



JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

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

August 23, 2006

TO: Members, Senate and House Transportation Committees

SUBJECT: Joint Transportation Committee Update

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

The enclosed "August Update" reflects a busy first year for the JTC, since its creation in July 2005. Since its inception, the Committee has completed three major studies, and has an additional five studies and projects in progress. One of those studies continues from the 2005 Transportation Budget, three additional studies were directed by the 2006 Supplemental Transportation Budget, and the JTC is completing some work initiated by the Transportation Performance Audit Board before it was dissolved. The Committee also held its first joint meeting with the Transportation Commission, last month, July, in Ellensburg.

We continue to provide Transportation Committee members with regular updates on JTC activities, and House and Senate Transportation Committee members are invited to attend monthly JTC meetings. Our meeting schedule for the the interim is enclosed, with one future meeting scheduled for Seattle and three for Olympia. Please share with us any comments on issues that you are particularly interested in. If you have any questions you may contact JTC staff, Diane Schwickerath at (360) 786-7312 or Gene Baxstrom at (360) 786-7398. For Ferry Finance Study related activities, please contact Roger Polzin at (360) 786-7327.

Senator Mary Margaret Haugen
Co-Chair

Representative Edward Murray
Co-Chair

Senator Brad Benson

Representative Beverly Woods

Joint Transportation Committee: August 2006 Update

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

The JTC:

The 2005 Legislature created the Joint Transportation Committee. The Joint Transportation Committee assumed certain duties of the Legislative Transportation Committee, and it provides resources for transportation studies identified in the transportation budget and for other on-going transportation activities.

The four-member Joint Transportation Committee (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. It has met monthly since its inception in July, 2005 and its work has focused primarily on its assigned studies, closely coordinated with the House and Senate Standing Committees on Transportation, to address issues important to both committees.

Current JTC Studies and Projects: These studies/projects are currently being conducted by the JTC, in cooperation with the staff of the House and Senate Transportation Committees, for the 2007 Legislative Session. Drafts reports are due in late November, final reports are due prior to session, and reports will be made to the House and Senate Transportation Committees in January, 2007. All studies were mandated in the Transportation Budget except for the “Transportation Goals and Benchmark” project.

Long-Term Transportation Finance Study:

- The study charge is to 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. The study will also include a survey of state approaches to local and regional government finance;
- \$450,000 was appropriated to contract for the study, however, the JTC reduced the contract amount to \$350,000, because of other work already done around the country, and directed a more focused study on near and mid-term steps to implement alternative funding within Washington. The JTC contracted with Cambridge Systematics in May 2006, in the amount of \$317,577 to conduct this study;
- A group of DOT, OFM and Committee staff is reviewing consultant activities and the JTC is providing policy guidance.

Washington State Ferries Ferry System Finance Study:

- The study is to examine the State Ferry System’s future operating & capital costs, as well as patronage & revenue estimates. This study is guided by an Advisory Committee consisting of Senators Spanel and Benson, Representatives Woods and Flannigan, Victor Moore from OFM, and Transportation Commissioner Bob Distler;
- The JTC in June, contracted with Cedar River Group in the amount of \$200,000 to provide expert consulting services for the study including capital cost assessments, revenue and patronage forecasts, and analysis and implementation of past study recommendations. The consultant and JTC and House & Senate Transportation Committee staff are coordinating each of their activities on the study.

Programs to Reduce Teenage Driver Accidents:

- The JTC contracted with Rene Ewing and Associates, in the amount of \$67,375 to review existing research on programs and policies which decrease accidents by teenage drivers, and assess the cost effectiveness of programs.
- The evaluation will include publicly operated driver education and intermediate drivers licensing programs and an evaluation of the cost and benefits of other programs showing the greatest impact. Interested organizations and agencies are included in the evaluation; certain Transportation Committee members expressing an interest in this subject have been contacted; and committee staff is providing guidance.

Evaluation of Surface Transportation Program Enhancement Grant Program:

- This evaluation is being conducted by Transportation Committee staff and will include contact with MPOs/RTPOs across the state, as well as interest groups eligible for the Federal monies (transportation related but not traditional transportation activities).
- The evaluation will address the type of grants funded by the DOT from federal enhancement funds with regard to project type application, scoring, and allocation of funds, and it will examine processes in other states.

Align Transportation Goals and Benchmarks:

- The JTC contracted with Lund Consulting, Inc. in August in the amount of \$17,700 to assist the Governor's, Legislative, and Transportation Commission staff to conceptualize and reach concurrence on: proposed transportation goals for consideration during the 2007 legislative session; periodic performance reporting by WSDOT that meets the needs of the Governor, the Legislature and the Commission; and modifications to existing RCWs. Legislative staff will draft needed legislation.
- This builds on a recently completed Transportation Performance Audit Board "Study of Transportation Goals, Benchmarks, and Ten-Year Investment Criteria and Process" completed by Lund Consulting.

Completed JTC Studies: The following studies were mandated in the 2005 Transportation Budget and have been completed. Reports are available on the JTC website:

Review of Transportation Budgeting Methodologies and Processes (July 2006):

- This study, accepted by the JTC at its August meeting, examined the DOT budgeting process and program structure to improve the budget methodology and improved communication of the budget;
- Cambridge Systematics was awarded the contract in November, 2006 in the amount of \$249,854. Committee members and staff, and OFM and DOT staff provided study input;
- The study was completed in July 2006 so that certain study recommendations could be assimilated into the DOT budget consideration for 2007-09. The study recommended simplification and better identification of budget categories, an improved process for tracking project expenses, and improved methods and tools for improved budget communication.

Passenger-Only Ferry Evaluation (January 2006):

- The charge was to recommend 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's final report set forth mutual interest recommendations, findings, and criteria for setting priorities for POF service. The financial consultant also presented his findings on the costs of alternative POF services.

MVET Depreciation Schedule study (January 2006):

- The study requirement was to 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.
- Staff working groups, including interested parties, evaluated legal and contractual issues and methodologies for setting vehicle value and alternative depreciation methods. Recommended to the House and Senate Transportation Committees in January 2006 was a more lengthy depreciation schedule combined with initial vehicle value being set at 80% of the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price, instead of the current 100%.
- Senate Bill 6247, which embodied many of the recommendations of the MVET report, was enacted by the Legislature in the 2006 Session.

Other issues / activities of JTC: While not specifically provided in the transportation budget, there are other activities in which the JTC has been, or will be involved:

- **Support for Regional Transportation forums:** JTC committed up to \$10,000 to match Puget Sound Regional Council support for a 25-member group of leaders in the Puget Sound region. The PSRC convened the series of leadership meetings in 2005 aimed at developing a common regional agreement on regional transportation efforts. Regional 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, & advances in transportation policy & budget. This included a two-day ferry tour associated with the Ferry System Financial Study.
- **Assisting Transportation Committee members:** Several Transportation Committee members serve on various committees and task forces related to transportation. The JTC provides per diem and other support for those members, as approved by the JTC. The JTC also sponsored several members attending the NCSL activities.
- **The Transportation Executive Information System:** The JTC owns this system, which is maintained by the DOT. The system provides support for DOT Management and for OFM and the Legislature in developing the Transportation Budget.

INTERIM MEETING SCHEDULE 2006/2007

Please be advised that the following schedule is subject to change.

April 12 (10 am - Noon)
Puget Sound Regional Council
Seattle, Washington

May 17 (1:00pm – 3:00pm)
Puget Sound Regional Council
Seattle, Washington

June 27 (1:00 – 3:00pm) Cancelled

July 26
Ellensburg Inn
Ellensburg, Washington

August 23 (10:00am - Noon)
Puget Sound Regional Council
Seattle, Washington

September 20 (1:00 – 3:00pm)
House Hearing Room D
Olympia, Washington

October 25 (1:00 – 3:00pm)
Puget Sound Regional Council
Seattle, Washington

November 29 (1:00 – 3:00 pm)
House Hearing Room D
Olympia, Washington

January 3, 2007 (1:00 - 3 pm)
House Hearing Room D
Olympia, Washington