



# Washington State Transportation Commission

## Virtual Meeting Summary

November 13, 2023

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Chair Debbie Young opened the meeting at 3 p.m. with introductions by Commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and meeting protocols.

### **Agenda Item 2: Overview of I-405/SR 167 Toll-Setting**

#### **Presenters:**

- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Ed Barry, Director of Tolling, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Karl Westby, Senior Traffic Manager, I-405 Program, Washington State Department of Transportation

Ed Barry shared details about the current performance of the express lanes in the Interstate 405/State Route 167 toll corridor. The goal for the express toll lanes (ETLs) is to provide reliability for HOV, transit and paid trips, and the lanes currently experience peak period and peak direction congestion. Mr. Barry also discussed escalating costs for projects in the corridor, with bids for recently awarded projects coming in at \$275 million over original estimates. The Legislature has directed WSDOT to identify approaches to close the funding gap.

Karl Westby explained that the target performance for ETLs is 45 mph for 90 percent of the peak period. In the corridor, only northbound I-405 is meeting that metric. Maximum toll rates currently apply to a small percentage of trips: 4 percent of trips on the I-405 ETLs and 8 percent on the SR 167 HOT lanes.

Carl See explained the Commission's role, set out in state law, in reviewing toll rates to ensure they are maintaining travel time, speed and reliability. State law also mandates that revenues raised in the I-405/SR 167 corridor may only be spent for operating costs and projects in the corridor. In 2023, the Legislature directed the Commission to review toll rates in the corridor to support improvements, and further guidance requested the Commission to consider toll rate increases to support closing the funding gap for corridor projects. A two-phased approach to address the revenue and performance needs of the corridor has been proposed, with a Phase 1 adjustment of toll rates to take place by March 2024, and a Phase 2 adjustment to kickoff in mid-2024 to consider adjustments to toll

policies in preparation for the opening of the new Renton to Bellevue express toll lanes and the SR 167 toll equipment upgrade in 2025. Options for the rate adjustments before commissioners are:

- Increase the minimum toll rate from 50 cents on SR 167 and 75 cents on I-405 to \$1 on both facilities
- Increase the maximum toll rate from \$9 on SR 167 and \$10 on I-405 to \$15 on both facilities.
- Increase the maximum toll rate from \$9 on SR 167 and \$10 on I-405 to \$12 on both facilities.

Commissioners will select a toll rate adjustment proposal for public review at its Dec. 13-14 meeting and hold a final public hearing in January or February. The toll rate adjustment is expected to take effect in late February-early March 2024.

Mr. Westby shared a preliminary analysis of how the adjustments would affect traffic performance. Raising the maximum rate to \$15 is expected to bring material improvement to ETL operations, while raising it to \$12 is expected to bring little improvement. From a financial perspective, toll rate increases are expected to net between \$3 million-\$5.9 million between March 2024 and June 2025 but well above those ranges with the implementation of Phase 2 tolling policies in mid-2025.

**Presentation:** [I-405 / SR 167 Express Toll Lanes](#)

For more detail on agenda item 2, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:02:43, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Agenda Item 3:  
Public Comment**

**Jodie Alberts, Vice President of Government Affairs, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce** – While the chamber supports the intention to increase the flow of traffic and adequately fund infrastructure, the chamber’s transportation committee is concerned the toll rate increases would increase congestion in the general-purpose lanes and disincentivize long-distance commuting. Cost-burdened individuals in the East King County region who commute because they cannot afford to live close to their jobs and cannot telework could be disproportionately affected. The chamber asks the Commission to consider other revenue sources with less administrative costs or other mitigation efforts to address these concerns.

**Presentation:** There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:38:22, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

**Action:** None.

**Follow-Up:** None at this time.

**Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.**

The next meeting will be held in Pasco on November 14 & 15, 2023.