

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Summary

October 14 & 15, 2014

Chairman Haley opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commissioner Litt moved approval of the September 23, 2014 meeting summary for Ellensburg. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

2015 Meeting Dates and Locations Approval

Staff provided a list of proposed 2015 meeting dates and locations for discussion, including a recommendation of Renton and Longview/Kelso for the westside meetings and the options of Spokane, Yakima and Tri Cities for the eastside meetings. Kennewick would be a possible alternative if Yakima doesn't work. Another Westside option would be Bremerton.

Commissioner Royer suggested that the meeting dates and locations be discussed at the upcoming retreat. Reema Griffith, Executive Director, WSTC, explained that the meeting schedule is usually adopted in November, but December will work for approval.

Commissioner Haley suggested in lieu of Yakima that Sunnyside would cover the area better. Commissioner Tortorelli requested that the dates be set well in advance. Staff also suggested that the January meeting should be on Wednesday and Thursday in the third week because of legislative session beginning in the second week and a state holiday on January 19. February also has a holiday prior to what we would normally select as our meeting date.

Commissioner Haley asked if there are preferred dates. Several commissioners expressed a preference for the September 29th option offered. Commissioner Haley stated that formal action will be deferred to November agenda.

Ferry Naming Update

Ms. Griffith shared that hundreds of naming proposals were submitted for the new 144-car ferry under construction. Ten proposals met the spirit of the Commission's policy and were considered by the Commission's ferry naming team. Four of those were elevated for full Commission consideration. The four that moved forward for consideration are:

- Cowlitz
- Sammamish (some concern from ferry engineers because the name is similar to Samish and there may be a Coast Guard issue. Commission will look into it)
- Suquamish
- Chimacum.

These four proposals have been forwarded to Lynn Griffith, Assistant Secretary, WSF and the Ferry Advisory Committee for review and comments. A VOWS survey will be sent out to panel members that allows for a top two pick of the names. The Commission's ferry naming team will make its recommendation to the full Commission at its November meeting and the Commission will take action.

TARGET ZERO UPDATE

At the Commission's June meeting Commissioners had questions about adopting Target Zero into WTP 2035. Questions included how Target Zero results are generated and where the recommendations come from. Darrin Grondel, Executive Director, Washington State Traffic Safety Commission, shared that the Strategic Highway Safety Plan is a federal requirement. The plan is done every three years. It is a lot of work and took 18 months. Washington is one of the few states that update every three years, in order to keep up with the trends. In 2000, Washington formally adopted the Target Zero vision of becoming the first state to adopt a goal of: Zero traffic deaths and serious injuries on the roadways by the year 2030. Currently there is participation from the Department of Licensing, Department of Health, Department of Transportation, State Patrol, the Traffic Safety Commission, tribes, numerous local agencies and other major stakeholders.

Each area in the state has its own unique characteristics and one plan is not applicable to every area. The three stages of the process begin with an area data analysis: Impaired driving, run off the road and speed. Data integration system development includes various agency statistics to determine if the data is accurate and where specific areas are that kill the most people. Once the plan is put together it goes to the Commissioners who review, vote and approve before it goes to the Governor for approval.

The Traffic Safety Commission does not have the resources for the plan and must seek outside sources for assistance in implementation. Associates around the state help coordinate the plan. The Tribal Traffic Safety Advisory Board has been resurrected and is providing assistance. Many of the tribes are stepping up and wanting to participate in the plan. This has reduced traffic fatalities for the Colville confederated tribe. The Traffic Safety Commission is working to get other tribes onboard.

Bicycle fatalities have decreased, but pedestrian fatalities have increased. Commissioner Litt asked if there are specific data points for specific intersections. Mr. Grondel responded that DOT monitors those. Commissioner Haley asked how safety is insured at the local level related to engineering. Where is the enforcement if it's only local funds? How do we ensure that the plan is enforced? Mr. Grondel responded that if it's local money then the state has no enforcement of project safety. Grant money or federal money is tied to the local plan and includes a variety of detail that requires that it meet the state safety plan. Commissioner Haley noted that local governments should be encouraged to meet the state's safety plan.

Commissioner Tortorelli asked if there is any breakdown of motorcyclist incidents because of the increase in motorcycle sales. Mr. Grondel responded that funds are received for motorcycle education, but not for enforcement. The data indicates that in 80 percent of the crashes involving a motorcyclist, they are at fault because of impaired driving and/or speed. Analysis indicates that most of the fatalities are brand new drivers and a number of them are not endorsed. Department of Licensing looked at motorcycle registrations and cross-referenced them with motorcycle endorsements; it then contacted owners about getting training and endorsed.

There is a trend nationwide of prescription drug impaired drivers on the road. Commissioner Royer asked if seatbelt data is tracked and if it correlates with serious injuries? Mr. Grondel responded that yes it is tracked and the percentage is dropping.

The plan includes strategies of proven, recommended and unknown. If we stay at the current rate it will be the fourth straight year that Washington has had a decrease in fatalities.

[Target Zero](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None

FUNDING AND FINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS: WTP 2035

Mr. Parker briefed the Commission on what the current long-range plan says about funding and finance. In WTP 2035, the Commission based its funding recommendations on a recent report on funding options to the Joint Transportation Committee.

1. stretch revenue further through efficiencies.
2. maintain viability of the fuel tax to offset declines in fuel tax revenues.
3. maintain viability of permit license fees.
4. modify weight fees by eliminating registration deduction.
5. adopt fees for high mileage vehicles – implemented by legislature.
6. support for additional local funding options: street maintenance utilities, TBD and amend local authorizes for fuel tax.
7. use tolling to supplement revenue from gas tax.
8. fund ferry capital needs with vehicle excise tax or similar tax.
9. increase ferry fares and other operating revenues.
10. impose fuel surcharges when warranted.

Commissioner Tortorelli described the development of the Commission's 2013 Revenue Proposal. Staff added that the three primary revenue sources recommended were:

- 10 cent gas tax increase phased in over 6 years;
- Reinstitute a MVET and have it sunset after 10 years;
- Increase gross weight fees on vehicles over 10,000 pounds.

The 2013 proposal also recommended ways to reduce costs.

- With new tire technology a number of states have eliminated use of studded tires. There are savings associated with highway maintenance and repair.
- Right sizing project design to determine most efficient way to do projects.
- Advocate for non-highway public-private partnerships (PPPs) and encourage more of them

Commissioner Litt indicated that transit funding needs to be looked at. Current leadership seems to feel that transit can be funded at the local level. The state also has a responsibility in transit funding.

Commissioner Royer noted that King county will do a lot more for transit funding if there are local options allowed.

What has worked in other states? Does the plan make recommendations that are collaborative in nature? Should the plan also address how stakeholders could collaborate? Commissioner Haley noted that it appears that there are certain funding silos. Can the plan bridge those?

Commissioner's discussed PPPs and asked that Commissioner Royer help with this on the plan. Staff noted that the Commission does currently have the authority to oversee PPPs that have been proposed. The legislature precludes invitations of PPP. Changes have been proposed to the legislature and we have observed that the existing process is too cumbersome. Commissioner Haley asked if Commissioner Royer could engage the Seattle/King county delegation. Commissioner Royer suggested that PSRC would be a more likely venue.

Action/Follow-Up: In preparation for the 2035 plan, the current plan and the 2013 revenue proposal will be reviewed by a Commission team and a recommendation on funding will be incorporated into WTP

TRANSIT FUNDING OVERVIEW

Staff reported that in recent years the Joint Transportation Committee did a study on public transportation funding and a study on the state role in public transportation. Staff provided an overview of the elements of the public transportation system.

Commissioner Haley noted that there are some interesting comparisons between transit agencies.

Commissioner Jennings noted that operating costs between transit agencies shouldn't vary by more than about half and asked why it costs so much per passenger on Sound Transit.

Staff pointed out that smaller transit agencies receive more state funds than larger ones. Brian Lagerberg, Director, Public Transportation, WSDOT, addressed Commissioner questions about different transit systems. He noted that it's difficult to make comparisons between different transit systems. Commissioner Royer shared that some years ago former Mayor Norm Rice and civic leaders studied transit systems and suggested that possibly some systems could be combined to spread the burden over a larger area. There was some attention to this, but it sort of went away. Mr. Lagerberg said that transit relationships and coordination are being reviewed.

Commissioner Royer said that low income families are hit the hardest by taxes and transportation costs. Commissioner Haley agreed and noted that possibly leakage at the farebox should be looked at.

[Transit Funding Overview](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None

GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER ON CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION AND CLEAN ENERGY ACTION, EXECUTIVE ORDER 14-04

Keith Phillips, Governor's Special Assistant on Climate and Energy and Amy Scarton, Assistant Secretary, Community and Economic Development, WSDOT, briefed the Commission on EO 14-04, the Governor's Executive Order on Carbon Reduction.

Of the 18 directives, 5 Clean Transportation directives pertain to WSDOT.

- Electric Vehicles. An action plan to advance electric vehicle use.
- Statewide Transportation Plan. Develop implementation plan for reducing carbon emissions. WSDOT proposes developing a statewide travel demand model. Refocusing on corridor operations as a means to address congestion.
- Multimodal transportation investments. Review state grant programs to identify and implement opportunities to increase state investments in multimodal transportation.
- Transportation Efficiency. Technical and financial assistance to help cities and counties implement transportation efficiency measures.
- Planning Policies and Guidance. Adopt policies and guidance for multimodal transportation planning corridors.

WSDOT is seeking \$1.5 million to install nine additional fast charging EV stations along the I-5 north-south corridor in the Puget Sound Region and the I-90 east-west corridor between Seattle and Spokane. WSDOT also is requesting \$2.5 million and 1.0 FTE to purchase and provide on an ongoing basis, a

transportation investment economic impact analysis and develop a statewide travel demand forecast model.

Mr. Phillips briefed the Commission on the low carbon fuel standard option. A clean fuel standard would potentially result in gasoline cost increases of:

- 3-4 cents/ gallon by 2021
- 9-11 cents/gallon by 2026

Costs / Benefits of a climate impacts program in WA: \$10 billion a year (by 2020).

Commissioner Haley asked if a cap and trade system, or a revenue-neutral carbon tax, have been considered. Mr. Phillips said that both have been looked at. Cap and trade limits emissions and requires purchases to be made on the market at whatever price is available. As for a revenue-neutral tax, since Washington is looking for new revenue for a variety of reasons, most focus has been on a carbon tax that generates new revenue to spend.

How would a clean fuel standard or a carbon market interact with a road usage charge? Commission staff will meet soon with Mr. Phillips to discuss.

Why should WA act?

- Preventing further impacts
- Clean energy and competitiveness
- Protecting future generations
- Leadership

Next Steps:

- Taskforce: Oct 28 – draft report
- Nov 17 – final recommendations

- Clean Fuels: Oct 20 – draft report
- Oct 29 – final report
- Proposals: mid Dec – Governor’s 15-17 rollout

Commissioner Royer noted that Washington is close to the bottom of state’s investing in public transportation. Carbon pricing revenue should be used to buy public transportation in underserved transit corridors. Mr. Phillips agreed that reducing congestion will reduce emissions.

[Washington Carbon Pollution Reduction and Clean Energy Action Executive Order 14-04](#)

Action/Follow-Up: Monitor progress and proposals. Meet with Governor’s staff to discuss relationship between a clean fuel standard or a carbon market and a road usage charge.

SURVEY RESULTS

Bill Young, Project Manager, Research Assurance and Andrew Thibault, EMC Research presented survey findings:

The main objectives of general market assessment research are to understand: How are the ferries utilized by three distinct groups:

- 1) Eastside of Puget Sound,
- 2) Westside of Puget Sound and;
- 3) Residents living in Non Puget Sound areas

How important do residents think WSF is as a contributor to the overall economy, recreation and tourism in the Puget Sound region? What are residents feelings towards who should pay for WSF operational and capital costs?

An online survey of Washington State Ferry Riders Opinion Group (FROG) members, conducted June, 2014, had 3,912 interviews. Data was weighted by route and boarding method based on the last trip taken.

Survey highlights:

- Three in four (75%) ferry riders anticipate riding the same amount over the next two years.
- 15% say they will ride the ferry more and 10% say they will ride less. The top reason given for riding less is a move or job change.
- Over a quarter (26%) of ferry riders say they have taken the ferry going eastbound in conjunction with going westbound on the Tacoma Narrows bridge to make a round trip between west and east sound. Of those who have made a ferry eastbound / bridge westbound combined trip, almost two thirds (61%) say they make the trip less than once a month.
- There is a 8 percentage point increase from 2012 to 2014 in ferry riders saying they have taken a ferry eastbound in conjunction with taking the Tacoma Narrows bridge westbound to make a round trip between west and east sound. The top factors affecting riders' decision to drive-on instead of walking-on are all related to flexibility, as in 2012.
- Most riders (86%) say increased land side travel alternatives will have little or no impact on their decision to walk on to the ferry instead of driving. Only one in ten (14%) ferry riders say increased land-side travel alternatives will largely (3%) or somewhat (11%) impact their decision. Almost a third (31%) say transit service reductions will have some impact on their decision to walk on/bike on the ferry.
- Only a quarter of ferry riders say they have used WSF Wi-Fi service and over half (63%) of all Wi-Fi users give the service a negative rating of fair, poor or very poor.

The majority (70%) of ferry riders prefer current car size categories rather than paying by the foot. A third (32%) say the under 14 feet car length discount has some or a lot of influence on their decision to purchase a car under 14 feet.

Almost half (48%) of ferry riders say fares should be left as is or are not sure, and a third (32%) say fares should be decreased. Only one in five (19%) ferry riders say fares should be increased to cover daily operating costs.

The majority (52%) of ferry riders say fare increases should be the same for both walk on and vehicle/drivers, however a plurality (45%) agree that vehicle/driver fare increases should be higher than passenger walk on. Since 2012 there has been an increase of 6 points from 46% to 52% in ferry riders saying fare increases should be the same for both walk on and vehicle/drivers.

Initially, a majority (55%) of ferry riders are interested in a passenger only ferry, but interest significantly decreases when asked about doubling the current vehicle ferry walk-on fare to cover the cost.

There is minimal interest in adding any new amenities from funds generated by a \$0.25 fare increase. For a \$0.25 fare increase, just over a third (36%) say they would be interested in enhancing transit services and (35%) would be interested in providing free Wi-Fi at terminals and on ferry boats. Only a quarter (26%) of ferry riders are interested in expanding park and ride lots at home-side terminals and (23%) say they are interested in instituting Good2Go as fare payment method from funds generated by a \$0.25 fare increase.

[VOWS Vehicle Fleet Inventory](#)

[VOWS Statewide Survey on Opinions & Perceptions of WSF](#)

[FROG Survey on Ferry Policy Issues](#)

Action/Follow-Up: Review survey results in fare-setting process.

TOLLING UPDATE

Chairman Haley provided a report from the tolling team regarding upcoming rate setting issues.

The preliminary recommendations for I-405 express toll lanes include:

- HOV 3+ peak / 2+ off-peak
- Minimum/maximum Good To Go! toll rates = \$0.75 cents / \$15.00
- If WSDOT recommendation is \$0.75 minimum toll, WSTC would like to see the financial plan that demonstrates that minimum is adequate.
- Pay By Mail toll differential of \$2.00

Exemptions will apply to:

- Transit, vanpools, motorcycles, Emergency Vehicles, Incident response/tow trucks, maintenance vehicles

Costs and Fees:

- Keep short term account option, but eliminate \$0.50 discount
- For TNB & I-405 to commence starting July 1, 2015 for FY 2016
- For SR520 to commence starting July 1, 2016 for FY 2017 or during the FY 2016 rate setting cycle if the SR520 WAC's are opened;
- Increase Pay By Plate statewide fee from \$0.25 to \$0.30
- For TNB & I-405 to commence starting July 1, 2015 for FY 2016
- For SR 520 to commence starting July 1, 2016 for FY 2017 or during the FY 2016 rate setting cycle if the SR 520 WAC's are opened;
- Pay By Mail increment on SR 16 Tacoma Narrows Bridge remains at \$2.00
- SR 520 Pay by mail differential will be \$2.00 starting in 2017 to be consistent with I-405 and TNB, unless we open the SR 520 WAC for FY2016 rate setting, in which case the WSTC should consider a \$2.00 PBM differential.

Items for further discussion:

- I-405: Does Private Transportation (e.g. Microsoft Connector, Greyhound, airporters) receive an Exemption?

- Waiting for more information from Toll division. Should the language be similar to SR520?
- I-405: Introductory toll rate? Pro's and Con's? Tolling team is not in favor of an introductory toll rate
- I-405: Define Peak Period in the WAC?
 - More to be discussed. Perhaps establish principles in WAC with tight requirements.

Craig Stone, Assistant Secretary, Tolling Division, WSDOT, briefed the Commission on the schedule for I-405, SR 520, and TNB toll rate setting. He also reported that WSDOT has contracted with Stantec to provide:

- A model to develop a traffic and revenue forecast for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge
- New model will be simplified and updated to reflect recent experience and current travel data
- Model will be used for upcoming 2015 rate setting process.

Stantec also will conduct the Traffic and Revenue Investment Grade Study for SR 99.

Traffic on SR 520 for FY 2014 is 1.1% higher than forecast. Gross toll revenue is within 0.2% of projected adjusted revenue. Over \$5 million net in civil penalties collected during FY 2014.

Traffic on TNB for FY 2014 is 1.9% higher than forecast. Net toll revenue 1.5% less than projected, due to changes in accounting for violations. Nearly \$600,000 net civil penalties collected during FY 2014.

SR 167 HOT Lanes for Fiscal year 2014

- 1.13 million toll transactions
- 4,500 tolled trips per weekday
- Average daily tolled trips have more than tripled since opening
- Average time savings and cost
 - Morning, northbound: 8 mins, \$2.25
 - Evening, southbound: 6 mins, \$1.50

Since restriping SR 167 HOT Lanes in August, there has been a steady growth in transactions, up 10% and revenue up 50%. More drivers are getting into the lanes when they see congestion and HOV ONLY is posted more frequently/

The Commission will schedule open houses for public input in December and January on I-405 toll rates and exemptions at its November meeting.

[Tolling Update](#)

Action/Follow-Up: Prepare toll rate proposal for November meeting.

WTP 2035

Allegra Calder, Berk Consulting, led the Commission through the process of collecting public input and comment on the Washington Transportation Plan update. Early in the process, the consulting staff reviewed the findings of the VOWS Survey. The five public open houses included both highlights of the WTP 2035 content, as well as a continuously running Transportation 101.

Lon Wyrick, Thurston Regional Planning Council, added that despite the attempt to focus the open houses and other input meetings on transportation policy, the public keeps focusing on funding. He urged the

Commission to be bold. He noted that cities and counties are both emphasizing the need for localities and the state to collaborate on the future.

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 also should be more specific in its recommendations to the 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?”

Commissioner Litt noted that there is no single solution to congestion reduction. Mr. Wyrick added that there is no silver bullet for transportation challenges.

Staff reviewed the public comments from the public outreach. Commissioners emphasized the opportunity to make a strong statement about Washington industry and economy. Our state is about wheat, apples and aerospace, not coal and oil. Commissioner’s agreed that it is important for the state to work on grade crossings; key corridors need improvements.

Staff provided perspectives on the state role in public transportation, both current and potential. One perspective is that there is a continuum from generalized transportation to specialized transportation. Staff suggested that key areas to focus on include:

- paratransit
- congestion reduction in key corridors
- connecting communities

Commissioner Royer suggested that the state is the level of government least experienced with public transit. Perhaps recognize that the state has neither the money or the capacity and the emphasis should be on building the state’s capacity for multimodal transportation.

Commissioner Jennings noted that five transit agencies have reached the limit of taxing authority. As costs rise and population grows, how can that challenge best be addressed?

[Summary of Public Comments](#)
[State’s Role in Public Transportation](#)

***Action/Follow-Up:** Commissioner Litt will meet with the WSDOT and RTPO members on the WTP 2035 Steering Committee to resolve outstanding issues and return to the Commission with a recommendation.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul W. Locke urged the Commission to cut ferry routes. He also said that transit is not a viable mode.

CHANGES AND CHALLENGES FOR MARITIME SHIPPERS AND PORTS

Mike Moore, Pacific Maritime Shipping Association, briefed the Commission on the economic forces reshaping trade in the Pacific Rim.

Conclusions: The PNW must continue to compete.

- Huge Economic Job Engine at Stake
- Provide Regulatory/Cost Certainty
- Keep Costs Low
- Ensure Infrastructure Supports
- Efficient, Reliable Operations
- Money for freight movement and trade in a transportation Package

The ports of Seattle and Tacoma are discretionary ports. About 70% of the cargo coming in heads to warehouses in the Midwest. For a successful export sector, you also need imports coming in. Hay shipment in a container from Seattle or Tacoma costs \$700 more than shipping from Los Angeles-Long Beach, because the container volume in California is so much greater.

Commissioner Clare Petrich, Port of Tacoma, noted that the bad news is the new challenges for competition. The good news is that it is 1/3 of the state's GDP and the ports are responding to the challenges.

The Ports of Seattle and Tacoma have formed a SeaPort Alliance. The seaport assets and management will be jointly managed.

It's not only a great development for the ports, said Commissioner John Creighton, Port of Seattle, but for the whole state. He credited Commissioners Petrich and Bowman with taking the lead on the Alliance. A huge benefit will be the ability to collaborate on state infrastructure.

Ms. Petrich said that a framework agreement was submitted to the Federal Maritime Administration. They have 45 days to review. While that is happening, a team of port staff, headed by John Wolfe, Port of Tacoma and Kurt Beckett, Port of Seattle, are working on the details. A target date for a final vote is March 2015. The intention is to hire John Wolfe as CEO of the SeaPort Alliance.

The Port of Seattle retains sole control of the airport (70% of its revenue), fishing terminals, and cruise boat terminal. The Port of Tacoma retains sole control of its industrial lands. Mr. Creighton emphasized that the purpose is to grow cargo at both ports.

Mr. Moore said the shippers support the Alliance because they see the opportunities for efficiencies and cost savings making two ports more attractive.

The mid-size seaports are doing well. They are not container ports. Grays Harbor is moving 2.7 million tons in 2014, up from 50,000 in 2003. They are shipping grain, cars, and importing heavy equipment. Everett is handling Boeing parts and large cargo.

[Maritime Shipping and Port Challenges](#)

Action/Follow-Up: Monitor Seaport Alliance developments. Schedule briefing on smaller seaports.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

ANNE E. HALEY, Chairman

JOE TORTORELLI, Vice-Chairman

ROY JENNINGS, Member

JERRY LITT, Member

DAN O'NEAL, Member

MARY RIVELAND, Member

CHARLES ROYER, Member

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL