



Washington State Transportation Commission

Toll Rate Setting Hearing Summary

August 24, 2021

Day 1: August 24, 2021

Chair Roy Jennings opened the hearing at 10:00 am with introductions by commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and virtual meeting protocols.

Agenda Item 2:

Overview of Toll Rate Proposals

Presenters:

- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Aaron Halbert, Financial Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Brent Baker, Senior Vice President & Managing Director, WSP USA

The panel provided an overview of the Commission's toll rate increase proposals for the State Route (SR) 99 tunnel, the SR 520 bridge, and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge (TNB) to ensure financial requirements are met.

The toll rate proposed by the Commission for the SR 99 tunnel (Option A) is a uniform 15% increase, effective October 1, 2021. The Office of the State Treasurer (OST) verified that projected revenues from Option A are expected to meet financial commitments through Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. Additional toll rate increases will likely be needed starting in FY 2026 to cover all financial obligations including Motor Vehicle Account (MVA) loan repayments and on-going repair and replacement costs.

The toll rate proposed by the Commission for the SR 520 bridge (Option 1) is a tailored increase by time period averaging 15% overall, effective July 1, 2023. OST confirmed the financial sufficiency of projected net toll revenues across the forecast horizon for Option 1 and will continue to monitor traffic and revenue performance to assess the viability of lower toll increase options prior to the planned increase on July 1, 2023.

The toll rate proposed by the Commission for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge is a uniform 25 cent increase, effective October 1, 2021. The toll rate proposal is projected to generate over \$31 million more in toll revenues than without the increase over the remaining term of debt service repayment (through FY 2030), which supports legislative intent to cap on-going TNB loans at \$85 million.

The 2021 Toll Rate Setting Online Public Input Forum was open from June 25, 2021, through July 14, 2021. During this time, 26,276 people participated, providing 37,122 total responses to the various toll rate options. For the SR 99 tunnel proposed Option A, about 24% of voters were in support, and about 62% of voters in opposition. For the SR 520 bridge proposed Option 1, about 19% of voters were in support, and about 70% of voters in opposition. For the Tacoma Narrows Bridge proposed 25 cent increase, about 17% of voters were in support, and about 72% in opposition.

Following the Commission's decision at the July 2021 Commission meeting to advance Option A for the SR 99 tunnel, Option 1 for the SR 520 bridge, and the uniform 25 cent increase for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, additional comments were submitted via email. Ten comments regarded opposition to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge toll rate proposal, three comments regarded opposition to the SR 99 tunnel toll rate proposal, and one comment regarded opposition to the SR 520 bridge.

Presentation:

[Overview - Toll Rate Proposals](#)

For more detail on agenda item 2, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:03:52, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 3:

Public Comment on Toll Rate Proposals

Chair Jennings called on members of the public to provide testimony. Summaries of public comments are as follows:

Mr. Randy Boss (Gig Harbor) testified against the Commission's toll rate proposal for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Mr. Boss referenced language from RCW 47.46.190. He stated that previously appropriated funds should be available to cover the toll rate increase and requested that loan amounts be increased to prevent such.

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:47:42, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action:

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 4:

Commission Discussion & Adoption of Toll Rate Changes - *ACTION*

Commissioners discussed the difficulties associated with increasing toll rates this cycle. Efforts were made, and will continue to be made, to keep toll rates and their effects on drivers at a minimum, and to prevent diversion from the facilities.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 4, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:55:05, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action:

Commissioner Batra moved to adopt Option A for the SR 99 tunnel, the uniform 15% toll rate increase, effective October 1, 2021, and that it be filed as the CR-103. Commissioner Litt seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 7-0.

Commissioner Litt moved to adopt Option 1 for SR 520 bridge, the tailored toll rate increase by time period averaging 15%, effective July 1, 2023, and that it be filed as the CR-103.

Commissioner Batra seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 7-0.

Commissioner Litt moved to adopt the toll rate increase of 25 cents for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, effective October 1, 2021, and that it be filed as the CR-103. Commissioner Restucci seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 7-0.

Follow-Up: WSTC to file the CR-103 documents with final rate changes by August 30, 2021.

Next meeting: September 21 & 22, 2021

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

ROY JENNINGS, Chair

DEBBIE YOUNG, Vice-Chair

SHIV BATRA, Member

KELLY FUKAI, Member

JERRY LITT, Member

JAMES A. RESTUCCI, Member

HESTER SEREBRIN, Member

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL