

WASHINGTON STATE ROAD USAGE CHARGE FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

WHAT IS A ROAD USAGE CHARGE?

With a road usage charge system, drivers would pay for the roads as they do for other public utilities—based on how much they use.

WHY CONSIDER A ROAD USAGE CHARGE?

For almost a century, the motor fuel tax (or gas tax) has been a stable source of funding for our road network. It remains our primary source of transportation funding, supporting 76% of all state transportation investments, but it is not sustainable over the long term.¹ Collected from fuel distributors and based on a fixed amount per gallon, the gas tax:

- Does not rise and fall with the price of fuel
- Does not keep pace with inflation
- Declines on a per-mile basis as vehicles become more fuel-efficient

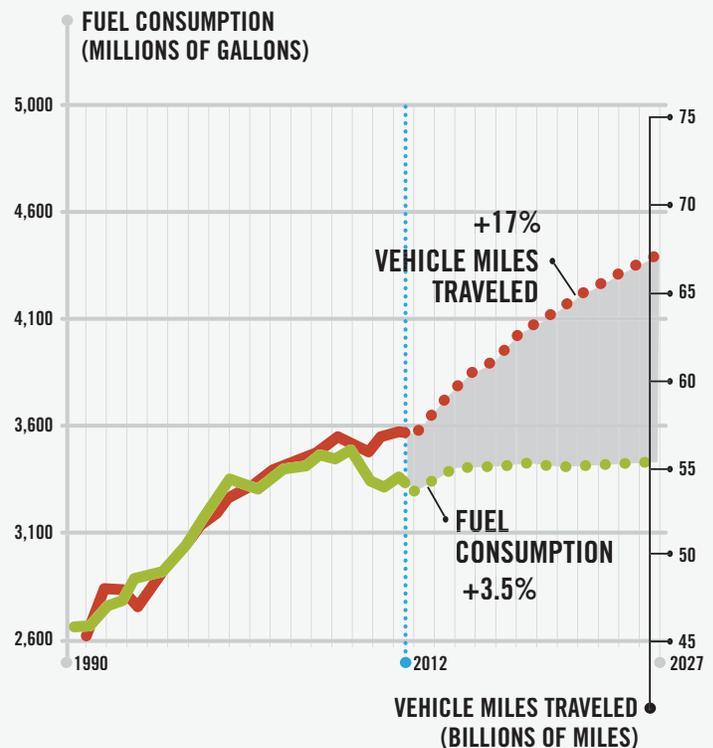
Population and vehicle miles traveled will continue to increase but vehicles will burn less gasoline – resulting in less revenue to maintain and operate our roadway system. To ensure a well maintained system, the move to cleaner, smarter vehicles must be accompanied by a change in the way we pay for our roads.

This approaching situation has caused leaders around the U.S. to look for alternatives. In Washington, the Legislature directed the Washington State Transportation Commission and Washington State Department of Transportation to work with a 20-member Steering Committee to examine the feasibility of transitioning to a road usage charge.

¹ Connecting Washington Task Force (2012)



ROADWAY USE IS FORECAST TO INCREASE WHILE FUEL CONSUMPTION FLATTENS OUT



WASHINGTON IS NOT ALONE

Efforts are underway in the following states to explore road usage charging:

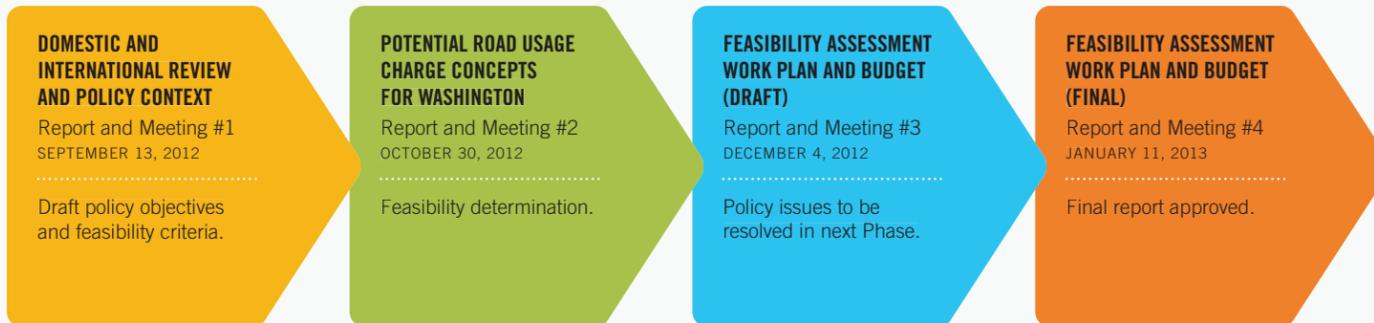
- Oregon
- Nevada
- Minnesota
- Colorado
- California
- I-95 Coalition (Includes East Coast states from Maine to Florida)



WHAT DID THE STEERING COMMITTEE FIND?

The Steering Committee met four times from September 2012 to January 2013, to discuss research on domestic and international experience with road usage charging, policy issues and objectives, and potential approaches.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY AGREED THAT ROAD USAGE CHARGING IS FEASIBLE IN WASHINGTON.



Key findings from the Steering Committee's work include:

- Existing road usage charge systems demonstrate that there are numerous viable operational concepts and technologies
- Potential options range from simple paper-based systems to more complex technological systems
- Several policy issues were identified that require further investigation and resolution before a road usage charge system can be designed

The Steering Committee identified several issues that will require in-depth research, including equity among user groups, rate setting, privacy, and out-of-state drivers, among others.

The Legislature must now decide whether to conduct in-depth research and development to refine the concept and gather public input.

ROADMAP TO ANSWER KEY QUESTIONS



A Work Plan has been developed to continue research into key questions, policy objectives, and operational concepts. Work will be conducted in phases allowing the Legislature and the Governor to decide whether to continue the work at defined check points. Throughout Phases 1 and 2, the Work Plan will include:

- Conduct public outreach, education, and engagement to measure public attitudes and share information
- Refine policy objectives and frameworks
- Develop operational concepts that achieve the policy objectives
- Design system alternatives to carry out the operational concepts
- Conduct business analyses that evaluate costs, risks, transition issues, and interoperability

Pilot tests could be carried out in Phase 2 once policy direction is established and a preferred operational concept is selected. Should opportunities to partner with other states emerge before Phase 2, there may be benefits to participate, within the context of the State's emerging policy framework.

BUDGET

The proposed budget to carry out the Phase 1 Work Plan is \$1.6 million. System tests, demonstrations or future pilot projects are too speculative at this early stage of research and development; therefore no funding is requested for these activities.

ALL STEERING COMMITTEE MATERIALS, INCLUDING A WORK PLAN AND PROPOSED BUDGET ARE AVAILABLE AT: [HTTP://WAROADUSAGECHARGE.WORDPRESS.COM/](http://waroadusagecharge.wordpress.com/)

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NAME AND AFFILIATION	REPRESENTING
Steering Committee Chair, Commissioner Tom Cowan (WSTC Commissioner)	WSTC
Commissioner Anne Haley (WSTC Commissioner)	WSTC
Commissioner Charles Royer (WSTC Commissioner)	WSTC
Rep. Andy Billig (Spokane (D) 3rd District)	Washington House of Representatives
Rep. Mark Hargrove (Covington (R) 47th District)	Washington House of Representatives
Sen. Tracey Eide (Federal Way (D) 30th District)	Washington Senate
Sen. Ann Rivers (La Center (R) 18th District)	Washington Senate
Curt Augustine (Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers)	Auto and light truck manufacturers
Rod Brown Jr. (Cascadia Law Group PLLC)	Environmental
Pete Capell (Clark County Public Works)	Cities and Counties
Scott Creek (Crown Moving Company, Inc.)	Trucking industry
Don Gerend (City of Sammamish Councilmember)	Cities and counties
Tom Hingson (Everett Transit)	Public transportation
Kush Parikh (INRIX)	User fee technology
Janet Ray (AAA Washington)	Motoring public
Neil Strege (Washington Roundtable)	Business
Kurt Beckett (Port of Seattle)	Appointed by WSTC
Cynthia Chen (University of Washington)	Appointed by WSTC
Paula Hammond (WSDOT Secretary)	Appointed by WSTC
Sharon Nelson	Appointed by WSTC



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Jeff Doyle (360) 705-7023 or DoyleJ@wsdot.wa.gov