Washington State Transportation Commission

# I-405 & SR 167 Express Toll Lanes Toll Rate Setting Considerations

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# Background

- The current I-405 Bellevue to Lynnwood ETLs and SR 167 ETLs operate as two distinct facilities. While toll rates align, some policies differ including hours of operation and HOV occupancy requirements.
- The I-405 Bellevue to Renton ETLs are expected to open in Summer 2027, which will connect the two current ETL facilities to create a single ETL corridor.
- The Commission is reviewing and setting rates and policies for the entire corridor to meet revenue requirements and performance needs, and to improve the customer experience.
- Further rate or policy changes may be necessary to continue effective management of corridor performance, and potentially to further support funding for corridor improvements expected at least through the 2030s.

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# Legislative Direction on Toll Rates
## I-405 & SR 167 Express Toll Lanes

RCW 47.56.880 directs the Commission to periodically review I-405 / SR 167 Express Toll Lanes (ETLs) toll rates against traffic performance of all lanes to determine if the toll rates are effectively maintaining travel time, speed, and reliability.

- Further establishes a performance measure of maintaining average vehicle speeds remaining above 45 miles per hour 90% of the time during peak hours.

I-405 / SR 167 ETLs toll revenues are dedicated to the corridor and may only be used to pay for the facilities' operating costs, debt service, and to fund projects identified in the corridors' master plan (RCW 47.56.880 & RCW 47.56.820).

Policy guidelines in RCW 47.56.830 establish general requirements and considerations in support of using tolling to encourage the effective use and funding of the transportation system.

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# Proposed Rate Setting Tenets

Expanding on legislative direction and prior Commission intent for setting rates and policies for the I-405 & SR 167 ETLs, for the upcoming rate-setting the Commission seeks to:

- **Prioritize setting consistent rates and policies** along the entire I-405/ SR 167 ETL system.
- **Meet current funding needs** by setting rates to support the achievement of the 6-year project financial plan for the I-405/ SR 167 corridor.
- **Manage corridor performance** by establishing rates and policies that support efficient operations and throughput in the ETLs and general-purpose lanes, and broader system operations.
- **Recognize the potential for fluctuating ETL performance in meeting future funding needs** by advancing an incremental approach to rate-setting that supports revenue generation expectations in the context of the long-term corridor plan.

# Toll Scenarios Under Consideration

Tolls were last adjusted on the ETLs in March 2024. In preparation for the opening of the Bellevue to Renton ETL segment, toll rates and policies will need to be set for the entire corridor to support the achievement of performance and revenue expectations in law.

Below are the current toll rates and polices, and the scenario options under consideration.

| Scenario | Facility | Max Toll | Min Toll | Hours of Operation | Peak Hours | HOV Exemption Policy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Existing Toll Policy** *(Scenario 1)* | SR 167 ETLs | $15 | $1 | 5a-8p, 7 days/week | 5a-9a & 3p-8p, M-F | HOV 2+ always exempt |
| | I-405 ETLs | | | 5a-8p, weekdays only | | HOV 3+ always exempt; HOV 2+ exempt during non-peak hours (9a-3p) |
| **Scenario 2** | SR 167 & I-405 ETLs | $15 | $1 | 5a-8p, 7 days/week | 5a-10a & 2p-8p, M-F | HOV 3+ always exempt; HOV 2+ exempt during non-peak hours (10a-2p) |
| **Scenario 3 / 4** | SR 167 & I-405 ETLs | $18 | | | | |

**Note:** Scenarios 2 and 3 would fully fund active and committed projects for the ETL corridor (phase 1). No scenarios would fully fund future projects identified for the corridor (phase 2).

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# Public Outreach

Following selection of a corridor toll rate and policy options, public input should will be gathered over the Late Fall 2026.

Final decision making on toll rates and policies will occur in Winter 2026 at which time WSDOT can advance a public education and outreach program ahead of the opening of the I-405 Bellevue to Renton ETL segment.

Possible public engagement approaches on the corridor toll rate and policy proposal could include:

- **Online open house**
  - Share information on the low-income discount options under consideration
  - Offer the public an opportunity to provide comments on them.
- **Engagement with jurisdictions in the I-405 / SR 167 corridor through I-405 / SR 167 Interagency Working Group (IWG) and Executive Advisory Group (EAG)**
- **Virtual input meeting and/or collection of public comments at future WSTC meetings**
- **Web comment form / emailing public inbox TransC@wstc.wa.gov**

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# Next Steps

**Summer – Fall 2026:** Commission receives follow-up analysis

**Summer – Fall 2026:** Commission selects rate and policy options for public outreach

**Late Fall 2026:** Public outreach and input gathering on proposal

**Winter 2026:** Commission adopts toll rates and policies

**Winter – Spring 2027:** WSDOT education and marketing

**Summer 2027:** New rates and policies for the full ETL corridor go into effect upon the opening of the I-405 Bellevue to Renton ETL segment

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# Questions / Contact

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