee – Tariffs (FAC-T). Ray Deardorf briefed the Commission on its membership, which not only includes all of the ferry-served communities but also Sound Transit, etc. etc. Greg Beardsley of Vashon Island, the Chair of the FAC-T, joined Mr. Deardorf in presenting the ferry tariff proposal.

The proposal contains many elements. Some of the recommended changes are informed by a cost of service study done by WSF.

Elements without significant revenue impacts

- Require 72-hour advance notice by school groups
- Reinstate freight-only charge fare category
- Adjust multi-ride rule to ensure equal fares for disabled passengers with attendants
- Allow multi-organization promotional fares
- Allow no-show fees in the reservation process
- Change the calculation methodology to remove the driver portion before adjusting the under 14' vehicle category
- Reduce under 14' vehicle fare to 70% of standard fare
- Eliminate the motorcycle oversize surcharge
- 3-wheel vehicles under 8' pay motorcycle fare
- 3-wheel vehicles 8' and longer pay appropriate length-based fare

Elements with positive revenue impacts

- On the Anacortes-Sidney route:
 - Consolidate oversize vehicle fares into one category
 - Eliminate promotional half-fare
 - Increase oversize vehicle fares by 5.1% in 2013 and 2.5% in 2014
 - Increase other vehicle and passenger fares by 4.1% in 2013 and 2.5% in 2014

Elements with negative revenue impacts

- Increase the youth discount from 20% to 50%
- In 2014, eliminate the one-way fares between Friday harbor and Sidney and institute a new, distance-based roundtrip fare that is lower than the current roundtrip cost
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Systemwide elements

- Generate \$328.1 million in biennial operating revenue, as directed by the transportation budget. In addition, the capital surcharge is projected to generate \$7.6 million for new ferry construction.
- A two-year, two-step fare proposal for 2013 and 2014
- Increasing the ratio of the vehicle/driver fare to the passenger fare

- Increase in the charter rate formula

Proposed General Fare Increase

- On October 1, 2013, increase vehicle fares by 3% and passenger fares by 2%, an average fare increase of 2.5%
- On May 1, 2014, increase vehicle fares by 2.5% and passenger fares by 2%, an average fare increase of 2.25%

Items reviewed by the FAC-T, but not recommended:

- Increasing the discount rate for passenger multi-ride card users from 20% to 30%. (This was a JTC Fare Media Study Recommendation.)
- Splitting up fare uniformity principle for the Central Puget Sound travel shed and charging each route based on distance.
- Creating a discounted student fare for those over age 18.
- Premium fare for first-class service.

Commissioner Cowan made a motion that the Commission begin the 2013-14 fare setting process and file a CR-102 and accompanying tariff schedules as proposed today by WSF. Commissioner Haley seconded the motion and it was adopted.

FOLLOW-UP:

(1) Greg Beardsley submitted a statement in support of the proposal and also recommending additional work that needs to be done prior to the next fare-setting cycle. He advocates that pricing can and should be more based on deck space that is used. He also recommends revising the priority loading policy, limiting the privilege only to those vehicles that provide an advantage to WSF service.

(2) The Commission discussed the need for extensive outreach on the tariff proposal in ferry-served communities during June and July. The public hearing will take place in Seattle on July 30, 2013. Public input meetings will be scheduled during the weeks of July 8 and July 15 at:

- The San Juan Inter-Island ferry
- Anacortes
- Vashon Island
- Bremerton or Southworth
- Whidbey Island
- Bainbridge Island

[Tariff Proposal](#)

[Proposed Capital Surcharge](#)

[Proposed Fare Table Oct 1, 2013](#)

[Proposed Fare Table May 1, 2014](#)

Action/Follow-up: Schedule ferry fare public input meetings.

TRANSPORTATION 101

Staff provided an overview of the statewide transportation system. Kevin Dayton, Olympic Region Administrator, provided highlights of the WSDOT projects in Clallam and Jefferson County.

Action/Follow-up: None.

CITY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Port Townsend Mayor David King identified key issues for city transportation.

Issue 1: Revenue to maintain, rebuild and upgrade existing city streets is a key need. City streets were not built to handle the size and volume of vehicles today. Port Townsend has leveraged \$15 million of improvements with \$4 million from TIB grants. These have funded 40% of sidewalk projects and

In Port Townsend, 50% of the property is tax exempt. Local improvement districts and TBDs have too much overhead costs – operating and political – to be of benefit. The 20-year need exceeds \$54 million, of which non-motorized improvements total \$17 million.

Three sources of street fund revenues:

- Public utility taxes
- MVFT (about \$188,000)
- Street permits (minor income)

Total revenues 2012: \$665,000. Operations and minor maintenance takes 70% and debt service 30%.

Issue 2: Safe, reliable access to Port Townsend is critical: ferry service, Hood Canal bridge, SR 20/19 and Highway 101/104. Several years ago, there was no access for a few days – US 101 was blocked by a landslide, the Hood Canal Bridge was locked open and the ferry was not operating.

Port Townsend and the County will be collaborating on improvements to the SR 20 and Mill Road intersection.

Issue 3: Develop adequate transportation network to support future growth while maintaining small town character. There is only one road into Port Townsend; an alternative entry route (Discovery Road) would preclude the need to four-lane SR 20.

Issue 4: Successfully integrate all forms of transportation into capital projects. Sidewalks and bike lanes are important to Port Townsend mobility.

Issue 5: ADA upgrades to existing sidewalks. Many downtown and uptown sidewalks were built in 1910s and 1930s.

Commissioner Haley asked

- If the city is banking its levy? No.
- Has Port Townsend looked at using the Transportation Benefit District (TBD) sales tax option? Local options have been used for competing local priorities, e.g., parks and community services. A lot of the retail sales occur outside of the county.

Suggestions

For arterials and collectors:

1. Continue and expand TIB grant programs;
2. Continue to pass a portion of federal dollars to local agencies
3. Expand funding of Bike/Ped and Safe Routes to School Programs
4. PT does not do well with funding based on population. Provide local government more revenue sources with small administrative overhead
 - a. License fees: increase councilmanic imposition to \$40; allow cost-of-living increases; reduce administrative requirements
 - b. Allow formation of street utility

Mayor Hayes, City of Sequim, noted that although Sequim has an older population, that demographic share has dropped in the last 10 years from 68% to 60%. Sequim seeks completion of the Simdars interchange on US 101, which provides access to Battelle and the east side of the city.

Sequim Transportation Benefit District is generating about \$500,000 a year. The City also enacted transportation impact fees. Sequim downtown plan aims to improve walkability and mobility.

Community Development Director Nathan West and Councilmember Patrick Downey, City of Port Angeles, reported that their city is the largest on the north Olympic Peninsula (about 20,000 people) and host to over 3 million visitors annually. The City focuses on balancing current needs and investing the future. The city has a backlog of 41 projects, some of which date to 1999. Future investments focus on increased connectivity and providing alternative transportation routes.

Downtown waterfront redevelopment includes:

- Improved ferry traffic circulation
- Safer and more efficient multimodal access
- Better transit connections
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Challenges and Successes:

- Ediz Hook Road Protection (access to Coast Guard station)
- \$7 million Lauridsen Blvd Bridge Replacement
- 18th Street Reconstruction, access to Fairchild Intl Airport
- Race Street complete street development, access to Olympic National Park
- Marine Drive Bulkhead repair, in conjunction with the Port of Port Angeles
- Citywide Wayfinding

Commissioner Haley asked:

- If Port Angeles is banking its levy? In general, it is using most of the levy capacity.
- Has Port Angeles looked at using TBD option? The City is examining it and developing options for the Council to consider.

Secretary Peterson asked if there has ever been an agreement between the state, counties and cities on gas tax distribution. In Oregon there is an agreed-upon 50-30-20 split.

Commissioner Haley noted that the Commission revenue proposal initiated a discussion regarding a split between counties, cities and the state. The Commission relied on vehicle miles traveled rather than population as a basis for the discussion, to reflect basic needs and to correlate with a possible transition to a road usage charge.

[City of Port Townsend](#)
[City of Port Angeles](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

COUNTY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Jefferson County Commissioner David Sullivan and County Engineer Monte Reinders briefed the Commission on the safety needs at key intersections on SR 19 and SR 20. They also briefed the Commission on plans for the Discovery Trail, which at completion will traverse the Olympic Peninsula for over 100 miles distance from Port Townsend to La Push. To date, Jefferson County has completed 7.3 miles, the Larry Scott Trail, from Port Townsend south. A major challenge is trail construction at Discovery Bay; although the rail grade offers an opportunity for the trail to cross on the former trestle, the Department of Fish and Wildlife and salmon recovery groups oppose this access. Inability to use the trestle will move the trail alongside US 101, with additional cost, safety and right-of-way challenges.

Secretary Peterson asked what agency maintains the map of trails statewide. Staff indicated that the Recreation and Conservation Office would have that information.

Mike Doherty, Clallam County Commissioner and Joe Donisio, Assistant County Engineer, talked about the importance of US 101 to Clallam County. Traffic volume has increased to the point where all unsignalized intersections are failing to meet level of service standards. Additional signals will lead to rapid deterioration of the operational efficiency of US 101. Continued and increased flexibility on the use of federal funding is Clallam County's top request.

The Elwha River Bridge, completed in 2009, includes a 10' trail below the car deck that carries the Discovery Trail across the River. Almost 40 miles of the Discovery Trail is paved in Clallam County.

Clallam County has invested about \$6-7 million in the Deer Park underpass project, utilizing WSDOT right-of-way and rest area funding to help complete it. The rest area will serve both vehicle and Discovery Trail traffic.

[Jefferson County](#)
[Deer Park RTPO](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Tammi Rubert, General Manager of Jefferson Transit, explained the mission of Jefferson Transit, which began operations in 1981. It serves 300,000 passengers annually. Jefferson County residents support the transit system with a 0.9% sales tax. Jefferson Transit generates 70% of its operating funds from sales tax. Its farebox recovery is 5%.

Jefferson Transit operates three fixed routes in Port Townsend. It began its Pacific Ocean coast service in 1995 and now partners with Clallam Transit and Kitsap Transit to connect the Peninsula. Due to budget issues, Sunday service will end beginning in July.

Jefferson County has a higher than median share of state population at poverty level. Its challenges include:

- Tax base
- Geographic area
- Inadequate operations base
- Special needs transit service takes 22% of budget

Successes:

- Mobility coordinator
- Connecting the Olympic Peninsula, Communities and economic centers
- Inter-local agreements and regional collaboration
- Promoting multi-modal travel and providing seamless connections
- Summer Youth Pass offered by Clallam, Grays harbor, Jefferson and Mason Transit

Needs include:

- Reliable, stable and flexible state investment for public transportation
- Maintain current state transit assistance
- Increase funding to enable expanded service and increase frequency of existing service

Terry Weed, General Manager, Clallam Transit, reported that the system moves over one million passengers a year Collecting 0.6% sales tax, Clallam Transit has a 15% farebox recovery rate. Clallam Transit strongly supports the multimodal approach of the Washington Transportation Plan. Demand for paratransit and vanpool service is up about 10% each this year.

Sustainability is the biggest challenge for Clallam Transit. It is within a year or two of service reductions. More state assistance is needed; at about 3%, Washington is way under the national average of 30% in assisting local transit. Systems in our state are over-reliant on federal funding and at the limit of local funding.

[Public Transportation Needs, Challenges and Successes](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

PORT NEEDS, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Larry Crockett, Executive Director of the Port of Port Townsend, briefed the Commission on Port activities, which include a shipyard and marine industrial area, an airport and industrial park, and three marinas. It owns and operates the largest public boatyard in the state. Needs include protecting the access to the boat haven and shipyard, ability to develop the airport industrial park, and safety improvements at the SR 19 and Airport Road entrance.

Jeff Robb, Executive Director of the Port of Port Angeles, briefed the Commission on the port's multiple business lines, including:

- 2 airports, including a 6350' runway with the capacity to support 737s
- 2 marinas
- 2 boat launches
- Marine terminal facilities and a ferry terminal

Needs:

- Increase WSDOT aviation division funding to support small airports, which are capital intensive and not self-supporting
- Improve highway system
- Support barge operations to reduce truck movement. Regional support may enable a sustainable volume.

There are now six mills in Clallam County, hardwood and plywood.

Successes:

- A public-private partnership to retain the Black Ball Ferry. The Port of Port Angeles and Black Ball Ferries has done a \$4 million improvement to its facilities, replacing creosote pilings with concrete piers
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- Increased cargo movement at marine terminal facilities
- Expansion of composite manufacturing campus

[Port Needs, Challenges and Successes](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

TRIBAL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Annette Nesse, Chief Operating Officer of the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, briefed the Commission on the nine tribes of the Olympic Peninsula: Squaxin Island, Skokomish, Suquamish, Pt. Gamble S’Klallam, Jamestown S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Makah, Quileute, and Quinault.

The tribes participate in the Peninsula RTPO and the Tribal Transportation Planning Organization. Tribes engage with the state in transportation policy through the Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Council (WITPAC). Many tribes have transit programs and partner with local transit agencies. Tribes are providing data to the state freight plan to demonstrate the importance of US 101 as a freight corridor.

Lennea Wolfe told the Commission the Skokomish Tribe receives about \$180,000 a year in transportation funds. BIA funds can be used as match funds to federal funds.

The Skokomish/Mason Transit program provides service from Shelton to Brinnon and from the Reservation to Cushman Road. By August 2012, after five months, monthly ridership exceeded 800. Skokomish has applied for and received 3 scenic byway grants for safety improvements on US 101.

Jamestown S’Klallam has built a pedestrian tunnel under US 101; a traffic calming project on the Old Blyn Highway, a county road, built with fuel tax refund revenues; Olympic Discovery Trail scenic pull-out and restrooms; Jamestown Campus transit Service; and has planned safety improvements with WSDOT and Clallam County for intersection improvements at Chicken Coop/Zaccardo Road.

[Tribal Transportation Needs, Challenges and Successes](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

PENINSULA RTPO: A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PERSPECTIVE

Jefferson County Commissioner David Sullivan, Chair of the Peninsula RTPO, noted that the RTPO is one of four rural RTPOs in the state. Its member counties are Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap and Mason. Kitsap County also is a member of Puget Sound Regional Council. Nine tribes are members.

Peninsula RTPO is more of a coordinating group than a funding agency. It is restructuring and revising its by-laws. Hood Canal Bridge, US 101 and ferries are key priorities.

Action/Follow-up: None

A REGIONAL CHALLENGE: SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION ON THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA

Leesa Monroe is Mobility Coordinator for Jefferson Transit. The system assists special needs customers.

- Fixed route vehicles are fully accessible
- Dial-a-ride service runs within ¾ mile of fixed routes
- Discounted fares offered to seniors and the disabled
- Drivers sell monthly passes

As Mobility Coordinator, she sits on disability board, works with veterans, etc. She helps people navigate the transportation network. Transports a lot of people going to renal dialysis; they must go whether it snows or not.

There is confusion btw Dial-A ride and paratransit (Medicaid clients). To reduce costs, Jefferson Transit has set up Saturday shopping trips. It also provides expanded Dial-a-Ride (DAR) service to Kala Point, Marrowstone and Cape George (¾ of population is over 65) one day a week. Jefferson County has an exceptional coordinated community volunteer service.

The greatest challenge is the distance to services. The Amanda Park to Forks Loop is 128 miles RT. Buses deviate up to ¾ mile upon request.

How the Transportation Commission can help:

- One call assistance system. Agencies are very disconnected and uncoordinated.
- Google Transit is a success for some customers, others need printed information
- Funding for more technology: smart phone applications showing real time bus service, ORCA card funding assistance

The top problem is difficulty walking. There are structural barriers to transit access. Physical needs for rural transit include seating at bus stops, covered shelters, and restrooms.

In 2013 Jefferson Transit's average cost for one way DAR is \$53. The Veteran's Administration takes people to the Seattle VA Hospital, but there is no VA lift-assisted vehicle.

The Olympic Area on Aging reports that Jefferson County has the highest median age population the state, recently surpassing San Juan County – over 26% above 65 years in age. Over half the seniors live alone. Seventy-eight percent of Olympic Peninsula residents drive or are provided

transportation by family or friends. Older adults outlive their ability to drive: men by 6 years and women by 11 years. Public transit can involve multiple transfers and long waits. There can be reliance on EMS transport for non-emergent needs.

If people are not able to age in place, costs are pushed to other parts of the state or local budget.

[Jefferson Transit Special Needs Customers](#)
[Special Needs Transportation on the Olympic Peninsula](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK, TOURISM, AND TRANSPORTATION

Olympic National Park (ONP) is one of 20 World Heritage Sites in the U.S., attracting almost 3 million visitors a year and \$115 million in tourism. The Hoh Rainforest gets up to 300,000 visitors a year. It is the second most popular destination in ONP. The Hoh River Road serves ONP and 25 Jefferson County residents.

The rainforest gets over 125” of rain a year. There is frequent flooding and repairs and mitigation is costly. Federal assistance has only been on an emergency basis. The 10-year history of repair costs for the Hoh River Road ranges from minimal in 2005 to \$1.1 million in 2010. In six years the repair cost exceeded \$400,000; the annual share of gas tax in Jefferson County is \$1.3 million.

Is it time to consider a route jurisdiction transfer? SR 110 to LaPush and SR 119 were transferred from the county to the state. It is very small use by the county, compared to the ONP use. Clallam County Commissioner Mike Doherty noted that the Hoko Road has similar maintenance costs to the Hoh River Road.

Teresa Verraes, Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce, indicated how several businesses failed after the steel electric ferries were taken out of service. Six years later, the economy is still in recovery. The business community wants to keep the transportation system that is in place and notice and time to prepare if a part of the system will fail. The ferry service is critical to the local economy.

In 2013, the Visitor Center has already had visitors from 47 states and 25 countries outside North America.

Jefferson County Commissioner David Sullivan said the important need is certainty. What can be planned on? What can be counted on?

Gordon Nielsen, transportation planner for the Skokomish Tribe and a business owner in Port Townsend, noted the resilience of the city. It was a Port Townsend business owner who provided a boat and found crew to transport people from Port Townsend to Coupeville when the steel electric ferries were taken out of service.

[Olympic National Park Tourism and Transportation](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Libby Clark-Manson, Kitsap Transit, told the Commission that the Rich Passage research vessel is housed at Port Townsend. That high speed passenger ferry can make a 35 minute run between Bremerton and Seattle. Kitsap Transit is working with WSF and developing a business plan for passenger ferry service.

NAMING SR 117 THE POW/MIA MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

Gerald Rettela, President of the Korean War Veterans of Washington, drafted the Resolution adopted by the Legislature that asks the Transportation Commission to name SR 117 the “POW/MIA Memorial Highway.” Col. Don Roberts talked about his experience with prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action, including a medic in his command in Viet Nam.

Commissioner Litt moved the adoption of Resolution 713 naming SR 117 the “POW/MIA Memorial Highway. Commissioner Tortorelli seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAN O'NEAL, Chairman

TOM COWAN, Vice-Chairman

ANNE HALEY, Member

PHILIP PARKER, Member

JERRY LITT, Member

CHARLES ROYER, Member

JOE TORTORELLI, Member

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL