

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Special Meeting Summary

I-405 Express Toll Lane Public Outreach
June 29, 2011

The special meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 2:00 p.m., on Wednesday, June 29, 2011, at Bellevue City Hall, Council Chambers, 450 110th Avenue NE, Bellevue, Washington.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF I-405 EXPRESS TOLL LANES STUDY

Craig Stone, Director, Toll Division, WSDOT and Kim Henry, I-405 Project Director, Northwest Region, WSDOT, briefed the Commission on the I-405 Express Toll Lanes Study to date. The Legislature has authorized tolling on I-405 between Bellevue and Lynnwood, but also a Commission – led traffic and revenue study. Tolling equipment cannot operate until appropriation authority is given in 2012.

Tolling probably cannot fully fund the project. The Financial Plan, building on the Traffic/Revenue Study, will.

- Access potential toll funding contribution.
- Identify excess revenues available.
- Identify funding gaps.

Mr. Stone said that revenue/expense on SR 167 is now about equal. He anticipates it will be in the black at conclusion of the pilot. We have learned a lot from the SR 167 Pilot.

[Overview of I-405 Express Toll Lane Study](#)

OVERVIEW OF I-405 TRAFFIC AND REVENUE STUDY

Steve Pickrell, Executive Vice President, Cambridge Systematics, summarized and explained the legislative directive. The questions to answer are:

- Are express toll lanes a workable solution in the I-405/SR 167 corridor?
- What range of revenue is possible?
- How will express toll lanes impact traffic operations?

The Study will not revisit:

- Capital or operating costs.
- Financial capacity.
- Tolls on all lanes.
- Other project options or roadway configurations.

It will build on prior work WSDOT models and data:

- Extensive independent review.
- New stated preference survey in July 2011.
- Independent model of choice to pay.
- National review of similar projects.

It is critical to look at a variety of options and risk factors. Also it's very important to ask the right questions in the right way.

What will happen if your models/outcomes vary significantly from prior WSDOT work? Cambridge Systematics is not going in assuming any specific result. But if the outcome is different, we will know why.

[Eastside Corridor Traffic and Revenue Study](#)
[Eastside Corridor Scope of Work](#)

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commission Statewide Survey Team: Anne Haley, Tom Cowan and Dan O'Neal.

It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner O'Neal to designate the team and delegate consultant selection to them. The motion passed unanimously.

I-405 EXECUTIVE ADVISORY GROUP COMMENTS

Dave Gosset

- › Excellent that we are re-doing Stated Preference survey
- › Glad we are looking at different HOV scenarios. Please consider HOV 2+ options, such as off-peak travel or reduced toll rates.
- › Hope we can get data on viewpoints from the northend of the corridor that includes Snohomish County drivers of the corridor – feels it will be important to know where those folks are at on the issue if we are going to convince them HOT lanes are the way to go.
- › Ensure that the new lanes will work for transit and build toward using toll revenue to expand transit.

Sue Singer

- › The Advisory Group supports the current plan. The 405/167 improvements are much needed.
- › We are skeptical about how much revenue tolls will generate.
- › There still needs to be more education about how SR 167 HOT Lanes work.

Sonny Putter

- › Served on original I-405 Committee from 2000-2002.
- › Also served on Executive Advisory Group, which has endorsed the Phase I Plan from Bellevue to Lynnwood (Phase I) and continuing to look at the entire corridor.
- › He buys bonds funding similar projects elsewhere in the U.S.
- › Gas tax is diminishing resource.
- › We know tolling is coming, but how do we do it?
- › Other states have already had the fight over the HOV 2+ / 3+ debate – need to look at what transition strategies that have worked elsewhere and share that with the Legislature.

- › Try to accelerate your work as much as possible – watch out for “scope creep”.
- › We are building multi-generational projects. Funding is a “mosaic” – no one source can cover the costs of big projects anymore – so tolling is just one piece of that mosaic.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bruce Hand, Medina

- › Lots of low-wage workers drive I-405. Need to add lanes for all – not just for the “better off”
- › No on HOT lanes
- › Shame on the Legislature for failing to control construction cost and failing to raise the gas tax.

Susan Gardner, Kenmore

- › Transit is too hard to use so not really a viable alternative to paying tolls
- › She uses traffic data on line to decide which way to go to work and home each day.
- › As we do this study, we need to realize that tolls on 520 are going to increase traffic on 405
- › Employees have no real choice on WHEN they travel

Lois Dobisn, Bellevue

- › She thinks the SR 167 HOT Lane is very confusing and dangerous.
- › Cumulative impact of tolls on SR 520, I-90, I-405.
- › Overly optimistic to expect tolls to build many new projects.

Victor Bishop, Bellevue (Eastside Transportation Assn. (ETA) Member)

- › A professional traffic engineer who suggests traffic operational work be compared to same work without tolls.
- › Consider a “no action” alternative.

Bill Eager, Eastside Transportation Assn.

- › Key questions need answering....study needs to deny or confirm the following assertions by DOT:
 - HOT lanes will improve throughput in the GP lanes
 - HOT lanes will take traffic now on the local streets and put them back on the now better flowing 405 corridor
 - DOT says under our current 405 configuration (no improvements), the current 1.1 million vehicle trips/day will increase to 1.5 million /day by 2030. But when you look at DOT’s estimates for the HOT lanes and overall impact to throughput on the corridor, their numbers show they won’t be able to move the 1.5 million expected on the corridor with the HOT lanes – why? How is that then a good decision to put in HOT lanes when adding GP lanes shows that it could accommodate the increase in traffic growth?
 - The transition lanes are under question and believe the current design will impact use of the HOT lanes.

Jim McGraw

- › Open road tolling isn’t working and it’s wrong to convert gas tax built lanes to paid lanes. Need to at least have toll booth for cash payments

Bruce Nurse, Kemper Development

We draw 65K shoppers every day.

- > Strongly supports Vic Bishop and Bill Eager's comments. It is very unfortunate that the Legislature has not directed a study of adding GP lanes. So frustrated with Legislature, we are supporting an initiative.
- > We recommend a uniform toll on all I-405 road users to build new GP lanes.

Ken Seal

- > Don't use gas tax money to build toll lanes
- > 2 HOT lanes too many, GP lanes will see no relief once we have HOT lanes and commerce will leave
- > Will freight trucks be able to use HOT Lanes?

Doug MacDonald, Seattle

- > The Eyman initiative will spike any opportunity to improve transportation in the state.
- > The problem is how long in this country will we avoid mechanisms that get efficient use of the system.
- > We will have congestion until we price use of roads.
- > Express toll lanes are being used elsewhere in USA.
- > This is first about efficiency, then revenue.
- > When we have efficient highways we will not need as many of them, and we can invest in other forms of transportation.

Don Berellford, Seattle

- > Should also consider HOT-V (vanpool goes free).
- > Where lanes end, there will be a big bottleneck.

Phillip Skoog, Juanita

- > Roads are like a computer network – but people act like ants....they go where the sugar is.
- > Non-road options don't work
- > With tolling, you never know what you get.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

PHILIP A. PARKER, Chair

DICK FORD, Vice-Chair

TOM COWAN, Member

DAN O'NEAL, Member

CAROL MOSER, Member

ANNE HALEY, Member

Absent

LATISHA HILL, Member

TERESA BERNTSEN, Ex-Officio Member
Governor's Office

PAULA HAMMOND, Ex-Officio Member
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL