



Washington State Transportation Commission

Virtual Meeting Summary

March 14 & 15, 2023

March 14, 2023

Vice Chair Deborah Young opened the meeting at 9 a.m. with introductions by commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and meeting protocols.

Agenda Item 2:

On-demand Transit

Presenter:

- Remi Desa, Chief Operating Officer, Pantonium
- Bonnie Powell, Mechanical Engineer, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)

Pantonium CEO Remi Desa discussed macro transit solutions being implemented in small cities and rural areas to make public transit more equitable and convenient. Pantonium, a software company, has developed proprietary algorithms to dynamically route buses in real time, allowing for higher productivity, greater service coverage and increased ridership while also realizing reductions in cost. Bonnie Powell, of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), presented the findings of a case study on the use of on-demand transit in Fort Erie, Ontario, where Pantonium was a software partner with Fort Erie Transit. Since moving from a system of fixed transit route buses to an on-demand system with a fleet of Dodge Caravans, the community of roughly 30,000 has seen increased ridership from pre-COVID levels, lower fuel consumption and lower costs. The case study showed the potential of on-demand transit to move more people using less fuel and producing fewer emissions.

Presentation: [On-Demand Transit](#)

[On-Demand Transit – NREL](#)

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: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 3:

Washington State Patrol Impairment Program

Presenter:

- Lt. Jeff Leonard, Section Commander, Washington State Patrol

Lt. Jeff Leonard discussed the Washington State Patrol's work with partners to remove impaired drivers from roadways through its Impaired Driving Section. The program is three-pronged and includes the state's Drug Evaluation and Classification Program, which is responsible for the administration and oversight of law enforcement training in apprehending impaired drivers. It manages the Evidential Breath Test program, one of two ways law enforcement across the state collects evidence of impairment. It works with the Department of Licensing on the Ignition Interlock Program, offering service, certification and technician licensing and enforcing violations of the program. In the area of prevention, WSP partners with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission on its Mobile Impaired Driving Unit, which works on high-visibility emphasis patrols to urge people not to drink and drive, as well as the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board on the "place of last drink" program to provide data that aims to educate establishments on overservice.

Presentation: [WSP Impairment Program](#)

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:54:33, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 4:

Modernizing the Transportation Ecosystem

Presenter:

- Chris Tomlinson, Managing Director, Deloitte National Transportation Practice
- Edward (Ted) Thomas, Senior Manager, Deloitte National Transportation Practice

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act brought a level of federal spending that hasn't been seen since the New Deal. The question is whether the spending will be used to implement fundamental changes in America's transportation system, or whether it will be another influx of funds that turns into a fiscal cliff once those funds are spent. Chris Tomlinson and Ted Thomas explained trends in play in different states that support a broader shift in the evolution of the transportation system. The first is creating a sustainable funding mechanism for the transportation system, including user fees, such as the adoption of a Road Usage Charge (RUC). Pilot states launching RUC are addressing technology in how miles will be recorded and exploring public sentiment when it comes to privacy and other concerns. Next is expanding and scaling Electronic Vehicle (EV) use and charging infrastructure in an equitable way and addressing a talent crunch in the EV market, which can involve worker retraining. Third is modernizing America's transportation system in an inclusive and equitable way, including bringing underserved and disadvantaged

communities into the planning process. Fourth is making America’s transportation network more resilient to cyber threats and climate change. And the final concept presented to support the shift is using new federal funding to spur technology experiments (pilots) and to scale up innovation.

Presentation: [US Transportation Trends 2022-23](#)

For more detail on agenda item 4, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:28:48, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 5: State Highway Right of Way Safety Initiative

Presenter:

- Tedd Kelleher, Housing Policy Director, Washington State Department of Commerce
- Mike Gribner, Assistant Secretary for Regions, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Colin DeForrest, Homeless Response Manager, Puget Sound Gateway Program, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Andrew Fortune, Maintenance Manager-Policy, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Colin Maloney, Manager, Community Health Strategies for Homelessness, Washington State Department of Health

The Legislature’s Right of Way Safety Initiative grew out of the rapid rise in the number of encampments on state-owned right of ways over the last 15 years, with costs associated with cleanup rising from \$200,000 in 2008 to \$2.8 million in 2022. Funding for the initiative allows for new approaches, including an offer of shelter/housing that is “meaningfully better” than the current situation of those in the encampments. The most successful housing and homelessness efforts include the availability of different housing options. Presenters cited success stories, such as the Pre-Employment Preparation Program (PEPP), a pilot job training program WSDOT participates in that trains those formerly living in encampments in high-need fields to get them on the path to jobs and homeownership. Panelists acknowledged the critical role nonprofit organizations and social and behavioral health service providers play in their work to place people experiencing homelessness in housing options.

Presentation: [Homelessness Impacts on State Right of Way](#)

For more detail on agenda item 5, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:25:43, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 6: Hood River Bridge Traffic & Revenue Study

Presenter:

- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Timothy J. Boesch, AICP PMP Principal Senior Project Manager, CDM Smith
- Lowell Clary, President, Clary Consulting Company

Carl See gave background on the Hood River Bridge Traffic and Revenue Study, which has been underway since August 2022 to support future funding decisions for proposed bridge replacement plans. Timothy Boesch shared annual gross toll revenue forecasts of eight tolling scenarios previously approved by the Commission, with adjustments based on the cost to collect the tolls. The scenarios also formed a basis for doing a preliminary financial capacity analysis for construction of the bridge, with Lowell Clary comparing the results of bonded debt with a federal TIFIA (Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act) loan. The difference in capacity for each tolling scenario to fund bridge replacement ranges from \$0 to as much as \$140 million, depending on the financing option. Input from the Bi-State Working Group supports advancing scenarios that would allow for financial capacity with a TIFIA loan ranging from \$75 million to \$125 million.

As work continues to reduce the number of scenarios to two, commissioners provided preliminary support to advancing scenarios that would allow for the \$75-125 million toll-backed financing range; apply a toll rate increase upon bridge opening in FY 2031, with periodic escalation starting in FY 2036; and apply a \$2 differential to video toll rates from transponder rates for one scenario, with the escalation applied to both the transponder and video rate for the other scenario.

Presentation: [Hood River Bridge Traffic and Revenue Study](#)

For more detail on agenda item 6, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:26:33, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: Commissioners will take action to select two final tolling scenarios in April.

Vice Chair Young reminded the Commission that the meeting will continue Wednesday, March 15, 2023, and recessed the meeting.

DAY 2: March 15, 2023

Vice Chair Deborah Young opened the meeting at 9:00 am with introductions by commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and meeting protocols.

Agenda Item 8: Commission Business

- February Meeting Summary
- 2023 Commission Officer Elections: Appoint Nominating Committee – *Action*
- Meeting Logistics and Retreat

Presenters:

- Reema Griffith, Executive Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Paula Reeves, Senior Policy Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission

Commissioners had no changes to the February meeting summary.

Reema Griffith indicated Commissioner Roy Jennings will not be seeking the office of Chair for the next term, and a call for elections must take place. Per commission policy, a nominating committee must be convened, followed by an election by written ballot. New officers take their seats on July 1.

Ms. Griffith proposed a one-day retreat for commissioners, convened around the November meeting in Pasco, focusing on operations, commission policies, state regulations and identifying commissioner priorities.

Ms. Reeves asked for feedback on meeting schedules as the commission transitions back to in-person meetings in Olympia. Commissioners preferred the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule on the first day and 9 a.m. to noon on the second day to allow for travel.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 7, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 0:02:50, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: Commissioner Jerry Litt made a motion to call for an election; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Jim Restucci. The motion passed 6-0, with Commissioner Jennings excused.

Vice Chair Young proposed a nominating committee made up of Commissioners Jennings and Litt, with no objections.

Follow-Up: The nominating committee will provide an update at the April meeting.

Agenda Item 9:

Colman Plaza Naming

Presenter:

- Patty Rubstello, Assistant Secretary, Washington State Ferries
- Phillip Narte, Tribal Liaison, Washington State Ferries

Patty Rubstello and Phillip Narte shared that the reconstruction of Colman Dock ferry terminal is entering the final stages, including the construction of two plazas (South Plaza near Yesler Way and North Plaza near Columbia Street). WSDOT has been consulting with the Suquamish Tribe and the Muckleshoot Tribe, which have adjudicated treaty rights in Elliott Bay, during the project on activities such as in-water construction and barging. It invited the tribes to submit names for the plazas. The Muckleshoot Tribe submitted the name *slu?wił* – a perforation for a canoe, a short cut – for the South Plaza. The Suquamish Tribe submitted the name *?ulułali* – a place of traveling by water – for the North Plaza. Seventeen organizations have submitted letters of support for the naming, and WSF has conducted public education on the names through several forums.

Presentation: [Colman Dock Plaza Naming](#)

For more detail on agenda item 8, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:23:24, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: The commission will take action on the proposed plaza names in May.

Agenda Item 10:

I-90 Argonne Overpass Naming Proposal - *ACTION*

Presenter:

- Capt. Tracie Meidl, Spokane Police Department

Capt. Meidl shared information about an effort by the Spokane Fallen Officer's Memorial Project and the Spokane Regional Law Enforcement Museum to honor Deputy Joseph M. O'Conner, who was killed in August 1961 while directing traffic following a crash near the Argonne Overpass in Spokane County. He was killed by a drunk driver who entered the crash scene at a high rate of speed. Several letters by elected officials and members of the community were presented to support the renaming of the Argonne-Mullen Overpass over I-90 as the "Deputy Joseph M. O'Conner Memorial Overpass" as part of a larger effort to honor fallen law enforcement officers through signage nearest the location an officer has lost their life. Commissioner Kelly Fukai read Resolution 747.

Presentation: [Argonne/Mullen Overpass Naming Proposal](#)

For more detail on agenda item 9, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:46:44, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: Commissioner Restucci made a motion to name the Argonne-Mullen Overpass the "Deputy Joseph M. O'Conner Memorial Overpass;" the motion was seconded by Commissioner Litt. Following a roll call vote, the motion passed 6-0 with Commissioner Jennings excused.

Follow-Up: A letter will be sent directing WSDOT to make signage for the overpass.

Agenda Item 11: Financial Update on Washington's Tolled Facilities

Presenter:

- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Jason Richter, Deputy Treasurer, Office of the State Treasurer

Jason Richter provided a financial update using the most recent Traffic and Revenue (T&R) forecasts for SR 520 and SR 99. The January 2023 T&R forecast update for SR 520 shows an increase in net toll revenues in FY 2025 after small losses in FY 2023 and 2024. With the Legislature deferring sales taxes and appropriating American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to pay operations and maintenance costs in FY 2022-23, the facility is meeting its policy rate requirements and is in good financial health. Carl See said a previously approved rate increase for July 1 on SR 520 will meet the current financial needs of the facility.

On SR 99, the February 2023 T&R forecast shows a dip in adjusted gross toll revenues in the next two years followed by small increases that are largely a result of operations and maintenance costs decreasing substantially. The governor's budget calls for \$16 million in settlement funds on the project to be applied to reduce Motor Vehicle Account loans in the 2023-25 biennium. The latest forecast puts the corridor on better financial footing than previous ones, with sufficient funds to meet obligations through FY 2027, assuming a planned 3 percent toll rate increase for FY 2026. Mr. See said that based on the latest forecast and pending the Legislature's approval of funding in the transportation budget to similarly reduce the Motor Vehicle Account loans in the 2023-25 biennium, no toll rate action would be needed through FY 2025.

Presentation: [Financial Update on Washington's Tolled Facilities](#)

For more detail on agenda item 11, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:04:51, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 12: I-405 / SR 167 Express Toll Lanes Rate Setting Policy Discussion

Presenter:

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

In the ongoing process of setting toll rates for the I-405/SR 167 Express Toll Lane Corridor Program, Ed Barry sought guidance from the commission on advancing the minimum toll rate for analysis. Information on cost to collect tolls was presented along with minimum and maximum tolls at other facilities across the nation. The average cost to collect a toll for I-405/SR 167 was \$0.73 per transaction in FY 2022, with the cost ranging from \$0.63

to \$1.46, depending on whether drivers used GoodToGo or pay-by-mail. Forecasted collection costs are expected to rise to an average of \$0.77 cents per transaction by FY 2032. Base assumptions to date have been a minimum toll rate of \$0.75 in the corridor. The Commission approved an analysis of raising the minimum toll rate to \$1. Lastly, Mr. Barry provided an update on I-405 / SR 167 traffic conditions and average toll rates.

Presentation: [I-405/SR 167 ETL Corridor Program](#)

For more detail on agenda item 12, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:30:14, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

**Agenda Item 13:
2022 Current Conditions in Washington Cities**

Presenter:

- Candice Bock, Government Relations Director, Association of Washington Cities

Candice Bock explained that the Association of Washington Cities does its city conditions survey every year, and this year, condition of infrastructure remains a high concern among cities that responded. Other concerns are the increased costs of city services, housing affordability, workforce availability and behavioral health resources. When asked how they would best be assisted by the state, cities responded with an increase in state funding to local governments for infrastructure and capital projects, an increase or preserving state-shared revenue, a revision to the 1 percent property tax limit, and granting new revenue authority. In transportation, maintenance and preservation of current assets is the top need, followed by pedestrian access and safety, new or increased capacity, state highway improvements, and multimodal investments such as public transit. When looking at cities' top funding sources, federal funding lagged other sources (TIB, general fund revenue, WSDOT local programs and TBDs), and cities cite barriers in accessing those funds, especially for under-resourced communities.

Presentation: [2022 Current City Conditions Survey](#)

For more detail on agenda item 13, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:56:26, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

**Agenda Item 14:
Secretary's Report**

Presenter:

- Marshall Elizer, Assistant Secretary, Washington State Department of Transportation

Marshall Elizer said the secretary's office is engaged in the legislative process, and he highlighted legislation on speed cameras in work zones that has passed the Senate, with hopes for the same outcome in the House. He mentioned the increases in crashes and fatality injuries on state highways and other roads and noted that the update of the Target Zero Strategic Highway Safety plan in coordination with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission kicks off this year. With the Move Ahead Washington revenue package and the increase of federal funds, WSDOT is facing the largest capital delivery program ever, and that's a challenge with the young workforce.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 14, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:37:59, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 15: State of Washington's Bridges

Presenter:

- Evan Grimm, Bridges & Structure Engineer, Washington State Department of Transportation
- James Morin, Maintenance, Washington Department of Transportation
- Tim Rydholm, Capital Program Development and Management, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Sonia Lowry, Local Programs Bridge Engineer, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Derek Pohle, Support, Training, and Compliance Manager, County Road Administration Board.

Evan Grimm explained that WSDOT is responsible for the maintenance and preservation of 3,377 state-owned bridges with a replacement value of \$93 billion. Currently, 8.2 percent are in poor condition, and that percentage is expected to grow. Tim Rydholm explained that a majority of state funding goes to mobility projects. He explained that when WSDOT can be proactive, routine maintenance prevents the need for bridge replacement. But current routine maintenance needs are not fully funded, making for a growing backlog of work. James Morin added that workforce shortages make it difficult to staff the highly qualified crews that do bridge work.

Sonia Lowry said there are roughly 4,200 bridges owned by counties and cities across the state. That number does not include short-span bridges in local jurisdictions, which do not qualify for federal funding, a challenge for cities and counties. Derek Pohle talked about the number of short-span bridges in counties as well as roughly 70,000 culverts, many of which will be required to become bridges when they are replaced. The condition of local bridges directly affects the movement of goods and services for agriculture, the timber industry, tourism and other economic activities. Funding (especially for short-span

structures), permitting, climate change, inflation, staff capacity and fish passage requirements are among the current challenges for building and maintaining local bridges.

Presentation: [State of Washington Bridges](#)
[State of Washington County Bridges](#)

For more detail on agenda item 15, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:43:03, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 16: Public Comment

John Ley, Clark County – Mr. Ley said there should be four-lane replacement for the Hood River Bridge rather than a two-lane bridge given the growth of the two areas the span connects. He said presentations to the Commission show how volatile tolls can be, with the Legislature approving money to shore up toll-supported facilities, and said Oregon should take note as it asks for tolling to support the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) project. He said the IBR can be built for much less without extras for mass transit.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 16, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:48:28, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 17: Commission Business

- 2023 Legislative Session & Engagement Update
- Update on Route Jurisdiction Transfer requests from the City Snoqualmie for Snoqualmie Parkway and the City of Ridgefield for SR 501
- 2023 Ferry Fare Setting Schedule – *Action*
- 2023 Autonomous Vehicle Workgroup Direction – *Action*

Presenters:

- Paula Reeves, Senior Policy Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Aaron Halbert, Fiscal Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Reema Griffith, Executive Director, Washington State Transportation Commission

Ms. Reeves gave an update on the 2023 Legislative session, explaining that the House and Senate transportation budgets will come out later this month following the revenue forecast. Bills still in play include the DOT-requested speed safety cameras in work zones bill, Ferries' workforce development bill, climate response bills, odometer reading bill and the ferry fuel surcharge bill.

The Commission's Subcommittee on Route Jurisdiction Transfers is preparing to meet with staff from the Transportation Improvement Board to go over findings on the two requests (City of Snoqualmie and City of Ridgefield) currently pending with the Commission, and letters of concern/concurrence are being requested from WSDOT. Commissioners will be presented preliminary findings for approval at the May meeting.

Aaron Halbert presented the proposed WSTC ferry fare-setting schedule and explained the final rule-making paperwork on any fare increase would be due on Aug. 31. WSTC staff is planning to do public outreach on fare proposals during WSF's community meeting plans in late spring (occurring in hybrid or virtual format) to share options on fare proposals, and an online survey is also planned. A discussion took place on holding the public fare hearing in August at Puget Sound Regional Council board room in Seattle. Commissioners adopted the fare-setting schedule by acclamation.

Ms. Griffith proposed directing the Autonomous Vehicle Work Group to develop a regulatory framework on permitting Autonomous Vehicles, for legislative consideration in the 2023 session. The Work Group sunsets in December 2023 under current law.

Commission Discussion:

Reflections and Recommendations:

Commissioners shared highlights from the meeting:

- Much of the information provided at the meeting will help us guide our annual report. Reflecting on the Deloitte Transportation Trends discussion, the past will not always be a guide for change and growth looking ahead 25 years.
- The On-Demand Transportation service discussion was intriguing, and the possibilities are broad. It presents solutions to many of our concerns. The information should be shared through regional agencies. The Washington Cities Survey provides critical data. The bridge conditions presentation was important, and getting updated on the percentage of bridges that are in fair or poor condition is impactful.
- The Washington State Patrol impairment program was important information, and it was good to learn about all they do. Developing testing tools for THC impairment needs to continue. The Washington Cities Survey provides an important local perspective from those who are on the ground and see infrastructure challenges up close.
- A common thread through many of the presentations is the question of whether there is enough qualified workers and funding to meet the state's transportation infrastructure needs. There are specific policies that promote having a skilled workforce able to perform difficult projects, including supporting apprenticeship programs.
- The discussion of homelessness in the right of way sheds new light on that issue and looked at it from new angles, including public health. Each person living in the right of way is an individual case.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 17, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:54:28, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: Commissioner Restucci moved to direct to the Autonomous Vehicle Work Group to follow the commission's direction on creating a workable law; Commissioner Shiv Batra seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 with Commissioners Fukai and Jennings excused.
Follow-Up: None at this time.

Vice Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

The next meeting will be held in person in Ellensburg April 18 & 19, 2023.