

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
March 18 & 19, 2008**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9 A.M., on March 18, 2008, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair Ford, Bob Distler, Elmira Forner, Carol Moser, Philip Parker and Dale Stedman.

MINUTES APPROVAL/ADOPTION

It was moved by Commissioner Forner and seconded by Commissioner Moser to adopt the minutes of the February 19, 2007, 2008 SR 167 HOT Lanes Toll Rate Hearing minutes and the February 19 & 20, 2008 regular meeting minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES IN-NEED ORGANIZATION APPLICATION

Reema Griffith, Executive Director, WSTC, presented an In Need Organization application, at the request of Washington State Ferries, for Kitsap Community Resources / AmeriCorps.

It was moved by Commissioner Stedman and seconded by Commissioner Distler to approve Kitsap Community Resources / AmeriCorps application for the In Need Organization Program. The motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE ON TRANSPORTATION INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Jeff Doyle, Director, Public-Private Partnerships and Kim Johnson, Project Development Manager, Public-Private Partnerships, WSDOT.

Mr. Doyle opened the presentation pointing out that the Innovative Partnership Program advances important transportation projects and priorities by exploring and engaging the private sector and other public partners in joint ventures that benefit the citizens of Washington. The program's role is to serve as a portal for those from the outside that are looking to do business with the Department, whether public or private as they explore opportunities with projects. He explained that the legislature is funding the feasibility stages on a project by project basis. In other words programmatic funds are being received to explore different avenues and support current activities. The program has taken a bit of a different turn than what was expected, that's why there is no current project registry.

He explained that the program is looking for opportunities to maximize the value of public assets whether tangible or intangible. The program looks at strategic partnerships that advance important public policy goals; innovations in contracting and alternative financing due diligence.

Commissioner's expressed concern that this program has been around for a couple of years and appears to be wrapped up in process without much progress. Mr. Doyle responded that it took the first few months to define the program's role. Over the last few months the program's role has taken shape and public/private partnerships are being examined.

Ms. Johnson explained that the 2007-09 biennial budget earmarked \$300 thousand for a Ferry Terminal Joint-Development Study. The Innovative Partnership Program is examining potential public/private partnerships at ferry terminals that could include transit-oriented development (where privately-owned land near a terminal is developed); joint development (where multiple partners undertake a development project, typically using publicly-owned land); and terminal concessions (where the terminal owner grants the right to operate a business within the terminal or on associated public property). The purpose of these partnerships is to provide revenue from the development of publicly-owned land; leverage improvements to the ferry terminal itself; increase farebox revenues through increased ridership; or entice contributions from other public partners.

Mr. Doyle pointed out that the Legislature allocated \$200 thousand to the Innovative Partnerships Program to conduct further analysis. To date the Department has entered into a contract with KPFF Consulting Engineering and its subcontractors to examine the potential for innovative financing and partnerships at WSDOT ferry terminal sites. The study will consist of three phases:

- Phase I – Thorough examination of the 19 WSDOT ferry terminals and the potential for co-development opportunities.
- Phase II – Co-development opportunities that are identified in Phase I will be evaluated in light of a list of goals/criteria, and
- Phase III – The highest rated terminals from Phase II will be examined in depth, and a financial feasibility analysis will be developed for each terminal and presented to the Legislature.

At this time a draft report of findings from Phase I and II are being reviewed. Terminals that advanced to Phase II of the study are: Bainbridge Island, Seattle's Coleman Dock and the Edmonds terminal. A basic folio is being prepared to provide financial feasibility information. The study is scheduled to be completed late summer or early fall 2008.

Commissioners shared comments and concerns regarding the differences between revenue and terminal developments, FTA funding and terminal projects.

The Legislature also requested that Innovative Partnerships explore opportunities for partnerships with the private sector and other public agencies to establish and promote alternative fuel refueling facilities along major interstate highways, in particular Interstate 5. The Alternative Fuels Corridor Feasibility Study will consider the potential use of state-owned rights of way as a means of reducing the infrastructure investment risk associated with ventures into these new fuel sources and technologies.

Washington, Oregon and California DOT's are cooperatively exploring this concept. A Memorandum of Understanding and Statement of Principles is being drafted to help guide the development of the project between the states. The Department intends to consult with stakeholders within and outside Washington as the study progresses.

Given the dynamic subject matter, we need to remain open to a wide range of possible outcomes and potential partnerships structures. It is expected that the results of the study will be available no later than fall 2008.

WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN (WTP) UPDATE PROCESS PROPOSAL FOR 2008-09

Paul Parker, Senior Policy Analyst, WSTC, explained that the Commission is responsible for preparing a comprehensive and balanced statewide transportation plan every four years. The next adoption date for the plan will be 2010. The plan must address:

- A vision for development of the statewide transportation system;
- Identify significant statewide transportation issues; and
- Recommend statewide transportation policies and strategies to the legislature.

In addition to presenting a policy perspective on transportation and identifying significant statewide transportation policy issues, we suggest the development of a WTP vision to incorporate policies and strategies. SSB 5412 provides for a new goal that is not currently addressed in the WTP – “stewardship”. Because this goal is defined in law as “to continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system,” the Commission will need to determine how to best integrate this policy into the next WTP.

Commissioner’s pointed out that one of the concerns is that the WTP is missing the transportation element in the Growth Management Act. This issue will be brought forward to Regional Transportation Planning Organizations for their input. It seems that there is a huge gap between the WTP and what SSB 5412 calls for. The question is how to get transportation facilities in sync with economic vitality.

Brian Smith, Director, Strategic Planning and Programming, WSDOT, noted that when plans are developed federal requirements in long-range planning for both metropolitan and state planning, economic vitality and growth development patterns should be considered. The question is should the WTP be driven by modal plans or be informed by them or both? Many of the modal plans are nearing completion and should be ready sometime in the next year and a half, which leads into the ability to start working on a statewide multi modal plan that would pretty much be set on what the WTP would look like. It’s going to be difficult for a vision, policy and strategy plan to conform to the new federal requirements from the standpoint that there is a greater emphasis on consultation, whether it’s with tribes, communities or environmental organizations and regulatory agencies. There is a level of specificity that you need to have with this kind of consultation, it’s difficult to consult on a policy. It’s much easier to consult on when things will happen. For example the new federal requirements suggest that environmental mitigation should be discussed in order to decide how to implement the plan. It also talks a bit more about investments not only investment strategies. The WTP will probably not be able to stand on its own to satisfy the requirements. The WTP should set the policy framework or at least critical issues, whereas the Multi Modal Plan takes the policy framework and becomes the statewide conforming plan. The WTP standing alone will probably not meet the SAFETLU federal requirements.

Mr. Parker shared that perhaps the WTP might sync up with the goals of the Growth Management Act.

As the Commission makes investment decisions for economic vitality and other goals it needs to prioritize those choices. Sometimes choices made have adverse impacts on other areas. Perhaps the five specific goals should be considered first and then visit the economic vitality part.

Mr. Smith explained that an incredible amount of effort went into the last WTP, and it would be a waste to start over and not build on what we currently have.

Ms. Griffith explained that she feels the current WTP can not be dismissed, but continue to evolve into something else. Conversations with the RTPO/MPO's will help the Commission in making its decision on what the next WTP should evolve to. The current WTP can not be ignored, but needs to move forward evolving into a new process with proactive involvement from jurisdictions and others on what they would like to see the next WTP look like.

In closing Mr. Parker highlighted that the bulk of the work will be happening between July 2009 and 2010. It's proposed that there be a slow ramp up until after the next legislative session.

REPORT ON ACTIVE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Charlie Howard, Transportation Planning Director, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), shared information on a new traffic management technology that is emerging around the world known as "active traffic management." In the 1970's Washington began traffic management with the opening of the I-5 express lanes in Seattle that led to freeway cameras, variable message signs, highway advisory radio and ramp meters, and the first traffic management center located in Seattle. In the 1980's through late 1990 HOV lanes, incident response, traveler information, signal system management and managed lanes came onboard. In 2000 vehicle-infrastructure integration approaches were introduced into traffic management.

There are several benefits of active traffic management; an increase to over all throughput and capacity, which decreases primary and secondary accidents providing a travel time savings up to 20 percent. Observation of managed lanes in Europe indicated that they are comprehensive, extensive and provide a customer oriented approach to operating the system, something the United States could learn from.

In Washington State we know that we have the least performance from our roadway system when we need it the most. As an example, I 405 has a loss of 20 percent of its capacity because of congestion. Maximizing the efficiency of our corridors to move the most people and goods comes when freeway speeds are reliably maintained between 40 -50 miles per hour. Our system's delays come from recurrent and non-recurrent congestion similar to the European experience.

PSRC and WSDOT partnered to evaluate major transportation corridors for best applications of active traffic management techniques observed in Europe to maximize safety of critical freeway corridors. In order to implement "active traffic management" it requires a higher commitment to operations and needs to be reflected in budget decisions. Other issues that need to be addressed are driver acceptability and the visual impact that overhead gantries have on communities.

In closing he reflected that “active traffic management” requires a much different way of budgeting. The philosophy is that you are substituting a whole lot of capital investment for an operating investment. This investment is ongoing and necessary to keep the system running.

Commissioner’s questioned how difficult it would be to gain federal acceptance of this new technology. Mr. Howard responded that the U.S. Department of Transportation is very interested in getting these new technologies applied to the system. He also noted that both the SR 520 and I-90 bridges are slated to test the new technology under Urban Partnerships.

Dan Mathis, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), explained that highway standards have been strict in order to provide safety. With active traffic management and the available technology that can make the change without causing traffic disruption there is definitely an opportunity. The FHWA is open to proposals and willing to give it a trial to see how it works out – safety is primary.

UPCOMING WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES PUBLIC OUTREACH

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director, Ferries Division, WSDOT, distributed a draft 2008 Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) meeting schedule and draft agenda for the March/April Public meetings. He provided an overview of the Long-Range Plan milestones from the fall 2007 through December 2008 when the final plan will be delivered.

A technical team comprised of WSF staff, PSRC and the Joint Transportation Committee have been working on a comprehensive review of methods for forecasting ridership and revenues, reconciliation of WSF planning and revenue models and improvements to the WSF planning models consistent with federal planning requirements and development of a baseline set of ridership forecasts, that is currently undergoing extensive technical team review. The previous forecast for 2006-30 indicated a 70 percent increase in total riders, whereas the new initial baseline forecast for the same period is just under a 40 percent increase in total riders. Route level forecasts are currently being developed with a final baseline weekday forecast expected by mid March. These findings will be shared with the FAC at the March/April FAC meetings.

He addressed the two key directives of ESHB 2358 that relate to ferry level-of-service standards:

- WSF is to re-establish the vehicle level-of-service standards.
- WSF is to proactively manage demand for ferry services through the use of operational and pricing strategies to maximize the use of existing assets and minimize the need for additional investments.

The effect on future demand of recommended operating and pricing strategies must be considered in planning for future service or capacity improvements.

Level-of-Service (LOS) standards are necessary in order to provide a mechanism to determine when it is appropriate to add capacity (system sizing). System sizing determines the appropriate number of vessels and what type and size of vessel is needed. Future fleet determines the needs for terminal improvements.

The proposed approach is to base the LOS standards on congestion and service effectiveness in order to meet market needs. Current assets will be used most efficiently in order to adjust to the growing demand, but not overbuild the system. This will vary by and/or travel shed.

The next step in LOS standards is to receive feedback on the conceptual framework and possible refinements based on input, including coordination with other performance measurement efforts. Feedback will be received from the FAC public meetings and the Commission's Ferry Survey findings. This feedback will be considered when the standards and targets are developed.

The Commission discussed the ferry system's mission, and agreed that it is expected that it will continue to provide the level of access and convenience that now exists to the extent that isn't funded by the legislature, an alternative means of funding must come from somewhere, whether it is from users or a combination thereof.

Ms. Griffith distributed a schedule of upcoming FAC meetings and Commissioner expected attendance dates.

COMMISSION BUSINESS & REPORTS

Ms. Griffith provided a briefing on the Commission's supplemental budget. She highlighted various budgetary changes and impacts of session legislation.

Commissioner's briefly discussed Tacoma Narrows Bridge toll transactions, associated operational costs and the TransCore Contract.

Paul Parker, Senior Policy Analyst, WSTC, provided an overview of 2008 session legislation. He distributed a draft 2008 Commission Agenda Item calendar for review, comments and approval. This calendar is primarily to meet the needs of the Department to coordinate agenda item presenters, as well as map out the WTP process and Annual Report adoption timeline.

Ms. Griffith shared that she has been in contact with her counterpart from the California Transportation Commission regarding our alignment with the Oregon Transportation Commission and ODOT on their Road User Fee Pilot Program proposal. California indicated its support in signing a joint letter to be sent to federal delegates.

Commissioners and Ms. Griffith held discussion regarding review and update of the Commission's 2009-11 Strategic Plan. Chair Ford appointed Commissioner's Forner and Parker to take the lead assisting with the update due to the Ms. Griffith May 1, 2008.

Commissioner's briefly discussed their concerns regarding having adequate time to review the WSF System Plan before adoption.

Mr. Parker presented a draft PowerPoint presentation titled "Transportation 101" for review and comments. The Commission will share this presentation with attendees at the Commission's local meetings around the state.

TACOMA NARROW BRIDGE 2008/09 TOLL SETTING

Chair Ford welcomed Representative Seaquist.

Overview of changes to TransCore contract with WSDOT

Craig Stone, Regional Administrator, Urban Corridors Office and Greg Selstead, Director, Toll Operations, WSDOT, provided an overview of the recently concluded negotiation process with TransCore the toll operations vendor for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB) and SR 167 HOT Lanes.

Mr. Stone opened the presentation providing background information on the “Good To Go” Program, noting that this has been a learning process for the Department. The “Good To Go” Program’s success on the TNB and the planned opening of the SR 167 HOT Lanes gave the Department the opportunity to explore changes in the toll operations contract and look for efficiencies in service and operations. The Department met with TransCore over a two-month period to negotiate new terms that will lead to cost savings. While TNB and SR 167 HOT Lanes are separate contracts, both are based on the concept of a single back office that will handle toll transactions and customer service operations for both facilities. The most viable contract option is a new amended version with a single monthly fixed fee and stipulated limited specific items which will be billed as reimbursable costs. The amended contract is based on the negotiated elements of level of service, cost and term. This newly-negotiated contract is expected to save the Department \$5.6 million over the life of the TNB contract. With this new flat-fee contract it is estimated to save toll payers \$ 150 thousand per month. The Department continues to hold the contractor to a high level of accuracy in toll operations, with an overall accuracy standard of no less than 99.5 percent.

Paula Hammond, Secretary, WSDOT, emphasized that the tolling startup has been very successful, especially the low violation rate. The Department’s goal is to have an efficient toll collection operations back office. We must make certain that the money is being tracked with total accountability. With SR 167 HOT Lanes starting up having the same back office is going to be interesting. The Commission will have policy issues to deal with that will require big decisions as Washington State moves into future tolling.

The Commission discussed transaction verification, overhead issues and the necessity for good data. Perhaps future cost should be included in the toll as opposed to additional fees for cards ect. It was questioned if the TransCore contract will be able to provide more than one type of operation i.e. the Columbia River Crossing where a lot of users may not have an ETC account. There are concerns regarding the separation of overhead for each project, it is assumed that allocation of transaction fees will be kept separate for each tolled facility. Whatever the methodology used for calculating overhead fees it must be transparent.

Mr. Stone responded that TransCore wants to be a good provider of services to the state of Washington. The Department anticipates that this contract will not be the one used in the future. The TNB and SR 167 HOT Lanes are two separate contracts with TransCore. It’s important to have one back office and a single device that gets you where you want to go in Washington and hopefully in neighboring states as well. The contract will be revisited in the future as we move forward with tolling.

Representative Seaquist emphasized that it has been written into the budget that WSDOT will report to the Legislature next term exactly what the constituent elements of the operation of the bridge are and how to make it more efficient.

Commissioners questioned the financial scope of the new contract as compared to the previous one.

Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB) Citizen Advisory Committee toll recommendations

Bob Ryan, Chairman, Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), explained that the CAC met several times beginning in late February through early March. The CAC's objectives were to look at the operating costs and debt service. The base scenario, if no action was taken, would increase to \$3/3 dollars ETC vs. cash. The expectation is that this increase would provide \$46 million; \$3/4 scenario is \$49.8 million and \$2.75/\$4 scenario equates to about \$47.1 million.

He emphasized that the CAC received a great deal of feedback from constituents and legislators. The primary concern heard was that the ETC discount remains in effect. During the debate the CAC took into consideration costs and discounts both, although cost is outside of the CAC's scope of responsibility it is looked at very seriously. The discussion also considered what the fund balance would be at the end of fiscal year 2008/09. This led to discussion of what the appropriate level of funds would need to be in order to not cut it to close after the debt service was paid. Violation revenues are not considered in projections based on the fact that this data was not provided. The CAC considered the scenarios as provided by WSDOT and determined after debate to recommend that the Commission consider \$2.75 ETC and \$4 for manual tolls.

Commissioners discussed the elasticity of tolls and user behavior patterns, and what the justification is to continue the ETC discount. Phasing out the ETC discount and the gap between that and the manual toll were discussed. This discussion is legitimate although the Commission is not adopting the toll rate at today's meeting.

Mr. Ryan stressed that the biggest reason that the CAC kept the ETC discount is based on the communities feeling that they are paying for something that others in the state are not having to pay for, whether that be right or wrong, the CAC took the communities view into consideration.

Representative Seaquist emphasized that we are learning about tolling and business operations in a democracy. The community feels a certain amount of ownership towards the bridge because they are buying down the bonds with tolls. Because it's the communities' bridge it is the expectation that outsiders pay more. This is felt as fair in the community!

Overview of possible toll scenarios

Greg Selstead, Director, Tolling Operations, WSDOT, distributed the TNB Toll Operations and Maintenance Financial Plan Summary for review and comment. He explained that today the Commission will review the toll rate adoption schedule, the February 2008 Transportation Revenue Forecast Council Forecast, the baseline Financial Plan Summary for the fiscal year 2008 toll rates and toll rate scenarios that were presented to the CAC.

Commissioners expressed concern regarding the Financial Plan Summary and the TransCore contract renegotiation. The original financial plan and the new financial plan do not show a distinct difference in the operation & maintenance estimate costs.

Mr. Selstead indicated that the financial plan reflects cost savings from the Governor’s Supplemental Budget and the renegotiated contract with TransCore. It also reflects an updated debt repayment schedule as approved by the Office of the State Treasurer that came into effect September 2007.

Next steps and schedule

Mr. Selstead provided an overview of the baseline and proposed toll scenarios.

The baseline scenario is based on a new rate of \$3 ETC/\$3 Cash. This scenario assumes that the discounted rate of \$1.75 for ETC will end as of July 1, 2008. Furthermore, based on the approved WAC language, if no action is taken by the Commission, these rates would automatically take effect on July 1, 2008.

The CAC requested five scenarios that all included some form of rate differential between ETC and Cash. In addition, the CAC was provided with a rate scenario developed for the Commission at the request of Representative Frank Chopp. This scenario was developed to extend the existing \$1.75 ETC discount 3 months. The baseline and six scenarios are labeled as follows:

Scenario	FY 2009 ETC/Cash	FY 2010 ETC/Cash	FY 2011 ETC/Cash
Baseline	\$3.00/\$3.00	\$4.00/\$4.00	\$4.00/\$4.00
Scenario A	\$3.00/\$4.00	\$4.00/\$5.00	\$4.00/\$5.00
Scenario B	\$2.75/\$4.00	\$4.00/\$5.00	\$4.00/\$5.00
Scenario C	\$2.75/\$4.00	\$4.00/\$4.00	\$4.00/\$4.00
Scenario D	\$2.75/\$4.00	\$2.75/\$4.00	\$4.00/\$5.00
Scenario E	\$2.75/\$4.00	\$3.00/\$4.00	\$4.00/\$5.00
Scenario F	\$1.75/\$3.00 & \$2.25/\$3.50 ⁽¹⁾	\$3.00/\$4.00	\$3.00/\$4.00

Ms. Griffith noted that the Commission will hold public meetings in Gig Harbor prior to the adoption of the toll rate May 27, 2008. The Commission’s Toll Rate Setting schedule can be found at: <http://www.wstc.wa.gov/TollSetting/default.htm>

Chair Ford opened the floor for public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Randy Boss, citizen, expressed concern with the use of projections to determine the toll rate. He also emphasized that the Department, Commission and CAC should scrutinize the out years projection numbers. The TransCore contract is critical....using a transponder that is sole sourced by the contractor has cause for concern in the future. The question that really hits home to the citizens of Gig Harbor is why a transponder reduction?...there is a sense that Gig Harbor citizens are not being treated fairly even though they represent the majority

of the toll payers using the ETC. He supports the CAC's toll rate decision, but hopes that next year actual numbers and costs will be used rather than projections to determine toll rates. Chair Ford welcomed Senator Chris Marr.

WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES (WSF) WASHINGTON ADMINISTRATIVE CODE (WAC) MODIFICATION HEARING

Chair Ford opened the March 19, 2008 WSF WAC Amendments adoption hearing at 1:00 p.m. He noted that purpose of today's hearing is to review and consider an amendatory proposal for adoption to the following rule: WAC 468-300-010, 020 and 040. See attached minutes for hearing details and action taken.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Paula Hammond, Secretary, WSDOT, summarized this session's legislation and supplemental budget. She provided a brief overview of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions bill, explaining that the bill is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas pollution. The Department is working towards setting the stage in how transportation contributes to the environmental challenge. The Department has been working on a three-part strategy aimed at alleviating congestion, which is a big contributor to emissions, because of vehicles sitting idle.

She moved on to discuss tolling policy legislation that sets the framework and guidelines for how we will move forward with tolling on certain routes. The Department will utilize these guidelines moving forward with the SR 520 tolling discussion. The bill creates a committee to study technology, pricing, variable-price tolling, and the impacts on surrounding communities.

In closing she shared information regarding other pieces of legislation that impact the Department, the supplemental budget and the status of the Nickel and TPA projects. The Legislature did provide funding for safety improvements on the Aurora Bridge Suicide Prevention Project, I-5 cable median barrier replacement near Marysville and completion of US 2 Corridor safety projects. She briefly touched on the I-5 Chehalis River Flood Reduction Project funding.

Secretary Hammond introduced recently appointed David Moseley, Assistant Secretary, WSDOT Ferries Division. Mr. Moseley expressed that he is completely aware of the challenges that face the ferry system. One of the key ways to begin restoring the public's trust and confidence in the ferry system is by bringing together WSDOT, the Joint Transportation Committee and the Transportation Commission in order to provide clear and concise information.

GRAY NOTEBOOK – MEASURES, MARKERS, AND MILEPOSTS QUARTERLY REPORT

Daniela Bremmer, Director, Strategic Assessment Office, WSDOT, opened the Gray Notebook presentation providing an overview of materials that will be presented today.

Maintenance: Analysis of 2007 MAP results

Chris Christopher, State Maintenance Engineer, WSDOT, provided an overview of biennial maintenance targets for 2006-07. In 2006 the Department achieved 85 percent of its targets, whereas in 2007 that activity dropped to 53 percent achieved (noted: this is a new scoring method that focuses on system-wide results).

Inflation and an increase in infrastructure continue to challenge the Department. Due to excessive snowfall the state experienced one of the most challenging winters in recent history. The increased use of deicer and labor pushed the cost of maintenance to about \$8.5 million over budget. If the Department's supplemental requests are moved forward and approved, MAP scores will at best stay about the same as they were in 2007.

Mr. Christopher provided a briefing on browning Conifers along mountain passes in the Northwest. He explained that the browning occurs every spring due to sanding and salt used to deice the highways. The Department has attempted to coordinate with all entities that would be involved with this issue. Discussions about this problem are underway between the Department and other agencies including the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Ecology and the State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Scientists are well aware of the needle browning phenomenon and explained that in the scheme of all forest diseases, they had little concern over the browning, which is a temporary event, and does not significantly affect the overall health of the trees.

Traffic operations: Incident response quarterly update; and cabinet strategic action plan goal achieved

Bill Legg, State ITS Operations Engineer, WSDOT, explained that incident clearances have improved over last quarter by 2.2 percent which is a trend in the right direction. There has been a 3.3 percent decline in incidents responded to over the previous quarter. He highlighted that Incident Response achieved the Governor's GMAP goal to reduce by 5 percent the average clearance time of incidents that take longer than 90 minutes to clear on nine key corridors. Stronger relationships among responders with common goals are major factors in achieving a national unified goal.

Commissioner's commented regarding the rise in incidents on specific corridors. It was suggested that perhaps using a median as opposed to an average when the incidents exceed 90 minutes would be a much more telling measure.

In closing Mr. Legg shared that there are several programs in place that are targeting longer term incidents.

Environment: Discussion of compliance and stormwater treatment facilities

Ken Stone, Branch Manager, Research Programs, Environmental Services Office, WSDOT, spoke of stormwater treatment facilities in general. He noted that WSDOT is engaged in efforts to control stormwater run off on state highways, ferry terminal parking lots and rest areas. Controlling stormwater also includes removing pollutants as well as limiting the quantity flowing off of the site. Most of the pollutants originate from motor vehicles and land uses and often runs off into nearby streams and rivers. Managing stormwater runoff effectively cuts down on pollutants entering into the streams and rivers, reduces flooding and erosion and is an important contributor to Puget Sound and salmon recovery efforts. The Department's stormwater management activities are guided by a federal Clean Water Act stormwater permit that was issued in 1995. In accordance with this permit the Department has tracked the number of stormwater treatment facilities built in King, Pierce, Snohomish

and Clark Counties since 1995. Additional treatment facilities have been built statewide and inventory efforts are nearly completed.

Christina Martinez, Compliance Branch Manager, Environmental Services Office, WSDOT, shared information regarding environmental compliance associated with construction and operation of maintenance activities and ferry sailings. The Department self-monitors for non-compliance events regardless of whether or not such events are considered formal violations by resource agencies that monitor the Department. Between 2003 and 2005, the Department instituted its Environmental Compliance Assurance Procedures (ECAP) and the environmental compliance for construction inspectors training course. Both actions have raised the general awareness of non-compliance events, with events being cited and quickly resolved with increasing numbers.

In 2007, there were 25 percent more non-compliance events reported than in 2006. The Department saw moderate changes in the distribution of non-compliance events associated with water quality turbidity or sediment issues and hazardous material. Of the hazardous materials events, one percent involved water contact and the remaining 99 percent involved soil or pavement contact that was cleaned according to WSDOT specifications. Although minor drips and spills to the ground or pavement are not immediately considered violations of permits, the Department responds to them through ECAP and tracks them.

Commissioner's questioned the types of different non-compliance situations and possible penalties to the Department and contractors.

Project delivery: Usual state of the Capital Project Delivery Program

Laura Aradanas, Branch Manager, Reporting & Analysis, WSDOT, provided an overview of highway construction performance. She noted that there has been a gradual improvement in performance over time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Locke, citizen, expressed his concerns regarding the operation of ferry system routes. How many of these routes can we continue to operate? He also commented regarding SB 6857 Heavy Haul Corridors....where the amount of gross weight that can be put on the roads is a disaster. Road beds can not support this excess weight, so highways need to be built to support these heavy loads.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 5 p.m., on March 19, 2008.

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DICK FORD, Chair

ELMIRA FORNER, Vice-Chair

PHILIP A. PARKER, Member

CAROL MOSER, Member

ABSENT

DAN O'NEAL, Member

ROBERT S. DISTLER, Member

DALE STEDMAN, Member

PAULA HAMMOND, Ex-Officio Member
Secretary of Transportation

JENNIFER ZIEGLER, Governor's Office

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL