

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
February 16 & 17, 2010**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 A.M., on February 16, 2010, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair Carol Moser, Bob Distler, Dick Ford, Elmira Forner, Latisha Hill, Dan O'Neal and Philip Parker.

Chair Moser opened the meeting and introduced the Commission's January 20 & 21, 2010 meeting minute's summary for approval.

MINUTES SUMMARY ADOPTION

The Commission moved to adopt the January 20 & 21, 2010 meeting minute's summary. The motion passed unanimously.

TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE (TNB) RATE SETTING

Al Weaver, Chair, Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) expressed his appreciation for the Commission's attention to the TNB toll setting. The CAC reviewed and considered the Commission suggestion of raising ETC toll to \$3.25 and the cash toll to \$5.00, but by a substantial majority continues to recommend that only the cash toll increase this year.

The CAC considers a \$4.718 million reserve adequate.

Chair Weaver recommended further discussion of what constitutes an appropriate reserve amount and suggested some alternative approaches to rate setting for the Commission to consider.

Craig Stone, Director, Toll Division and Jeff Caldwell, Assistant Director, Financial Planning, WSDOT, presented information on the most recent actual bridge traffic and the expected reductions in TNB revenue due to the February transportation revenue forecast. Insurance coverage for TNB includes a \$10 million "deductible" amount.

John Milton, Enterprise Risk Management, WSDOT, clarified that the \$10 million deductible applies to repair coverage (\$500 million). The loss of revenue coverage (\$60 million) kicks in after a 10-day period of service interruption resulting from damage to the bridge.

Mr. Stone also presented a series of calculations indicating how to calculate:

- Debt service coverage
- Coverage of all expenditures
- Cumulative percentage coverage
- 3-month debt service coverage
- Decline in traffic counts

The Commission then discussed what the appropriate risk structure is for the calculation to cover debt and operating expenses, and what should trigger reviewing toll rates.

What is needed? For a major catastrophe, there is insurance. But, at a minimum, 10 days of revenue loss is not covered. One Commissioner suggested 10 percent of total annual expenses as a target. Another Commissioner suggested that the target be measured in the number of days of anticipated revenues. There is some doubt whether the State Treasurer's concerns extend to the TNB project.

Factors to consider:

- When insurance kicks in
- What insurance covers
- Weather related loss
- Coverage of costs or coverage of lost revenue

The Commission's Tolling Subcommittee is to develop policy recommendations for guidance on when to raise rates and what a sufficient ending balance should be.

The Commission discussed the timing and location of public input meetings. If Senator Kilmer's effort to defer the payment of \$5.28 million succeeds, there is the possibility of no toll increase required.

Public meetings in both Port Orchard and Gig Harbor have been requested. It may make sense to convene in a location between the two cities. If there is only one public input meeting, it needs to be in a location large enough to accommodate the number of public anticipated. The cost of meeting facilities and equipment rental will be a factor.

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP03_TNBRateSetting.pdf

HARBOR WING TECHNOLOGIES –WINGSAIL TECHNOLOGY AND APPLICATIONS

Rear Admiral Stuart Platt, Chairman and CEO, Harbor Wing Technologies, gave a presentation on Auxiliary Wind Propulsion technology for Ferry Vessels. Rear Admiral Platt explained that wind technology has largely been ignored for the last 100 years. This technology incorporates aeronautics knowledge as applied to marine vessels in America's Cup races. The Wind Assist Ferry Project is backed by San Francisco Bay passenger ferry operations.

Wing and mast cost (117 ft high) is about \$1.8 million. Wing sails could cut fuel consumption by 30 percent on most WSF routes; fuel savings would cover installation cost within 2 years. There is a possibility of federal funding to test Wingsail ferry prototype. San Francisco Bay is asking for \$10 million for a 49 foot vessel. At this time, there is no support from WSF for Wingsail modification.

The Commission will contact WSF and suggest a meeting with Harbor Wing Technologies.

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP04_FerryCommPres.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP04_StuartFranklinPlattBio.pdf

SR 520 RATE SETTING

Mr. Stone presented policy issues for the Commission to consider in setting SR 520 tolls:

- Truck rates – tolling subcommittee recommends per axle charge, consistent with TNB.
- Discounts and Exemptions – WSDOT proposes discount for transit and agency vanpools for the duration of Urban Partnership Agreement.
- Discounts and Exemptions – consider that ferries provide a discount for registered private vanpools. Should that extend to two trips daily on SR 520? Consider also extending any transit discount to Microsoft Shuttle and other private transit.
- Transponder/Account Incentives.
- Toll and fee options – fees must cover actual costs and cannot cover lost revenue.
- Toll and fee options – incentives to use least costly collection methods.

WSDOT Preferred Approach -- Two toll rates: one for pre-paid account holders and one for post-pay- by-mail. Charge video (optical character recognition, or OCR) account holders an additional monthly fee.

The Commission concurred to include a monthly fee for video accounts to cover “leakage” caused by OCR failures.

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP05_SR520TollRateSetting_IssuesIncentives.pdf

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commissioner Hill shared that the Spokane Regional Transportation Council is beginning to update its regional plan. There are a lot of other exciting things going on as well.

Commissioner Parker shared information on the Columbia River Crossing Sponsors Council membership.

Commissioner Forner shared that she will be meeting with the King County SCAT Board regarding possible transit service cuts.

Commissioner O’Neal shared that the Puget Sound Partnership is coordinating with multiple organizations looking at an information gathering process.

Commissioner Ford indicated that the Tribes have won round one against the state on culvert cleanup (Boldt Phase II). He also noted that Puget Sound Regional Councils’ T-2040 is close to adoption. He has concerns that there may be increased danger of balkanizing transportation funding.

Commissioner Distler briefly commented on the proposed Ferry Fuel Surcharge.

Reema Griffith, Executive Director, WSTC, provided an update on the status of the Commission's Ferry Survey.

Paul Parker, Senior Policy Analyst, WSTC, provided a legislative update.

ROUTE JURISDICTION TRANSFER PROGRAM RULES ADOPTION

Ms. Griffith provided an overview of the streamlined WAC rule for the Route Jurisdiction Transfer process, replacing 15 WAC sections with only eight sections in the new rule - WAC 468-710.

It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner Parker to adopt WAC 468-710. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner's discussed various complications that can occur with some of the transfers.

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP06_NewOTS2863.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP06_RepealerOTS2864.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP06_RepealerOTS2865.pdf

WSDOT CABLE MEDIAN BARRIER REPORT

Ted Trepanier, State Traffic Engineer and Director of Traffic Operations, WSDOT, shared that the 2002 study recommended cable barriers in medians up to 50' wide. Program targeted 169 miles for installation; now 181 miles installed and 10 additional miles underway.

Trends and performance:

- 44% reduction in fatal injury collisions
- 64% reduction in serious injury collisions
- 65% reduction in cross-median collisions
- 46% reduction in median rollover collisions

Collision data indicates specific places where it is better to install low-tension or high tension cable median barrier, as well as where in the median to place the barrier itself. The low-tension barrier is less effective at preventing median cross-over, and the high-tension barrier tends to redirect more traffic, sometimes back onto the road. WSDOT now installs only high-tension style cable barriers and is converting low-tension systems to high-tension.

By using cable barrier, WSDOT is saving more lives for the same level of investment in barriers than it would be using concrete barriers. Average per mile cost is \$250 thousand.

Whenever cable barriers are damaged and WSDOT can identify the responsible party, it attempts to recover the cost of repair.

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP07_CableBarrierPerfReport2009.pdf

INRIX SCORECARD REPORT

Kush Parikh, Senior Vice President, INRIX, explained that INRIX uses GPS data to analyze congestion. It establishes a “free-flow” reference speed between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. that compares the average speed in segment each hour to the reference speed. If the average speed is less than half the reference speed that equals an “hour congested.” The average speed while congested is the “intensity of congestion.” The score is calculated by multiplying the hours congested by the intensity of congestion.

Unlike WSDOT, INRIX has data on arterials and the entire system. This might be useful in evaluating SR 520 diversion challenges and tolling options

National Trends: congestion is reset to 2005 levels. We have hit the bottom (Q2, '09). 2010 outlook depends on employment and fuel prices.

Travel time tax= percentage time for peak hour trip added to the reference time. Seattle dropped from 29 percent in 2006 and 2007 to 19 percent in 2009.

INRIX has talked with PSRC about multi-modal info distribution.

SR 520 is ranked the 112th worst bottleneck nationally. In the Seattle region, peak travel hour is 4-5 pm on Friday.

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP07_CableBarrierPerfReport2009.pdf

FERRY NAMING PROCESS ADOPTION

Ms. Griffith presented the proposed Ferry Naming Policy for review and adoption. She reminded that the Commission needs to take into consideration that the next 64-car ferry needs to be named by July. In summary a name proposal must meet the following policy guidelines:

- Identify the lead/ sponsoring entity along with the ferry name being proposed.
- Establish eligibility - Identify how the proposal conforms to WSTC guidelines as indicated in the “WSF Vessel Naming Policy” (See link to policy below).
- Provide background and make a case for the proposal.
- Establish and identify widespread support for the proposal via letters of support from local, regional, and state bodies and officials.

At a minimum, the following guidelines will be used to assess ferry name proposals:

- Names for ferries should carry statewide significance and represent our state’s image and culture.

- Specifically, names should represent such things as: state adopted symbols, tribal names, names of bodies of water, geographic locations, cities, counties, or relate to nautical heritage, etc.
- Consideration will be given to the consistency with existing WSF fleet names. *(NOTE: All but two current vessels have tribal names: the Rhododendron and the Evergreen State.)*
- Names should have broad familiarity, be easy to pronounce, are non-offensive and meet ethical standards.
- Names with commercial overtones or names honoring or commemorating individuals should be avoided, but will be considered upon very careful review. In these cases, the following guidelines will apply:
 - The individual must be deceased for at least 20 years.
 - They must have enduring fame and have played a significant historical role in the region and/or state.

It was moved by Commissioner Hill and seconded by Commissioner Distler to adopt the Ferry Naming Policy with the changes proposed. The motion passed unanimously.

It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner Forner that the Commission initiate the process for the next two 64-car vessels, with naming for one or both to take place at the July Commission Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

To view the Commission Ferry Naming Policy in its entirety please click on the link.
<http://wstc.wa.gov/FerryNamingPolicy.pdf>

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul W. Locke emphasized that he believes that government needs to cut down on its spending.

STATE OF TRANSPORTATION REPORT AND SECRETARY'S REPORT

Paula Hammond, Secretary, WSDOT, said that the State is seeking additional federal funds; AASHTO recommends a doubling of 2009 ARRA funding. WSDOT and USDOT are working to establish 5th and 6th RT between Seattle and Portland. Hammond expects that 2nd daily trip to Vancouver will continue.

Today WSDOT was notified that State has \$35 million in Tiger grants to add NB lane to North Spokane Corridor. Seattle got \$30 million of a \$50 million request for Mercer Street. There is another \$600 million (nationally) in funding to be issued in September.

There is no money for scoping and planning projects for next revenue package, because all the Nickel and TPA money went to projects. We will need to be very careful of cost estimates, with so little design work.

The state highway preservation needs are well-known. We really need to get a handle on freight routes' needs before summer ends.

We need to better link land use and transportation; until we do, we will continue to grow VMT. Need to add capacity strategically in urban areas.

- Develop Transit Corridor plans.
- Determine whether there is a state role in transit investment for both capital and operations.

The Commission discussed the fact that if transit facilitates operation of state highways, there is a state role. Otherwise, it should remain local. The State has a role in connectivity and efficiency.

Secretary Hammond responded that perhaps the State could buy Express Service to help corridor flow.

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP14_StateOfTransportationSTC.pdf

WSDOT MULTI MODAL PLAN OVERVIEW

Brian Smith, Director, Strategic Planning and Programming, WSDOT, presented an update on state and regional transportation planning. The WTP sets policy guidance for all the modal plans; they inform the guidance that is offered.

Passenger rail development has focused on the Seattle-Portland route. The Commission suggested that a market analysis be done of the East-West market.

WSDOT is holding off doing the MMP until Federal Reauthorization is done. Some modal plans are tied to federal funding and some are not.

WSDOT will hold Open Houses on Climate Change and Transportation.

WSDOT has an outline of the Trends Report.

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP11_TranspPlanning.pdf

HIGHWAY SYSTEM PLAN

Jay Alexander, Director, Capital Program Development and Management, WSDOT, explained that WSDOT updates on a two-year cycle to coincide with biennial budget development. Need to look ahead, but not build things before they are needed.

The Commission discussed the fact that data can frame the problem, but at some point you need to apply common sense. Where do you leave the numbers and use your gut?

In the denser areas, we look multi-modally for solutions. Also, across the state, it is becoming more difficult to categorize projects by policy goal criteria. We look at the range of needs and issues.

WSDOT strives for HSP to be consistent with WTP, but notes that since it is financially constrained, the connection has not always been evident. WSDOT is broadening what is in the HSP to be less financially constrained.

There are multiple areas of focus for preservation and improvement.

The Commission asked that a Draft Plan be presented at the May meeting for further discussion.

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2010/Feb16/20100216_BP12_2011_2030HighwaySystemPlan.pdf

If you would like additional detail on what occurred at any Commission meeting in Olympia, please refer to our web site at www.wstc.wa.gov and click on the link titled "Meeting Audio on TVW" under the 2010 Olympia Meetings section of the home page. There you will be able to access the full audio recording of the meeting. If you have questions please contact our office at 360-705-7070.

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TERESA BERNTSEN, Governor's Office

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL