

Integrating Tolling and Regional Planning in the Puget Sound Region

Rob Fellows

Pricing System Planning and Policy Manager
Urban Planning Office
(but soon, Tolling Division...)

Paula Hammond

Secretary of Transportation

Dave Dye

Deputy Secretary

Steve Reinmuth

Chief of Staff

FHWA Webinar

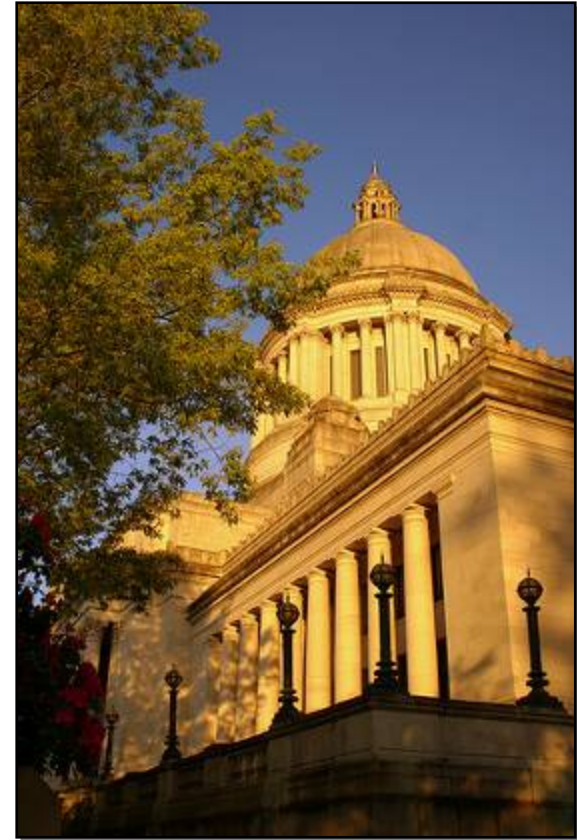
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**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Where Do We Stand Today?

- Has WSDOT developed a rational statewide process to test, prioritize and select toll projects?
 - **NOT YET!** Tolling proposals are considered by the state Legislature on a case-by-case basis.
 - Our DOT leads physical highway corridor planning and our MPO addresses regional policies.
- But we have made real progress engaging policymakers and the public on tolling dialogue, increased awareness and acceptance.



Presentation Outline

WSDOT and tolls:

- Overview of tolling in Washington
- How have current toll projects come about?
- How are tolling decisions made?

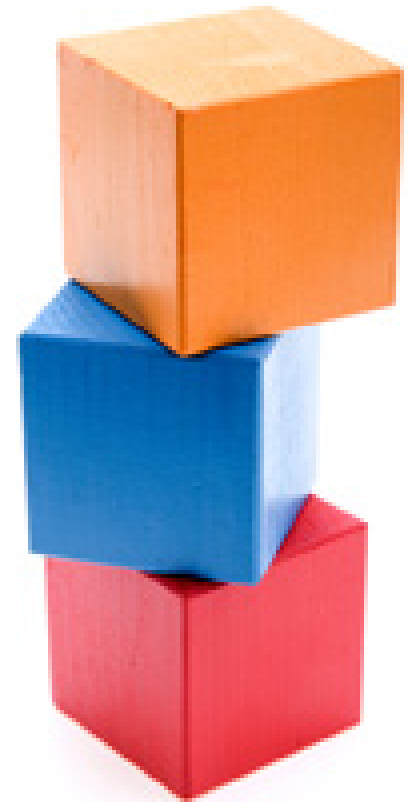
PSRC's role in raising tolling issues:

- Metropolitan transportation plan update:
Objectives, tools, alternatives and findings

Behind the Scenes

Building blocks necessary to consider tolling in a systematic way:

- Leadership
(both pushing the issue and carrying the ball)
- Engagement at all levels
(policy, stakeholders and technical)
- Broadening the issue to include system performance and financial impacts
- Tools adequate to support the dialogue



History of Tolling in Washington State

- 14 bridges financed with bonds and paid for with tolls
- The first tolled bridges were the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the I-90 bridge across Lake Washington, both of which opened in July 1940
- Nearly 20-year gap before tolling started again with opening of new Tacoma Narrows Bridge in July 2007.
- First HOT lane system opened in May 2008 on SR 167 between Renton and Auburn.



Brief Interest in Public Private Partnerships

- PPP legislation allowed for six franchises to be proposed by private parties
- Passed in Legislature unanimously in 2005
- Only one survived – and the state bought out the private developer
- Little taste for PPP today, which could have slowed consideration of tolling somewhat



Efforts outside WSDOT

- Washington State Transportation Commission conducted statewide tolling study and recommended 7 potential tolling corridors:

Cross Lake Washington, I-5 Central Puget Sound, I-405/SR 167, I-5 Lewis County, SR 395 North Spokane, Columbia River Crossing and Snoqualmie Pass.



- PSRC demonstrated GPS-based regional tolling.
- PSRC convened Pricing Task Force, which engaged business and policy leaders on tolling.
- Other groups (such as, the Cascadia Project of the Discovery Institute) conducted large educational events on tolling.



Megaprojects and Regional Initiatives

- Major initiative to develop a tax-funded, combined roads-and-transit ballot measure
 - Included “megaprojects” throughout the region and extensive rail extension
 - Measure failed, and second attempt was for transit only
- Fuel tax increased twice, by 14.5 cents
 - Bond-financing now powers major construction program, including progress on megaprojects
 - But gas tax funding will dry up within 5 years



Tolling Authority

Washington's Legislature established goals and framework for tolling

Goals:

- Provide revenues
- Improve highway performance

Tolling authority is shared:

- Legislature has authority to implement tolls
- Transportation Commission sets toll rates
- WSDOT implements the tolling program



Rep. Judy Clibborn,
House
Transportation
Committee Chair



Sen. Mary Margaret
Haugen, Senate
Transportation
Committee Chair



Dan O'Neal,
Transportation
Commission Chair

Current Tolling Projects in Washington

The new Tacoma Narrows Bridge
State's first electronic tolling facility opened July 15, 2007



SR 167 HOT Lanes Pilot Project

State's first high-occupancy toll lanes launched May 3, 2008



Coming Soon: SR 520 Evergreen Point Floating Bridge

- Partially funded with major gaps
- Urban Partnership Agreement
- Significant outreach effort
- Legislature authorized tolling



How does our tolling work?

Tacoma Narrows Bridge

- Both toll booths and electronic toll collection.
- 75% of traffic using electronic tolls
- 85% of morning commuters have electronic toll accounts
- 96% of all Gig Harbor households have *Good To Go!* accounts
- 14 million transactions in first year



6/3/2009

SR 167 HOT lanes

- All electronic toll collection – no toll booths
- Dynamic pricing based on traffic levels
- More than 30,000 *Good To Go!* users have paid to use the SR 167 HOT lane
- Average of approximately 1,500 vehicles per day paid to use the HOT lanes

On the Horizon...

Studies and planning for a statewide tolling program

Legislature funded several tolling studies this past session, including:

- Outreach process and financial feasibility study for 2-lane express toll lanes on I-405
- Outreach process and financial feasibility study for I-5 Columbia River Bridge replacement in Vancouver, WA.
- Toll feasibility studies for freeway extensions on SR 167 and SR 509.



I-405 in Renton



Columbia River Crossing
visualization

How are Tolling Decisions Made?

The SR 520 experience

- Tolls are considered due to intractable funding gap for a must-do project.
- Urban Partnership federal funds advanced the concept of early tolling and other actions to reduce congestion.
- Legislature called for outreach effort:
 - Toll implementation committee included DOT Secretary, PSRC Executive Director, Transportation Commission member
 - Technical program modeled several toll scenarios to assess performance, revenue and likely diversion
 - Significant listening effort involved public meetings and targeted outreach to community and businesses
- Legislature acted to authorize tolling this session.



Moving Washington

WSDOT's three-point strategy for mobility

As WSDOT follows the Legislature's lead on toll implementation, tolling is addressed as a major tool for the state's transportation strategies, known together as "*Moving Washington*." Tolling can:

- Provide revenue for strategic capacity
- Enhance traffic management and efficiency
- Help manage demand for road space

WSDOT recently awarded Federal value pricing funds to develop implementation plans for converting a 250-mile HOV system to tolled express lanes.



For more information
about tolling in Washington State,
please contact:

Rob Fellows
Pricing System Planning and Policy Manager
Urban Planning Office
WSDOT
206-464-1257
FellowR@wsdot.wa.gov

www.wsdot.wa.gov/Operations/Tolling

www.wsdot.wa.gov/Congestion/Technology



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