Washington State Transportation Commission

I-405 & SR 167 Express Toll Lanes Toll Rate Setting Overview

Carl See

Deputy Director
Washington State Transportation Commission

Karl Westby, Ph.D

I-405/SR 167 Program
Washington State Department of Transportation

July 2026

Background

- The current I-405 Bellevue to Lynnwood Express Toll Lanes (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 segment is planned to open in Summer 2027, which will connect the current I-405 and SR 167 ETLs, creating a continuous ETL corridor.
- The Commission is reviewing rates and policies for the entire I-405/SR 167 corridor to establish consistent rules, and to meet revenue requirements and performance needs.

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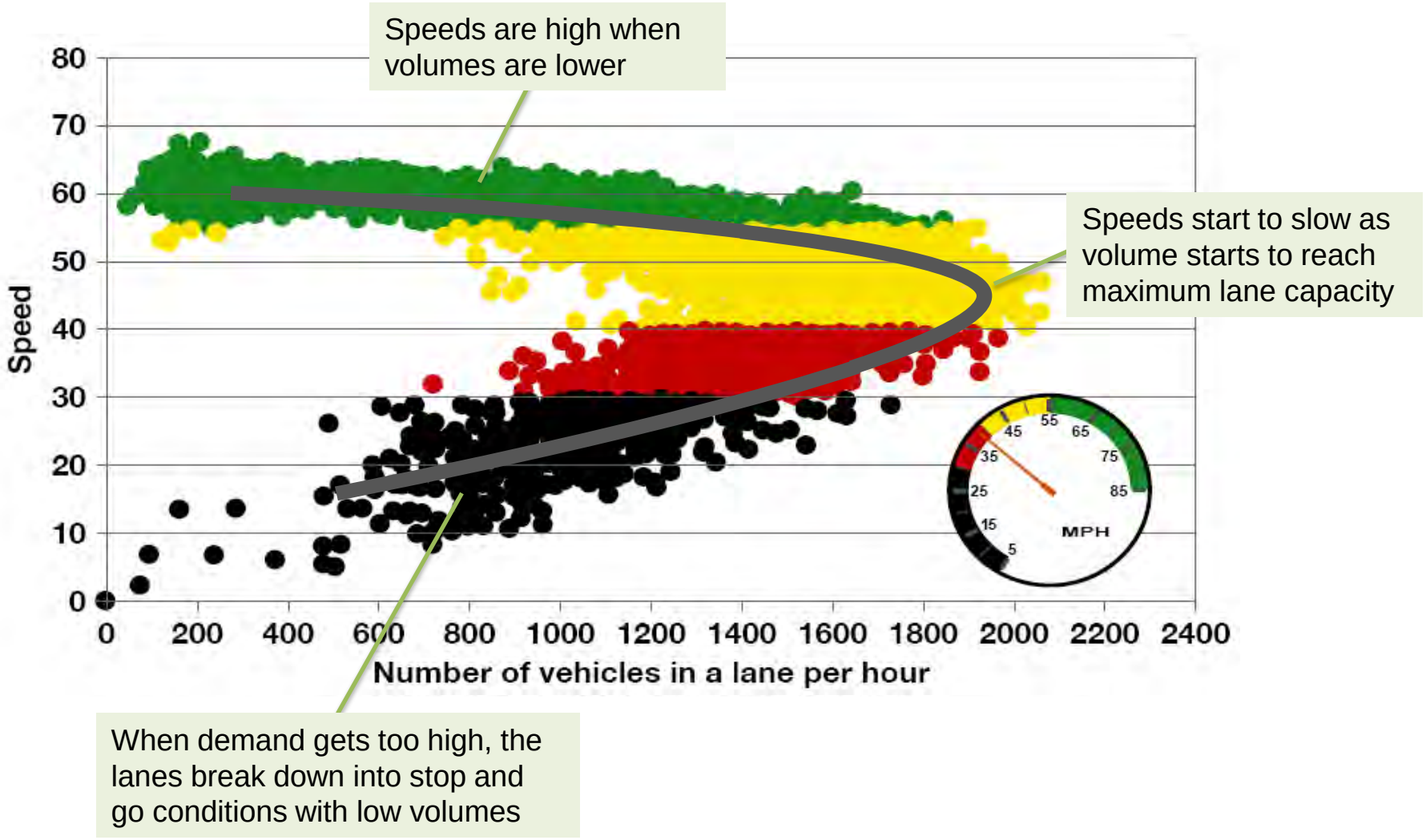
Future Considerations for I-405 and SR 167 Corridor Operations

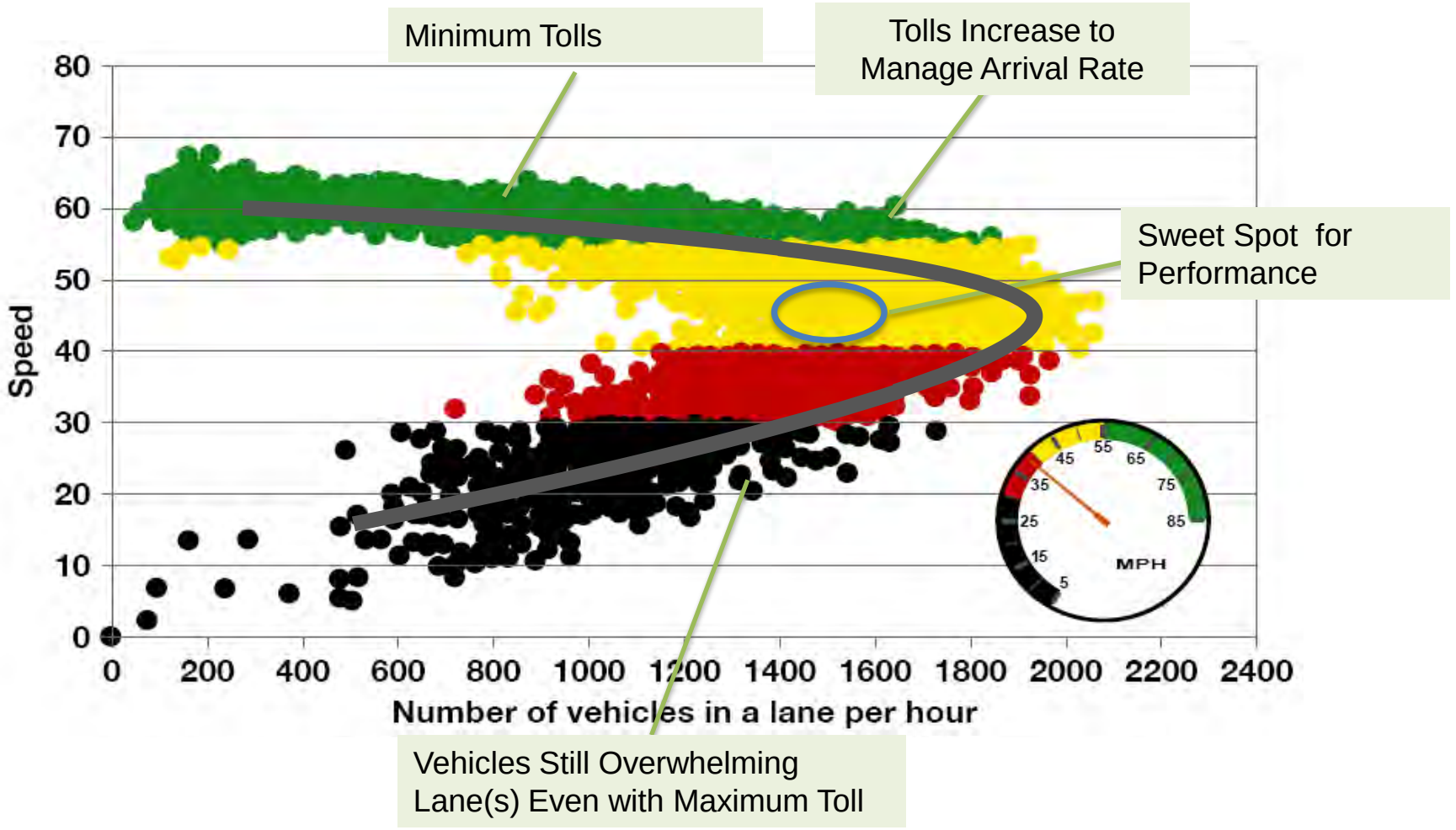
- As presented to Commission in May 2026, currently assessed toll rate scenarios each incorporate the following proposed policy changes for the I-405 / SR 167 ETL corridor upon planned opening of the I-405 Bellevue to Renton ETLs in Summer 2027:
  - Addition of weekend tolling for the I-405 ETLs, in alignment with the SR 167 ETLs.
  - Addition of peak hour HOV 3+ policy on SR 167 ETLs, in alignment with the I-405 ETLs.
  - Extension of morning and afternoon peak hours by 1 hour for the full corridor.
- The one policy or toll rate difference between the currently assessed toll rate scenarios is consideration of either maintaining the maximum toll rate at $15 or increasing it to $18.

Current I-405 and SR 167 Corridor Operations & Toll Rates

How Traffic Flows, and Stops



How Express Toll Lanes Help Traffic Flow



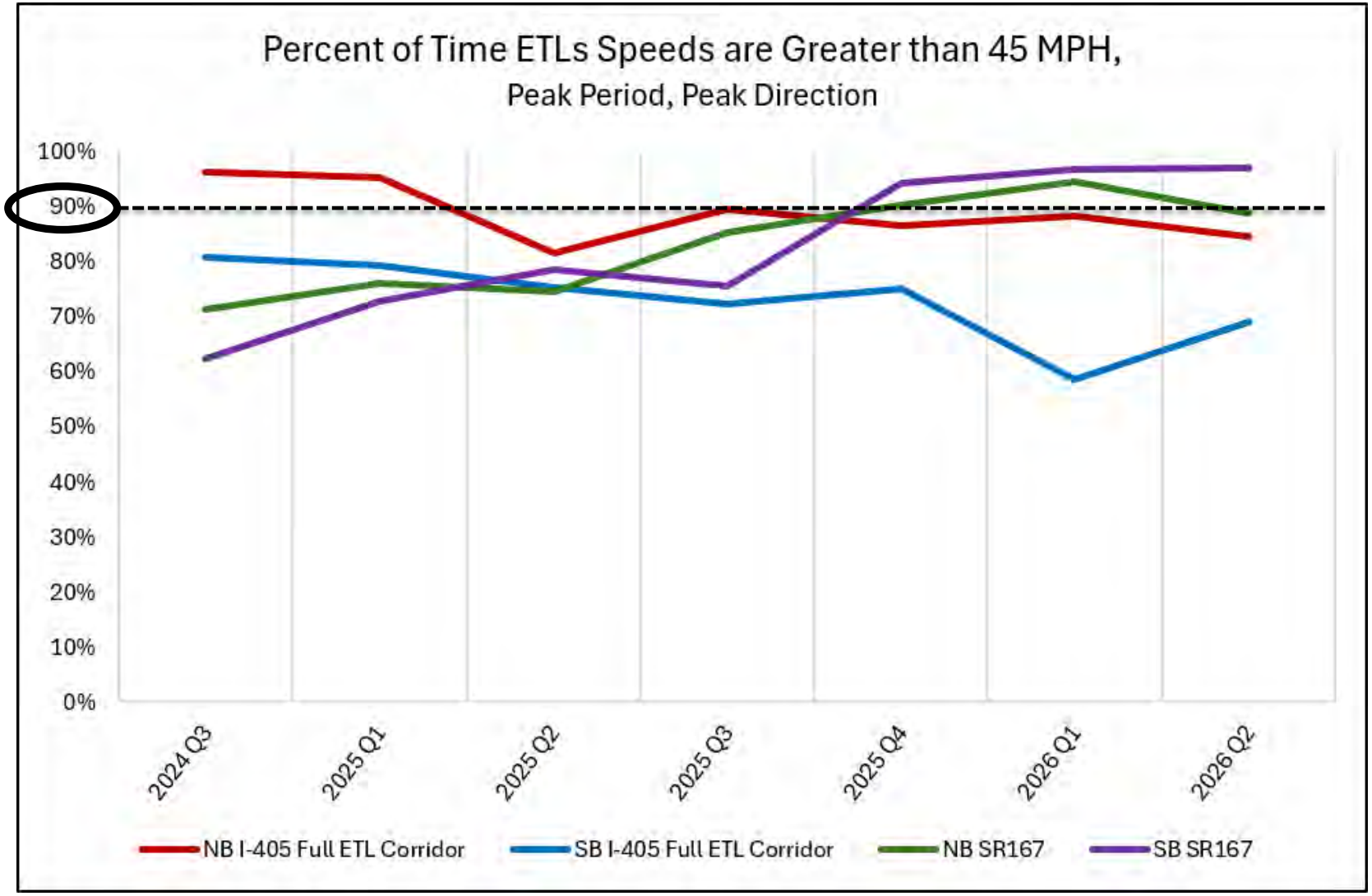
Express Toll Lane Use and Toll Rates

Intent of pricing is to manage the lane to be highly utilized, have reliable speeds, but not overfull.

- The algorithm has a constant stream of corridor speed and volume data.
- When ETL(s) have few vehicles, toll rates go to the minimum to encourage use of the lane(s).
- As volumes increase, toll rates rise to avoid overloading the lanes and creating slowdowns.
- When the maximum rate is hit and vehicles continue to enter into the ETL(s), we are unable to manage the lanes and speeds and throughputs drop.

Express Toll Lanes Performance Trends

- Target ETL performance in law is 45 MPH, 90% of the time during peak periods.
- ETL Performance can vary significantly by direction (northbound / southbound) during peak hours, so WSDOT measures peak hour performance specific to direction.
- Currently, only southbound SR 167 is meeting the 90% target.



Express Toll Lane Use and Toll Rates: April 2026

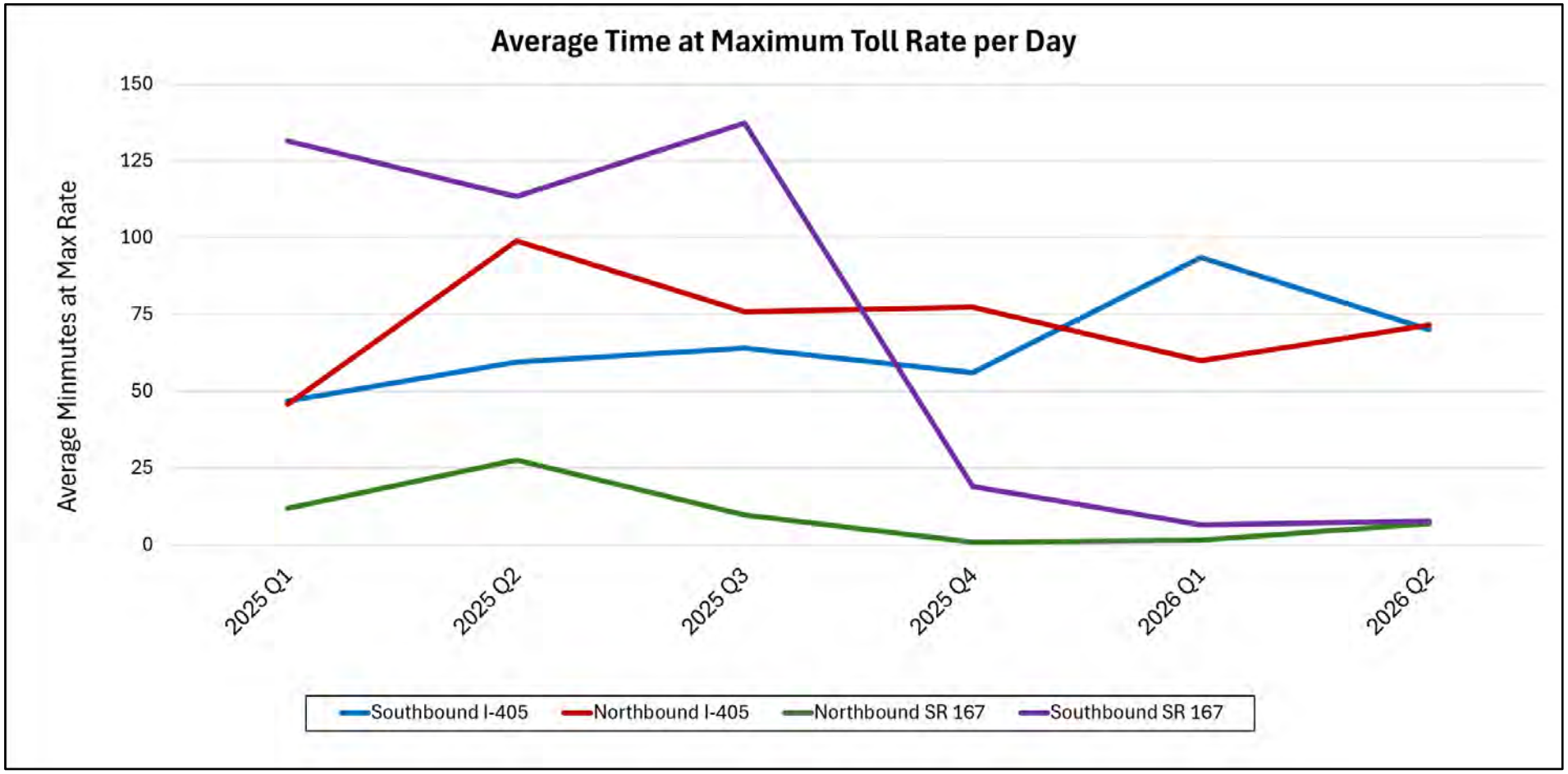
- Average daily toll rates*****:
  - I-405 ETLs: $6.72
  - SR 167 ETLs: $2.31

- Maximum toll rates* apply to a small percentage of daily trips:
  - 5% of trips on I-405 ETLs
  - 1% of trips on SR 167 ETLs
  - Maximum rates only seen during peak hours, responding to high lane demand

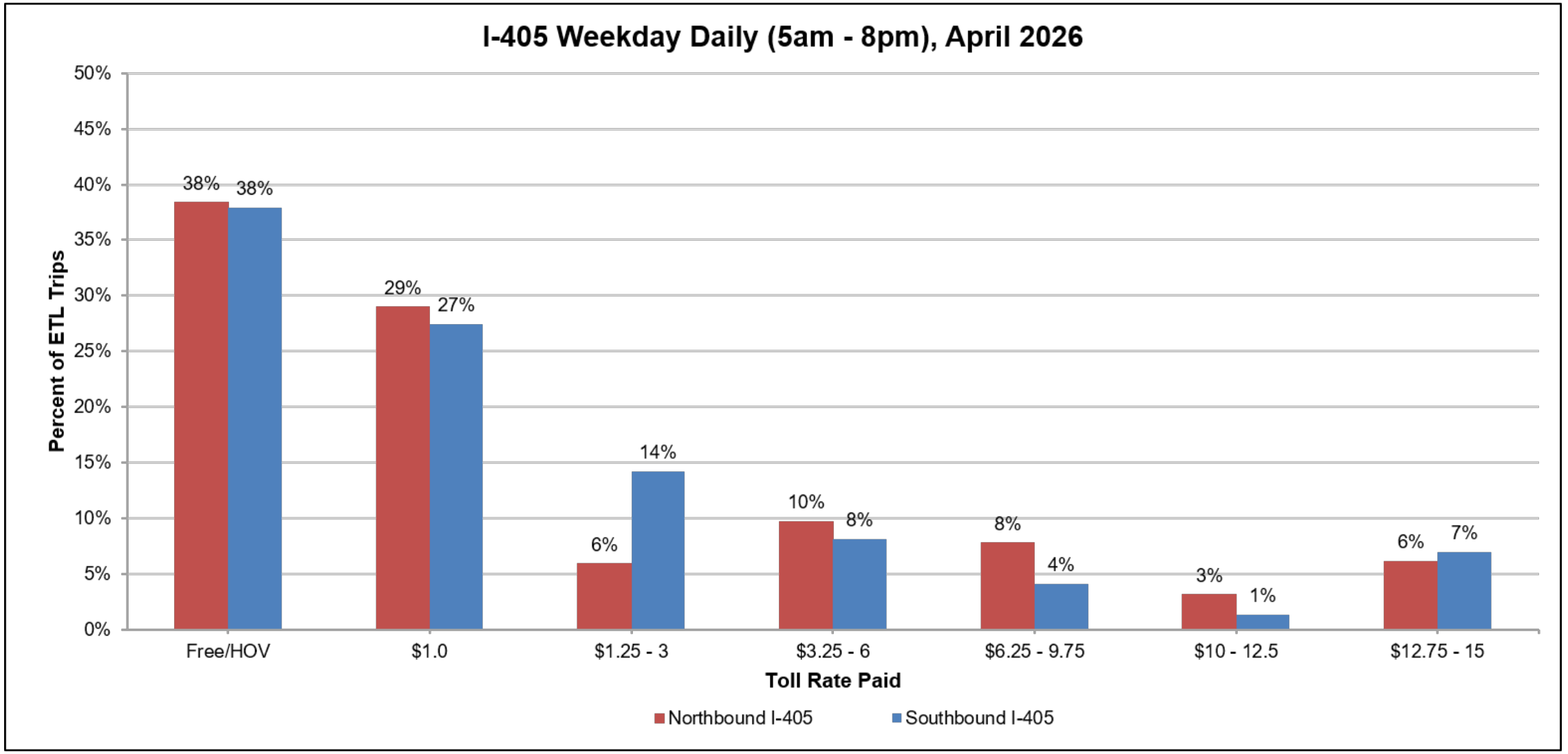
Based on posted rates, does not include pay by mail or pay by plate

How Often Are We At the Maximum Toll Rate Today?

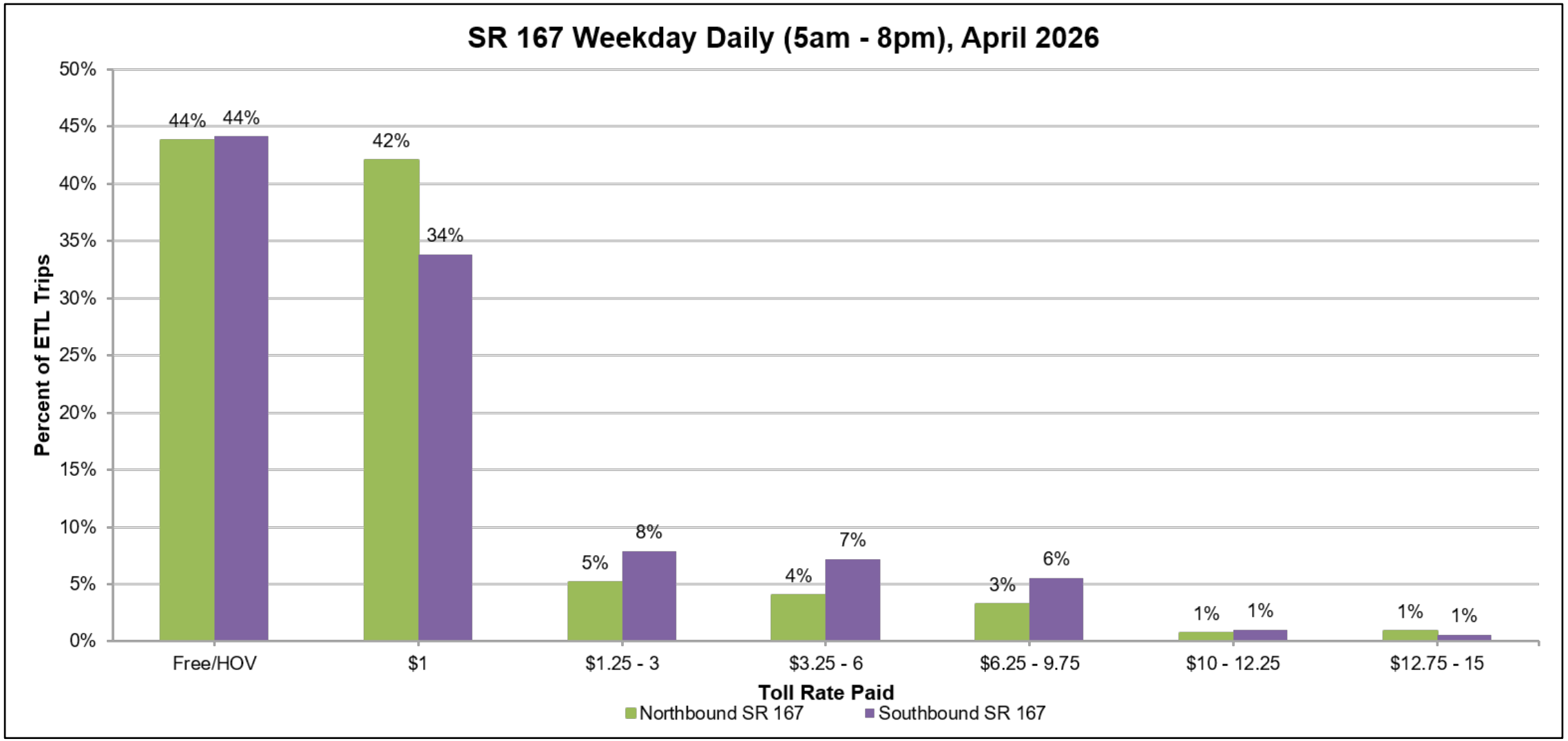
During peak periods and peak directions, the $15 maximum toll rate is reached and lane performance drops.



How Much Are Drivers Paying To Use the I-405 ETLs?



How Much Are Drivers Paying to Use the SR 167 ETLs?



What happened to travel speeds when the maximum toll rate was raised $15 in March 2024?

Speeds improved when comparing Jan-Feb 2024 (before increase) and May 2024 (after increase)

- ETL peak period speeds
  - SR 167 northbound +6%, southbound +9%
  - I-405 northbound -3%*, I-405 southbound +2%
- General purpose lanes peak period speeds
  - SR 167 northbound +8%, southbound +7%
  - I-405 northbound -9%*, I-405 southbound +2%

**Note:*

- *WSDOT has projects under construction to improve northbound I-405 corridor operations.*
- *Northbound I-405 saw sections of speed decrease where corridor backs up approaching I-5.*

What happened to vehicle throughput when the maximum toll rate was raised to $15 in March 2024?

Vehicle throughput improved when comparing Jan-Feb 2024 (before increase) and May 2024 (after increase)

- ETL peak period vehicle throughput
  - SR 167 northbound +13%, southbound +9%
  - I-405 northbound +10%, southbound +15%
- General purpose lanes peak period vehicle throughput
  - SR 167 northbound +1%, southbound +3%
  - I-405 northbound +1%, southbound +3%

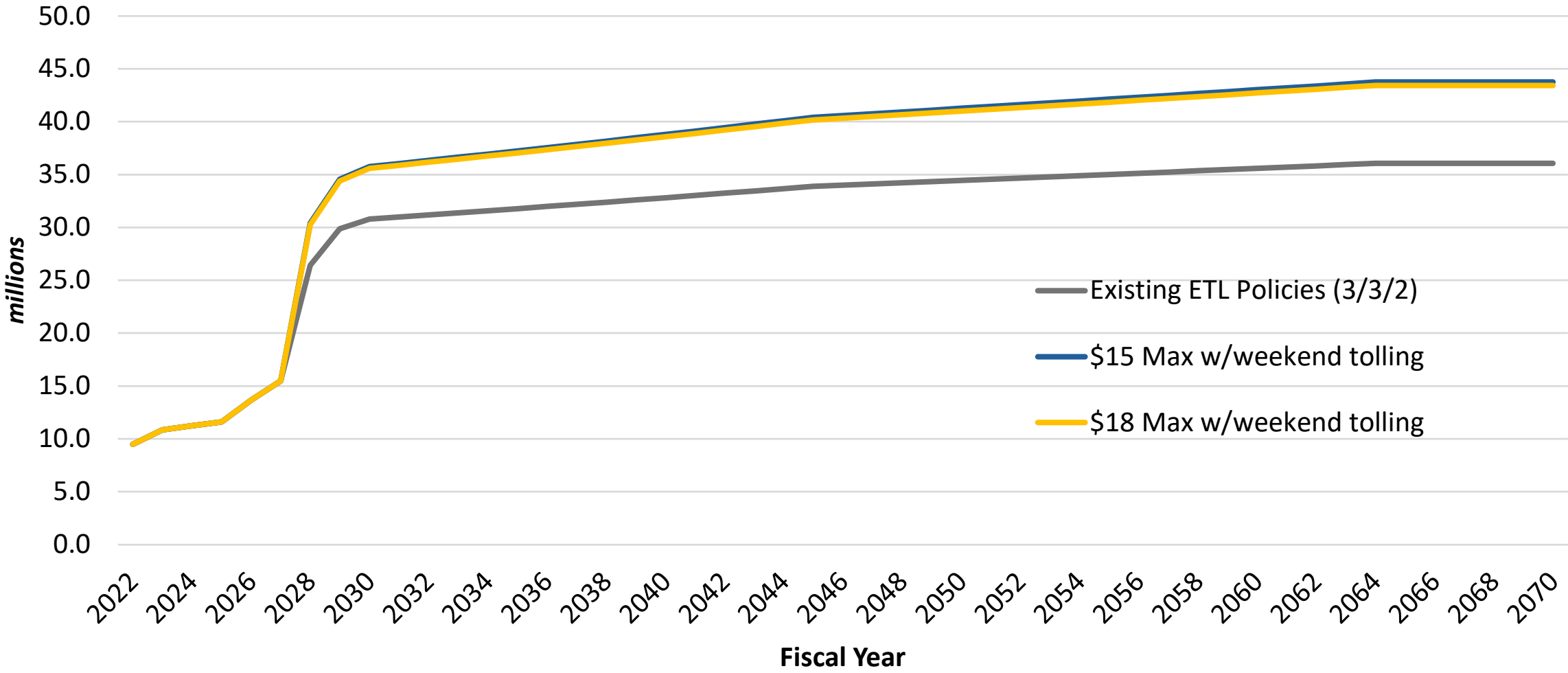
Future Considerations for I-405 and SR 167 Corridor Operations

$15 versus $18 Maximum Toll Rate and Operations

- The maximum toll rate is only reached if there are too many general purpose lane customers attempting to use the ETLs and overwhelming the system.
- A cap on the maximum toll rate limits the management of ETLs performance, limiting the value for transit, carpools, and toll users.
- Currently, when we reach the $15 maximum toll rate, we see the ETL performance degrade as speeds and throughput drop. This means the ETLs are not able to accept or process general purpose lane customers, limiting the ability to serve as an effective alternative to the general purpose lanes.
- An $18 maximum toll rate is expected to discourage some additional general purpose lane customers from using the ETLs and would improve performance.

$15 vs. $18 Maximum Toll Rate

Estimated Traffic Forecasts – Total ETL Toll Trips



$15 vs. $18 Maximum Toll and Operations

Summary of Projected Future Corridor Operations

Along with a potential change in the maximum toll rate, upcoming increases in corridor capacity and potential policy changes are expected to improve to corridor traffic conditions for general purpose lanes and ETLs compared to current conditions in 2026.

Summer 2027:

- Addition of a 2 lane ETL on I-405 from Renton to Bellevue by converting the existing HOV lane to an ETL and adding one new lane in each direction
- Potential toll policy changes for SR 167 toll free occupancy and peak period hours.

Spring 2028:

- Extending the length of the 2 lane 405 ETLs with the addition of one new lane in each direction on I-405 from SR 522 to SR 527, where a single-lane ETL current exists.

In addition to these improvements, an $18 maximum toll would provide some additional improvement to peak period traffic conditions in general purpose and ETL lanes during high demand days, compared to a $15 maximum toll.

On-Going Corridor Performance Monitoring

- Annual I-405 / SR 167 ETL performance reports continue to be published in Toll Division's Annual Report, including general purpose lane and ETL performance.

Moving the Rate-Setting Process Forward for the ETL Corridor

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Public Outreach

Following selection of a proposed maximum toll rate and policy revisions for the corridor, public input is anticipated to be gathered Late 2026 – Early 2027.

Final decision-making on ETL corridor toll rates and policies is anticipated to occur in Winter 2027.

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

- Online open house
- 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
- Electronic/ written comment gathering.

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Potential Rate-Setting Timeline

Late Fall: Commission selects proposed maximum toll rate and policy revisions for public outreach which is anticipated to occur in Late 2026 – Early 2027.

Winter 2027: Commission adopts toll rates and policies for the full ETL corridor.

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.

Questions / Contact

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360-705-7070

transc@wstc.wa.gov

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