

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Meeting Summary March 20 & 21, 2012

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on Tuesday, March 20, 2012, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

MINUTES APPROVAL / ADOPTION

Chairman Ford opened the meeting.

Commissioner Parker moved adoption of the February 21 & 22, 2012 meeting summary. Commissioner Cowan seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous vote.

ADDRESSING STORMWATER – WSDOT EXPERIENCE

Megan White, Director, Environmental Services, WSDOT and Chris Christopher, Director, Maintenance Operations, WSDOT talked about the WSDOT stormwater program. NPDES permit compliance requires collecting and testing stormwater at 16 stations in 13 locations statewide. WSDOT is collecting and analyzing over 350 samples throughout the year for a variety of pollutants.

Overall, under the new NPEDES permit, the changes are:

- Annual maintenance at 2200-2300 facilities;
- More sampling and monitoring
- Implement water cleanup plans
- Locate and resolve illegal connections
- Inventory facilities; and
- Erosion control.

The collection ponds have two primary purposes:

- Holding water and slowing its flow;
- Removing sediment and contaminants and treating the water

Cost to address stormwater is estimated at 10% of construction project costs; this cost varies substantially for each project. It does not include the cost of impact avoidance. In addition, in the 2011-13 Biennium:

- The environmental program spends \$6.2 million;
- Capital facilities spends \$1.2 million;
- Program M, maintenance and operations, spends \$38.5 million
 - Sweeping \$8.6 million
 - Ditches \$13 million
 - Culverts \$6.5 million
 - Catch basins \$8.5 million
 - Stormwater facilities \$1.9 million

Retrofit work to correct stormwater problems on existing facilities mostly occurs when other improvements are made to the facility. Fish passage retrofit gets priority.

For the 2013-15 Biennium, the cost to implement the stormwater permit is estimated at \$21 million. Reissuance of the stormwater permit is scheduled for March 2014.

[Addressing Stormwater](#)
[Managing Stormwater](#)

Follow-Up/Action: Consider featuring stormwater management and compliance as a focus topic in the 2012 Annual Report.

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL (PSRC) REPORT ON MULTIMODAL CONCURRENCY – USE OF TRANSIT OVERLAY ZONES

Gil Cerise, Senior Transit Planner, PSRC, briefed the Commission on the implementation of multi-modal concurrency through better integration of transit investment and land use decisions. The expectation is that the local government and the transit agency reach agreements on land use density and frequency of service. The goal is frequent all-day two direction service, at 15 minute frequencies or better, connecting high density employment and population centers.

Objectives:

- Better predictability that increased transit service will serve growing communities
- Better assurance for transit agencies that land use decisions will generate the density to support high-productivity service
- Improved predictability and incentives for in-fill development and transit oriented development within transit corridors
- Improved mobility choices for people

The Study recommends:

- The RTPD determines eligible corridors for a transit overlay zone
- Complete a negotiated local agreement, signed by the transit agency and jurisdictions within the corridor planning area, committing the signatories to do the planning necessary to implement the overlay zone
- The local planning process will identify the shape of the overlay zone and how it will grow to support transit. The level of analysis would allow implementation of a planned action or other SEPA analysis.
- Implementation phase would include a series of tools:
 - Regulatory
 - Infrastructure and operations
 - Funding priorities and development incentives

Although Transit Service Overlay Zones can be accomplished under current law, statutory changes would make these zones more attractive. Suggested possible changes include:

- Formal legal framework for the overlay strategy
- Zoning changes
- Infrastructure and funding priorities

[Transit Service Overlay Zone Approach Report](#)
[Transit Overlay Zones](#)

Follow-Up/Action: None.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ON TOLLING

Craig Stone, Director, Toll Division, WSDOT briefed the Commission on the legislature's decision to authorize tolling for the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) and the AWW Replacement Tunnel. The budget also provides further direction to study and prepare for tolling on I-405 and I-90.

[Legislative Update on Tolling](#)

Follow-Up/Action: The Commission will begin work with WSDOT and the Oregon Transportation Commission on CRC issues, including one or two joint meetings between the two states' Commissions this year.

Commission Staff are developing a joint workplan with WSDOT regarding tolling on the AWW Replacement Tunnel.

TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE (TNB) 2012 RATE SETTING

TNB Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Chair Alan Weaver and other TNB CAC members presented its recommendation for toll rates effective July 1, 2012. The CAC recommends:

- \$3.65 for *Good to Go*
- \$5.00 for cash
- \$7.00 for pay-by-mail

It further recommends that the toll be kept as low as possible and that the Commission not attempt to set tolls more than one year in advance.

[CAC TNB 2012 Rate Recommendation](#)

Mr. Stone then briefed the Commission on the Rate Setting Process and the rate setting requirements. For FY 2013, the revenue target is \$64 million, comprised of debt payments, operations and maintenance, and the sufficient minimum balance.

The Commission Tolling Subcommittee asked for two additional scenarios:

- \$3.75 *GTG*
- \$5.00 cash
- \$6.50 *pay by mail*

- \$4.00 *GTG*
- \$5.00 cash
- \$6.00 *pay by mail*

More recent traffic forecasts project a much slower economic recovery. Traffic will not reach 2020 levels projected in 2009.

[TNB Rate Setting Process](#)

Commission Staff then briefed the Commission on traffic volume risk. Two key points:

- Projected traffic volumes are consistently optimistic when compared against actual traffic volumes
- Actual traffic volumes have declined with no change in toll rates; there has been a negative traffic growth rate

Commissioner Litt moved that the Commission consider the proposal from the TNB CAC. Commissioner Tortorelli seconded the motion.

Commissioner Haley then moved to amend the motion, with:

- ***\$4.00 GTG***
- ***\$5.00 cash***
- ***\$7.00 pay by mail***

Commissioner Parker seconded the motion to amend. Commissioner Haley explained that her proposal takes into account the declining traffic forecast and provides the Commission the ability to reduce downward upon adoption.

Commissioner Cowan expressed his concern with a Good to Go rate as high as \$4.00, given the uncertainty of the data and the hard work of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Litt indicated that he is not as concerned with the traffic numbers as staff and others. He is, however, willing to accept Commissioner Haley's motion as a friendly amendment. The motion was amended by voice vote.

Commissioner Cowan then moved to amend the motion to

- ***\$3.75 GTG***
- ***\$5.00 cash***
- ***\$7.00 pay by mail***

The motion to amend was seconded by Commissioner O'Neal.

The motion to amend received only two votes.

The motion to propose tolls at:

- ***\$4.00 GTG***
- ***\$5.00 cash***
- ***\$7.00 pay by mail***

Was approved by a 5-2 vote, with Commissioners Cowan and O'Neal voting no.

Follow-Up/Action: The Commission will hear public input on the Proposed FY 2013 Toll Rates at meetings in Port Orchard and Gig Harbor on April 18 and 19. The Commission will take action on FY 2013 Toll Rates on May 21 in Gig Harbor.

Commission Staff and Commissioner's Haley and O'Neal will be briefing the editorial boards of the Kitsap Sun, Peninsula Gateway, Port Orchard Independent, and the Tacoma News Tribune prior to the public meetings.

TNB PAST VIOLATION PROCESS AND TRANSITION TO NEW VENDOR

Mr. Stone briefed the Commission on the history of the infractions notices and the transition to civil penalties. The delay in photo tolling impacted 2.5% of TNB transactions; violation processing was backlogged and many violations were dismissed.

WSDOT thinks the NOI issue is behind it. In calendar year 2011, violations revenue was down approximately \$300,000. Since July 2011, WSDOT withheld payments of \$40,000 a month (for a total of \$240,000) from ETCC. WSDOT is pursuing any lost revenue to hold TNB toll payers harmless.

[TNB Notice of Infraction Process](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None.

FEBRUARY TRANSPORTATION REVENUE FORECAST

Julie Salvi, Acting Director, Budget & Financial Analysis, Strategic Planning & Finance Division, WSDOT and Lizbeth Martin-Mahar, Assistant Director, Economic Analysis, Budget & Financial Analysis, Strategic Planning & Finance Division, WSDOT briefed the Commission on the latest transportation revenue forecast. Total revenue is up from March and November 2011 forecasts.

[February 2012 Transportation Revenue Forecast](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Paula Hammond, Secretary, WSDOT updated the Commission on the Supplemental Transportation Budget. She shared that the Legislature has authorized tolling for the I-5 Columbia River Crossing Bridge and the SR 99 Tunnel. The Legislature also authorized moving forward on the I-405 Express Toll Lanes project upon completion of the Commission's toll revenue analysis study, and directed moving forward with an environmental impact study on I-90 tolling. In closing she briefly commented on revenue generating fees.

SETTING PERFORMANCE TARGETS FOR WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES (WSF)

Robin Rettew, Sr. Budget Analyst and Erik Hansen, Budget Assistant, Office of Financial Management and Jean Baker, Deputy Chief, Ferries Administration & Finance, Ferries Division, WSDOT briefed the Commission on WSF performance targets. The 2011 Legislature created an ad hoc committee to establish ferry system performance targets. Targets must include:

- Safety performance
- Service effectiveness
- Cost-containment
- Maintenance and capital program

The 17 targets proposed by the Committee are:

- 90% of ferry terminal capital projects completed on time
- 90% of ferry terminal capital projects completed on budget
- 100% of new vessel construction and 75% of vessel preservation projects completed on time
- 100% of new vessel construction and 75% of vessel preservation projects completed on budget
- Passenger injuries per one million passenger miles below 0.48% on a three-year average
- 110 crew injuries per 10,000 revenue service hours
- 90% passenger satisfaction with ferry employee interaction
- 90% passenger satisfaction with cleanliness and comfort of vessels and terminals
- 90% passenger satisfaction with requests for assistance
- Operating costs per passenger mile within 5% of budgeted service plan
- Operating costs per revenue service mile within 5% of budgeted service plan
- Overtime within 1% of budgeted level
- Fuel consumption within 5% of budget
- Design, engineering and maintenance costs for vessels and terminals to be consistent with standards and guidelines due this year
- Out of service time limited to six weeks or less per vessel per year
- On-time annual performance at 95%
- Annual average trip reliability at 99%

[WSF Performance Targets](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None.

WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES (WSF): OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES REVIEW AND RIDERSHIP/REVENUE UPDATES

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director, Ferries Division, WSDOT provided an overview of operational strategies as required by RCW 47.60.327:

- An update on the reservation system, which is the keystone of its operational strategies. To achieve efficient implementation of reservations, a community partnership group advised that reservations be available at no additional cost. Phase 1 implementation will begin this spring.
- Except for schedule changes on the Edmonds/Kingston route, transit enhancements have focused on ferry/bus connectivity in downtown Seattle.
- Fuel conservation efforts have included vessel slowdowns on some off-peak sailings. Capital improvements to reduce fuel consumption at the dock while loading and unloading are still under exploration.
- Differential vehicle and passenger pricing remains under review and discussion but has not been part of a tariff recommendation.

The *Under 14' Vehicle Fare* is being used by 4.5% of vehicle traffic. A more uniform system to measure vehicle length using a laser has been implemented at most terminals.

Ferry ridership for 2011 is up slightly to 22.6 million, a 0.7% increase over 2010. Passenger volume is up 2.3% and vehicles are down 1.2%.

[Final Long-Range Plan](#)

Action/Follow-up:

1. The Commission requested a monthly update on ferry fuel costs.
2. The Ferry Division does not plan to recommend any changes to operational strategies.
3. Commission and department staff may discuss further development of a Fare Advisory Committee.

OVERVIEW OF KING COUNTY PASSENGER-ONLY FERRY SERVICE

King County Councilman Joe McDermott, Harold Taniguchi, and Scott Davis, Marine Division Director, briefed the Commission on the King County Ferry District and Water Taxi Service. In 2007, King County created a Ferry District. In November 2007 a levy rate was approved; levy capacity is 7.5 cents and 0.33 cents is collected.

Two routes:

- Vashon Island – Pier 50
- Seacrest Park in West Seattle – Pier 50

Vision is a viable marine mass transit system

- Sustainable operations
- Reliable service
- Long-term ridership growth
- Service expansion

The Ferry District is shifting from leasing boats to owning boats using federal grant money.

Commissioners asked about competition between WSF and the Water Taxi; WSF fare collection practice provides a “free ride” eastbound, resulting in lower water taxi ridership in the morning commute and higher ridership in the afternoon.

[King County Water Taxi](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None.

FROG SURVEY 2012

Bill Svendsen, Market Decisions Corporation and Bill Young, Research Assurance briefed the Commission on the 2012 FROG Research Initiatives. The Winter Survey will occur during April-May; the Summer Survey will occur during July and August.

The Winter Survey topics include:

- Winter travel activity
- Customer Satisfaction
- Household Ferry Usage
- Fare Options
- Transit Connections

Questions also will explore the impact of the Tacoma Narrows bridge tolls on ferry travel and use of *Good 2 Go* as a payment method.

One of the big changes in this survey, compared to the 2010 Survey is that this survey will probe deeper into customer satisfaction *and* WSF *performance*.

Commissioners complimented the consultant on revising the survey form to allow people to comment on other matters. The Commission also expressed concern about the survey length and asked how long the survey would take. Bill Svendsen estimated 20-30 minutes to complete.

Bill Young expressed his opinion that 20-30% of FROG members would take the survey.

[2012 FROG Winter Survey](#)

Action/Follow-Up: The Commission will receive reports on the surveys after they are complete.

CONNECTING TRANSPORTATION AND THE ECONOMY

Chris Mefford , President, Community Attributes shared his data and understanding of employment patterns and transportation needs for workforce and businesses in different industries.

His conclusion is that transportation investments should reduce operating costs for employers and reduce access costs for employees. Jobs will increase again and investments should support their growth, regionally and by industry.

[Transportation Investment Planning](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None.

SR 520 FINANCIAL PLAN REVIEW AND FUTURE TOLL REVENUE REQUIREMENTS

Mr. Stone briefed the Commission on toll implementation. Through February, 79% of all toll trips were by *Good to Go!* account users, 10% greater than CDM Smith forecast.

January average traffic is less than projected; the snow may account for some of the difference. February traffic exceeds projections, especially weekend traffic. So far, traffic flow has met the 45 mph standard established by the Urban Partnership Agreement.

Ellen Evans, Office of State Treasurer, provided a briefing on the SR 520 Finance Plan. The key concept is the enforceable toll rate covenant – the State Finance Committee has pledged the State’s obligation to impose and maintain tolls. The legislature has agreed not to impair or withdraw the authorization of the Tolling Authority to fix and adjust tolls.

In order to sell the first tier of bonds, a plan for all tiers of bonds was required. The Master Bond Resolution applies to all bond sales.

[SR 520 Finance Plan Review](#)

[SR 520 Update](#)

Action/Follow-up: WSDOT and the Commission need to develop a timeline to ensure adequate time for annual review of toll revenue and time to review and adjust rates. By February 2013, the Commission will need to look at whether to propose a new July 2013 toll schedule.

Commissioner Parker moved that the Commission file a CR-105 for Expedited Rulemaking to clarify the toll rate table adopted in January 2011. Commissioner Haley seconded the motion. The motion was adopted.

STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE PERFORMANCE AUDITS –TOLLING AND WSF CAPITAL DELIVERY

Larisa Benson, Director of Performance Audits, State Auditor's Office, provided an overview of the Performance Audits on Tolling and WSF Capital Delivery.

Scott Baird, Performance Auditor talked about the objectives of the Tolling Audit:

- What lessons can be learned from the challenges in implementing all-electronic tolling?
 - TNB billing issues
 - Vendor nonperformance
 - Delay in starting tolling on SR 520
 - Problems with all-electronic tolling on SR 520

Objectives of the Ferry Audit are:

- Comparing construction costs with comparable ferries built elsewhere.
- Factors affecting construction costs.
- Identifying leading practices in developing, managing and monitoring ferry construction contracts.

Field work, done jointly by SAO and consultants, will be concluded by June 2012. Estimated audit issue date is the end of November 2012.

[Ferry Construction and Tolling Audits](#)
[Ferry Construction Performance Audit Overview](#)
[Highway Tolling Audit Overview](#)

Action/Follow-Up: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Locke is bothered by the report on the Ferry System. He doesn't think there is the money to continue all its operations. The Legislature should close those ferry routes where people have other travel options, such as Southworth (TNB option); Pt. Townsend-Coupeville (highway options).

Ann Dasch expressed dismay with the information the Commission is receiving from WSF Staff. She noted that it is misleading to compare fares over a 10-year period since major fare increases took place just prior to that time.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commissioners discussed the need for a potential timeline of upcoming meetings. They also discussed the upcoming VMT Study and determining the selection of Commission steering committee members.

Paul Parker, Senior Policy Analyst, WSTC provided an update of session legislation.

Commissioner Cowan reported that he will be presenting to San Juan County Council on ferry issues. He requested that a letter of gratitude be sent to the CAC for service and assistance in preparing a TNB toll rate analysis.

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