



Washington State Transportation Commission

SR 520 Bridge Toll Rate Adjustment Hearing July 10, 2024

July 10, 2024

Chair Debbie Young opened the meeting at 9 a.m. with introductions by Commission members and staff, an overview of the agenda, and meeting protocols.

Agenda Item 2: Overview of the Toll Rate Proposal

Presenters:

- Carl See, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Aaron Halbert, Financial Analyst, Washington State Transportation Commission

Carl See explained the purpose of adjusting the State Route 520 Bridge toll rates and the requirements for the rates as outlined in state law. In December 2023, the Office of the State Treasurer reported that current bridge toll rates are not projected to meet financial requirements beginning in July 2025. This was primarily due to increases in projected bridge insurance costs through FY 2031 as well as construction effects on SR 520 west of the bridge, which are projected to suppress demand through FY 2031. The Commission must adjust toll rates this summer to generate the required net revenues.

Two toll rate options were considered by the Commission, both rounded to the nearest nickel:

- **Option A:** A uniform 10 percent increase, applied to all times of the day and days of week; and
- **Option B:** A “tailored” 10 percent increase, which varies by time of day and day of week.

After holding a public survey on these options, the Commission voted on May 15 to advance Option B as its toll rate proposal for public comment. Under the proposal, weekday toll rate increases range from \$0.10 to \$0.70, and on weekends, rates range from a \$0.10 decrease to a \$0.60 increase. The proposal also reduces the number of price variations throughout the week from eight to six.

Presentation: [SR 520 Bridge Toll Rate Setting](#)

For more detail on agenda item 2, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:03:41, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 3: Public Comment

Savannah Bouton – The majority of those who took the toll survey were opposed to both options presented in the public survey. Nothing is in place for low-income people, and tolls have posed an extreme personal hardship. Strong advocate for a low-income toll rate to allow those making smaller incomes to use the bridge rather than having to make the longer trip to divert to Interstate 90.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation.

For more detail on agenda item 3, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:26:49, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: None.

Follow-Up: None at this time.

Agenda Item 4: Commission Discussion & Adoption of Toll Rate Changes – ACTION

Chair Young said the public testimony is a strong reason to continue the Commission's work of studying a low-income program, which ultimately requires legislative approval and funding. But toll rates must be raised to meet the facility's financial obligations and to keep it functioning.

Vice-Chair Jim Restucci reiterated that the Commission has recommended a low-income toll study to the Legislature, and it's up to the Legislature to act.

Presentation: There was no associated presentation

For more detail on agenda item 4, please refer to the [TVW Meeting Recording](#), starting at 00:33:51, on the progress bar found at the bottom of the screen.

Action: Commissioner Shiv Batra moved to adopt the Commission's final toll rate proposal; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Roy Jennings. A roll call vote was taken. Voting yea: Chair Young, Vice Chair Restucci, Commissioner JC Baldwin, Commissioner Batra, Commissioner Kelly Fukai, and Commissioner Jennings. No nay votes. Excused: Commissioner Nicole Grant. The motion passed 6-0.

Follow-Up: The Commission staff will file the final CR-103P rule-making paperwork by July 15 to enable WSDOT to implement the new rates on August 15, 2024.

Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

The next meeting will be a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting in Chelan, WA, on July 24-25, 2024.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DEBBIE YOUNG, Chair

JIM RESTUCCI, Vice-Chair

JC BALDWIN, Member

SHIV BATRA, Member

ABSENT

NICOLE GRANT, Member

KELLY FUKAI, Member

ROY JENNINGS, Member

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL