

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Lakewood Local Meeting Summary

November 19, 2014

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Chairman Haley opened the Commission meeting at 9 a.m. and proceeded with two items of Commission business.

Commissioner Tortorelli moved adoption of the October 14 & 15, 2014 meeting summary. After a second by Commissioner Jennings, the summary was adopted unanimously.

Commissioners then considered the proposed 2015 Commission meeting schedule. After agreeing to change the date of the Kelso/Longview meeting to April 21, *Commissioner Tortorelli moved adoption of the 2015 Commission meeting schedule. After a second by Commissioner Riveland, the schedule was adopted unanimously.*

TRANSPORTATION 101

Paul Parker, Deputy Director, WSTC, presented the Transportation 101 overview. Kevin Dayton, Olympic Region Administrator, WSDOT, spoke briefly about transportation projects underway in the Olympic Region. Construction highlights in Pierce County include construction of additional HOV lanes and the SR 167 Puyallup River bridge replacement. TIGER III grants have helped pay for ramp meters, variable message signs, traffic signals and an auxiliary lane to manage I-5/JBLM congestion.

A major focus over the next 15 years is culvert improvement and replacement. WSDOT barriers have been inventoried and prioritized statewide. To date, 285 improvements have been made, opening 971 miles of habitat. The US District Court has ordered improvements to or replacement of another 825 culverts with significant habitat impacts. These are estimated to cost \$2.4 billion. About half are in the Olympic Region.

[Transportation 101](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None

I-5/JBLM CORRIDOR: MOBILITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Mr. Dayton briefed the Commission on the challenges of congestion in the I-5/Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) corridor, which is due to significant population growth in South Puget Sound, including the expansion of JBLM. WSDOT is working collaboratively with JBLM and the City of Lakewood on solutions, short-term and long-term. Mr. Dayton emphasized the benefits of making small changes in traffic operations, such as reducing WSP ticketing efforts in peak travel periods.

Now, 17 ramp meters are being installed. Although four interchanges must be rebuilt for freeway widening those are long-term solutions. The corridor improvements are needed from Mounts Road to SR 512.

Although a lot of transit options could be available, under the current configuration, without an HOV or transit-only lane, buses also are caught in the congestion. Expanded rail service is another option that is under consideration. In the meantime, JBLM is ramping up to 80 vanpools.

Don Anderson, Mayor of Lakewood, emphasized that JBLM is the largest single, one site employer in the state. JBLM is bigger than Boeing or Microsoft. The Lakewood City Council will support a 2015 transportation funding package if the JBLM corridor problem is substantially solved. They won't support it if it is a band aid.

It is estimated that \$820 million will rebuild four interchanges and add an additional lane for HOV use in each direction. Mayor Anderson emphasized that it is not a Lakewood problem but a problem for the whole Puget Sound. Corridor congestion impacts every truck and car heading south or north.

Lakewood has implemented a \$20 license tab fee through a TBD. The City also is considering a property tax increase for transportation improvements.

Colonel Chuck Hodges, JBLM, informed the Commission that JBLM is the second largest employer in the state and largest in Pierce County. It is equivalent in size to the 7th largest city in the state, with 139,000 people coming and going on a given day. The Department of Defense is committed to helping solve the transportation problem. One part of the solution is improving connections between McChord and Fort Lewis Main. Another project is Integrity Gate, which creates a third entrance to Fort Lewis North from DuPont-Steilacoom Road. The Mounts Road project and gate allows people arriving from the south to exit I-5 at Mounts to enter the base.

Col. Hodges is not authorized to spend any of his JBLM budget on state or local roads, but there have been road improvements within the base, such as Pendleton Road, which has been widened from two lanes to four lanes. Col. Hodges also said the Department of Defense also will provide right-of-way if and when funding is available to expand I-5.

Mayor Anderson said that Washington is close to the bottom of state support for military installations. With Secretary Hagel's call this week for a new Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), it is important for the state to engage more with its military cluster.

Commissioner Litt noted that time-sensitive commodities, such as apples, travel through the corridor.

[WSDOT Olympic Region](#)

[City of Lakewood Mobility Challenges and Opportunities](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None

COUNTY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive spoke about transportation resources in Pierce County. There are 5525 total road miles in Pierce County, of which over 3000 are part of the county road network. Pierce County also has 382 bus route miles of service, 51 miles of passenger rail service, 10 miles of ferry routes and three airports.

