



# WTP2035

WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN

CONNECTING WASHINGTON COMMUNITIES  
FOR A HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE

# WTP 2035 Public Outreach Results

Briefing for the Transportation Commission

October 15, 2014

# Overview

1. Status report on WTP 2035 public outreach activities
2. Key findings from public comment
3. Summary of comments received on draft WTP 2035
4. Schedule of remaining activities

# Outreach Conducted Prior to Release of Draft WTP 2035

- Stakeholder Roundtables
- Presentations to numerous organizations
- Transportation Commission briefings
- Project Website: WTP2035.com



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "wtp2035.com/public-comment/". The website header features the WTP2035 logo, which includes a map of Washington state with puzzle pieces, and the text "WTP2035" and "WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN | CONNECTING WASHINGTON COMMUNITIES FOR A HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE". A green navigation bar contains links for "WTP2035", "ADVISORY GROUP", "DOCUMENTS", "NEWS", "PUBLIC COMMENT", and "CONTACT US", along with a search icon. The main content area is titled "PUBLIC COMMENT" and contains two paragraphs of text. The first paragraph states: "The Washington State Transportation Commission (Commission) is seeking broad public comment on its draft Washington Transportation Plan (WTP 2035), a plan designed to chart the course for how the statewide transportation system will change and grow over the next 20 years." The second paragraph states: "To help meet this objective, the Commission is gathering statewide ideas, comments and concerns from the general public through online, webinar and upcoming in-person forums around the state." To the right of the main text is a "LINKS" section with three links: "WTP2035", "Washington Transportation Plan 2030", and "Washington Transportation Plan 2007-2026". Below these are two more links: "Documents" and "Advisory Group".

# Objectives of Outreach Conducted After Draft WTP 2035 Release

Following release of the draft Washington Transportation Plan 2035 (WTP 2035) in early August, a second wave of outreach and engagement was launched, targeting the general public as well as transportation stakeholders.

The outreach effort had multiple objectives:

- Inform the general public and stakeholders of the release of the draft plan
- Provide summary-level information about the issues, strategies and actions contained in WTP 2035
- Seek feedback on the plan and engage the public in helping to refine the content and priorities for WTP 2035
- Understand regional perspectives on transportation challenges and investment needs

# Post-Release Outreach Summary

## Key Elements of the Draft WTP 2035 Outreach Effort

- Five public Open Houses
- Two webinars
- Press releases to print, on-line and broadcast media
- Press interviews with Transportation Commissioners
- Additional presentations to stakeholder groups

# Outreach Summary

## Public Open Houses

**Vancouver** September 8, 2014

Vancouver Downtown Library

Attendees: 42

**Spokane** September 9, 2014

Spokane Downtown Library

Attendees: 15

**Bremerton** September 11, 2014

Norm Dicks Government Center

Attendees: 15

**Bellevue** September 17, 2014

Bellevue Library

Attendees: 20

**Richland (Tri-Cities)** September 18, 2014

Ben Franklin Transit Center

Attendees: 12

### Open House Recruiting:

Attendees were recruited by the local MPO/RTPOs, at transportation related events, the WTP 2035 website, and a series of local press releases.



Vancouver Open House, September 8, 2014

# Outreach Summary

## Webinars

We also delivered two hour-long webinars attended by participants together in the host locations as well as individuals who dialed in. An on-line summary presentation was given, followed by questions and discussion. These were noticed through press releases, at transportation related events, and through the MPO/RTPOs.

1. **Chelan County, September 17, 2014**  
8 Attendees
2. **Whatcom County, September 25, 2014**  
12 Attendees

HELP SHAPE WASHINGTON'S TRANSPORTATION FUTURE

## WEBINAR SESSION 1

SEPT 17 2014

.....  
The Washington State Transportation Commission is seeking feedback on its draft Washington Transportation Plan (WTP 2035).  
.....

Join the webinar live or from your computer to hear a presentation of plan highlights followed by a Q&A session.  
.....

**Date: September 17, 2014**  
**Time: 1:00 - 2:00pm**

**HOW TO JOIN**

**Option 1: Join Us Live**  
1350 McKittrick Street, Wenatchee WA  
Conference Room 2  
RSVP to [Kathy@wvtc.org](mailto:Kathy@wvtc.org)

**Option 2: From Your Computer**  
RSVP to [admin@berkconsulting.com](mailto:admin@berkconsulting.com)

 **WTP2035**

View the draft plan, learn more:  
[www.wtp2035.com](http://www.wtp2035.com)

# Outreach Summary

## Media Coverage

- To date, **more than 50 media stories** about WTP 2035 have been published in news sources across the state
- Coverage included print, online and radio
- Stories have appeared in every targeted region including:
  - 7 cities in King County
  - 6 cities in Olympic region
  - 3 cities in North Central region
  - 1 city in Southwest region
  - 1 city in Eastern region

A9 | THE DAILY HERALD | WWW.HERALDNET.COM/OPINION | MONDAY, 09.15.2014

IN OUR VIEW | 20-Year Transportation Plan

## Replace the gas tax, but how?

Every five years, the Washington State Transportation Commission updates its 20-year plan, a document meant to inform state and local governments' decisions on transportation spending and related issues. The commission is introducing its 2035 plan at a series of public forums, the nearest of which for most of our readers is scheduled for 5 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at the Bellevue Regional Library, 1111 110th Ave. NE. The draft plan and an opportunity to comment online are also available at [wtp2035.com](http://wtp2035.com).

The most significant issue the plan raises doesn't involve concrete, steel rails or bridge trusses, but how the state pays for maintenance, operation and new construction in the

coming years. The state's gas tax, 37.5 cents per gallon, isn't automatically adjusted for inflation and doesn't account for the increase in the number of vehicles with improved fuel efficiency. With each passing year, the revenue generated by the gas tax pays for less and less.

The transportation commission, in the draft plan, calls for a transition from the gas tax to a road usage charge, basically treating transportation in general, and roads in particular, as a utility to be paid for based on how much of the service each of us use. (Actually, the commission couches its guidance in squishier language: "The commission recommends that the state continue to evaluate and plan for a possible transition from the gas

tax to a road usage charge.") But you get the picture.

A subcommittee was more concrete, recommending that such a usage charge be assessed either by charging a flat fee for an unlimited number of miles each month or year, a per-mile fee based on a vehicle's odometer reading, a per-mile fee with mileage determined by a GPS-recording device, or a combination of two or more of those options.

Charley Royer, the mayor of Seattle from 1978 to 1989 and current transportation commission member, knows that such a transition in funding will require a change in thinking for motorists and legislators. Oregon and California, he noted in a teleconference with The Herald

editorial board, are ahead of Washington in terms of raising the issue and beginning work to implement a workable system.

Any system that uses GPS to determine how many miles are driven on state roadways will likely raise privacy concerns among many motorists, Royer acknowledged. And the gas tax, at least for the time being, remains the closest thing we have to a carbon tax, levying a higher tax on those who pump more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

"The gas tax is no longer a sustainable way to preserve and maintain our transportation system," Royer said.

As a funding source, the gas tax is running on empty. Now's your chance to weigh in on what replaces it.

# Key Findings of Outreach Effort

- Considerable feedback was received, reflecting different regional perspectives and differing priorities of advocacy groups
- There is lots to digest, and we are still working through WSDOT comments, but we see no fatal flaws or deal-breakers in the public commentary
- The public input and feedback through our outreach work will unquestionably lead to an improved Final WTP 2035.
- A Draft Final will be ready before Thanksgiving, other than funding recommendations

# Key Findings of Outreach Effort, cont.

- There are a few important policy areas that call for further deliberation and guidance from the WTP Steering Committee and the Transportation Commission, notably:
  - Defining the State’s role in public transportation, especially transit
  - Addressing congestion reduction through a combination of capacity expansion, system operations and demand management
  - Balancing a bold “call to action” with realism about what can be achieved, politically and financially
- WTP 2035 should *be more specific* in its recommendations to Legislature about what the State can do to help agencies and stakeholders at all levels to achieve transportation objectives.
- Ultimately, the final WTP 2035 must address the questions: “*What does this Plan mean? Who does it apply to? And how can we get the Legislature to pay attention to it?*”

# Summary of Comments

- Economic Vitality & Freight Mobility
- Mobility and Congestion Reduction
- Environment
- Land Use
- Public Transportation
- Stewardship
- Public Health
- Non-Motorized
- Technology



# Economic Vitality & Freight Mobility

- Many comments in support of protecting/improving freight mobility
- Protect industrial lands that support ports, logistics activity, and economic development
- Give priority to shipments of Washington high time-value produce and products over trans-shipment of energy resources
- Additional Columbia River crossing(s) to support economic vitality, improve freight mobility and accommodate projected growth
- Invest in more all-weather roads



# Mobility and Congestion Reduction

- Reduce travel times and relieve roadway congestion as a goal
- More efficient use of existing infrastructure capacity
- Integrate system operations and management strategies with capital projects from the beginning
- More incentives for capacity-efficient modes, e.g., additional incentives to WA businesses to encourage telecommuting or higher-capacity transportation use by employees; financial incentives to individuals (tax reduction, fee waivers)
- Improve intermodal connectivity; particularly strong sentiment in ferry communities
- Negative connectivity and reliability impacts of long unit trains on truck freight and EMS as well general public.
- Improve ferry system reliability; need more redundancy



# Environment

- Take preemptive actions now to reduce likelihood of, and minimize environmental damage from, oil train spills
- Reduce ongoing environmental pollution from coal dust at rail terminals
- Reduce idling time for all vehicles – ferries, buses, trucks, diesel trains, autos
- Provide HOV lane access and related benefits to eco-friendly cars
- Replace/modify culverts to improve fish passage



# Land Use

- More regional-scale planning, integration of land use and transportation policy, plans and decisions
- Reduce sprawl and related infrastructure costs, congestion;
  - Avoid sprawl-inducing transportation investments
  - Smart growth: Direct development to contiguous areas already served by transit, roads, and sidewalk networks
- Provide non-motorized transportation infrastructure in residential developments
- Provide more support for farm-to-table shipping processes and infrastructure



# Public Transportation

- Important for the state to define its role in transit, whether funding, planning, programming, or a mix
- Numerous comments, from all five open houses, about the need to improve coverage and effectiveness of public transit
- Elderly, low-income groups particularly in need of improved accessibility and mobility via transit
- Safety improvements particularly important on routes used by pedestrians and cyclists to connect to public transit
- Funding strategy to solve the “first and last mile” challenge and thus make public transit a more feasible option for more trips



# Stewardship

- Near-term need for large investment in seismic retrofit
- Dedicate motor vehicle sales tax entirely to street maintenance
- Reduce time required to permit transportation projects
- Local funding is inadequate for maintenance of existing infrastructure
- Phase out use of studded tires; need more education on the cost and impacts of studded tires
- Give more attention to design aesthetics and community context in transportation projects



# Additional Important Issues

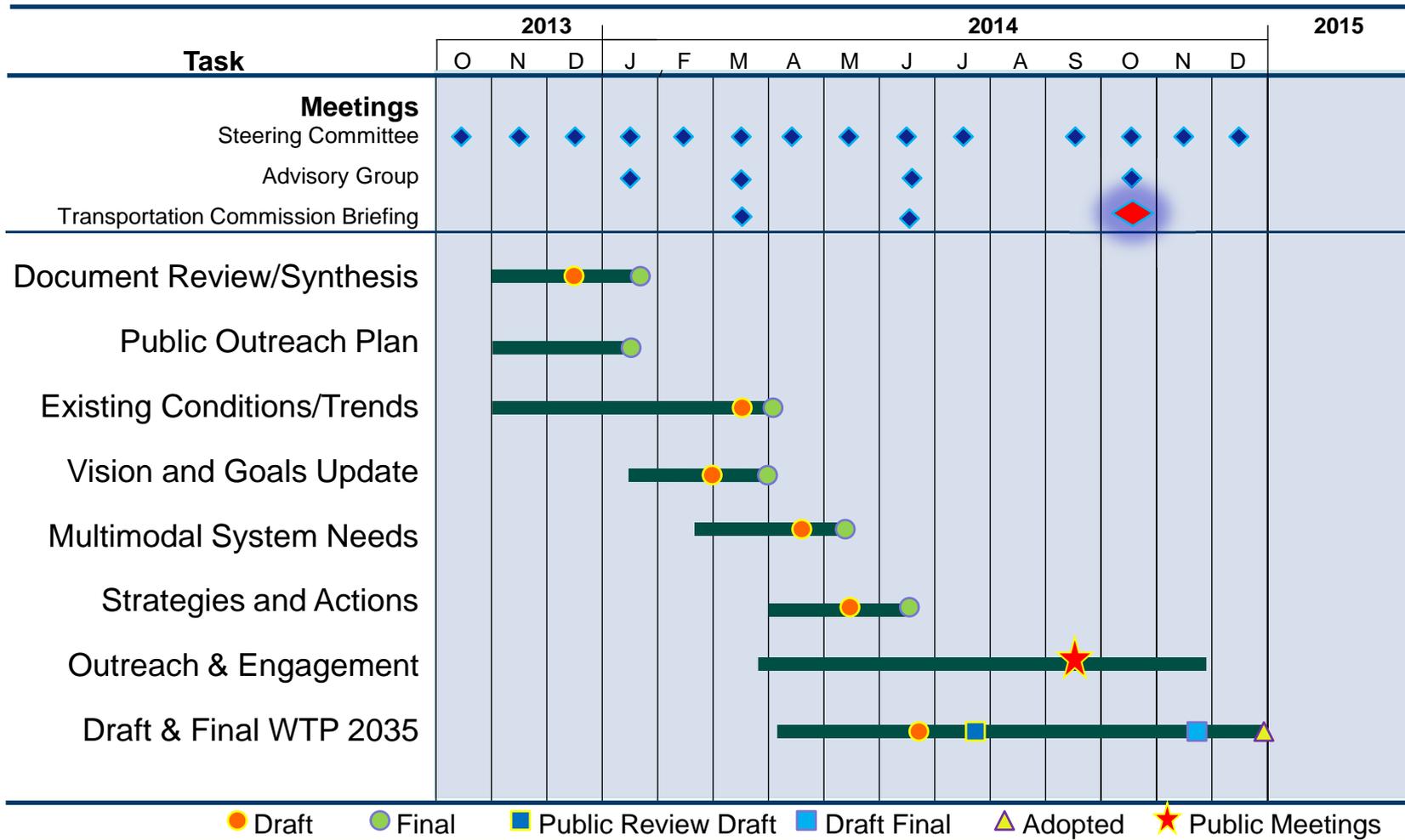
- Autonomous/connected vehicles could have significant impacts as soon as the next 5 to 10 years
- Non-Motorized Transportation
  - More investment in “complete streets” including sidewalks and bike trails, safer routes to schools
  - Improve enforcement of traffic laws to improve safety for bicyclists
  - Integrate non-motorized infrastructure into land development and transportation planning and design
- Public Health
  - Access to health services in small towns and rural communities
  - Investments that facilitate and encourage walking and biking will improve public health
  - More effective partnering between transportation and public health agencies

# Comments on Transportation Funding

- Rely on existing funding sources, and increase them if necessary, rather than look for new funding sources
- Move funding more towards general taxes and fees, rather than more heavy reliance on user fees; everyone depends on and benefits from the transportation system
- If more toll-based funding is used, mitigate its regressive nature, provide discounts for regular users, and offer a cash payment option to protect privacy/anonymity.
- Road usage charge generated comments primarily about privacy/anonymity concerns
- Generally negative reaction to “privatization” of transportation facilities, but positive support for employer-funded transportation
- Effectively manage state and local transportation spending; rely less on debt financing



# WTP 2035 Overall Project Schedule



# Recent and Remaining Project Milestones

- Aug - Sep Public Review Period
- Oct 7 Advisory Group meeting #4
- Oct 15 Transportation Commission Briefing
- Nov 24 Draft Final WTP 2035
- Dec 9 - 10 Transportation Commission Adoption

# Transportation Commission Discussion

