



Washington State Transportation Commission

Olympia Meeting Summary January 19 & 20, 2022

January 19, 2022

Chair Roy Jennings opened the meeting at 9:30 am with introductions by commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and virtual meeting protocols.

Agenda Item 2:

Request to Approve Planned State Route 99 Tunnel Rate Adjustment – *ACTION*

Presenters:

- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Brent Baker, Sr. Vice President and Managing Director, WSP USA

Commission staff reviewed the current plan under the toll regulation for the State Route 99 tunnel which includes a planned 3% toll rate increase every three years, starting July 2022. After receiving an update on the traffic and revenue performance of the tunnel, the Commission confirmed the planned 3% toll rate increase which will take effect on July 1, 2022.

Presentation:

[SR 99 Tunnel Planned Rate Adjustment](#)

For more detail on agenda item 2, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:03:39, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: Commissioner Litt made a motion to confirm the planned 3% increase for the State Route 99 tunnel and to make clarifying technical edits to the SR 520 Bridge toll rate tables.

Commissioner Restucci seconded the motion. The Commission voted 7-0 to approve the motion.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 3:

Climate Change Blueprint: Nationally and in Washington State

Presenters:

- Becky Kelley, Senior Policy Advisor for Climate, Governor Inslee's Office
- Debbie Driver, Senior Policy Advisor for Transportation, Governor Inslee's Office
- Stu Clark, Special Assistant to the Director, Washington State Department of Ecology
- Kathy Taylor, Air Quality Program Manager, Washington State Department of Ecology

The Commission was briefed on the implementation of the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), enacted in 2021 with planned full implementation by January 1, 2023. Washington's strategy for reducing carbon pollution and achieving limits on greenhouse gas emissions is being implemented through the CCA and new Clean Fuel Standards. Panel members reviewed the state's preparations to fully implement the program and reviewed the ways Washington State is leveraging its role in national, multi-state alliances to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Governor's transportation policy advisor reviewed the Governor's 2022 Climate agenda and updated the Commission on specific provisions contained in the Governor's proposed 2022 supplemental transportation budget.

Presentations:

[Climate Change Blueprint](#)

[Washington's Climate Commitment Act](#)

[Governor Inslee's 2022 Climate Agenda - Transportation](#)

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:19:18, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 4:

Columbia River I-5 Bridge Replacement Program Update

Presenter:

- Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, Interstate Bridge Replacement
- Frank Green, Assistant Program Administrator, Interstate Bridge Replacement

The I-5 Bridge Replacement (IBR) program is making significant progress towards its target to start construction in 2025 of a replacement to the I-5 bridge over the Columbia River. The Commission was provided an update on the current state of the IBR program, its progress on developing new design options, community engagement and outreach efforts, and financial planning. Tolling is expected to be a key component of the financial plan and the IBR team provided an overview of the work that lies ahead for the Oregon and Washington Transportation Commissions, serving as each state's tolling authority.

Presentation:

[IBR Program-Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 4, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:25:19, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 5: 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 activities.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 5, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:12:04, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 6: Tolling Facility Financial Update

Presenter:

- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission

Commission staff provided an update on the status of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB) fund balance and loan needs consistent with RCW 47.46.200. While the facility did not meet pre-pandemic forecasted performance in 2021 for traffic and revenue as a result of impacts on travel patterns related to COVID, the declines were smaller than anticipated. Commission staff reviewed projections for the coming year, and that analysis indicates that no changes are needed in the current loan to meet funding requirements for this biennium. Unfunded loan needs through June 2030 are now estimated at \$57.9 million. Loans are scheduled for repayment using TNB toll revenues from July 2030 through summer 2033.

Presentation:

[2022 TNB Loan Update Summary](#)

For more detail on agenda item 6, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:17:45, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 7:

I-405 / SR 167 Express Toll Lanes Corridor Operations Plan Review

Presenter:

- Jennifer Charlebois, Director of Systems and Engineering Toll Division, Washington State Department of Transportation

The Commission reviewed the operational plans for the future expanded I-405/SR 167 express toll lanes (ETLs) corridor. The planned opening of the I-405 ETLs from Bellevue to Renton in 2024 will unite the existing I-405 and SR 167 facilities to create a 50-mile ETL corridor. WSDOT staff reviewed current plans to ensure operations of the corridor are being designed to support a seamless customer service experience, effective traffic management, and generation of needed revenues. Staff also provided an overview of plans for customer education and strategic use of signage that will be needed to communicate the variety of options available to customers, including dynamic toll rates, multiple payment options, destination pricing, and multiple entry/exit points.

Presentation:

[I-405/SR167 Toll Lanes Corridor Operations](#)

For more detail on agenda item 7, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:39:47, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 8:

Broadband Deployment within State Highway Right of Way

Presenter:

- Paul Neal, Senior Counsel, Joint Transportation Committee

Staff from the Joint Transportation Committee briefed the Commission on their recent study to identify strategies to increase installation of broadband infrastructure on the state highway right of way. Over 23% of households in Washington State have no or inadequate broadband service. This study was directed by the Legislature to assist the Washington State Department of Transportation as they develop policies governing permitting access to the rights of way and as they develop collaborative partnerships to reach underserved communities. The resulting study provides guidance on establishing appropriate governance and strategies for prioritizing right of way access.

Presentation:

[Broadband Deployment](#)

For more detail on agenda item 8, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:02:35, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 9: Short Line Rail Inventory & Needs Assessment

Presenter:

- Dave Catterson, Coordinator, Joint Transportation Committee

The Commission received a briefing on the Joint Transportation Committee's (JTC) update to the Washington State Short Line Rail Inventory and Needs Assessment. Short line railroads handle one in every four rail cars moving through the nationwide network and they are a critical component of moving goods to market in Washington State. The report highlights the key challenges facing these Short Line Rail operations including the need to address deteriorating track conditions and the need for additional funding for construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation and makes recommendations to the Legislature on ways to improve and enhance state support.

Presentation:

[Short Line Rail Assessment](#)

For more detail on agenda item 9, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:20:49, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Chair Roy Jennings reminded the Commission that the meeting will continue Thursday, January 20, 2022, and recessed the meeting.

DAY 2: January 20, 2022

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 11: 2022 Legislative Session Overview

Presenter:

- Jill Satran, Senior Policy Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission

Commission staff provided an overview of the 2022 Legislative session.

Presentation:

[2022 Session Overview](#)

For more detail on agenda item 11, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:02:44, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 12: Governor's Supplemental Transportation Budget

Presenter:

- Erik Hansen, Senior Budget Assistant, Office of Financial Management

Mr. Hansen briefed the Commission on the Governor's proposed 2022 Supplemental Transportation Budget. Governor Inslee's priorities include moving his climate agenda forward, ferry reliability, preservation and maintenance of the state's highway system, keeping the state's commitments to previously approved transportation projects, and enhancing the state's focus on equity in transportation investments. Transportation revenues continue to fall short of funding needs and therefore the Governor's proposed budget includes several new sources of funding to meet current needs including Climate Commitment Act funds, new federal funds, and a one-time transfer from the state's General Fund.

Presentation:

[Governor's Proposed Transportation Supplemental Budget](#)

For more detail on agenda item 12, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:17:17, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 13:

Transportation Partners: A Look Ahead at 2022 Legislative Priorities

Presenters:

- Axel Swanson, Managing Director, Washington State Association of Counties
- Brandy Delange, Government Relations Advocate, Association of Washington Cities
- Michael Shaw, Lobbyist, Washington State Transit Association
- Chris Herman, Senior Director, Washington Public Ports Association

Most trips involve city streets and county roads, including significant freight movement which may begin and end in ports. Public transportation is a vital link in our statewide transportation system. Partners from the cities, counties, transit, and ports briefed the Commission on their top legislative priorities for 2022. Common priorities include increased and dedicated funding, funding for preservation and maintenance of investments, and equity-based transportation goals.

Presentations:

[Washington State Association of County Engineers](#)

[AWC - 2022 Legislative Priorities](#)

[WSTA - 2022 Legislative Priorities](#)

For more detail on agenda item 13, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:33:13, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 14:

State Transportation Agency Partners: A Look Ahead at 2022 Legislative Priorities

Presenters:

- Ashley Probart, Executive Director, Transportation Improvement Board
- Jane Wall, Executive Director, County Road Administration Board
- Brian Ziegler, Executive Director, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board
- Steven Breaux, Director, Legislative Relations, Washington State Department of Transportation
- John Vezina, Director, Government Relations, Washington State Ferries, Washington State Department of Transportation

State transportation partners briefed the Commission on their overall agency and legislative priorities for 2022. The presenting agencies each play a unique role in funding critical system preservation and improvements throughout the state. These agencies discussed the impacts of lower than anticipated state revenues and how they have adjusted to the reduction of program funds. Funding remains a critical issue into 2022 for all agencies, as is the long-term future of transportation funding for both existing projects and for preservation and maintenance. They also discussed their keen interest in how the state will transition from reliance on the gas tax to an alternative funding approach as vehicle owners are transitioning to vehicles that operate on cleaner energy options.

Presentations:

[TIB - State Agency Partners](#)

[FMSIB - State Agency Partners](#)

For more detail on agenda item 14, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:33:13, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

**Agenda Item 15:
Public Comment**

Mr. Bob Ortblad expressed concern about the current bridge designs under consideration by the Interstate Bridge Replacement Project, considering them unsafe due to their steep grades. He also expressed concern about the adequacy of Washington State Department of Transportation’s evaluation of an immersed tube tunnel, an alternative design he supports.

Mr. Joe Kunzler spoke in support of more funding for the Washington State Ferry system. The system has been strained from the impacts the pandemic and an aging fleet. He also supports investment in electric and hybrid ferries, and advocates for the implementation of a low-income fare option.

Presentation: There were no associated presentations.

For more detail on agenda item 15, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:38:33, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

**Agenda Item 16:
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

Commission Discussion:

Reflections and Recommendation

- Its good to see the increased attention on the Washington State Ferries. These issues have been a concern for some time and the focus on resolving these concerns is needed.
- The information provided on how to use the state’s right of way to improve access to broadband was useful and highlights a broader question about other important uses of the

state right of way, such as electrification. Perhaps this can be investigated as a way to support providing electric vehicle charging infrastructure at all rest stops.

- The Commission heard a great deal of support in this meeting for implementing a road usage charge and interest in putting that in place sooner rather than later.
- There was much discussion about the Climate Commitment Act and the additional transportation funding it will provide. It underscores the need for the road usage charge, because as the state moves to cleaner energy vehicles, the less revenue will be generated by gas tax for the transportation system.

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

Reports Submitted to the 2022 Legislature

- Annual Report
- Tolling Report
- Road Usage Charge Report
- Autonomous Vehicle work Group Report
- I-405 / SR 167 Express Toll Lanes Low-Income Tolling Study

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 16, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:44:27, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

The Commission adjourned at 12 noon.

Next meeting: February 15 & 16, 2022