Eighty aerospace manufacturers operate in Pierce County, including Boeing and its carbon fiber supplier for the 777. Facilities at the Frederickson Industrial Park are expanding. WSDOT estimates SR 167 will generate 80,000 jobs statewide.

Brian Ziegler, P.E., Pierce County Public Works Director, talked about the major corridors in Pierce County and the improvements that Pierce County has made or plans to make:

- SR 167
- SR 704 and 176th Street
- connecting 176th Street to Orting, providing a lahar evacuation route
- Canyon Road

Ms. McCarthy emphasized that there are enormous statewide needs for transportation. She recognizes that it may not be possible to get all of the funding at once for the I-5/JBLM improvements. She also recognizes that demand is growing for public transportation and that public transportation also needs additional revenue authority.

Eleven Pierce County cities have formed Transportation Benefit Districts and the Pierce County Council will vote on forming one in December 2014.

[Transportation Issues in Pierce County](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None

FERRY NAMING FOR NEXT 144-CAR FERRY

Reema Griffith, Executive Director, WSTC, reported that the four names selected earlier in the year by the Commission for consideration are: Chimacum, Cowlitz, Sammamish and Suquamish. Almost 6,000 people responded through the VOWS and FROG surveys indicating their preferences for naming the next ferry, first Suquamish and second Chimacum.

Lynne Griffith, Assistant Secretary, reported that WSF Staff recommended that the Commission avoid a name beginning with “S” because of potential confusion with the Salish and the Samish.

Commissioner O’Neal reported for the Commission’s ferry naming team and moved the name Chimacum for the new ferry. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Riveland and adopted unanimously.

After adjourning for lunch, Chairman Haley indicated that it had come to her attention that proponents of ferry names had been notified that ferry naming was on the Commission Agenda at 1:00 pm. Leonard Forsman, Chair of the Suquamish Tribe, told the Commission it is disappointing that the ferry naming took place earlier in the day and prior to the announced time.

[2014 Ferry Naming FROG Quick Poll](#)

Action/Follow-Up: Sign the Resolution naming the new 144-car ferry “Chimacum.”

Send letters to the tribes and organizations nominating ferry names for consideration apologizing for the agenda change without notice. Notify them that the names they suggested will automatically be considered when the next ferry boat is constructed.

CITY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Lakewood City Manager John Caulfield spoke to the Commission about the incorporation of the City of Lakewood in 1996, motivated in part by the desire for greater local control over land use and public safety. The City is very concerned about the safety impacts of the Point Defiance Rail Bypass, which will add 14 Amtrak trains a day traveling at speeds up to 79 mph.

Citizens want safety improvements before passenger rail begins. Sound Transit, which owns the corridor, is working with Lakewood and citizens to identify additional safety improvements. Additional enhancements, mostly in the form of sound barriers, total \$4.6 million. Lakewood also is asking Amtrak to include a stop in Lakewood, either at the Sound Transit Lakewood Station or in Tillicum.

Don Wickstrom, Public Works Director, City of Lakewood, emphasized that the city is transitioning from rural to urban streets. Lakewood has been adding sidewalks and improving key corridors such as South Tacoma Way and Bridgeport Way. With the exception of federal funding, which is uncertain, Lakewood's 6-year Transportation Improvement Plan is fully funded. The Council is considering a \$36 million bond measure in 2015 to improve residential arterials.

Michael Courts, Councilmember from the City of DuPont, reported that the city now has a population of 9175. DuPont-Steilacoom Road is a major priority. With the addition of Integrity Gate and the Amazon Distribution Center, traffic will grow on that arterial. In addition, with completion of the Pt. Defiance Rail Bypass, DuPont will need a grade separation at Exit 119 to maintain traffic flow.

Ted Danek, City Administrator, DuPont, explained that DuPont opted out of Pierce Transit because it received no service with its \$400,000+ contribution. DuPont has a TBD and takes its full property tax levy.

Roger Schoessel, City Engineer, City of Lacey, briefed the Commission on the Interstate Improvement Plan. Because one in 10 Lacey residents are active duty military, access to and from JBLM is critical to Lacey residents. The City began working in 1996 to anticipate future growth in the I-5 corridor and is close to finishing new Interchange Justification Reviews for Marvin Road and Martin Way.

Ian Munce, City of Tacoma, told the Commission that eliminating the Point Defiance route for Amtrak passenger service improves the service reliability. Passenger trains will not be competing with freight rail.

[City of Lakewood 6-Year TIP](#)

[City of Lakewood Enhanced Safety](#)

[City of Lacey Interstate Improvement Plan](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Justin Leighton, Government Relations Officer, Pierce Transit, explained that Pierce Transit (PT) covers about 70% of the urbanized area of Pierce County. Since 2008, dropping revenue has caused PT to cut about 1/3 of its fixed route service. Paratransit boardings are down by 18%. In 2008, PT had nearly 635,000 service hours. PT increased fares from \$1.50 to \$1.75 in 2009 and to \$2.00 in 2010.

PT farebox recovery is about 2% on paratransit, 0.75 cents. A rider using non-medicaid emergency transportation through PT pays \$0.75 for a trip; a nonprofit provider or taxi receives close to full reimbursement from Medicaid.

Next steps for PT:

- Eliminate transfers, December 2014
- \$5.00 All-day pass for adults
- Developing a long-range plan
- Parkland/Puyallup service
- Tacoma Dome Transit-Oriented Development possibility

Chelsea Levy, Government Community Relations, Sound Transit, told the Commission that 5 million people will live in the ST region by 2040. ST projects underway in Pierce and South King:

- Angle Lake Light Rail station, with 1,050 stall garage
- Planning for Federal Way Link Extension
- replacing the Tacoma trestle
- Sounder South expansion, parking and access in Puyallup and Sumner
- Adding layover track in Lakewood

ST is seeking additional revenue authority in the 2015 session to move forward with ST 3. It could go on the ballot as early as 2016.

[Sound Transit](#)
[Pierce Transit](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None

WSDOT 2015-17 BUDGET REQUEST

Cam Gilmour, Deputy Secretary of WSDOT, told the Commission that the WSDOT budget is shrinking. The Nickel and TPA programs are nearing completion. Preservation funding is dropping.

WSDOT engineering staff has dropped from 2,920 budgeted FTEs for 09-11 to a 2,600 biennial average in 11-13, to 2,091 currently.

A number of ferry capital projects are largely unfunded. Colman Dock reconstruction estimated at \$260 million. Ferry operations still require large transfers from other accounts.

Commissioner Royer said that developers are lined up to help develop Colman Dock. Barriers include: some in the Legislature don't like private partners; the City Council doesn't like density. Commissioner Royer asked Mr. Gilmour if WSDOT and SDOT could reach an agreement on construction of Alaskan way.

WSDOT is not able to balance its budget over 3 full biennia. It is balanced for 15-17. Highway preservation investment levels are expected to drop significantly.

- Proposed ferry reductions are 3/10th of a percent of WSF budget.
- Strategic reductions in highway maintenance are planned
- Reduced highway safety and funding for fish passage barrier removal
- A number of ferry capital projects are largely unfunded

- Ferry operations still require large transfers from other accounts

The \$2.4 billion estimated cost for culvert replacement is a minimum:

- Does not include cost of correcting barriers outside the injunction area, or those identified after the date of the injunction
- Does not reflect 10% deferral of culverts with smaller amounts of habitat
- Projects currently in design have higher than originally estimated costs

Budget Policy Requests:

- fund least cost planning and practical design principles
- statewide transportation planning model
- bolster training for ferry terminal and vessel crew
- leadership training and succession planning
- fill gaps in EV charging network on I-5 and I-90
- compensation adjustments

Commissioner Riveland suggested that Transportation Secretary Peterson present the budget proposal directly to the Legislature.

[WSDOT 2015-17 Budget Request](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul W. Locke told the Commission that the ferry system must be reduced in size. He also said that Sound Transit is having a major impact on his property taxes.

Mark Bethune, City Administrator for Orting, came with a message from Mayor Pestinger, a former WSDOT employee: don't forget eastern Pierce County, including SR 162 and SR 410.

Steve Misiurak, City Engineer of Gig Harbor, said that the situation of Gig Harbor is the same as other cities, counties and the state: needs exceed available revenue. SR 16 divides Gig Harbor and hinders east-west connectivity. Extending the HOV lanes north is a priority for Gig Harbor.

Jim Longley, staff with the Nisqually Indian Tribe, submitted comments from Joe Cushman, Director of Planning and Economic Development for the Nisqually Indian Tribe. The comments describe the master planning process undertaken by the Nisqually Indian Tribe for a more orderly development of reservation roads, facilities, and infrastructure. The reservation is adjacent to SR 510, which passes through the reservation and requires interaction with WSDOT on access, signalization and circulation issues. The relationship has improved greatly in recent years.

The full comments are attached to this meeting summary.

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