



JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 40937 • 531 15th Avenue S.E. • Olympia, Washington 98504 • (360) 786-7312 • <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/jtc>

April 20, 2006

TO: Members, Senate and House Transportation Committees

SUBJECT: Joint Transportation Committee Update

This is the third report of the Joint Transportation Committee to the Senate and House Transportation Committee Members. We want to keep you informed of activities of the Committee, including an update on studies.

The enclosed "April Update" reflects a busy first nine months for the JTC. Since its inception, the Committee has completed two studies, will have another study completed this June, and is just starting another. The 2006 Supplemental Transportation Budget assigned three additional studies to the Committee for completion by the 2007 Session.

Also enclosed is a recent publication from the Transportation Research Board titled "Critical Issues in Transportation." We hope you find this publication stimulating and informative, providing a great summary of trends and challenges we face in the future.
<http://trb.org/publications/general/CriticalIssues06.pdf>

House and Senate Transportation Committee Members are invited to attend our monthly JTC meetings. If you have any questions about Committee activities, please visit our website, <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/JTC/>, or contact us directly. Also, Diane Schwickerath, Committee Coordinator, can be reached at 360 786-7312.

Senator Mary Margaret Haugen
Co-Chair

Senator Brad Benson

Representative Ed Murray
Co-Chair

Representative Beverly Woods

Joint Transportation Committee: April 2006 Update

<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/JTC/>

Background:

The Joint Transportation Committee was established in July, 2005. The Committee conducts transportation studies identified in the transportation budget and provides support for other on-going transportation activities.

The four-member JTC consists of the Chairs and the Ranking Members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees. Senator Haugen and Rep. Murray serve as Co-chairs. The JTC has monthly meetings, and its work has focused primarily on assigned studies, closely coordinated with the House and Senate Standing Committees on Transportation.

JTC Studies in the 2005 Transportation Budget: The Transportation Budget in 2005 assigned four studies to the JTC. Since these studies are also of direct interest to the Standing Committees on Transportation, JTC and House and Senate Transportation Committee staff collaborate in these efforts. Following is a description and update on each of those studies:

Passenger-Only Ferry Evaluation (Completed):

- Address the most cost effective means of providing passenger-only ferry service, with study guided by an 18-member steering committee of stakeholders, including four legislative members—Senators Spanel & Oke and Reps. Woods & McDermott;
- JTC contracted for a facilitator to help organize meetings and develop recommendations, and a financial consultant to review POF service alternatives considered by the Task Force;
- The Task Force and financial consultant submitted their reports at the Jan. 6th JTC meeting. Reports are available on the JTC website.

MVET Depreciation Schedule Study (Completed):

- Determine the feasibility of a statewide uniform MVET including an MVET depreciation schedule that more accurately reflects vehicle value, but does not hinder outstanding contractual obligations;
- Report to the House and Senate Transportation Committees in January 2006 recommended a more lengthy depreciation schedule and that initial vehicle value be set at 80% of the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price, instead of the existing 100%. The MVET report is available on the JTC website.
- Senate Bill 6247, which embodied many of the recommendations of the MVET report, was enacted by the Legislature in the 2006 Session.

Review of Transportation Budgeting Methodologies and Processes (In progress):

- Examine the budget process and program structure of the DOT to improve the budget methodology and improve communication of the budget;
- Cambridge Systematics was awarded the contract in November, 2005 after a competitive proposal process. The contract amount is \$250,000. Committee Members and staff and OFM and DOT staff are providing study input;
- The study is to be completed by June 2006 so study results can be used in the DOT budget development cycle and be used, to the extent possible, in the 2007 Session.

Long-Term Transportation Finance Study (In progress):

- Examine the long term viability of the state's transportation financing methods and sources, with attention to reliance on fuel tax, alternative sources of user-based revenue, implications of debt financing, and effectiveness of state-distributed funds for local governments;
- \$450,000 was appropriated to contract for the study. The JTC reduced the contract amount to \$350,000 because of work already done around the country on this subject, directing a more focused study on near and mid-term steps to implement alternative funding for Washington. Contractor proposals are being evaluated, with anticipated consultant selection in May, 2006.
- The study is to be completed by January 1, 2007.

Additional JTC Studies (2006 Supplemental Transportation Budget):

Marine Finance Study:

- The JTC, together with a representative of the Governor, are to look at the State Ferry System's future operating & capital costs, as well as patronage & revenue estimates.
- A significant portion of the study will be done by House & Senate Transportation Committee staff, with \$200,000 provided for expert consulting services. Study completion, January 1, 2007.

Programs to Reduce Teenage Driver Accidents:

- \$75,000 is provided to contract for review of existing research on programs and policies which decrease accidents by teenage drivers.
- Evaluation to include publicly operated driver education and intermediate drivers licensing programs and an evaluation of the cost and benefits of programs showing the greatest impact. Study completion goal is January, 2007.

Evaluation of Surface Transportation Program Enhancement Grant Program:

- Evaluate the type of grants funded by the DOT from federal enhancement funds with regard to project type, application, scoring, and allocation of funds.
- Study completion goal is January, 2007.

Other policy-related issues of interest to JTC: While not specifically provided in the transportation budget, the JTC has also addressed:

- Support for Regional Transportation forums: JTC committed \$10,000 to match Puget Sound Regional Council support for a 25-member group of leaders in the Puget Sound region, convened to develop a common regional agreement on regional transportation efforts. Regional transportation reform legislation was enacted in the 2006 Session.
- Briefings, tours and site visits to keep Transportation Committee members informed of emerging issues, projects of interest, and advances in transportation policy and budget.
- Support for Transportation Committee Members: Several Transportation Committee Members serve on various committees and task forces related to transportation. The JTC pays expenses for those duties. The JTC also sponsored Members attending the NCSL Spring Forum.
- Computer System Support for Transportation Budget: The JTC is working with LEAP and DOT in these efforts.