



JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

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January 11, 2013

TO: Members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees

SUBJECT: Joint Transportation Committee Activity Update

In the 2012 Supplemental Transportation Budget (ESHB 2190), the Legislature directed the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) to undertake five studies, and all have been completed. Unlike in years past, no consultants were hired this year to conduct studies. Instead, staff from the JTC and the House and the Senate Transportation Committees conducted all five studies within existing resources, with significant assistance from state agency personnel and others.

Attached are summaries of the five 2012 studies:

- Aviation search and rescue (p. 3)
- Columbia River Crossing Oversight Subcommittee (p. 5)
- Federal funds expenditure (p. 7)
- Joint vessel procurement with BC Ferries (p. 8)
- Public transportation fiscal health (p. 9)

In addition to meetings associated with specific studies, the JTC met seven times this interim:

- April 18th at Dupont City Hall
- June 20th in Vancouver, in conjunction with the Association of Washington Cities annual meeting
- July 25th at Kenmore City Hall
- October 24th at Burlington City Hall
- November 14th in Wenatchee, in conjunction with the Washington State Association of Counties annual meeting
- December 5th in Olympia, and
- January 9th Olympia.

Tours were also part of JTC's 2012 interim plan. On June 15th, twenty-one legislators and staff toured the active construction site of Sound Transit's tunnels and stations for the new light rail line between the University of Washington and Capitol Hill. The tour included viewing two large tunnel boring machines (TBM), which at 21' are less than half the size of the 57.5' TBM that will bore WSDOT's SR 99 tunnel in Seattle.

On July 25th, a dozen legislators and staff toured the SR 520 construction site at the Kenmore Industrial Park, where contractor KGM is constructing gravity and fluke anchors for the SR 520 replacement bridge, and where roadway deck sections and other pre-cast concrete elements will be constructed.

On August 8th, fourteen legislators and staff joined Rear Admiral Mark Rich and seven other Navy and civilian personnel on the Admiral's *Old Man IV* yacht for a tour of the U. S. Navy's Manchester Fuel Depot. This fuel depot supplies six types of petroleum-based fuels to Navy, Coast Guard, Army, Air Force, National Guard, and other federal customers in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. In the event of an emergency, the Washington State Ferry system could conceivably receive fuel from the fuel depot to operate Puget Sound ferries.

On September 26 and 27, fourteen legislators, three members of the Transportation Commission, and more than a dozen staff toured Washington State Ferry terminal and vessel preservation and construction projects with Secretary Paula Hammond, Assistant Secretary David Moseley and a number of ferry staff. Stops included Colman Dock in Seattle, nearby Vigor Industrial Shipyard to tour the construction of an Olympic Class ferry, Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility on Bainbridge Island, the Port Townsend ferry terminal, Nichols Brothers Shipyard on Whidbey Island, Dakota Creek Industries in Anacortes, and the Mukilteo and Edmonds ferry terminals.

At the end of 2012, JTC staff completed the biennial update of the Transportation Resource Manual, a compendium of facts and data about Washington's statewide transportation system. Coinciding with the opening of the 2013 legislative session, the updated manual is now available in electronic format on the JTC website, and as a three-ring binder.

Thanks to the thirty-three members of the House and Senate who have participated in one or more JTC meetings and tours this interim. Your participation is invaluable, and contributes to the richness of discussion and the thoroughness of our work.

The JTC website provides links to all current and past studies, including meeting presentations and reports. <http://www.leg.wa.gov/JTC/Meetings/Pages/default.aspx>.

If you have any questions, please contact the JTC staff:

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Senator Mary Margaret Haugen
Co-Chair



Representative Judy Clibborn
Co-Chair



Senator Curtis King



Representative Mike Armstrong

Enclosures: JTC Studies

Summaries of 2012 Joint Transportation Committee Studies

January 11, 2013

Aviation Search and Rescue

The Legislature directed the Joint Transportation Committee to convene a study group to evaluate the most appropriate agency to house the aviation search and rescue (SAR) program, currently operating from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). This program is responsible for responding to emergency aircraft beacon alerts and conducting searches to locate downed general aviation aircraft. The JTC is required to issue a report of its findings to include the following information:

- Where should aviation search and rescue operations be located to provide the maximum benefit for these searches?
- How should the duplication of services and training be addressed?
- Is the current structure the best use of state and federal funding?
- If aviation search and rescue is relocated, what should be the source of funding?

An appointed workgroup assisted with the study. It included representatives from WSDOT, Washington Military Department, Civil Air Patrol, Washington State Patrol, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Washington Pilots Association, Washington Air Search and Rescue, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the U.S. Air Force Rescue Coordination Center in Florida.

Staffing the study was staff from the Joint, House and Senate Transportation Committees, with assistance from the Work Group representatives and the Office of Financial Management.

Working with agencies and organizations involved in Aviation Search and Rescue (ASAR), staff prepared an overview of the ASAR process in Washington, including profiles of each agency and organization. Staff conducted one-on-one interviews with each Work Group member, and solicited their observations of the ASAR process, both in Washington and other states.

The Work Group held a half-day meeting in Olympia on July 31, 2012. The principal focus of the meeting was a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the Washington process, and the advantages and disadvantages of moving the program to other agencies. Members also discussed ASAR training, funding and other states' approaches to ASAR. Senator Honeyford and Representative Klippert participated in the meeting.

Following the Work Group meeting, staff followed up on issues raised at the meeting. Report draft observations and recommendations were shared with Work Group members for review and comment. Draft observation and Recommendations were presented to the JTC on November 14th, the draft report was presented to the committee on December 5th and the Final Report was accepted by the JTC on January 9, 2013.

Study Observations and Recommendations:

General observations regarding aviation search and rescue included recognition of the importance of an effective ASAR program to the active general aviation community operating in a state with challenging conditions. The Washington program is regarded as a strong program that does a good job and that it is dependent on the coordination of numerous government agencies and volunteer organizations.

The principal observation related to the state ASAR program was that it should remain at the Department of Transportation, rather than be relocated to another agency. Other observations included that the program is largely dependent on one individual, and that it is adequately funded relative to other states' programs. Some study participants called for additional outreach by WSDOT to other agencies and volunteer groups, and more transparency in how the program conducts its business, including training programs and search mission assignments.

Observations concerning search-related issues identified the potential for improved coordination between the Civil Air Patrol and WSDOT in conducting search mission training classes; additional use of Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELT's) as a means to improve search success; declining numbers of volunteers available for ASAR missions; and the fact that most pilots do not file flight plans (87% nationally).

Study recommendations focus on three areas: WSDOT administration of ASAR; ASAR training; and enhancements to general aviation safety. Regarding WSDOT, the primary recommendation is that the ASAR program should remain at WSDOT. Other existing staff at WSDOT should be cross-trained to provide back-up for the aviation emergency coordinator. Additionally, WSDOT should work more closely with other aviation stakeholders for improving relations clarifying methods and criteria for search mission assignment.

Regarding ASAR training, WSDOT and the Civil Air Patrol, in cooperation with other groups, should coordinate ASAR training courses to maximize the effectiveness of limited training resources. This includes course requirements, materials, and scheduling, and instructors. WSDOT should offer training opportunities in Eastern Washington, and should more clearly designate training required to participate in ASAR missions.

Enhancements to general aviation safety include suggestions for organizations involved in general aviation: encourage pilots to file flight plans or leave itineraries for every flight; conduct on-going pilot safety education; and encourage installation of newer technology emergency beacons. Aircraft registration renewals, aviation newsletters and magazines, and community college aviation courses are cited as methods to improve general aviation safety awareness.

Study materials are available at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/JTC/Pages/AviationSearchRescue.aspx>

Study origin:	2012 Transportation Budget, ESHB 2190, Sec. 204(5)
Report:	December 14, 2012
Appropriation:	Within existing funds
Project Manager:	Gene Baxstrom (360) 786-7398; Mary Fleckenstein, back-up (360) 786-7312
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Columbia River Crossing Oversight Subcommittee

The 2012 Legislature directed the Joint Transportation Committee to form a Columbia River Crossing Oversight Subcommittee to review project and financing information, and to coordinate with the Oregon legislative oversight committee.

The I-5/Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project addresses six critical problems: congestion, crashes, freight immobility, earthquake risk, limited transit options, and poor bike and pedestrian access and connectivity. The project is estimated to cost up to \$3.413 billion, funding for which is anticipated to come from tolls (up to \$1.3 billion), the federal government (\$1.3 billion), and Oregon and Washington (up to \$0.9 billion).

