

# What's Next?

**2015 Reflections  
and Recommendations**



# Message from the Chairman

## Road, River, Rail, Runway

When the Transportation Commission visited Kelso and Longview in April 2015, civic and business leaders stressed again and again how SR 432 and SR 433, the Columbia River, and the BNSF Railroad each play an integral part in the commercial success of the Port of Longview and adjoining cities. People in that community understand that Washington's transportation system is complex, diverse, and interconnected: **Road, river, and rail.**



We also learned that Cowlitz County is extending the runway of the Southwest Washington Regional Airport (SWRA) to 5,000 feet to better accommodate corporate jets. As a regional general aviation airport, SWRA hosts approximately 90 aircraft, including 2 corporate jets, and provides regional aviation based services. Airports provide critical transportation services throughout rural Washington: **Road, river, rail, and runway.**

The diversity of our transportation system ensures that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In all four corners of the state, we hear these strong, consistent themes:

- Almost every community ranks maintenance and preservation of the existing transportation system as its first priority.
- Citizens understand that a diverse and multimodal transportation system benefits the economy and their quality of life.
- Residents in cities and towns want sidewalks and safe places to walk and bike within their communities.
- Voters support additional local taxes for transportation when they know how the money will be spent; and there is accountability for the investments.

The transportation challenges vary by community; some places lack rail service, water transport, or an airport. But I also hear four more "Rs" that the state and each community must consider in order to continue making forward progress on transportation:

- **Revenue:** Despite the major, new state investment of *Connecting Washington*, we must work to increase investment in preservation and maintenance. The cost to maintain what we have is less than the cost over time of doing nothing.
- **Reform:** Transportation projects and services must be delivered effectively and efficiently.
- **Resiliency:** A strong, redundant transportation system provides reliability for families and businesses, whether affected by congestion, by seismic events, or snow.
- **Human Resources:** The system depends on transportation workers – bridge engineers, state patrol officers, bus drivers and many others – who keep the system running safely.

We are fortunate to have a statewide transportation system that includes roads, rivers, rail, and runways. To keep it, and improve its resiliency, we must invest additional revenue and spend it wisely – on keeping the hard infrastructure we have, building more where necessary, and employing the right people to keep it running safely and efficiently.

Sincerely,

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SR 397 Cable Bridge over the Columbia River.

## Recommendations

***Transportation never stops. The circulatory system for a modern society, transportation is critical to building strong communities and enhancing the state's global competitiveness. A healthy transportation system improves the quality of life by providing travel options that safely and efficiently connect people and communities.***

In its 2015 Revenue Proposal, the Transportation Commission recommended that over the next 10 years transportation investments should focus on “maintaining what we have, while continuing to invest ... in critical projects that improve our economic competitiveness, build on our state’s stellar safety record, and smooth connections between home, school, work, shopping, and recreation.”

With passage of the *Connecting Washington* revenue and policy package, the 2015 Legislature made progress on several fronts in meeting current and future transportation needs. Statewide, the package does a lot to finish what has been started, connecting key arteries of commerce and improving network resiliency. The package has a strong focus on economic vitality, prioritizes safety, and includes an initial investment in fish passage improvements.

***In Central Puget Sound, the *Connecting Washington* package will:***

- Complete the SR 520 corridor
- Complete the I-405 express toll lanes
- Complete the SR 509 and SR 167 freight corridors
- Authorize votes for expansion of Sound Transit

***In Eastern Washington, the *Connecting Washington* package will:***

- Complete the North Spokane Corridor
- Complete Snoqualmie Pass safety and mobility improvements
- Complete another section of US 12 in Walla Walla County
- Fund state highway portions of the Yakima Gateway

Finishing large, complex highway projects and connecting additional parts of the network improves the transportation system, and demonstrates to the public that government can follow through with commitments. But *Connecting Washington* is not the silver bullet that solves all of our transportation challenges. Much remains to be done at the state, regional and local levels.

More must be done to address:

- Funding for city and county infrastructure
- Funding for system preservation and maintenance
- No plan or money for seismic retrofit of I-5 between Boeing Field and Lake City Way
- No plan for improving mobility between Portland and Vancouver

While expanded local options in the package are helpful for small projects and maintenance, new infrastructure options are needed to accelerate and leverage transformative projects, such as Yakima’s Gateway project or the Bel-Red Corridor, both of which will redevelop commercial and industrial areas to mixed-use commercial, office and residential neighborhoods.



*The City of Zillah has restored and relocated the historic Teapot Dome Service Station on the Yakima Valley Highway.*



The Commission makes the following recommendations, based on our work over the past five years, including meetings in over 20 communities<sup>1</sup> around the state.

## 1. Invest More in Maintenance and Preservation.

In statewide surveys conducted by the Commission, residents of our state overwhelmingly prioritize maintenance and preservation as the most important transportation investment. This need, echoed at Commission meetings in communities large and small, encompasses streets and roads to ferries, runways, short haul rail lines, and bus service.

While there has been too little emphasis on preservation and maintenance in the \$30 billion investment of the last three transportation packages, *Connecting Washington* makes some progress in investing to keep what we have in good condition. In asking, *What's Next?* we challenge the state and local governments to emphasize basic maintenance and preservation in the future and embrace fiscal tools that match growing needs at all jurisdictional levels. In addition, a growing awareness of seismic vulnerability and changing climatic conditions will require preparation and adaptation to respond to these events. And, at both the state and local levels, it is time to ask whether the current transportation system size and modal mix matches our ability and willingness to pay.

Funding must be adequate, stable and reliable so that jurisdictions can develop and implement long-term asset preservation plans – with transparency in spending and accountability to the public. In turn, greater transparency and accountability should develop public awareness of the entire transportation system and how it works holistically.



*The Port of Longview ranks third in revenue among Washington ports, trailing only the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma.*

## 2. Address Congestion in Key Corridors.

**Short-term.** Local, state and private sector leaders in urban areas of Washington need to collaboratively implement corridor-based congestion policies to optimize corridor use during peak hours. With little additional investment, it is possible to get more out of existing highways by using traffic-management tools, such as ramp meters and other control strategies to improve traffic flow and reduce collisions, deploying incident response to quickly clear collisions, retiming traffic signals to optimize the flow of traffic and maximize available capacity, and providing traveler information to allow users to move efficiently through the system. New resources to solve the unmet demand for transit service in the Central Puget Sound

also can help reduce congestion. Access to transit is limited due to a variety of factors from full park-and-ride lots to full buses that leave people standing at the curb.

### **Short-to-Medium Term.**

Lower cost infrastructure improvements may include adding capacity strategically within a corridor by targeting traffic hotspots and filling system gaps within a corridor. This could include upgrading a failing on-ramp merge, hard-shoulder running during peak periods, improving rail crossings, and adding capacity at park-and-ride lots.

### **Long-term.**

Better integration of transportation and land use will improve mobility by providing alternatives to congested roadways. To accomplish this, the state and metropolitan regions must incentivize transit oriented development, require multi-modal concurrency as a long-term strategy for more efficient corridor operations, and improve passenger train service frequency and reliability (Amtrak and North Sounder). Discussion should begin soon on long-range integrated intermodal planning, including transit coordination with Washington State Ferries (WSF) and whether and how to integrate passenger ferry service into the existing WSF system.

<sup>1</sup> Between 2011 and 2015, the Transportation Commission met with local officials, business and community leaders in Bellingham, Bothell, Cheney, Clarkston, Colville, East Wenatchee, Ellensburg, Kelso, Lakewood, Mt. Vernon, Olympia, Pasco, Port Townsend, Pullman, Renton, Seattle, Spokane, Sunnyside, Tacoma, Vancouver, and Walla Walla.



### 3. Improve State Financial Sustainability.

As the fuel tax becomes less reliable and less equitable, we must plan for different revenue sources. Cars and trucks are becoming more fuel efficient, resulting in fuel tax revenue that is stable or shrinking, less reliable, and less equitable. Those who drive more fuel efficient vehicles will pay a much smaller share of the cost of building, maintaining and operating the highway system.

Based on the statewide surveys the Commission has conducted, the public supports funding transportation with a user-fee based system – if you use something, you should pay for it. We suggest the following work toward long-term financial sustainability:

- Continue to evaluate and plan for a possible transition from the fuel tax to a road usage charge assessment.
- Develop and implement a strategic plan for how the state moves forward with tolling in future years.
- Consider implementation of a streamlined, equitable motor vehicle excise tax.
- Develop a single, long-range statewide transportation plan that meets state and federal requirements.
- Issue fewer bonds and do more transportation improvements on a cash flow basis.
- Increase the \$5 studded tire fee enacted in the *Connecting Washington* package to offset road damage from tire studs, and begin to phase out the use of studded tires to reduce pavement repair costs for cities, counties and the state – and improve driving safety.
- Establish desired transportation system outcomes and measure system performance.



- We are increasingly concerned with the age and reliability of the ferry fleet, and with resolving ferry performance issues identified by customers as needing improvement. Although the Legislature has enacted a reform to authorize out-of-state firms to bid on ferry construction in limited circumstances, other capital and operating efficiencies must be found to keep ferry service affordable and dependable.

- The state can lower capital construction costs for Washington State Ferries terminal construction and rehabilitation by seeking public-private partnerships.
- Use technology to improve ferry customer service and pricing. This may include account-based fare collection systems, the option to use *Good to Go!*, and ways to implement

pricing strategies based on vehicle length and size, and improve vessel loading and unloading.

- *Connecting Washington* provides increased funding for culverts and fish passage, but significantly more funding is needed to correct past practices.



*Culverts awaiting installation.*

### 4. Reform Capital Construction and System Operations.

Several Commission recommendations to reduce and reform capital construction costs and operations have been implemented or enacted in the past two years, some in small ways and others more fully.

- We have suggested the Legislature return to a more collaborative planning approach with WSDOT, instead of funding specific projects to build, reasoning that project designers and contractors should be empowered to find the best, least expensive and timeliest ways to accomplish what is needed. Steps have been made in this direction in two ways:
  - The Legislature has increased and streamlined the use of design-build contracting and enabled general contractor/construction manager as a delivery method for large transportation projects.
  - WSDOT has embraced – with Legislative support – Practical Solutions, a process to develop and better assess project design options so they are “right-sized” for available funding and achieve the desired outcomes.



## 5. Provide Adequate Local Transportation Resources.

*Connecting Washington*, the 2015 revenue and policy package, includes new revenue tools for counties, cities and some transit agencies, but many local officials consider that county, city, and transit resources remain insufficient. In addition, the state must continue to assist the marine ports in maintaining a competitive edge, especially in the changing container freight business.

- Counties and cities need additional revenue tools and changes to help existing tools work better. Communities have recommended the following:
  - Authorize creation of a street utility program.
  - Authorize tax increment financing.
  - Facilitate regional creation of Transportation Benefit Districts (TBD); currently a single jurisdiction can veto a countywide TBD.
  - Better balance grant funding for maintaining infrastructure vs. building new infrastructure.
  - Create a state program to enable local agencies to swap federal funds for more flexible state funds.
  - Reduce funding silos and encourage infrastructure projects that manage growth in a comprehensive fashion by creating a single account for multi-purpose projects.
  - Renew funding for the Public Works Assistance Account.



*Reconstruction of McGinnis Canyon Road in Douglas County eliminated one sharp reverse curve and widened the roadway from 24 feet 30 feet. For safety, the slopes were flattened and guardrail was installed.*

- Rural communities need better ways to compete for funds, which is especially critical since MAP-21 reduced rural road funding by 70%. State bridge funding requires a 20% local match, which is especially difficult for smaller communities. A single event can deplete county road reserves and demolish long-term plans.
- Counties need the same revenue tools as cities. County sales tax revenues in urban counties have declined due to annexations and incorporations.
- Increase state funding for special needs transportation, and better leverage federal funding for this population.

## 6. Work with Private Partners for the Public Good.

- Utilize public-private partnerships for non-toll projects with a clear public benefit, such as park-and-ride lot construction and expansion, improved system operations through technology partnerships, and partnerships with the tourism industry for increased signage and directions.
- Foster partnerships with

airlines, ports, economic development organizations and businesses to maintain and enhance commercial aviation service in rural Washington.



*Natural hazards of rain, snow, and landslides destroy roadways in Washington. A December 2015 storm closed US 12 near White Pass.*



*Spokane Transit provides convenient service to Spokane International Airport.*



*The Columbia River (on the left) and the Wenatchee River (lower right) divide population centers in Chelan and Douglas Counties.*

## Overview of 2015 Transportation Commission Work and Activities

### Tolling and Ferry Fare Actions

Tolls and ferry fares generate \$716 million per biennium. This is a small, but significant portion of the WSDOT budget. While tolling is necessary to raise revenue for capital improvements and tolling operations and to improve traffic flows at peak hours, and ferry fares are required to provide nearly 70% of the operating costs for the ferry system, the Commission knows that tolls and fares can be a substantial expenditure by those residents who rely on ferries and toll facilities on a regular basis.

Whenever called upon to revise toll rates or ferry fares, the Commission carefully reviews traffic and revenue projections, listens to affected members of the impacted communities, and seeks to ensure that customers are treated fairly and understand that their tolls and fares are used to build and operate the transportation facilities they use.

This section of the Report summarizes the Commission's activities in setting tolls and ferry fares. This satisfies the Commission's requirement to provide the Legislature a detailed report each year regarding changes in toll rates (RCW 47.56.855).

### I-405 Express Toll Lanes

WSDOT opened the I-405 Express Toll Lanes (ETL) between Lynnwood and Bellevue in September 2015. In recent years before the ETLs opened, this corridor experienced some of the state's worst traffic. The existing High Occupant Vehicle (HOV) lanes were often as crowded as the regular lanes and failed to reduce traffic congestion.

The I-405 ETLs are intended to manage this congestion, and provide drivers with a fast and reliable option for their trip. To do so, vehicles not qualifying for HOV status are allowed to "buy into" the ETL. Free use of the ETLs is limited to 3+ people carpools with use of a FlexPass during peak hours (weekdays from 5-9 a.m. and 3-7 p.m.). No toll is assessed for carpools of two or more during any non-peak hours.

The Commission released its I-405 ETL toll rate proposal in February 2015. In addition to proposing minimum and maximum toll rates, the Commission proposed key policies such as exemptions and carpool requirements. The release followed review of many traffic analysis studies by the Commission and WSDOT, as well as consultation with elected officials and many others who use the I-405 corridor. The Commission accepted WSDOT's recommendation to limit carpools' free use of ETL lanes during peak hours to cars with 3+ people, based on projections that the ETL lanes would remain congested during peak hours if 2+ carpools were allowed free access.

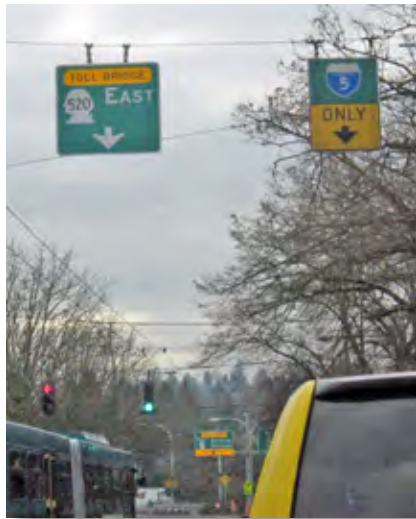
EXPRESS TOLL LANES	
NE 124th St	\$0.75
Jct 520	\$1.00
Jct 5	\$1.25
HOV 3+ FREE W/FLEX PASS	

The release kicked off a full public review and input process through March 2015. The Commission held four public input meetings – one online, one in Bellevue, and two in Kirkland – as well as an online survey of Voice of Washington panel participants from the six central Puget Sound counties. After consideration of

the resulting public input, the Commission enacted a final toll rate proposal on March 18, 2015.

As enacted, the toll rate varies between \$0.75 and \$10.00 based on how many drivers choose to use the Express Toll Lanes (ETL). If traffic flows freely and maintains an average speed of 45 miles per hour, the minimum charge applies. When traffic slows, the rate increases with greater congestion.

Revenue collected on I-405 will first be used to maintain and operate I-405 ETLs. Additional revenue, if available, will be used for future improvements within the corridor.



*SR 520 Toll Bridge signs in Montlake.*

## SR 520 Tolling

Tolling is required to raise \$1 billion to help fund the new SR 520 floating bridge. Overall project costs will be lower by tolling the existing bridge while building pontoons to support the new roadway. Although traffic fell significantly when tolling began, it has increased as congestion grew on other facilities.

In 2011, the Commission adopted a variable toll schedule (rates vary by day of week and time of day) on the SR 520 bridge to maximize revenue and minimize diversion to other routes. In accordance with the federal Urban Partnership Agreement established between participating jurisdictions at the beginning of the project, the goal is a free flow of traffic at 45 mph or more during 90% of peak travel hours.

The SR 520 finance plan assumes toll rates will be increased 2.5% annually FY 2013 – FY 2016, subject to review and potential adjustment by the Commission. In the spring of 2015, the Commission reviewed traffic and revenue data to consider the rate increase for FY 2016. For a third consecutive year, the Commission allowed the anticipated 2.5% rate increase to take effect.

The following toll rates took effect on July 1, 2015 for FY 2016:

- Peak period weekday rates: \$3.90 each way (7 a.m. - 9 a.m.; 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.).
- Off-peak rates (including weekends and specified holidays) range from \$1.25 - \$3.10.
- No toll is charged between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.

After completion of the SR 520 bridge, the finance plan assumes a 15% revenue increase in FY 2017, with no further rate increases planned to meet the financing obligations. The

Commission will review traffic and revenue data in the spring of 2016 and decide how to adjust toll rates to meet the revenue requirements necessary to satisfy the financial plan while maximizing traffic flow and minimizing adverse impacts on the communities in the corridor.

## Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB)

Scheduled increases in debt service payments require the Commission to regularly review traffic counts and revenue collections on the TNB. These reviews ensure TNB tolls generate enough revenue to make debt service payments, and to maintain and operate the facility. Scheduled debt service payments increase by 16% in FY 2016, and 15% in FY 2017.

The Commission undertook rate setting during winter 2015 in consultation with the TNB Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC). After a series of public meetings in April-May 2015, the Commission approved the TNB CAC's proposal of consecutive \$0.50 toll rate increases effective FY 2016 and FY 2017.

The following FY 2016 toll rates took effect on July 1, 2015, as approved by the Commission:

- Transponder *Good To Go!* toll.....\$5.00
- Cash toll at the tollbooth.....\$6.00
- Pay By Mail rate ..... \$7.00

For all payment methods, the toll charge increases with each additional axle.

In addition to ensuring that revenue is available for the increasing debt service payments, the toll increases enable the TNB account to maintain a sufficient minimum balance that avoids any reliance on the motor vehicle fuel account. By setting rates for two years, the approved increases also provide more predictability for toll payers. The FY 2017

fee increase was approved subject to the CAC's annual review process, which began in November 2015.

## SR 167 High Occupancy/Toll Lanes

A pilot project begun in 2008 allows drivers of single occupant vehicles equipped with a transponder to "buy into" the HOV lanes on a nine mile stretch of SR 167 between Auburn and Renton. The toll rate is posted on electronic signs and varies dynamically based on traffic flow. During 2015, the Commission did not alter the toll rate currently set at a minimum of 50 cents and a maximum of \$9.00.

Use of the High Occupancy/Toll (HOT) Lanes continues to increase. The Commission supports continued operation of the SR 167 HOT lanes as a way to reduce congestion and maintain a free-flow of traffic in the SR 167 corridor.



*A pontoon for the new SR 520 floating bridge moves through the Ship Canal.*

## Ferry Fares

Ferry fares were increased 1% on general passenger fares and 2.5% on general vehicle fares on October 1, 2015. The Commission implemented these fare increases in response to a 2.5% revenue increase assumed from ferry fares in the 2015 - 2017 state transportation budget. The fare increases will generate an estimated \$357 million during the biennium. In addition, the Commission eliminated the over-height surcharge for vehicles less than 22 feet long, and extended the over-height waiver for qualifying disability vehicles 22 to 30 feet long to include any feature that may add height, as necessary to accommodate a disability.

The fare increases were the first part of a two-step fare increase plan enacted by the Commission in August 2015 after a series of public meetings in July and August 2015. Following the October 1, 2015 fare increase, a second increase will take effect on May 1, 2016. It will repeat the fare increases enacted in step one, and reduce the over-height fare threshold for vehicles 22-30 feet long from 7 feet 6 inches to 7 feet 2 inches.



*M/V Salish at the Coupeville Ferry Terminal on Whidbey Island.*

## Road Usage Charge Assessment

EPA fuel efficiency standards mandate a fleet average of 54.5 mpg for model year 2025 new car sales. As cars become more fuel efficient, a fixed fuel tax rate is less likely to generate the same level of revenue and raises serious vehicle equity concerns. Drivers of more fuel-efficient vehicles are paying less per mile than other drivers for the costs of building, maintaining, and operating the highway system. This situation has caused leaders around the U.S. to look for alternative revenue sources.

In Washington, the Legislature directed the Commission, in coordination with WSDOT, to work with a diverse stakeholder Steering Committee to examine the feasibility of transitioning from the fuel tax to a road usage charge. Beginning in 2012, this has included exploring policy issues, evaluating the business case, and developing plans for a demonstration project.

The current fuel tax system is based on the number of gallons of fuel purchased, regardless of how many miles are driven. A road usage charge system is based on the number of miles driven, regardless of the amount or type of fuel used.

There are various ways a road usage charge could work. Some are as simple as an annual odometer reading, or buying a time permit, such as for a year, a quarter, or a month. Two other approaches use technology to record miles driven, either through a smartphone or a car's telematics device. Both options could distinguish between public roads and private roads, and in-state and out-of-state driving, at the option of the car owner.

In the course of its work, the Commission has adopted principles to guide final recommendations. These include:

- GPS and other location technology shall not be required to implement a road usage charge. Motorists must have choices for how they choose to be assessed and how they will pay.
- A road usage charge should co-exist with the fuel tax, and drivers should only pay one or the other – not both. This would fulfill the state's bond debt commitments for the fuel tax, while ensuring that out-of-state drivers and other drivers not paying the road usage charge still pay for use of the roads by continuing to pay the fuel tax at the pump.
- A road usage charge should not apply to vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds (such as heavy trucks and semi-trailers).

During the 2015 Legislative session, the Legislature directed the Commission "to continue evaluating a road usage charge as an alternative to the motor vehicle fuel tax to fund investments in transportation. The evaluation must include monitoring and reviewing work that is underway in other states and nationally." The Legislature also granted the Commission authority to "pursue any federal or other funds that are or might become available and eligible for road usage charge pilot projects."

With this direction, the Commission worked with its Steering Committee in the fall of 2015 to further understand road usage charge developments in other states. This included learning more about Oregon's voluntary road usage charge program, tracking the development of a road usage charge pilot in California, and following regional coordination efforts by the Western Road Usage Charge Consortium. The Steering Committee also heard from technology entrepreneurs who have developed user interfaces and account management tools for a road usage charge system.



It is time to learn how a road usage charge system might work in the real world. The Commission recommends pursuing federal grant funds made available in the 2015 FAST Act which, along with state funds, could fund the preparation and implementation of a demonstration project in Washington. A demonstration could include 2,000 Washington State residents from up to five regional areas across the state to ensure that urban, rural, and border areas are included in the demonstration. A 12-month demonstration could evaluate all seasons and travel patterns.

The demonstration project would test all four road usage charge payment options that have been part of the Commission study:

- Annual Permit (no technology involved) – a flat charge for unlimited use of streets, roads, and highways, like the annual vehicle registration;
- Odometer Read (no technology involved) – the vehicle owner self-reports their annual mileage when renewing their vehicle registration, and pays the mileage fee based on reported miles;
- Automated Distance Charge (involves technology) – actual miles driven in-state and on public roads are electronically transmitted through an in-vehicle mileage reporting device, and a bill is issued;
- Smartphone App (involves technology) – actual miles driven in-state and on public roads are electronically transmitted through a smartphone app, and a bill is issued.

The Commission would convene and oversee the demonstration, and maintain the current 25-member Steering Committee to advise and guide the Commission's work, and support the state's application for a federal road usage charge grant. It would:

- Further articulate the purpose and need for the demonstration project;
- Prioritize work on unresolved issues;
- Develop evaluation criteria for testing the effectiveness of a demonstration project;
- Develop a strategic communications plan to ensure accurate and timely information for the public and stakeholders; and
- Design the demonstration project in alignment with the project's purpose.

To further support a demonstration project, the Commission also plans to convene a Technical Advisory Committee of agencies likely to be involved in the demonstration, i.e., WSDOT, Department of Licensing, and Washington State Patrol (WSP). This Technical Advisory Committee will ensure that the demonstration project addresses the unique needs and characteristics of vehicle licensing, fuel tax collection and enforcement mechanisms in our state.

For further discussion, see <http://waroadusagecharge.wordpress.com/>

## Surveys on Public Preferences and Opinions

The Commission conducts surveys each year to provide the Governor, the Legislature, the Commission, and WSDOT clear and accurate information on the public attitudes about the transportation system, including perspectives on ferry operations by the people who use the ferry system.

### Winter Ferry Performance

In 2015, the Commission conducted an online survey of ferry riders regarding their personal experiences riding Washington State Ferries (WSF). Nearly 2,500 members of the Ferry Riders' Opinion Group (FROG) participated in the winter travel survey conducted during March and April. Most respondents ride the ferries during winter to commute to work (31%) and visit family and friends (16%). WSF performance is consistent from 2014 to 2015 and rider satisfaction has been consistent from 2012-2015.

The FROG survey reveals that 85% of these riders drove onto a ferry as a driver or a car passenger, 91% visited the passenger deck, and 74% used the WSF website. Most were satisfied with the WSF website.

There are three areas of high dissatisfaction and high importance where WSF should focus:

- Clean restrooms;
- Clear loading directions; and
- Adequate parking on the Fauntleroy/Vashon and Mukilteo/Clinton routes.

Over 40% of Seattle/Bremerton riders are dissatisfied with the terminal restrooms.

About three quarters of respondents offered suggestions to improve WSF service quality, but no one issue dominates the recommendations. About one in seven (15%) suggest fixing terminal issues.

### Ferry Reservation Policy

A 2009 statute directed WSF and the Commission to manage system demand by:

- Planning for efficient growth;
- Making better use of limited resources; and
- Shifting vehicle traffic to underutilized sailings.

Reservations provide customers with a guaranteed space on a vessel, predictability, and minimal wait time. Ferry communities benefit from reduced queuing on streets, continued access to businesses and attractions, and less air pollution. Taxpayers benefit from more efficient use of existing assets. Terminal congestion is reduced – lines approaching the Anacortes tollbooth are now typically less than 15 minutes.



*M/V Samish entered service in June 2015.*



There have been challenges, including the following:

- Lack of reservation space availability
- Tiered release of space is confusing and creates surges that are difficult to manage
- Locals want more drive-up space for flexibility
- Some customers not completing reservation process due to confusion
- Customers making multiple reservations and then cancelling the day before
- Low fees allow customers to make “insurance” reservations
- 10% average no-show rate impacts WSF ability to communicate available space
- Customers arriving early want to travel standby on earlier sailings than their reservations.

Of 4,201 respondents who completed a FROG survey conducted in early June, nearly half used a route served by the reservation system on their last ride. Two-thirds of the FROG respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the reservation system.

However, that number varies by route: while 80% of Port Townsend-Coupeville users are satisfied, only 54% of San Juan County users are. In the San Juan Islands, satisfaction with the reservation system varies by island:

- Orcas Island: 64% satisfied;
- San Juan Island: 49% satisfied; and
- Lopez Island: 33% satisfied.

For a full copy of either 2015 FROG Survey, see <http://www.wstc.wa.gov/StudiesSurveys/FROGSurvey/2014.htm>

## WSDOT Survey on Statewide Transportation Issues

As part of its work to implement the Washington Transportation Plan 2035, WSDOT used the Voice of Washington State survey panel developed by the Commission to conduct a survey during June 2015 in which over 7,500 residents statewide provided their views on state and local transportation priorities.

While all six state policy goals for transportation investment are seen as important, Mobility emerged as the top priority followed by Safety, Economic Vitality, and Preservation.



*I-5 bridge over Capitol Lake.*

## Naming Transportation Facilities and Ferries

On May 19, 2015, the Commission adopted a resolution initiated by the Legislature naming a portion of US 101 in Clallam County the “North Olympic Peninsula Medal of Honor Memorial Highway.” The naming honors four veterans who

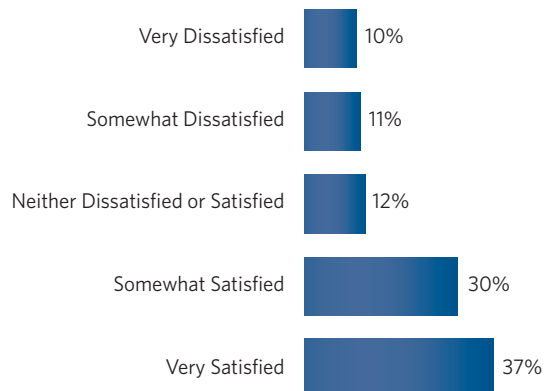
sacrificed their lives for the lives of others: Corporal Francis A. Bishop, Corporal Thaddeus S. Smith, Private First Class Richard B. Anderson, and Construction Mechanic Third Class Marvin G. Shields, all residents of Clallam and Jefferson Counties.

On December 8, 2015, the Commission adopted a resolution naming a portion of State Route 14 between Lyle and Murdock the “Deputy Michael J. McNabb Memorial Highway,” in honor of a Klickitat County Sheriff’s Deputy who was killed in the line of duty when his patrol car was struck head-on by a drunk driver.

### Rating the Reservation System

The 2,672 riders who have used the WSF reservation system were asked how they would rate it. The majority of users are satisfied with the system (67%) and 21% are dissatisfied.

#### WSF Reservation System Rating - All Routes





# Partners in Transportation

*While each community has unique transportation needs, challenges and successes, the consistent and pervasive need is revenue to maintain existing transportation systems and meet new needs of a changing populace.*

*This section presents key findings from the Commission's visits to Kelso, Renton, Seattle, Spokane, and Sunnyside during 2015. It also highlights other topical areas where private and public partners are jointly addressing long-term or emerging transportation challenges.*

## Kelso/Longview



1. Kelso has created a Transportation Benefit District (TBD) and used every funding source available for transportation. Still, it sees a need for the state to adequately fund grant programs. Kelso praised the Transportation Improvement Board's (TIB's) Hardship Assistance Program, which helps finance improvements to former state highways turned back to cities.

Kelso has completed a realignment of West Main Street and is improving it to be more pedestrian friendly, with new sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, new pavement, pedestrian scale lighting, and stormwater treatment facilities.

2. Beginning in the 1920s, Longview city founders built a road system to last: more than half the 138 centerline road miles are concrete. Pavement analysis indicates the city of 35,000 residents is spending today only 20% of what a comparable city would be spending on maintenance.

Committed to making its school zones the safest they can be, Longview has invested \$8.4 million on school zone pedestrian safety projects in the last 5 years. A safety audit recommended \$900,000 in additional improvements.

3. The Port of Kalama ranks third highest in volume in Washington and owns about 1,000 acres of property along the Columbia River with:

- 4 deep-draft marine terminals
- Navigable waters accommodating 43' draft ships
- 2 grain elevators, exporting 9-10 million tons of grain a year
- A steel mill that processed 400,000 tons of hot rolled coil in 2014



*The Port of Longview's export grain terminal and rail loop.*

Twenty-five businesses, with over 850 jobs, are located in the Port of Kalama, including lumber, chemicals, concrete products, compressed gases, wood protection, log home manufacturing/furnishing, bulk liquid transport, pump manufacturing, fuel dispensing, glass products, and electronics recycling.

4. The Port of Longview's cargo mix includes grain, potash, soda ash, steel, lumber, logs, minerals, fertilizers, pulp, paper, wind energy, and calcined coke. Its \$230 million export grain terminal and rail loop accommodates six unit trains at a time.

Pacific Lumber and Shipping (PLS), an affiliate of Port Blakely Tree Farms, has been the Port's longest tenant. PLS receives 39,000 log trucks a year from Oregon on SR 433 and from Washington on I-5. Longview exports 62% of northwest timber, with about 60% of the logs cut in Washington and 75% from within a 50 mile radius including Oregon. It takes 3-5 days to load a ship with logs bound for any of 600 customers throughout Asia.

5. The SR 432/SR 433 interchange, which serves the Kelso-Longview industrial corridor, is an important link in the statewide transportation system. Investments in the corridor include the Columbia River channel deepening, lock rehabilitation, and jetty improvements. Cowlitz County, the City of Longview and the Port of Longview support a grade separation and rail realignment along SR 432 to relieve congestion, enhance safety, and improve freight mobility.
6. The Wahkiakum County Ferry is the only means for vehicle crossing of the Columbia River between Longview and Astoria. The *Oscar B*, a \$5.7 million ferry christened in January 2015, carries 23 vehicles, nearly twice the capacity of the prior vessel. Built by Nichols Brothers on Whidbey Island, the funding came from FHWA, County Road Administration Board (CRAB), WSDOT, and Wahkiakum County.
7. River Cities Public Transit, serving Kelso and Longview, began over 85 years ago to get millworkers to and from work. While most riders on the system are transit-dependent, a new commute trip reduction partnership with Lower Columbia College has attracted more students.
8. Wahkiakum on the Move, operated by Wahkiakum County, connects to Kelso and Longview.
9. The Cowlitz Tribe provides transit services to all area residents at no charge. About 50% of its passengers are tribal members. The system connects with River Cities Public Transit, Twin Cities Transit in Lewis County, and Amtrak. Cowlitz Tribal Transit plans to expand into Clark County to provide better access to medical specialists.

10. The proposed Fire and Ice Scenic Loop promises a travel circuit of Mt. St. Helens via White Pass and the Columbia River Gorge. The project goals include an increased number and length of visitor stays, enhanced user experience and safety, and new opportunities for place-based education.



## Renton

1. Renton is a regional traffic pinch point, with two freeways and three state routes converging in a city of nearly 100,000 residents. Traffic bypassing I-405 & SR 167 creates a major problem, as are the backups from I-405 traffic ramps onto city streets.



2. The City of Renton grew up with the automobile, but is redeveloping commercial and residential areas to reduce reliance on cars. Its goal for downtown Renton is a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environment, including the conversion of one-way streets to two-way traffic and creation of a public plaza. City-wide, Renton aims to focus density in concentrated mixed-use centers for cost-efficient service delivery and alternatives to single occupant vehicles.

Renton looks at bicycling and walking as part of the city's quality of life. The Trails and Bicycle Master Plan seeks to have parks within ½ mile of low density and ¼ mile of high density residential areas, and to link parks together.

3. Kent is home to America's fourth largest manufacturing distribution center and the Kent Valley generates 1/8 of the state's GDP. No other community in Washington is impacted by freight as much as Kent. With BNSF and Union Pacific railroads traversing the city, 70 trains a day move through the Kent Valley. Coal and oil trains will add more delay. *Connecting Washington* funds the South 228th Street grade separation, which will keep people and goods moving.



*Every 737 makes its maiden flight from Renton Municipal Airport.*

4. Tukwila is enhancing economic development and sustainability by improving connections to its urban center from multiple modes: better auto access via the I-5/Klickitat Interchange; a bicycle/pedestrian bridge to connect the urban center with the Sounder/Amtrak station; and extending Strander Boulevard eastward to Renton and the Sounder/Amtrak station.

5. Several major highways, including I-5, SR 509, and SR 518 provide regional access for autos, trucks, and transit to, from and through the City of SeaTac and the airport.

A \$25 million project in the City of SeaTac improves the 28th/24th Avenue corridor, connecting north to the airport and south to Des Moines, passing directly by the new Angle Lake Light Rail Station at South 200th Street. Partners in this investment include Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB), Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), Sound Transit, WSDOT and the Port of Seattle. Only \$2.6 million of the project cost comes from City of SeaTac sources.

6. King County's Bridges and Roads Task Force is considering how to address the gap between \$90 million in revenue for 1,500 road miles in the unincorporated area and an estimated \$330 million investment that the road system needs. In addition to new revenue, draft efficiency recommendations from the Task Force include:
  - a) Incorporate orphaned county roads, islands of roads within cities, and Potential Annexation Areas within the growth boundaries of cities, into those jurisdictions.
  - b) Increase the amount of work that county crews can perform "in-house" without having to go to bid with contractors when it saves dollars and time.
  - c) Update state statutes for local roads and county road engineer laws to reflect current technology and practices.
7. Transportation equity and opportunity is a growing concern in south King County and other suburban areas with growing poverty. Investments in transit service in South King County can improve access to higher education, increasing economic opportunity, and improve access to health care, reducing health care costs.

8. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and King County Metro have been including social equity considerations in long-range planning and in developing alternative transit services. Although there is no common, agreed-upon definition

or set of values for fairness or equity principles, PSRC emphasized that *equity is about ensuring that all people have access to resources and opportunities to thrive*. Transportation equity considerations focus on the disparate benefits and impacts of transportation investments and funding sources on different socioeconomic populations and outcomes that repair inequities of past transportation decisions.

9. Between 2010 and 2014, King County Metro established six RapidRide Lines to provide Bus Rapid Transit service. The RapidRide F Line, initiated in June 2014, connects Burien, SeaTac, Tukwila, and Renton, increasing access to education, employment and health care. With over 5,500 boardings on a weekday, RapidRide F reached its five-year goal in one year.
10. The everyday living environment is a critical attribute of public health. Referencing an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, King County Public Health notes that 60% of health depends on where you live, 30% is genetics, and 10% is health care. Sidewalks, bike facilities, public transportation, and traffic calming are all components of healthy transportation. The challenge for improving healthy transportation is that the costs of public health impacts are externalized -- they are not accounted for in the current framework of planning, funding and building highways, bridges and public transit.



## Seattle



1. Shipping company alliances and the emergence of larger ships nudged the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma to forge the Northwest Seaport Alliance. The Alliance will unify the two ports' marine cargo terminal investments, operations, planning, and marketing to strengthen the Puget Sound gateway and attract more marine cargo to the region. At the Port of Seattle, Terminal 18 and Terminal 5 are being upgraded for the new, larger ships; at the Port of Tacoma, Pier 4 and Pier 3 are being improved.
2. Geography is a major constraint for mobility in Seattle. Although water and hills divide Seattle into five areas, nearly all local traffic goes through the central city. A crash in Bellevue can cause a backup on I-90, which can then cascade all the way to Fifth Avenue downtown. WSDOT estimates that accidents cause 25% of urban congestion.
3. Seattle's new \$930 million levy will cost the average homeowner \$275 and is allocated to:
  - Safe City ..... \$320 million
  - Affordable City ..... \$250 million
  - Interconnected City ..... \$265 million
  - Vibrant City ..... \$95 million

With passage of Prop 1 last year, Seattle is contracting for 223,000 additional bus hours annually from King County. More routes will have buses operating at a 15 minute or shorter frequency.

4. Seattle's Vision Zero campaign aims to eliminate fatal and serious injuries. Redesigning city streets, typically reconfiguring them from 4 lanes to 2 with a center turn lane, can create major safety gains. For example, Seattle redesigned NE 75th Street in August 2013 after a horrific crash in March 2013 where a drunk driver killed two grandparents and left a mother and her newborn seriously injured. Today, speeds and collisions have decreased dramatically on NE 75th Street while traffic volumes actually increased by 3% on the average weekday.
5. Mitigation is the most effective preparation for a major earthquake. For every dollar spent on mitigation, four dollars is saved on response and recovery. Statewide, 619 bridges require seismic retrofit at a total cost of \$1.2 billion. Of those, 236 bridges are in the Puget Sound basin.

Securing a strategic freight corridor is key to recovery following a major earthquake. Due to the high retrofit costs on I-5 from Lake City Way to south of Boeing Field, WSDOT has relocated the designated North-South lifeline corridor in King County from I-5 to I-405. The remaining bridges on

the lifeline corridors in Puget Sound that still need additional seismic retrofitting of their columns and crossbeams (substructure) will be designed to resist the forces caused by ground motion for the largest predicted seismic event in 1,000 years.

6. Sound Transit (ST) serves 52 jurisdictions within its boundary and now has over 30 million riders. Light rail ridership is projected to double after the University Link and Angle Lake stations open in 2016. By 2023, Puget Sound will have over 50 miles of light rail, with over 30 stations, directly connecting 11 cities. For its next steps, ST anticipates releasing an ST 3 Draft System Plan in February 2016, which will be open for public comment until June.
7. Sound Transit plans to develop Bus Rapid Transit on I-405 in phases; it is not waiting for the full build-out of Express Toll Lanes from Lynnwood to Renton.
8. In dense urban areas, shared transportation services are increasing travel options and reducing the cost of living, while providing needed, desired, and very flexible mobility. Shared services can include:
  - Taxi services (Uber, Lyft, Sidecar)
  - Paid on-demand carpool services
  - Shared vehicles (Zipcar, Car2Go)
  - Bike share (Pronto Bike Share, and Capital Bike Share).



*Sound Transit will extend Link light rail to the University of Washington Station in 2016.*

9. The emergence of autonomous cars will have major impacts on transportation planning and investment. Those impacts will differ depending on the regulatory choices shaping who drives or owns autonomous vehicles. Is a qualified driver required to be in the automated car? Can an individual own a fully automated car, or only companies with big liability insurance policies and reliable maintenance practices?

If individuals own self-driving cars, miles traveled and sprawl will increase with lots of extra miles driven. If insurance and other regulatory requirements result in corporate ownership of autonomous vehicles, vehicle miles traveled will decline and travel will be priced per use. Regardless of ownership, autonomous vehicles also will impact highway maintenance and preservation because intelligent vehicles require clearly painted lines, standardized guard rails, and other orienting guides.

10. ORCA Lift is a program charging a flat fare of \$1.50 for public transportation to assist low-income residents. Launched in March 2015, with assistance from King County Public Health, the eligibility standard for ORCA Lift is 200% of the federal poverty level – about \$23,000. ORCA Lift cards look the same as other ORCA cards and expire 24 months after the issue date.



## Spokane

1. Spokane County has 2,527 centerline miles, the most of any county in Washington. Of those, 693 miles are rural arterials and 123 miles are urban arterials. Spokane County also has 113 bridges.



2. Spokane is taking a collaborative approach to rebuilding its infrastructure. The City is committed to a 20-year, long-term plan integrating utility and road improvements and uses Lean management techniques and new construction delivery models to lower costs, improve service, and be greener.

Spokane's economic development strategy builds on infrastructure improvements in centers and corridors defined in its comprehensive plan. The strategy prioritizes projects based on:

- Comprehensive Plan goals
- Maintaining what we have in good condition
- Ensuring safety for all users
- Multi-modal transportation components: bike lanes, pedestrian improvements, mass transit, freight mobility
- Integrating stormwater management with public and private utility infrastructure
- Economic development opportunities
- Available funding

3. Spokane Transit Authority (STA) relies on local sales tax for 70% of its revenue. The state's biennial transportation budget includes funding for STA's Central City trolley line and the West Plains Transit Center. *Connecting Washington* provides capital funding for the Central City line.

4. Comparing metro Spokane to 20 other urban areas of similar size, the Spokane region ranks 8th for vehicle operating costs and 6th for roads in poor condition. The Spokane Regional Transportation Council's (SRTC's) Transportation Improvement Plan anticipates \$304.5 million investment across modal types. This includes 62% for roads and bridges, 25% for transit, and 5% for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

5. Partnerships are key to success in WSDOT's Eastern Region. WSDOT has collaborated with Spokane Airport on improved I-90 signage, Spokane Transit on the West Plains Transit Center, and the City of Spokane on the Division Street Gateway.

6. The business model for BNSF Railway is long-haul rail transport. As the economy improved, BNSF Railway rail traffic rebounded. BNSF spent \$3.6 billion nationally on maintenance and expansion in 2014, and planned to spend \$6 billion on capital investment in 2015. This business model also anticipates a major role for trucking and a minor role for short line railroads. BNSF sees limited growth for intermodal facilities; it notes that the best intermodal yard sites already are operating in Seattle, Spokane and Portland.



*High Drive reconstruction improves safety for bicyclists and drivers, and reduces stormwater impacts downstream.*

7. The 297-mile state-owned Palouse and Coulee City (PCC) Rail System has a new strategic plan and new investment needs because the economics of moving wheat are changing:

- BNSF is requiring shippers to achieve greater efficiency and faster loading times.
- Shippers have invested or plan to invest nearly \$100 million in facilities located along PCC Rail lines.

The combined investment by railroad operators and the State of Washington has not kept pace with the PCC Rail System's maintenance and preservation needs. Many of the 157 bridges in the PCC system were constructed between the 1930s and 1960s. The poor condition of some bridges has resulted in lower operating speed and a greater need

for inspections. Thirty percent of the PCC Rail System can operate at only 10 miles per hour. Also, some of the rail is lightweight and some is old enough to have developed defects that may cause breakage and train derailments.

8. Spokane International Airport (SIA), the second largest commercial airport in the state, uses no local tax dollars and generates over \$750 million in economic activity. Its passenger and air freight is growing incrementally each year. But, air service is volatile

and unpredictable. Industry-wide, it is extraordinarily competitive to attract and retain air service. Domestic flights are decreasing as carriers, including Southwest, ramp up international flights.

SIA is investing in terminal improvements, safety projects, and taxiways. It also is working to increase airport parking and shopping options. SIA is working with the business community to attract aerospace and intermodal transportation businesses to the area. Successes to date include Aeroflite's relocation from Kingman, Arizona, Alaska Airlines' Q-400 maintenance facility, and Exotic Metals' expansion from Kent

9. Amtrak's Empire Builder arrives at Spokane in the middle of the night. Spokane's tourism industry wants passenger rail service to be more convenient for the rail riding public. It notes that I-90 works well for travelers, but better way finding is needed to improve connections between I-90 and the regional road network.

10. Scafco, a manufacturing business using about 400 railcars a year, praises WSDOT's investment in rail: it saves roads, reduces congestion, and attracts family-wage jobs. The Scafco CEO asks that Washington emphasize road maintenance and preservation, and suggests WSDOT invest in an education campaign to steer people away from studded tires.



## Sunnyside

1. Cities in the Lower Yakima Valley have low property valuations, low salaries and growing needs. Sunnyside, like many small cities, advocates for a greater share of statewide revenue to cities and relaxed regulations on local street construction. Very small cities, such as Mabton, and small counties, such as Garfield, lack the population and tax base to raise meaningful revenues from local option revenue sources.



2. The Mayor of Grandview emphasized the importance of showing residents what they get for their tax dollar. Local streets and sidewalks need to be in good repair for people to support revenue for the system as a whole. In 2011, Grandview implemented a TBD, which generates about \$150,000 a year. Its TBD leverages other matching funds for projects that need to be done, such as a water main and street repair.

3. The transformation of agriculture from family farms to industrial agriculture has created new burdens for Yakima County's transportation system. Streets and roads were not built to accommodate 105-ton trucks and heavy traffic in food processing centers. Conflicts sometimes arise from growing wine tourism and agricultural production.



*Winery signage boosts tourism and road safety.*

4. Yakima's Cascade Mill redevelopment project involves the conversion of 225 acres from industrial to multiple uses. *Connecting Washington* includes \$120 million for ramps, widening, bridges, and the east-west corridor connecting to the old Boise Cascade Mill. The City of Yakima will use LIFT funds to match the state contribution for a \$50 million investment.
5. Outside the cities of Yakima, Selah, and Union Gap, there is very little public transportation available in Yakima County. About 20 years ago, Yakima County tried and failed to create a Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA); a second attempt to create a PTBA a few years ago also failed. Lower Yakima Valley cities are interested again in working together to study the feasibility of building a transit system.

For many reasons, the Lower Yakima Valley's tax base is not positioned well to finance regional improvements from within:

- 60% of land mass: Yakama Nation and federal lands
- Median home value: \$155,000 [state: \$283,000]
- Median family income: \$49,500 [state: \$71,250]
- Per capita income: \$19,730 [state: \$30,500]
- Families in poverty: 16% [state: 8%]

In addition:

- Did not graduate high school: 17% [state: 4%]
- Unemployment: 6.5% [state: 5.4%]

6. The Community Connector, operated by the nonprofit agency People for People with state funding, provides a public transportation link between Lower Yakima Valley communities only three times a day. This lack of adequate public transportation has real human impacts in the Lower Yakima Valley.

Many farmworkers rely on walking or bicycling to get around. When a worker is injured, there often is no transportation to health care until the end of the day. Heritage University students, many of whom are Hispanic and Native American, come from a family with only one car, and are dropped off early and picked up late. Student surveys indicate that transportation is their highest need.

7. Tourism in Yakima County is a \$320 million business. Among the 40 different crops that grow in the valley, the wine industry has taken off with nearly 100 wineries and in excess of 12,000 acres of vineyards. Wine tourism relies on a strong, safe road network. The Economic Development Association and Yakima County took the lead in developing a project to eliminate distracting signs in the right-of-way. Standard winery signage was erected beginning in 2012.

8. The 22 short line railroads in Washington are small but important in moving agricultural products and materials. The Yakima portion of the Central Washington Rail Road moves

fertilizer, french fries, and cardboard. Lower Valley railroad track, leased from the BNSF, is used to haul cattle feed.

9. Tree fruit represents about 30% of the value of the state's agricultural industry. Washington tree fruit is grown to sell fresh. The 2014-15 west coast port slowdown, which began just as apple harvest was finished and the peak Asian exports usually take place, was the major reason that 10 million 40-pound boxes of apples were never shipped.

Shortages of truck and rail capacity can cause similar sales reductions and price effects. A reliable transportation system is critical to sustain the 60,000 jobs and the more than \$7.5 billion in economic impact of the state's apple industry.

10. The distance by truck from Grandview to Seattle, Spokane, and Portland is 185 miles. This central location is one of the main reasons Walmart located a regional distribution center in Grandview that serves 127 Northwest stores. R.E. Powell, also based in Grandview, is the 15th largest family-owned business in the northwest, and has delivered fuel products throughout the region for 35 years. Deliveries to gas stations account for 60% to 70% of their business.

Both R.E. Powell and Walmart operate 24 hours a day, every day. Keeping the roads open is a key priority. Their truck drivers need safe places to chain up when crossing Snoqualmie Pass and White Pass.



## Private and Public Partners in Transportation

**At-grade crossings** of roadways and rail continue to be a significant challenge across the state. As trains have expanded in length, delays at grade crossings have grown. Additional wait time due to trains impacts service delivery by police, fire, and medical responders. Each mile-long 110-car unit train disrupts everyday commercial and recreational activity.

The cost of projects to eliminate at-grade crossings starts at \$30 million and goes up from there. Federal law requires that the railroad contribute only 5% of the project cost. Recognizing that not every crossing can be eliminated, cities, counties, railroads and the state have concluded that the best way to address grade crossings is through regional partnerships.

The Association of Washington Cities is investing \$250,000 of the cities' statewide fuel tax distributions in a Road-Rail Conflict Study administered by the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) that will:

- Identify prominent road-rail conflicts;
- Recommend a corridor-based prioritization process for addressing the impacts of projected increases in rail traffic; and
- Identify areas of state public policy interest, such as the critical role of freight movement to the Washington economy and the state's competitiveness in world trade.

Cities and counties expect the Road-Rail Conflict Study will:

- Enhance the ability to make an effective case to funding partners for solutions to prominent road-rail conflicts;
- Identify priority crossings with the greatest impacts on traffic congestion, safety, freight mobility, and emergency access; and
- Establish a central database for information on at-grade crossings.

Benefits for the state include the ability to prioritize investments in at-grade crossing solutions, and to balance interests in freight mobility, safety, traffic congestion, and emergency access.

**Bridges** are costly to preserve, maintain, or replace. As with other transportation infrastructure, bridges are a challenge for cities, counties, and the state. WSDOT and the Oregon DOT equally share maintenance and preservation costs for bridges connecting the two states. Repainting the 1-1/2 mile long Lewis and Clark Bridge connecting Longview, Washington and Rainier, Oregon took years and cost \$40 million. Repainting the Astoria-Megler Bridge began in 2009 and is scheduled for completion in 2018, at a cost of \$60 million.



*Oil train on overpass in downtown Vancouver.*

As a local example, Cowlitz County currently budgets approximately \$750,000 per year for bridge repairs. Of 65 bridges on Cowlitz County roads, the oldest was constructed in 1919. Most bridges need significant repairs or replacement by the time they reach 50 years of age. Twenty-five of the county's bridge structures are over 50 years old. At an average

replacement or repair cost of \$2 million, Cowlitz County would need to spend \$2.5 million annually for the next 20 years. At that point, there would again be 20 more bridges over 50 years old.



*SR 532 Davis Slough bridge girders are placed.*



**Planning and preparing for catastrophic events** can keep people and goods moving after disaster hits. The Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ), which runs 800 miles from Southern British Columbia to Northern California and lies 50 to 80 miles off the Pacific Coast, is the only significant fault line on the Ring of Fire without a major quake in the last 50 years. The last earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale to rock the Pacific Northwest was in 1700.

A magnitude 9.0 CSZ earthquake has occurred every 300 to 500 years. Ground shaking effects include liquefaction, landslides, and tsunamis. Most transportation facilities west of the I-5 corridor will suffer complete to severe damage. Most facilities along the I-5 corridor will suffer severe to moderate damage. The state is working with the Coast Guard, the Department of Defense, and ports to identify areas for emergency response, including areas for off-loading supplies from ships and planes, including airfields as far away as Moses Lake.

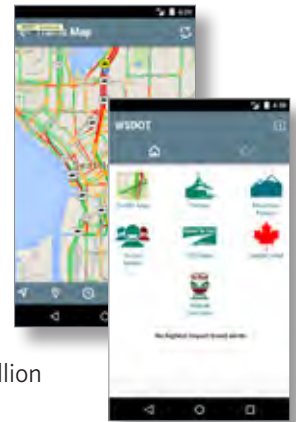
Cascadia Rising, a statewide response plan and exercise, will take place in June 2016 to identify and develop core coordination elements in the event of a major CSZ earthquake. The exercise assumes ground shaking to last up to five minutes and tsunami wave heights of 20 to 80 feet with multiple waves. During

Cascadia Rising, Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) at all levels of government and the private sector will activate to coordinate simulated field response operations within their jurisdictions and with neighboring communities, state EOCs, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and major military commands.

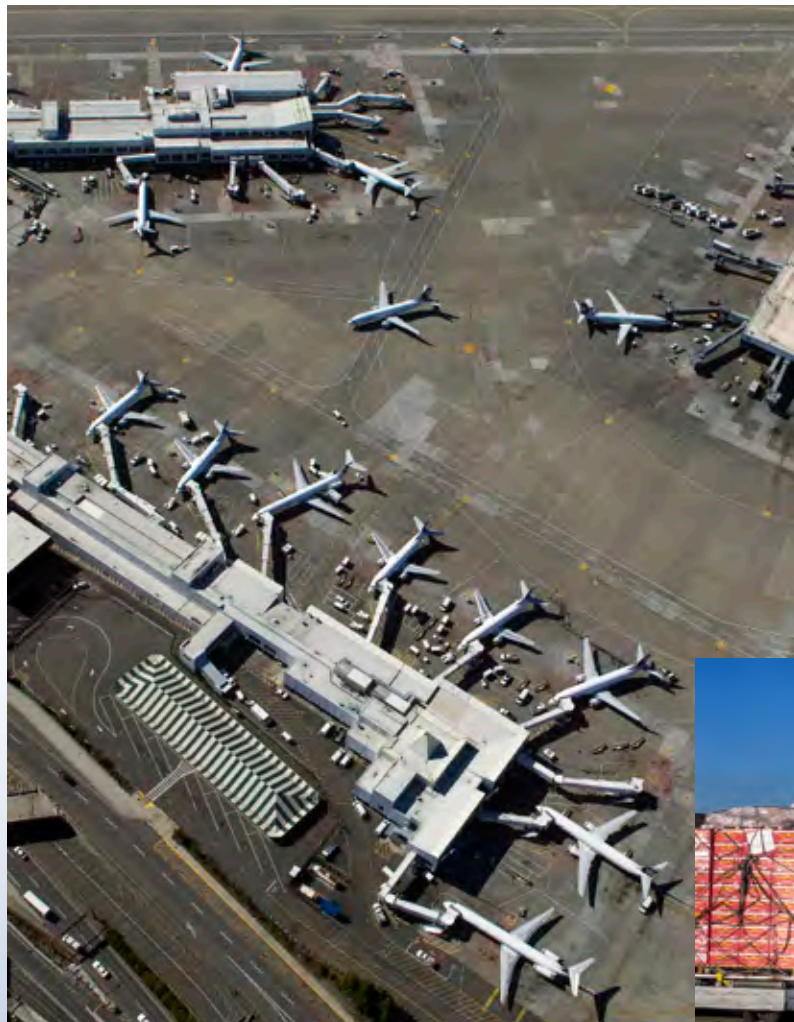
**Technology** can help make transit an easier way to travel. The public transportation agencies in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston Counties, along with Washington State Ferries have collaborated on the Puget Sound Integrated Trip Planner.

The Integrated Trip Planner offers a variety of options:

- Desktop trip planning (over 18.3 million page views in 2014);
- Mobile web trip planning (over 1.7 million page views in 2014); and
- Mobile apps for Android and iPhones.



WSDOT also has worked to improve information about intercity bus travel. The Google trip planner now includes Travel Washington intercity bus information, allowing riders to plan travel using public transportation on scheduled routes from Ocean Shores to the Idaho border.



*Sea-Tac Airport needs more gates to accommodate growth.*

**Sea-Tac International Airport**, the fastest growing aviation hub in the nation, served 37.5 million passengers in 2014, an increase of 7.7% from the previous year. No U.S. airport is handling as many passengers in limited space as Sea-Tac today. Projections indicate that Sea-Tac will need to accommodate 33% more peak hour operations without a runway expansion. The terminal will need 35 more gates, in addition to eight already planned. A second terminal at Sea-Tac is under consideration. And, managing vehicle traffic is a growing challenge.

The expansion cost is conservatively estimated to be over \$10 billion. Passenger facility fees, along with increased fees on airlines, parking and vendor revenues, will help to repay the debt obligation necessary to finance the needed expansion.



*Washington cherries depart Sea-Tac for export to China.*



*The Blue Bridge connects Pasco and Kennewick.*

## A Snapshot of Regional Priorities

**Benton-Franklin Council of Governments** provides transportation planning for the jurisdictions within Benton and Franklin Counties. The highways, rail, and rivers that pass through the region provide benefits of access and freight movement, but also create challenges where interacting with the local transportation network. The efficient movement of people and goods, through a variety of modes, continues to be a priority. Maintenance and preservation of existing capacity is a top priority across all modes.

Major urban projects include replacing a deteriorating railroad underpass in the City of Pasco, constructing a new four-lane bridge over the Yakima River in the City of Richland, and new infrastructure in Kennewick's fast-growing Southridge area. The smaller, rural communities are focused on community enhancement and creating healthy economies – they face many of the same challenges larger cities, but with fewer resources. The rural areas emphasize upgrading freight routes to all-weather road standards, improving multi-modal facilities, and enhancing rural economies through tourism and trade.



*Artist's conception of Wenatchee's proposed Confluence Parkway.*

### **Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council (CDTC)**

is the RTPO for a large region of diverse small cities and rural areas with the Wenatchee urban area at its center. Its economy based primarily on agriculture and tourism, the region depends heavily on access to I-90 (42 miles eastbound through George and 70 miles westbound through Ellensburg) and over the US 97 and US 2 mountain passes to access the Puget Sound region and its seaports. *Connecting Washington* dedicates funding for multi-modal and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements to the SR 285 North Wenatchee Avenue corridor, and for improving pedestrian safety and adding lanes to SR 28 through East Wenatchee.

The region's strategic transportation plan *Transportation 2040* identifies two primary challenges:

- Adequate and ongoing funding sources to maintain the region's transportation system in a state of good repair and to reliably move agricultural commodities;
- Connecting the growing Wenatchee urban core with neighboring cities and the state highway system by constructing a third access point over the Wenatchee River (or the Columbia River).

In response to these challenges, an increasing number of municipalities have enacted local option transportation fees. The CDTC board continues to advocate for increased state funding for city and county transportation infrastructure.

Other regional priorities include relocating the BNSF switchyard adjacent to downtown Wenatchee to avoid costly railroad underpasses, more passing lanes and ITS on state highways, and leveraging the state's Complete Streets program to improve communities and "main-street highways" in small cities.

### **Northeast Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization**

serves Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties. The region's priority in 2015 has been to enhance pedestrian safety. The cities of Chewelah, Kettle Falls, Colville, and Newport have installed new sidewalks along main roadways and the Kalispel Tribe is installing a new pedestrian pathway for their community center.

Newport is working on a second sidewalk project, which borders some of its public facilities. This project, and the sidewalks in Colville, Chewelah, and the Kalispel Indian reservation, were funded through the federal Transportation Alternatives Program. Newport's US 2 sidewalks were funded through the Safe Routes to School program and Kettle Falls' sidewalk project along US 395 received 90% of its funding through the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB).



*New sidewalks in Chewelah.*



### Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO)

provides transportation planning for Asotin, Columbia, Garfield and Whitman Counties, and their cities and towns, port districts and transit districts. PRTPO is working on a Safe Routes to Schools Program and is assisting local agencies with Complete Street policies.

Continuing needs are the maintenance and improvement of paved surfaces, the region's rail infrastructure and ability to move commodity freight, and preserving the inland waterways as a transportation conduit to barge the commodities produced within the region to markets worldwide. The region is planning for a 14-week closure of the Columbia-Snake River System for surface transportation and freight movement due to repair of the navigation locks starting December 2016.



*Dredging the Snake River.*

### Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization

provides regional transportation planning for the jurisdictions within Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap and Mason Counties. Its priorities include projects to alleviate traffic congestion and promote safety and mobility for freight and public transportation users. High priority projects include the SR 3 corridor from

Mason County through Kitsap County to the Hood Canal Bridge, specifically the Belfair Bypass, the SR 3/SR 304 interchange in Gorst, and the Hood Canal Bridge vicinity; SR 20 safety and mobility improvements; and the intersections of state routes and



*Jefferson Transit's Brinnon run plows down Center Valley Road.*

county roads. Several of the high priority projects were included in *Connecting Washington*.

The region's economy and social environment are very closely tied to Washington State Ferries (WSF), which link the area with Central Puget Sound and the rest of the state. The aging WSF fleet and terminal infrastructure lack a reliable funding source, which could force service cuts and preclude the ability to meet long-term capital needs.

Rural transit service is critical in connecting people to jobs, vital community services, and opportunities. Peninsula RTPO supports efforts that facilitate safe, cost-effective and efficient delivery of rural transit services and projects, and improve and integrate multi-modal transportation systems, including consistent use of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) practices in planning and construction of all mixed-use projects.

**Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)** is the MPO for Central Puget Sound, a region whose economy has fueled unprecedented job growth – job growth that has met a transportation system that is too often unprepared. Since 2010 the region has grown over 250,000 new jobs. During that time traffic congestion is also way up: by 92% on I-5 and by 94% on I-405.

In 2016 the population of King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap Counties is expected to surpass four million people. Five million people are expected by 2040.

Transportation is the top priority of the people of the region and its elected leadership. Significant investments have been made to get better prepared and thanks to action by state leaders and voters in 2015, more help is on the way. Over 500 transportation projects currently underway in the region are part of a coordinated three-year \$6.4 billion investment program.

Many major breakthroughs are expected in 2016, including light rail service between downtown Seattle and the University of Washington early in the year, connecting two of the state's largest employment centers with a reliable eight-minute trip. The new connection will lead to the redeployment of buses that will improve the frequency and reliability of Metro service for an additional 80,000 Seattle residents.

The new SR 520 floating bridge connecting Medina to Montlake is expected to open in the spring of 2016 – replacing a fragile structure, and adding lanes, shoulders, and access for bikes and pedestrians. In the fall of 2016, light rail service will extend to Angle Lake, south of Sea-Tac Airport. On I-90, work is underway to prepare for light rail: completion of the outside HOV lanes will allow light rail construction to start on the center roadway in 2017. Major work is also underway to complete Seattle's Mercer Street, and HOV lanes through Tacoma on I-5. The state expects drilling to recommence on the SR 99 tunnel through downtown Seattle for potential completion in 2018.



*I-5 HOV lanes are under construction in Tacoma.*



The *Connecting Washington* package included up to \$26 billion in investments within the PSRC region. Major projects are:

- Completion of the SR 520 bridge from Montlake to I-5;
- Completion of SR 167 and SR 509 connections to the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma;
- Replacement of the Seattle and Mukilteo ferry terminals;
- New lanes on I-405 connecting job centers in Bellevue and Renton; and
- Several improvements to support aerospace manufacturing within Snohomish County.

In 2015, Snohomish County voters approved the first new funding authorized by *Connecting Washington* that will provide new Community Transit rapid ride bus service to major job centers. Voters in Enumclaw, Seattle, and Tacoma also approved significant new investments for streets over the next decade.

Sound Transit is developing a major ballot measure for a vote in 2016 – a measure that will finally connect the region’s major cities with light rail. The 15-to-25 year Sound Transit 3 package will include between \$15 and \$27 billion in new taxes – part of an overall \$26 to \$48 billion regional investment.

**Quad County Regional Transportation Planning Organization (QUADCO)** comprises the counties, cities and towns within Adams, Grant Kittitas, and Lincoln Counties, and covers an area of 9,214 square miles. The top priority for QUADCO is preservation of local streets, roads, and bridges. Safety improvements on two-lane county roads are always a high priority. QUADCO plans to have a regional transportation plan update completed during this biennium that will include strategies to address safety, preservation, economic vitality, mobility, and the environment.



*Anderson Hay truck on I-90.*

Construction progresses on I-90, which is the unifying backbone of QUADCO. The current work to improve I-90 over Snoqualmie Pass is focused on the snow shed avalanche zone, Slide Curve, and the wildlife crossing zone at Price Creek. Regional priorities will preserve pavements and bridge structures, through repaving projects, pavement maintenance, and bridge deck repair on I-90, US 2, and rural road and state routes.

**Regional Transportation Council (RTC)** is the MPO for Clark County and the RTPO for Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania Counties. The RTC and its members want to increase their understanding of the nature of freight flows within the region



*Travel time message boards on I-205 in Clark County.*

in order to identify key improvements needed to promote freight commerce. In 2015, RTC collected data, worked with a newly formed private sector advocacy group aimed at focusing attention on freight and commerce related improvements within Clark County, and provided technical services to Vancouver in support of its West Side Mobility study examining freight commerce and community livability issues.

The RTC is helping to coordinate the multi-partner Vancouver Area Smart Trek (VAST) program to evaluate and plan for the future connectivity within the transportation system. RTC and its partners hosted a regional workshop on the future of connected infrastructure and vehicles, and RTC has provided grants to agencies willing to make future-oriented upgrades to traffic signal and communications systems. The region concluded a multi-year effort of activating travel time reader boards and posting travel times on existing variable message signs to better inform motorists of traffic conditions along major state routes. Each of the investments under consideration, or planned as part of the regional VAST program, is designed to increase the capacity of existing transportation networks by providing users with more responsive traffic signal systems and better informing their transportation mode and route choices.

RTC continues to collaborate with Metro, the Portland regional MPO, on matters of bi-state significance, meeting on three occasions to pursue discussions on matters such as corridor planning, housing affordability, and regional economic development. The Committee will focus its 2016 efforts on discussion of the interstate corridors crossing the Columbia River and ways to address growing congestion on these corridors.

**Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG)** is the MPO and RTPO for Skagit County, its cities, transit agency and ports. The biggest challenge facing the region is identifying funding to maintain and preserve the existing transportation network. This past year some progress was made by the implementation of TBDs in Anacortes and Sedro-Woolley. State funding was continued for the popular regional transit service connecting Island, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties but still lacks a long-term sustainable funding source.

Recent successes include completion of the Tammi Wilson Memorial Trail for bicyclists and pedestrians

traveling east and west under I-5 in Burlington. SCOG is finishing a rail crossing study that will identify high priority crossings and strategies to address conflicts at rail crossings.



*Tammi Wilson Memorial Trail in Burlington.*



## Southwest Washington RTPO

(SWRTPO) is the five county region embracing Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, and Wahkiakum Counties. The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments serves as the lead agency for SWRTPO and the Longview-Kelso-Rainier MPO. The recently adopted 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) provides an overarching vision and 25-year direction for the transportation system in the region. The plan is being used to guide decisions to address current and anticipated demands on the region's entire transportation system, encompassing roadways, public transportation systems, non-motorized transportation facilities, as well as maritime, rail, and aviation facilities.

SWRTPO's large size and geographic diversity pose a variety of challenges in building, maintaining, and managing a safe, efficient transportation system. Four emphasis areas – Freight Transportation, Roadways, Public Transportation, and Active Transportation – provide focus to analyze the regional transportation gaps and needs, and the development of next steps to support and build upon RTP goals. Other common regional issues shared with the Commission last spring include: bridge performance, safety, funding structures, and economic vitality.

**Spokane Regional Transportation Council** focused on the general conditions of area transportation infrastructure and pavement during 2015. Area jurisdictions implemented pavement preservation treatments or reconstruction on 60 miles of roadway within Spokane County, not including chip seals or filling potholes.

*Connecting Washington* included \$879 million to complete the North Spokane Corridor (NSC), Spokane's north-south freeway. Over half of the NSC is now complete, with just five miles left to connect to I-90. The BNSF railway mainline, switching and spur tracks were relocated in 2015 to accommodate the freeway. Two bridge and bicycle/pedestrian structures were built over BNSF tracks.

Spokane Transit (STA) received \$15 million funding from *Connecting Washington* for the Central City Line, a six-mile electric bus transit route through downtown Spokane to Spokane Community College. An additional \$8 million Regional Mobility Grant will fund design and partial construction of the West Plains Transit Center, including a park-and-ride lot, passenger loading platforms, two flyer stops, a pedestrian bridge, shelters, benches, and bike lockers.



*Improvements to the BNSF mainline will improve Amtrak travel time and reliability between Seattle and Portland.*

STA also implemented a Smart Bus System in 2015 to allow riders to monitor the location of buses, including when a bus will get to a particular stop. This saves riders time, reduces time waiting in the rain or snow, and could help increase ridership.

Several bicycle and pedestrian projects were completed in 2015, including the first segment of the Appleway Trail in Spokane Valley

on the site of a former rail line, and paving a parking lot and trailhead and adding bike racks to increase use of the existing Liberty Lake Trail. Many roadway reconstruction projects improved bicycle and pedestrian elements as well, by fixing broken sidewalk sections, filling gaps in sidewalks, and bringing ADA ramps up to standard.

Two programs were implemented during the year to encourage people to walk or bicycle more. The Safe Routes to School program features a walking school bus/bicycle train at targeted schools. A walking school bus can be as simple as a group of children walking (or biking) to school with one or more adults, picking up more students along the way. Or it can be formalized with schedules, routes, and official stops. The program will expand in 2016. *Walk Bike Bus Spokane* is an individualized marketing program that encourages residents of the South Perry neighborhood to use alternative modes of transportation. This program includes outreach materials and incentives, education materials and events, bicycle facilities and travel kiosks.

**Thurston Regional Planning Council**, the RTPO and MPO for Thurston County, supports a region influenced by the urban economy and lifestyles of Central Puget Sound and the transitioning rural economies and lifestyles of Southwest Washington. Efforts to strengthen the fragile economies in rural parts of the region include the South Thurston Economic Development Initiative and The Bountiful Byway, joining private investments from rural communities, economic development agencies, and new agricultural and food production businesses taking root in the region. The region's partners also work to ensure that important state routes – that serve as Main Street for our small cities and town – move traffic through the small communities, while supporting the local economies.



*Monroe Street Bridge in Spokane.*



*Bridging the Pacific Avenue gap on the Chehalis Western Trail.*



Regional leaders who understand the connections between transportation, land use, and health adopted the Sustainable Thurston Plan. The 3-year effort with thousands of stakeholders created a vision and set aspirational goals and targets that include moving toward a carbon-neutral community, maintaining air quality standards, preserving resource lands, creating vibrant centers and corridors, protecting water quality and availability, and creating a robust economy through sustainable practices. Three examples of regional challenges:

- Insufficient funding for preventive pavement maintenance.
- Local taxpayers bear the full cost of inter-regional express transit service that reduces the number of cars on I-5 during peak periods.
- Lack of any long-term strategy for I-5 congestion from JBLM to the State Capitol, including the Nisqually River portion.

**Walla Walla Valley MPO/SRTPO**, established in 2013, is both a bi-state MPO and a Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization. The agency coordinates multi-state, county, and city transportation planning efforts that cover 1,300 square miles and affect 65,000 people living in Walla Walla County and northeast Umatilla County in Oregon.

