



Washington State Transportation Commission

Pullman Meeting Summary
September 15 & 16, 2020

Chair Jerry Litt opened the meeting at 1:00 pm with introductions by Commissioners and staff.

Mayor's Welcome

Glenn Johnson, Mayor, City of Pullman

Pullman Mayor Glenn Johnson welcomed the Commission to Pullman.

For more detail on agenda item 2, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 15](#), which starts at 00:05:59, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Transportation 101

Reema Griffith, Executive Director, Washington State Transportation Commission

Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission

Tamara Jones, Senior Policy Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission

Commission staff gave an overview of Washington's transportation system.

[Transportation 101](#)

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 15](#), which starts at 00:13:21, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport

Glenn Johnson, Mayor, City of Pullman & Board Chair, Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport

Tony Bean, Executive Director, Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport

An update on the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport was provided by Glenn Johnson, City of Pullman Mayor and Pullman-Moscow Airport Board Chair, and Tony Bean, Executive Director, Pullman-Moscow Airport.

The Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport is owned by the local communities. The partnership of the communities has been a key component in the success of the airport, specifically in securing funding. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Aviation Division is the lowest funded state aviation program in the region. Across Washington State, airports are not pursuing projects because they are unable to meet the 90/10 match required by the federal government.

The airport has been under active construction since 2015. These project's will be completed in 2021. The projects cost \$6.5 million. The runway was shifted 5.5° to better align with Moscow Mountain.

[Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport Presentation](#)

For more detail on agenda item 4, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 15](#), which starts at 00:38:14, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Pullman Transportation Issues, Challenges, and Success

Kevin Gardes, P.E., Director, Public Works, City of Pullman

Kevin Gardes, Public Works Director, City of Pullman, provided an overview of how the city is addressing downtown congestion, working with residents, businesses, and Washington State University (WSU).

Pullman has several challenges contributing to downtown congestion.

- Afternoon congestion
- Two state highways that go through the Central Business District
- State highways that are truck routes
- Ring Road Concept: Arterial/Bypass Studies; driven by development
- WSU's Long-Range Plan
- Funding for Ring Road sections

In 2020, Pullman has accomplished several successes in the central business district. The Central Business District (CBD) Master Plan was completed in February of 2020. The plan started as a City Council goal. The development included planning and design and stakeholder input. A CBD demonstration is happening summer and fall of 2020. This included changing the traffic flow on East Main Street to one-way: maintained existing sidewalks on both sides of the street, reconfigured 56' of curb-to-curb with painted lane changes, ADA stalled were incorporated into back-in angle parking, and two-way cycle track along the street with temporary protection (candlesticks and planters) installed. New Complete Streets Ordinances were completed in March of 2020.

The City has celebrated many accomplishments related to pedestrian and bike trails. Many miles of bike and pedestrian trails have been added to the city in last twenty years.

This has been a priority for both the city council and residents for many years; usually listed as the #1 or #1 goal for both. The voters approved related bonds in 2007 and 2018. The city is planning to complete a Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan in near future. The city recently completed a better and safer crosswalk for a new elementary school. This project was brought to the city by resident groups (PTA and Girl Scouts).

Lack of funding is the city's #1 transportation challenge. Revenue from the City's Street Fund cannot keep up with existing pavement maintenance, so finding funding sources (grants) for CBD improvements and bypass improvements is very important to completing these projects. The city currently relies heavily on grants (TIB, Federal STP and other, etc.) to do much more than basic street operations and maintenance. Gas tax revenue is flat.

There was discussion about possible funding sources. Has the city identified a funding option that could be helpful, that is not currently available? The city pursues every grant that they can; however, grants cannot be for purchasing Right of Ways. The city is appreciative of any state funding and it would be great if the state revenue that has been lost in recent years was restored.

Pullman is a university in town, as the home of Washington State University (WSU), which is a major employer in the area. The master plan was put together pre-COVID. Would an update to the master plan help with the budget issues? The city expects the effects of COVID to be relatively short-lived. The master plan is based on concepts that are solid and good, not matter the impact of COVID. The City and their residents want a vibrant, multimodal downtown. This master plan delivers that.

[City of Pullman](#)

For more detail on agenda item 5, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 15](#), which starts at 01:00:15, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Pullman Transit

Wayne Thompson, Manager, Pullman Transit, City of Pullman

Mr. Thompson provided an overview of Pullman Transit, its funding, impacts of WSU and COVID-19.

Pullman Transit was started in 1979, as a division of the City of Pullman Public Works Department. Since it is a city service, Pullman Transit can use part of the city's utility tax, which accounts for 25% of the transit's operating budget. In 1999, because of the passage of Initiative 695, Pullman Transit lost substantial state provided operating funds. As a result, they dropped routes, let drivers go, and went eight years without purchasing a new bus. Today, in addition to the city utility tax, the rest of the budget comes from pre-paid fare contracts and rider fares. WSU's prepaid fare contract accounts for 50% of the transit's operating budget.

25% of Pullman Transit's fleet is from the 1990s and needs to be replaced. They are still operational; however, maintenance costs are increasing, due to the age of the fleet.

Looking for new sources of revenue, Pullman Transit has implemented bus wraps. The bus wraps, featuring WSU's mascot, are known locally as "Coug Wraps." The university pays for the advertising. The costs to the transit system are minimal. This practice has been highlighted nationally as a best practice.

Pullman Transit's community service extends beyond regular bus service. They have received two exemptions to the FTA Charter Rule allowing for (1) school bus service for eleven routes and (2) fall football service for pre- and post-WSU games.

Pullman Transit is one of four city run transit systems in the state. Despite having the smallest population of the four, Pullman Transit provides the most rides per capita. The transit system is looking to expand to provide more late-night routes, increase weekend service and routes from downtown Pullman to the airport.

Mr. Thompson provided details on the transit system's Dial-A-Ride program; the system's ADA-required service. There are six dedicated vans, equipped with wheelchair lifts, in the fleet. There are four daily van/driver shifts. The service provides door-to-door pickup and drop-off. Over the last five years, the Dial-A-Ride service has provided more than 20,000 rides annually. Dial-A-Ride accounts for 20% of Pullman Transit's operating budget. Anyone age 65 or older is eligible or younger with a qualifying disability.

In response to COVID-19, Pullman Transit has stopped collecting fares, shifted to rear door loading and unloading, applied social distancing and capacity limits on all vehicles, and increased cleaning. On buses, there is a ten-person capacity. Due to the limited rider capacity, on high-rider routes, there is a main bus and a following bus. When the main bus reaches capacity of ten riders, it stops picking up riders and the "following bus" starts picking up waiting riders. To limit budget impacts, while not collecting fares, they have temporarily cut four routes. Having dedicated funds from the city's utility tax and funds received in the federal CARES Act have helped.

Commissioner Serebrin asked about transit recovery, specifically how is Pullman Transit communicating with riders. Mr. Thompson replied through meetings; getting the word out that they are taking steps to ensure rider safety, maintaining social distancing, putting out additional buses, increasing cleaning. It is about getting the message out. They expect that a return to pre-COVID service levels will not happen until August 2021. Mr. Thompson provided details on when service was altered (routes cancelled or service stopped at 10:00 pm from midnight), they received feedback from riders that this created hardship for those that needed the service to commute to work. Pullman Transit immediately extended service to 10:30 pm. This is also a problem year-round, when the student body leaves, and transit services stop at 6:00 pm. They are addressing this in their planning. Even with the changes and knowing that some are dependent on transit for commuting, they rarely reach their ten-person capacity, expect during peak hours.

[Pullman Transit](#)

For more detail on agenda item 6, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 15](#), which starts at 01:27:08, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Washington State University (WSU) Issues, Challenges, and Successes **John Shaheen, Director, Transportation Services, Washington State University**

Mr. Shaheen provided an overview of WSU's travel demand management program and the impacts of COVID-19 on the program, the WSU community, and parking needs.

Mr. Shaheen provided an overview of the evolution of WSU campus parking. The program started in the 1953 Campus Traffic and Parking Regulations, which referred to the problem of increased vehicles "one of grave concern to the College administration, the faculty, the Associated Students, and parents." The 1970s saw the adoption of the auxiliary model and the financing of facilities. In the 1980s – 1990s, the program started focusing on customer service. In the 1990s, the program was impacted by Americans with Disabilities Act requirements on parking and transportation. Since the 1990s, the program has had a comprehensive multi-modal approach.

WSU Transportation Services is a self-supported service. Through strategic direction they accommodate parking demand, take steps to mitigate that demand, build and maintain facilities, and facilitate alternatives to driving single occupancy cars to campus.

The Student Transit Program has had student involvement from the beginning. In 1979, Pullman Transit service was started with the help of student advocacy. In 1992, student-funded WSU/Pullman Transit partnership began. In 2003, Student Transit Fee restored service lost from the passage of Initiative 695. Currently, student fees compose 2/3 of WSU's contribution for transit service.

A major goal of the program is to reduce trips and vehicles miles, primarily of single occupancy vehicles. To achieve these goals, the program oversees Commute Trip Reduction (CTR), a state mandate, and Transportation Demand Management (TDM), which is overarching strategy. COVID-19 has reduced trips everywhere and quickly shifted the workforce to telework. The response to COVID-19 accomplished what employers had been reluctant to do.

There have been impacts to the program from COVID-19, beyond a sharp increase in telework. The drop in parking needs, reduced parking revenues, which creates a potential funding risk for transit. Transit is a value proposition for students. The program is trying to maintain a level of service that represents a value to the student body. This is tough to do with the social distancing restrictions on buses (ten or fewer riders per bus), limited buses, and reduced funding. This also increases the demand balances of operational budget versus capital needs.

Commissioners noted that they have heard from several large employers that they continue to maintain considerable numbers of employee teleworking into the future, post COVID. Is WSU looking into this? Mr. Shaheen noted that COVID has normalized telework. He is not sure what WSU will decide, but they could see an increase in telework.

There was an inquiry as to what percentage of students bring their car to school. Mr. Shaheen said that the number fluctuates over time. However, about 25% of campus parking permits are sold to student. 68% of students use transit services.

[WSU Transportation Challenges and Opportunities](#)

For more detail on agenda item 7, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 15](#), which starts at 01:46:41, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Regional Issues, Challenges, and Successes

Shaun Darveshi, Director, Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Mr. Darveshi, Director, Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), provided an overview of *Palouse 2040*, the RTPO's plan for the region (Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman County).

The plan includes active transportation, driver safety, a coordinated public transit, human services, and transportation plan. The plan highlights five regionally significant projects: Pullman Bypasses; Moscow Pullman Airport Realignment Project; Colfax US-395 and SR 26 Intersection Update; Pullman Airport Road Widening Project; and widening of US 12, in Clarkston.

In the region, 73% of county roads in the region are unpaved. This is about 450 miles of road, including many arterials. These roads need paving, but the funds for paving are lacking. Once paved, funds for maintenance are even more scarce. There are about 350 county owned bridges. 72 are deficient; however, there is no money available for maintenance and preservation.

Commissioners asked about damage to the rail lines from the many fires in the area since Labor Day. These fires are so recent, with some still uncontained, that there are no official damage estimates yet.

[Palouse RTPO](#)

For more detail on agenda item 8, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 15](#), which starts at 02:10:40, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Nez Perce Tribe Issues, Challenges, and Successes

Mary Beth Clark, Planning Director, Nez Perce Tribe

Ms. Clark, Planning Director, Nez Perce Tribe, informed the Commission about the Tribe's various transportation issues and transit services. She started with background on the Tribe's historical land. The Nez Perce Reservation is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million acres in Idaho, with about 1,800 miles of public road. 5% or 95 miles are within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) system and tribally owned routes. The Tribe has three major projects: Aht'Wy Interchange, Cherry Lane Bridge, and National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory (NTTFI). For six years, the Tribe has operated a road maintenance crew, of three employees. The Tribe has operated a transit system, Appaloosa Express Rural Transit, for thirteen years.

Transportation funding is needed for tribes and rural communities. The US Government, in fiscal year (FY) 2019, allocated \$495 million for 576 tribes, nationwide. In the Northwest Region, in FY 2020, there are 35 tribes, \$49.5 million was allocated. Tribes are not able to access state funding.

The Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) is the only tribe that has a transportation maintenance program, started in Spring 2014. The program operates on a \$45,000 annual budget. The maintenance need is about \$36 million annually. They do not have the funding to do scheduled or planned maintenance. They re-act to emergencies and do repairs to keep the roads safe and functional. It would be beneficial for grants to include "tribes" and to ensure TTP federal funding would be acceptable for any match requirement.

Transit is a valuable asset to rural and tribal communities. NPT Appaloosa Express began service 13 years ago. The Express has three routes, covering about 75 miles up-river, and servicing eight small communities and Lewiston, ID. The Nez Perce has heard from tribes within Washington State that the transit systems in Washington work well with tribal transit in coordinating routes between local and tribal systems.

There are steps that states can take to increase communication, collaboration, and coordination with tribes. States can establish communication with tribes. States can and should include tribes on projects, in the early stages. Tribes and states can work together for safe roads and multi-modal transportation.

Commissioners asked what needed to be changed for tribes to receive state funding and if this would be helpful. Ms. Clark responded that to be helpful there were probably two things that needed to happen: open state funding to tribes and decrease or change matching requirements. Currently, most federal funding opportunities include a clause that "no federal money can be used for matching fund." This systemically excludes tribes from accessing these funds because most tribal funding is federal.

[Nez Perce Tribe](#)

For more detail on agenda item 9, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 15](#), which starts at 02:41:12, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: Staff will invite the statewide Tribal Transportation Planning Organization (TTPO) to present at an Olympia meeting. This should be scheduled to happen annually, starting in 2021.

Regional Trails & Non-Motorized Transportation

Shaun Darveshi, Director, Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)

Bobbie Ryder, President, Pullman Civic Trust

Fred Wert, Board Member, Palouse to Cascades Trail Coalition

Lowell Kappmeyer, Daily Cycle Commuter, Moscow, ID, to WSU

John Shaheen, Director, Transportation Services, Washington State University

A panel of regional stakeholders provided details about the trail system as part of the regional transportation plan; projects to build trails, rural and urban, from local non-profits; and the role of trails in WSU's travel management plan.

Mr. Darveshi provided an overview of the trail component of the "Palouse 2040 Plan." During the development, the community was very clear that they want to improve trails, bike lanes, and alternate transportation modes as the first investment priority in the region and that transportation investment increases safety and health, not just pay for highways and roads. In the past few years, the region has been involved with trail improvements on several trails. Residents are asking for more trails and improvements to existing trails. The PRTPO Board has approved \$54,000 to study and complete the Trail Plan, estimated to be completed in December.

Ms. Ryder spoke to the work of the Pullman Civic Trust (PCT). Established in 1983, the PCT, a non-profit organization, has completed many projects including the Bill Chipman Palouse Trail, Three-Forks Wayside, and River Park waterfall. PCT continues to enhance the region's trail system.

In 2006, the trestle between Colfax and Albion burned, shortly after WSDOT purchased the rights of way. This section of the PCC Rail System has remained idle ever since. Lack of traffic demand opens the door for railbanking and trail creation. The Colfax-Albion-Pullman (CAP) Corridor connects to existing trails and provides multi-modal transportation. PCT envisions a 60-mile trail from Colfax, WA, to Julietta, ID. The CAP Trail will add about twenty miles to existing trails, creating a 60-mile regional trail system.

Ms. Ryder spoke about the importance of railbanking to the expansion of the trail system. There are three major components to railbanking. The federal law preserves the national rail network, retains existing rail easements, and the right of reactivation is retained by the railroad (WSDOT). The ownership component: WSDOT relinquishes ownership of the right of way (ROW) and cost of maintenance assumed by railbanking entity/management group. Management of the railbank trail - the trail will be managed by a consortium of entities; responsible for upkeep, maintaining weeds, etc.; and fundraising through grants and donations. The Palouse has two successful railbanking models: the Bill Chipman Palouse Trail, operates as a County Park, and the Latah Trail, which operates as a non-profit.

Railbanking provides many opportunities: saves WSDOT money, as maintenance is done by a trail management group that procures funding from dues and donations; frees up valuable assets for use elsewhere in the rail system; rails, ties, and crossings materials (WSDOT will salvage materials.); provides year-round transportation and recreation opportunities; converts WSDOT long-term liability into a benefit to the State; preserves taxpayer investment. Railbanking preserves this public amenity for the benefit of all Washington residents.

There is a high rate of return on investment on railbanking. A 60-mile trail from Colfax to Julietta becomes a destination trail. As a trailhead, Colfax could capitalize on overnight visitors. WSU and the University of Idaho attracts people to the area. The trail gives them a reason to stay longer. Trails provide public access to view the Palouse landscape, rank high as enticement for recruitment and retention, and give all ages a recreational amenity and safe transportation routes.

The PCT's next actions to completing their trail vision are: railbanking (create a railbanking entity and introduce legislation to railbank) and trail building (fundraising and building the trail in phases: Phase 1: Colfax to burned trestle & Pullman to Albion; Phase 2+: Replace trestle and extend through middle).

Mr. Werts spoke about another trail project in the area, the Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail (PTCT), stretching from North Bend, WA, to Idaho. This project would connect several existing trails. In addition to recreation opportunities, this project would allow alternative commute possibilities, in some areas greatly reducing commute mileage. The PTCT provides a unique recreation opportunity; creates a tourist attraction beyond Washington State; provides some economic benefit to small communities; preserves unique historic structures such as the Beverly Bridge; provides a transportation alternative to highways; provides utility corridors; provides access to farm/ranch properties; and preserves a railroad right of way for future uses.

Mr. Kappmeyer spoke about his experience as a daily bicycle commuter. He commutes daily from Moscow, ID, to the WSU campus in Pullman. Formerly he commuted by a university funded shuttle; however, the shuttle was suspended in response to budget shortfalls. He highlighted that if given a safe, reliable trail system, many people will move from cars on roads to bicycles for their commute. Commissioners complimented him on his dedication to year-round cycle commuting, especially given the severity of weather on the Palouse.

Commissioners stated that they support railbanking. The discussion shifted to the cost of railbanking. It is believed that in the long run, railbanking will save the state money as it shifts maintenance and upkeep to the non-profit organizations from the state. The state's cost is in construction. Commissioners asked where in the process the PCT is for railbanking on their proposed trails. Ms. Ryder stated that while most of the community supports their plan, there are a few landowners of property that is adjacent to the rail line that have reservations. Commissioners again expressed support of railbanking and committed to having further conversations to support the idea.

A member of the public stated that they were aware of opposition to railbanking for the trail that the PCT was discussing and asked if this has been overcome. Ms. Ryder stated that her

understand was that the opposition was because of the belief that railbanking removed the rail line from the inventory; however, the reality is that railbanking preserves the rail line, so that it can be reactivated if needed.

[Palouse Active Transportation Plan 2020](#)

[Colfax-Albion-Pullman Rail-Trail](#)

[Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail](#)

[Regional Trails](#)

For more detail on agenda item 10, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 15](#), which starts at 03:01:55, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: Support of railbanking.

Chair Litt reminded the Commission that the meeting will continue Wednesday, September 16, 2020, and recessed the meeting.

September 16, 2020

Chair Jerry Litt opened the meeting at 9:00 am with introductions by Commissioners.

Naming Proposal for SR 902: Gold Star Memorial Highway - ACTION

Rudy Lopez, Director, Washington State Veterans Cemetery

Marcus Riccelli, Representative, Washington State House of Representatives

Keirsten Lyons, Washington Fallen Heroes Project & Gold Star Mother

John Lee, Command Sergeant Major, US Army, Retired and Director, Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, Retired

The Commission heard a proposal from the Eastern Washington Veterans Task Force to honor US Service Members by naming SR 902 the “Gold Star Memorial Highway” as an enduring final tribute to service members and veterans, and acknowledgment to surviving family members that they do not stand alone.

Mr. Lopez provided a history of the “Gold Star” designation.

Ms. Lyons, a Gold Star mother, spoke about her experience since her son was killed and the meaning of the designation to other Gold Star family members. Ms. Lyons’s son, Staff Sergeant Jacob Hess, was killed in a training exercise at Fort Polk, Louisiana, on May 15, 2019.

Representative Riccelli informed the Commission that the legislative intent for this naming was clear. There was bipartisan agreement and the Legislature appreciates the Commission addressing this. CSM (Ret.) Lee informed the Commission that the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is unique with the level of services offered to veterans and their family members and reiterated the significance of the naming.

Chair Litt read Resolution 741. Commissioner Jennings moved adoption of Resolution 741. Commissioner Restucci seconded the motion. The Resolution was unanimously adopted.

[SR 902 Naming Proposal](#)
[Resolution No. 741](#)

For more detail on agenda item 12, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 16](#), which starts at 00:05:08, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: Approved Resolution 741.

Follow-Up: WSTC staff will notify WSDOT of the naming action for signage placement.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Eastern Region Update

Mike Gribner, Eastern Region Administrator, WSDOT

Bob Westby, Transportation Technical Engineer, Rail Freight & Port Division, WSDOT

Mike Gribner, Eastern Region Administrator, and Bob Westby, Transportation Technical Engineer of the Rail Freight & Port Division, Washington State Department of Transportation provided an overview of WSDOT's activities and collaborations in the region specifically related to maintenance and preservation of the system and safety improvements.

Due to the Labor Day 2020 Storm and resulting fires, 15% of the Eastern Region's lane miles (570 miles) were closed due to dust, fires, and smoke. Some of the fires are still burning. The total damage from the fires has not yet been determined.

Improving safety has been the priority for the region, while improving roads for economic support. SR 26 and US 195 have a history of fatalities and serious injury collisions in Whitman County. WSDOT made design changes to improve the safety. On SR 26 from Dusty to Colfax (milepost 123 – 132), climbing lanes were added. This stretch of road was recognized as an important "farm to market" corridor and is used by WSU students, family, faculty. The addition of truck climbing lanes will address vehicle platooning behind trucks, reduce congestion, improve safety. Construction was scheduled for Spring 2021, but COVID-19 impacts have delayed right of way acquisition and plan approval. On US 195, six passing lanes were added in 2018.

In addition to the road design changes, WSDOT established the Palouse Driver Safety Campaign, in 2016. This evolved into a partnership with many state and local agencies. The campaign, #BeSafeCougs, and the safety improvements may have contributed to the downward trend in collisions. The campaign posted highway safety messages to reach WSU students, staff, and families. The messages started very practical and evolved to provocative messages: increased creativity to draw interest without distracting. These messages were in addition to the physical design changes. This has resulted in greater awareness among students and parents and may have contributed to the downward trend in collisions.

According to WSDOT data:

- 2013-2018 - 40.14% (766) of crashes were ages 14-25 years old
 - o Of those, 6 fatality crashes (.78%) and 10 (.13%) suspected serious injury crashes
- 2019-2020 - 32.8% (160*) of crashes were ages 14-25 years old
 - o Of those, 1 fatality crash (.062%) and 7 (4%) suspected serious injury crashes
- Falling asleep, exceeding safe speed, inattention, alcohol, and drugs contributed to
 - o 42.65% (804) of crashes from 2013 – 2018, and
 - o 41.51% (203) of crashes from 2019 – 2020

Other projects in the Pullman area:

- SR 276 North Bypass
 - o SR 276 right of way (ROW) for a north bypass to relieve congestion and improve safety.
 - o Made property available to Pullman Moscow Regional Airport.
 - o City of Pullman is currently reviewing proposed roadway alignment.
- Snake River Environmental Impact Study (EIS) - To update operations, maintenance, configuration of fourteen Columbia River System multiple purpose dams and related facilities
 - o Three years+ successful collaboration among WSDOT and other co-lead agencies, 30+ Tribes, state, federal, and county agencies.
 - o Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO) freight movement is evolving: 90% goes through river navigation; opportunity to update freight studies in Palouse.
 - o Preferred alternative
 - o Includes innovative dam operations; balances fish benefits; honors tribal rights; meets clean energy and climate goals; ensures affordable transportation for wheat farmers in the Palouse and Tri-Cities areas, and reliable irrigation supplies for Eastern Washington farmers.
- US 195/SR 26 Colfax – Addressing Structurally Deficient Bridges & Intersection
 - o With limited budget, 2015 repairs ensured traveler safety on the bridge.
 - o Significant effort of public outreach during alternatives phase.
 - o Many options considered.
 - o Preferred option: replace SR 26 bridge; remove US 195 infrastructure.
 - o Project estimated at \$12.4 million unprogrammed in 2020 Plan update, not included in 10-year plan.

There is a revenue shortfall that has become a crisis. Insufficient funding continues to impact our ability to operate and maintain our transportation network. The total revenue loss from maintenance accounts over the next three years is at least \$1.3 billion, of which we will need to address a \$482 million deficit this biennium. Longer term, combining the impact of the pandemic and I-976, forecasted revenue is down between \$4 billion and \$8 billion over the next 10 years. While WSDOT is taking steps to cut spending, it will not be enough to make up for the anticipated revenue shortfall.

Increased funding in preservation is needed now to achieve a state of good repair on our roads. Currently, in just WSDOT's Eastern Region there are 4,000 lane miles of pavement due for preservation, another 3,600 miles are past due, 1,600 miles have a poor rating.

We are only repaving 750 lane miles/year. Fifteen bridges need replacement, nineteen need major rehabilitation; only two are being replaced. Sixty steel bridges are due for painting, thirty-nine are past due; only four are being painted. Fifty-six concrete bridge decks are past due for repair, thirty more are due for repair; only eight are being repaired. Seventeen of twenty-two ferry vessels have a preservation backlog. The average vessel is twenty-eight years old. More than 20% of Palouse River and Coulee City (PCC) railway is in poor condition, only capable of ten mph operations. Of seventy-five miles in poor condition, only 20.8 being replaced. 110, or 39%, of WSDOT facilities are fifty years old or older.

The public needs to understand that revenue shortfall impacts the transportation system which impacts our economic health and quality of life. This is not a new problem, preservation and maintenance has been underfunded for over 20 years. Without additional revenue, there will be cuts to maintenance, preservation, and capital projects across the state.

In Washington State, we have a history of partnership and problem-solving enabling hard decision-making at difficult times. We need to collaborate on what projects to build and challenges to tackle. We will move forward on building alignment around the budget, investing in projects with high positive outcomes to the system.

Mr. Westby provided an overview of the Palouse River and Coulee City (PCC) Railway System. There are six segments of the PCC Line, totaling 297 miles. The rail authority oversees business and economic development portions of the operating leases. Four members operate as an intergovernmental entity formed by Grant, Lincoln, Spokane Counties, and the Port of Whitman through an inter-local agreement. Operators maintain infrastructure through an operating lease agreement. They do not pay for the rights to operate on the system. WSDOT manages infrastructure, property and regulatory portions of operating leases, determines projects and develops PS&Es, manages leases with operators, sale of nonessential property, constituent response, regulatory compliance, and works with operators and shippers as they develop new facilities or business opportunities.

The PCC strategic plan advances priority projects to increase 286,000-pound railcar capability; rehabilitate track in the curves; identify and replace defective rail through rail testing; inventory, load rate, and prioritize bridges; address ongoing maintenance and preservation needs; initiate an annual tie replacement program; improve at-grade crossings; repurpose rail materials from other sources; and replace substandard rail.

The Connecting Washington transportation package provided funding for PCC including \$47 million for PCC improvements; funding designated through the 2029-31 biennium:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| - 2015-17 - \$345,000 | - 2023-25 - \$6.7 million |
| - 2017-19 - \$6.7 million | - 2025-27 - \$6.7 million |
| - 2019-21 - \$6.7 million | - 2027-29 - \$6.7 million |
| - 2021-23 - \$6.7 million | - 2029-31 - \$6.5 million |

WSDOT is currently leveraging Connecting Washington funds as state match for federal funding.

\$11.3 million was secured through the Federal BUILD Grant to fund the Washington State Rural Rail Rehabilitation Project.

(\$5.6 million federal funds; \$5.3 million state funds; \$35 million private funds) This is being used for track rehabilitation (LaCrosse to Endicott – 8 miles; Marshall to McCoy – 5 miles; Geiger Spur to Davenport – 16 miles) and for bridges (replace eight and rehabilitate two between Marshall and McCoy). The work is now underway and is projected to be completed in late 2020.

The stability of a state-owned rail system gives confidence to private investors. Private sector investment along the PCC totals nearly \$70 million since state acquisition. Most recently, Northwest Grain Growers invested \$7 million to expand the Endicott grain terminal, allowing grain to be moved to market using Union Pacific unit trains. Now all three branches of PCC have unit train service, providing the most economical rail shipping rates to eastern Washington farmers.

In Whitman County, about 40 miles of line are maintained but there is no rail movement. Farmers have multiple freight movement options: truck, rail, and barge. The PCC system has strong support from growers and shippers.

Discussion started with an inquiry about if the significance of the fire damage to the rail line and initial ideas on recovery. Mr. Westby responded that about eight miles of track had been burned, mostly the railroad ties and it was anticipated to have repairs completed and the line back on-line in about one week. Additionally, an 80-foot timber trestle was completely lost. This has severed service to the Palouse, from this area. There is not a replacement timeline yet, but it is important to replace/repair, since this line moves agriculture products. Reestablishing the line, is a significant step to keeping truck traffic on roads down.

A balanced pricing structure between truck and rail, based on market analysis. WSDOT does not set prices for rail service; that is proprietary of BNSF and the shipping companies.

Commissioners expressed support to increase investment in maintenance and recognized the importance in helping the public to understand the importance of our transportation system and its relationship to our economy. Steps on how to achieve this were discussed. It was discussed expanding an approach that the Eastern Region has used in the Spokane area of focusing on the business community – how transportation impacts their bottom line and health transportation. Additionally, not all communities have the same level of understanding of the impacts of the transportation system.

[Eastern Region - Navigating Washington's Transportation Future](#)

For more detail on agenda item 13, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 16](#), which starts at 00:32:09, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

County Issues, Challenges, and Successes

Mark Storey, P.E., Director & County Engineer, Whitman County Public Works

Mark Storey, P.E., Director & County Engineer, Public Works, Whitman County, provided an overview on county strategies and successes over the last several years, and possible approaches county road management that may be employed over the coming years. The presentation was coordinated to cover the county perspective throughout the region, including Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman counties.

Whitman County has a large road system, which supports the freight needs and lots of bridges and ageing infrastructure. The roads are used by larger trucks and farm equipment. While the county is facing costs of new maintenance equipment and materials, revenue is flat or declining. Heavy road use is seasonal, based on agriculture. Safety is a major concern, due to the severity of rural road crashes.

County road departments face many challenges. Many issues are related to dwindling revenues. Maintenance revenue comes from gas and property taxes and the CRAB Board. Finding and retaining qualified staff is an increasing problem as salaries are becoming less competitive. Due to decreased revenue, maintenance is becoming increasingly complaint driven rather than planned. There are insufficient funds for local match on projects and emergencies.

Despite these challenges, Whitman County has had many successes. The county's pavement ratings have increased from a PCI of fifty-nine, in 2009, to eighty-two, in 2018. Many wood bridges have been replaced. In 2001, there were ninety-two wood bridges, in Whitman County. Today, there are twenty-two. Whitman County has been able to improve salaries, resulting in retaining more qualified staff. They no longer have the lowest wages in the region. In 2019, voters approved an increase in the levy lid (\$1.46 to \$2.25), generating an additional \$1.4 million annually. The county has improved their all-weather/season road system.

In the future, Whitman County is moving to a performance-based maintenance rather than complaint based. They are hoping to keep revenues up with inflation. The county will be seeking parity for local roads maintenance and preservation and for local roads maintenance and preservation. The county is reducing the number of maintenance pieces of equipment that it owns through strategic equipment purchases vs leases and rentals. The county is improving performance of surfacing materials; training for maintenance equipment operators, based on national training standards; and road maintenance for safety (i.e. local roads safety plan).

[Whitman County Roads](#)

For more detail on agenda item 14, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 16](#), which starts at 01:22:02, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Port of Whitman County

Joe Poire, Executive Director, Port of Whitman County

Kara Riebold, Broadband Manager, Port of Whitman County

Port of Whitman County staff, Joe Poire, Executive Director, and Kara Riebold, Chief Operating Officer, provided an overview of the Port's extensive rural broadband access initiative.

Mr. Poire provided an overview of the deregulation of telephone service in the US. While the goal was to allow greater competition in a certain market, but deregulation resulted in higher, not lower, prices for many rural communities. This system serves the high-cost company, rather than the high-cost customer.

Ms. Riebold spoke to the Port's broadband initiative, started in 2000, with the passage of Senate Bill 6675 to bridge the digital divide. The Port of Whitman was very involved in this bill as an attempt to bring broadband to rural areas. The Port of Whitman County has built out over 300 miles of dark fiber in a network ranging from the City of Spokane in the north to the City of Clarkston in the south. As a result, the city of Pullman, WA, alone has: 14 carriers, an open access network, and a free trade environment. According to a study by the University of Idaho Economist Steve Pedersen, the economic impact in Whitman County has been 132 jobs, \$5.6 million labor income payroll, \$29.4 million output sales transactions, \$10.9 million gross regional product, and \$759,000 in state and local taxes.

According to Fiber Broadband Association, which has been submitted to the Federal Communications Commission, fiber broadband is now available to more than 30% of households across the US, and fiber networks should reach 50% of homes, by 2025. But 50% coverage would obviously leave another 50% of homes without access to the fastest wireline broadband technology. Reaching 80% of homes instead of just 50% would require an additional cash infusion of \$52 billion over the next 10 years. Going from 80% to 90% would then require another \$18 billion. Going from 90% to 100% would be far more cost-prohibitive because it would require wiring up the least populated parts of the country, which make up "the vast majority of US land."

Ms. Riebold reminded the Commission the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that our nation's telecommunications infrastructure fails to meet the needs of on-line learning, business, and telemedicine in many communities. We need a unified state and federal response to address the unique broadband challenges of today. There are companies ready to invest in underserved markets, showing that the problem of broadband services can be solved by working together. To move forward, the model of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) stimulus funding for broadband, which created open-access, publicly owned fiber infrastructure, should be followed. To move forward and quickly advance the deployment of broadband, the federal government should provide direct broadband stimulus infrastructure funds to the states, for rapid deployment and distribution and the state should plan for right-of-way use that opens markets.

Commissioner Restucci stated that Yakima County has been exploring creating a non-profit to promote broadband expansion and asked how the Port of Whitman how they addressed the

prohibition of gifting public funds to private companies, which has been the stumbling block in Yakima County. Mr. Poire replied that the Port formed a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). The Port uses public funds to purchases and provides the infrastructure and the private sector delivers the services. Commission staff asked if the Port had seen the connectivity issue play out during COVID and working with transportation partners (related to autonomous vehicles). Mr. Poire responded that they have seen this with both partners and other local communities, in three arenas: autonomous vehicles and systems, telework and remote learning, and 5G. Now is a great time for the conversation and for publicly owned rights of ways.

For more detail on agenda item 15, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 16](#), which starts at 01:53:51, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Freight Mobility on the Palouse

Eric Jessup, Director, Freight Policy Transportation Institute, School of Economic Institute, Washington State University

Kristin Meira, Executive Director, Pacific NW Waterways Association

The Commission heard from a panel discussing freight mobility, its importance in and challenges of the region, and the role of the federal navigation channel and federal locks on the Columbia and Snake Rivers.

Mr. Jessup updated the Commission on the Freight Policy Transportation Institute at WSU's School of Economic Sciences. There was a steady increase in freight service and economic performance from May 2015 through September 2019. There was a slight decrease, in November 2019. They both significantly decreased in March 2020, when businesses shut down in response to COVID-19. The Institute recently completed the following surveys: Inland Container Optimization Model (USDA), Agricultural Truck Safety Analysis (USDA), Paper Barriers Impacting Rail Movements (USDA), and Oregon Motor Carrier Safety Action Plan: Best Return on Investment (ODOT). In 2020, the Institute started the following studies: Columbia / Snake River Economic Impact Study (USDOT, USDOE, USDA, USACE), Pacific Northwest Forest Transportation Efficiency Modeling (USDA), and Truck vs. Rail Rate Analysis for Agriculture Product Shipments (USDA).

Ms. Meira provided an overview of the Columbia Snake River System. The system is made up of several different rivers. The Lower Columbia River is a 43' deep channel that extends 105 miles inland, from the Pacific Ocean; over 56 million tons of cargo were moved on it, in 2018. This cargo valued \$21 billion. 40,000 jobs depend on this channel. The Inland Columbia-Snake River System (CSRS) is 14' deep; extends 365 miles inland; and includes eight navigation locks. These locks have the highest lift in the US. Most of the cargo moved on the CSRS is for export. This is the third largest grain export gateway in the world. There are seven major grain facilities between Portland, OR, and the Pacific Ocean. Grain from Idaho to the Dakotas arrive by rail. Grain from the CSRS arrives by barge. Other materials are also moved on the system: mineral,

auto import and exports, wood exports, petroleum products, containerized municipal solid waste, oversized project cargo, wood chips, and sand/gravel.

Ms. Meira provided a comparison of cargo capacities of different methods of moving materials.

- Semi-Truck: 26 tons; 910 bushels; 7,865 gallons
- 100-Car Train (grain): 10,000 tons; 350,000 bushels; 3,024,000 gallons
- Hopper Car: 100 tons; 3,500 bushels; 30,240 gallons
- 4-Barge Tow: 14,000 tons; 490,000 bushels; 3,500,000 gallons
- Barge: 3,500 tons; 122,500 bushels; 875,000 gallons

1 Barge = 35 Hopper Cars = 134 Trucks

1 Tow = 1.4 Trains = 538.4 Trucks

8,675,000 tons of cargo moved by barge in 2018 = 602 4-barge tows or 86,750 rail cars or 333,653 semi-trucks

In recent years, there have been several maintenance projects on the river systems. The Columbia River Jetties at the mouth of the river is currently undergoing major rehabilitation and is on schedule. This rehabilitation is to help maintain depth & orientation of the navigation channel and provide protection for ships entering and leaving the river. A jetty breach could lead to a shoaled-in bar. A 20-year project to deepen a 110-mile channel of the Columbia River to 43' deep was completed in November 2010. This added 6,000 tons of capacity per ship and \$1-2 million worth of cargo per ship call. This resulted in over \$1 billion of new investment. Major repairs on the Columbia Snake River Locks were completed in 2011. To ensure safe operations, new gates were installed at three locks and major repairs were made at three others. Another round of repairs to locks were completed in 2017, during which components and systems were installed at six of the eight locks.

Fish survival at dams has improved. Juvenile survival at the dams now averages 97%. NOAA estimates that survival rates through the hydro system are approaching levels in rivers without dams. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Columbia River Systems Operations is currently underway for a new plan for basin dams. The final EIS was released on July 31, 2020. The record of decision will be released on September 30, 2020.

The Columbia River Basin covers territory in two countries (US and Canada) and four states (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana), covering approximately the same mileage as France. The Columbia River Treaty was ratified by the US and Canada in 1964, providing for coordinated flood control and optimizing hydroelectric generation. Under the treaty, four dams were constructed: Duncan (1967 in Canada), Arrow/Keenleyside (1968 in Canada), Mica (1973 in Canada), and Libby (1975 in the US). The Treaty addressed cost sharing and shared energy benefits, provided a framework for cooperation and some flexibility, with “notes” exchanged.

The Columbia River Treaty and navigation could be impacted by changes in flow volume, timing, and duration. These changes could impact sedimentation and shoaling, safe movement of barge tows and deep draft vessels, further degradation of pile dikes, and impacts to levees which protect port assets.

Formal negotiations on the Treaty opened in May 2018. Ten rounds of talks have been held. Navigation and port interests continue to engage with the US State Department and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Chair Litt stated that he has heard about considerations of a pipeline to move water from the Columbia River Basin to California. Ms. Meira said that this could impact the Treaty. Domestically, the State Department and Corps could be examining. This could change calculations and the US position about future needs.

[Freight Mobility on the Palouse Columbia Snake River System](#)

For more detail on agenda item 16, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 16](#), which starts at 02:21:49, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Moving Wheat to Market

Glen Squires, Chief Executive Officer, Washington Grain Commission

Glenn Squires, Chief Executive Officer, Washington Grain Commission provided an overview of the critical role of transportation to the grain industry.

Wheat from Washington is exported to Africa, Asia, South America, Central America, Canada, and Mexico. In 2019, Washington wheat produced 291.5 million bushels of wheat. Mr. Squires provided a comparison of cargo capacities of different methods of moving materials.

- Semi-Truck: 26 tons; 910 bushels; 7,865 gallons
- 100-Car Train (grain): 10,000 tons; 350,000 bushels; 3,024,000 gallons
- Hopper Car: 100 tons; 3,500 bushels; 30,240 gallons
- 4-Barge Tow: 14,000 tons; 490,000 bushels; 3,500,000 gallons
- Barge: 3,500 tons; 122,500 bushels; 875,000 gallons

1 Barge = 35 Hopper Cars = 134 Trucks

1 Tow = 1.4 Trains = 538.4 Trucks

Transportation critical infrastructure is vital to the grain economy. Roads, rail (Class I and short line), ocean freight, and river barges are all used. Rail and barge are the preferred methods of moving product since they have more capacity than trucks and do not contribute to road deterioration. County and port access roads are vital for moving product to ports and railyards. Keeping the river system intact and maintained to ensure freight transport balance and undo impacts to highways, which are already in dire need of increased maintenance funding.

[Moving Wheat to Market](#)

For more detail on agenda item 17, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 16](#), which starts at 03:01:40, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Columbia Pulp

John Begley, CEO and Founder of Columbia Pulp

John Begley, CEO and Founder of Columbia Pulp, briefed the Commission on the importance of the transportation system to a new business.

Columbia Pulp uses innovative and proprietary technology in their next generation pulp mill, which is the first in North America to turn 250,000 TPY of residual wheat straw into cellulose fiber. North American based production, with an established annual feedstock, addresses security of supply issues. The mill produces 140,000 TPY of straw pulp to complement wood fiber for the manufacture of tissue, towel, paper, molded and packaging products and yields 75,000 dry tons of bio-polymers annually for industrial and agricultural applications and creates a solid fiber stream for compost, animal bedding, heating pellets and other uses.

The Columbia Pulp plant, strategically located in Southeastern Washington State, one of the leading wheat growing regions in the world. The location allows for year-round straw availability and delivery at the 450-acre site in Lyon's Ferry. This site has main line rail and interstate highway access and natural gas pipeline runs through facility. The transportation system in the area was a key consideration when looking for locations to place the plant. The area has seasonal road traffic, roads and bridges in good conditions, and good maintenance response during weather incidents. This is important for both bringing in materials, moving out product, and safe and reliable conditions for employee commuting. Straw is sourced and stored locally, with over 4 million tons of straw per year produced within a 75-mile radius of the site. Columbia Pulp has contracted for feed straw supply with Columbia Straw. The facility uses a state-of-the-art resource efficient process, resulting in lower energy, chemicals, and water per ton than traditional pulp mills. The closed loop process is sulfur free, meaning that there is no odor.

The process has a positive environmental impact. It replaces 140,000 tons of conventional pulp annually. Using Columbia Pulp's products will result in 133,000 metric tons of CO2 carbon savings per year. This is equivalent to:

- The CO2 absorbed by approximately 5.8 million trees each year
- The CO2 emitted by approximately 40,000 cars, each driving 10,000 miles per year

Utilizing wheat straw as a feedstock:

- Eliminates the need to burn 250,000 tons of straw waste (approximately 100,000 acres)
- Reduces approximately 45,000 tons of air emissions

Columbia Pulp operates year-round, 24/7. There are 4, 12-hour shifts. The plant is closed once a year for maintenance.

[Columbia Pulp](#)

For more detail on agenda item 18, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 16](#), which starts at 03:16:06, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Commission Business

Reflections and Recommendations

Commissioners discussed their reflections and responses to materials presented and recommendations that they would like to consider making to the Governor and Legislature.

- Struck by the significant economic impact of Whitman County and Eastern Washington.
- As we advance our social and racial equity conversations, we should also dovetail with locational equity.
- This was a good reminder that our rural counties have significant infrastructure needs and that they are also significantly impacted by lack of resources.
- As we move forward, we are mindful of rural versus urban inequities.
- Touched on how freight and climate intersect but would like to dive deeper into this.
- The information presented over the last two days were great reminders that the food for our state and the world comes from this region. Delivery of this food is dependent on a robust and maintained transportation system.
- Despite desire funding circumstances, it was nice to hear that the Columbia and Snake River dams are up to date on maintenance.
- Terrific to hear about the innovative research happening at WSU regarding freight.
- The Port of Whitman broadband is a great example of innovation with few resources.
- There was a common theme, across both days and multiple presenters, about the lack of preservation and maintenance for infrastructure, bridges, rails, and roads, in many different capacities. To a certain capacity, new construction also. The Commission needs to stress to legislators that a region that is the largest wheat growing in the world, we are not providing them the means to reliably move their product to the world. We need to help them get new resources to improve and maintain their transportation infrastructure.
- Very much appreciate how the cross-state groups has worked and continues to work together regarding the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport. This is extremely impressive.
- The relationship between the Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho and Washington are a model of how states and tribes can work together. The tribes are important partners for transportation systems.
- Appreciate the work that the task force did on the naming of SR 902, "Gold Star Memorial Highway. Honored to be part of this process.
- Especially concerned by the WSDOT Eastern Region's statistics about crashes of drivers' ages 14-25 years old. Wondering if there is something that we can do to address this through more comprehensive drivers education/training.
- This meeting has really highlighted the issues experienced by our rural areas. Recently participated in a National Highway Safety Administration webinar, where it was highlighted that:
 - o 4.1 million miles of public access roadway in the U.S. is rural.
 - o 46% of all road fatalities happen on rural roads.
- The issues with rural area roads will be highlighted/seem more drastic as autonomous vehicles are deployed:

- 45% of rural roadways are unpaved/unimproved.
- Lack of curbs/limited lane markings
- Often surrounded by foliage; at times covered with snow/silt; black ice
- Limited availability of HD Maps
- More pronounced vehicle dynamic effects (high CG vehicles/Trailers/Uneven loads)
- Slow moving vehicles
- Animal crossings/cattle guards
- According to the Federal Communication Commission 39% of rural Americans lack access to 25/3 service, compared to only 4% of urban Americans. 5G, due to high-density requirements, will not solve the rural internet problem. High-speed broadband access is essential for ranchers and farmers to follow commodity markets, communicate with customers, and access new markets around the world. Precision agriculture, remote schooling, rural healthcare, roadside infrastructure, and quality of life are disproportionately impacted than urban areas. The disparities are even more apparent now, during the Age of COVID. The highway of the future is the internet and we should be looking at how we can use transportation dollars to address this nationwide problem.
- Impressed by the positive environmental impact of the operations at Columbia Pulp.
- Would like for the Commission to adopt a more formal recommendation or statement on state spending on the rural transportation system or rural projects, including prioritizing preservation and maintenance.
- The recent Labor Day storm and fires have highlighted the importance of the resiliency of systems and where our systems are vulnerable. For example, currently most of our rural areas have above ground poles with copper lines. We should be moving to buried lines and upgrade to fiber.

Commissioner Young moved and Commissioner Restucci seconded the motion approving the June 16 & 17, 2020, July 7, 2020 & July 21 & 22, 2020 meeting summaries with corrections, as discussed. The motion was approved unanimously.

For more detail on agenda item 18, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording – September 16](#), which starts at 03:35:55, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: All meeting summaries approved unanimously.

Follow-Up: After corrections made, staff will post on the WSTC web page.

Next meeting: October 20 & 21, 2020

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

JERRY LITT, Chair

ROY JENNINGS, Vice-Chair

SHIV BATRA, Member

JAMES A. RESTUCCI, Member

HESTER SEREBRIN, Member

KELLY FUKAI, Member

DEBBIE YOUNG, Member

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL