



JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

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September 24, 2012

TO: Members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees

SUBJECT: Joint Transportation Committee Activity Update

The 2012 Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) interim workplan is well underway. The Legislature directed us to undertake five studies in the Supplemental Transportation Budget (ESHB 2190), and all are moving forward. Unlike in years past, no consultants have been hired this year to conduct studies. Instead, staff from the JTC and the House and the Senate Transportation Committees are conducting all five studies within existing resources, with significant assistance from state agency personnel and others.

Attached are summaries of the five 2012 studies, which include the following:

- Aviation search and rescue (p. 3)
- Columbia River Crossing Oversight Subcommittee (p. 4)
- Federal funds expenditure (p. 5)
- Joint vessel procurement with BC Ferries (p. 6)
- Public transportation fiscal health (p. 7)

In addition to meetings associated with specific studies, the JTC has met three times this interim: April 18th at Dupont City Hall; June 20th in Vancouver in conjunction with the Association of Washington Cities annual meeting; and July 25th at Kenmore City Hall. Four more meetings are planned before the 2013 legislative session begins:

- 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.

This is also the year JTC updates the Transportation Resource Manual, a compendium of facts and data about Washington's statewide transportation system. The updated manual will be available for distribution in electronic and paper format in January, 2013, to coincide with the opening of the 2013 legislative session.

A number of tours are on JTC's 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 later this year.

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.

A two-day tour of Washington State Ferry terminal and vessel preservation and construction projects is planned for September 26th and 27th.

Thanks to the twenty-six members of the House and Senate who have participated in one or more JTC meetings and tours already 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

September 24, 2012

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 is assisting with the study. It includes 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.

Study progress to-date includes the following:

- Staff has outlined the existing SAR process, developed written summaries describing the role of each party in aviation SAR, and explored ideas for improvements to the current approach.
- Staff conducted interviews with each of the member of the workgroup.
- A four-hour workgroup meeting was held in Olympia on July 31st, with legislators also in attendance.
- Staff conducted follow-up interviews with some stakeholders, as well as the State of Montana Aeronautics Division (often mentioned as a national model).

Little support was voiced for transferring the aviation SAR program out of WSDOT during the interview process and at the July 31st workgroup meeting. However, a number of suggestions have been made for improving the process in Washington. Staff is currently developing a list of findings and recommendations for improvements to the SAR program, which will be presented to the workgroup for comment. The draft report will follow, and it too will be submitted to the workgroup for comment.

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 Legislature directed the JTC to convene a Subcommittee to provide legislative oversight of the I-5/Columbia River Crossing (CRC) bridge replacement project. At least two of the Subcommittee's legislative members must represent districts served by the bridge. Additional members include a Washington citizen who is served by the bridge, and a Governor's appointee. The Subcommittee is to review project and financing information, and coordinate with the Oregon CRC Legislative Oversight Committee.

The I-5/Columbia River Crossing 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 \$3.5 billion, funding for which is expected to come from tolls (up to \$1.3 billion), the federal government (\$1.3 billion), and Oregon and Washington (up to \$0.9 billion).

The Subcommittee has met twice in Vancouver, and two more Vancouver meetings are planned.

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. 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. 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 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 a 0.1% sales tax increase to fund light rail transit operations and maintenance.

A **third meeting** scheduled for October 9th will address the project's finance plan, traffic and revenue work, and potential federal TIFIA funding for the project. The **fourth meeting** on December 10th will include a governance discussion with members of the Washington and Oregon Transportation Commissions, and a presentation by WSDOT on their phased master plan. Discussions are underway with the Oregon Oversight Committee about a potential fifth meeting in early January in Olympia.

Subcommittee members include Rep. Mike Armstrong, designated by JTC to chair the Subcommittee, 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.

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
Project Manager:	Mary Fleckenstein (360) 786-7312; Beth Redfield, back-up (360) 786-7327
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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 is 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.

As originally approved by the JTC, the project had two phases. The purpose of Phase 1 was to achieve a common level of understanding of how federal transportation highway funds are distributed to the state and used by WSDOT. Additionally, the study group will discuss processes to link statewide priorities and incorporate legislative and OFM input into the programming of newly available federal funds. Phase 2 was added to the scope of the direction given by the 2012 Transportation Budget to tackle issues relating to potential transportation funding reauthorization by Congress. However, now that Congress has enacted MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century), the Governor's Office is convening a Steering Committee to discuss how the state will distribute funds among jurisdictions. As a result, the JTC study group is deferring to the Governor's MAP-21 Steering Committee to achieve the goals of Phase 2.

To accomplish Phase 1, the study group met three times during the spring and summer. 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 fourth meeting is scheduled for October to follow up on remaining questions and discuss recommendations for the final report.

Recommendations from the study group will focus on regular and ongoing consultation between key users of federal funds information, particularly changes in the availability and programming of federal funds.

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.

Project progress to-date includes the following:

A first meeting was convened in August at BC Ferries headquarters in Victoria, British Columbia. In attendance were representatives of BC Ferries, the BC Transportation Ministry, WSF, Senator Tracey Eide, Representative Jeff Morris and legislative staff. The purpose of this meeting was to establish the areas of collaboration which are of joint interest to both ferry systems.

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). In the area 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.

As a next step, WSF will propose areas where the two systems will continue discussions on collaboration opportunities. After consultation with the key legislative members, the continued role of the JTC in subsequent meetings will be determined.

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 28 public transit agencies.

Legislative staff has 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 has been working with WSDOT to ensure data accuracy. Other interested parties such as the Washington State Transit Association, individual transit agencies, and the Washington Policy Center, will be asked during the study to comment on technical issues, which may include specific data questions, appropriate inflationary indices, and performance measures.

Using collected data, staff will assess trends in public transportation revenues, capital and operating expenditures, the size and use of reserve funds, ridership, and other measures of utilization and performance during the past twenty years. The final report will include numerous charts and graphs illustrating and explaining these trends. Case studies of specific transit agencies may also be included.

The resulting trends and measures of public transportation fiscal health will be compared with relevant data on funding for state transportation programs. State transportation data will reflect revenues, capital and operating expenditures.

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
Project Manager:	Gene Baxstrom (360) 786-7398; Mary Fleckenstein, back-up (360) 786-7312
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