

The proposed express toll lane concept is a viable and appropriate strategy for improving mobility on the I-405/SR 167 corridor.

The ERP found that WSDOT and partnering agencies have a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and need and associated policies, and they have generated a solution that meets these objectives, fitting within the context of the I-405/SR 167 corridor master plan and record of decision. Implementing this ambitious plan given the corridor complexities and scale of investment represents the next steps for WSDOT’s Project Team. The ERP workshops and deliberations have helped inform the EAG and Project Team to the challenges that lie ahead. The ERP outlined a series of recommendations that can help assure successful completion of this project and generate the anticipated benefits in a timely manner.

1. Move forward with the funded Phase 1 project. (6 months)
2. Address regional policy for HOV degradation and migration to HOT3+. (6 months)
3. Seek FHWA tolling approval for corridor. (6 months)
4. Continue authorization of tolls on the SR 167 HOT Lanes Pilot Project. (1 year)
5. Continue developing the components comprising a mega project (project management plan, risk management plan, master schedule, phasing plan, and financial plan). Maintain momentum with the legacy Project Team. (1 year)
6. Leverage completed environmental documents by augmenting existing EAs to reflect managed lane/toll scenarios.
7. Address operating policies and design elements that support financing requirements. (1 year)
8. Make the I-405/SR 167 interchange a higher priority by mobilizing critical path items like ROW and value engineering. (2 years)
9. Address the funding gap through financing, user fees and delivery options as part of the financing and phasing plan. (2 years)
10. Complete an investment grade traffic and revenue study. (2 years)

Members of the ERP gained much insight into the conduct and collaborative spirit found among Project Team and EAG members, and sincerely appreciate the opportunity to have shared participation in this landmark endeavor.

ERP Panelists Include:

- **Academic and research:**
Ginger Goodin, ERP Chair
Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) of the Texas A&M University System in Austin, TX
- **Transportation Policy:**
Robert Poole
Independent national transportation consultant (Los Angeles, CA and Fort Lauderdale, FL)
- **Transportation Planning:**
Chuck Fuhs
Parsons Brinckerhoff in Houston, TX
- **Express Toll Operations:**
Jennifer Tsien
PBS&J/Atkins, working with the Florida Turnpike Enterprise in Orlando and Miami on the I-95 Express Lanes
- **Financing:** **Janet Lee**
of Public Resources Advisory Group in New York, NY

How do I get more information?

The complete Expert Review Panel report and all report appendices are on the WSDOT website at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Tolling/EastsideCorridor/Library.htm>.

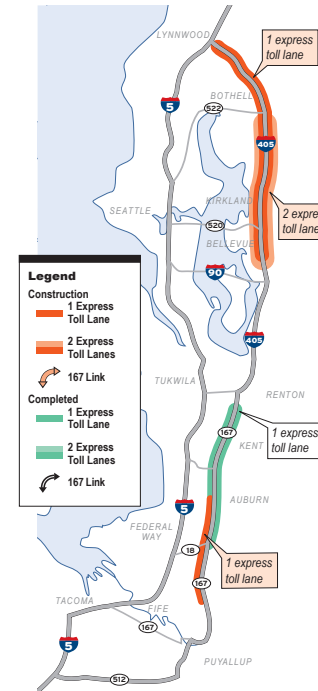
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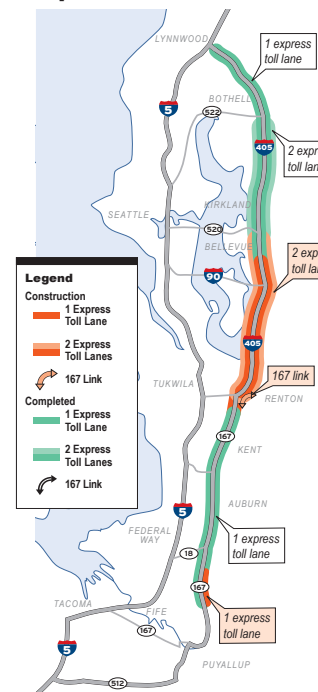


Moving forward with Phase 1 as a first step to implementing Option 4 makes sense.

Option 4 – Phase 1



Option 4 – Phase 2



Callout Legend
 new with this construction phase
 completed construction

I-405/SR 167 Corridor Tolling Study Expert Review Panel Findings FINAL REPORT

As directed by the Secretary of Transportation, a five-person Expert Review Panel (ERP) reviewed WSDOT’s I-405/SR 167 Tolling Study in four general topics: policy, methodology, phasing, and financing. The ERP found that a corridor-wide express toll lanes system will keep the I-405/SR 167 vision moving forward and is a viable implementation strategy for the corridor master plan. The ultimate vision is to improve personal and freight mobility and reduce traffic congestion in a manner that is sustainable, flexible, safe, reliable, and cost-effective. Ideally, there would be financing to implement the entire corridor improvements at once, to realize all the benefits as soon as possible.

1. POLICY Is the state’s strategic approach to implement express lanes on I-405/SR 167 viable, appropriate and consistent with emerging federal policy and current state and regional policies? **YES**

The proposed express toll lane concept is a viable and appropriate strategy for improving mobility on the I-405/SR 167 Corridor.

The ERP members performed a literature review of federal, regional and state tolling, HOV, and livability policies, concluding that the I-405/SR 167 Corridor express toll lanes are aligned with these principles.

Federal Policy

The ERP found the Tolling Study to be in line with the FHWA Tolling and Pricing Programs, including the Value Pricing Pilot program and SAFETEA-LU allowances for states to charge tolls on vehicles not meeting the established occupancy requirements to use an HOV lane. The ERP also found the Tolling Study also meets national livability principles.

Regional Policy – Transportation 2040 Strategies

The ERP found the Tolling Study meets congestion and mobility, environmental, and funding principles established by the accepted regional transportation plan, *Transportation 2040*.

State Policy

Moving Washington – WSDOT’s Strategic Plan to Fight Congestion

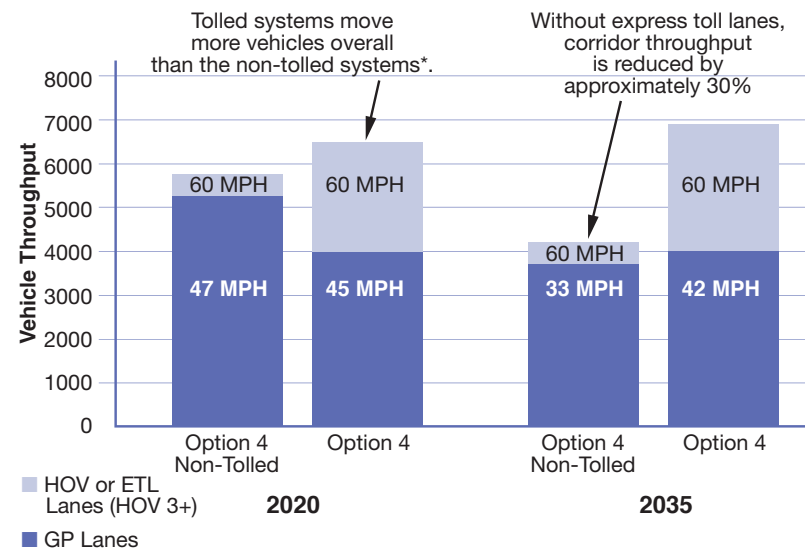
The ERP found the Tolling Study to be in line with the State’s congestion relief goals, strategic planning, and policies for tolling and HOV lanes.



2. METHODOLOGY: Are the technical analytical measures and results supporting the Eastside Corridor Express Toll Lanes Report valid? Were the right tools applied to the analysis? Are the report results reasonable? Are outcomes reasonable to expect based on industry experience? **YES**

- The state used sound planning and engineering practices consistent with industry standards to analyze the operational performance of I-405/SR 167 corridor express toll lanes.
- The express toll lane proposal provides greater operational benefits than a general-purpose lane alternative with HOV lanes.
- The state will provide more detailed analyses and better definition of specific impacts on transit, freight and local streets through the project-specific environmental analysis that is currently under way.

Speed and Vehicle Throughput Measures for I-405 NB from SR 167 to NE 8th Street during AM Peak Period



* Not only does the tolled investment move more vehicles overall than the non-tolled investment, it moves more vehicles at 60 mph. Comparing options, GP lane speeds do not change very much until you get to 2035, when GP lane speeds slow down to 33 mph with the non-tolled investment. Over time, GP lanes fill up and consequently slow down. Because express toll lanes manage traffic with dynamic tolls, they keep vehicles moving at 60 MPH well into the future.

3. PHASING: Is the proposed phasing plan to implement an express toll lane system sensible, and does it provide for logical, usable segments towards a 40+ mile I-405/SR 167 corridor system? **YES**

- Moving forward with Phase 1 as a first step to implementing Option 4 makes sense and provides logical first segments to complement the existing SR 167 HOT lane pilot project.
- A more detailed plan is needed for future phases.
- Do not lose sight of Option 4 as a corridor-wide solution in response to the master plan.

Phasing Recommendations— Move forward with Phase I as a first step to a corridor-wide solution

Option 4 represents a corridor-wide approach to implementing the master plan vision. To optimize overall corridor performance through successive phases, WSDOT, along with the corridor and agency stakeholders comprising the Executive Advisory Group (EAG), should take a broader, more strategic approach to implementing the balance of improvements in Option 4. To that end, and in parallel with Phase 1 implementation, WSDOT should lead the development of the following recommendations over time:

- Continue exemplary constituent outreach.
- Address regional policy for degradation on existing HOV lanes and migration to HOT3+.
- Reassess delivery opportunities, such as public-private-partnerships.
- Advance the I-405/SR 167 interchange soon after Phase 1.
- Develop a corridor-wide project management plan, risk management plan, and master schedule in keeping with mega project requirements.
- Give some consideration to a role for active traffic management.

4. FINANCING: Are the I-405/SR 167 Corridor Tolling Study financial assumptions, methods, and forecasts valid? **YES**

Phase 1 provides necessary momentum and helps to fill the funding gap for future phases. An investment-grade analysis will be needed to produce a viable financial plan for a corridor-wide solution.

- The State has available funding for Phase 1, including \$403 million from the 2003 and 2005 gas taxes, and \$67 million of savings within the corridor. Phase 1 toll revenues can be leveraged to meet a portion of the Phase 2 funding gap. The bonding capacity will depend on the risk constraints of the State. To help develop a viable, feasible finance plan, the State's risk constraints with respect to toll revenue bonds need to be determined. Toll revenue bonds, ranging from non-recourse to triple-backed toll revenue bonds, will not alone be sufficient to fill the total funding gap.
- Consideration should be given to funding models used successfully to finance other national mega projects, especially in today's stressed credit markets. Funding mosaics including toll concessions, combinations of toll revenue and availability payments, and partnerships with other funding entities (public and private) have been shown to be viable.
- Operating express toll lanes optimally for both congestion relief and financing needs will require openness to new operational tools and policies. Financing needs may drive different applications of operating policies than would be otherwise considered. WSDOT should consider strategies like photo enforcement of violators, carpool registration and 24/7 operations, etc. to maximize toll revenue and design considerations to minimize revenue leakage.

Delivery, Phasing and Financing Strategies on Comparable National Express Toll Lane Mega Projects

Project	Delivery Approach	Phasing	Financing*
I-15, San Diego 20 miles	Conventional design-bid-build	Multiple phases as corridor is extended and widened, opening 2008-2015	Conventional, augmented with local sales tax bonding
I-10, Houston 22 miles	Public-public partnership w/ toll authority	Single phase, opened in 2009	Toll authority contribution of \$250 million on \$2.6 billion
I-495, N Virginia 14 miles	Public-private partnership	Single phase, under construction	30% public match on \$1.3 billion
I-595, Ft Lauderdale 10.5 miles	Public-private partnership	Single phase, under construction	future public availability payments on \$1.7 billion
SH 183/I-820, Ft Worth 13.3 miles	Public-private partnership	Single phase, under construction	32% public match on \$1.8 billion
I-635/I-35E, Dallas, 15 miles	Public-private partnership	Single phase, under construction	22% public match on \$2.2 billion

* Excluding financing-related costs

HOT3+ is a practical carpool policy supporting sustainable traffic performance, transit-friendliness, and needed financing/revenue.

- Phasing into this policy change has immediate and long-term benefits regardless of whether the overall improvements are implemented in incremental steps or as a corridor system.
- Conversion of existing HOV lanes to HOT3+, preferably in sync with Phase 1, provides a tolling experience base for the financial community, reducing the risk in financing the broader system and supporting future financing. It also supports logical phasing with a seamless corridor that limits peak hour bottleneck concerns at transition points.

First Generation/Second Generation Toll Projects

Conceptually, this program is similar to projects implemented and under development in major metropolitan regions across the U.S. The I-405/SR 167 corridor express toll lanes represent both first-generation managed lanes whose primary focus is generally on traffic management, and second-generation managed lanes whose primary focus is generally on financing.