



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**

**Department of Public Works**

**123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800**

**[www.ci.kirkland.wa.us](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us)**

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**To:** Dave Ramsay, City Manager  
**From:** Transportation Commission, Jon Pascal, Chair  
**Date:** November 19, 2009  
**Subject:** EASTSIDE CORRIDOR TOLLING STUDY

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign the attached letter.

**BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:**

In 2009, the State Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to prepare a traffic and revenue study for I-405 that includes funding for high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes and other improvements. The Legislature directed WSDOT to confer with the Mayors and City Councils of jurisdictions in the vicinity of to the project regarding the implementation of high occupancy toll lanes might have on the operation of the corridor and adjacent local streets. Additionally the WSDOT is to conduct public work sessions and open houses to present information to citizens and to solicit their opinions.

To this end, two groups were assembled, an Executive Advisory Group consisting of Mayors from corridor jurisdictions and other elected officials along with an Interagency Working Group consisting of staff from those jurisdictions and other agencies. The groups met four times over the summer and fall, the final meeting of the Executive Advisory Group is scheduled for December 10th. Open houses and other outreach activities have been conducted as well, including an open house on November 5th at Kirkland City Hall.

Five alternatives have been developed to look at "express toll lanes" on the corridor which includes I-405 and SR 167 from I-5 on the north to SR 512 on the south. Each alternative includes a two lane HOT lane system through Kirkland.

Memorandum to Dave Ramsay

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WSDOT tolling study staff attended the September Transportation Commission meeting to describe the study and the options on which analysis was being performed.

(Attachment 1) The Commission developed a set of comments which were transmitted to the Mayor for his use at the Executive Advisory Group. (Attachment 2) Several Transportation Commissioners had the opportunity to attend the November 5 Open House at Kirkland City Hall. They had discussions with WSDOT staff that were at the meeting, while also hearing from concerns from other attendees. At its November 18 meeting the entire Commission reviewed the results of the option analysis and discussed the findings. (Attachment 3) The Commission felt that because of the importance of this issue the entire Council should review the Commission's comments and transmit a position to WSDOT on behalf of the City of Kirkland.

A fact sheet on the project and information about the performance of the alternatives is attached on the following pages.





## What are the benefits of express toll lanes?

- Higher performance and reduced congestion**  
Provide a reliable, faster commute in the express toll lanes as well as the regular lanes.
- Improved transit service**  
Enhance existing transit service reliability and facilitate a bus rapid transit system, where express buses come approximately every 10 minutes.
- Financing opportunities**  
Express toll lanes generate revenue that could help fund future transportation improvements.
- Better air quality**  
Keep traffic moving with less idling and air pollution.



The SR 167 HOT Lanes Pilot Project opened to traffic in May 2008.

## Key Dates



## What's next for Eastside Corridor tolling?

Proceeding with any work on express toll lanes on the Eastside Corridor will require legislative decisions and direction. Producing a finance plan for the corridor-wide express toll lane concept requires additional traffic, revenue and financial analysis.

Next steps include:

- Engaging the public and local elected officials and staff from Eastside Corridor communities.
- Submit traffic and revenue study to legislature and Governor Gregoire by January 2010.

## Find Out More

Visit: [www.wsdot.wa.gov/Tolling/EastsideCorridor](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Tolling/EastsideCorridor)  
E-mail: [ECTollingStudy@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:ECTollingStudy@wsdot.wa.gov)

Contact: Janet Matkin,  
WSDOT Tolls Communication Manager  
206-716-1150



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**To:** Jim Lauinger, Mayor

**From:** Transportation Commission, Jon Pascal, Chair

**Date:** September 30, 2009

**Subject:** COMMENTS FROM TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION ON EASTSIDE CORRIDOR TOLLING STUDY

At our September 23 meeting, the Transportation Commission was briefed by WSDOT staff on the I-405 Eastside Corridor Tolling Study. The Commission had the following comments for your consideration as you prepare for the October 29th Executive Advisory Committee meeting.

*Priority for transit*

The first priority for operation of HOT lanes should be to ensure speed and reliability for transit. The HOT lane should be designed to allow unimpeded movements for buses.

*Operations and traffic management over revenue*

The Commission believes that, in keeping with the City's roadway pricing policy, a higher priority should be given to toll rates set to optimize operations and traffic management rather than to maximize tolling revenue.

*Use of revenue*

While we do not promote funding "firewalls" or "subarea equity", we do believe there should be broad geographic equity between where toll revenue is collected and where it is spent, since it is a 50-mile corridor. For example, if the segments of I-405 north of Bellevue collect the majority of the revenue, we would be concerned if all the revenue funds capital improvements in Renton or Kent at the expense of not mitigating potential local impacts. Again, in keeping with the City roadway pricing policy, tolling revenue should be allowed to be spent on transit or other improvements that support transportation in the corridor.

*Access*

WSDOT is assuming that toll paying SOVs would be allowed to use direct access facilities like those at NE 128th Street. Because these ramps were constructed with Sound Transit funds, that may be a flawed assumption. In any event, more work

should be done by WSDOT to understand the costs and feasibility of using ramps paid for by Sound Transit.

Range of alternatives

The Commission did not feel that the alternatives being tested were of adequate breadth. We did not see an alternative that reflected the complete I-405 master plan vision for example. The I-405 master plan includes direct access facilities at NE 85th Street, yet it is not included in any of the alternatives. The study should at least understand how further investments may or may not enhance the corridor and operations of the toll facilities.

Length of corridor

It's not clear how the full 50 mile HOT lane corridor would be used by various travelers. The relationship of tolling, capacity and trip length should be explored. For example, many Kirkland travelers only use a short segment of I-405 so it's not clear how the tolling corridor will benefit or not benefit Kirkland.

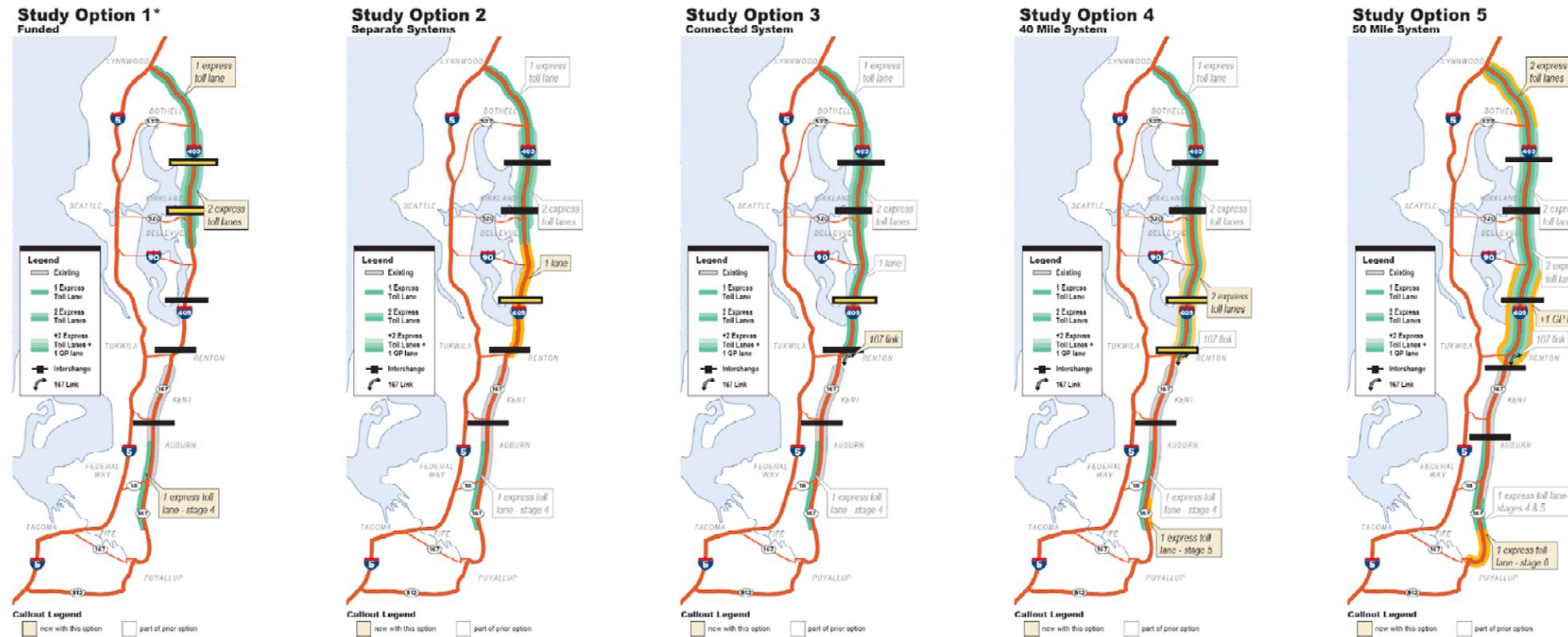
cc: Kirkland City Council  
Dave Ramsay, City Manager  
Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director



# Eastside Corridor Tolling Study

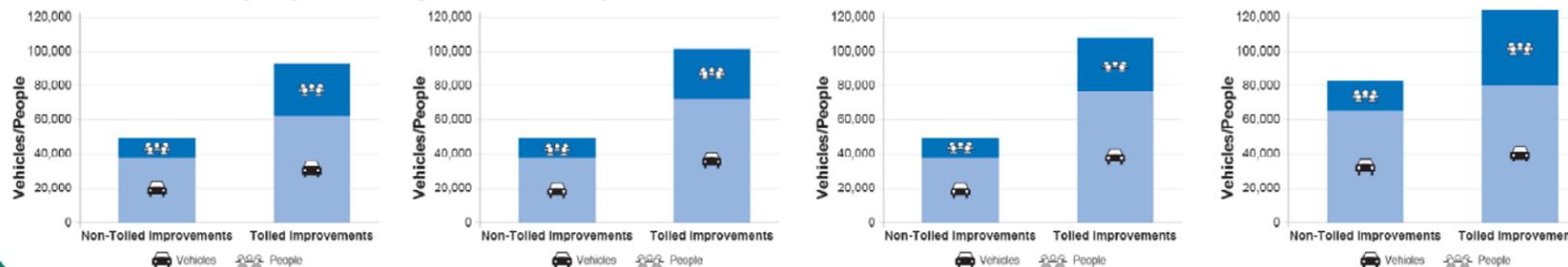
## Why an express toll lane system?

(Preliminary results)



\*funding possible from savings within the corridor

### Vehicles and people moving at freeflow speeds



Because we can  
 move more people  
 and vehicles faster

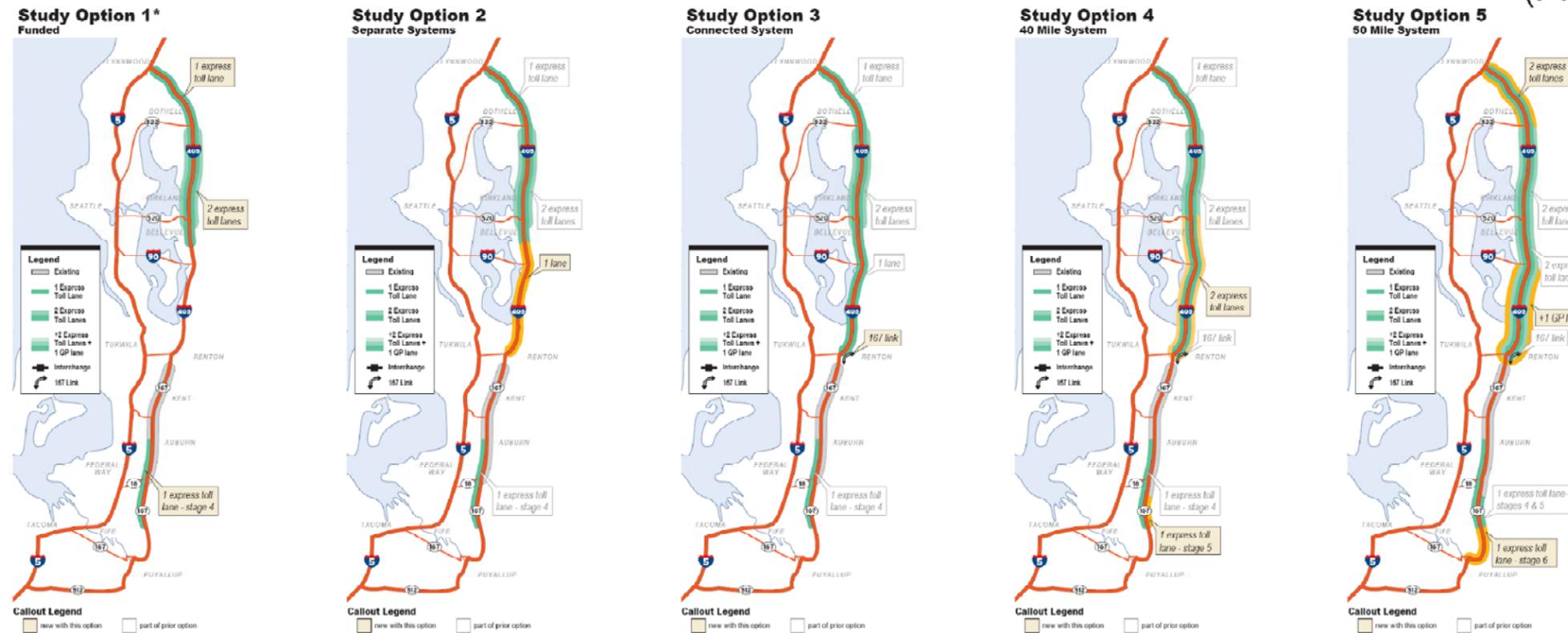




# Eastside Corridor Tolling Study

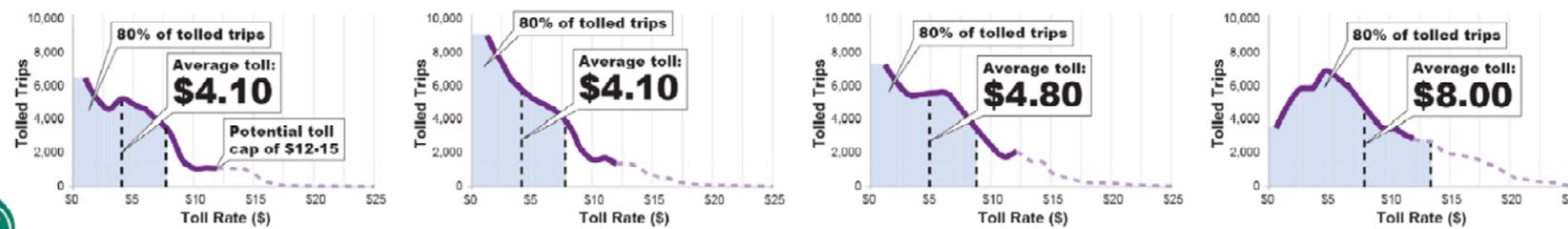
## What is the average toll I might pay in 2020?

(Preliminary results)



\*funding possible from savings within the corridor

### 2020 Weekday Peak Period Toll Rates (2008 Dollars)



Toll rates are estimates only as the actual rates would be based on supply and demand

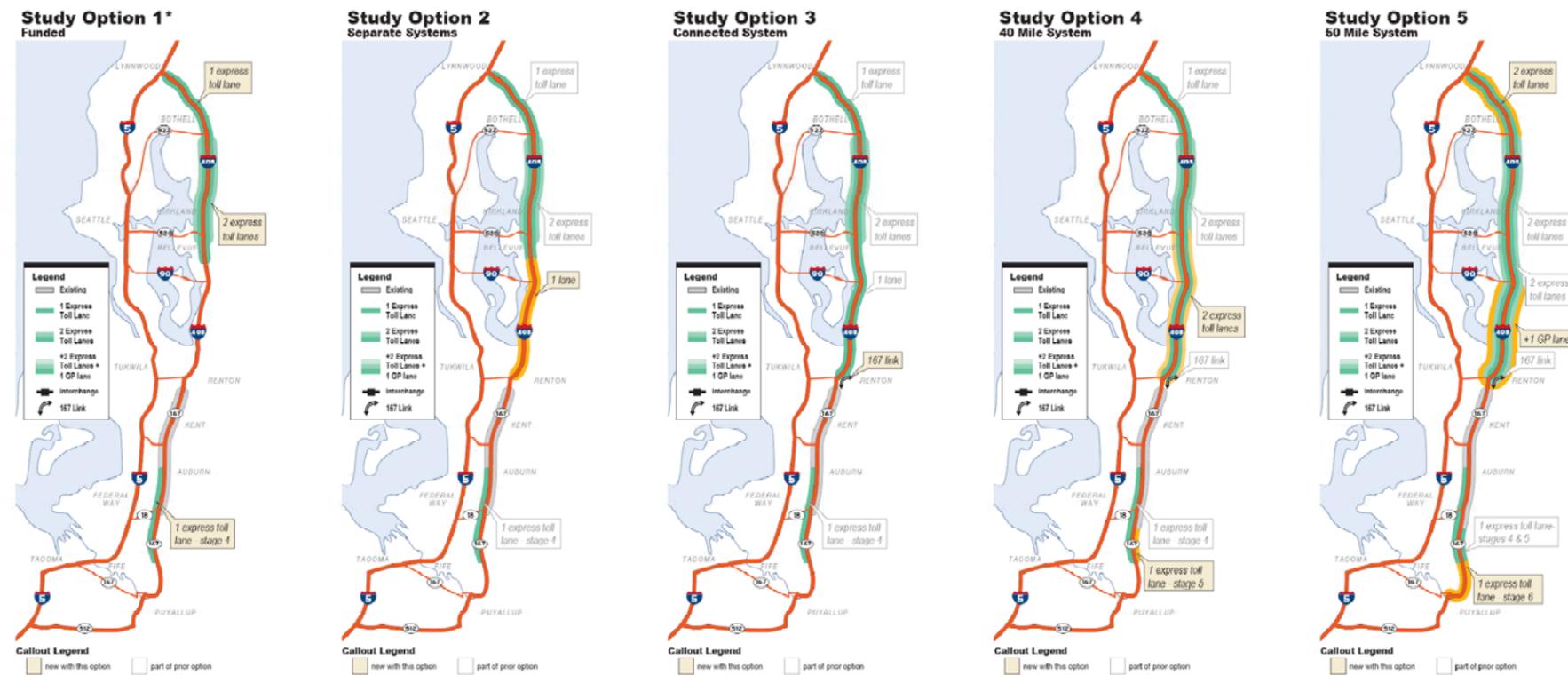


# Eastside Corridor Tolling Study



## How much would express toll lanes cost?

(Preliminary results)



Funding	Study Option 1*	Study Option 2	Study Option 3	Study Option 4	Study Option 5
Capital cost	\$470 M	\$540 M	\$1,030 M	\$1,950 M	\$4,100 M
Available funding	\$403 M	\$403 M	\$403 M	\$403 M	\$403 M
Funds needed	(\$67 M)*	(\$140 M)	(\$630 M)	(\$1,545 M)	(\$3,685 M)

\*funding possible from savings within the corridor

Bonding	Study Option 1	Study Option 2	Study Option 3	Study Option 4	Study Option 5
Range of net bond proceeds	\$135-245 M	\$160-290 M	\$190-345 M	\$450-775 M	Available in December
% of funding gap filled	100%+	100%+	30-55%	30-50%	Available in December
Remaining funding gap	\$0	\$0	(\$285-440 M)	(\$770-1,095 M)	Available in December



December 2, 2009

**D R A F T**

Mr. Craig Stone  
Director, WSDOT Tolling Division  
401 Second Avenue, Suite 300  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mr. Stone:

Thank you for your work and the work of your staff on the Eastside Corridor Tolling Study. We appreciate the efforts that State Legislature and the Department of Transportation have made to further our region's understanding of how express tolling might work on I-405 and SR 167.

For some time the City of Kirkland has advocated tolling as an important strategy to fund transportation solutions and preserve system performance. In a spirit of continued support, we offer the following comments based on the results of the WSDOT's recently completed modeling of HOT lanes on I-405.

Because single occupant vehicles are allowed in the HOT lanes and because those lanes will be located on the inside of the freeway, there will be increased merging and weaving as vehicles both enter the lanes and leave them to access freeway exits. This merging and weaving will be concentrated near the openings in the HOT lanes and will likely be much greater than observed on the existing SR 167 HOT lanes. We are concerned that the operational impacts of this activity have not been thoroughly explored and would urge you to do so. A related topic is the use of direct access ramps. Will SOVs that are in the HOT lane be able to use the HOV direct access ramps? This important policy question has not yet been answered. It will affect operations and safety on the freeway as well as the interchanges and local arterials that connect to the direct access ramps.

An express tolling system will likely have benefits for transit speed and schedule reliability. Transit performance or benefits have not been reported in the materials that were available at the Kirkland open house or elsewhere. This leads us to question the extent to which the needs of transit providers have been considered or integrated into your process in a collaborative and meaningful manner. A primary interest of the City of Kirkland is to develop an operating environment where transit can have substantial travel time savings over single occupant vehicles.

A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system is part of the I-405 Master Plan. However, the alternatives that were examined do not include any funding for improved transit service or facilities. Some of the revenue projected from tolling should support or accelerate the ability to implement BRT along the I-405 corridor. There should also be consideration under one or more of the alternatives for additional direct access ramps along the corridor

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and an evaluation of the benefits they may provide. Of particular interest to Kirkland is improved direct access in the vicinity of NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street as stated in the I-405 Master Plan and the draft PSRC 2040 Plan.

Tolling is scheduled to begin on SR 520 in less than 18 months. Technically, the SR 520 and I-405 tolling discussions are separate since they are fundamentally two very different systems. However we are concerned that in the eyes of the public, tolling on I-405 and SR 520 will be considered one system. WSDOT has done a good job of describing how the tolling infrastructure will be uniform across corridors but we encourage more discussion of how the projects will be better integrated.

Modeling shows that speed and throughput will improve for all users with an express toll lane system. It is possible, however that the modeling could be incorrect and there could be impacts on local streets due to the loss of one general purpose lane. While the City of Kirkland's position is that revenue collected in a corridor should be available for a wide range of uses throughout that corridor, it seems reasonable that a small amount of revenue should be preserved to monitor, quantify and address unexpected local impacts. It is important that as segments of the HOT lane corridor become operational, WSDOT commits the necessary resources to continue operating them at a high performance level before investing in new facilities. We request WSDOT work with local jurisdictions to define a program to monitor local arterial performance and address issues as they arise and which are directly related to implementation of tolling.

Thank you once again for your consideration of these comments as you prepare the report for the State Legislature.

Sincerely,  
Kirkland City Council

By James L. Lauinger, Mayor

cc: State Legislators 45 and 48 districts