



Washington State  
Transportation Commission

The background of the slide features a photograph of the Washington State Capitol building and a large fountain with multiple water jets. The image is partially obscured by a blue wavy graphic that flows across the top and sides of the slide.

# **I-405 ETLs: Adoption of Permanent Rule**

## ***Recap & Next Steps***

*Carl See*

*Senior Financial Analyst*

*Washington State Transportation Commission*

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# I-405 ETL Background

- Early ETL successes (thru Feb. 2016):
  - Initial express toll lane usage was higher than expected.
  - Transit, vanpools and carpools had a more reliable trip in both directions.
  - I-405 was moving more vehicles during peak commutes.

# I-405 ETL Background

- Early ETL successes (thru Feb. 2016) cont.:
  - Southbound traffic improved in general purpose and express toll lanes.
  - Northbound express toll lane traffic improved overall compared to HOV.
  - Long and medium trips received faster travel times.

# I-405 ETL Background

- Challenges also remained (thru Feb. 2016):
  - Northbound general purpose traffic more congested in some locations.
  - Some shorter trips were not seeing the same travel time benefits as longer trips.
  - Weekday carpool usage was lower than projected, but steadily increasing.
  - Toll rates continued to reach the maximum rate.

# I-405 ETL Background

- Challenges also remained (thru Feb. 2016):
  - New weekend congestion in spots along corridor.
  - Weekend users of I-405 cited concerns about ETL toll rates and cost of buying a Flex Pass as reasons for not using ETLs (*Jan 2016 WSDOT survey*).
    - Primarily discretionary trips, not commutes.

# Emergency Rule

- Approved by Commission on March 15, 2016
  - Reduced ETLs hours of operation to 5am-7pm on weekdays.
  - Opened HOV lanes to all vehicles on evenings, weekends, and six major federal holidays.
    - No HOV or transponder required.
  - Took effect March 18, 7pm.
  - Emergency rule extended on May 24, 2016.

# Benefits of Emergency Rule

- Maintain faster, more reliable trips for transit, carpoolers, and toll-paying customers when needed most.
- Balance traffic across all lanes on evenings and weekends.
- Improve consistency of HOV policies with I-405 south of Bellevue, and SR-167.

# I-405 ETL Public Input Recap

- Public Comment
  - March 15 Commission Meeting in Olympia
  - Input from 5 individuals or organizations
- Summary of Support
  - Support for the change in hours
  - Request data be collected to monitor performance
  - Pursue additional changes to relieve congestion

# I-405 ETL Public Input Recap

- Public Comment
  - March 15 Commission Meeting in Olympia
  - Input from 5 individuals or organizations
- Summary of Opposition
  - Maintain existing hours of operation and HOV policies to support transit
    - At least enable ETL tolls if speeds below 45 mph
  - ETLs are elitist – a burden for low-income drivers

# I-405 ETL Public Input Recap

- Received ~75 emails (March-July 2016)
- Summary of Support (*majority*)
  - Support change as proposed
  - Support change, but urge additional changes
    - Further decrease hours of operation
    - Remove peak hour 3+ carpool requirement
- Summary of Opposition
  - Maintain original ETL hours
  - Return ETLs to HOV or general purpose lanes

# Proposed Revision

- Proposing to include revision of WAC 468-270-140 on toll-free use of motorcycles in the ETLs
  - Clarify that G2G account and transponder are required only during ETL hours of operations.
  - Ensures consistency with intent of changes in the emergency and permanent rule.

# Next Steps

- Today
  - Receive Public Comment.
  - Take action on Permanent Rule.
- Upon Approval
  - File Concise Explanatory Statement & CR-103.
    - Upon approval, will file ASAP
    - Emergency Rule in effect until September 2016
  - Permanent Rule to take effect 31 days after filing.

# For Questions or Further Information

**Carl See**

Senior Financial Analyst

Washington State Transportation Commission

360-705-7934 or [seecarl@wstc.wa.gov](mailto:seecarl@wstc.wa.gov)