

Washington State Transportation Commission

SR 167 HOT Lanes Hours of Operation

Patty Rubstello, Assistant Secretary of Tolling

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The Transportation Commission received a legislative request to consider impacts of making SR 167 HOT Lanes hours of operation consistent with I-405 express toll lanes

- **Removal of HOT lane tolling on weekends**
 - HOT lane could be open to all, like express toll lanes
 - Could also revert to HOV operation, like I-405 HOV lanes
- **Issues addressed in this presentation:**
 - Policy inconsistencies throughout the I-405/SR 167 corridor
 - Differences between express toll lane and HOT lane operation
 - Likely impacts of changing SR 167 hours of operation
 - Future changes to the SR 167 corridor
 - Timing for comprehensive consideration of alternative policies

OPERATION AND POLICY CONSISTENCY

- Plans call for a continuous 40-mile express toll lane facility when the I-405 program is complete
- Until then drivers face inconsistent operations through the corridor

	SR 167 HOT Lanes	I-405 Renton to Bellevue HOV lanes	I-405 Bellevue to Lynnwood ETL
HOV Policy	2+ Free	2+ Allowed in HOV Lane	3+ Free Peak 2+ Free Off-peak
Access	Continuous	Continuous	Only at designated access points
Use by tolled customers	Yes	No	Yes
HOV need special pass	No	No	Yes
Hours of operation	5am – 7pm 7 days per week	5am – 7pm 7 days per week	5am – 7pm weekdays only

HOT LANE VS. EXPRESS TOLL LANE OPERATION

- Before implementing the express toll lanes, carpools could access the HOV lane at any point and without cost
- After implementation, HOV's needed to obtain a Flex Pass to continue using the facility for free, and could only enter at designated locations
- Infrequent users were less likely to obtain a Flex Pass, and less likely to be aware of operation changes
- Result was higher portion of total volume in general purpose lane, causing congestion
- **These factors do not apply on SR 167 HOT lanes**

IMPACTS OF ELIMINATING WEEKEND HOT LANE TOLLING

- Primary benefits from HOT lane tolling occur when congestion occurs, mostly on weekdays
- On weekends the HOT lane can help manage traffic when incidents occur (about 4-6 times per month), and people willing to pay to be in the HOT lane help distribute traffic more evenly over all lanes
 - If the HOT lane becomes an HOV lane on weekend days (consistent with I-405 HOV lanes), more traffic would move to general purpose lanes
 - If open to all, traffic would be spread evenly, but it would be more difficult to introduce HOV or tolling in the future if weekend congestion develops
- Toll rates remain at the minimum toll rate on weekends unless an incident occurs
- We do not see recurring weekend congestion in the corridor, and are not hearing from customers that any change is needed
- If tolling was curtailed on weekends, there would be a revenue loss of approximately \$85,000 annually

FUTURE CHANGES FOR SR 167

- In mid-2019 a ramp will open connecting I-405 HOV lanes to the SR 167 HOT lanes
 - HOT lanes on SR 167 will connect directly to HOV lanes on I-405
 - Both will have a 2+ HOV definition
 - Both currently have the same hours of operation
- In 2024 completion of the Renton to Bellevue express toll lanes will create a 40-mile express toll system
 - Requires SR 167 be removed from pilot status
 - Consistent HOV definition likely needed
 - Will need to choose whether to adopt same hours of operation
- By the time the full corridor becomes a continuous express toll facility, the toll system on SR 167 must be upgraded to accommodated photo tolling
 - HOV customers will then need a Flex Pass to be exempt from tolls

TIMING FOR COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF SR 167 OPERATION

- The SR 167 HOT lanes are in pilot project status, and prior decisions to upgrade to permanent status were deferred
- During the 2018 legislative session the I-405 express toll lanes will have had two years of evaluation and the legislature will determine whether to continue
 - Possible request for permanent authorization of the SR 167 HOT lanes
- After the SR 167 HOT lanes become permanent, analysis and decisions will be needed on comprehensive and consistent operations throughout the corridor
 - When will photo-tolling be added to SR 167?
 - What hours of operation should apply?
 - Should the same HOV policy be applied to SR 167?
- Comprehensive analysis will result in simpler, more consistent operation for customers

CONTACT

Patty Rubstello, P.E.
Assistant Secretary, Toll Division
206-464-1299 or RubsteP@wsdot.wa.gov