The WWVMPO/SRTPO and its members are wrapping up the development of the first metropolitan and regional transportation plan for the Walla Walla Valley. Priorities in the 2040 Plan include the safety of all transportation users, enhancement of quality of life and economic vitality, preservation of transportation infrastructure and services, and improvement of region-wide accessibility, mobility, and connectivity.



*Downtown Walla Walla is a walkable Main Street community.*

Funding shortfalls exacerbate the region's ongoing challenge to maintain existing transit services, sidewalks, bike routes, and 1,400 lane-miles of regionally significant roadways, all while trying to address critical gaps and connectivity needs.

**Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG)** is the MPO for the Bellingham urban area and the RTPO for Whatcom County. Despite its state designation as a "rural" county, Whatcom experiences suburban levels of travel demand due to its connection to metropolitan Vancouver, and its 2.6 million people. Every day, 45,000 passenger cars and 3,000 trucks cross the border through the "Cascade Gateway" – the five ports-of-entry Whatcom shares with British Columbia – resulting in annual trade of more



*On average, 3,000 trucks cross the border in Whatcom County each day.*

than \$14.5 billion (USD). While Canadian traffic benefits Whatcom County's economy, it also strains the regional road network.

In response to this and other border-transportation issues, WCOG leads the International Mobility and Trade Corridor (IMTC) Program, a U.S.-Canadian coalition of businesses and

government agencies that identifies and promotes mobility and security improvements in the Cascade Gateway. The IMTC has helped secure approximately \$40 million (USD) since 1997 from U.S. and Canadian partners to pursue border improvements. In 2015, the IMTC kicked off two projects: Dynamic Border Management and a Cross-Border Truck Study, both of which will be completed in 2016.

In its 2015 session, the Legislature funded some of the region's priority projects, including a new I-5 northbound on-ramp at West Bakerview Road in Bellingham, reconstruction of I-5 Exit 274 in Blaine, and improvements to Slater Road in the unincorporated area between Bellingham and Ferndale. Remaining needs include completion of SR 539 in Lynden, which was funded in the 2003 package, and ongoing operational funding for the highly-successful County Connector regional bus service provided through a partnership of the Whatcom Transportation Authority, Skagit Transit and Island Transit.

**Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG)** is the MPO for the Greater Yakima Metropolitan Area and the RTPO for Yakima County. YVCOG takes pride in its member agencies' successes of identifying regionally supported projects, optimizing funding opportunities, and delivering regionally significant projects. The bus service linking Yakima and Ellensburg enjoys continued support and provides vital connections for educational, medical, shopping, and employment trips. Regional successes include securing funding, through *Connecting Washington*, for the new east-west corridor that will connect the Terrace Heights community to the east of the Yakima River with the Yakima urban area to the west.

Future challenges include evaluating the feasibility of a regional or county-wide transit system, and working with other organizations to restore the Public Works Trust Fund. Several member cities have adopted Complete Streets ordinances and

await funding to begin projects utilizing Complete Streets design principles.



*US 97 in Yakima County.*

# Commission Facts

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Key Facts

The Washington State Transportation Commission is a seven member body of citizens appointed by the Governor for six-year terms. The Secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation and a representative from the Governor's Office are ex officio members of the Commission.

The Washington State Transportation Commission provides a public forum for transportation policy development. It reviews and assesses how the transportation system works across the state and develops and issues a comprehensive and balanced 20-year statewide transportation plan. As the State Tolling Authority, it adopts all state highway and bridge tolls and sets fares for Washington State Ferries (WSF).



### Policy Guidance

The Commission offers policy guidance and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature in key issue areas including but not limited to:

- Transportation finance and funding.
- Preserving, maintaining and operating the statewide transportation system.
- Transportation infrastructure needs.
- Transportation efficiencies that will improve service delivery and intermodal coordination and connectivity.
- Improved planning and coordination among transportation agencies and providers.
- Use of intelligent transportation systems and other technology based solutions.

### Public Involvement and Outreach

The Commission conducts its public outreach program through meetings held in Olympia and localities throughout the state each year and through its statewide survey panel, the Voice of Washington State (VOWS). Meetings held outside of Olympia focus on local and regional transportation issues and challenges. The Commission also convenes periodic regional forums to gather citizen input on various transportation issues.

### Transportation Innovative Partnerships Program

The Commission may solicit concepts or proposals for eligible public private partnership (PPP) projects. In consultation with the Governor, the Commission may execute, reject or continue negotiations on proposed PPP.

### Route Jurisdiction Transfer Program

The Commission is required to consider and act upon possible additions, deletions, or other changes to the state highway system. The Commission receives, reviews, and evaluates petitions from cities, counties, or WSDOT requesting changes to the state highway system. Once the review is done, the Commission makes a final finding and forwards its recommendation to the Legislature for final action in law.

### Studies and Projects Completed Recently

- Completed updated business case analysis of road usage charging.
- Completed three Statewide Transportation Surveys to assess residents' attitudes, perceptions and priorities.
- Conducted comprehensive system-wide ferry customer surveys on service quality and the ferry reservation process.

## Current Responsibilities in Detail

### Washington Transportation Plan

Every four years, the Commission recommends to the Legislature a comprehensive and balanced statewide transportation plan. The plan must be consistent with the state's growth management goals and be based upon transportation policy goals adopted by the Legislature. It is required to reflect the priorities of government and address local, regional and statewide needs, including multimodal transportation planning.

### State Ferry Fare and State Highway Toll Responsibilities

The Commission is the state's tolling authority, adopting tolls for the SR 520 Bridge, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, the I-405 Express Toll Lanes, the SR 167 HOT Lanes, and any future authorized toll facilities.

The Commission reviews and adjusts the WSF fare schedule and adopts fare and pricing policies. The Commission also reviews the WSF long-range capital plan and operational strategies.

### Ferry Customer Survey

The Commission is required to conduct a ferry customer survey every two years. Data gathered is used to help inform the level of service, operational, pricing, planning, and investment decisions for the state ferry system.



# Commissioners



## **Anne Haley, Chairman, Walla Walla County**

Anne comes to the Transportation Commission with a breadth of experience serving on private, public, and nonprofit boards and commissions, and 30 years of experience managing public libraries in Washington. She is currently Chairman

of the Board of Directors of Brown & Haley, Tacoma. As Chairman of the Washington State Library Commission, she guided the Washington State Library's merger into the Office of Secretary of State in 2002. She was President of the Washington Library Association and Pacific Northwest Library Association, and Counselor-at-Large of the American Library Association. In Walla Walla, she founded Project Read, sat on the Sherwood Trust Advisory Committee, and has served on the boards of various community organizations. After retiring from the Yakima Valley Library in 2002, she returned to school and earned a BFA degree. Anne was appointed by Governor Gregoire in 2011 for a partial term and reappointed in 2012. Term expires June 30, 2018.



## **Joe Tortorelli, Vice Chairman, Spokane County**

Joe is an economic development consultant with over 30 years of experience working with cities, counties and ports interested in growing their local economy by creating jobs and private sector capital investment. He began his

career with Washington Water Power Co., now Avista Corp., after attending Eastern Washington University. He has led numerous boards on economic development over the years and serves on a variety of local boards such as the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council, the SRTC and the Spokane Area Good Roads Association. Joe has lived in Spokane all of his life and is an avid cyclist and snow skier. Joe was appointed to the Commission by Governor Gregoire in 2011 and reappointed by Governor Inslee in 2014. Term expires June 30, 2020.



## **Roy Jennings, Clark County**

Roy brings to the Commission over 30 years of hands on experience in the field of transportation. He served on the Board of Directors for the Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Area (C-TRAN), the local transit agency in Clark County for over six years. Roy is currently the

president of the Amalgamated Transit Union Legislative Council of Washington State and the Secretary-Treasurer of the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council. He also serves as Treasurer of the Southwest Washington Roundtable and is also a member of the Executive Board of the Amalgamated

Transit Union Local 757. In 1976 Roy enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, and after 20+ years of honorable service he retired as a Staff Non-Commission Officer (SNCO). In 1997 Roy and his family moved to Southwest Washington (Vancouver) where he has lived for the last 18 years. He worked full-time as a coach operator for C-TRAN. He is a graduate of the Labor Education and Research Center, University of Oregon. Roy was appointed by Governor Inslee in 2014. Term expires June 30, 2019.



## **Jerry Litt, Douglas County**

Jerry brings the Commission 40 years' experience in planning and community development. He served as the Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Lacey for 13 years and 10 years with Douglas County. He has mid-management experience in Spokane

and Chelan Counties and has done private sector consulting throughout Eastern Washington. His experience includes responsibility for a full-range of Planning and Community Development services, including public participation in Douglas County's award winning GMA public involvement program and the City of Lacey's "Designing Downtown 2000" program. He has also been involved with state-wide issues through the Washington City Planning Director's Association as an executive board member and Transportation Improvement Board member. As past president of the Washington County and Regional Planning Director's Association he has built a long history and awareness of community infrastructure needs and economic development at the forefront. Jerry was appointed by Governor Gregoire in 2011. Term expires Jun 30, 2017.



## **Rita Brogan, King County**

Rita served as the Chief Executive Officer of PRR, Inc. for 25 years, retiring in 2014. As CEO, she established the company as a leader in strategic communications and marketing, advancing the environment, community and human health. Prior to joining PRR, she was the Superintendent of

Public Transportation Development at Seattle Metro and served as chief land use advisor to the King County Executive. With more than 40 years of professional experience, she has served on the boards of the Downtown Seattle Association, Crosscut, the Seattle Chinatown/International District Preservation Development Authority, the University of Washington Graduate School and on the Associates in Cultural Exchange International Advisory Council. At the University of Washington, Rita earned a Master's degree in communications theory and methodology and a Bachelor's degree in editorial journalism. Rita was appointed by Governor Inslee in 2015. Rita resigned from the Commission effective December 31, 2015.



*Commissioner Dan O'Neal retired as a Transportation Commissioner on June 30, 2015. The Commission wishes to thank him for his 12 years of service to the state as a Member of the Commission, which included three years as Chairman and two years as Vice-Chairman. Dan joined the Transportation Commission in 2003, and led many Commission efforts including: assessing railroad capacity and needs in Washington, developing the foundational state tolling policies, and establishing policies to maintain the financial stability of the state ferry system. Dan promoted healthy, active transportation, and slower, safer speed limits. Active in the state's environmental community, while a Commissioner Dan elevated the importance of reducing the impacts of transportation on water quality and fish passage.*



## **Photo Credits**

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