Subcommittee members include Rep. Mike Armstrong, Subcommittee Chair; Rep. Judy Clibborn, Rep. Jim Moeller, Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen, Sen. Curtis King, Sen. Tracey Eide, Sen. Ann Rivers, citizen representative Rhonda Boni-Burden, and Secretary of Transportation Paula Hammond.

The Subcommittee met four times in Vancouver in open public meetings. The Subcommittee also had a private meeting with the head of the Federal Transit Administration. Chair Armstrong also held a private meeting with the Commander of the U.S. Coast Guard's Thirteenth District.

The first meeting was held at Vancouver City Hall on June 19, 2012. The day-long meeting included a project overview and description of the December, 2011 Record of Decision; discussion of the project cost and financing plan, and appropriations to-date from all sources; the U.S. Coast Guard permitting process; and project phasing opportunities. A three-hour bus tour showed the project location on both sides of the river, and included discussion with the Port of Vancouver and C-TRAN, the local transit agency responsible for proposed light rail operations across the bridge. Finally, members of the Oregon CRC Oversight Committee reported on their work over the past year.

Subcommittee members engaged project staff on several key issues, including concerns about bridge height and its impact on current river users; how the locally-preferred-alternative (LPA) was chosen; why the LPA includes light rail rather than bus-rapid-transit; and the requirements to secure an \$850 million federal New Starts grant to pay for the light rail project.

The second meeting was held at WSDOT's SW Region headquarters on August 20, 2012. Two members of the Oregon Oversight Committee joined the Subcommittee at the table. The agenda included discussion of work underway to refine the LPA; what might trigger an amendment to the Final Environmental Impact Statement and the implications of such an amendment; work underway with river users for whom a 95' bridge clearance would be a barrier; and the workplan for submitting a General Bridge Permit application to the U.S. Coast Guard by late 2012. C-TRAN also reported on their November, 2012 ballot measure, a request for approval of a 0.1% sales tax increase to fund light rail transit operations and maintenance.

The **meeting with Peter Rogoff, FTA Administrator** occurred October 1 in Seattle. Mr. Rogoff indicated strong FTA and FHWA support for the project; said the \$850 million New Starts grant is only for light rail (not bus-rapid-transit); and that a recent law spearheaded by Senator Patty Murray provides a significant benefit to the project, allowing Oregon and Washington's equity contribution to the highway portion of the project to qualify as the required 50% match for the New Starts transit grant. In response to questions, Rogoff said TriMet is in good shape as far as being able to finance maintenance on existing facilities. And he said Congress has always funded approved "full funding grant agreements" (signed New Starts contracts), and he would expect nothing different in the future. He also said that should the C-TRAN sales tax vote fail in November, 2012, it won't slow the project down; the project remains in the FTA New Starts pipeline until one of the project sponsors says to pull it out of the pipeline.

Also on October 1, **Chair Armstrong met with Rear Admiral Keith Taylor, Commander, Thirteenth Coast Guard District**, members of the Admiral’s staff, and CRC project personnel and JTC staff, concerning the General Bridge Permit. The Admiral said the Coast Guard had concerns about the proposed 95’ clearance, and needed to understand current river users and the economic impact of that clearance on river users. Discussion also included a potential lift span on the bridge, mitigation requirements, and related topics.

A **third meeting** on October 9, 2012, addressed the project’s finance plan, traffic and revenue work, the list of expenditures to be financed with the \$850 million New Starts grant, and potential federal TIFIA funding for the project. Discussion continued regarding the U.S. Coast Guard’s General Bridge Permit.

Thirty-four members of the public addressed the Subcommittee. Some indicated strong support for the project as currently designed, and called it the largest economic development project on the West Coast. Others expressed support based on the jobs and apprenticeships it would create for members of the Building Trades who have high unemployment rates in Clark County. Some speakers expressed opposition to light rail, additional sales tax to finance light rail operations, or were concerned it would force C-TRAN to inherit Tri-Met’s cost structure and debt. Others questioned the cost to collect tolls, said the project needed independent financial advice, and objected to spending \$150 million without constructing anything yet.

The **fourth meeting** on December 10, 2012, included a post-election update; addressed governance with the Washington and Oregon Transportation Commissions, (both states will issue debt and set tolls); discussed the *Navigation Impact Report* recently delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard, and the General Bridge Permit application; reviewed debt-issuance considerations with the Oregon and Washington State Treasurers’ offices; and discussed the project’s phased master plan.

Key dates in CRC Project Timeline:

- September, 2011 Final EIS published
- December, 2011 Federal Record of Decision signed
- March, 2012 Governor signed ESSB 6445 defining CRC as an eligible toll facility, and authorizing the Washington State Transportation Commission to enter joint toll setting agreements with the Oregon Transportation Commission
- June–December, 2012 JTC’s Columbia River Crossing Oversight Subcommittee meets
- January, 2013 Project submits General Bridge Permit application to USCG
- 2013 Oregon and Washington legislatures need to approve equity contributions to meet federal New Starts and TIFIA application deadlines
- Fall, 2013 Submit full funding grant agreement application to FTA
- Winter, 2013 Submit TIFIA application
- Late, 2013 Complete investment grade traffic and revenue analysis
- Early, 2014 Transportation Commissions set toll rates
- Late, 2014 Begin construction
- Mid, 2015 Begin pre-completion tolling

Subcommittee materials are available at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/JTC/Pages/CRCOversightSubcommittee.aspx>

Study origin:	2012 Transportation Budget, ESHB 2190, Sec. 204(7)
Appropriation:	Within existing funds
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Federal Funds Expenditure

The Legislature directed the JTC to convene a study group to evaluate the effectiveness, transparency and priorities by which WSDOT spends federal transportation funds. The study group was required to make recommendations to:

- Increase transparency in the programming of federal funds;
- Evaluate assumptions used to predict future federal funds from the different federal programs;
- Develop a process to link statewide priorities to distribution of federal funds from project savings and redistributed federal funds from other states; and
- Develop a process to incorporate legislative and OFM feedback in the development of federal grant and loan applications.

Study group members include representatives from WSDOT, the Office of Financial Management, the Federal Highway Administration, and legislative staff.

To accomplish the goals of the proviso, the study group met four times during the legislative interim. At the first meeting in May, the fundamentals of federal transportation funding were discussed. At the second meeting in June, the focus shifted to WSDOT responsibilities in meeting the requirements of the Federal Highway Administration. The third meeting in July addressed the method by which WSDOT programs federal funds. A final meeting in October followed up on remaining questions.

The study found that WSDOT has been effective at ensuring that Washington State maximizes its use of federal funds. However, WSDOT can improve the transparency of its processes and by doing so could help strengthen external decisions on programming transportation funds, including federal funds. The background information provided during the meetings covered federal authorization, apportionment, obligation authority, and planning requirements; WSDOT's multiple jurisdictional requirements; transportation revenue forecasting; project prioritization; and federal grant and loan processes.

The report recommendations focus on regular and ongoing consultation between key users of federal funds information, particularly changes in the availability and programming of federal funds:

- JTC should facilitate the convening of a regular federal funds forum, including WSDOT, OFM, and legislative staff, for information-sharing about federal funds availability, programming, and other relevant developments.
- WSDOT consultation with OFM and the Legislature on federal funds-related issues should consistently include staff as well as elected officials.
- WSDOT should consult and update both OFM and the Legislature regarding how they are planning to use any new funds coming available through savings or redistribution from other states. Improved external communications on project prioritization more generally could help meet this objective.
- WSDOT should seek timely input from OFM and the Legislature when applying for federal grants or loans that will drive policy changes.

Study materials are available at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/JTC/Pages/FederalFundsProject.aspx>

Study origin:	2012 Transportation Budget, ESHB 2190, Sec. 204(8)
Report:	December 16, 2012
Appropriation:	Within existing funds
Project Manager:	Beth Redfield (360) 786-7327; Mary Fleckenstein, back-up (360) 786-7312
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Joint Vessel Procurement with BC Ferries

The Legislature directed the JTC to convene a series of meetings between representatives of Washington State Ferries (WSF) and British Columbia Ferry Services as well as the respective shipyard contractors for new vessel construction for each system. The purpose of the meetings is to explore joint procurement of additional 144-car capacity ferry vessels for use in either ferry system.

The benefits identified by the budget proviso may include, but are not limited to:

- Construction savings accruing to both ferry systems due to the economies of scale of purchasing multiple vessels;
- Additional relief vessel capacity available to both ferry systems; and
- Enhanced service on the international route connecting Washington and British Columbia.

It is worth noting that achieving the "series-build" savings of an additional 144-car vessel requires that the work be done through the existing WSF contract with Vigor Industrial.

One meeting was held to accomplish the goals of the project. Convened in August at BC Ferries headquarters in Victoria, British Columbia, the purpose of the meeting was to determine whether the two ferry systems were interested in joint vessel procurement. In attendance were representatives of BC Ferries, the BC Transportation Ministry, WSF, Senator Tracey Eide, Representative Jeff Morris and legislative staff. At the meeting, the two ferry systems discussed at length their long term plans for vessel procurement and their plans to use liquefied natural gas (LNG).

On the subject of vessel procurement, BC Ferries described its plans to continue its recent practice of competitively bidding its new vessel contracts on the international market. BC Ferries expressed interest in greater participation by Washington State shipyards in their bidding process. WSF has two 144-car vessels under contract with Vigor shipyards, with an option for an additional two vessels.

The meeting also included discussions of LNG use, which both ferry systems view as an important fuel cost savings strategy. There is a common interest in regulatory alignment between the U.S. Coast Guard and Transport Canada. Both ferry systems have been working first on retrofits of existing vessels to gain operational experience with LNG.

BC Ferries' plans to continue procuring its vessels internationally effectively precludes joining WSF in its contract with Vigor for an additional 144-car ferry. As a result, no second meeting was held.

Study materials are available at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/JTC/Pages/JtProcurementBCFerries.aspx>

Study origin:	2012 Transportation Budget, ESHB 2190, Sec. 204(6)
Appropriation:	Within existing funds
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Fiscal Health of Public Transportation

The Legislature directed the JTC to evaluate the fiscal health of public transportation in Washington and to make a comparison to the fiscal health of state transportation programs. This evaluation came out discussions during the 2012 legislative session about the need for additional funding sources for public transportation, including questions raised about existing transit funding, and reserves currently held by transit agencies. The study will evaluate public transportation and state transportation fiscal health from 1990 – 2011, with the primary focus being on Washington’s 31 public transit agencies.

Legislative staff collected transit financial and operational data from numerous sources including the Federal Transit Administration's *National Transit Database*, the *Annual Summary of Public Transportation* published by WSDOT, and past Legislative Transportation Committee and JTC studies. Staff worked with WSDOT to ensure data accuracy. Other interested parties such as the Washington State Transit Association, individual transit agencies, and the Washington Policy Center, were contacted during the study to comment on technical issues, including specific data questions, appropriate inflationary indices, and performance measures. Those parties also provided input on study drafts.

The report assesses trends in public transportation revenues, capital and operating expenditures, transit ridership and other measures of utilization and performance, and the size and use of reserve funds. These trends were depicted during the 1991-2011 period. Many of these graphs combine totals for all 31 transit agencies, or categorize the agencies by rural systems, small city systems, and urban systems. In some cases, King County Metro and Sound Transit are broken out separately because of the relative scale of those agencies. Case studies of six transit agencies are included in the report to overcome the effects of aggregation of data. Those transit agencies are Ben-Franklin, Grays Harbor, Link, King County Metro, Pierce and Sound Transit.

The report depicts state transportation funding and expenditures during the 1991-2011 period and then compares their relative growth with transit funding and expenditure changes over the same period. Again, the report contains observations related to this comparison. The report also includes a description of transit system governance, funding methods, and types of services. The report also includes a description of state transportation agencies and the funding sources for state transportation programs.

The report presents a significant amount of data and employs graphics to illustrate data trends. Observations on those graphics are provided to help the reader interpret the graphics. The report does not reach conclusions on the data, nor does it make recommendations.

Initial study materials and study drafts were presented at the October 10th and November 14th JTC meetings, and the Draft Report was presented at the December 5th JTC meeting.

Study materials are available at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/JTC/Pages/PublicTranspFiscalHealth.aspx>

Study origin:	2012 Transportation Budget, ESHB 2190, Sec. 204(9)
Report:	December 1, 2012
Appropriation:	Within existing funds
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