

Going Places

Performance

Safety

Partnerships

Stewardship

Mobility

2017 Reflections and
Recommendations



Washington State
Transportation Commission

Message from the Chairman



The Legislature, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Licensing do the heavy lifting for transportation at the state level. The Legislature creates and revises revenue streams for the backbone of a transportation network that safely connects people and communities – from the highways we travel, the officers who patrol them, and the staff who test and license drivers and their vehicles. At WSDOT, over 6,000 employees statewide build and operate over 7,000 miles of the state highways and 24 ferries, distribute state and federal funds, and administer Amtrak Cascades, among many other critical parts of our statewide system. At the Department of Licensing over 1,000 employees statewide test and license drivers and their vehicles, and collect the revenues necessary to support the state transportation system.

If the state system is the backbone, nearly 60,000 miles of city streets and county roads, 32 public transit systems, 75 ports, freight trains, shipping lines, trucking companies, and other public and private partners in transportation provide the muscle and movement that makes the entire network function. Transportation doesn't work without all these partners working together.

In this transportation network, the Washington State Transportation Commission provides important connections between transportation partners and the public. Consisting of seven volunteers appointed by the Governor and a professional staff of five, the Commission brings unique perspectives and skills from different corners of the state and embraces partnerships in every aspect of its work.

Following the Legislature's passage of a historic gas tax increase in 2015, the Commission continues to work with public and private partners to lay the groundwork for a Road Usage Charge Pilot that begins in 2018, a funding approach that potentially could replace the gas tax in the future. We continue to work with communities, citizens, and WSDOT to adjust the tolls and ferry fares that enable us to safely cross large bodies of water and provide alternative pathways in congested corridors.

Continuing its outreach and education work in communities across the state, the Commission met in eight counties around the state this year. We met with community leaders and toured the communities of Centralia, Kent, Leavenworth, Spokane Valley, and San Juan County to learn about transportation challenges and successes in rural, urban, suburban, and island communities.

Our workload will grow in 2018 as the Commission meets with communities, businesses, citizens, local and state agencies, and legislators to update the long-range statewide transportation plan. Our goal – a sustainable transportation network that continues to safely connect people and communities in 2040 and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gerald R. Pett".

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Commissioners hear about Auburn's transit-oriented development.



Policy Guidance and Recommendations

The Port of Friday Harbor owns and operates this busy marina and an airport.

The Transportation Commission proposes policies to the Governor and Legislature to further a comprehensive and balanced statewide transportation system for our state.

RCW 47.01.071 and 47.01.075 mandate preparation of a statewide transportation plan and direct the Commission to provide policy guidance to the governor and the legislature in key issue areas, including but not limited to the following areas:

- Transportation finance;
- Preserving, maintaining, and operating the statewide transportation system;
- Transportation infrastructure needs;
- Best practices for adoption and use by transportation related agencies and programs;
- Efficiencies that will improve service delivery and/or coordination;
- Improved planning and coordination among transportation agencies and providers; and
- Use of intelligent transportation systems and other technology-based solutions.

Before offering specific recommendations, it is our observation that overall, the statewide transportation network is working well. The major state investments in the highway system and Amtrak Cascades and the regional investment in Sound Transit are beginning to pay dividends, although the pace of growth in Central Puget Sound exceeds the growth in capacity. At the local level, the Commission observes an improved condition of streets and roads in the majority of cities and counties we have visited recently and improvements in non-motorized transportation options in nearly every community.

Our largest concern this year, as in past years, is insufficient investment in basic preservation and maintenance. The business lost due to numerous mechanical breakdowns in the state ferry fleet this summer and the devastating floods and landslides afflicting many eastern Washington counties last winter and spring again emphasize the importance of maintaining and strengthening existing transportation assets.

This section of the 2017 Reflections and Recommendations provides near-term and long-term policy guidance and recommendations for the Governor and Legislature.

Transportation Finance

Expand the Transportation Funding Toolbox for Counties and Cities

Over the last 15 years, as counties and cities have received a smaller share of the state's gas tax revenue, the need for a variety of revenue sources has grown. Most counties and many cities cannot keep up with basic maintenance and preservation needs. While many local jurisdictions are utilizing new tools, such as the Transportation Benefit District (TBD), some jurisdictions need other tools.

The Commission recommends the Legislature create additional local revenue options, enhance grant and loan programs, and maintain and improve local funding tools that have proved successful. Counties and cities around the state have identified the following tools and programs to consider:

- Authorize creation of street utility programs.
- Establish a program to finance new transportation facilities leveraging future tax revenue.

- Facilitate creation of regional TBDs; currently a single city can veto a countywide TBD.
- Increase grant and loan funds available to preserve existing infrastructure.
- Enable cities and counties to swap federal funds for more flexible state funds.
- Create an account to encourage efficient, multi-purpose infrastructure projects.
- Create better ways for rural communities to compete for funds.

Expand Opportunities for Public Private Partnerships

Collaboration between public agencies and private businesses should expand beyond the traditional concrete and steel solutions. **The Commission recommends a new look at systemic, on-going, long-range partnerships between government and the business community that may include financial contributions, or involve property, services, data or access.**



Microsoft operates Connector as a transit service for its employees.

Partnerships between transportation agencies and the private sector can improve access to public transportation, support housing adjacent to transit centers, and reduce single-occupant trips. Opportunities to improve transportation access and capacity may include but are not limited to:

- allowing private transit providers access to publicly owned lots in exchange for increased parking capacity;
- co-developing park and ride lots with housing, private business, and a variety of transportation modes (public and private) to create a mobility hub;
- co-developing ferry terminals with hotels, restaurants, and tourism offices; and
- using private sector data to facilitate ride-sharing opportunities.

Preservation

Dedicate Sustainable Funding to Preservation and Maintenance

As the Commission meets with local officials and citizens around the state, and reviews the condition of the state and local transportation system, investments in maintenance and preservation continue to rise to the top. This priority continues to be underfunded by the state, and by many cities and counties.

As long-term funding discussions take place, a sustainable and dedicated revenue source for long-term asset preservation is critical to maintain the existing transportation network.

The replacement value of pavement in the state highway system is \$19 billion. Cost-effective asset management shows an average need of \$250 million per year to preserve; while current funding averages \$202 million per year for stand-alone projects.

Bridges on the state highway system have a replacement value estimated at \$58.2 billion. Asset management analysis shows an estimated need of \$270 million per year over the next 10 years to preserve these assets; current funding averages \$118 million per year for stand-alone projects.

The current replacement value of state ferry vessels and terminals is \$4.5 billion. The preservation backlog for ferry vessels alone exceeds \$269.4 million and is growing.

Infrastructure Needs

Improve Connections Within and Between Cities

Transit provides connections between population and employment centers, across travel modes, and between communities. Recognizing that public transportation issues may be different in rural and urban areas, and in light of declining federal support, **the Commission recommends the state continue investing more in regional mobility grants, intercity bus connections, and other programs that connect communities, improve access to employment and schools, and reduce congestion.**

Increase Preparations for Seismic Events, Storms and Climate Impacts

The transportation system is vulnerable to wildfires, floods, earthquakes and tsunamis. A 9.0 magnitude seismic event off the Washington coast would devastate the state's transportation system, with impacts across the nation. In 2011, FEMA estimated a \$49 billion economic impact from a 9.0 Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) quake in our state. Damage to transportation infrastructure would significantly multiply these impacts and exacerbate loss of life.

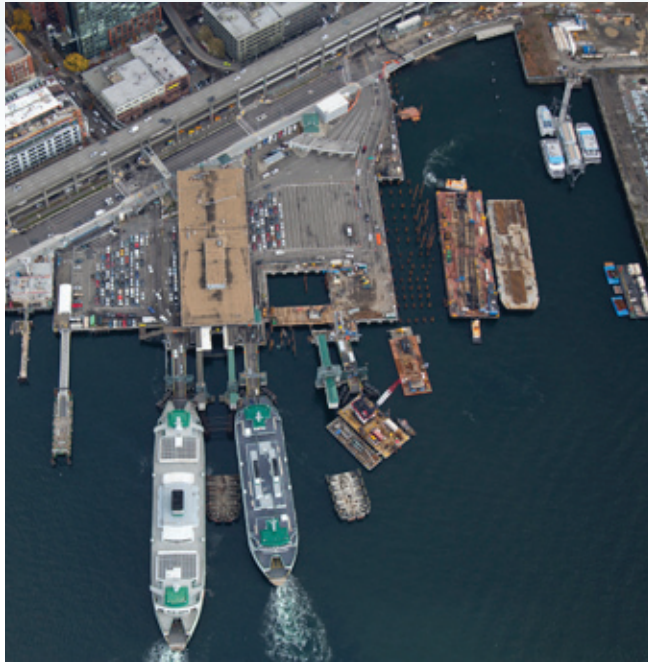
Preparations and investments in Washington State fall far short of meeting the known seismic risk. Although the state has invested more than \$166 million since the early 1990s in retrofitting over 300 bridges, nearly 600 more need work, with an estimated price tag of \$1.4 billion. **The commission applauds the short-term recommendations made by the Governor's Resilient Washington Subcabinet Task Force. In addition, the Commission recommends the state, cities, counties, and federal agencies develop a long-range seismic improvement plan to preserve and protect key life line routes, such as US 101, and rebuild other assets at risk, such as the I-5 Columbia River bridge and the I-5 Ship Canal bridge.**

It is further recommended that WSDOT, cities and counties continue to work with state and federal land agencies to reduce wildfire and flood risk to key infrastructure and develop an emergency revolving fund that counties and cities can quickly access to repair and rebuild damaged infrastructure.

Better Utilize Waterways

Home to the nation's largest public ferry system and the birthplace of floating bridges, our state's inland seas, lakes, and rivers offer the potential for improved mobility and a more resilient transportation system. The San Francisco Bay Area has demonstrated the possibilities – incrementally funding expanded passenger ferry service to provide travel options and improve their transportation network's resiliency to seismic events.

The success of King County's Water taxi service from West Seattle and Vashon Island to downtown Seattle and the fast ferry service between King County from Bremerton that began this year also has led to discussion of additional water taxi and fast ferry routes. **Given the demand for water transportation options and the lifeline benefits that water transportation offers, the Commission recommends the state reconsider whether and how passenger ferries and water taxis fit with the WSF system.**



Colman Dock is being rebuilt to modern seismic standards. It will have a new terminal and additional staging for vehicles.

Efficiently Grow Passenger Rail Service

The long-term investment in frequent Seattle-Portland passenger train service is near the point where the train offers a modal alternative to driving or flying between the two cities, at a substantially lower carbon footprint and cost to consumers. Given the investment and lead time required, **the Commission recommends the state also begin planning and identifying strategic ways to enhance, improve and expand rail service outside the I-5 corridor, such as adding future daily round-trip rail service between Seattle and Spokane, and Seattle and the Tri-Cities.**



Amtrak's Empire Builder provides a connection between Washington and the Midwest. Support for additional east-west passenger train service is growing.

Best Practices

Transportation Access and Equity

Increasingly people who work in urban areas are choosing longer commutes in response to high housing costs. As commutes get longer, more vehicles clog the existing road network. Longer commutes cause congestion, lower air quality, and reduce people's quality of life. On the west side of Puget Sound, nearly 20 years of steadily increasing fares have made it difficult for working class families to live in ferry-served communities and commute to work by ferry. In many rural areas, little or no access to public transportation has always limited mobility and economic opportunity.

Once a problem mainly in remote areas and poor communities, transportation equity and access is becoming a widespread problem in our state. While there are no simple solutions, future decisions on transportation policy and pricing must take into account the need for access to mobility at a fair and reasonable price.

Special Needs Transportation

The cost of providing transit service under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and to Medicaid recipients challenges almost every transit agency, but some transit agencies have succeeded in moving larger numbers of riders from costly paratransit to fixed route service. While all transit agencies should adopt strategies to reduce paratransit demand, demand will grow as the population ages. **Because access to transportation is critical for the physical and mental health of senior and disabled populations, the Commission recommends the state increase transportation funding for special needs transportation and also better leverage the federal funding it receives for this population.**

Improve Community Health and Public Health with Transportation Policy and Investments

Many transportation professionals underestimate how the built environment shapes and affects community health. Fifty years ago, 89% of K - 8 students walked or biked to school. Today, only 35% do so. To reverse this trend, communities across the state are investing in sidewalks and bike lanes, changing land use plans, and adopting active transportation policies. WSDOT has also created a new Active Transportation Program.

Not only children benefit. In walkable, bikeable, transit-oriented communities, citizens enjoy:

- More physical activity
- Lower body weight
- Lower rates of traffic injuries
- Better air quality
- Improved mobility for non-drivers
- Lower stress due to shorter commutes

The top five cities in the state for bike/walk share of commuting are:

1. Pullman: 25.9%
2. Seattle: 12.5%
3. Bremerton: 12.3%
4. Bellingham 12.2%
5. Walla Walla 11.8%

School districts and state agencies involved in siting schools and other public facilities should ensure their siting decisions include the ability to walk, bike, and use transit, and future major transportation projects should assess health impacts and benefits.

Efficiencies

Phase Out Studded Tires

Studded tire technology creates safety hazards, and causes road damage that is costly to repair. On state highways alone, damage from studded tires is estimated at \$20 to \$29 million a year.

The ruts they create reduce road safety for all motorists due to ponding and water on the roadway, including hydroplaning, excessive spray, and steering problems. Although studded tires perform better on glare ice than non-studded tires, research shows they are not as effective as snow tires in snow, slush, or wet pavement. The studs reduce contact between rubber and pavement, requiring a longer stopping distance on wet or dry pavement than regular tires.

The commission recommends the Legislature prohibit sale of studded tires and phase out their use within five years after they are no longer sold. As an alternative, the studded tire fee

should be increased to a level that will produce the revenue needed to fund repairs to the damage they cause.



Combining bike and transit trips gets easier all the time.

Improved Planning and Coordination

Develop a Long-term Tolling Policy Plan

Over the last 10 years, tolling has successfully been implemented on four facilities and an additional four tolling projects are now underway. While the Commission looks at the immediate impacts to neighboring routes and communities, the state has not conducted systemwide assessments that look at the bigger picture in terms of the economic, social, and operational implications a new tolled facility or expanded toll system may have. It is our observation that tolls unevenly impact different areas of the state.

In order to better ascertain how our urban highway system fits together and functions in the world of high demand and fixed capacity, **the Commission recommends the legislature direct development of a strategic tolling policy plan that sets a path forward on tolling into the future.** For example, the tolling policy



I-90 Westbound over Snoqualmie Pass.

plan could begin to evaluate the potential for a limited application of tolling of the HOV lanes on I-5 in the Central Puget Sound to ensure a reliable trip for transit and HOV vehicles during peak hours.

Ensure Adequate Transportation Networks Exist to Serve New Development

In most of the growing areas of the state, the transportation system does not adequately support current and future population densities. Passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) more than 25 years ago raised expectations that appropriate infrastructure would be provided concurrent with new development. Although implementation of GMA has improved planning and coordination, many land use decisions continue to add to infrastructure demands and costs. Too often, cities and counties have adopted land use plans and permitted new development without adequate street and transit provisions, and fail to coordinate adequately with the state and adjacent jurisdictions.

The commission recommends regional transportation planning organizations and the state use all existing authority to require adequate transportation facilities and services are in place concurrent with growth expectations.

Maintain Commercial Aviation Service in Rural Washington

Airports are vital to the economic health of many small communities. With congestion at Sea-Tac, and the changing structure and economics of commercial

aviation, maintaining commercial aviation service at smaller airports in the state continues to be a challenge. Meanwhile, access to general aviation airports, a valuable resource for pilot training and emergency response, has declined as airports have closed.



Search and rescue plane.

The Commission recommends the state engage with airlines, ports, economic development organizations, and businesses to identify ways to ensure continued vibrant and sustainable commercial aviation service in rural Washington.

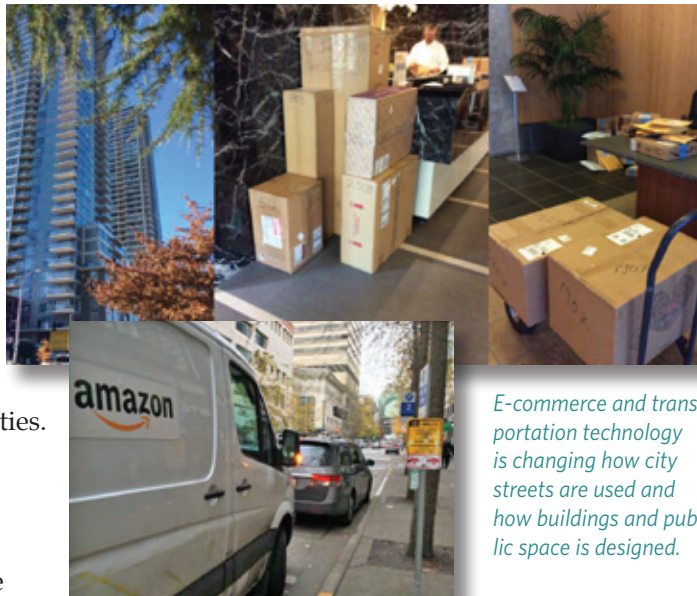
Technology

Mobility of people and goods is experiencing an automation revolution. A growing number of vehicles already stay within lanes, maintain a safe distance from the car ahead, and park themselves. Fully autonomous vehicles (AVs) are being tested on public roads. E-commerce and consumer demand has transformed shipping with same-day delivery of consumer items, by trucks, by bicycle – and soon by drones.”

The Transportation Commission has invested several hours of attention to the impacts of technology on transportation during 2018. Technology in automobiles, trucks, and trains has the potential to virtually eliminate collisions, deaths and serious injuries. But, in the short term, misuse of technology has been a dominant reason for the increase in distracted driving and the growing number of fatalities. Cybersecurity is another puzzle that may delay full implementation of autonomous vehicle technology.

How technology will influence mobility is uncertain. Although technology and the shared economy could reduce the total number of vehicles on the road and the amount of parking needed, congestion also could increase if on-demand transportation services result in more trips, and more circling the neighborhood awaiting the next pick-up request. Recent studies have shown that ride-sharing companies frequently increase congestion in cities.

E-commerce and on-demand delivery has put increasing pressure on the final 50 feet of the urban delivery system. Fast-growing cities like Seattle must rethink traffic congestion, as well how curbs, sidewalks, parking, and other street-side infrastructure is managed. The University of Washington’s Supply Chain and Transportation Logistics Center is researching how to improve package delivery in dense urban areas. Its goals include reducing truck dwell time – the time a truck is parked in a load/unload space; and reducing failed first deliveries to lower traffic congestion in cities.



E-commerce and transportation technology is changing how city streets are used and how buildings and public space is designed.

Five cyber technologies will be part of future smart city transportation systems:

- Autonomous Vehicles
- Positive Train Control Systems (PTC) for rail
- Intelligent transportation systems, (ITS)
- Vehicle to Vehicle (v2v)
- Vehicle to Infrastructure Technologies (v2i)

Technology offers the possibility of better mobility for people who cannot get around independently, due to age or disability. But the availability and timing of these benefits will vary depending on the pace and cost of adoption, and whether improvements to public infrastructure are needed. Without guidance, new transportation technology could exacerbate existing inequities in access to transportation options.

Smarter vehicles will communicate not only with each other and the driving environment, but with other technology, such as smartphones and parking lots. As these vehicles communicate with each other and the surrounding public infrastructure, the future transportation network will generate huge amounts of metadata. Intel estimates that each AV will generate 4 TB of data per day. Who will own the metadata? What can be done with it? Can it be used for public benefit?

Ownership is another variable in the future of AV development. Who will own and manage AVs in the future?

Technological change is happening so fast that it is hard to see how to keep up. There are many questions to consider about how evolving transportation networks will work for people in all parts of the state and at each socioeconomic level.

Given the uncertainty and the magnitude of impacts as mobility technology evolves, it is critical to ensure that mobility technology add to – and not detract from – a complete and seamless system that fosters mobility and quality of life as well as economic growth. The Commission recommends the state house a multi-dimensional public forum and convene a broad-based stakeholder group to assess

and identify needs related to autonomous vehicles and mobility as a service – from infrastructure needs to vehicle licensing, driver education, insurance, traffic enforcement, and public transit funding.

Overview of 2017 Work and Activities



Rush hour in the San Juan islands

Tolling and Ferry Fare Actions

Tolls and ferry fares are projected to generate \$785 million during the 2017 – 19 biennium. This is a significant and growing portion of the state's transportation budget, raising revenue for major capital improvements and system operations, and improving traffic flow on key corridors. Ferry fares generate nearly 75% of the operating costs for the ferry system.

When revising or establishing toll rates and ferry fares, the Commission carefully reviews traffic and revenue projections and listens to affected members of impacted communities. Tolls and fares are set at rates that will meet the fiscal and mobility needs of the transportation system and minimize the financial impact on those residents and businesses who regularly use toll facilities and ferries. The Commission is committed to help the public understand how tolls and fares help build and operate the transportation system, and it strives to ensure that customers are treated fairly.

This section of the Annual Report summarizes the Commission's toll setting and ferry fare activities. It also provides the annual report to the Legislature on changes in toll rates required by RCW 47.56.855.

SR 520 Floating Bridge

The new SR 520 Floating Bridge opened for traffic in 2016, replacing the four-lane bridge that opened in 1967. Tolls contribute \$1.2 billion toward the construction cost of the new bridge and also help manage congestion and improve traffic flow. Rates vary by day of week and time of day to maximize revenue and vehicle throughput, and minimize diversion to other routes.

To lower overall project costs, tolls were reinstituted on the old bridge in December 2011 while construction began on the new bridge. In May 2016, after extensive review and analysis, and following public input meetings in the Puget Sound region, the Commission enacted new toll rates for the new bridge to take effect in two steps: July 1, 2016 and July 1, 2017 (FY 2017 and FY 2018). The July 2017 toll rates represent a 5% increase from the 2016 toll rates, and include an \$1.25 toll for overnight (11pm – 5am) hours.

The Commission reviewed traffic and revenue data early in 2017 to determine if the toll rates set in 2016 adequately met the revenue needs and maintained traffic flow. Finding that traffic and income from tolling met expectations, the Commission let the new toll rates take effect on July 1, 2017.

The Commission will continue to monitor SR 520 traffic and revenue each year. No toll rate increase for the SR 520 floating bridge is anticipated in 2018.

Toll Rates for SR 520 Bridge

Good To Go! Rates	July 1, 2017
Peak period weekday rates (7am - 9am; 3pm - 6pm)	\$4.30
Off-peak weekday rates	\$2.00 - \$3.40
Weekend rates & specified holidays	\$1.40 - \$2.65
Overnight rates (11pm - 5am)	\$1.25

I-405 Express Toll Lanes

The I-405 Express Toll Lanes (ETL) between Lynnwood and Bellevue opened in September 2015. The ETL project converted an existing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane to an ETL, and added a second ETL in each direction between SR 522 and downtown Bellevue.

The ETL project has three objectives:

- reduce congestion in the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes;
- through dynamic toll rates that fluctuate based on congestion, provide drivers traveling alone the opportunity for a faster and more predictable trip; and

- generate toll revenue for future improvements in the I-405 corridor.

In “dynamic tolling” projects, tolls vary automatically depending on traffic volumes and speeds. Toll rates are displayed on overhead electronic signs. The Transportation Commission has set a minimum toll rate of \$0.75 and a maximum rate of \$10.00.

Before the ETLs opened, this corridor experienced some of the state’s worst traffic. The HOV lanes were often as congested as the general purpose lanes, and failed to operate reliably. For example, in the previous HOV lane, traffic moved at 45 mph only 60% of the time. Now, in the two-lane ETL section between Bellevue to Bothell, traffic moves at 45 mph 95% of the time. The single-lane ETL section, between Bothell and Lynnwood, with its limited capacity, is less reliable and has held back performance of the full 17-mile ETL system.

Throughout the first two years, WSDOT has made operational adjustments: adding a northbound peak-hour shoulder lane for a portion of the single-lane ETL, changing striping, access points, and signage, and refining the variable toll rate algorithm.

The Commission has continuously monitored ETL performance and rates. In March 2016, upon legislative request, and after consultation with WSDOT and gathering public input, the Commission modified the hours of operation for the I-405 ETLs, limiting tolling to 5am - 7pm on weekdays only and opening the lanes to all vehicles on evenings, weekends, and major federal holidays. This maintained faster and more reliable trips for transit, carpoolers, and toll-paying customers during the busiest time of the work week, while balancing traffic across all lanes on evenings and weekends when traffic volumes are much lower.

SR 16 Tacoma Narrows Bridge

Scheduled increases in debt service payments require the Commission to regularly review traffic volumes and revenue collection on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB). This review ensures tolls generate adequate revenue for debt service payments, and to maintain and operate the facility. With traffic volumes slowly growing and no significant increase in debt service or operating costs, toll rates on the TNB did not change in 2017.

Toll Rates for Tacoma Narrows Bridge

Toll Payment Method	Toll Rate
Transponder <i>Good To Go!</i> toll	\$5.00
Cash toll at the tollbooth	\$6.00
Pay-By-Mail rate	\$7.00
For all payment methods, the toll charge increases with each additional axle.	

SR 167 High Occupancy Toll Lanes

Since 2008, a pilot project has allowed drivers of single occupancy vehicles equipped with a transponder to “buy into” the SR 167 HOV lanes between Renton and the King County line, near Pacific. (12.5 miles southbound and 9 miles northbound). The toll rate, which varies based on traffic flow, is posted on overhead electronic signs. The Commission has maintained the original minimum and maximum toll rates of \$0.50 and \$9.00.

SR 167 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane use continues to increase and the Legislature has continued this project each biennium. The Commission supports continued operation of these lanes to reduce congestion and to provide a reliable travel option in the corridor.

Ferry Fares

Fares generate nearly 75% of the operating costs for Washington State Ferries (WSF), the largest ferry system in the country. Each biennium, the Transportation Commission sets fares to meet the revenue target and policy objectives set by the Legislature. The process begins nearly a year before new fares and policies take effect, beginning with extensive discussions involving WSF, the Commission, and the Ferry Advisory Committee on Tariffs (FAC-T), representing citizens and interested parties who use each ferry route, including transit, freight and tourism.

Formal consideration of new ferry fares and policies begins with a proposal from Washington State Ferries designed to meet the revenue target established in the transportation budget. The initial WSF fare proposal to the Commission included vehicle fare increases of 2.9% in 2017 and 2.5% in 2018 and passenger fare increases of 2.5% in 2017 and 2.1% in 2018. It also included the following:

- A smaller fare increase for oversize vehicles than for vehicles under 22’ to return to a proportional alignment based on length and height.
- A flat fee increase for school groups and its application to home school students.
- Charge licensed two or three wheeled vehicles the motorcycle/stowage fare.
- Charge bicycles towing any type of trailer the motorcycle/stowage fare.
- Reinstate the frequent user discount for commercial accounts.
- Prohibit commercial resale of Wave2Go passes.
- Require customer documentation at the tollbooth for the small vehicle length discount.

The Commission held public meetings during July 2017 in Bainbridge Island, the community of Freeland on Whidbey Island, Friday Harbor, and Vashon Island to hear public comment on the proposed fares and policy changes. The Ferry Advisory Committee expressed concern about increasing the fare differential between vehicle and passenger fares, which is especially burdensome for the aging population on the islands and for riders on routes that have little or no transit access. Other comments included:

- Fares should be tied to better service.
- Residents should get a break on fares.
- Objections to charging bikes with trailers the motorcycle/stowage fare.
- Adopt a low income fare.

The Commission adopted new fares and policies at a public hearing in Seattle on July 26, with four amendments:

- Reduced the passenger fare increase in 2017 to 2.1%.
- Revised the definition of bicycle to include bicycles as defined in RCW 46.04.071 and electric-assisted bicycles as defined in RCW 46.04.169.
- No charge for bike trailers; apply the stowage fee to bikes hauling kayaks and canoes.
- No fee on interisland towing of canoe or kayaks.

The Commission also directed WSF to collect information on bicycles hauling trailers and the impact on deck space, by route and by season, and report back by fall 2018.

Expected Toll and Fare-Setting Activity in 2018

SR 16 Tacoma Narrows Bridge: No rate setting expected based on projected toll revenues.

SR 520 Bridge: No rate setting expected, with certification from the State Treasurer that projected toll revenues are sufficient at current toll rates.

SR 99 Tunnel Rate Setting: The Commission will set toll rates and policies for the SR 99 Tunnel during 2018 that are designed to generate \$200 million toward tunnel construction costs. Beginning with analysis of traffic and revenue projections, the process will include on-going engagement with the public, local partners in Seattle and King County, and other interests.

Traffic patterns change with the SR 99 Tunnel; the new facility will no longer include four entrances and exits to Seattle's downtown core that exist today. Rates will be designed to encourage maximum use of the tunnel both to generate the expected revenue and to minimize impacts on city streets and port operations. Final action on SR 99 tolls is anticipated in fall 2018.

Exemption Policies: Toll exemption policies are currently unique for each facility. The Commission has been reviewing exemption policies and may propose changes to increase uniformity across facilities. No change in exemptions is planned for SR 167 HOT lanes and I-405 express toll lanes.

The Commission also works with WSDOT on planning for proposed toll facilities, including the Gateway Program and the extension of ETLs from Bellevue to Renton.

Tacoma Narrows Bridge Workgroup

A budget proviso in 2017 directed the Commission to convene a workgroup to identify preferred and prioritized policy solutions providing long-term toll payer relief for users of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and transmit those policy solutions to the transportation committees of the legislature. A member of the Commission and the Chair of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Citizen's Advisory Committee served as co-chairs of the TNB Workgroup, which also included legislators from the districts abutting the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, and local officials.

The TNB Work Group identified the remaining \$125 million in debt service increases as the primary problem to address for reducing the financial burden for TNB bridge toll payers. The escalating debt structure has contributed to rising toll

rates since the opening of the facility in 2007. This sets apart the TNB facility financing from Washington State's other tolled facilities, and represents a clear inequity. Such a financing structure is not consistent with best practices, and is not supported by the Washington State Office of the State Treasurer.



Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

A request for \$125 million is equivalent to only 10% of total costs remaining over the life of the current bonds, including the repayment of deferred sales tax immediately to follow. While funding at this level would provide toll payer relief, the primary burden of the costs remains with TNB toll rate payers.

To mitigate the impact of the debt service structure, the Work Group identified three objectives:

- Maintain toll rates at FY 2018 levels.
- Funding to address immediate funding needs in the next one to two biennia.
- Long-term plan to address increasing debt service costs.

The workgroup recommends the following scenarios for legislative consideration, in order of preference:

- Provide \$125 million to fund debt service increases for FY 2019 – FY 2030. This scenario seeks the full \$125 million by the 2019 legislative session. This may include funding during the 2018 or 2019 session, or both, and would ensure the Legislature fully addresses the problem statement of increasing debt service costs. At currently forecasted traffic and revenue for the TNB, it also would maintain current toll rates on the facility with about a \$9 million funding cushion.
- Plan for biennial budget provisos totaling \$125 million over the remaining term of the bonds. To maintain current toll rates, this option would require different amounts of funding assistance each biennium. For example, funding needs for the next two biennia are projected to be:
 - ~ \$27.8 million for the 19-21 biennium (FY 2020 – FY 2021).
 - ~ \$14.2 million for the 21-23 biennium (FY 2022 – FY 2023).

Road Usage Charge Assessment

At the direction of the Legislature, since 2012 the Transportation Commission has led work investigating whether a pay-by-the mile funding system could eventually replace the gas tax as the primary revenue source for the state transportation budget. After significant research, including a detailed review of the costs and benefits of a road usage charge, and with the support and guidance of a broad-based Steering Committee that includes legislators and public and private sector leaders, Washington will conduct a live pilot test of a Road Usage Charge (RUC) system during 2018.



Learn more at www.waroadusagecharge.org

A road usage charge (RUC) is a per mile charge drivers would pay for the use of the roads, rather than paying for them by the gallon of gas. It is called a usage charge because it works like other public utilities, where people pay different amounts based on how much they use. Not only will a RUC generate revenue, it will do so more equitably. What you drive will determine the cost impact: less fuel efficient vehicles will pay more tax to use the roads than today and fuel efficient vehicles will pay more. But all drivers will pay the same rate to drive 10 miles regardless of their vehicles MPG.

Developed in partnership with WSDOT and the Department of Licensing, over 2000 residents of Washington will participate in the pilot to begin to answer important questions, such as:

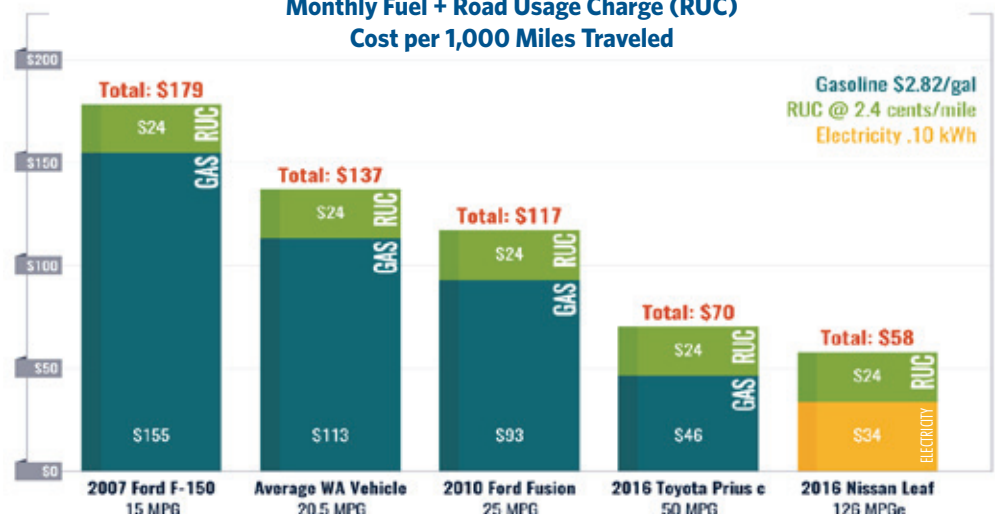
- Will road usage charging enable better transportation funding in the future?
- Will it work in real world terms? Are there fatal flaws the conceptual study missed?
- What does the public think? How does it work for drivers?

To get feedback from a diverse group of drivers from across the state, most participants will be selected from five regions across the state, including the Spokane area, the Tri-Cities, southwest Washington, northwest Washington and the Olympic Peninsula, and Central Puget Sound. Drivers from Clark and Cowlitz counties who commute into Oregon will test interstate interoperability, a small pool of participants from Surrey B.C. will test the international border crossing, and electric vehicle owners all will provide feedback on their experience with different methods of recording mileage driven.

The Commission and its RUC steering committee has held as a foundational priority that drivers will have a choice in how they report mileage under a RUC system. Instead of mandating a single reporting method, the pilot is providing a choice of mileage reporting, ranging from pre-paid mileage that requires no in-vehicle technology to options that include using smartphones and GPS-enabled technology. Licensing subagents will be available in some areas to conduct manual odometer reads and reporting.

Federal grants have funded all pilot design and set-up activities, and will pay the full cost of the pilot project and post-pilot evaluation. FHWA has provided the Commission \$8.5 million for this trial run of a potential new transportation funding system.

**Monthly Fuel + Road Usage Charge (RUC)
Cost per 1,000 Miles Traveled**



During 2017, as Washington prepared for the pilot, the project scope was enhanced in several small respects:

- Added a Mileage Permit option to test in the pilot.
- A Privacy Impact Assessment will be conducted; the intent is to develop a model for future RUC systems.
- Proof-of-concept to test a multi-jurisdictional clearinghouse (“Hub”) that can securely and efficiently collect and distribute RUC revenue between states.
- Expand the pilot to include drivers from Idaho – a non-RUC state.
- Research and analysis on all 18 identified (but unresolved) RUC policy issues.

FHWA is funding six other Road Usage Charge projects in 2018:

- California (\$1.75 M) will explore ways to collect revenue at retail gas and EV charging stations
- Colorado (\$500k) will explore data collection mechanisms
- I-95 Corridor Coalition (\$975k): Delaware will lead research into equity and privacy issues on the I-95 corridor
- Missouri (\$2.77 M) will conduct outreach related to equity and data security concerns
- Oregon (\$2.32 M) will examine ways to improve its existing RUC program
- RUC West Consortium (\$2.6 M): Oregon DOT will lead an Oregon/California pilot, with the intent of expanding the approach regionally in the western United States.

Surveys on Public Preference and Opinions

The Commission conducts surveys each year to provide the Governor, the Legislature, the Commission, and WSDOT customer perspectives on ferry operations by the people and businesses that use the ferry system. The Ferry Riders’ Opinion Group (FROG) is an online community that offers Washington State Ferry (WSF) riders an ongoing opportunity to weigh in on ferry issues through surveys and quick polls.

Four thousand ferry riders participated in the Winter 2017 FROG Survey, which took place from January 8th through April 1st 2017. The Winter Survey revealed that during winter all routes except Coupeville/Pt. Townsend and Anacortes/San Juan Islands are used primarily for commuting. Anacortes/San Juan has a high percentage of “other” trips (shopping, medical appointments, etc.).

Customers who participated in the Winter 2017 Survey interacted with WSF facilities and staff in the following ways:

- riders who visit the vessel passenger deck (90%).
- drove onto a ferry (87%).
- visited WSF’s website (75%).
- went inside a terminal (62%).
- walked onto a ferry (54%).

Overall satisfaction with WSF service during the recent winter period continues to be strong (77% of all riders are satisfied, up from 74% in winter 2016).

Overall dissatisfaction for the 2017 winter period is at 15%, down from 18% in winter 2016. Riders on the Fauntleroy / Vashon (23%) and Anacortes/San Juan Islands (21%) routes continue to have the highest overall dissatisfaction.

Payment options to be tested in the Road Usage Charge Pilot Project

Road Usage Charge Options	How miles are reported	How RUC is calculated	How RUC is paid
Mileage Permit	Certified smartphone photo or in-person verification of vehicle odometer by authorized rep	RUC based on number of miles driver chooses to purchase, in 1,000 mile increments, reconciled with actual miles driven every 3 months	Paid up front, at time of purchasing miles
Odometer Charge	Certified smartphone photo or in-person verification of vehicle odometer by authorized rep	RUC invoice based on exact mileage driven	Pay upon receipt of invoice, after mileage driven
Automated Mileage Charge	Plug-in mileage meter records and reports vehicle’s actual mileage.	RUC invoice based on exact mileage driven	Pay upon receipt of invoice, after mileage driven
	Drivers choose either GPS-enabled or simple mileage meter	GPS-enabled meters automatically deduct non-taxable miles.	
	Smartphone app to automatically report mileage	Smartphone app could also deduct non-taxable miles	

Dissatisfaction for each individual attribute evaluated is largely unchanged (0 to +/- 3 percentage point shift) when compared to 2016 and 2015. Overall dissatisfaction remains highest, by a wide margin, for “adequate parking near terminals” (30%), an increase of 1 percentage point from 2016.

As in 2016, the greatest opportunities WSF has to improve rider satisfaction system wide are “terminal bathroom cleanliness” and “clear loading crew directions.” One in five vehicle drivers say hand signals are somewhat (14%) or very (6%) inconsistent between crews.

Among riders who used the WSF reservation system, most (84%) say that they are satisfied with their experience. Only 6% of those that use the system are dissatisfied with it.

The summer rider survey, which is conducted every other year, reveals different rider priorities and higher satisfaction levels from a more diverse ridership, compared to the annual winter survey, which attracts response primarily from commuters. Summer respondents, surveyed in 2016,



Bicyclists ride the ferries for commuting and for recreational travel.

are likely to use WSF again for a recreational or social trip. Better schedules and routes was the top mentioned way to increase the number of recreational or social trips. Better transit connections to and from ferry terminals was the top mentioned method of encouraging walk-ons by respondents. Three in ten (29%) say that the ferry schedule does not match up with their needed train or bus connections. A third (34%) of respondents believe that the faster growth rate of vehicle fares has encouraged more travel as a foot passenger or carpool.

Joint Washington-Oregon Commission Activity

The Oregon and Washington Commissions meet jointly from time to time to discuss transportation issues of common concern. In 2016, the two Commissions agreed to advocate jointly for federal funds to improve the seismic resiliency of the transportation system in the Pacific Northwest. A letter to the Congressional delegations of the two states dated February 24, 2017 outlines the impacts of a 9.0 magnitude seismic event off the Pacific Coast to both the region and the nation as a whole. In addition to the loss of life and infrastructure in the Northwest, the national impacts would extend to the \$100 billion in exports and more than \$65 billion in imports that moved through the two states in 2016.

Naming Transportation Facilities

The Commission is authorized to name or rename state transportation facilities, including highways, bridges, and ferries. During 2017, the Commission adopted resolutions naming two state highways.

In October, the Commission adopted a resolution initiated by the City of Rainier in Thurston County. The action names SR 507 from milepost 22 to milepost 24 the “Sergeant Justin D. Norton Memorial Highway” to honor Sergeant Norton, a graduate of Rainier High School who was killed in action on patrol in Baghdad in 2006.

In November, the Commission honored another hero. On September 13, 2017, Sam Strahan, a high school sophomore at Freeman High School, stepped forward and attempted to stop a classmate with guns from hurting others in the school. By giving his own life, Sam gave life to his classmates.

The Commission received a petition with over 7500 signatures and support from many legislators to name SR 27 in Sam Strahan’s honor. On November 15, 2017, the Commission adopted Resolution 734 naming a portion of SR 27 the “Sam Strahan Memorial Highway.”

Partners in Transportation

Each community and region in our state has unique transportation needs, challenges and successes. This section presents key findings from the Commission's visits to Centralia, Kent, Leavenworth, San Juan County, and Spokane Valley during 2017. In each visit, the message from local leaders emphasized the need to maintain existing transportation systems and invest in meeting new needs of a changing population.

Centralia and Chehalis



1. With 13 Presidential Disaster Proclamations in only 20 years, flooding in Lewis County drains state and local transportation resources that could be spent elsewhere. But due to the geography of the area and its road system, flooding cannot be stopped. A Chehalis Basin Strategy, with state, local, and tribal leadership, has developed a dual-purpose strategy to reduce flood damage.

None of the alternatives under consideration, ranging in cost from \$600 million to \$1.5 billion, would entirely eliminate closures on I-5 and other state routes during a 100-year flood. Some of the alternatives could reduce closures due to flooding by three days.

2. As in many small to medium-sized cities, a state highway doubles as Centralia's main street. SR 507 is Centralia's primary north-south arterial.
3. Railroads shaped Centralia and Chehalis in the past and continue to impact the city today. Trains moving through on the main line can block traffic for up to 40 minutes.
4. Centralia and Chehalis both have enacted Transportation Benefit Districts, funded with a 0.2% sales tax. Between outlet malls in Centralia and regional shopping destinations in Chehalis, the cities expect to collect \$630,000 and \$800,000 annually for local street improvements.
5. The Chehalis-Centralia Airport plays an important part in the local economy. It is home base for three Citation jets owned by Pacific Cataract and Laser Institute, founded in Chehalis in 1985 and now operating throughout the Pacific Northwest.
6. With over 1000 miles of roads, Lewis County needs to maintain 142 miles/year to efficiently preserve its county road system but can afford upkeep on only 80 miles a year.
7. Twin Transit, one of the smallest transit providers in the state, operates four fixed routes in Centralia and Chehalis, serving Centralia College and major employers and retail sites. Its purchase of an electric bus will save \$11,000 - \$14,000 in fuel a year.
8. The region served by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization, including Lewis, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties, is highly dependent on automobiles for mobility. Workers must travel farther and regional travel times exceed the state average.
9. Transportation and logistics is a growing economic sector in Lewis County. The Economic Development Council reports that three new trucking companies have located in Lewis County, and 700 - 1000 warehouse and distribution jobs are in the pipeline.
10. The White Pass Scenic Byway, a major tourism destination and route linking eastern and western Washington on US 12, has received grant funding from the Port of Seattle in its effort to connect cruise ship tourists to Mt. Rainier and the South Cascades. The Byway partners are seeking state assistance for electric charging stations to serve the growing number of travelers with electric cars.



SR 507 is the Main Street in Centralia.

Kent

1. Kent is the heart of the Green River Valley, home of the nation's 4th largest manufacturing and warehousing district in the nation with over 274 million square feet of active industrial space. One-third of all the truck traffic to the ports and 70 trains a day move through the valley.



A minus: the impacts of the freight traffic on roads is significant. Kent's annual street maintenance need is \$12 million, and it has a \$250 million backlog of work to maintain, replace, and upgrade its street system.

2. Kent annually dedicates over \$4.5 million of its business and occupation tax to street repairs and also increased its utility tax to 18% but cannot keep up with repair costs. Auburn spends \$7 million a year on pavement preservation and replacement.
3. The city of Auburn, a net importer of jobs, is also home to several regional attractions that generate traffic, including the Muckleshoot casino, the White River Amphitheatre, Emerald Downs, and the SuperMall.
4. South King county's transportation network is stressed by people choosing affordable housing with long commutes. Over 17% of south King County residents spend more than an hour commuting each way, double the average King County commute time.



Kent's warehousing district seen from the sky.

5. King County has worked with suburban cities to define a regional road network and identify the unmet maintenance, preservation, operations and capacity needs. This Regional Transportation System Initiative will then engage the legislature in a conversation on revenue and financing tools for local roads.

6. As Sound Transit's light rail and passenger rail network matures, and King County Metro's Rapid Ride bus service expands, Metro's role is changing to better feed riders to the high-capacity rail and bus networks. MetroConnects will bring 73% of King County residents and 87% of low-income residents within ½ mile of frequent transit service.
7. Passenger rail has helped downtown revitalization in Auburn and Kent and both cities in turn have invested in downtown infrastructure to attract transit-oriented development. Kent now has 300,000 square feet of retail and a downtown campus of Green River Community College adjacent to the Sounder station.

Sound Transit also is expanding parking garages in both cities to serve growing demand and expanded service. Transit options will grow again when Link light rail reaches Federal Way by 2024.

8. Sea-Tac International Airport is one of the fastest growing major airports in the nation. In 2015, passenger counts and number of flights both grew by 12% or more; in 2016 growth exceeded 8%. The airport is out of gate capacity and developing expansion plans that will enable it to serve 66 million passengers a year.
9. Like other cities in South King County, Des Moines is evolving from a suburban to an urban platform. While it appreciates new growth including a headquarters office for the Federal

Aviation Administration, the City of Des Moines is concerned that Sea-Tac's expansion plans do not address the impacts to adjacent cities.

10. The Northwest Seaport Alliance has successfully combined the resources of the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma. As of May 2017, total container volume was up by 8.4%, with imports leading at 11.1% growth and exports accounting for 5.4% growth.

Leavenworth



1. Although its population is only 2,000, Leavenworth welcomes 2 million visitors a year. Its Main Street is a state highway, US 2.
2. Leavenworth funds its Transportation Benefit District (TBD) with a 0.2% sales tax. The \$280,000 it generates is spent on street rehabilitation and as a match for other projects. Wenatchee's TBD, funded by a \$20 license fee, brings in about \$500,000 a year.
3. The City of Cashmere partnered with Chelan County, the Port of Chelan, the Community Economic Revitalization Board and WSDOT to rebuild the Sunset Highway through part of Cashmere.
4. The City of Chelan is working to restore and reconfigure the 80-year old Woodin Avenue Bridge that connects two state routes. It will carry northbound traffic into town, add a bicycle lane, and improve safety with sidewalks on both sides of the bridge.
5. The average pavement condition on Chelan County's road network is PSC 70 (fair to good). To maintain that average will cost an additional \$800,000 annually.
6. Fire, flooding, and landslides have been major challenges to Okanogan County, and its 1339 miles of roadway. Okanogan County suffered \$1 million in road damage between March 13 and April 13, 2017, but because the state total did not trigger the threshold for federal assistance, it received no funding assistance.
7. Link Transit has successfully moved many riders from costly paratransit service to fixed route ridership. With strategies that include adding lighting and benches to transit shelters, and siting shelters at locations for known paratransit users, Link has half the paratransit users today that it had 10 years ago.



8. The Cascade Loop, which includes US 2, US 97 and the North Cascades Highway, was created in 1978 as a way to improve the economic health of rural areas by utilizing transportation infrastructure already in place. From a tourism perspective, it provides a sample of everything travelers love about the state, from outdoor recreation to wine-tasting. From a transportation perspective, it also showcases the state's diversity and is now fully accessible to electric vehicles with charging stations along the entire roadway.



A quiet June evening in Leavenworth. On festival weekends, up to 30,000 visitors flood the city streets and US 2.

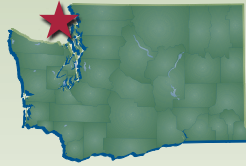
9. Over 90% of organic apples and cherries and 79% of organic pears grown in the US come from Washington. About 1/3 of the apples, cherries, and pears grown in Washington are exported.

Transportation is a critical component of financial success in the tree fruit industry and as crop production grows, so does the need for reliable transportation. With apples and pears shipped year round, there are conflicts between tourism traffic and agricultural shipments. More crops mean more trucks on two-lane roads.

10. The Port of Chelan and the Port of Douglas jointly manage Pangborn Field, the regional airport located outside of East Wenatchee. Although Alaska Airlines operates three trips each way between Seattle and Wenatchee at an average 85% capacity, a pilot shortage and limited gate capacity at Sea-Tac precludes discussion of additional flights.

Fires followed by heavy rains resulted in major damage to state and county roads in Okanogan County in 2017.

San Juan County



1. The San Juan Islands have no connection to the mainland except by boat or air. Washington State Ferries serves the four most populated islands and transport 85% of visitors to the islands. Private ferry services and barges provide access and equipment to the 56 other inhabited islands.

2. Several ferry breakdowns during the peak summer season of 2017 severely impacted the local economy. July ridership was down 7.4% from 2016, and also lower in August, a major impact to the tourism economy. The Chamber of Commerce estimates that ferry disruptions affected 73% of the county's businesses.

3. In addition to the challenge of travel to and from the mainland, interisland service is infrequent and not always reliable, compared to 20 years ago. Interisland commuters often must be away from home for 12 hours to get to work and back. The interisland schedule works better in the winter than in the summer.

4. Ferry fares are growing faster than transportation costs in other parts of the state, a burden that especially impacts the many service workers in the community.

Compared to the rest of San Juan Island, the median income of Friday Harbor's full-time residents is only 75% of the state's median household income.

5. San Juan County owns seven vessels, used mainly for public works, sheriff and assessor operations, and maintains a dozen maritime facilities. The county maintains gravel and dirt roads on three islands not served by Washington State Ferries.



The ferry landing and a large marina dominate the shoreline of downtown Friday Harbor. The community would like a second slip for loading and unloading vehicles in Friday Harbor.

6. On Lopez, Orcas, and in Friday Harbor, ferry waiting lines frequently impact local roads and traffic. WSDOT and San Juan County have partnered to build a park and ride near the Orcas Terminal. The project adds space for vehicles waiting for a ferry, provides a safe and convenient place for residents to park and walk on to the ferry, and improves safety in and out of the terminal area. San Juan County wants to see improvements to the Lopez terminal facilities, which are no longer adequate.

7. San Juan Transit, a privately-owned business that provides public transportation, charges \$5.00 a trip. It operates two buses on San Juan Island, and one each on Orcas and Lopez. When waits at the Lopez ferry line, which is distant from any services, lasted for hours last summer, San Juan Transit has provided hungry and thirsty travelers a shuttle from the ferry line to Lopez Village.

8. Port districts on the largest three islands operate airports which accommodate commercial flights as well as private planes. Because San Juan County residents have limited access to medical care on the islands, medical airlift is a crucial service. The Lopez airport, which lacks staff, also needs a weather station to continue to have medical evacuation capability.

9. Kenmore Air provides seaplane service to the islands from Lake Union, as well as service from Boeing Field, carrying up to 10,000 passengers a month in the summer and about 1,000 a month in the winter. Its clientele is evenly divided between professional commuters, visitors with cabins or family in the islands, and weekend getaways.

10. Visitors to San Juan County spent \$211 million in 2016. Tourists and businesses that rely on tourism love the new reservation system for the predictability and reliability it provides for visitors to San Juan and Orcas Islands. Local residents emphasized the need to retain the two-day reservation window.



Spokane International Airport.

Spokane Valley



1. Spokane County is projected to grow from its population of 488,310 today to 600,000 or more by 2040. It offers a commute travel time of 21 minutes and easy access to rural areas and recreational opportunities.
2. As the Spokane area grows, urbanization has alleviated the need for a car in downtown Spokane, and transit investments from the high-performing transit Central City Line to new Park-and-Ride facilities will continue to facilitate urban growth and offer mobility options.
3. Improving grade crossings and reducing fatal and serious crashes are important transportation challenges. Despite many trails, and policies that promote active transportation, 35% of fatal and serious crashes in Spokane County involve non-motorists.
4. The City of Spokane Valley coordinates its land use planning, transportation, and economic development in one city department to efficiently implement its vision to be a community where people can grow and play and businesses will flourish and prosper.
5. The City of Spokane is coordinating infrastructure investments in street improvements and bike lanes with projects that reduce stormwater discharge into the Spokane River. This not only saves money, it reduces traffic impacts by limiting how frequently the city digs up a street.
6. The City of Liberty Lake is a planned community that has used money from its Transportation Benefit District to connect its neighborhoods with trails. The city plows the trails in winter, so they can be used year-round for mobility and recreation.

7. Spokane Transit Authority, operating 134 fixed route buses on 36 routes and 108 paratransit vehicles, boasts the second-highest number of passengers per revenue hour in the state. Building on its efficient reputation with new voter-approved revenue, STA is adding new routes and expanding service.
8. The Empire Builder passenger train from Chicago leaves Spokane to Seattle or Portland after midnight, providing a poor train travel connection. Amtrak is aware of growing interest in new Eastern Washington service, including daylight service between Seattle and Spokane and encourages ridership studies and improved local access as first step to better service.



The Barker Road Grade Crossing is one of several needing attention in Spokane Valley.

9. The two airports in Spokane County, Spokane International and Felts Field, receive no local tax dollars. Spokane International added five new destinations in 2017 – including Chicago and Dallas. Passenger growth grew by 10 percent.
10. Every school in Spokane County has received a grant to promote safe walking and bicycling to school. Kids who participate in a walking school bus have better attendance.

Commission Roles and Responsibilities

Key Facts

The Washington State Transportation Commission is composed of seven members appointed by the Governor for six-year terms. The Secretary of WSDOT and a representative from the Governor's Office are ex officio members of the Commission.

The Commission provides a public forum for transportation policy development. It reviews and assesses how the transportation system works across the state, and develops and issues a 20-year statewide transportation plan. The Commission also serves as the state tolling authority, adopting all state highway tolls and setting ferry fares.

Current Responsibilities in Detail

Washington Transportation Plan

Every four years, the Commission recommends to the Legislature a comprehensive and balanced statewide transportation plan, which also addresses local and regional needs. The plan must be consistent with the state's growth management goals and is based upon transportation policy goals adopted by the Legislature.

State Highway Tolling and State Ferry Fares

As the state's tolling authority, the Commission adopts tolls for the SR 520 Bridge, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, the I-405 Express Toll Lanes, the SR 167 HOT Lanes, and any future authorized toll facilities. The Commission also sets fares and pricing policies for Washington State Ferries (WSF).

Ferry Customer Survey

The Commission is required to conduct a ferry customer survey every two years. Surveys are conducted via the Ferry Riders Opinion Group (FROG) survey panel. Data gathered is used to help inform WSF's level of service, operational, pricing, planning, and investment decisions.

Policy Guidance

The Commission offers the Governor and the Legislature policy guidance on key issue areas, which include:

- Transportation finance and funding.
- Preserving, maintaining and operating the statewide transportation system.
- Transportation infrastructure needs.
- Transportation efficiencies to improve service delivery and intermodal coordination and connectivity.
- Improved planning and coordination among transportation agencies and providers.
- Use of intelligent transportation systems and other technology based solutions.

Public Involvement and Outreach

The Commission conducts its public outreach through meetings held in Olympia and in community meetings throughout the state each year, which focus on local and regional transportation issues and challenges. The Commission also convenes periodic regional forums to gather citizen input on transportation issues.

Transportation Innovative Partnerships Program

The Commission may solicit concepts or proposals for eligible public private partnership (PPP) projects. In consultation with the Governor, the Commission may execute, reject or continue negotiations on proposed PPP.

Route Jurisdiction Transfer Program

The Commission is required to consider and act upon possible revisions to the state highway system. It receives, reviews, and evaluates petitions from cities, counties, or WSDOT requesting changes to the state highway system. Once the review is done, the Commission makes a final finding and forwards its recommendation to the Legislature for final action in law.

Naming State Highways and Bridges

The Legislature has authorized the Commission to name state transportation facilities, including highways, bridges and ferry vessels. Naming requests may come from the legislature, community organizations, state and local governments, or an individual. The Commission carefully considers community support and consults with WSDOT before naming any transportation facility or ferry vessel.

Recent Studies and Projects

- Since 2012, the Commission has led an assessment of road usage charging to determine its feasibility and potential to generate revenue. A Road Usage Charge (RUC) is a per mile charge drivers would pay for use of the roads, as opposed to paying by the gallon of gas. If implemented, RUC would replace the state gas tax as cars become more fuel efficient. During 2018, 2,000 volunteers from around the state will test RUC in a pilot project funded by an \$8.5 million grant from the US Department of Transportation.
- During 2017, the Commission has staffed a workgroup of legislators and local officials tasked with identifying solutions for long-term toll payer relief from increasing toll rates on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. The work group, co-chaired by a Commissioner and the Chair of the TNB Citizens' Advisory Committee, will report its findings and recommendations to the legislature for consideration in 2018.

Commissioners



Jerry Litt, Chairman, Douglas County

Jerry brings the Commission 40 years' experience in planning and community development. He served as the Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Lacey for 13 years and 10 years with Douglas County. He has mid-management experience in Spokane and Chelan Counties and has done private sector consulting throughout Eastern Washington. His experience includes responsibility for a full-range of Planning and Community Development services, including public participation in Douglas County's award winning GMA public involvement program and the City of Lacey's "Designing Downtown 2000" program. He has also been involved with state-wide issues as past President of the Washington County and Regional Planning Director's Association, as an executive board member of the Washington City Planning Director's Association, and as a member of the Transportation Improvement Board. Jerry was appointed by Governor Gregoire in 2011, and was reappointed to a six-year term by Governor Inslee.



Roy Jennings, Vice Chairman, Clark County

Roy brings to the Commission over 30 years of hands on experience in the field of transportation. He served on the Board of Directors for the Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Area (CTRA), the local transit agency in Clark County for over six years. Roy is currently the president of the Amalgamated Transit Union Legislative Council of Washington State and the Secretary-Treasurer of the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council. He also serves as Treasurer of the Roundtable of Southwest Washington. In 1976 Roy enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, and after 20+ years of honorable service he retired as a Staff Non-Commission Officer. In 1997 Roy and his family moved to Southwest Washington (Vancouver) where he has lived for the last 20 years. He is a graduate of the Labor Education and Research Center, University of Oregon. Roy was appointed by Governor Inslee in 2014. Term expires June 30, 2019.



Joe Tortorelli, Spokane County

Joe is an economic development consultant with over 30 years of experience working with cities, counties and ports interested in growing their local economy by creating jobs and private sector capital investment. He began his career with Washington Water Power Co., now Avista Corp., after attending Eastern Washington University. He has led numerous boards on economic development over the years and serves on a variety of local boards such as the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council, the SRTC and the Spokane Area Good Roads Association. Joe has lived in Spokane all of his life and is an avid cyclist and snow skier. Joe was appointed to the Commission by Governor Gregoire in 2011 and reappointed by Governor Inslee in 2014. Term expires June 30, 2020.



Hester Serebrin, King County

Hester is the Policy Director at Transportation Choices Coalition, a statewide organization working to bring Washingtonians more affordable, sustainable, and reliable transportation choices that connect them with jobs, housing, education, and each other. She regularly works with a broad coalition of partner organizations to develop transportation policy recommendations that focus on improving health and equity outcomes. Hester sits on the PSRC Transportation Policy Board, and other PSRC Committees. She received her Bachelor's degree from Reed College in 2004, and completed her Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy and Governance in 2016. Hester was appointed by Governor Inslee in 2015. Term expires June 30, 2021.



Debbie Young, San Juan County

Debbie brings 30 years of management, negotiation and natural resources experience to the Commission. She has served on a number of boards and councils, including being elected to the National Hydropower Association Board, serving as the Chairman of the Nisqually River Council, and as a board member for Tahoma Land Conservancy, and Forterra. A graduate of the Washington State Agriculture Forestry Leadership program. She worked in the utility industry for over 20 years, serving as the Natural Resources Manager for Tacoma Power. Earlier in her career she taught sciences at Tacoma Community College. She currently resides on Lopez Island where she and her husband operate a small diversified farm providing meat and specialty food products to customers in the Puget Sound region. Debbie was appointed by Governor Inslee in 2015 for a partial term and reappointed in 2016. Term expires June 30, 2022.



Shiv Batra, King County

Shiv played a key role in establishing INCA Engineers' unparalleled reputation in professional Architectural/Engineering. INCA provides civil, structural, hydraulic, mechanical, electrical engineering and surveying services to public and private clients. Shiv has been a prominent advocate and active member of the US engineering community for more than three decades. He is a member of numerous professional organizations that serve the engineering and construction industries, and has served terms as president, special consultant, committee chair, and board member for these organizations. In these roles, he has been successful in promoting membership, technology transfer, civic, and professional development activities at the local, regional, national, and international levels. He and his wife are very active in many local and international non-profit organizations. Shiv was appointed by Governor Inslee in January 2016. Term expires June 30, 2019.

In Memoriam



Washington State and the nation lost a transportation leader in October when Dan O'Neal left this earth. Dan retired as a Transportation Commissioner in 2015 after serving 12 years as a member of the Commission, including three years as Chairman and two years as Vice-Chairman. As a Commissioner, Dan led Commission work assessing railroad capacity and needs in Washington, developing the foundational state tolling policies, and establishing policies to maintain the financial stability of the state ferry system. Dan strongly advocated for healthy, active transportation, and relentlessly argued for slower and safer speed limits.

A native of Bremerton and graduate of Whitman College, Dan worked in Washington, D.C for Senator Warren Magnuson and the United States Senate Commerce Committee after serving in the Navy and graduating from law school at the University of Washington. While he was staff counsel to the United States Senate Subcommittee on Surface Transportation from 1969-1973, many historic pieces of legislation were enacted including Amtrak, railroad safety, and railroad revitalization. Dan served as a Commissioner on the United States Interstate Commerce Commission beginning in 1973, and was appointed its Chairman by President Jimmy Carter from 1977 – 1980, during which time both the Commission and Congress took historic action to deregulate surface transportation.

After returning to Washington State with his family in 1982, Dan continued to work on transportation in the private sector as a lawyer and as the CEO and owner of a freight transportation services company. In addition to his work on the Transportation Commission, Dan was active in retirement as Chairman of the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board from 1998 – 2003 and convenor of the Puget Sound Regional Council's Freight Roundtable from 1998 to 2017. He also served on the Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council from 2007 – 2013, the Cascade Land Conservancy, and the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group.

Dan O'Neal is sorely missed by his colleagues and friends.



Photo Credits

Paul Parker; Carl See; Okanogan County; University of Washington's Supply Chain and Transportation Logistics Center; WSDOT Photo Library; WSDOT

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