



Washington State
Transportation Commission



Streamlining the Toll Rate Setting Process

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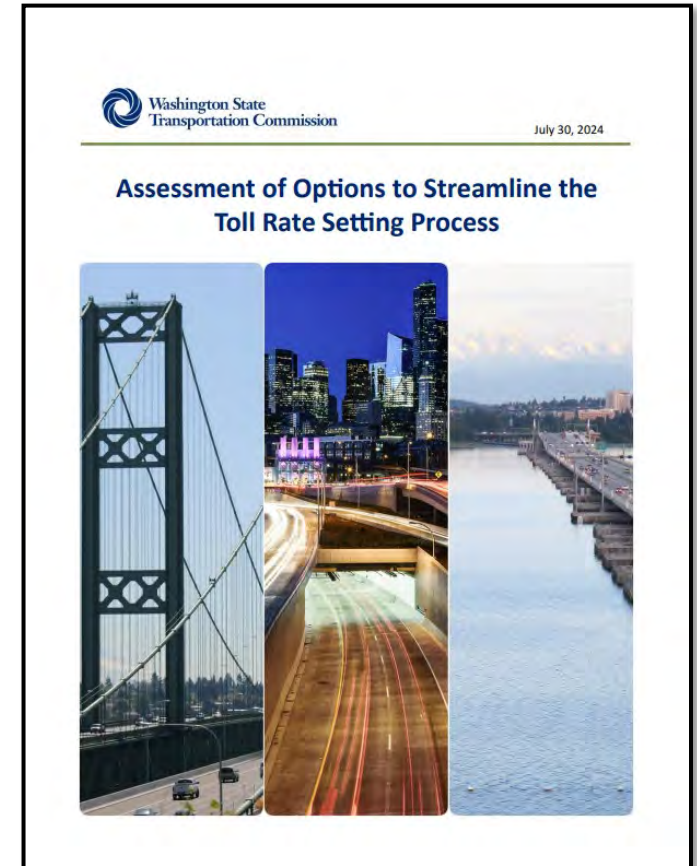
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Background

The current process for setting toll rates in Washington State is governed by the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), which presents a number of challenges due to its inflexibility and lengthy timeline.

In 2024, the WSTC conducted an assessment aimed at determining ways the toll rate setting process could be streamlined.

The final report was delivered to the Legislature in July 2024 and **recommended that a new toll rate setting process be created outside of the APA structure.**

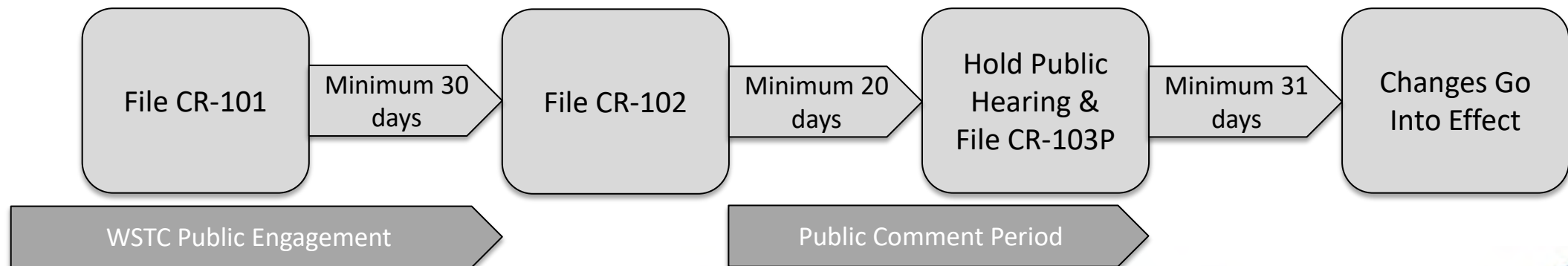


WSTC's Current Process for Setting Toll Rates

When setting or adjusting toll rates / policies, the Commission follows the Full Rule Making process laid out the **Administrative Procedure Act (APA)**.

Full Rule Making includes **three major steps**:

- **File CR-101** (*proposal statement of inquiry*)
 - Must be published in the state registry 30 days before filing CR-102.
- **File CR-102** (*proposed rule making*)
 - Must be published in the state registry 20 days before holding a public hearing
- **Hold public hearing and file CR-103P** (*rule making order*)
 - Rule goes into effect a minimum of 31 days following adoption of final rule



New Law Enacted in 2025 to Support Streamlining the Process

[SB 5702](#) exempts the Commission's rate setting duties from the APA and authorizes a new process to be set forth by the Commission. This new law takes effect on **January 1, 2026**.

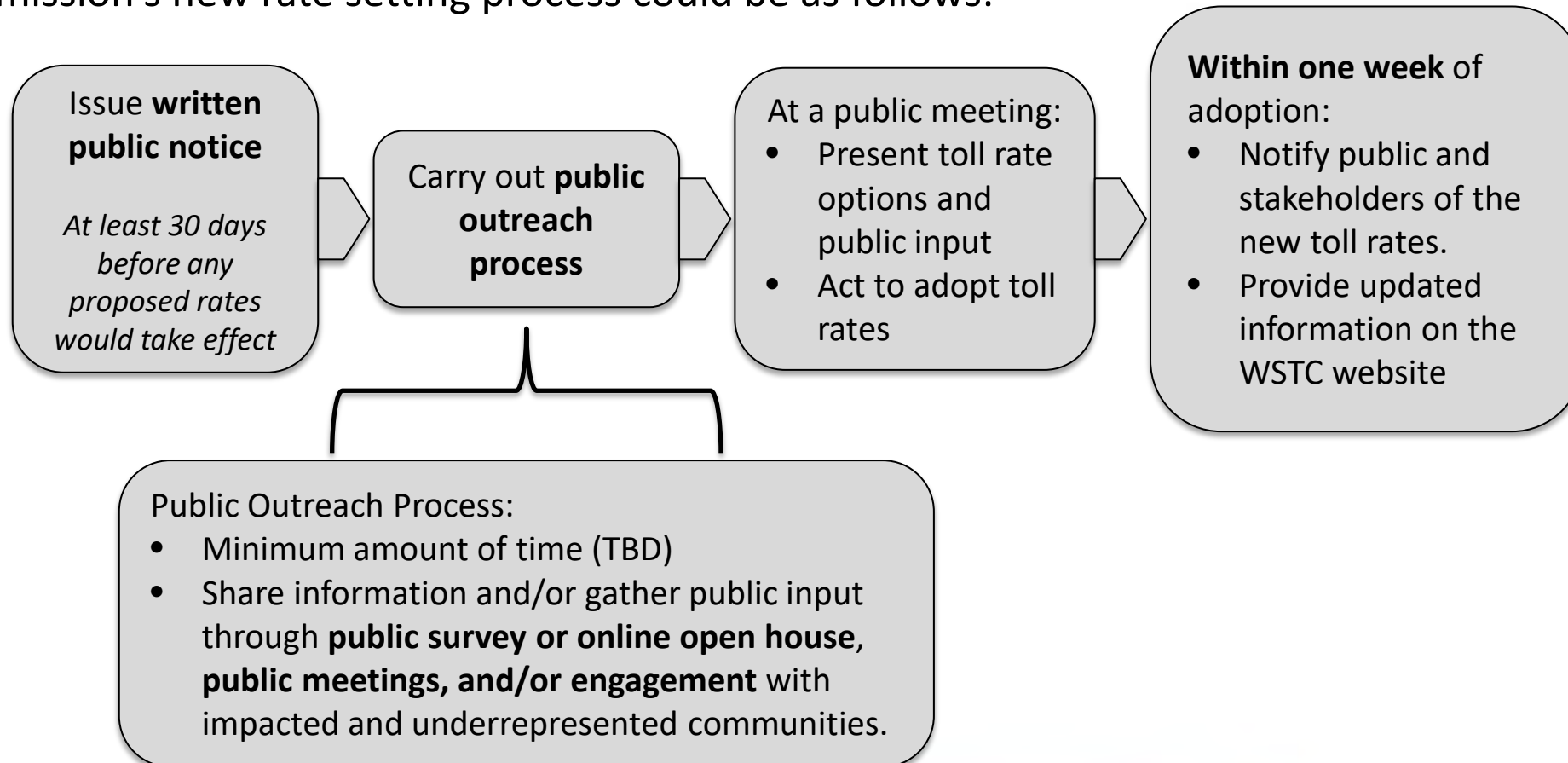
The law provides guidance on what the new process must include, at a minimum:

- Issue a written public notice at least 30 days before any proposed rates would take effect
- Carry out a public outreach process on possible toll rate or options under consideration
- Adopt toll rates at an open public meeting
- Notify the public and stakeholder agencies of the toll rates and providing the updated information on the WSTC website within one week of adoption
- Post all current toll rates and toll rate policies on the WSTC website

SB 5702 also authorizes Commission to implement rate adjustments on an emergency basis when necessary to comply with the legal or financial obligations of the state.

Possible New Rate Setting Procedures

The Commission's new rate setting process could be as follows:



Commission's Current Rule Structure

[WAC Chapter 468-270](#) currently includes 25 separate sections:

- 010** – *Who sets the toll rates and exemptions?*
- 020** – *Who collects the tolls?*
- 030** – *Definitions*
- 040** – *How are the tolls determined and adjusted?*
- 045** – *Which Tacoma Narrows Bridge costs may be paid with toll revenues?*
- 050** – *What toll facilities are currently subject to this chapter?*
- 060** – *How often will the toll rates for each toll facility be reviewed for potential change?*
- 070** – *What are the toll rates on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge?*
- 071** – *What are the toll rates on the SR 520 Bridge?*
- 073** – *What are the toll rates on the SR 99 Tunnel?*
- 075** – *What are the toll rates for the SR 167 HOT lanes pilot project?*
- 077** – *What are the toll rates for the I-405 express toll lanes?*
- 078** – *What are the hours that tolling will be in effect on the I-405 express toll lanes?*
- 079** – *What are the hours that tolling will be in effect on the SR-167 high occupancy toll lanes?*
- 080** – *When are toll rates in effect?*
- 081** – *What are the toll rates on the SR 509 Expressway?*
- 082** – *What are the toll rates on the SR 167 Expressway?*
- 085** – *What vehicles are exempt from paying tolls on all toll facilities on Washington state highways?*
- 095** – *What is required to claim a noncarpool toll exemption on all toll facilities on Washington state highways?*
- 105** – *What high occupancy vehicles are exempt from paying tolls on the SR 167 HOT lanes?*
- 115** – *What high occupancy vehicles are exempt from paying tolls on the I-405 express toll lanes?*
- 120** – *How many occupants are required to be considered an eligible carpool for toll exemption on I-405 express toll lanes?*
- 130** – *How many occupants are required to be considered an eligible carpool for toll exemption on I-405 express toll lanes?*
- 140** – *How can I use the I-405 express toll lanes as a toll-free motorcycle?*
- 300** – *What other fees and discounts may apply to toll customers?*

Possible New Rule Structure

In the future, specific toll rate and policy information by facility would be removed and [WAC Chapter 468-270](#) could be structured as follows:

010 – *Who sets the toll rates and exemptions?*

020 – *Who collects the tolls?*

030 – *Definitions*

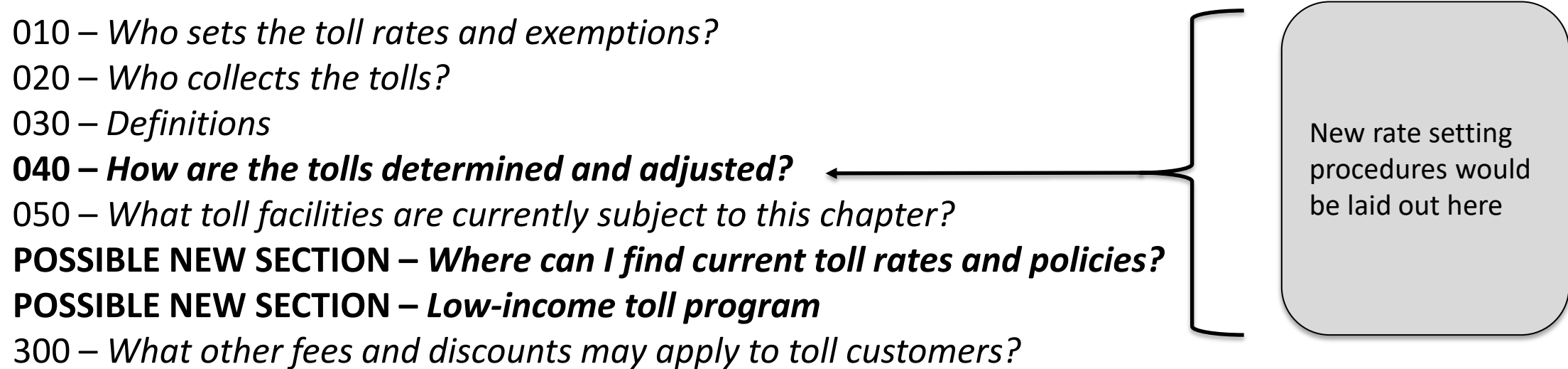
040 – *How are the tolls determined and adjusted?*

050 – *What toll facilities are currently subject to this chapter?*

POSSIBLE NEW SECTION – *Where can I find current toll rates and policies?*

POSSIBLE NEW SECTION – *Low-income toll program*

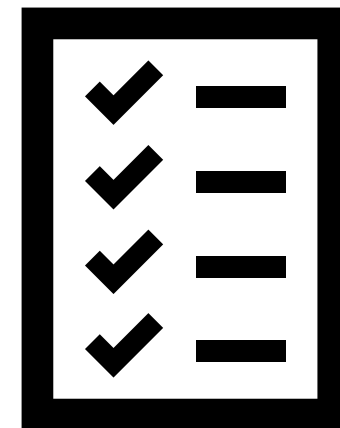
300 – *What other fees and discounts may apply to toll customers?*



New rate setting procedures would be laid out here

Next Steps

- ✓ CR-101 filed November 19, 2025
- Present draft proposal for new process: January WSTC meeting
- Adopt proposal for CR-102: February WSTC meeting
- File CR-102: by February 18, 2026
- Hold Public Hearing & advance new process: TBD, as soon as March 24, 2026
- New rate setting process takes effect: TBD, as soon as 31 days after hearing date



Questions?

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