



Washington State Transportation Commission

Regular Meeting Summary May 17 & 18, 2016

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Chairman Haley opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. with introductions of Commissioners and staff.

Action: Commissioner Tortorelli moved and Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion approving the April 20, 2016 meeting summary. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioners reported on recent activities.

- Commissioner Jennings attended the Amalgamated Transit Union General Council meeting.
- Commissioner Young attended the keel laying ceremony for the ferry Suquamish. She reported that the Governor, Senator Rolfes and Tribal Chairman Leonard Forsman welded items on the keel.
- Commissioner Serebrin reported that Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) meetings were cancelled due to the viaduct closure. She did attend a Regional Center Framework workshop.
- Commissioner Batra attended a Bellevue Chamber of Commerce meeting, and joined a tour of Inrix with Representative Clibborn and Commission staff.

Executive Director Reema Griffith reported on the Road Usage Charge (RUC) grant proposal to FHWA. All but three members of the Washington Congressional Delegation wrote letters in support of the RUC grant proposal. We also have letters of support from the State of Oregon and the City of Surrey, B.C., both of which could be involved in the pilot program. Ms. Griffith stressed that the proposal submitted this week is the starting point and that FHWA may seek changes prior to making a grant award. Paperwork was submitted to transfer \$500,000 in unused federal funds from PSRC to the Commission to continue planning work for the RUC demonstration project.

Ms. Griffith explained the RUC consultant selection process. The recommended consultant team has D'Artagnan as the lead and includes Parsons Brinckerhoff and Berk as subcontractors.

Action: Commissioner Jennings moved and Commissioner Batra seconded the motion approving the consultant selection, pending FHWA approval of the fund transfer. Commissioner Batra seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Haley then began discussion of the Commission's 2016 Retreat.

Action: Commissioners agreed to schedule a retreat for Thursday, September 22, in Kennewick.

The Commission's nominating committee recommended Anne Haley as Chairman and Jerry Litt as Vice-Chairman for 2016-17.

Action: Commissioner Jennings moved and Commissioner Tortorelli seconded the motion electing Anne Haley, Chairman and Jerry Litt as Vice Chairman for 2016 - 2017. The motion was approved unanimously.

CHALLENGE SEATTLE PLAN

The Honorable Christine Gregoire briefed the Commission on her work with a group of 17 Seattle area CEOs who have decided to engage in civic leadership on Washington issues. The effort is to effect change and establish a state brand.

The *Challenge Seattle* principles:

- We don't lobby
- We don't do what others do

As business leaders, they realized they can contribute innovation and risk-taking to the civic discussion. Because the Puget Sound area cannot build its way out of transportation problems, they suggest technology can be part of the solution. Seattle applied for a Smart Grant through USDOT, which it did not win, but *Challenge Seattle* will move forward the ideas. The CEOs have made a five-year commitment to *Challenge Seattle*. Austin, Texas, which is a model for this civic engagement, is on its third five-year commitment.

Action:

- The *Challenge Seattle* partners set a goal of no more than 35% of *Challenge Seattle* employees commuting by single occupant vehicle (SOV) by 2035. Gates Foundation staff is already below 20% SOV.
- Create a Mobility Innovation Center, housed at the University of Washington, to look at how transportation problems are addressed and solved elsewhere.

Six Strategies:

- Create an I-5 Corridor for the 21st century
- Integration. Break down silos
- User-focused system. Housing costs are pushing people out of the city, increasing congestion, and increasing inequity
- Maintain assets
- Sustainable funding
- Integrate land use and transportation. Example: Bellevue's Spring District

Every goal identified has a metric. The four major metrics are:

- Reliability
- Zero fatalities and zero serious injuries
- Percent of income paid for transportation
- Environmentally sustainable region

Commissioner Batra suggested using our waterbodies as new transportation corridors.

[Executive Summary](#)
[Challenge Seattle](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

SOUND TRANSIT 3 PROPOSAL

Beginning in 2014, Sound Transit (ST) began a long-range plan update. In 2015, the Legislature provided additional revenue authority. David Beal, ST Planning & Development Director, told the Commission that ST is developing a ballot measure for November 2016 election to be considered at the June ST Board Meeting. Based on public comment, staff is looking at ways to reduce the time frame from 25 years to 20 – 22 years.

The light rail highlights of the ST 3 Proposal:

- A 112-mile regional system
- North to Everett, south to Tacoma, east to Redmond & Issaquah, west to Ballard & West Seattle
- Extend Tacoma Link to Tacoma Community College
- Daily ridership: 470,000 - 580,000 by 2040
- 35 new stations

The Draft Plan includes early deliverables for improved access and Bus Rapid Transit improvements. There also is about \$500 million available for additional Sounder service. ST is discussing options with BNSF.

Decisions that remain on the table:

- The specific route for light rail from Lynnwood to Everett
- Whether the Issaquah link can extend north to Kirkland
- How much parking investment to make
- Whether to keep Sounder service to DuPont in the plan

[Draft ST3 Plan](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

METRO CONNECTS

Stephen Hunt, Transportation Planner for King County Metro, briefed the Commission on *Metro Connects*, a countywide long-range vision for transit connections. The *Metro Connects* plan would triple the percentage of people close to frequent service, and provide greater transit access for low-income and minority areas. This shift could remove approximately 300,000 car trips from King County roads every day. Without additional transit, approximately 16 new freeway lanes and more than 2,000 acres of parking would be required to accommodate those trips, costing billions of dollars.

Recommended investments to help buses run faster and stay on schedule:

- Bus lanes, signal priority, off-board ORCA readers
- 600 miles of roadway investments for all service types
- Significant expansion to Metro's capital program
- Requires strong partnerships with cities

Expanded Range of Options:

- Provide flexible service where traditional local transit service does not fit
- Make it easier to move between Metro and other providers
- Invest in paratransit and find new options to increase access to Metro's services
- Move toward faster and easier payments with ORCA Next Generation
- Integrate city planning and transit planning
- Develop new products through research and development

Improve access to transit:

- Walking: For most riders, transit trips involve walking, whether it is walking to a bus stop from their home or from their parked car to the stop at a transit center. Sidewalks and trails, good lighting, and even grading can improve the walking environment.
- Biking: Biking is a valuable mode to reach transit for many of Metro's customers. The presence of bicycle facilities may influence their choice to ride a bicycle to a bus stop or light rail station.
- Driving: Park-and-ride lots are a traditional way of providing auto access to transit. Park-and-ride lots concentrate demand at a bus stop or transit center, allowing Metro to serve those locations more efficiently than with transit service in low-density areas.
- Other first- and last-mile connections: "Shared mobility options" can be used to deliver riders to and from transit stops or park-and-rides via car-share, bike-share, taxis, transportation network companies, such as Uber or Lyft, and public and private shuttles. Partnerships with providers of these services could help to make them affordable and convenient.

Today Metro has four major transit hubs with 10,000 or more daily boardings -- all in downtown Seattle (Westlake is the largest with 28,000 daily boardings). In 2040, there could be as many as 30 hubs with more than 10,000 boardings. Metro also proposes adding 1,000 stops and several stations.

Metro Connects analysis identifies 13,000 new park-and-ride stalls across King County to support future ridership by 2040 (ST 9800/KC 3800). This will require building new parking and leveraging existing parking stalls not managed by King County, and identifying and implementing cost effective strategies to increase parking capacity, such as real-time information, paid parking, ridesharing, etc.

Metro estimates that about 2/3 of the cost of Metro Connects is covered within current revenues.

[Metro Connects](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE TOLL RATE SETTING HEARING

WSDOT and Commission staff reported that a \$2.5 million appropriation from the Legislature, and higher than forecasted bridge traffic, allows current toll levels to remain in place to meet debt obligations.

[SR 16 Toll Rate Setting Hearing](#)

Action: *Commissioner Jennings moved and Commissioner Tortorelli seconded the motion to repeal the planned toll increase. The motion was approved unanimously.*

Follow-Up: *Bruce Beckett, Chair of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Citizens Advisory Committee, thanked the Commission for its action and asked for feedback on the TNB CAC proposal. He also asked for a new look at the purpose and calculation of the sufficient minimum balance prior to toll setting in 2017.*

SR 520 BRIDGE TOLL RATE SETTING HEARING

WSDOT and Commission staff provided an overview of tolling on the SR 520 corridor. This includes generating sufficient revenue to cover operations and maintenance costs, and debt financing obligations, as well as maintaining travel time, speed, and reliability. Tolling began December 29, 2011. Prior to construction beginning, the plan was to collect tolls on the old bridge as a down payment on the SR 520 corridor improvements. Tolling was planned for the new bridge to ensure sufficient revenue is collected to meet requirements to cover on-going costs, such as the new bridge's debt payments, and maintenance and operation costs.

SR 520 tolls are collected to pay for a portion of the SR 520 corridor improvements, operation and maintenance expenditures, debt repayment, deferred construction sales tax, periodic major repair and replacement, and to provide required reserves to meet contractual lender requirements. Tolls will contribute approximately \$1.2B of the project's total capital cost of \$4.56B, which includes the new bridge and corridor improvements between I-5 and I-405.

The initial toll rates were:

- \$3.50 *Good To Go!* weekday peak period, \$1.60 minimum
- \$2.20 *Good To Go!* weekend peak period, \$1.10 minimum
- Additional \$1.50 Pay by Mail toll increment
- No overnight toll from 11 PM to 5 AM due to construction activity and need for overnight closures

The 2011 SR 520 Financial Plan assumed:

- 2.5% annual increases each fiscal year on July 1, 2012 through July 1, 2015 (FY 2013-16)
- An average 15% toll increase on weekdays (\$4.35 peak period), a 4% midday weekend toll increase, and night tolling (11 PM – 5 AM) on July 1, 2016 (FY 2017).

Traffic and revenue are meeting projections. An average of 74,000 tolled vehicles crossed the bridge each weekday in FY 2015, up from 72,000 per weekday in FY 2014. This trend has continued in FY 2016. Transit ridership has increased by more than 50% since tolling began and there are 238 registered vanpools, an 83% increase.

The proposed toll rate increase is consistent with the original financial plan, reflecting increased debt service payments over the next two years following the opening of the new bridge and revenue to make installment payments on sales tax deferred during construction. Staff briefly discussed eight different toll-setting scenarios that the Commission considered. Some of the options would not generate adequate revenue. A toll-free option for carpools was considered but determined to be too difficult to enforce with construction still underway. Rather than the large increase called for in the original financial plan, two smaller increases are proposed.

The proposed toll rate changes are:

- Toll rates are proposed to increase by approximately 5 percent on July 1, 2016, and another 5 percent on July 1, 2017. The current weekday, peak period toll rate would go from \$3.90 to \$4.10 in mid-2016, and to \$4.30 in mid-2017.
- Nighttime tolling (11 p.m. to 5 a.m.) would begin on July 1, 2017 at a flat rate of \$1.25.

There was no public comment.

[SR 520 Toll Rate Setting Hearing](#)

Action: *Commissioner Jennings moved and Commissioner Tortorelli seconded the motion to adopt toll increases for FY 2017 and FY 2018. The FY 2018 increase will be subject to review in winter 2017. The motion was approved unanimously.*

Follow-Up: None at this time

I-405 PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONS UPDATE

Patty Rubstello, Assistant Secretary, Toll Division, WSDOT reported on I-405 Express Toll Lanes (ETL) performance after 6 months of operation. Data indicates that 88% of people on I-405 understand how to use the ETLs and 82% are paying \$4 or less during peak drive time.

Improved speed and reliability:

- The ETLs operate at 45 mph or greater 90 percent of the time
- Travel time has improved in both general purpose and ETLs for full corridor length trips

Operating Expenses

- ETLs are on track to generate revenue to cover operating expenses
- ETL use of 48,000+ daily trips is well above projections

Local streets benefit

- Little change to adjacent local street and state highway travel time and volume

Increase transit and vanpool ridership

- King County Metro ridership is up 10% and Community Transit ridership is up 3%.
- Vanpool ridership remains strong with 350+ vans and 3,300+ riders daily.

WSDOT has completed several adjustments to the ETL layout and operations. Other changes are planned, including a longer access points SB at SR 527 and NB near NE 85th Street.

Future projects under evaluation include:

- Northbound auxiliary lane between SR 520 and NE 70th Place
- General purpose hard shoulder running on northbound I-405 from SR 527 to I-5
- Address limited capacity in single express toll lane section (SR 522 to I-5)

[I-405 Express Toll Lanes](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: *The Commission discussed the type and frequency of data reporting from WSDOT on I-405 ETL operations. Following the discussion, it was decided that WSDOT would report on \$10 toll occurrences with less detail and frequency. The chart indicating the percent of peak period toll trips by rate category is most helpful. WSDOT will provide simplified reports on \$10 toll rates and a toll spread chart on at least a monthly basis.*

WSDOT ANNUAL TOLLING REPORT

Ms. Rubstello presented highlights from the FY 2015 Toll Division Annual Report.

- Gross toll revenue of \$133.8 million included \$68.2 million from Tacoma Narrows Bridge tolls and \$64 million from SR 520 bridge tolls.
- *Good to Go!* accounts for 69% of TNB transactions and 84% of SR 520 transactions.
- Between 2009 and 2015, use of SR 167 HOT Lanes has increased by 33%. 65% of users support expanding HOT Lanes to other facilities in the region.

[WSDOT Annual Tolling Report](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

TARGET ZERO PLAN UPDATE

Chris Madill, Deputy Director, Washington State Traffic Safety Commission, briefed the Commission on the role of the Traffic Safety Commission and its update of Target Zero. Myke Gable, Program Manager, Washington State Traffic Safety Commission, reported that while FHWA requires an update every five years, Washington is updating on a three-year cycle.

- Written for many traffic safety partners
- Establishes state-wide priorities
 - based on most current data
 - includes fatality and serious injury data
- Documents various proven strategies
 - targets areas where investments will provide the greatest return, and result in less deaths and serious injuries

Traffic safety improvement has stalled since 2010 and fatalities increased in 2014 and 2015. Tribal fatality/serious injury rate is higher than other demographic groups.

Main differences from the current Target Zero Plan:

- *Lane departure* category merges run-off the road and opposite direction collisions
- Older drivers = 70+ (changed from 75+)
- Distracted driving drops from Priority 1 to Priority 2
- *Impairment involved* injuries increased by 6 percent points. It includes impaired pedestrians.
- There is a new chapter on automated vehicles in the plan.

Commissioner Serebrin expressed concern that pedestrian/bicyclists are a lower priority when they are at a higher risk.

[Target Zero](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

NAMING SR 99 “WILLIAM P. STEWART MEMORIAL HIGHWAY”

Hans Dunshee, Snohomish County Councilman, told the Commission how he observed a marker that indicated that SR 99 was once named the Jefferson Davis Highway. He twice sponsored legislation to name SR 99 for William P. Stewart, who fought for the Union in the Civil War as a member of the Negro regiment, and who is buried in the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery in Snohomish.

May Davis Barrett, Georgina Hall, and Marilyn Davis Quincy, all great-granddaughters of William P. Stewart attended and spoke.

Chairman Haley noted that this is the first highway to be named from border-to-border.

She read Resolution 727.

Action: Commissioner Batra moved and Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion to adopt Resolution 727. The motion was approved unanimously.

Follow-Up: None at this time

WASHINGTON BUSINESS ALLIANCE: PLAN WASHINGTON

David Giuliani, Co-Founder and Board member of the Washington Business Alliance, talked about the genesis of this statewide business organization that has developed *Plan Washington*, a strategic plan for the state, including a transportation element. Its mission is to help solve the state's most critical problems and its focus includes five areas in addition to transportation: economy, education, environment, governance, and health.

Mr. Giuliani emphasized the importance of stressing where government is doing a good job, and seeking opportunities for business to back up government. Bruce Agnew, Director, Cascadia Center, noted that our government entities were created long ago and there are reasons to streamline regional governance and authorize more public-private partnerships.

Commissioners agreed with the need for a statewide plan and streamlining process to achieve desired economic and environmental results.

Steve Marshall, Executive Director, Center for Advanced Transportation and Energy Solutions, talked about the future of transportation:

- Vehicles will be *oil free, interconnected*, and ultimately *self-driving*
- ACES (Automated, Connected, Electric, Shared)
- Public transportation will be redefined

Automation, connection, electrification, and sharing will accelerate in pace as major automakers are in full competitive mode and the tort liability system will demand collision avoidance systems. He recommends integrating transportation technologies into policy:

- Bring the Commute Trip Reduction Act up to date to encourage flexible vanpools, carpools, and company transit
- Create a system of connected, high-tech mobility hubs, financed in part with private sector investments and connected with apps
- Consider VMT for trucks during commute peaks; use the revenue to finish SR 167 and SR 509
- Establish a series of federally funded demonstration/pilot projects for self-driving shuttles and taxi, working with Uber, Lyft, GM, Google, Tesla, BMW and others.

Mr. Agnew recommended many approaches to public-private partnerships that the Commission has endorsed in the past, including ferry terminal improvements and park-and-ride lots. He suggested that "performance-based infrastructure" is an alternative term to use in discussing public-private partnerships.

[Plan Washington](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE – OVERVIEW OF TOLLING AUDIT

Sohara Monaghan, Lead Performance Auditor, Washington State Auditor's Office and Olha Bilobran, Performance Auditor, Washington State Auditor's Office, briefed the Commission on the State Auditor's recent audit of tolling operations. The audit was spurred by a prior audit and customer complaints.

- Prior toll system audit found problems with system implementation
- Customer complaints about toll bills raised questions on how well the system processes, collects and reports tolls
- Internal audits and an incident compromising customer payment information indicated security weaknesses

The audit asked two questions:

- How well is WSDOT's toll collection system processing, collecting and reporting toll transactions? If issues exist, why?
- Is WSDOT's toll collection system in compliance with information security standards issued by Washington's Office of the Chief Information Officer and payment card industry? If not, why not?

Findings:

- Toll system lacks key functions that affect toll processing, collection and reporting
- Toll system and operational limitations complicate creation of toll bills and collection of tolls
- WSDOT struggled to enforce vendor compliance

State Auditor's Office (SAO) concluded that leadership and management weakness caused the issues. It concludes that WSDOT and its Toll Division did not:

- Sustain shared vision with stakeholders to develop an all-electronic toll system with accounting functionality
- Establish business functions and processes to prevent, identify and resolve issues
- Assign people with sufficient knowledge and expertise to develop and operate tolling system
- Effectively communicate and engage key stakeholders at the Legislature and Transportation Commission to meet their needs and build trust

State Auditor's Office (SAO) concerns:

- No feasibility study done to assess need for a new system
- Work Plan lacks Toll Division's ultimate vision for tolling and detailed plans to address program needs
- Without a clear understanding of the tolling program's goals and specific strategies to achieve them, the success of the program is at risk.

Recommendations in brief:

- Require the Assistant Secretary of the Toll Division to develop a long-term business strategy and plan to support and improve current operations as well as the next generation toll system
- Address the leadership and management weaknesses identified in this report
- Address the current toll collection system limitations and operational challenges identified in this report

Roger Millar indicated that WSDOT would be responding formally to the SAO Report at the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee meeting this afternoon. He said that WSDOT is an industry leader in electronic tolling and that only 0.2 percent of transactions have been delayed. The financial reporting is accurate and customer information is secure. He noted the difficulty of hiring adequate IT professionals given the salary structure in state government.

Commissioner Litt said that he is willing to work with WSDOT staff and improve communication.

Mr. Millar agreed that WSDOT decided to bring I-405 on-line, rather than focus on system inefficiencies. He said, “We can be better. We will be better. But we are fundamentally sound.”

Commissioner Young asked about the process from here. Ms. Monaghan said that there would be a follow-up report. Mr. Millar said WSDOT will seek legislation in 2017.

[State Auditor's Office - Overview of Tolling Audit](#)

Action: None

Follow-Up: Commissioners will review WSDOT's response to the SAO Audit and meet with SAO staff. The Commission will receive the follow-up report from the SAO next year.

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION FUTURES REPORT

Ben Bakkenta, Program Manager, Puget Sound Regional Council, briefed the Commission on the Transportation Futures Task Force Report. The Task Force, established by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), had the following mission:

Recommend a strategy to provide an equitable, financially sustainable, and environmentally responsible regional transportation system that works for people, economic development, and quality of life.

The approach taken:

- T2040, the current PSRC long-range plan is fundamentally good
- Meet overall funding needs
- Fund local needs sooner
- Use immediately available sources now; phase in longer-term new revenue
- Goals: long-term, sustainable funding sources & measurable performance

After developing principles, including performance for value, the Task Force evaluated public opinion. People were asked about letting the PSRC raise its own revenues, establishing system-wide tolling, and assessing pay-per-mile fees. Over half oppose system-wide tolling and pay-per-mile fees.

Task Force Recommendations:

- Maximize Use of Existing Authority
- Establish Regional Transportation Authority
- Achieve Efficiencies
- Pay for Use
- Flexibility in Expenditures

Next Steps:

- Support local/regional initiatives
- Educate the public on sustaining transportation funding long term
- Research regional alternatives
- Incorporate the recommendations into regional plan updates
- Partner with the state on pay-by-mile pilot

Transportation Futures

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time

NAMING SR 509 “PHILIP MARTIN LELLI MEMORIAL HIGHWAY”

Senator Steve Conway spoke to SJM 8019, initiated by the Port of Tacoma to name the portion of SR 509 through the Port the “Philip Martin Lelli Memorial Highway.” Ron Magden, author of *The Working Waterfront: The Story of Tacoma’s Ships and Men*, said that Phil Lelli inspired his book about the tremendous growth of the Port of Tacoma. Patty Rose, Pierce County Central Labor Council, noted how Phil Lelli was visionary in building the Port of Tacoma and bringing together labor and business. Even more important, she added, was his humanitarian work.

Gordon Baxter, Vice-President of the Puget Sound Maritime Trades Council, and a representative of ILWU, noted that Phil Lelli was both a labor leader and a community leader.

Dean Lelli thanked the Commission for considering the Resolution honoring his dad.

Commissioner Haley read Resolution 728.

Action: *Commissioner Jennings moved and Commissioner Tortorelli seconded the motion to adopt Resolution 728. The motion was approved unanimously.*

Follow-Up: None at this time

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Hablewitz commented that it is a great idea to print the tax amount on gas receipts. He noted that as gas tax revenue drops, air quality will improve. He thinks that technology will change the amount of congestion. He advocated that revenue collection be cost-neutral as well as revenue-neutral.

He disagreed with a PSRC comment that tolling is disliked because people don't understand it. People understand it but don't like it. Texas is considering repealing tolls. Try to collect revenue efficiently and in a least intrusive manner.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

ANNE E. HALEY, Chairman

JOE TORTORELLI, Vice-Chairman

SHIV BATRA, Member

HESTER SEREBRIN, Member

ROY JENNINGS, Member

DEBBIE YOUNG, Member

JERRY LITT, Member

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL