



Washington State Transportation Commission

Olympia Meeting Summary December 14 & 15, 2021

December 14, 2021

Chair Roy Jennings opened the meeting at 9:00 am with introductions by commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and virtual meeting protocols.

Agenda Item 2:

Pantonium: Transforming Public Transit with On-Demand Macrotransit

Presenter:

- Remi Desa, CEO, Pantonium

The Commission was briefed on Pantonium's on-demand macrotransit software that assists cities of all sizes to make their public transit services more efficient and enhance the user experience. Pantonium's software allows transit riders to request trips as needed, from any bus stop within a designated service area. The software provides transit agencies real-time routing that moves buses off fixed routes and sends them directly to where transit riders want to go. As a result, the service eliminates transfers, improves riding time, and makes public transit more convenient and equitable.

Pantonium reports they are currently working with Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and several other cities to implement their software. Sioux Falls has seen very positive results, reporting that the number of buses in service reduced from eight to six; the percentage of riders requiring transfers to reach their destination reduced from 76% to 0%; and service was expanded from 306 stops to 368 stops.

Presentation:

[Pantonium's On-Demand Transit Platform](#)

For more detail on agenda item 2, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:03:24, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 3:

Road Usage Charge (RUC) Update

Presenter:

- Travis Dunn, Vice President, CDM Smith

A detailed review was provided of the 2021 RUC update report to the legislature currently being prepared. The 2021 report will report on several key analyses, including an update to the 2015 financial analysis, the equity analysis and outreach results that evaluate the relative impact of RUC on low-income households, and a summary of recommendations for reducing the cost of collection focusing on customer service, enforcement, and procurement. An overview of the upcoming 2022 pilot testing being planned as also reviewed.

The rapid expansion of hybrid and all-electric vehicles was discussed, as was the acceleration of autonomous vehicle (AV) technology and the impact these developments will have on gas tax revenues. It was noted that the Commission should consider highlighting in their report to the legislature the increasing urgency of advance the transition to RUC as a replacement to the gas tax.

Presentation:

[WA RUC - Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:04:14, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 4:

Oregon Road Usage Charge (RUC) Program

Presenter:

- Maureen Bock, Chief Innovation Officer, Oregon Department of Transportation

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) provided an update on their RUC program operations and where it is headed into the future. ODOT's payment framework was reviewed, which draws on the use of a third-party account manager to collect driver mileage and perform transaction processing and invoicing. Payments are made to the account manager which then transfers payment to the state. Also reviewed was the local option RUC pilot that was completed in the Portland area in 2021. The results of the pilot are currently being analyzed.

The agency is currently kicking off plans to implement a "connected vehicle ecosystem" that will combine cloud-based analytics and an open technical architecture to connect systems, vehicles, and facilities. This is expected to provide an efficient method for data and fees to be collected, help the agency better manage congestion, increase system reliability, and support climate goals by helping to reduce congestion.

Presentation:

[RUC and Toll](#)

For more detail on agenda item 4, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:03:30, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 5:

Paratransit Service Considerations: Lessons for Recovery Planning, Post COVID-19

Presenters:

- Dr. Andrew L. Dannenberg, Medical Doctor, Master of Public Health, University of Washington
- Lamis Abu Ashour, PH.D. Student, University of Washington
- Yiyuan Wang, Ph.D. Student, University of Washington

The Commission was briefed on research at the University of Washington evaluating the impacts to paratransit services in the Seattle region resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The research also addressed the impacts of a returning demand on paratransit service efficiency, equity, and quality. Based on the research completed, paratransit services experienced substantially reduced demand and an increased need to provide equitable services while protecting their clients and staff's safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research team provided options for addressing key post-pandemic challenges including returning ridership, longstanding cost efficiency challenges, service offerings.

Presentation:

[Paratransit Service Considerations](#)

For more detail on agenda item 5, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:32:24, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 6:

Mobility Bill of Rights

Presenters:

- Anna Zivarts, Director, Disability Mobility Initiative, Disability Rights Washington
- Paulo Nunes-Ueno, Transportation & Land-Use Policy Lead, Front and Centered

The Commission was briefed on research completed as part of the Disability Mobility Initiative focused on transportation access for non-drivers in Washington state. One of the main themes emerging from their research is that many people who cannot drive would like to be able to use

transit services but find it difficult because the sidewalk access points. Some people with mobility issues also reported sidewalks in their community are not well maintained and create safety issues. As a result, people in wheelchairs may opt to navigate using the road when no sidewalk is available, or when the sidewalk is too hazardous to use, which presents significant safety risks. Recommendations emerging from this research were reviewed including the need to eliminate constraints that limit sidewalk investments, improving representation of non-drivers in the public transportation field, and ensuring that connection points are a focus of transportation planning.

An overview was provided on work related to climate justice. Transportation plays an outsized role in greenhouse gas emissions, and people of color bear a disproportionate share of negative impacts from the pollution. Front and Centered is evaluating these impacts and proposing ways to reduce the disparate impact the traditional transportation system has on underrepresented and marginalized communities.

Presentation:

[Mobility Bill of Rights](#)

For more detail on agenda item 6, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:20:40, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 7:

WSDOT's 2021 American Disabilities Act (ADA) Annual Report

Presenter:

- Gary Sea, External ADA Program Analyst, Office of Equal Opportunity, Washington State Department of Transportation

An overview was provided on WSDOT's ADA annual report. The report summarizes progress WSDOT has made in 2021 toward removing accessibility barriers in WSDOT buildings, facilities, rest areas and WSF operations. The agency's ADA work is guided by the state's ADA transition plan (updated in 2017) which documents an inventory of existing barriers in facilities under the department's control and provides a schedule for removal of these barriers.

Presentation:

[ADA Annual Report](#)

For more detail on agenda item 7, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:58:46, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 8:

Public Attitudes Towards High-Speed Rail Service in the Northwest

Presenter:

- Dave Metz, Partner & President, FM3 Research

The Commission was briefed on the results of a survey of Oregon and Washington voters assessing their attitudes toward a high-speed rail line connecting major cities in the Northwest. Climate change, traffic, and deteriorating transportation infrastructure were identified as “extremely” or “serious” problems by more than 50% of respondents. Respondents identified expected benefits from high-speed rail, and the primary reasons why they might oppose a high-speed rail project. Additional insights were provided by breaking the data out by key demographics such as age, political affiliation, and geographic area.

Presentation:

[Northwest High-Speed Rail Survey Analysis](#)

For more detail on agenda item 8, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 04:19:05, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 9:

Naming the Next Washington State Ferry - *ACTION*

Presenter:

- Reema Griffith, Executive Director, Washington State Transportation Commission

Commission staff provided an overview of the process and results of the Commission’s public outreach effort related to naming the state’s new hybrid-electric Olympic Class 144-car ferry. The public outreach efforts resulted in the submittal of 19 eligible naming proposals, six of which were advanced as finalists for further public review and input. In addition to receiving significant input from the public, the Commission also conducted a survey of its Ferry Riders Opinion Group (FROG) and received input from members of the Ferry Advisory Committees in ferry-served communities. All tribes in the state we also contacted and encouraged to provide input. Based upon the results of the collective input received, the Commission voted unanimously to name the new ferry the “Wishkah”.

Presentation:

[2021 Ferry Naming - Overview of Public Input](#)

For more detail on agenda item 9, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 04:44:20, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: Commissioner Young made a motion to name the new hybrid-electric Olympic Class ferry the “Wishkah”. Commissioner Batra seconded the motion. The Commission voted 7-0 to name the ferry as moved.

Commissioner Litt moved to approve Resolution #743 designating the new ferry name. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The Commission voted 7-0 to adopt the resolution.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 10:

Facility Naming Proposal to Designate the Tacoma Rail Station the “Tacoma Dome Station” - *ACTION*

Presenter:

- Ron Pate, Director, Rail, Freight, and Ports Division, Washington State Department of Transportation

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff requested the Commission designate the Tacoma Amtrak Cascades station the “Tacoma Dome Station.” The background of the station and public review and input process was shared, noting that all other transportation modes around the station refer to it as the “Tacoma Dome Station.” In 2015, a Citizen’s Advisory Committee established by WSDOT recommended formally naming the facility the “Tacoma Dome Station” to align with all other modes. The Commission acted unanimously to designate the station as requested.

Presentation:

[Naming Tacoma Amtrak Cascades Station](#)

For more detail on agenda item 10, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 05:08:35, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: Commissioner Litt made a motion to name the station the “Tacoma Dome Station.” Commissioner Restucci seconded the motion. The Commission voted 7-0 to name the station as moved.

Commissioner Young made a motion to approve Resolution #744 designating the station naming. Commissioner Batra seconded the motion. The Commission voted 7-0 to adopt the resolution.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

DAY 2: December 15, 2021

Chair Roy Jennings opened the meeting at 9:00 am with introductions by commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and virtual meeting protocols.

Agenda Item 12: Secretary's Report

Presenter:

- Roger Millar, Secretary, Washington State Department of Transportation

Secretary Millar updated the Commission on the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) activities.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 12, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:02:24, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 13: Tolling Facility Performance Update

Presenter:

- Ed Barry, Director, Tolling Division, Washington State Department of Transportation

November 2021 Traffic and Revenue Forecast: The November 2021 Traffic and Revenue Forecast assumptions was reviewed. It was noted that the same assumptions used in the previous forecast were in use for this forecast. Actual traffic and revenue performance through June 2021 is incorporated, as are toll rate increases adopted by the Commission in August 2021. Using this data, the November 2021 revenues and fees forecast is higher than the June 2021 forecast, but below the November 2019 forecast.

FY 2021 Traffic and Revenue Actuals:

- Traffic and revenue actuals (March 2020 through May 2021) are above the March 2021 forecast by 15%
- June toll traffic and revenues are above the June forecast
- And the March 2020 through June 2021 toll revenues are below the November 2019 (pre-COVID) forecast by 40% (\$127.2 million)

I-405/SR167 Update: I-405/SR 167 continue to meet WSDOT's goals of allowing drivers a choice for a faster, more reliable trip while covering the costs of toll operations.

Presentation:

[Toll Facilities Performance-Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 13, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:08:43, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 14: Washington State Ferries Service & Performance Update

Presenters:

- Nicole McIntosh, Chief of Staff, Washington State Ferries, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Rick Singer, Director, Finance & Administration, Washington State Ferries, Washington State Department of Transportation

An overview of the current state ferry system's operations was provided. WSF has identified four pillars of providing service: ridership, vessel availability, crewing and budget. All four pillars have suffered recently. The vessels pillar remains at risk given WSF's small and aging fleet and in the past three years three vessels have been retired reducing the fleet from 24 to 21 vessels. COVID has resulted in significantly reduced ridership and put the crewing pillar at risk as well. An overview was provided of the recently implemented alternative service plan, designed to provide riders with greater reliability and predictability. Under the plan, service is slowly being added back as crewing is available.

In addition to the challenges presented by COVID, WSF has an aging workforce. These are highly trained, highly skilled staff and difficult to replace. WSF is implementing a staffing plan to address these issues.

The November 2021 ridership and revenue forecast reflects a pessimistic view, with both ridership and revenue expected to be below the September 2021 forecast. WSF is seeing a reversal of some of the more positive trends from this summer as ridership in September and October dipped more than expected, likely a result of continuing concerns about the Omicron COVID variant, mask mandates, vaccination issues, etc. They noted it is difficult to predict what the "new normal" will look like or when we will reach it. The next forecast cycle will be available February 2022.

Presentation:

[WSF Service-Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 14, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:29:43, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 15:

I-405/SR 167 Express Toll Lane Corridor – Interim Financial Plan Report

Presenters:

- Doug Vaughn, Chief Financial Officer, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Robert Woeck, I-405/SR 167 Deputy Program Administrator, Washington State Department of Transportation

The Commission was briefed on the status of the I-405 and SR 167 Express Toll Lane revenues. WSDOT reported that revenues are down on both I-405 and SR 167. Several projects have been moved out from the 2019 delivery schedule. However, performance between April and June 2021 continued to meet WSDOT's goals of allowing drivers a choice for a faster, more reliable trip while covering the costs of toll operation.

In September the department delivered a preliminary report to the legislature responding to two proviso requests in the 2021-23 Transportation Budget.

- Section 306 proviso response: The department has determined that phasing or modifying the SR 522-SR 527 project would not deliver systemwide benefits and not meet the I-405 bus rapid transit deployment schedule.
- Section 209 proviso response: The department detailed how corridor bond proceeds can cover the proposed construction plan from the 2021-2023 transportation budget, while also detailing potential project delivery schedules and funding scenarios that would fill the funding gap.

WSDOT reviewed I-405 / SR 167 Executive Advisory Group recommendations and the financial impediments to meeting the Current Law schedule and noted that specific action will be needed by the Governor and legislature at key points in early 2022 to keep projects moving and to avoid delays.

Presentation:

[I-405/SR167 Express Toll Lane Corridor](#)

For more detail on agenda item 15, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:49:03, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 16:

I-405/SR 167 Express Toll Lanes – Update on Toll Rate & Policy Setting for the Future Corridor Expansion

Presenters:

- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission

Commission staff provided an overview of the draft timeline for toll rate and policy setting activities necessary through the opening of the I-405/SR 167 Express Toll Lane facility planned in 2024. Work in 2022 will focus on preparing preliminary considerations and modeling and

conducting public outreach. Rulemaking is expected to begin in the winter of 2022 and conclude by spring of 2023 in anticipation of a mid- to late-2023 bond sale.

Presentation:

[I-405/SR 167 Express Toll Lanes - Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 16, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:19:29, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 17:

Civil Penalties for Unpaid Tolls

Presenters:

- Ed Barry, Director, Tolling Division, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Patricia Michaud, Operations Manager, Tolling Division Customer Service Center, Washington State Department of Transportation

The Commission received a presentation on the collection of civil penalties for unpaid tolls. The law provides for a \$40 penalty to be levied for each unpaid toll. Most tolls (up to 97% of all trips) are paid prior to a penalty being issued. The WSDOT tolling staff provided an overview of the escalation process that gets triggered when a vehicle owner fails to pay a toll in a timely manner and discussed the evolution of the civil penalty process based on feedback from the public. Currently, administrative judges have some latitude to waive penalties based on certain mitigating circumstances. In addition, WSDOT has implemented a penalty forgiveness program designed to encourage compliance with tolls. Hearings and debt collection have dropped substantially while cash received from civil penalty-related tolls increased.

Presentation:

[Toll Civil Penalties](#)

For more detail on agenda item 17, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:41:09, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 18:

Public Comment

Tom Thiersch, Jefferson County, expressed concern that the timeframe for the RUC needs to be accelerated, noting that conversion to electric vehicles is occurring more rapidly than expected. Thiersch requested the Commission highlight the need for rapid adoption of RUC when submitting its annual RUC report to the Legislature.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 18, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:02:02, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 19: Commission Business

Presenters:

- Reema Griffith, Executive Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Aaron Halbert, Fiscal Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission

A. Commission Discussion:

Reflections and Recommendations

- We need to modernize the way we think about funding transportation. The Commission needs to encourage the legislature to move more rapidly in adopting RUC.
- Commissioners expressed interest in the presentations on disability access and were impressed with how much progress can be made for mobility by addressing simple things like sidewalks. Commissioners appreciated the focus on mobility for all and felt they should be looking at these issues in more thoughtful, inclusive ways.
- The Pantonium presentation provided very good information on transit and fits nicely within the Commission's goals for using technology. Technology is being used in new ways to help rural communities improve mobility and transit.
- The Oregon OReGO program is intriguing. There is interest in learning more about how blockchain can be used.

November Meeting Summary – No modifications or adjustments were made to the November meeting summary. The summary can be considered final and published.

B. Work Session - Review current Drafts of the Following Draft Reports (Action to delegate finalization):

- **Assessment of Alternative Transportation Funding Sources (Legislative Request) - *ACTION***

Aaron Halbert provided the Commission with an overview of a draft memo from the Commission to Representative Goehner. The memo addresses portions of a Legislative proviso, specifically focusing on possible alternative funding approaches for addressing maintenance and preservation needs of the state highway system. It outlines several viable funding options the legislature could consider using to address the current transportation funding gap. In addition to the revenue options provided, the memo also

outlines policy changes that could result in efficiencies and reduce costs for maintenance and preservation.

Action: Commissioner Batra made a motion to delegate to the Chair and Vice Chair the authority to finalize the letter to Representative Goehner prior to the Legislative session. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

- **Commission Annual Report – *ACTION***

The WSTC Executive Director reviewed the most recent updates to draft sections of the 2021 Annual Report. Members of the Commission discussed whether to state a target cap for the WSF farebox recovery. Members expressed concern that without comparative data (for example, farebox recovery rates for transit) a stated rate for ferries lacks appropriate context. Commission staff agreed to work on rephrasing this section and Commissioner Fukai agreed to work with other members and staff to develop acceptable language.

Action: Commissioner Restucci made a motion to delegate to the Chair and Vice Chair the authority to finalize the Annual Report prior to session, with the assistance of Commissioner Fukai. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Litt. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

- **Commission Tolling Report - *ACTION***

The WSTC Deputy Director reviewed the 2022 Tolling Report Recommendations Section. The recommendations are intended to inform legislative considerations that support the capacity to sustainably build and maintain tolled facilities in Washington state. The recommendations address system-wide issues, as well as Express Toll Lanes/HOT lanes, and the SR 520 Floating Bridge and the I-90 Floating Bridge.

Action: Commissioner Fukai made a motion to delegate to the Chair and Vice Chair the authority to finalize the report prior to session with the assistance of Commissioner Litt. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Restucci. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0, with 1 excused.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 19, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:06:04, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: The Commission voted to delegate authority to the Chair and Vice-Chair) to finalize the documents discussed above.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

The meeting adjourned 1t 1:17 p.m.
Next meeting: January 19 & 20, 2022