



# Washington State Transportation Commission

## Olympia Meeting Summary

February 19 & 20, 2025

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### February 19, 2025

Chair Debbie 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: WSDOT Safety Office Update

#### Presenter:

- Gabe Philips, Deputy Safety Office Engineer, Transportation Safety and Systems Analysis, Washington State Department of Transportation

An overview of efforts by WSDOT’s Traffic Safety Office to reverse the rising number of deaths and serious injuries on the state’s roadways was shared. The recently completed Target Zero Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update drives safety policy at WSDOT, and it emphasizes the “Safe System Approach” to help reduce fatal crashes. The six overlapping elements that provide layers of safety as part of the Safe Systems Approach were discussed, along with policy recommendations to support Target Zero. Seventy percent of WSDOT’s safety improvement budget, which invests in the elements in the safety plan, goes to local programs, and 30 percent is devoted to state projects. The current funding proposal to address safety priorities is \$2.37 billion over 10 years.

#### Presentation: [Transportation Safety Office Action Plan](#)

For more detail on agenda item 2, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:03:41, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

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

### **Agenda Item 3:**

## **Recreation and Conservation Funding Board**

#### **Presenters:**

- Brock Milliern, Policy and Legislative Director, Recreation and Conservation Office

The primary mission of the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is to distribute grant funds for recreation, conservation, outdoor programs/education, and salmon recovery. Recreation on state lands is dependent on funding that comes not only from proceeds from the Discover Pass but also the state’s gas tax. RCO activities supporting boating and non-highway and off-road vehicle activities each receive 1 percent of proceeds from the gas tax. The snowmobile account receives \$2 million. A range of \$30-40 million in gas tax proceeds each biennium supports programs of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and State Parks. As discussions of alternatives to the gas tax take place, the RCO is sharing the importance of preserving funding to the recreation categories currently funded by the gas tax.

#### **Presentation:** [Recreation and Conservation Office](#)

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:03:24, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

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

### **Agenda Item 4:**

## **Preparing for Washington’s Future: A Grand Boulevard Housing Solution**

#### **Presenter:**

- Peter Calthorpe, Urban Designer and Author, HDR Calthorpe

The concept of “Grand Boulevards” focuses on developing housing infill on underperforming commercial corridors. Developing such corridors expands the potential for transit and puts workers in closer proximity to their jobs. Changing demographics – such as a larger percentage of single people living alone than married couples with families seeking housing – necessitates a paradigm shift from single-family home subdivisions to more affordable types of housing in closer proximity to job centers. The Puget Sound is slowly responding to the new demand, driven by demographics and the housing affordability crisis. Since 2009, permits for multi-family construction are outpacing single-family homes in the region. A study of the “Grand Boulevards” concept for cities along the Interstate 5 corridor (Seattle, Portland and Vancouver, B.C.) was undertaken by Challenge Seattle in 2024. It estimated that redevelopment of underperforming commercial parcels into housing infill could yield 1.4 million new units of housing over the long term.

#### **Presentation:** [Grand Boulevards](#)

For more detail on agenda item 4, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:42:26, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

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

## **Agenda Item 5: Addressing Public Health Impacts of Climate Change**

**Presenter:**

- Rad Cunningham, Manager, Climate and Health, Washington State Department of Health  
Climate events are significant mortality events and are projected by climate scientists to be more frequent and severe as time goes on. Climate-focused public health focuses on projections to help understand what interventions are needed today to avoid negative outcomes in the future. Interventions include creating infrastructure that helps Washingtonians adapt to and mitigate negative effects of climate events. Redlining and the historical siting of industrial facilities in lower-income neighborhoods has led to worse health outcomes for residents of those neighborhoods. That history informs planning of transportation and infrastructure projects underway today. Considering projections and incorporating interventions into transportation and infrastructure projects can ensure a good quality of life for all Washingtonians in the future.

**Presentation:** [Health Impacts of Climate Change](#)

For more detail on agenda item 5, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:41:55, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

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

## **Agenda Item 6: Toll Facility Financial Update – State Route 520 Bridge and State Route 99 Toll Sufficiency Analysis**

**Presenters:**

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

An analysis of the SR 520 Bridge and the SR 99 Tunnel finances to determine whether the facilities' bonding and other financial requirements are being met was shared. Both facilities have sufficient coverage to meet financial obligations through the end of their debt service commitments. The financial picture for the SR 520 Bridge has improved because of an average of \$34.6 million in annual savings through self-insurance and a projected \$1.1 million average annual increase to adjusted gross toll revenues. A series of financial challenges in the early years of the life of the SR 99 Tunnel has given way to positive fund balances and capacity to meet financial obligations over the long-term as supported by improved net toll revenue projections and funds from the SR 99 Tunnel construction lawsuit settlement in 2023 and 2024. The SR 99 Tunnel analysis assumes

adoption of the planned 3 percent toll rate increase by the Commission, effective July 1, 2025, pending the Commissions review and approval.

**Presentation:** [SR 520 and SR 99 Tolling Update](#)

For more detail on agenda item 6, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:24:22, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

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

**Agenda Item 7:  
Protecting and Preserving Washington’s Bridges**

**Presenters:**

- Evan Grimm, Bridges & Structures Engineer, Washington State Department of Transportation
- James Morin, Maintenance Operations Branch Manager, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Rob Charbonneau, Priority Programming Manager, 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

An overview of WSDOT’s bridge portfolio was shared. A total of 8.5 percent of state bridges are considered in poor condition, 55.4 percent in fair condition, and 36.1 percent in good condition. For local bridges, 51.1 percent are in good condition, 44.3 percent are in fair condition, and 4.5 percent are in poor condition. At the county level, short-span bridges, which are not eligible for federal aid and completely reliant on local funds for repair and replacement, present unique challenges. Bridge maintenance teams at the state and county level are efficient stewards of resources available to keep bridges maintained. But underinvestment in maintenance and preservation is expected to result in a growing percentage of bridges in poor condition in the coming years, meaning load restrictions and closures could be more common.

**Presentations:** [Washington State Bridges](#)  
[Washington’s County Bridges](#)

For more detail on agenda item 7, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 03:44:47, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

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

**Agenda Item 8:  
Commission Business**

- Commission Representative on PSRC Executive and Policy Boards – *ACTION*
- Appointment to Spokane Regional Transportation Council – *ACTION*
- 2025 Meeting Dates in Bellevue, Spokane

**Presenters:**

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

Commissioner Nicole Grant currently serves as a member of the Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Board, and Vice Chair Jim Restucci serves as the alternate. Vice Chair Restucci serves as a member of the Transportation Policy Board, with Commissioner Grant as the alternate. The positions are up for reappointment.

Commissioner Kelly Fukai serves as a member of the Spokane Regional Transportation Council, and the position is up for reappointment.

Dates for the April meeting in Bellevue and the July meeting in Spokane need to be shifted a day later to accommodate scheduling conflicts at the meeting locations.

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

For more detail on agenda item 8, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 05:19:08, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** Commissioner JC Baldwin moved to reappoint Commissioner Grant and Vice Chair Restucci to their respective roles on the Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Board and Transportation Policy Board; Commissioner Fukai seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0, with Commissioners Shiv Batra, Nicole Grant, and Roy Jennings excused.

Commissioner Baldwin moved to reappoint Commissioner Fukai to the Spokane Regional Transportation Council; Vice Chair Restucci seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0, with Commissioners Batra, Grant, and Jennings excused.

Commissioner Baldwin moved to adjust the dates of the April and July meetings; Commissioner Fukai seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0, with Commissioners Batra, Grant and Jennings excused.

**Follow-Up:** The Commission’s meeting in Bellevue will be held on April 16-17, and the meeting in Spokane will be held July 16-17.

Chair Debbie Young reminded the Commission that the meeting will continue Thursday, February 19, 2024, and recessed the meeting.

## **DAY 2: February 20, 2025**

Chair Debbie 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 10: Public Comment**

**Luis Moscoso, Government Affairs Director, All Aboard Washington and the Oregon Association of Rail and Transit Advocates** – There is more legislation on passenger rail in the Washington and Oregon legislatures this year than ever before. Federal support for local routes by the Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Identification and Development Program show growing interest in passenger rail in the Northwest and across the nation. The discussion of transportation policy in the state should include restoring intercity passenger rail routes to cities across the state, including Yakima and Spokane.

**Breck Lebegue, Co-Chair, Climate and Health Taskforce, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility** – More roads will result in more traffic, accidents, emissions and more need for medical care, resulting in higher medical costs. We need more trains, not more lanes, not more planes. Washington physicians support rail bills in the Legislature.

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

For more detail on agenda item 10, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:02:43, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

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

### **Agenda Item 11: Commission Business**

- Legislative Update
- January Meeting Summary
- Gateway Program Engagement Update

#### **Presenters:**

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

An update of bills of Commission interest moving through the Legislature was shared. Commission staff will present its research in areas of interest to the Senate Transportation Committee as well as testify on behalf of bills dealing with toll streamlining and advanced tolling technologies.

In anticipation of toll rates being in place on the new SR 509 Expressway in October, the Commission will have to adopt rates and policies in mid-June for both the SR 509 and SR 167 Expressways. Commissioners will hear about possible toll rates and policies at the March Commission meeting. Public engagement on possible toll rates and policies will

begin in late March and run through early April with an online open house and two virtual input meetings.

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

For more detail on agenda item 11, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:09:48, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** Commissioners approved the January meeting summary for posting and distribution.

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

## **Agenda Item 12: Route Jurisdiction Study Update**

### **Presenters:**

- Paula Reeves, Senior Policy Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Rob Fellows, Transportation Planning Director, WSP USA
- Steve Gorcester, Chief Executive Officer, Performance Plane LLC

The Route Jurisdiction Study (RJT) was undertaken to determine if changes are needed in jurisdictional assignment between state, county, and city road systems and to review current criteria to define the state highway system. The preliminary findings of the study led to a proposal for RJT process improvements for both the party requesting the transfer, the party proposed to receive the road, and the Commission. Modifications to evaluation factors of roads is also proposed, with specific evaluation factors to help judge the objectives of connectivity, function, and continuity. Recommendations for next steps were given and include re-writing the statute authorizing the RJT process to incorporate proposed changes and clarify the roles of state transportation agencies in the evaluation process. Further funding could be used to refine the state highway database developed for use in evaluating proposed transfers.

**Presentation:** [Route Jurisdiction Study](#)

For more detail on agenda item 12, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:30:14, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

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

## **Agenda Item 13: Transportation Policy and Advocacy Update**

### **Presenters:**

- Kirk Hovenkotter, Executive Director, Transportation Choices Coalition
- Charles Prestrud, Director, Coles Transportation Center, Washington Policy Center

Two views on transportation planning priorities of the future were shared. The Transportation Choices Coalition shared its legislative proposal for a “Megaproject for Safety,” a \$1.5 billion transportation package that would go toward making state-owned

highways that run through urban and downtown areas safer for pedestrians, transit users and other forms of active transportation. State-owned roadways in towns and cities throughout the state were built as vital connections, but as population centers grew up around them, they became the main streets of their communities. The proposal calls for adding more sidewalks, crosswalks, median refuge islands, and other features that make the corridors easier to cross for active transportation and transit users.

Charles Prestrud focused on the Commission's update of the Washington Transportation Plan, which is in progress and scheduled to be completed in 2025. Looking at the state's progress in achieving the goals of the last update of the plan, it is clear funding has been aligned with the vision set forth when it comes to the use of transit and multimodal funding. But work remains on other goals, which include keeping up with maintenance and preservation, and managing growth and congestion. It is important to examine the trends in transit ridership and acknowledge that population growth has not been distributed in areas that previous forecasts have predicted. Suggestions for the WTP update include a focus on system efficiency and cost-effectiveness, being realistic about trends, and understanding that most transportation infrastructure is not the responsibility of the state, but of cities, counties and transit agencies.

**Presentations:** [Megaproject for Safety](#)  
[Transportation Planning Trends and Issues](#)

For more detail on agenda item 13, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 01:14:05, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

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

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

**Presenter:**

- Mike Gribner, Deputy Secretary, Washington State Department of Transportation

WSDOT is working to engage and inform legislators, who are working to set the 2025-2027 biennial transportation budget. Department staff continue to work on project delivery and current priorities as decisions at the legislative level about the future budget are made.

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

For more detail on agenda item 14, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:18:22, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

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



## **Agenda Item 15: Commission Business**

Commissioners shared the following reflections and recommendations from the meeting:

- It's good to see the work WSDOT's Safety Office is doing to advance the Safe System Approach. Specific concerns over safety include the number of fatalities caused by a speeding driver as well as what seems to be an increase wrong-way crashes.
- It's concerning to see the number of bridges that are in poor condition in our state system, and it's clear that the consequences of not fully funding maintenance and preservation are beginning to bear fruit. We hope the Legislature is listening to the Commission's recommendations when it comes to fixing the condition of our roads.
- Great work and recommendations have come out of the Route Jurisdiction Transfer Study to present to the Legislature.
- The backlog in maintenance and preservation is a safety issue, particularly when it comes to wrong-way drivers and the difficulty in some areas of seeing lane markings.
- The presentation by Peter Calthorpe shows an ambitious plan and what can happen when silos are broken down between transportation planning, land-use planning, and the development of housing. It's important in the planning conversation to offer choices and give resources and options to those who cannot drive or choose not to own a vehicle.
- The meeting topics contained a lot of connections and cross-pollination. Transit safety, land use and housing are all interconnected. While that is beginning to happen in Washington state, there is potential to do more.

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

For more detail on agenda item 15, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 02:20:34, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

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

**Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 12 p.m.**

The next meeting will be held virtually on March 18 & 19, 2025.