

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
July 13 & 14, 2010**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on Wednesday, July 13, 2010, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair Carol Moser, Bob Distler, Dick Ford, Elmira Forner, Latisha Hill, Dan O'Neal and Philip Parker.

MINUTES SUMMARY ADOPTION

It was moved by Commissioner O'Neal to approve the June 22, 2010 Aberdeen, and June 23, 2010 meeting minutes as amended by Commissioner Distler. The motion passed unanimously.

SR 527 ROUTE JURISDICTION TRANSFER REQUEST – REVIEW PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Stevan Gorcester, Executive Director, Transportation Improvement Board, provided a preliminary report on the request from the City of Bothell to transfer 2.5 miles of SR 527, which carries 40,000 average daily trips, from the state system to the City of Bothell. TIB Staff recommends that the City request be granted, but this request also demonstrates some of the weaknesses in the formal transfer criteria. The criteria are intended to support the continuity of the state highway system, connecting activity centers and reflecting state needs. State highways should connect city centers to the state system and to each other.

Although this route connects other state routes at both ends, it is not the only connection. On the other hand, this route is parallel to I-405 and provides an alternative route for excess capacity on I-405.

That finding is countermanded to some extent by the city's comprehensive plan, which calls for a more complex urban design combining a 4-lane through route with frontage roads. Most of the statutory criteria support the City's transfer request.

Commissioners, Ms. Griffith and Mr. Dye thanked Mr. Gorcester for his professional service to the State. Several singled out his dedication to performance measurement.

It was moved by the Commission to adopt the SR 527 Preliminary Analysis Report recommending transfer of 2.5 miles of SR 527 to the City of Bothell and move it forward for 30-day public review and comment period. The motion passed unanimously.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100713_BP2_SR527RJT_002.pdf

Action/Follow-up: Final Analysis will be reviewed at the October Commission meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Dave Dye, Deputy Secretary & Chief Operating Officer, WSDOT, reported on current activities of the Department, including an update on the status of the Columbia River Crossing and Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement megaprojects. He talked about the cost-overrun risk analysis for the SR 99 bored tunnel and answered questions about the project.

The Commission asked how the \$1 million construction error on SR 16 happened and what it means for the project budget. Mr. Dye apologized for the mistake and said that the cost will be absorbed within project efficiencies. It is the result of two design teams working on different parts of the project; although the alignment error was caught early, it was not followed up on correctly to prevent construction of the ramp. While the error in ramp construction was discovered in December 2009, the magnitude and the solution were not known until spring 2010. WSDOT management lost track of the error until just before the ramp was torn out.

Commission members stressed that the \$1 million needs to be looked at in the context of the nearly \$500 million expenditure on I-5 and SR 16 improvements (not including the Tacoma Narrows Bridge).

Action/Follow-up: None

NAME SELECTION FOR 64-CAR FERRIES

The five names under consideration, recommended by the Commission subcommittee, are Salish, Tokitae, Cowlitz, Kennewick, and Samish.

Linda Spier, Public Relations, City of Kennewick, spoke in support of the name "Kennewick," and the significance of its meaning.

Nicole Tesh and Tamara Rogers from the Samish Nation spoke in support of the name "Samish." The route this ferry will travel is through traditional Samish fishing grounds and travel routes.

Commissioners discussed naming the two ferries. A member of the Commission asked whether the poll conducted reflects the sentiment of the entire state or only the Puget Sound ferry ridership. Ms. Griffith clarified that the poll results came from the Ferry Riders Opinion Group.

It was moved by Commissioner Forner and seconded by Commissioner Hill that the second new 64-car ferry vessel be named "Salish," as it covers a broad geographic area. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Hill and seconded by Commissioner O'Neal to name the third new 64-car ferry vessel be named "Kennewick". The motion passed six "yes" and one "No".

<http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/Resolutions/documents/699.pdf>

<http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/Resolutions/documents/700.pdf>

Action/Follow-up: None

COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hill reported that now is an exciting time in the Eastern Region. There is a lot of ongoing discussion regarding transportation.

Commissioner Ford shared that transit is at the forefront of discussion in the King/Pierce County area.

Commissioner Forner shared that the WVCOG is having an ongoing federal funding discussion.

Commissioner Distler reported that there is a modest concern in San Juan County that the WTP process is neglecting San Juan County perspectives. Mr. Parker noted that the consulting team has contacted both the County and the City of Friday Harbor to obtain their needs and accomplishments.

Commissioner Parker commented on light rail funding in Southwest Washington.

Commissioner's talked about the challenges and discussions with the RTPOs in responding to the Commission's request for the top twenty priorities.

Action/Follow-up: Staff and Commission will make additional contact with San Juan County and provide a WTP briefing if desired.

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE "KEYSTONE" FERRY TERMINAL TO THE "COUPEVILLE" TERMINAL

Nancy Conard, Mayor, Town of Coupeville, talked about the rationale for changing the name of the Keystone Terminal to Coupeville Terminal. The motivation is to improve tourism and visitor connection to the town and Whidbey Island.

Don Piercy, Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce, indicated that support for the change comes from greater Whidbey Island.

It was moved by Commissioner Distler and seconded by Commissioner Forner to adopt Resolution 698 renaming the Keystone Ferry Terminal to Coupeville Ferry Terminal and direct WSDOT to take the direction which will minimize cost. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner O'Neal and seconded by Commissioner Parker to amend the motion to reflect the language in Resolution 698. "The Transportation Commission requests the Department of Transportation change the official terminal name and update all references to it including but not limited to highway signage, social media and print materials. The Department may phase in this name change to allow for the updating of all reference materials, signage and any other areas in need of updating as funding becomes available to do so." The motion passed unanimously.

<http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/Resolutions/documents/698.pdf>

Action/Follow-up: None

WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN – DRAFT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Commissioner Moser made introductory comments about the development of WTP 2030. Allegra Calder, Berk and Associates, explained the process and development of the plan and its content to date.

The Commission suggested numerous refinements to the Draft WTP 2030. It decided to delay Draft Plan release, pending a work session to be scheduled.

Action/Follow-up: A WTP work session was scheduled for July 21 in Seattle. At the work session, the Commission will make additional edits and direct staff to move forward with releasing DRAFT WTP 2030 for public review and comment.

MICROSOFT CONNECTOR SERVICE

Mr. Stanton, Senior Community Affairs Manager, Microsoft, discussed the growth of the Microsoft Shuttle, which now has a capacity of over 5600 riders a day on 24 fixed routes, with five trips each way AM and PM. He estimates that about half the employees using transit ride the Shuttle and half use Metro.

Microsoft spends about \$13 million/yr on the Shuttle and about \$6 million to subsidize Orca passes for its employees.

Mr. Stanton serves on the JTC Transit Committee and on the King County Transit Task Force. The three policy goals he thinks are important:

- Diversity of service
- Performance metrics
- One media for travel transactions

He recommends that Metro and other agencies be more transparent about costs and policies. He suggests that transit be looked at much like we look at other infrastructure.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100713_BP8_MicrosoftConnectorCommuteFactSheet.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100713_BP8_MicrosoftGrowthMobility.pdf

Action/Follow-up: None

JUNE TRANSPORTATION REVENUE FORECAST

Lizbeth Martin-Mahar, Assistant Director, Economic Analysis, Budget & Financial Analysis, Strategic Planning & Finance, WSDOT, shared that revenue over the biennium is down compared to the previous biennium.

Gas consumption 2009 vs. 2010 is down 0.7% and diesel consumption is down 4.0%.

The Commission asked how a \$44 million revenue loss is made up; given obligations already made, where do the reductions take place?

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100713_BP9_June2010TransportationRevenueForecast.pdf

Action/Follow-up: None

TOLLING WORK SESSION – SR 520 AND TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE

Craig Stone, Director, Tolling Division, WSDOT, Amy Arnis, Chief Financial Officer, Strategic Planning & Finance, WSDOT and Jennifer Ziegler, Director, Government Relations, Toll Division, WSDOT, reviewed the tolling discussions and tentative decisions taken thus far and then discussed the alternatives that have been tested thus far and the revenue that would be generated. Discussion then centered around specific scenarios to test and move forward for an investment grade analysis.

Commissioners asked if toll schedules and amounts would need to be revisited once the West Side design and funding is determined. Mr. Stone replied that is up to the Legislature, but if it decides to raise the additional \$2 billion through tolling, then the answer is “Yes.”

It was moved by Commissioner Distler and seconded by Commissioner Forner to establish a preferred toll rate scenario of either 4.1 or D.1, and direct WSDOT to provide analysis on both scenarios. The motion failed four “No” and three “Yes.”

It was moved by Commissioner Distler and seconded by Commissioner Hill to authorize filing of a CR-101 to initiate proposed Toll Rates, Fees, Photo Enforcement and Exemptions for SR 520. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Stone and Jeff Caldwell, Assistant Director, Financial Planning & Analysis, WSDOT, provided an overview of Tacoma Narrows Bridge revenue noting that it is slightly lower than forecast, but not enough to trigger a need to revise rates at this time.

The Commission will need to take action to implement rules to allow –and establish a fee schedule – for photo tolling. Mr. Stone would like to see the photo toll rate take effect in January, although the photo tolling probably will not begin that soon for TNB. WSDOT is considering the options and interested in maximizing net revenue.

It was moved by Commissioner Hill and seconded by Commissioner O’Neal to authorize filing of a CR-101 to initiate proposed Tacoma Narrows Bridge Toll Rates, Fees, and Photo Enforcement. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission also scheduled public input meetings and public hearings for TNB and SR 520 rules and tolls.

Preliminary tolling studies indicate that tolling can provide a substantial amount of revenue to fund completion of SR 509 and/or SR 167. Both projects are ready to go. Both SKAT Board and On-RAMP have been very supportive.

WSDOT has looked at 5-design configurations for SR 509 extension/I-5 improvements. The estimates of peak tolls range from \$1.00 to \$5.00.

WSDOT has looked at 5-design configurations for the SR 167/509 extension. The estimates of peak toll rates for the SR 167 east extension alone are in the \$2.00 to \$5.00 range; westward extensions would raise additional tolls.

Mr. Ralph Shapp, former Councilmember from SeaTac, spoke in support of the need to complete SR 509.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100714_BP10_SR509-167TollingStudies.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100714_BP10_SR520TollProposal.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100714_BP10_TNBRevenue.pdf

Action/Follow-up: The Commission will release a TNB rate proposal at its October 19 meeting in Olympia and hear public input on Wednesday, October 20th at 7:00 p.m. in Gig Harbor. The public hearing prior to adopting revised rates will take place Tuesday, November 30th at 7:00 p.m. in Gig Harbor. (Exact locations to be determined.)

The Commission will file proposed SR 520 toll rates in early November and has scheduled the following Public Input Meetings:

- Seattle: Monday, November 15th at 6:30 p.m. Exact location to be determined.
- Bellevue: Tuesday, November 16th at 6:30 p.m. Will likely take place at Bellevue City Hall.

The public hearing to adopt SR 520 toll rates will occur on Monday, December 13th @ 6:30 p.m. in either the Seattle or Bellevue area.

FERRY RIDERS' OPINION GROUP (FROG) – FERRY RIDER SURVEY UPDATE

Marlene Holm, Market Decisions Corporation, reported on the current wave of ferry research. The April Survey included an exercise to assess alternative approaches to manage vehicle demand and reduce congestion in peak travel periods. It also assessed opinions on a fuel surcharge, a summer surcharge, and WSF Operational Costs. Most riders thought that fares cover an appropriate amount of operational costs.

It was noted that interest in new On-Board amenities should be used in concert with the marketing plan.

A key finding is that people are trading off traffic and congestion with longer waits at the ferry terminal.

The General Market Assessment surveyed the population in the counties surrounding the ferry routes. The results were generally consistent with the results from 2008 and did not include any major surprises.

Ms. Holm noted that the Freight Survey indicated that fifty-eight percent of truckers interviewed use WSF. Twenty-six percent more would use WSF if there were a reservation system. The amount of deposit charged isn't too important to the decision.

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100714_BP11_WinterWaveSummary.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100714_BP11_GeneralMarketAssessment.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/Meetings/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/July13/documents/20100714_BP11_FreightSummaryReport.pdf

Action/Follow-up: None

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.

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DATE OF APPROVAL