



CONNECTING WASHINGTON TASK FORCE

Meeting Notes Tuesday July 19, 2011

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle

Meeting materials are online at www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/transportation/connectwa.asp

A. Call to order and introduction of task force members and facilitators

The Connecting Washington Task Force meeting was called to order by Governor Chris Gregoire at 12:00 p.m. Tuesday July 19, 2011. Task force members in attendance were:

Governor Chris Gregoire, Chair

Bob Adams, Vice President, Guy F. Atkinson Construction

Rep. Mike Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member, House Transportation Committee

Leo Bowman, Benton County Commissioner

Terry Brewer, Executive Director, Grant County Economic Development Council

Rodney Brown, Board Chair, Washington Environmental Council

Bill Bryant, Port of Seattle Commissioner

Rep. Judy Clibborn, Chair, House Transportation Committee

Richard Ford, Chair, Transportation Commission

Mike Fredrickson, Port of Walla Walla Commissioner

Charlotte Garrido, Kitsap County Commissioner

Paula Hammond, Secretary, Department of Transportation

Fred Jarrett, Deputy King County Executive

David Johnson, Executive Secretary, Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council

Jeff Johnson, President, Washington State Labor Council

Glen Squires, on behalf of Alex McGregor, President, The McGregor Company

Don Meyer, Port of Tacoma Commissioner

E. Susan Meyer, CEO, Spokane Transit/Incoming President of the Washington Transit Association

Kirk Nelson, President and CEO, AAA Washington

Laura Peterson, Vice President of State and Local Government Relations, Northwest Region, The Boeing Company

Tom Rasmussen, Seattle City Councilmember

Paul Roberts, Everett City Councilmember

Nick Rocchi, Managing Director Pacific Northwest District, Federal Express

Tim Schauer, Chair-Elect, Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce

Mel Sheldon, Chairman, The Tulalip Tribes

DeLee Shoemaker, State Government Affairs Director, Microsoft Corporation

Tom Trulove, Mayor of Cheney

Stan Vander Pol, President and CEO, Peninsula Truck Lines

Barbara Wright, Board Member, Transportation Choices Coalition
John Howell and Tom Byers, Cedar River Group, facilitators

B. Welcoming remarks and task force charge by Governor Gregoire

Governor Gregoire welcomed the task force members. She stated that each member brings a unique and valuable perspective, with insight into the transportation needs of our communities. She also stated that she hoped the task force can also focus on the future of our state as a whole.

Governor Gregoire discussed the status of implementing the last two transportation revenue packages — the 2003 Nickel and 2005 Transportation Partnership Act packages. She stated the State is on schedule in the delivery of the projects, and the public is enjoying the benefits — safer roads, fewer chokepoints, greater safety. However, no ongoing maintenance or preservation funds were provided for roads created through these projects. Without that funding, deterioration will set in and the condition of state and local roads will decline dramatically at the same time the needs of a growing population and a recovering economy will continue to put strains on our transportation infrastructure. Governor Gregoire indicated our aging ferry system is at risk and we can't continue to Band-Aid the nation's largest ferry system.

Further, in this recession, transit agencies' budgets also have been battered just as people need them the most. As a leader in exports and trade, we must maintain the transportation infrastructure of our ports.

Governor Gregoire then discussed the task force's charge. The task force was formed to develop a financially sustainable 10-year funding strategy for the state's transportation system and presenting it to the 2012 Legislature. She indicated the group's charge is not to write a project list but to develop strategic principles and categories that will guide our strategy:

1. Develop principles for investments, categories of investment, and priorities for those categories. The task force will provide examples of key investments for each category that are consistent with the developed principles, but will not develop a specific project list.
2. Develop principles for revenues to fund investments and identify fund sources consistent with those principles.
3. Present the facts about the transportation funding crisis — and the risks of inaction — to stakeholders, public officials and the citizens of Washington. The task force members' professional networks, the media, public meetings and the continued work of this task force are essential channels for delivering this information.

C. Overview of proposed task force meeting topics and ground rules

John Howell reviewed task force logistics, including a proposed method of indicating consensus, and stated that the Governor and state legislators are non-voting members. He reviewed proposed task force meeting round rules. No changes were suggested. The full group indicated support for the ground rules as proposed. He said that in the future, meeting materials will be

sent to task force members in advance whenever possible, and that materials will be posted on the Governor's web site: www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/transportation/connectwa.asp

John reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings and proposed agenda items, which the task force will continue to discuss.

Representative Clibborn asked about public comment. John indicated that future meeting agendas will provide time for public comment or questions. He also stated the Governor's web site will have a form for input set up following this meeting. Comments received on the web site will be shared with task force members.

D. Forces Affecting State's Transportation System

Susan Binder from Cambridge Systematics gave an overview of global, national and regional forces shaping current and future transportation system. Key points from the presentation are:

- A mismatch between transportation supply and demand is occurring in the U. S. due to population increases, dramatic increases in maritime trade and domestic freight movement, and transit ridership increases on one hand; and aging infrastructure and increased material costs on the other. The resulting mismatch means increased congestion and decreased reliability.
- Gas tax revenue per mile is declining due to the economy (people driving less, fewer vehicles owned) and vehicles that use less gas (federal air emissions standards, emerging technology), and higher use of other forms of transportation (transit ridership is at its highest level in five decades).
- Federal funding distributed to states for their infrastructure needs is declining, which puts at risk two basic ingredients to a sustainable system: predictability and consensus.
- In funding transportation infrastructure, policy considerations include: changing vehicle technology and the fuels they use, environmental impacts, economic development, sustainable systems, global scale markets, and competitors addressing transportation edge.

A link to the presentation is at:

http://www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/transportation/meeting/national_forces.pdf

Paula Hammond, Secretary of the Department of Transportation, gave an overview of forces in Washington State shaping the current and future transportation system. Key points from the presentation are:

- There are growing demands on Washington's transportation infrastructure. Between 2010 and 2020, Washington State's population is expected to grow by almost 29%, vehicle miles travelled is expected to grow from 56 to 60 billion, and ferry ridership is expected to increase by 14.5%. Transit ridership is expected to increase by 90% between now and 2040, and freight volumes are expected to triple to 975 million tons annually by 2035.

- Washington's primary transportation revenue, the gas tax, is limited, committed, and doesn't keep up with inflation and growing demand. The 421 projects funded by the last two transportation revenue packages are almost complete, and ongoing revenue from those packages will be used to pay debt service. Of the state's current 37.5 cent fuel tax, about 8 cents per gallon is available for maintenance, operations and debt service of state highways, bridges, and ferry vessels and terminals.
- The economy has negatively impacted the entire state transportation system. Examples are less driving, less trade and decreased sales tax revenues for transit.
- Factors that influence transportation revenues and investments include citizen initiatives and referenda; user fees such as tolls, ferry fares, and truck weight fees; and environmental commitments.

A link to the presentation is at:

http://www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/transportation/meeting/transportation_system.pdf

E. Overview of the State Transportation System of the Future

Allegra Calder from Berk & Associates gave an overview of statewide transportation policy goals and the Washington Transportation Plan 2030. A link to a fact sheet on these topics is at:

http://www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/transportation/meeting/goals_plans.pdf

John Howell asked task force members if this plan, and the policy goals, set the right course for the transportation system we want to create during the next two decades. Comments included that the work of the task force should create a sense of the value of investments; benchmarking to the experience of other states and counties should be used; the task force should be provided existing performance measures used throughout the state's transportation network and discuss if changes or additions are needed; and the task force needs to understand what the public wants and needs from the state transportation system.

F. Initial Presentation of identified transportation needs

A presentation of the currently-identified needs of the various components of the state's transportation system was provided by:

- City-owned system – Ashley Probart, Washington Association of Cities
- County-owned system – Scott Merriman, Association of Washington Counties
- Transit needs – Susan Meyer, CEO, Spokane Transit
- State-owned system – Paula Hammond, Secretary of Transportation

A link to the presentation is at:

http://www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/transportation/meeting/transportation_needs.pdf

Due to time constraints, the following presentations will be given at the next meeting:

- Port needs – Larry Paulson, Executive Director Port of Vancouver

- Tribal transportation systems – Mel Sheldon, Chairman, The Tulalip Tribes

G. Discussion of next steps and meeting adjournment

John Howell reviewed the information requested by task force members during the course of the meeting, and indicated additional information requests should be forwarded to him. There were several additional requests from task force members:

- A schedule of bond payments and the amounts outstanding;
- Information on return on various investments in the transportation system;
- Information on benchmarking and use of performance metrics;
- An understanding of replacement costs for the system;
- The difference in costs to maintain an asphalt road vs. a gravel road;
- An understanding of how the proposed ten year funding strategy will fit in to the context of what has, or has not, been funded with previous revenue packages; and
- A better understanding of the number of jobs that will be lost in 3 – 4 years when there are no revenues to support transportation investments.

Governor Gregoire thanked the task force for its work and stated the next meeting is September 9, 2011 in Olympia.

The Connecting Washington Task Force meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.