



Washington State Transportation Commission

Seattle Meeting Summary
March 14, 2018

Chairman Jerry Litt opened the meeting at 9:00 am with introductions by Commissioners and Staff.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commissioner Jennings moved and Commissioner Tortorelli seconded the motion approving the January 17 & 18, 2018 and the February 13 & 14, 2018 meeting summaries. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commission staff provided a summary of the transportation legislation that passed and failed. Key bills include:

- The Commission will facilitate and staff a workgroup on Autonomous Vehicles (AVs)
- The Legislature agreed to provide loans to reduce future toll increases on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge
- Funding and structure of Sound Transit was not changed
- Carbon tax did not pass

Reema Griffith, Executive Director, WSTC, reported that the RUC Pilot now has 2100 participants. The geographic diversity of participants nearly matches the state demographics.

TRANSPORTATION 101

Paul Parker, Deputy Director, WSTC, presented an overview of transportation planning and finance.

[Transportation 101](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

CITY OF SEATTLE TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES, AND SUCCESSES

Goran Sparrman, Interim Director, Seattle Department of Transportation, reported that the City of Seattle is committed to a city that is safe, interconnected, affordable, vibrant, and innovative for all.

The city is growing rapidly; 253 projects are underway in downtown Seattle. Center city households are projected to increase 60% by 2035, and jobs by 23%. The city also is in the midst of a transformational change in its transportation network.

Last year, the Second Avenue protected bike lane opened. In 2018, the SR 99 tunnel will open and the transit tunnel will close to buses as the Convention Center construction begins. Next year will bring demolition of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the start of Alaskan Way construction. Seattle cannot accommodate more vehicle traffic.

Near-term solutions include:

- Traffic Operations, including signal timing changes
- Transit Speed, Reliability, & Customer Experience, including 10-minute service in many key corridors
- Bus Service Restructures
- Hub Area Improvements
- Pedestrian Experience and Accessibility
- Center City Bike Network Connections
- Management Strategies

New Tools and Strategies:

- Project coordination and Right of Way management systems. All agencies, utilities, franchisees, and City departments required to enter their planned project information to identify conflicts in space and time and opportunities to collaborate on restoration
- Adaptive signal technology, which combines data from multiple sources and adjusts signal timing in real-time to match traffic patterns
- Urban goods movement: improving the final 50' of the urban delivery system. It begins at the city-owned Commercial Vehicle Load Zone or alley or in a building's freight bay, and ends when the customer takes receipt of the goods

Commissioners asked how to provide downtown access for tourists and others who are not commuters. Perhaps better transit information and airport signage for visitors? Mr. Sparrman agreed that there is room for improvement at key portals and transit centers.

How do we improve the connection between housing affordability and transportation?

- Urban villages
- Transit options

[City of Seattle](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

MOBILITY ALTERNATIVES – INCREASING TRAVEL OPTIONS IN AND AROUND THE CITY

Seattle, King County Metro (Metro), and Sound Transit (ST) are collaborating on expanding travel options including a major expansion of light rail and bus rapid transit, improving walking and bicycling options, and telecommuting.

Mike Harbour, Deputy Director, Sound Transit, reported that ST now has 13-commuter rail round trips per day on Sounder South; 4 round trips on Sounder North. ST also is moving into Bus Rapid Transit with an exclusive right-of-way, similar to light rail.

Paul Roybal, Transportation Planner, King County Metro, addressed mobility challenges in the center city:

- Longer travel times and less reliable travel for bus riders and vehicle drivers
- More passengers waiting on already busy sidewalks
- Additional transit operating cost
- Impacts to everyone who comes downtown

What people said:

- Prioritize safety for all users
- Design for people first
- Prioritize transit, bikes, and walking
- Make the user experience at transportation hubs safe, easy to use and comfortable

Strategies to improve mobility and the transit rider experience include taking advantage of light rail reliability and capacity, improving transit hubs, and maximizing the investments in transit speed and reliability improvements.

Cristina Van Valkenburgh, Deputy Director, Transit and Mobility Division, Seattle Department of Transportation, noted that the number of jobs in downtown has increased by 60,000 between 2010 and 2017 and the share of commuters who drive-alone is down by 25% over that period. Light rail ridership is up 91% and 64% of residents live near frequent transit.

To address transportation equity, Seattle has distributed 2680 ORCA cards to low-income high school and middle school students, accounting for 440,000 student trips on Youth ORCA and \$648,000 saved.

Ms. Van Valkenburgh emphasized that Seattle is committed “to creating the city we want, not the city technology wants:”

- Mobility hubs
- Transportation Network Company (TNC) growth is profoundly impacting the transportation system
 - Over 1.2 million trips per month
 - 60% growth between Q2 2016 and 2Q 2017
 - Cruising TNCs make up 10% of all peak hour trips in downtown
- Free floating car share

Although Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOV) usage downtown is only 25%, even less SOV use is needed during the “Period of Maximum Constraint” when construction and transportation projects downtown are at their peak. The city is exploring innovative demand management strategies and developing a comprehensive marketing communication plan that includes telecommuting education and promotion, managing Transportation Network Company (TNCs), freight delivery management, and the first and last mile connections.

The City of Seattle also is working with the National Association of City Transportation Officials on developing a policy framework for how AVs are used. This includes elements of street design and place making. Seattle does not want them to transform the city.

How will Automated Vehicles (AVs) influence public transportation? Mr. Harbour responded that Lyft and Uber could cover the first and last mile trips. One of the biggest challenges of AVs is drop off sites and pick up zones.

Mobility Impacts and Opportunities Near Term Mobility Solutions

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

KING COUNTY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Joe McDermott, Chair, King County Council, reported on the diversity of King County. His district includes downtown Seattle, Vashon Island and farms. The County has 1500 miles of roads but it cannot raise enough money from the road fund to maintain them. Only 3.6 % of retail sales in the county are from the unincorporated areas. The road network has an annual deficit of \$250 million. County revenue generating tools were established in the 1930s, they do not support Growth Management Act (GMA) goals and do not support the infrastructure needs.

Chairman Litt emphasized the need for revenue reform to make GMA work. Councilman McDermott responded that counties have worked in the Legislature to emphasize revenue needs.

King County stressed four tolling points to the Commission in a November 2017 letter:

1. Establish time period rates on the SR 99 tunnel that best manage diversionary impacts
2. Forward-looking toll escalation
3. Exempt transit; it is complementary to toll facilities
4. Toll revenue should help support transit

As of today, Metro envisions four buses an hour in peak periods through the SR 99 tunnel. More transit depends on market growth in South Lake Union.

METRO CONNECTS builds on 236 current partnerships with 50 jurisdictions to achieving Metro priorities and leveraging regional resources. It sets out a vision for how customers will access transit in the future. METRO CONNECTS identifies a growing demand for transit and a shift in mode of access (2015: 78% walk/bike to 2040: 84%) and identifies both operational and capital investments to support this shift.

Major elements of METRO CONNECTS:

- Rapid Ride Expansion (13 lines)
 - Status: Planning & pre-planning underway for expansion program (King County-wide); one line currently in design (G Line in Seattle, Madison Valley)
- Major redesigns of service network (20 project areas)
 - Status: First three redesign projects currently proposed for 2019-20 implementation
- Expansion of capital programming (ST2 & ST3 facility integration with Sound Transit, corridor improvements, access expansion, etc.)

- Status: Actively engaged on ST2 facility design and ST3 planning; planning and KC budget development underway to support additional capital elements

The plan also calls for parking:

1. More efficient and actively managed
2. Increased supply using low-cost solutions
3. Long-term expansion of vehicle and parking supply

The plan also calls for better first and last mile connections including new bike and walking connections and partnerships with private providers like TNC's and car sharing companies. Finally, the plan calls upon Metro to take an active role with partners in building and promoting compact development near frequent transit service.

The Connecting to Transit (C2T) program covers all the ways in which people get to our transit service, including parking at a park-and-ride, walking, biking, getting dropped off, and transit oriented development that allows people to live and work close to transit. A few highlights:

- Bike walk program: expanding secure bike parking, developing a Safe Routes to Transit initiative
- Innovative mobility: launching 4 pilots in 2018, including designated car share parking, dynamic/flexible carpooling, first/last mile pilot, shared employer shuttle pilot
- Transit-oriented development: new addition to the C2T team, working on program development including building TOD work plan, and identifying partnership opportunities
- Parking program: guided by METRO CONNECT's priorities to first manage existing parking, and then find low-cost ways to expand capacity before building new permanent parking. Several pilots under way to expand leased lot capacity, shared parking (with residential/commercial uses), and an outreach effort about solo driver permit parking

Reserved permit parking for transit customers may be tried for solo drivers during AM rush hours at very full park & ride lots. Considering a minimum \$15/month to \$130/month (market rate) and a discount for ORCA LIFT participants.

King County is creating a new Master Plan for Boeing Field, one of the busiest primary non-hub airports in the nation. The draft Master Plan will be submitted to King County Council in early 2019. Tax dollars are not used for Boeing Field operations.

[King County Metro](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

SEATTLE WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT

Seattle's downtown waterfront is in the midst of major change, including improvements to be built as part of the City's Waterfront Seattle Program after the tunnel is open and the Alaskan Way Viaduct is demolished.

The Program spans the waterfront from Pioneer Square to Belltown and supports all modes of travel, work includes the rebuild of the Elliott Bay Seawall, new Alaskan Way and Elliott Way surface streets, a pedestrian promenade, a new ferry terminal, and improved connections between center city neighborhoods and Elliott Bay.

Angela Brady, Deputy Director, Waterfront Program, City of Seattle, said that the city is vvery focused on an Alaskan Way that addresses pedestrian, truck and bus traffic. The design includes:

1. Vehicle parking and loading
2. Ferry loading and unloading
3. A transit pathway linking the waterfront to west Seattle
4. North/south bicycle and pedestrian movement

Ms. Brady walked through the demolition/construction schedule for the waterfront and SR 99.

[Seattle Waterfront](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

PORT OF SEATTLE, WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT AND FREIGHT MOBILITY

The Elliott Bay waterfront remains a busy maritime center and a critical link for freight movement between the Port and industrial districts in the city. Geri Poor, Regional Transportation Manager, Port of Seattle, noted that the Northwest Seaport (Seattle and Tacoma) is the number one North American gateway for refrigerated exports, moving nearly 20% of the nation's frozen or chilled products. The area also is the fourth largest freight distribution center in the US.

The Port has developed origin and destination estimates for container truck movements. For planning purposes, it assumes that 7% head north and about 37% locally head to the rail yards or Duwamish area trans load facilities. This leaves 45% heading south and 11% east on I-90.

Cruise ships dock at both Pier 91 and downtown. Mobility on Alaskan Way is critical for the port's truck and passenger traffic.

- Alaskan Way is the only surface freight route through downtown Seattle
- The SR 99 tunnel does not allow hazmat cargo or over-legal loads
- It is critical to support other state investments in freight (SR 99 Tunnel, SR 519)

The Port of Seattle sold Pier 48 to WSDOT for tunnel construction. Its future use is yet to be determined, but it may be used for passenger-only ferries in the long-term.

[Port of Seattle](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

SR 99 TUNNEL PROJECT UPDATE & TOLL SETTING PROCESS

The deep tunnel that will replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct (AWV) is nearing completion. David Sowers, SR 99 Deputy Program Administrator, WSDOT, provided a progress update on the AWV Replacement Program. The completed tunnel features:

- Two 11-foot lanes in each direction
- 8-foot and 2-foot shoulders
- Modern safety and traffic systems
- No mid-tunnel entrances or exits

The pathway to opening the tunnel requires completing the tunnel walls and roadway decks, installing and testing tunnel systems, and finishing the north and south operations buildings. Three post-completion projects are under one contract:

- AWV demolition
- Battery Street tunnel demolition
- North surface street connections

Carl See, Senior Financial Analyst, WSTC, updated the Commission on what has changed since rate setting began in 2017. WSDOT has updated cost and revenue assumptions, including costs that reflect new toll vendor contracts. Net revenues now include net civil penalty revenues.

The Legislature also took action during the 2018 session, approving a budget proviso that gives the Commission FY 2019 rate-setting and funding direction. Legislation that set forth specific financing direction did not pass.

Stantec Inc. and WSP USA completed gross and net revenue analysis for the Commission's requested toll rate scenarios. All requested scenarios maintain initial toll rates within a range of \$1.00-\$2.50. The toll rate options proposed for detailed analysis by the WSTC Tolling Team:

Option 1a. Tolls initially same or lower than Investment Grade Scenario 0 (IG-0)

- 3% toll increases every 3 years, starting FY 2023 thru FY 2059
- Toll increases include overnight and weekends

Option 2a. Peak tolls same as IG-0

- Peak shoulder period \pm adjustments and lower midday and evening tolls
- No toll escalation

Option 3a. Tolls initially same or lower than IG-0

- 3.5% annual increases FY 2021 thru FY 2025
- Toll increases exclude overnight and weekends
- No toll escalation after FY 2025

Option 5a. Tolls initially same or lower than IG-0 except 6-7 PM shoulder

- 5% increases in FY 2025 and FY 2030
- Toll increases include overnight and weekends
- No toll escalation after FY 2030

Option 6. Peak period tolls similar to IG-0, with peak shoulder tolls added

- Lower midday/evening tolls and no overnight tolls
- 5¢ (2%) toll increase in FY 2025; includes weekends
- No toll escalation after FY 2025

Projected toll revenue is very similar for the four options that were modeled. Except for Option 6, all options pay for expected costs (including debt service) but provide different levels of financial “cushion”. The Commission will determine the final method and amount for a cushion following consultation with WSDOT and Office of State Treasurer (OST). By April, the Commission seeks to settle on key financing assumptions, and the need for other scenarios.

Key Finance Assumption Decision Points:

- Apply legislative action for what expenses toll rates need to cover
- Obtain updated debt service requirements for \$200 million in capital funding from OST
- Commission will determine definition of sufficiency, the time period time for consideration, and amount of funds assumed for other uses or cushion
- Clarify reserve requirements, when payments should begin, and on what schedule

Determining Additional Scenarios:

- Determine if changes to key finance assumptions merit additional toll scenario analysis
- Consider interest in merging elements of existing toll scenarios
- Review and confirm Commission rate-setting priorities
- Continue to assess stakeholder feedback and priorities
- Seek and apply changes to costs and operational assumptions

Under the current schedule, from April through June 2018, the Commission will continue stakeholder outreach and host public input meetings. Stantec Inc. and WSP USA will model additional toll scenario requests, if needed. At the June Commission Meeting, the Commission will review the Tolling Team’s recommended toll scenario options, and at the July Commission Meeting (July 17-18, 2018), the Commission will propose a rule for public review and comment leading to a public hearing and rule adoption on September 11, 2018.

Commission staff will present the Tolling Team’s proposal on toll exemptions at the April Commission meeting. Stakeholder outreach and public input meeting will take place in April and May. At the May Commission Meeting, the Commission will consider proposing a rule for public hearing in July.

[Alaskan Way Viaduct](#)
[SR 99 Tunnel Rate Setting Update](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: *Continue to refine the SR 99 tolling options.*

PERSPECTIVES ON SEATTLE TRANSPORTATION

Leaders from Seattle businesses and civic organizations shared thoughts on the long-term benefits and challenges from the transportation related changes underway in the greater Seattle area, in the downtown Seattle core, other parts of the city, and regionally.

Jon Scholes, President and CEO, Downtown Seattle Association, emphasized the record high private investment that Seattle has not seen since the Gold Rush. There are 60,000 new employees in downtown since 2012, and fewer are driving alone. Among the reasons:

- Commute trip reduction
- Growth Management Act
- Business investment in transit passes. That is unusual across the country.
- There is an increasing number of travel options and a real opportunity to leverage these investments to improve housing affordability

On SR 99 tolling, start low and watch how things develop. Do no harm to the Seattle's economic engine. Keep it simple.

Abigail Doerr, Advocacy Director, Transportation Choices Coalition, noted that Seattle is one of many communities in the state that have invested in public transportation. Others, big and small include Spokane, Garfield County, and Ellensburg. Sound Transit 3 is very exciting: U-Link is just the tip of the iceberg for ridership growth.

Transportation equity is a priority:

- Affordable housing near Sound Transit light rail stations
- One Center City – lots of public investment, but also private collaboration
- Ensuring reliable transit options

Jessyn Farrell, Senior Vice-President, Civic Ventures, noted that cities function best when there is a vibrant multi-modal transportation system. Bike sharing is working; it provides first and last mile connections to transit.

Speaking to the state's role, Ms. Farrell urged:

- Consider providing multi-modal funding from the Road Usage Charge
- Consider transit as a tolling revenue recipient
- School transportation also matters
- The state should help speed up Sound Transit delivery:
 - Regional mobility grants
 - Permit streamlining
 - Right-of-way
- Data sharing from ride-share companies
- Think big on housing policy, as boldly visionary as ST in transportation
- SR 99 tolling, the state should consider transit investment in the North - South corridor. Provide broad access to public infrastructure

Dave Gering, Executive Director, Manufacturing Industrial Council, made these points:

- Deep-bore tunnel was the right choice

- Preservation of in-city industry is a triumph of GMA
- I-5 and SR 99 are the city's arteries
- From Everett to Renton, about 200,000 manufacturing jobs
- One Center City needs more public engagement
- On SR 99 tolling, start low. There is a huge North-South commute in Seattle for family wage jobs. There is a social justice need for through access. Who should use the tunnel?
 - School bus drivers and people who work in the industrial areas north and south of the central city. Start low to see how people going to major events use the tunnel
 - Think about no tolls on multi-event days

Commissioner Batra asked whether there are opportunities to better utilize the water. Mr. Gering responded that it is hard to get water-borne transportation to scale. Ms. Farrell said that a resilient transportation system needs many ways to get around and suggested exploring options with the state.

Major Truck Streets

Action: None

Follow-Up: *Incorporate this feedback into SR 99 tolling options.*

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL PLANNING

Kelly McGourty, Senior Program Manager, Transportation Planning, Puget Sound Regional Council, reported that Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is finalizing an update of its Regional Transportation Plan.

The update:

- Supports the Regional Growth Strategy
- Provides transportation choices
- Improves access to jobs, opportunity, destinations
- Improves reliability of the system
- Improves air quality, reduces greenhouse gases, supports improved water quality
- Includes a new financial strategy to deliver investments
- Includes measures for regional outcomes

Getting ahead on key issues:

- Maintenance & preservation
- Sustainable financial strategy
- Transportation technology
- Climate change

Addressing near-term gaps:

- Identified needs for city streets, county roads and local transit
- Working with WSDOT on a State Facilities Action Plan

- I-5 preservation, near-term efficiencies
- HOV policy
- Seismic preparedness
- Local priority state routes

Formal public comment period ran from December 14, 2017 – January 31, 2018. The comment period is open until General Assembly action is taken on May 31. So far, 152 respondents have commented. Two things jump out: “Transit” and “More.”

Leading comments:

- A lot of concern with how a regional road usage charge would be implemented
- Local jurisdictions need more revenue
- Staying ahead of technology
- Equity
- Importance of freight movement

Paul Inghram, Senior Program Manager, Growth Management Planning, Puget Sound Regional Council, briefed the Commission on Vision 2050, the next PSRC Regional Plan. Last year, the region added 61,000 wage & salary jobs (3.0% increase). Since 2010, the region has added 349,000 jobs (20% increase). King and Snohomish counties have accounted for 86% of regional job growth since 2010.

Population also has continued to surge. The regional population of 4.0 million has increased by 350,000 over six years. Nearly 50% more people are expected by 2050 – for 5.8 million people. This is a little above the Office of Financial Management mean forecast. Urban centers have grown twice as fast as other parts of the region, with 96% of the growth within the Urban Growth Area. Home prices and rents have increased about 60% in the past five years.

Chairman Litt asked how the plan approaches transportation to and from other regions.

[Draft Regional Transportation Plan
Vision 2050](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Peoples, resident of Green Lake neighborhood told the Commission that a road usage charge is anti-American. Government should not follow where we go. It also is unnecessary. I pay my Tacoma Narrows Bridge toll in cash. We each pay a different per-mile rate, which is good. EV owners should pay an electric charge tax.

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commissioners reflected on how much growth has taken place and is still happening in downtown Seattle, Lake Union and the industrial area.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

JERRY LITT, Chairman

ROY JENNINGS, Vice-Chairman

SHIV BATRA, Member

HESTER SEREBRIN, Member

JOE TORTORELLI, Member

DEBBIE YOUNG, Member

VACANT

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL