

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Meeting Summary February 21 & 22, 2012

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on Tuesday, February 21, 2012, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

MINUTES APPROVAL / ADOPTION

Chairman Ford opened the Commission Meeting at 9:00 am. Commissioner Haley questioned a statement in the January 17 Meeting Summary; staff clarified what was said and recommended a revision to better reflect the discussion.

With that correction, Commissioner Parker moved adoption of the January 17, 2012 Meeting Summary. The motion was seconded by Commissioner and the summary was adopted.

WSDT PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

Jay Alexander, Director, Capital Program Development and Management Office, WSDOT briefed the Commission on WSDOT's Priority Programming Process. RCW 47.05.010 directs that priority programming be done for the state highway system. The policy direction is provided by:

- Legislative Policy Goals in 47.04.280
- Washington Transportation Plan
- Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan
- Governor Priorities and Strategies

The general steps are:

- Performance criteria
- Needs identification and ranking
- Strategies for achieving performance
- Identify and test alternatives
- Prioritize
 - Benefit/cost
 - Lowest life cycle

Economic development is the most difficult to prioritize. And, sometimes the local priority may not further the state's interest. It does not benefit the state if a business only moves from one region to another.

Moving Washington reviews and builds on corridor performance.

[WSDOT Capital Project Prioritization](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

SR 99 ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOLLING AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Linea Laird, SR 99 Project Administrator, WSDOT and Linda Mullen, ACTT Committee Administrator shared that the Advisory Committee on Tolling and Traffic Management (ACTT) has met twice; the third meeting is scheduled for February 29. Charley Royer and Maud Daudon co-chair the ACTT.

The ACTT charge is

- Minimize diversion from the tunnel due to tolling
- Tolling the SR 99 tunnel
- Mitigating diversion effects on city streets and I-5

WSDOT plans to manage the investment grade traffic and revenue studies. It already has been working with Parsons Brinkerhoff and is revising the PSRC traffic model. The regional model does not deeply enough look at signal timing and real time traffic choices on city streets.

Prior to beginning the project, SR 99 through traffic was estimated to account for 65% of the AWV traffic. WSDOT asserts that the traffic pattern changes driven by tunnel design and elimination of two entrances/exits is anticipated and addressed in the FEIS. The Alaskan Way design is being developed right now – it will be six lanes and, in some places, more.

Although WSDOT is seeking tolling authorization from the legislature, WSDOT not seeking authority at this time to sell bonds because more work needs to be done. Recent data and analysis – since 2010 – indicates that \$400 million revenue is not achievable through tolling.

Suggested Draft Guiding Principles:

- Minimize diversion onto city streets
- Minimize diversion onto I-5
- Mitigate anticipated effects of diversion
- Meet funding obligation for AWV Replacement Program
- Identify funding to mitigate diversion impacts
- Support Seattle's Complete Streets policy goals

SR 99 Tunnel Project

Action/Follow-up: Commission Staff will attend ACCT meetings and work with WSDOT SR 99 Staff to develop a joint workplan for SR 99 Tolling Milestones.

SR 99 TUNNEL EXPERT REVIEW PANEL

Dr. Patricia Galloway, Chair of the Expert Review Panel (ERP), briefed the Commission on the ERP analysis of the AWV Replacement Tunnel Project. This megaproject, she emphasized, consists not only of the tunnel, but several other projects at the north and south and along the waterfront.

Funding actions in next 6 months:

- Tolling authority granted
- New toll revenue projections
- Port financial contribution in binding agreement by June 2012
- Additional federal funding (\$19 million to substitute for less Port funding)

Complementary Projects/Actions:

- Project Oversight Committee last met in April 2011; it should begin meeting again as soon as possible and continue meeting until project completion
- City and WSDOT need to enter into binding agreements on project
- Mercer West and Seawall Replacement contracts must move forward
- City should put Seawall proposition on Spring 2013 ballot
- **City should proceed with LID to ensure seawall completion interfaces with WSDOT proposed** schedule for AWV surface street

ERP recommends Governor and Legislature consider a semi-annual ERP Update on the action items and risks. This may require some additional funding.

[Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Presentation](#)

[Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program Expert Review Panel Report](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE QUARTERLY TRAFFIC AND REVENUE UPDATE

Bob Covington, Director, Accounting and Financial Services, WSDOT reported on TNB revenues, expenditures and fund balance.

[TNB Project and Reported Traffic and Revenue](#)

Action/Follow-up: Continue to monitor

TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE TOLL RATE SCENARIO PROCESS AND FEBRUARY FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

The Commission convened CDM Smith in GoTo Meeting format to learn about TNB Traffic and Revenue forecasts. CDM Smith first talked about how forecasts have been developed and about work being done to update assumptions and inputs.

Members of the Commission expressed some skepticism that Pay-by-Mail (PBM) share will increase. Of the current cash payers, the 20% share today is expected to decrease as some switch to PBM.

Jacobs, another WSDOT consultant, talked about survey results of TNB users, travel projections and future payment choices.

[Rate Assumptions](#)

[Results Applied to Financial Plan](#)

Action/Follow-up: Review and refine forecasts and assumptions

TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE DEBT SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Commission Staff made a presentation on the Debt Service Withholding practices and proposals for TNB and how it impacts the revenue requirements.

Action/Follow-up: Continue discussion with Office of State Treasurer and WSDOT

[TNB Debt Account](#)

SR 520 UPDATE

Craig Stone, Director, Tolling Division, WSDOT provided an update on SR 520.

Findings to date:

- About 75% of drivers use Good to Go!
- Total trips across the lake have decreased about 5%
- Vehicle trips across SR 520 are at 60-70% of pre-toll levels
- SR 520 traffic is now typically free flow during peak travel time
- Mid-day trips have increased on both bridges

The Issaquah-Seattle trip time has increased the most.

[Toll Division Update](#)

Action/Follow-up: Continue to monitor SR 520 traffic volume, toll revenue and diversion

OVERVIEW OF WSDOT TOLL ADJUDICATIVE PROGRAM

Craig Stone, Director, Toll Division, WSDOT explained that the ETCC provides customer service and back office processing of notices of civil penalties for failure to pay tolls. ETCC provides administrative support for adjudication, including hearing scheduling and payment processing. Office of Administrative Hearings provides Administrative Law Judges for contested civil penalties. Department of Licensing is developing a system and protocol for transferring license plate and toll violation info for vehicle registration holds.

The Legislature intends that the costs of the toll adjudication process are covered by revenue collected by toll adjudication. Although the TNB Financial Plan shows a loss from violations, in part that is due to outdated expenditure estimates for adjudication in the Financial Plan.

ETCC failed to process 144,000 Notices of Infraction last year; Judge O'Malley dismissed an additional 14,000. WSDOT is working to recoup a portion of the lost revenue from ETCC.

Action/Follow-up: None

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commissioners made some brief reports on recent activities:

- Commissioner Cowan indicated strong interest in the ferry community in discussing VMT as a gas tax replacement.

- Commissioner Parker attended the memorial service for Gail Achterman, former Chair, Oregon Transportation Commission.
- Commissioner Haley announced that the voters in the City of Walla Walla approved a Transportation Benefit District proposal for a 2/10 cent sales tax.

Staff and Commissioners discussed legislative action that may impact the TNB revenue needs. Staff reported that Senator Kilmer is optimistic that the payment of the deferred sales tax can be delayed for several years. He also believes the Sufficient Minimum Balance (SMB) is too high. Commissioners noted that the SMB has been drawn down over the last year to keep rates low. The TNB Citizens Advisory Committee should be making toll recommendations to the Commission at its meeting tonight; if it does not, it will need to schedule an additional meeting within the next two weeks.

Staff also provided an update on legislative activity:

- Bills to increase driver's license and vehicle licensing fees remain alive.
- HB 2190, the supplemental transportation budget, as passed by the House Transportation Committee, includes provisos directing the Commission to.
 - Study and evaluate a mileage based user fee system.
 - Conduct an investment grade traffic and revenue study for the Columbia River Crossing.
- Bills to authorize tolling for the Columbia River Crossing and the SR 99 AWV Replacement Tunnel are still in play.

Staff announced that there will be joint meetings with the Oregon Transportation Commission scheduled later this year.

Action/Follow-up: Schedule meetings with Oregon Transportation Commission

WSDOT GRAY NOTEBOOK QUARTERLY REPORT

Daniela Bremmer, Director, Strategic Assessment Office, WSDOT noted that the Gray Notebook is organized consistent with the state transportation policy goals.

WSDOT has adopted a new state noise policy which will impact when and where noise walls will be constructed. Quieter asphalt pavements have not been effective at reducing tire pavement noise after six months; test sections were badly rutted after two years and removed. WSDOT is now evaluating quieter concrete pavement textures with promising results.

WSDOT has a significant backlog of building preservation and repair needs; 191 aged and obsolete primary buildings need repair and replacement. The repair backlog for all buildings is estimated to be \$196 million. WSDOT is exploring the possibility of public-private partnerships, swapping and leveraging existing properties to finance and build facility improvements.

[Gray Notebook](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

AVIATION ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

Tristan Atkins, Director, Aviation Division, WSDOT explained that the Study takes three perspectives on the economic contribution of aviation:

- Airport – jobs, wages, spending from businesses at the airport and visitors passing through.
- Industry – the role of aviation in the broader economy and the relationship between aviation and selected industries.
- Users – the value that individuals derive from their use of aviation facilities and services.

Airport Perspective

Airport impacts are concentrated in central Puget Sound. Four airports account for 91% of jobs and 95% of output. Washington State is unique in that aircraft manufacturing plays a significant role in generating jobs and economic impacts.

All RTPOs in the state have either a commercial or regional airport.

Industry Perspective

How does aviation affect business decisions of production and location? This has not been done before. There are businesses that depend on airport services, notably airplane manufacture, testing and training, but also a variety of others:

- PETNET Solutions – radiopharmacy network providing an isotope with an 8-hour half-life.
- Pacific Cataract and Laser Institute.
- Tek Construction – transportation construction and engineering workers to remote sites.
- Cherry farmers use helicopters to dry cherries.

User Perspective

Looks at the value users derive from all types of aviation services. This perspective particularly demonstrates the importance airports have in smaller communities. The Study identified 17 activities that users derive benefits from, including:

- Moving people and goods.
- Supporting industry.
- Protecting people and resources.
- Supporting research.
- Flying for recreation.

Commissioners asked about how aviation fits within the entire system. What is the cost and value of time; how does the system meet the needs of Washington citizens and businesses? The Study did not look at whether we are investing adequately as a state or in specific areas.

[Aviation Economic Impact Study](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION UPDATE

Shelly Baldwin, Impaired Driving Program Manager; Chris Madill, Traffic Records Program Manager and Jonna VanDyk, Distracted Driving Program Manager, WTSC shared that in 2009, impaired driving traffic deaths accounted for 54% of all traffic deaths in Washington. While total

traffic deaths declined by 23% from 2000 to 2009, impaired driving deaths declined by only 2%. Target Zero teams, over an 18-month effort from July 2010 to September 2011, generated a 39% reduction compared to a 23% reduction in control counties.

About 60% of collision reports, 55% of tickets, and 50% of dispositions are handled electronically now. Electronic Traffic Information Processing (eTRIP) has won national awards.

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teens. Drivers 16 - 25 make up 15% of drivers but are involved in 38% of all fatal and serious injury collisions. Top three factors in teen fatalities are

- Speed
- Impairment
- Distraction

Cell phones increase crash risk 4.1 times; semitruck driver's texting are 23 more times likely to crash. Enforcement is very difficult; especially challenging to cite for texting while driving, since it is legal to dial a phone while driving. While observations of drivers talking on a hand-held phone have peaked at 5% and declined to 2%, the risks apply equally to hands-free use.

[Target Zero](#)
[Electronic Traffic Information](#)
[Distracted Driving](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

GOVERNOR'S CONNECTING WASHINGTON TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT AND GOVERNOR'S REVENUE PROPSAL

Jennifer Ziegler, Policy Advisor, Governor's Executive Policy Office and Robin Rettew, Sr. Budget Analyst, Office of Financial Management shared that the Governor's 10-year Investment Proposal focused on \$3.68 billion for maintaining and operating the transportation system. Only the electric vehicle fee and other small drivers licensing and vehicle licensing fees remain in play; the House would generate about \$200 million in new revenue per biennium and the Senate would generate about \$160 million per biennium.

[About Connecting Washington](#)

Action/Follow-up: Incorporate this information into Transportation 101 and other presentations

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Hammond, WSDOT talked about the supplemental budget and projects.

On Monday, Washington filed a preproposal for three Tiger IV projects:

- North Spokane Corridor.
- Lynden/Aldergrove border crossing.
- SR 167 HOT lane extension southbound.

Washington, California and Oregon are jointly proposing a request to fund additional electric charging stations in rural areas.

Action/Follow-up: None

OVERVIEW AND UPDATE OF FREIGHT RAIL PROGRAMS; INVESTMENT BANK; DATABASE PILOT PROJECT; PCC

Ron Pate, Freight Rail Programs, WSDOT briefed the Commission on the WSDOT Freight Rail program. In the last five years, the state has invested over \$4 million in the 2011 Freight Rail Investment Bank, over the last 10 years, invested \$13.75 million in the 2009 Freight Rail Assistance Program, and purchased two rail lines: PCC and Royal Slope. The Produce Rail Car Program has expended \$2 million in federal funds and the Grain Train Program is self-supporting.

The Port of Longview Rail Loop is the top ranked project; investment from the Port of Longview and a WSDOT loan funds a \$1,029,000 second loop track capable of accommodating 110 rail car unit trains from the mainline. The second ranked project is the \$443,000 improvement to the Tacoma Rail East 11 Street grade crossing. Third ranked is the \$454,923 Tacoma Rail Yard Track Rail Relay serving the Port of Tacoma.

WSDOT oversees the facilities and regulatory portions of the operating leases. The PCC Rail Authority was created by Grant, Lincoln, and Spokane Counties and the Port of Whitman to oversee the business and economic development portion of PCC. Since purchasing the PCC, the state has invested \$12.2 million on rehabilitation. The PCC Rail Authority has developed a \$58.2 million rehabilitation plan to bring 231 miles of the 277 mile system to Class 2 standards.

[Freight Rail Program](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Locke shared that there should be a system where we have project money and not borrow it. Borrowing money and debt is not the way to go. Costs need to be brought down and the big thing is not having to borrow money to complete a project.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DICK FORD, Chairman

PHILIP PARKER, Vice-Chairman

TOM COWAN, Member

DAN O'NEAL, Member

JERRY LITT, Member

ANNE HALEY, Member

JOE TORTORELLI, Member

JENNIFER ZIEGLER, Ex-Officio Member
Governor's Office

PAULA HAMMOND, Ex-Officio Member
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL