



# Washington State Transportation Commission

## Olympia Meeting Summary May 17 & 18, 2022

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### May 17, 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 2: Secretary's Report

#### Presenter:

- Amy Scarton, Deputy Secretary, Washington State Department of Transportation

An update was given on Washington State Department of Transportation's activities.

**Presentation:** There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 2, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:03:28, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

### Agenda Item 3: 2022 Legislative Wrap Up – Update from State Transportation Agencies

#### Presenters:

- Jill Satran, Senior Policy Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Steven Breaux, Director, Legislative Relations, Washington State Department of Transportation
- John Vezina, Director, Government Relations, Washington State Ferries, Washington State Department of Transportation

An overview was provided by staff with the Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Ferries, and the Transportation Commission on key outcomes from the 2022 Legislative Session.

**Presentation:** There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:13:43, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

#### **Agenda Item 4:**

### **Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Equity Strategy and Advisory Committee**

**Presenter:**

- Charles Patton, Program Manager for Equity Policy and Initiatives, Puget Sound Regional Council

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has committed to ensuring that equity is infused throughout their organization. They have established an Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) that represents people of color from each of their four member counties. The EAC will be responsible for developing the regional equity strategy and for ensuring that the strategy is incorporated into their planning and project selection activities. PSRC has developed several tools they use to evaluate the impact their work is expected to have on different communities, and they are beginning to implement an equity pilot program to identify disparities or gaps in the transportation system. Ultimately, the data gathered from this process will be used to inform future project selection.

**Presentation:**

[Equity & PSRC](#)

For more detail on agenda item 4, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:35:21, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

#### **Agenda Item 5:**

### **Legislative Wrap Up – Update from Local Partners**

**Presenters:**

- Brandy DeLange, Government Relations Advocate, Association of Washington Cities
- Axel Swanson, Managing Director, Washington Association of County Engineers
- Ashley Probart, Executive Director, Transportation Improvement Board
- Brian Ziegler, Executive Director, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board

Representatives of local agency partners provided a wrap-up of the 2022 legislative session. A number of bills passed this session that will advance transportation priorities in cities, counties, and regions across the state. They expressed appreciation and support for the additional transportation investments delivered through the Move Ahead Washington package, but also expressed concern that local transportation needs were largely left unaddressed in the package. In

addition, the Move Ahead Washington package relies in part on funds redirected from the Public Works Assistance Account which had been expected to be restored as a major source of local infrastructure funding.

**Presentations:**

[AWC - Legislative Recap](#)

[WSAC - Legislative Update](#)

[TIB - Legislative Update](#)

[FMSIB - Legislative Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 5, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:05:04, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 6:**

**Tolling Performance and Financial Update; Tolling Division Annual Report**

**Presenter:**

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

An overview of traffic and revenue performance of each of Washington State’s tolled facilities was provided for the period July 2021-March 2022. While performance on some facilities has improved since the February 2022 forecast, all remain significantly below pre-COVID forecasts. A brief overview of the Tolling Division Annual report was also provided.

**Presentation:**

[Toll Facilities Q3 Traffic & Revenue Actuals Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 6, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:11:59, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 7:**

**Autonomous Vehicle Work Group Update**

**Presenter:**

- Scott Shogan, Vice President, WSP USA

The Autonomous Vehicle (AV) Work Group is continuing to develop its legacy deliverable, the “Roadmap to the Future”. This document, to be delivered in 2023, is expected to serve as a resource to policy makers as they consider future actions to enable the expansion of autonomous vehicles in Washington State. The AV Work Group is also working to define a proposal to implement an AV pilot project designed to test last-mile solutions to increase accessibility to transit in urban and small city/town settings. WSTC and the AV Work Group will establish the scope, plan and funding need, and will report back to the Legislature by the 2023 session.

**Presentation:**

[AV - Work Group Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 7, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:44:31, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 8:**

**Update on Road Usage Charge Research & Pilot Planning**

**Presenter:**

- Travis Dunn, Vice President, CDM Smith

An update was provided on the Commission’s Road Usage Charge (RUC) research program. Several key components of the RUC workplan are currently underway. The project equity analysis will be ready for publication at the end of May; the financial analysis is being updated to include two new fleet electrification scenarios; and innovation research is being incorporated into pilot planning. Planning is under way for several small-scale RUC pilots slated to begin later this year. The project workplan for the remainder of 2022 was reviewed.

**Presentation:**

[RUC - Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 8, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:07:33, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 9:**

**Washington State Department of Transportation’s Highway System Plan Update**

**Presenters:**

- Allison Camden, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Multimodal Development & Delivery, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Karena Houser, Statewide Planning Manager, Washington State Department of Transportation

The Highway System Plan is a major component of the Washington State Department of Transportation’s (WSDOT’s) multimodal transportation planning effort, and covers key topics including system preservation, highway maintenance, and paths and trails. WSDOT is using a scenario planning approach as a way to focus stakeholder input and investment prioritization. The end result will be a plan for transportation investments in the highway system over the next twenty years. The plan is expected to be complete and adopted in late 2022.

**Presentation:**

[Highway System Plan - Funding Scenarios](#)

For more detail on agenda item 9, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:51:24, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

## **Agenda Item 10: Legislative Funding for Tacoma Narrows Bridge**

### **Presenter:**

- Emily Randall, State Senator, 26<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

Senator Randall provided insight into the passage of Substitute Senate Bill 5488 which provides for adjustments to the toll rate on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. This adjustment provides needed relief to community members and others who rely on the bridge to connect to jobs, health care, family, etc. Transportation costs are correlated with health equity issues in the region. The adjustment will be funded by transfers from the state's Operating Budget. She clarified that the intent of the legislation is to adjust toll rates rather than to reduce the time that the bridge will be tolled.

**Presentation:** There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 10, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 04:37:23 on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

## **Agenda Item 11: Columbia River I-5 Bridge Replacement Program Update**

### **Presenters:**

- Greg Johnson, Program Administrator, Interstate Bridge Replacement
- Frank Green, Assistant Program Administrator, Washington State Department of Transportation

Staff with the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program provided an update on the Columbia River I-5 Bridge Replacement Project, including the proposed modified Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). This LPA will be used to study the project in depth to inform in a supplemental environmental impact statement and associated process. Three components required specific focus as the LPA was developed: transit options, the Hayden Island/Marine Drive Interchange, and the number of auxiliary lanes that will be carried across the bridge.

The team also discussed the current status of discussions on tolling policy and governance structures. Tolling rate setting will be a joint Washington/Oregon responsibility however administration of the toll program will be assigned to the Oregon Department of Transportation's tolling program. Concern was expressed by commission members that the Oregon Department of Transportation has not yet implemented a tolling program, and Washington's experience should be considered. An overview of the project timeline was provided.

**Presentation:**

[IBR - Program Progress](#)

For more detail on agenda item 11, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 04:48:09 on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 12:**

**WSDOT Virtual Coordination Center**

**Presenter:**

- Travis Phelps, Mobility and Technology Manager, Management of Mobility Division  
Washington State Department of Transportation

The Virtual Coordination Center is a cloud-based congestion management platform that enables eight Puget Sound public agencies to collaborate in real time, improving congestion caused by major incidents. The VCC brings together a wide array of real-time data to inform response management (site management and clearance/removal), traffic and transit management, traveler information. It will allow the agencies to work together to clear congestion, provide rapid incident response and get back to efficient traffic flow more quickly. Initiated originally by Challenge Washington, this public/private endeavor is currently in development and plans to begin testing as early as late fall of 2022.

**Presentation:**

[WSDOT - Virtual Coordination Center](#)

For more detail on agenda item 12, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 05:30:36 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 Wednesday, May 18, 2022, and recessed the meeting.

## **DAY 2: May 18, 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 14:**

#### **Ben Franklin Transit Connect – On-Demand Micro-transit Service**

##### **Presenter:**

- Kevin Sliger, Planning & Service Development, Ben Franklin Transit

In 2020, Tri-Cities Ben Franklin Transit launched “Connect,” an on-demand transit service added as an extension of its fixed route service. Connect provides last-mile service to encourage increased transit ridership. Using Via, an on-line app, riders can access ride-sharing service from transit hubs for regional travel, network service between hubs not currently served by a fixed route service, and connections to low-demand areas such as less dense, rural settings. The service has been well received and ridership continues to increase. Connect now serves over 400 riders per day.

##### **Presentation:**

[Ben Franklin Transit - Connect](#)

For more detail on agenda item 14, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:03:29, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

### **Agenda Item 15:**

#### **Fare Policy Change for Washington state Ferries – Passengers 18 and Under Ride Free – *ACTION***

##### **Presenters:**

- Aaron Halbert, Financial Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Rick Singer, Director, Finance & Administration, Washington State Ferries, Washington State Department of Transportation

As part of the Move Ahead Washington package, the Commission was directed to adopt a fare policy that allows passengers 18 years of age and under to ride free on Washington State Ferries. The Commission was provided an overview of the financial and operational analysis of the fare change and the steps they will need to take to implement the new policy. The body voted unanimously to initiate the expedited rule making process (CR-105) with the intent the new policy will be in effect by October 1, 2022.

##### **Presentation:**

[Ferry Fare Adjustment - 18 & under passengers](#)

For more detail on agenda item 15, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:30:31, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** By a unanimous vote (7 yes, 0 no), the commission voted to start the expedited administrative rule making process to implement the Youth Ride Free policy for the Washington State Ferries by October 1, 2022.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

## **Agenda Item 16:**

### **2022 Legislative Session: Insights on the “Move Ahead Washington”**

#### **Presenters:**

- Marko Liias, State Senator and Senate Transportation Committee Chair
- Jake Fey, State Representative and House Transportation Committee Chair

The Chairs of the Senate and House Transportation Committees provided their perspectives on the 2022 legislative session and provided insights on the passage of “Move Ahead Washington.” The Move Ahead Washington transportation investment package provides nearly \$17 billion of new transportation investment over the next 16 years. This package is an expression of a new vision for the future of transportation. The package was developed to address core principles such as finishing the work that has been started, maintaining, and preserving the existing system, and making strategic investments in a small number of key areas. It reflects a strengthened commitment to providing a multimodal transportation system and to meeting the state’s environmental goals.

**Presentation:** There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 16, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:49:24, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

## **Agenda Item 17:**

### **Initiating the Process of Adjusting Toll Rates on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge**

– *ACTION*

#### **Presenter:**

- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission

During the 2022 legislative session, the legislature passed Substitute Senate Bill 5488 which provides funding to adjust toll rates on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. The commission was briefed on the background of the bill and reviewed a financial analysis of various toll rate scenarios in which a reduction could be applied. As part of the implementation process, the commission must provide an opportunity for public input on options being considered. Three options were discussed and agreed to advancing for purposes of public input in June:

- Option 1: Flat 75 cents toll rate reduction for only two-axle vehicles
- Option 2: Flat 75 cents toll rate reduction for all vehicles
- Option 3: Flat 75 cents toll rate reduction for two-axle vehicles, with a per axle multiplier applied for vehicles with 3+ axles

The Commission will select the toll rate reduction option to advance via an official rule making proposal (CR-102) at its July 19/20 meeting, based upon the public input gathered and further financial analysis to be presented from WSDOT and Commission staff.

**Presentation:**

[2022 TNB Rate Setting](#)

For more detail on agenda item 17, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:54:03, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** By unanimous vote (7 yes, 0 no) the commission directed staff to move forward on gathering public input on the three tolling scenarios.

**Follow-Up:** Staff will move forward with a public process to gather input on the three scenarios discussed. The results will be brought back to the commission in July so that a single option can be selected for implementation.

**Agenda Item 18:**

**Public Comment**

**Tom Thiersch:** Mr. Thiersch expressed concern about starting to roll out a road usage charge by implementing first in public fleets. Instead, he suggested that initially a road usage charge should apply only to electric vehicles. He also is concerned that he is seeing an increase in price gouging for electric vehicle chargers.

**Presentation:** There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 18, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:57:31, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 19:**

**Commission Business**

**Reflections and Recommendations –**

- It was excellent having the legislative transportation chairs with us to discuss the Move Ahead Washington package and the values represented by the investment package, such as Youth Ride Free policies. Thank you also to Senator Randall for providing her perspectives on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge tolling legislation passed this year.
- We appreciated the candor provided by the local partners' presentations on the outcomes of the legislative session. The Move Ahead Washington package is exciting and accomplishes many things, but work remains to support local communities.
- The presentation on Ben Franklin Transit's Connect service was very intriguing and could provide a model for other regional transit systems.

- Based on the comments of the transportation chairs, we need to do a deep dive on the Washington Transportation Plan to ensure it is structured in a way that is meaningful and can be implemented.
- The RUC update helped commissioners to better understand where we are at. Some disappointment was expressed that the legislature is continuing to study the issue further instead of finding ways to implement.
- It was refreshing to learn about the more outcome-driven approach being used to create the Highway System Plan.

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

**June Meeting** – The June commission meeting will be held in person in Clarkston. A brief overview of the agenda was provided.

**Hood River Traffic and Revenue Study Update** – The Hood River Traffic and Revenue study is getting under way. Consultant solicitation has been issued and selection will take place in June.

**Presentation:** There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 19, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:00:33, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

Chair Jennings adjourned the meeting at 12:30 pm. The next meeting will be held in person at Clarkston on June 22 & 23, 2022.