

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Summary

May 19 & 20, 2015

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

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commissioner Tortorelli moved adoption of the April 21, 2015 Kelso meeting summary. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion and it was adopted. Commissioner Riveland moved adoption of the meeting summary from the April 22, 2015 report from the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Expert Review Panel. Commissioner Litt, seconded the motion and it was adopted.

Commissioner Riveland reported that she and Commissioner O'Neal, as the nominating committee, recommend that the Commissioner Haley continue as Chairman and Commissioner Tortorelli continue as Vice-Chairman of the Commission. Election of officers will occur at the June meeting.

Commissioner Litt reported that he met with Melissa Carpenter, the Governor's new Eastern Washington representative. The Governor will be in Wenatchee to view transportation issues on June 15, including the movement of the BNSF railyard from downtown in order to reduce grade crossing conflicts. Commissioner Litt also has been meeting with the QuadCo RTPO.

Commissioner Tortorelli attended the NEW RTPO meeting in Colville. NEW RTPO is updating its long-range plan. He added that there are 80 trains a day going through Spokane.

Commissioner Brogan has been attending the PSRC Transportation Policy Board. There has been a lot of discussion of transit integration and efficiency, including fare integration and transit-oriented development.

Commissioner Riveland has been working with the FAC-T on ferry tariff policy. The new ferry, Samish, is a stunning vessel and a welcome addition to the fleet.

Chairman Haley attended the Benton-Franklin MPO meeting. The population growth rate in the Tri-Cities is 8%, twice the growth rate of the PSRC region.

Commissioner Jennings attended the FAC-T meeting by phone. He also attended the International Bridge, Tunnel and Toll Authority meeting in Portland.

Action/Follow-Up:

MEDAL OF HONOR MEMORIAL HIGHWAY NAMING

Chairman Haley announced that the Commission is prepared to act on Resolution 722 naming a portion of US 101 in Clallam and Jefferson counties the North Olympic Peninsula Medal of Honor Memorial Highway.

Lt. Commanmder Mike Jarosz, USN, spoke to the Commission in support of the naming of a portion of US 101 in honor of Construction Mechanic Third Class Marvin Shields, who was born, raised and buried in the Sequim area.

Commissioner Tortorelli moved to approve Resolution 722. Commissioner Litt seconded the motion. Motion was adopted unanimously.

WSDOT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Brian Lagerberg, Director of WSDOT's Public Transportation Division, discussed the development of the Public Transportation plan with the Commission. He walked through the vision statement and explained that the point of the plan is to build communities. Mr. Lagerberg indicated that he considers access more important than mobility.

Commissioner Litt asked how the plan fits with WTP 2035 Phase 1. Mr. Lagerberg indicated that it's the broad statement of what WSDOT's Public Transportation Division wants to accomplish. WSDOT is trying to bring partners together; part of the reason the planning is taking so long is because it is bringing public and private people to the table. Different partners will have different responsibilities in working to bring about the policy goals. Providers are broadly defined to include private-employer providers.

Commissioner Riveland asked what is meant by multimodal and integrated. Mr. Lagerberg said, "Integrated is the starting point." Investing in different modes doesn't mean that we would have a system. We actually have to work at integrating modes and systems. Performance measures also have to be integrated. It's really a plan about integration. He noted that the draft plan doesn't address governance.

How will this plan be used in communities? WSDOT recognizes the need to transfer knowledge and put in place a process to spread knowledge and capacity. WSDOT will use corridor sketch planning to identify what kind of service and performance is needed to achieve community needs and objectives. WSDOT is focused on highway segments and performance gaps. Then examining what kinds of service exists, and what is the least cost way to fill the performance gap. There are different public transportation markets – e.g., special needs, commuters, tourists – that may have different requirements.

Draft goals and action strategies:

- Thriving communities
- Access
- Adaptive transportation capacity
- Customer experience
- Transportation System stewardship

It is not the goal of the plan to identify what needs to be done over 30 years, but to create a framework for discussion. WSDOT (and local agencies) need to demonstrate that they are willing to partner and have something to offer. A public review draft will be out for comment in August and the hope is to finalize the Public Transportation Plan by the end of 2015.

Action/Follow-Up:

2015 FROG SURVEY ON WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES PERFORMANCE

Bill Young, Project Manager, Research Assurance and Andrew Thibault, Principal, EMC Research, reported on the results of the online survey of Washington State Ferry Riders Opinion Group (FROG) members conducted March-April, 2015 regarding their personal experience riding Washington State Ferries during the recent winter travel period. There were 2,474 total interviews, with data weighted by route and boarding method based on the last trip taken. Rider interaction with WSF provides information to impact customer satisfaction in the future.

Overall, WSF performance is pretty consistent from 2014 to 2015 and overall rider satisfaction has been consistent from 2012-2015. Dissatisfaction is unchanged, with very low negative intensity.

Rider experience:

- 91% visited the passenger deck.
- 85% drove onto a ferry as a driver or a car passenger
- 74% use the WSF website

You can reach 91% of the people riding the ferry system by connecting with them on the passenger deck. Interaction with crew and staff requesting help ranged from 23-39% of interactions. Most are satisfied with the assistance they received. Just under one in five are dissatisfied with the assistance they received. Most are satisfied with the WSF website.

Dissatisfaction on all attributes is largely unchanged compared to 2014. A performance matrix indicates that three areas of high dissatisfaction and high importance where the ferries should focus improvements are clean bathrooms, loading with clear directions and parking adequacy.

Overall dissatisfaction remains highest for “adequate parking near terminals” and “terminal bathrooms clean.” Over 40% of Seattle/Bremerton riders are dissatisfied with terminal bathrooms.

Dissatisfied riders have higher dissatisfaction levels on every individual attribute.

Mr. Young and Mr. Thibault walked through the gap analysis and opportunity areas for each of the ferry routes. Riders on the Anacortes/San Juan Islands (29%), Fauntleroy/Vashon (29%), and San Juan Interisland (27%) routes continue to express the highest overall dissatisfaction; however both Anacortes/San Juan Island routes have seen significant decreases in dissatisfaction.

About three quarters of respondents offered suggestion for improving WSF service quality, but no one issue dominates the recommendations. About one in seven (15%) mention issues around fixing terminals and about one in ten mention improving loading/unloading issues, employee issues, and vessel issues.

[WSF Winter Ferry Performance Survey](#)

Action/Follow-Up:

WSDOT PUBLIC OUTREACH ON i-405 EXPRESS TOLL LANES

WSDOT is reaching out extensively to the public both through media and grassroots work as well as paid media to educate I-405 drivers about the new Express Toll Lanes (ETLs) and new Flex Pass. The overarching message is “Get there quicker so you can do what matters to you.”

WSDOT also has created incentive programs: a free flex pass to I-405 carpoolers, and a free motorcycle pass for motorcyclists who live, work or play in King and Snohomish Counties and drive I-405. In the first month, 4100 free flex passes distributed and 1100 free motorcycle passes distributed since April 27. WSDOT aims to distribute about 15,000 flex passes.

To date, the Speaker’s Bureau has visited 44 events and reached over 1400 people. WSDOT also has developed a YouTube video that explains how the I-405 Express Toll Lanes work.

Staff reported that the 3-person carpool definition during peak periods continues to attract significant comment on the IdeaScale forums. There is also attention to cars that only seat 2 people. Ms. Michaud reported that on SR 520, two-person vehicles are not eligible for carpools.

[WSDOT I-405 ETL Public Outreach Update](#)

Action/Follow-Up:

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL TRAVEL STUDY

Billy Charlton, Director of Data and Suzanne Childress, Principal Modeler, PSRC, briefed the Commission on the PSRC 2014 Regional Travel Study. The latest in a long series of travel studies since 1961, the 2014 survey randomly sampled nearly one percent of residents in the region. The study had two parts: a household information survey and a travel diary survey. Instead of conducting this survey every 8 years, the goal is to do it every two years from now. Transportation technology is changing very quickly.

More than 90% of respondents used a web based survey to respond. And a total of 6094 households responded, exceeding every target metric in every county. The study deliberately oversampled households with no vehicles and 1 and 2 person households to get deeper data on those populations.

Transit, biking and walking as mode choice are all up at the expense of driving, but the change is gradual. In the core of Seattle, the decrease in driving mode share is down by 23%. Trip mode also varies significantly by age.

The regional growth centers and Seattle are changing more rapidly than other areas.

Commissioner Haley asked about development of transit performance measures. Mr. Charlton responded that there are a number of ways to improve transit, from lower floor access to moving bus stops to the opposite side of traffic signals. Charlie Howard, Director of Integrated Planning, PSRC emphasized that the key in evaluating transit performance is to understand what happens to traffic during the peak periods. About 54% of the trips into downtown Seattle during the peak period use transit. Other centers with significant transit use:

- University District 44%
- Capitol Hill and First Hill 32%
- South Lake Union 25%
- Downtown Bellevue 25%

A significant number of people who live in Pierce and Snohomish Counties travel to King County to work; over 93% of King County residents work in King County. PSRC is developing an activity-based travel model, so that the outcomes of transportation and land use policy choices can be better forecast.

[2014 Regional Travel Study](#)

Action/Follow-Up:

STUCK IN TRAFFIC REPORT

Craig Hellman, Senior Modeler, PSRC, and Gary Simonson, Associate Planner, PSRC, reported on regional-scale congestion trends for Puget Sound corridors. Regional highlights since 2010 include:

- Employment has grown faster than population, especially in King and Snohomish counties – there are 144,000 more people and 167,000 more jobs
- Transit boardings increased by 11%, despite a 6.5% decrease in service hours. In 2014, 25% of all Sound Transit Express bus trips had passengers standing. Vanpool passenger trips increased by 20% between 2010 and 2014. Park and Rides fill up earlier and more frequently.
- Delay on the region’s freeways increased by 52% from 2010 to 2014. Some of the largest increases in congestion occurred in the evening on I-5 North of Seattle into downtown.
 - Delay on I-5 from Fife to Everett is up 92% from 2010 to 2014
 - Delay on I-405 from Tukwila to Lynnwood, up by 94%.
 - Delay on I-90, from Seattle to Issaquah increased by 100%. This reflects the diversion from SR 520 due to tolling.
- King, Kitsap and Pierce County ferry ridership grew by over 13% since 2010.
- Ten of the 14 HOV systems in the region are failing. Community Transit routes on I-5 were late 25% of the time in 2014.

In summary, employment growth in recent years has put an increasing amount of stress on an already fragile transportation system. As demand increases, the region’s transit system has been negatively impacted by the increase in congestion, with less reliable service and longer wait and travel times. Overall, growing hours of delay are a concern for the region’s economy and its residents’ quality of life. Employment growth has put an increasing stress on a fragile transport system.

Commissioner Litt reported that Cle Elum is looking at 2000 new housing units – most of which will not work in Kittitas. PSRC staff indicated that even in 2010, about 10% of Kittitas County residents worked in King County.

[2015 Stuck in Traffic Report](#)

Action/Follow-Up:

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL: STATUS REPORT ON THE REGION’S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND PLANS TO IMPROVE IT

Charlie Howard, Director of Integrated Planning, PSRC, reported on the PSRC region’s transportation system and plans to improve it. In a winter 2015 survey, 47% of survey respondents said that transportation is the top concern. No other topic was ranked the top concern by more than 8% of respondents. In the next 10 years, PSRC sees a \$25 billion deficit between needs and available revenue.

Mr. Howard referenced the previous two reports by PSRC staff and added that of the more than 450 bridges statewide that are waiting for needed seismic reinforcement, hundreds are located within the central Puget Sound region. Cost estimates to seismically retrofit region's bridges exceed \$1 billion. Of 341 structurally deficient bridges in the state, 96 are located within the region.

The PSRC has developed an extensive project list to improve access and mobility within the region; fortunately, the proposed 2015 transportation package covers most of it – with the exception of city and county funding.

[Status report on the region's transportation system](#)

Action/Follow-Up:

2015 WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES FARE SETTING, FARE POLICIES AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director, WSF, briefed the Commission on fare setting issues and scheduling requirements. Whether a fare increase is required ultimately depends on legislative action, but at this point, both the Senate and House budgets anticipate an annual 2.5% fare increase.

The most significant fare policy adjustments under discussion are:

- Vehicle-to-Passenger Fare Ratio
- Vehicle Height Issues
 - Disability waiver for overheight vehicles
 - Height limit (7'6") and overheight surcharge

Greg Beardsley, Co-Chair of the Ferry Advisory Committee - Tariffs, reported that FAC members do not support increasing car/driver fares over passenger fares differently based on routes. Beardsley said that there already is a differential and that people who can change their travel mode already have.

WSF cost of service analysis indicates that passengers are subsidizing the operational costs.

[WSF Fare Setting Process Update](#)

Action/Follow-Up:

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND OVERVIEW

Staff was joined by Alison Hellberg, AWC and James Thompson, WPPA, in briefing the Commission on legislation enacted and still in play.

For counties, cities and ports, grants and loans from the Public Works Trust Fund, Community Economic Revitalization Board and Model Toxics Control Act are all at risk. Ports and cities have collaborated to seek funding for rail studies of corridor impacts and solutions.

Action/Follow-Up:

SEA-TAC SUSTAINABLE AIRPORT MASTER PLAN

Mark Reis, Managing Director, Aviation Division, Port of Seattle, briefed the Commission on the growth at Sea-Tac. With 37.5 million passengers in 2014, up 7.7%, Sea-Tac today is the fastest growing large hub in the US. No US airport is handling as many passengers in limited space as Sea-Tac today.

Sea-Tac has seen dramatic growth in international long haul services from 2007-2015. Projected air traffic indicates that the airfield will need to accommodate 33% more peak hour operations without a runway expansion. Airfield efficiency must increase. The terminal will need 35 more gates, in addition to eight already in planning. There is need to consider a second terminal. And, traffic management is a growing challenge.

Environmental, airspace, and land use constraints severely limit expansion options. Options for growth include an expansion of Concourse A and a North Concourse terminal. In Summer 2015, the Port will discuss preliminary alternatives with the community and at community forums in Fall 2015 will discuss a Preferred Development Alternative.

A conservative estimate is the cost will be \$10+ billion. Mr. Reis is hopeful that Congress will increase the passenger facility charge in the FAA Reauthorization. Passenger facility fees, along with increased fees on airlines, parking revenue and vendor revenue, will help to repay debt taken on to finance the needed expansion.

How does this growth impact the need for additional airports? The 1996 PSRC Study indicated that additional commercial airports are a matter of when, not if.

Mr. Reis noted that the Port has had an international incentive program for many years. The Port of Seattle has recently expanded that concept to the Pacific NW region, providing two years of fee waivers to new markets or those that have lost service. In 2000, 42,000 passengers a year departed from Sea-Tac to other Washington airports; in 2015 there were only 15,000 departures to seven WA airports.

[Sustainable Airport Mater Plan \(SAMP\)](#)
[Sea-Tac Airport Master Plan Overview](#)

Action/Follow-Up:

TACOMA I-5 HOV PROJECT

Claudia Bingham Baker, Communications Manager, Olympic Region, WSDOT briefed the Commission on three projects reshaping I-5 in Tacoma:

- Construction of HOV lanes
- A new bridge spanning the Puyallup River
- Connections with the SR 16 HOV lanes. This project is divided into three parts, demolishing and rebuilding the westbound approach, then the eastbound approach, and finally making the HOV connections.

The three projects combined are about a \$500 million investment.

[Tacoma/Pierce County HOV Program](#)

Action/Follow-Up:

HYBRID VEHICLE AND ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Dr. Thomas Smith, Transportation Specialist 5, WSDOT began developing the hybrid vehicle/alternative fuels report in 2005 when WSDOT began wondering what those vehicles would mean for gas tax revenue. Today over 770 people subscribe to the report.

In early 2005, the questions asked were:

- What will the impact of hybrid cars be on Washington gas tax revenue?
 - What do we know about hybrid car registrations in Washington?
 - What do the experts think about sales potential?
 - Does our gas tax revenue forecast take hybrid cars into account?

These questions initiated looking for information that would grow into the report.

Observations Ten years of publication reveals some interesting trends, but some are relearned again and again.

- Early projections of hybrid car sales and penetration were optimistic
- Current projections of electric car sales and penetration still assume growth, but are less optimistic than earlier forecasts

Recurring Themes

- Gas prices and impact on hybrid and electric car sales
- Every gas price drop brings out speculation that the market is dead
- Gas prices are not the driving force in the first 5 years of hybrid sales and they are not the primary factor in EV sales.
 - Early tech adopters
 - Environmentalists
- From 2005 to 2007, gas prices and sales were positively correlated

In April 2015, hybrids are 2.24% of US sales; plug-in electrics, 0.2% and battery EVs, 0.42%. There is no way to know what the numbers are for WA State.

Toyota sees its work on hybrids as ultimately leading to hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

[Hybrid Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Report](#)

Action/Follow-Up:

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul W. Locke told the Commission that people who are living off investments have a lot of taxes deducted from income.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

ANNE E. HALEY, Chairman

JOE TORTORELLI, Vice-Chairman

RITA BROGAN, Member

DAN O'NEAL, Member

ROY JENNINGS, Member

MARY RIVELAND, Member

JERRY LITT, Member

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL