

Puget Sound Transit Agencies' Experience Using Toll Facilities

Washington State Transportation Commission
October 17, 2017



Objective

Empower the Transportation Commission and the Washington State Department of Transportation to find a solution to system-wide toll exemptions for transit agencies across Washington state that:

- Increases the movement of people and goods through tolled facilities
- Reduces the financial and administrative burden on transit providers



How Transit Supports Regional Mobility

As the region grows, it becomes more difficult to build our way out of congestion

- 1 million more people and 850,000 more jobs by 2040

Transit is part of the regional infrastructure that keeps people moving

- Enhancing transit service reduces roadway congestion and increases corridor capacity
- Reliable and frequent transit supports economic development
- If transit was no longer available, ~55% of transit riders would either drive alone, carpool or use a ride hailing service*

As demographic shifts increase the suburbanization of poverty

- People are being pushed out of the densest urban areas
- Transit provides a low-cost alternative to using a toll facility

*Source: American Public
Transportation Association
[2014 report](#)



Pierce Transit Overview

Service Area: 292 square miles

Local Routes: 37

Bus Fleet: 178 (excluding Sound Transit)

Fixed-Route Ridership: 8.6 million

Transit Centers: 7

Park & Rides: 30; 3 west of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge



Pierce Transit Vanpool Program

Vanpool fleet: 366 vans

Vanpool Ridership: 828,000 boardings; 2,400 customers

Vanpools Accessing the Tacoma Narrows Bridge: 80

Major Vanpool Anchor West of Tacoma Narrows Bridge:

- Puget Sound Naval Shipyard / Naval Undersea Warfare Center / Submarine Base Bangor (277 customers, 33 vans)

Example of other major employment anchors include Boeing (752), City of Tacoma (290), US Army (146), Costco (82)



Pierce Transit & Tolling

Transit is exempt on all toll facilities *except* the Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB).

- Pierce Transit has spent \$132,000 on tolls related to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge thus far in 2017:
 - 1 ½ weeks administrative staff time for managing tolling accounts
 - Excludes time spent on maintaining and replacing toll transponders as rolling stock circulates through operations
 - Excludes cost to vanpools; groups reimburse Pierce Transit for TNB tolling expenses



Pierce Transit Opportunity/ Tolling Parity

1. Gain toll-exempt status for Pierce Transit buses, maintenance vehicles and vanpools on the TNB.
2. Provide incentive to support WSDOT and Pierce Transit vanpool expansion goals while rewarding good will of existing vanpool community.



Sound Transit Overview



ST Express bus

- 28 regional bus routes
- Operated by KCM, CT and PT
- 2016 Highlights
 - 18.5 million annual boardings
 - 761k platform hours
 - 16.2M platform miles
 - 307 buses



Sound Transit & Tolling

- Routes operating in various tolling environments

Corridor	Daily Bus Trips	Daily Ridership (Spring 2017)
Tacoma Narrows	10	354
SR 167	72	2,066
SR 520	377	14,977
I-405	106	4,009

- Annual benefit of more than \$500k for transit service

Sound Transit & Tolling

- Tolling has worked
 - Routes using I-405 ETL experienced faster travel times in 2016 than before the ETL
 - Ridership has grown faster on these routes as well
 - ETLs provide 45 mph goal for HOV2+ lanes with 81% reliability
 - Compared to 62% before the ETL
 - Despite 20,000 more vehicles per day than two years ago



Sound Transit Opportunity

- Bus Rapid Transit:
 - ST3 funding of nearly \$1 billion in the corridor, beginning 2018
 - Builds upon state investments from Renton to Bellevue
 - Relies on ETL north of Bellevue and the 2024 completion of Renton to Bellevue work
 - Planning true BRT that needs 45 mph speeds 90% of the time or better
- Transit helps offset impacts of congestion and increase person movement in congested corridors:
 - Continue to exempt transit from tolls, and on any future tolled facilities
 - Allow toll revenues to be used for transit operations

King County Metro Transit Overview



Metro at a Glance (2016)

Service Area	2,134 square miles
Population	2.1 million
Employment	1.36 million
Fixed-route ridership	121.5 million
Vanpool ridership	3.6 million (2015)
Access ridership	1.3 million (2015)
Active bus fleet	1,414 excluding ST
Bus stops	over 8,000
Park-and-rides	137 lots
Park-and-ride spaces	26,869 w/ ST

Metro Transit's Tolling Positions



Tolled facilities with HOV lanes can help maintain speed and move more people:

- Enforce the adopted HOV lane performance standards by maintaining an average speed of 45 mph or greater at least 90% of the time during the morning and afternoon peak hours.
- Increase carpool occupancy requirements in congested HOV corridors from 2+ to 3+ during peak periods in order to maintain the 45 mph HOV lane performance standard

Transit can help offset impacts of congestion and increase person movement in congested corridors:

- Continue to exempt transit from tolls, and on any future tolled facilities
- Allow toll revenues to be used for transit operations

Metro Transit Operations on Tolled Facilities

Systemwide, King County Metro carries about 400,000 riders a day, with 42% of Metro's bus trips occurring during the peak period.

SR 520

Facility	Avg Daily Bus Trips	Avg Daily Passenger Loads
Spring 2010 (pre-tolling)	599	15,048
Spring 2017 (current)	773 29%▲	23,387 55%▲

I-405

Facility	Avg Daily Bus Trips	Avg Daily Passenger Loads
Spring 2015 (pre-ETL)	72	2,645
Spring 2017 (current)	83 15%▲	2,945 11%▲

Transit's Success in Managing SR 520 Congestion

SR 520 Urban Partnership committed to deploying 'Four T's' to ensure the free movement of people and goods:

- Tolls
- Transit
- Telecommuting
- Technology



This program was an example of how tolls and transit work together to meet the State's '*Mobility*' Transportation goal: *To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington state, including congestion relief and improved freight mobility*

Community Transit Service On Tolled Facilities

Paratransit on I-405

Vanpools on I-405 and SR 520

Transit support vehicles on I-405 and SR 520 (currently not exempt from tolls)

Commuter buses on I-405 and SR 520



Commuter Buses On I-405 and SR 520

Route 424: 4 trips, weekday



Route 435: 14 trips, weekday



Paratransit: Value Of Toll Exemption

I-405: \$6,426- \$85,680, annually

17 trips per day (38 boardings)



Vanpool: Value Of Toll Exemption

I-405: \$62,370 - \$831,600, annually
165 vanpools per day (2,376 boardings)

SR 520: \$33,000, annually
18 vanpools per day (259 boardings)



Transit Support Vehicles: Toll Paid

\$225-\$265, annually



Commuter Buses: Value Of Toll Exemption

I-405: \$3,402-\$45,360, annually
18 trips per day (444 riders)

SR 520: \$5,855, annually
4 trips per day (118 riders)



State Revenue Impact of Exempting Transit from Tolls

Data from WSDOT Sept 2017 Presentation to the WSTC

Current transit exemptions - June 2016 through May 2017

- Data includes public transit buses
- Data does not include supervisor trips, vanpools or private buses/shuttles

	I-405 Express Toll Lanes	SR 167 HOT Lanes	SR 520 Bridge	Total Tolls Dismissed
King County Metro	\$62,889	\$4,693	\$1,094,330	\$1,161,912
Community Transit	\$77,249	N/A	\$3,513	\$80,762
Pierce County Transit	\$1,227	\$47,678	\$101	\$49,006
Totals % of Annual Toll Revenue	\$141,365 1%	\$52,371 3%	\$1,097,944 1.6%	\$1,291,680



The Future of Tolling

Tolling is expanding in the Puget Sound Region

- I-405 ETL expansion between Bellevue to Renton (2024)
- SR-99 Tunnel tolls (2018-2019)

Over the next 25 years:

- Transit service is expanding across all regional transit providers
- Regional population growth is expected to outpace transit system growth

Transit needs to continue to be a solution to improving the movement of people and goods, and not burdened with increased financial and administrative burden that reduces efficiency



Questions?

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