

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION TOLLING

Background

Last session the Legislature adopted two bills on tolling. HB 1773 establishes statewide tolling policies and the framework for imposing tolls. The legislature reserved for itself the authority to impose tolls and designated the State Transportation Commission as the tolling authority, charged with setting toll rates, reviewing collection and operations policies and toll expenditures, and ensuring toll rates cover all costs and obligations. Toll revenue must be used to construct, maintain and operate the toll facility, and may be used for transit as well as other methods of conveying people or goods and to optimize system performance with the use of variable rates.

HB 3096 provides that tolling revenue (\$1.5-\$2B) will contribute to the costs for the replacement of the SR 520 Bridge and early tolling that could begin in 2009, requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to work with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on actions necessary to toll the I-90 floating bridge, and creates a Tolling Implementation Committee, consisting of Paula Hammond (WSDOT Secretary), Bob Drewel (Executive Director of the Puget Sound Regional Council, PSRC) and Dick Ford (Washington State Transportation Commission member from King County).

The Committee is required to evaluate potential traffic diversion from SR 520 when tolls are implemented and recommend mitigation, evaluate advanced tolling technology, evaluate active traffic management technology, explore partnerships, conduct public outreach and confer with mayors and city councils from cities along the SR 520, SR 522 and I-90 corridors. The Committee shall report to the Governor and Legislature by January 2009.

Numerous work efforts are underway which examine tolling, including the Lake Washington Urban Partnership (developing comprehensive traffic management and congestion reduction strategies that could be implemented in 2009), the Puget Sound Regional Council Tolling Task Force (developing recommendations on pricing strategies to be included in the Destination 2030 update), King County Update of its' Transit Comprehensive Plan, and the Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP) Sub-committee on Tolling. This sub-committee has met several times and discussed providing input on: the public outreach process that will be conducted by the Tolling Implementation Committee, defining corridors, diversion analysis, toll rates, use of toll revenue, and tolling implementation.

Issues for Discussion

1. How do we fund replacement of the SR 520 Bridge in the best terms for tax-payers, bridge users and communities? *(Please note: this is the question being asked by the Tolling Implementation Committee)*
2. What are reasonable uses of toll revenue?
3. Which facilities should be tolled and when should tolling begin on these facilities?
4. Are there limits to tolling?
5. Are there common interests between Kirkland and Redmond on tolling?

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