

# WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

## Regular Meeting Summary

December 9 & 10, 2014

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

### **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

*Commissioner Tortorelli moved approval of the November 19, 2014 Lakewood meeting summary. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion and the summary was approved unanimously.*

### **CORRIDOR CAPACITY REPORT**

Sreenath Gangula, Transportation Planning Specialist, WSDOT and Daniela Bremmer, Director of Strategic Assessment and Performance Analysis, WSDOT briefed the Commission on the Corridor Capacity Report developed collaboratively between WSDOT, MPO/RTPOs and transit agencies statewide. Beginning last year, WSDOT changed from measuring traffic congestion to a multimodal approach measuring corridor capacity.

Although statewide VMT is at an all-time high, VMT per capita continues to decline. Mr. Gangula walked the Commission through the morning and evening commutes on I-5, looking at travel times and changes from Federal Way – Seattle and Everett – Seattle. Many, but not all, park and ride facilities are full. Extra capacity should be available for any park and ride lot to operate effectively. If someone drives there and finds no space, they probably won't return.

The analysis also reveals that the HOV lanes are failing to meet desired speed and reliability measures. Even so, person throughput is consistently higher. Carpoolers and transit riders move faster.

[Corridor Capacity Report](#)

*Action/Follow-up: None at this time.*

### **REVIEW DRAFT FINAL WTP 2035**

Commissioner Jerry Litt briefed the Commission on the process of developing WTP 2035 and recommends that it is ready for adoption with a few changes. Amy Scarton, Assistant Secretary, Community & Economic Development, WSDOT, complimented the steering committee and consultants for soliciting so much public input and addressing it in the Plan. Lon Wyrick, representing MPOs and RTPOs on the WTP 2035 Steering Committee, agreed that the process was hard and that there has been a lot of input. He thinks the strength of the plan is the engagement and involvement of so many people.

Steve Pickrell, Cambridge Systematics, walked through the work that has been done since release of the public review draft of WTP 2035 to reach this point. The context for WTP 2035 recommendations includes:

- System utilization is increasing in the post-recession, across multiple modes, for passengers and freight.

- Insufficient discretionary funding exists to address both known and unanticipated future transportation needs.
- Spending on essential maintenance and preservation continues to lag estimates of need.
- Energy price volatility continues, and projecting the impact on travel demand and gas tax revenue is more difficult.
- Changing demographics and employment trends present challenges for projecting future needs and preferences.

Important Messages for Decision makers:

- Secure, sustainable funding is needed to ensure the long-term preservation of existing infrastructure and to meet growing demand in many regions of the state.
- Reliable, efficient freight movement is critical in terms of jobs, balance of trade, and economic competitiveness of the state.
- There is an important role for the state to play in planning and delivering multimodal transportation services and infrastructure, including public transit.

Commissioner O’Neal suggested that the plan emphasize safety more and clarify that automobile travel is the most dangerous mode of transportation. Ms. Scarton noted that some members of the Advisory Group asked that the Commission follow the lead of Target Zero and not dig too far into safety on its own.

Mr. Pickrell elaborated on the strong support heard around the state for more investment in public transportation to meet growing demand. The state has many interests in public transportation:

- Supports achievement of legislatively-mandated policy goals including growth management, emission reduction, energy conservation, and storm water management.
- Connecting different regions.
- Better mobility for the poor, elderly, and other special-needs populations.
- Crucial to meeting the economic development, education, and health care needs for Washington’s tribes.

Commissioner O’Neal acknowledged the demand for more transit and suggested that the plan scrutinize the costs and benefits of transit. Commissioner Royer noted that public transportation is key to address environmental problems, land use, and public health.

Mr. Pickrell indicated that an area where WTP 2035 falls short is in specifying who should implement specific recommended strategies. He suggests that the next iteration of WTP include an implementation plan. Commissioner Royer suggested adding examples and best practices.

It was noted that WTP 2035 does not address the level of debt in Washington. Commissioner Royer noted that the large debt obligation significantly impacts youth.

Commissioner O’Neal indicated that the plan makes it difficult to find out everything about one topic, such as freight mobility. Commissioner Litt added that there is a specific freight mobility plan.

Commissioner O’Neal also asked if we have forgotten history, such as the findings and recommendations of the 2006 Rail Study. Clarify that there is a lot of pressure on the rail system and it is not just one commodity.

Ms. Scarton indicated that the work that WSDOT will continue will be similar to an implementation plan.

She likes the idea of measuring progress.

Commissioner Litt said the Commission role is analogous to being the planning commission for the Legislature. We point out that there is no silver bullet to solving transportation challenges. Staff indicated that edits and corrections will be made to the WTP 2035 in response to comments received. Staff and the steering committee will revise the Executive Summary to emphasize the urgency of action, the funding shortfall, and the key recommendations.

### [Draft WTP2035](#)

***Action/Follow-Up: Commissioner Litt moved adoption of WTP 2035, subject to minor changes and clarifications approved by the Steering Committee. Commissioner O'Neal seconded the motion. The Plan was adopted unanimously.***

### **REVIEW DRAFT FINAL WTP 2035 FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Commissioner Tortorelli and staff briefed the Commission on the revenue and efficiencies options proposed for WTP 2035. Staff indicated that specific reforms need to be added, including elimination of studded tires and construction management options. Staff said that the revenue options also should include a motor vehicle excise tax.

***Action/Follow-Up: Commissioner Tortorelli moved adoption of the WTP discussion of efficiencies, reforms and revenue. Commissioner Riveland seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.***

### **REVIEW DRAFT FINAL ROAD USAGE CHARGE ASSESSMENT REPORT & 2015/17 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET REQUEST**

Jeff Buxbaum, Cambridge Systematics and Jack Opiola, D'Artagnan Consulting, reported on key findings from prior work:

- The road usage charge systems evaluated will cost more to collect than the gas tax, but will have greater and more stable net revenue over 25 years.
- Gas tax increases can raise more net revenue in the short term than the road usage charges evaluated, but over the long term will continue to erode in value, thus requiring frequent increases.
- Providing drivers choice as to how they pay a road usage charge will help improve public acceptance and mitigate privacy concerns.
- A road usage charge system ensures everyone pays their fair share for using the roads, regardless of fuel source or miles per gallon.

The primary policy direction is to identify a sustainable, long-term transportation revenue source.

Three types of vehicles were evaluated as candidates for a road usage charge:

- Vehicles 10,000 pounds GVWR or less regardless of fuel type;
- Highly fuel efficient vehicles; and
- All new vehicles 10,000 pounds GVWR or less regardless of fuel type beginning with model year 2019.

During 2014, the Road Usage Charge Assessment focused on development of a Concept of Operations (ConOps). The ConOps:

- Fulfills Legislative and Steering Committee guidance
- Is the technical basis for the financial model

- Provides the technical framework for a pilot or revenue generating road usage charging system
- Basis for further system specifications and interfaces
- Provides input into procurement of equipment and services

The proposed ConOps allows principals to choose one of four charging methods:

- Time Permit
- Odometer Reading
- Automated Distance Charge
- Smartphone Application

All four methods work well together and would be implemented in parallel. There are still several issues to resolve.

Commissioners O'Neal and Litt asked if one electronic device could be used for RUC and tolling. The answer is probably, but at this point in time, the challenge is the creation of a demonstration to show that the system can work in Washington.

Numerous questions still remain. Many can be delayed. Exploring these will help with a go/no-go decision:

- How to operationalize the four road usage charge methods.
- How will people react to the proposed road usage charge system?
- Public understanding and acceptance of a proposed system.
- 

How big a demonstration does Washington need? Considerations:

- Several months to one year.
- Methods to be offered/tested
- Geographic distribution
- Representative sample size of diverse regions
- Hundreds to thousands of participants
- Multijurisdictional collaboration

## Public Attitude Assessment

Baseline views:

- How well do the public and key stakeholders understand transportation funding sources and needs?
- How does the public react to road usage charging as an alternative funding policy?
- What questions and concerns does the public have about road usage charging? What are their reasons for support and opposition?

After learning more about road usage charging:

- The same questions as above, but the respondents will have more information from which to develop responses.
- Evaluate differences in responses.
- Possible follow-up interviews and/or surveys to drill down on specific issues and understand attitudes affecting any noticeable change in attitudes or responses.

## Public Communications and Engagement

Objectives:

- Communicate the purpose and activities of the demonstration;
- Address questions about road usage charging arising from the media and key stakeholders; and

- Stimulate and monitor public discussion of transportation funding in media and public forums
- Components:
- Communications plan
  - Communications content
  - Public outreach and stakeholder briefings
  - Print and broadcast media engagement
  - Social media engagement
  - Educational video shorts and infographics
  - Branding

The next phase of work will involve several state agencies. To date, WSTC, WSDOT, DOL and State Treasurer have participated. The proposed work plan would entail higher level of involvement including:

- Observation of demonstration planning, setup, and execution,
- Input in developing road usage charge systems;
- Potential involvement in some aspects of road usage charge data and revenue collection.
- Participation in working group meetings; and
- Potential support in development of public communications media and survey instruments.

The cost estimates provided earlier do not reflect any additional costs associated with agency participation.

## Proposed work plan Schedule and budget range

Stage of the Work Plan	Stage 1: Planning	Stage 2: Setup	Stage 3: Execution	Stage 4: Evaluation	Cost (millions)
<b>Demonstration</b>	Develop budget and detailed demonstration plan, including technical documents.	Procure technology vendors and set up necessary systems.	Conduct demonstration and collect evaluation data.	Evaluation analysis and reporting, including findings and recommendations.	\$2.4 to \$4.5
<b>Public Attitude Assessment</b>	Baseline assessment via web surveys, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews.	Attitudinal surveys.	Participant surveys.	Comprehensive report on attitude assessment.	\$0.3 to \$0.5
<b>Communications and Engagement</b>	Prepare communications plan, manage communications, and begin media outreach.	Recruit demonstration participants and engage media.	Proactive communications during demonstration.	Continue media engagement and report on findings.	\$0.3 to \$0.5
<b>Project Management</b>	Coordinate and manage the project deliverables. Direct and provide policy interface, reports and presentations.	Coordinate and prepare the agreed plans for executing and testing the demonstration plan.	Manage and monitor the execution of the demonstration and reporting status to Legislature.	Prepare and present final reports and analysis.	\$0.3 to \$0.4
<b>Timeframe</b>	6 to 8 months	6 to 12 months	6 to 12 months	6 to 9 months	26 to 41 months
<b>Cost (millions)</b>	\$0.8 to \$1.0	\$0.6 M to \$1.2	\$1.4 to \$3.0	\$0.6 to \$0.9	\$3.3 to \$6.0

Decision to continue or not      Progress reports to Legislature

[Draft Road Usage Charge Assessment Report](#)

***Action/Follow-Up: Commissioner Royer moved that the Commission send its Road Usage Charge Report and Recommendations to the Legislature in early January. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jennings. The motion was adopted unanimously.***

## **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

Commissioner O'Neal reported on two presentations at the PSRC Freight Roundtable last Friday. Scott Ferguson, Department of Ecology provided an overview of the Draft 2014 Marine & Rail Oil Transportation Study. It recommends significant improvements in prevention, first responder training and emergency response capabilities. A University of Oregon professor presented a study on the merits of rail transport.

The PSRC also has decided to begin moving forward with efforts to have regional revenue authority if the Legislature doesn't take action on a transportation revenue package.

Commissioner Riveland reported that she and staff attended the Ferry Advisory Committee on Tariffs meeting last week. She also met with Lynne Griffith, Washington State Ferries (WSF) Assistant Secretary. This Friday, she will attend the Farmhouse Gang meeting of transportation leaders from Island, Skagit, Whatcom and north Snohomish Counties.

Commissioner Tortorelli attended two meetings on the future of the Palouse-Coulee City Railroad. He also has been working with the Spokane MPO to begin planning for the Commission's June meeting in Spokane.

Commissioner Royer has spent increasing time responding to questions about the Alaskan Way viaduct. The viaduct is always moving, but the 1-1/2" settling in the last month and a half is more than usual. Fortunately, it has settled evenly and hasn't twisted. The city is on time and on budget for the seawall replacement work.

Commissioner Haley reported that the tolling team has been working extensively on I-405 tolling issues. It has become clear that Express Toll Lanes may be used more widely than I-405 and we need to think about their operation from a system-wide perspective.

Commissioner Tortorelli reported on development of the Commission's 2015 Revenue Proposal. The \$9.47 billion proposal is based on the same principles as the 2013 Revenue Proposal:

1. Maintain what we have.
2. Finish what we have started.
3. Keep the proposal simple and achievable.

It also recommends that the state incur no further debt.

The proposal recommends a 15-cent increase in the state fuel tax phased in over 2 years. The proceeds would be dedicated to maintenance and preservation for state, city, and county needs. It also recommends a 1.5% motor vehicle excise tax, generating revenue for capital projects and paratransit grants. Finally, it recommends a 15% increase in truck weight fees, the proceeds to be allocated to FMSIB for freight projects.

The proposal recommends the following efficiency measures:

- Phase out the use of studded tires.
- Expand project right sizing/practical design.

- Authorize non-highway Public Private Partnerships.
- Open ferry vessel construction to out-of-state bidding and place design work responsibilities with the successful vendor.

***Action/Follow-Up: Commissioner O’Neal moved adoption of the 2015 revenue proposal. Commissioner Litt seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.***

## **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

Staff reported on progress with the 2014 Annual Report and proposed a timeline and process for completion.

***Action/Follow-Up: The Commission agreed with the timeline proposed to complete the Annual Report by January 19.***

## **WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES**

Ray Deardorf, Planning Manager, WSF, WSDOT, indicated that in 2007, the Legislature directed WSF to develop, and the Washington State Transportation Commission to review, operational strategies “to ensure that existing assets are fully utilized and to guide future investment decisions.” RCW 47.60.327. WSF and the Commission responded to this legislation with a jointly developed evaluation and prioritization of operational strategies. Broader aspects of the legislation, pertaining to adaptive management strategies, were also addressed, including pricing. The report listed several priority operational and pricing strategies. Mr. Deardorf reported on the status of operational strategies:

### **Reservation System**

- The vehicle reservation system is a key operational strategy. Phase 1 involved consolidating updating the reservation system on routes that had older legacy systems.
- WSF is about to implement Phase 2 of the new system later this January. Phase 2 will expand the system to all vehicles in the San Juan Islands.
- A potential phase 3 would expand the system to either all vehicles or commercial vehicles on all the other remaining routes in the system with the exception of the routes serving Vashon Island and Mukilteo/Clinton.

### **Transit Enhancements**

- WSF modified its sailing schedule on the Edmonds/Kingston route to meet a series of objectives; one was to connect with the commuter rail Sounder better in Edmonds.
- Discussion with regional transit partners on facilities to enhance ferry/bus connectivity have been primarily focused on downtown Seattle.

### **Fuel Conservation**

- WSF has instituted selected vessel slowdowns on strategic off peak sailings with success in reducing fuel consumption.

### **Differential Vehicle and Passenger Pricing**

- The concept of increasing the spread between vehicle and passenger fares, making it relatively more financially attractive for riders to travel as a passenger than as a vehicle driver, was discussed and evaluated with the Ferry Advisory Committee on Tariff (FAC-T). A modest first step in this direction was implemented in the last fare setting cycle.

## Reservation System Pricing

- The concept of charging extra for vehicles with reservations was evaluated at the reservation system pre-design phase and discussed with a community partnership group created to help WSF define the system.
- In order to achieve maximum efficiency in implementing reservations, they should be available at no additional cost above and beyond what a rider would pay for the fare without reservations.

## Fuel Surcharge

- Language prescribing a fuel surcharge formula was proposed by WSF and adopted by the WSTC with the fall 2011 tariff cycle. Due to relatively stable fuel prices and successful hedging, this automatic mechanism has not come close to being triggered.

The report identified several other lower priority strategies that have had action since the report was published:

- Enhanced User Information: WSF has added “best times to travel” information to each sailing schedule for each of the four seasons. It is piloting a “Terminal Conditions” feature which lets customers see how full the next sailing is.
- Seasonal Surcharge: The Commission proposed a “peak of the peak” summer surcharge during the 2009 tariff outreach. It was not adopted.
- Small Car Discounts: The fare schedule now provides vehicles under 14 feet in length a favorable price compared to standard length vehicles. Phased in over three years from 2011 to 2013, the smaller vehicles travel for 30% less than standard cars (as calculated from the vehicle portion of the vehicle/driver fare).

Commissioners asked if operational streamlining could mitigate the need for the assumed 2.5% fare increase each year. Staff answered that the Legislature sets the fare revenue target.

Dwight Hutchinson, WSF, briefed the Commission on the reservations status. Overall, ridership is up 1.4% systemwide. But the Port Townsend/Coupeville route has seen a 5.6% increase YTD. That is quadruple the systemwide percentage ridership growth increase.

## Port Townsend - Coupeville:

- Customers with a reservation (out of 100%):  
YTD = 53% (the norm).  
July/Aug 2014 = 58%.  
Peak: Thanksgiving week = 68%.  
Low: the last week of 2 boat schedule (Oct 6-13 ) = 39%.
- Portion of vessel reserved (max 80%):  
Peak: summer weeks & Thanksgiving week = 60% of all vessel space  
Thanksgiving Wed-Sun only = 68%.  
Lowest: last week of 2 boat schedule, Oct 6-13 = 30% of all vessel space.

## Measured against goals:

- 1) Spread Demand: *Success*. Ridership is up, significantly during the busiest month.
- 2) Reduce queues: *Success*. Communities and terminal staff continue to report shorter lines and wait times.
- 3) Provide Greater predictability: *Success*.

- a) Customers make a reservation, show up and travel at a guaranteed time.
- b) Reservation rates are growing steadily, and growing the most at the busiest travel times.
- c) Traveling with a reservation is now the norm.

Starting December 2, travelers can make reservations for San Juan travel after January 5. The operational parameters are different on the two travelsheds.

**Anacortes & San Juan Islands**

Tiered 30/30/30 release of Regular Space

Will not pull res holders out of line

3 hour lock down

Handheld redemption at FH & sometimes Orcas

Anacortes next sailing reservation at the tollbooth

**Port Townsend - Coupeville**

All space released at 2 months

Will pull res holders out of line

2 hour lock down

Tollbooth redemption only

No tollbooth reservations

Mr. Deardorf then reviewed tariff roles and responsibilities:

- The Transportation Commission is responsible for adopting fares through the rulemaking process. The Commission may adopt by rules fares that are effective for more or less than one year, and may increase fares by a percentage that exceeds the fiscal growth factor.
- WSF is responsible for conducting review of fares, and developing a fare proposal for submittal to the Commission for their consideration.
- The Ferry Advisory Committee on Tariff (FAC-T) was created in 2010 to provide guidance to WSF as it develops its fare proposal for the Commission. The FAC-T membership includes Ferry Advisory Committee chairs or their designees. Modal interests such as transit, freight and tourism are represented as well.

Changes implemented last tariff cycle:

- Phase 3 of implementation of small car fare category and elimination of motorcycle oversized surcharge fare category
- General fare increase (based on 2013 legislative session revenue requirements that would have resulted from 2.5% annual increases)
- Market screen for Sidney fares resulted in 4.1% increase to keep on par with BC Ferries' 2013 increase
- Collapse Sidney oversize vehicle fares into one set of fares by eliminating the "commercial" fares
- Re-evaluate the pricing of all trips to/from the San Juan Islands to Vancouver Island
- Offer multi-ride passenger cards on ORCA
- Passenger/vehicle fare ratio – modest change of half a percent spread in each of the 2013 and 2014 fare changes
- Youth fare discount increased from 20% to 50%

Potential issues for this tariff cycle:

- Evaluation of the passenger/vehicle fare ratio – continue the spread?
- Re-examine the methodology of oversized vehicles for consistency in the way the driver portion of the fare is treated
- International route market screen
- General fare increase (dependent upon legislative action)
- Revisit distance-based fare travel shed issue

Planning issues for future replacement of fare collection system:

- “Back-end” frequency discounts
- Congestion or time of day pricing
- Vehicle fares – charging length based by foot

These would not likely be part of the 2015/16 fare proposal. They could be part of a 2017/18 fare proposal if a new fare collection system is on the horizon.

The timeline for 2015-17 WSF tariff adoption:

- December – May: FAC-T meetings
- No later than (NLT) April 22, 2015: file CR 101 providing notification of rulemaking
- Late April: end of regular legislative session and establishment of fare revenue target
- Mid/late May: WSF sends fare proposal to Commission
- NLT June 17, 2015: Commission files CR 102 with fare proposal
- July 2015: Public comment period for Commission fare proposal
- July 21, 2015 or later: Commission holds adoption hearing on tariff proposal
- NLT August 30, 2015: Commission files CR 103 with final amended tariff
- October 1, 2015: New tariff in effect

*Commissioner Jennings moved that the Commission change its July meeting to July 21 – 22 in Seattle. A public hearing on the tariff proposal will take place during late afternoon one of those dates. Commissioner Riveland seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.*

Chairman Haley also noted the disappointment of the Commission that it was unable to attend the keel laying for the Chimacum due to the Commission meeting yesterday.

[WSDOT WSF Operational Strategies, Vehicle Reservations and Fare Setting Process](#)

*Action/Follow-Up: None*

## **SR 520 PROJECT REPORT**

Julie Meredith and Denise Cieri briefed the Commission on the status of the SR 520 update.

- Eastside Transit and HOV Project: Opening late 2014
- Pontoon Construction Project (Aberdeen): Completion 2015
- New floating bridge: Opening spring 2016
- West Approach Bridge North: Opening summer 2017
- Remaining west side corridor: Depends on additional funding

All but three pontoons have been completed.

Design coordination in the City of Seattle;

- **Summer/fall 2014:** As directed by the Legislature in ESSB 6001, WSDOT worked closely with the city of Seattle to refine the design of the west side of SR 520.
- **Late 2014 – early 2015:**
- WSDOT will share a design report to document the refinements, which include a new Montlake lid, new Portage Bay Bridge, and non-motorized connections around the corridor.

- WSDOT will also share updated cost estimates for the unfunded program, currently estimated at \$1.4 billion.
- **Early 2015:** WSDOT will present this information to the Legislature during the 2015 legislative session.

Washington has more floating bridges than anywhere else. Norway has some floating bridges across fjords; Canada has one. None are as long as ours.

### [SR 520 Program Update](#)

*Action/Follow-up: None.*

## **2014 VOWS FALL INITIAL SURVEY RESULTS AND 2014 FROG SUMMER POLICY AND RECREATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS**

Andrew Thibault, Principle, EMC Research and Bill Young, Project Manager, Research Assurance presented the topline results for the Fall VOWS Survey:

- Completed 5,190 valid interviews between October 19 and November 3, 2014
- The Margin of Error for the overall results is +1.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval.

The statewide system grade has declined for three consecutive years. On a scale of 1 - 5, the grade has dropped from 1.94 in 2012 to 1.74 today.

By a narrow margin, 50% to 45%, respondents say the gas tax is a good way to fund transportation. By a 19-point margin, 58% to 39%, respondents initially say that the gas tax is a fair way to fund transportation.

A majority (57%) of respondents initially say a road usage charge is NOT a good way to fund transportation. A third (35%) say it is “definitely not” a good way to fund transportation. Respondents are initially divided over whether or not a road usage charge is a fair way to fund transportation. One third (31%) say it is “not at all fair.”

Initially, slightly more respondents think the gas tax is more fair than a road usage charge, although there is little intensity of opinion and one-quarter think they are the same in terms of fairness. Fairness issues (“Users pay for what they use” and “high mileage vehicles pay their share”) are the most mentioned reasons for supporting a per mile road usage charge. “RUC is unfair” and “road usage charge will be difficult to manage” are the top mentioned reasons for opposing a per mile road usage charge, followed by concerns about personal cost.

After hearing additional information about the gas tax a majority say it is not a good way to fund transportation. The percentage saying the gas tax is a good way to fund transportation drops 10 points and the percentage saying it is not a good way increases 9 points based on the description provided. Awareness of the funding challenges associated with relying on the gas tax has increased significantly since 2012.

Commissioner Royer said that the two big issues are fear of change and fairness. And fairness is the reason to make the change.

After hearing that under a road usage charge everyone pays the same amount no matter what type of vehicle they drive or how fuel efficient it is, support for a RUC increases 9 points and opposition drops 3 points, although a majority are still opposed to a RUC. After hearing more information about both the gas tax and the road usage charge, respondents remain divided over which is more fair, with little intensity on either side. One-in-five think they are the same.

Initially, respondents are divided over a year round ban on studded tires. A majority (53%) support a ban after they hear that metal studs in studded tires damage roads, which means roads have to be repaired and repaved sooner. This costs Washington taxpayers between \$17 million and \$27 million a year on state roads. They also cause millions in damage to city and county roads.

### **2014 FROG Summer Policy and Recreational Survey Results**

The percentage of riders saying they are satisfied with the level of service provided by WSF during the summer months has fallen overall compared to 2012 (60% vs. 68%). Onboard survey respondents are more satisfied by a 29 point margin. The Fauntleroy/Vashon route , Southworth/Vashon , Anacortes/San Juan, and Interisland routes all have higher dissatisfaction rates than the overall. The greatest shift from 2012 by route has been among Fauntleroy/Vashon and Fauntleroy/Southworth.

Among out-of-towners, 91% say WSF is a good value. The percentage of riders saying WSF is a “good” or “very good” value in the summer period has decreased significantly compared to 2012 (68% vs. 80%).

Both panel and onboard respondents say “only way” and “fastest way” are the primary reasons for choosing WSF rather some other way to make a recreational or social trip. Onboard respondents list the ferry experience as a top reason as well. Total cost of the ferry fare for the trip is more significant for panel members than for the onboard.

The majority of respondents say the 65% that is the rider paid percentage of daily operating costs should remain the same. One third say fares should be lowered and only 10% say they should be raised. 71% of respondents say funding for WSF capital needs is a major problem, with over a third (38%) saying the need requires immediate action.

Seating and comfort are the top complaints among people who are dissatisfied with terminals. The loading and unloading of walk on passengers is the top complaint among people who are dissatisfied. WSF employees giving hand signals are the top complaint among people who are dissatisfied with loading. Bathrooms are the top complaint among people who are dissatisfied with the vessels.

Twenty percent of people who call are unhappy. No answer or long wait times and bad customer service topped the list of phone complaints.

[2014 VOWS Fall Initial Survey Results](#)

[2014 FROG Summer Policy & Recreational Survey Results](#)

*Action/Follow-up: None.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Paul W. Locke said that only about \$20 of his license fee goes to roads. The workmanship on city streets is poor and the materials used are poor. The ferry system should be reduced to five routes.

Ann Dasch suggested that a “user pays” system may not actually be fair in the way fares and tolls are set today. She said that much of the benefit of road maintenance goes to future users and taxpayers since it is cheaper to maintain a road than repair or replace one. Road users cannot be expected to pay for benefits they do not receive, so road user fees cannot be the only funding mechanism for transportation.

She asked that the Commission consider what happens to communities when one type of family is charged over \$10,000 a year and another demographic pays less than \$250 to use the road between the city and their house.

## TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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ANNE E. HALEY, Chairman

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JOE TORTORELLI, Vice-Chairman

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ROY JENNINGS, Member

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JERRY LITT, Member

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DAN O'NEAL, Member

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MARY RIVELAND, Member

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CHARLES ROYER, Member

ATTEST:

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REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

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DATE OF APPROVAL