

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
January 18 & 19, 2011**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on Tuesday, January 18, 2011, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

MINUTES APPROVAL/ADOPTION

It was moved by Commissioner Ford to approve the December 14 & 15, 2010 meeting minutes as revised. The motion passed unanimously

STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN 2010

Lowell Porter and Steve Lind presented the Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2010. The Washington State Traffic Safety Commission focuses primarily on driver behavior. Its mission is to save lives and reduce injuries on Washington roads.

Nearly ¾ of the Traffic Safety Commission budget comes from federal highway safety funds. There is a base grant, and other revenue is available under specific programs.

The *Target Zero* Vision is zero traffic deaths by 2030. Washington is one of the few states that set traffic safety priorities. The three top priorities in *Target Zero 2010* are impaired driving, speeding, and run off the road.

Twenty-four Target Zero Task Forces around the state coordinate local efforts. Implementation is required by state agencies and recommended for county, city and tribal agencies.

Commissioners asked several questions about motorcycle safety. One question followed from a suggestion made at a tolling hearing that motorcycles be authorized to drive between lanes, as they can in California. The Legislature considered and rejected amending Washington law to allow motorcycles to drive between lanes a few years ago.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2011/January18/documents/011811_BP2_TargetZeroOverview.pdf

Action/Follow up: None

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Hammond reported on progress with the SR 99 bored tunnel and the SR 520 floating bridge. Groundbreaking in Aberdeen for building the pontoon facility will occur in late February. WSDOT is planning to make major workforce reductions in engineering and technical support staff as the Nickel and TPA projects reach completion and revenue declines.

WSDOT also is looking at a 20% decline in federal funds in future years, from about \$700 million/yr to \$550 million. Conversations are beginning in Washington about what federal reauthorization should look like. Senator Boxer may be the first with a reauthorization bill.

The Governor's Regional Ferry Proposal responds to a crisis; there is no longer any ability to shift money from other accounts to WSF. The Governor's Proposed Transportation Budget reduces highway project funds by \$212 million.

Action/Follow up: None

NATURAL GAS – NEW FLEXIBLE OPTIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION

Stephen Lambo, Ph. D., President, American Strategic Group/VISTA Natural Gas and Fernando Rosero, Chief Technical Officer, American Strategic Group/VISA Natural Gas shared that natural gas has potential as a cleaner marine fuel source for ferries. It generates 95% fewer particulate emissions. They presented the case for greater use of natural gas, a resource with a 200-year supply in the United States. WSF has been looking at natural gas, but their focus has been on LNG, not CNG.

The Energy Information Agency estimates CNG will be 30-50% cheaper per gallon than diesel through 2035. CNG provides the same BTU as diesel, per gallon.

The key change from past practice is that CNG is now more mobile. Until recently, a CNG user had to be located on the pipeline and willing to compress gas for its use. It is now possible to transport the fuel in smaller quantities.

Commissioners suggested that ASG provide WSF with more technical information, and also talk to Legislators about possible cost savings. Conversion of existing engines could be done through a public-private partnership.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2011/January18/documents/011811_BP4_NaturalGas_MarineFuel.pdf

Action/Follow up: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Locke expressed his concerns with ferries being docked because of weather conditions and the crew getting paid when we don't have the money.

JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC) TRANSIT STUDY: IDENTIFYING THE STATE ROLE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Gene Baxstrom, JTC Staff presented a summary of the JTC Final Report Identifying the State Role in Public Transportation. The study defined "public transportation" broadly with the term "public" focused on access rather than ownership of the system.

Study Panel Observations:

- Focus on the big picture. Integrate public transportation more systematically into planning.
- Focus on meeting state goals.
- One size does not fit all.
- Funding – stability, flexibility, coordination of resources.
- Demand is increasing for expensive, specialized transportation services.

The Study recommends moving toward a multimodal perspective:

- Integrate public transportation into regional, statewide planning.
- Develop and promote policies to encourage use of public transportation, including siting of state facilities within easy access of public transportation and partnerships between public and private providers.
- Refocus resources to better align with state needs and priorities.
- Create a new, bottom-up, performance reporting system.
- Focus on performance.

There were several comments and questions about how to provide special needs/elderly transportation more cost-effectively.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2011/January18/documents/011811_BP5_StateRolePublicTransportation.pdf

Action/Follow up: None

SR 520 ESSB 6392 WORKGROUP REPORTS

Julie Meredith, SR 520 Project Director, WSDOT provided an update on SR 520 West Side work:

- Conclusions and recommendations of 2008 High Capacity Transit (HCT) Plan still valid.
- ST2 includes money for SR 520 light rail evaluation.
- Some of the early milestones in 2008 HCT Plan have been completed.
- Transit funding is needed.

There are several provisions in federal law requiring mitigation in and around the Arboretum; tribal interests, national historic site, land and water conservation, wetlands.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2011/January18/documents/011811_BP6_SR520HOV_ESSB6392.pdf

Action/Follow up: None

I-5 CONGESTION – SR 510 TO SR 512

Kevin Dayton, Regional Administrator, Olympic Region, WSDOT and John Nisbet, Traffic Operations Director, WSDOT briefed the Commission on the I-5 congestion challenges between SR 510 and SR 512. In the corridor, JBLM has grown by 36,000 since 2000; it is now the third largest employer in the state. Also, large new businesses have located in DuPont and Hawks Prairie.

Long-range solutions for the corridor require additional lanes and interchange reconstruction. Short-term solutions being pursued include ramp metering, lane redesign, signals, and base operational changes.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2011/January18/documents/011811_BP7_JBLMCorridor.pdf

Action/Follow up: None

COMMISSION BUSINESS

The Commission reviewed and approved the content for the Annual Report, subject to specific revisions and edits.

Staff provided a Legislative update and discussed scheduling Commissioner appointments with Legislators.

The Commission reviewed and approved the letter from the three West Coast Transportation Commissions on federal transportation policy reauthorization.

The Commission considered a proposed consulting contract and chose not to act on it.

Action/Follow up: None

GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED SERVICE CUTS AND FARE ADJUSTMENTS

Robin Rettew, Senior Budget Analyst, Office of Financial Management and Eric Hansen, Office of Financial Management and David Moseley, Assistant Secretary, Ferries Division, WSDOT all made presentations on the ferry financial situation, proposed budget and financial plan. WSF has lost a cumulative \$1.2 billion since 2000 from repeal of the MVET. Since then, service has been reduced, fares raised and \$852 million transferred to ferry operations from other state transportation accounts. After this biennium, there will not be enough money to preserve vessels.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2011/January18/documents/011911_BP10_FerryBudgetProposal.pdf

Action/Follow up: None

GOVERNOR'S FERRY REFORM PROPOSAL

Teresa Berntsen, Executive Policy Analyst, Governor's Office presented the Governor's proposal for Ferries Regional Governance. The Passenger Vessel Association analyzed six ferry governance models. The Governor's proposal creates a district comprising all or part of the six counties with ferry terminals, governed by a Board of Directors – a majority elected from districts and the remainder appointed by the Governor.

Commissioners responded that the 2009 Long-Term Ferry Funding Study considered a regional approach and found it lacking. One problem is its tendency toward balkanization of the transportation system; another problem is that the revenue generated by the ferry-dependent communities is inadequate to fill the gap. A possible benefit of the proposal is that it may force legislators from those districts to find a solution.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2011/January18/documents/011911_BP11_FerriesFundingProblem.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2011/January18/documents/011911_BP11_Regionalferrygovernanceproposal.pdf

Action/Follow up: None

GOVERNOR'S TRANSPORTATION BUDGET OVERVIEW

Robin Rettew, Senior Budget Analyst, Office of Financial Management explained that the proposed 2011 – 13 Transportation Budget, the Governor proposes additional WSF service reductions, a 7.5% fare increase in FY 2012, and greater reliance on locally-generated revenue, proposed by a new governance structure.

Transportation agencies asked for 6 - 8% increases. On September 23, 2010 OFM told agencies to make reductions. WSDOT requested \$7.4 billion; the Governor proposes \$6.9 billion. The Governor's budget proposal reduces Licensing by 1.5% and increases Washington State Patrol by 2.2%. Proposed budgets for CRAB and TIB are both lower. The proposed biennial budget includes \$1.2 billion for system preservation and maintenance.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2011/January18/documents/011911_BP12_2011_13GovTranspoBudget.pdf

Action/Follow up: None

DRAFT NON-TOLL ROAD PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP REPORT

The Commission reviewed the Draft Report on *Best Practices Review of Public Private Partnership Programs and Laws for Non-Toll Facility Projects*. Ms. Griffith reviewed the recommended changes to law:

- *Establish a unique process for non-toll projects.*
- *Require Commission review and approval when a PPP involves sale or disposal of state assets or incurring obligations that bind future state appropriations.*
- *Modify review and approval of project selection criteria.*
- *Authorize WSDOT to carry out pilot projects with Commission review and oversight.*

It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner Hill to approve the Report. The motion passed unanimously.

Action/Follow up: Publication and distribution

DRAFT REGIONAL PRIORITY PROJECT REPORT

The Commission reviewed the Draft *Regional Priority Project Report*. There was discussion about whether and how to include the data supplied by the two RTPOs that submitted more than their top 20 projects.

It was moved by Commissioner Ford to approve the Draft report as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Action/Follow up: Publication and distribution

If you would like additional detail on what occurred at any Commission meeting in Olympia, please refer to our web site at www.wstc.wa.gov and click on the link titled "Meeting Audio on TVW" under the 2010 Olympia Meetings section of the home page. There you will be able to access the full audio recording of the meeting. If you have questions please contact our office at 360-705-7070.

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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LATISHA HILL, Member

TERESA BERNTSEN, Ex-Officio Member
Governor's Office

PAULA HAMMOND, Ex-Officio Member
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL