WSDOT

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Puget Sound Gateway Project SR 509, I-5 and SR 167

www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/gateway/

509 5 167

In 2012, following two decades of project development, WSDOT began an effort to develop an integrated, sustainable approach to completing the State Route 167 and State Route 509 corridor connections to Interstate 5 while relieving congestion and improving mobility between Tacoma and Seattle. The Gateway project completes SR 167 and SR 509 which are critical freight routes and provides new regional connections to I-5. The Gateway project:

- Improves regional mobility and relieves traffic congestion on local roads and highways by providing new and more efficient travel options, improving overall system performance for freight, commuters and transit.
- Completes critical freight links between the ports of Seattle and Tacoma and key distribution centers, warehouses, and industrial areas in King and Pierce counties. Supports regional and statewide job growth by allowing freight to move more reliably and economically.
- Provides direct access to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport from the south, better connecting the state's hub airport to I-5 and improving movement of air cargo.
- Leverages the opportunity to build an integrated system by constructing SR 509, SR 167 and I-5 together, using design-build to accelerate construction and capitalize on economies of scale.

Frequently asked questions

Why combine SR 509, SR 167 and I-5 into a single program?

SR 509 and SR 167 are long-planned new corridor connections to I-5, that each require additional project development, environmental updates, and right of way acquisition to be completed. Combining the projects into a single package using the design-build approach allows WSDOT to implement efficiencies and system integration between these similar projects, while also leveraging resources and accelerating project delivery. In addition to delivery efficiencies, adding express toll lanes along I-5 is projected to increase mobility and add 10 to 20 percent more capacity to I-5.

Why wouldn't WSDOT build two lanes each direction on SR 509 and SR 167 in Phase 1?

In Phase 1 of the Gateway project, WSDOT proposes to build 1 to 2 additional lanes in each direction of SR 167 and SR 509, to accommodate projected traffic volumes and freight movement through 2030. Additional lanes will be added over time to accommodate regional growth. If WSDOT were to build two lanes each direction continuously through the SR 509 and SR 167 corridors it would add nearly $200 million to the cost of Phase 1 without generating any additional toll revenue.

What would it take to complete the full-build of the SR 167 and SR 509 corridors with three lanes in each direction without tolling?

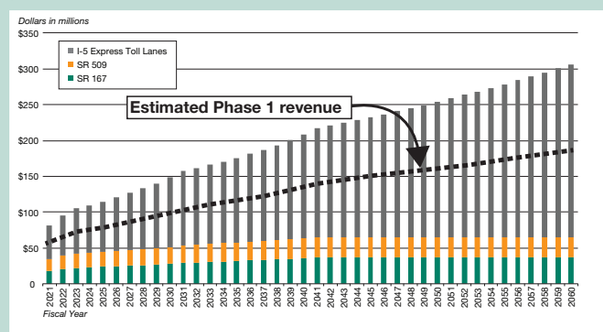
The full-build identified in the SR 167 and SR 509 corridor Final Environmental Impact Statements required three lanes in each direction which would cost at least $1 billion more than Phase 1 of the Gateway project. These cost estimates, which have not been updated recently, were $1.5 billion for SR 167 and $1.3 billion for SR 509 bringing the total cost to $2.8 billion, as compared to the $1.6 billion to $1.8 billion cost for Phase 1 of the Gateway project.

How much revenue can tolling contribute to the Gateway project?

Tolling could help manage traffic and contribute $330 million toward the total cost of the Gateway Phase 1 which is approximately $1.6 billion to $1.8 billion.

Annual Gross Toll Revenue Projections

Projections show the already congested I-5 express toll lanes would generate the most gross revenue, with the revenue increasing over time as the average toll paid increases.



Note: Gross revenue projections shown reflect two express toll lanes on I-5 between the SR 167 and SR 509 interchanges which is part of a future phase of the Gateway project. In Phase 1, there will only be a single I-5 express toll lane between SR 16 in Tacoma and I-90 in Seattle which has not been modeled but is anticipated to generate gross toll revenues of at least half of those shown above.

Can you build the Gateway project without tolls?

Yes, but WSDOT would need to build three lanes in each direction and additional I-5 improvements as identified in each corridor's Final Environmental Impact Statement to accommodate increased traffic volumes. The total cost for the full-build, which has not been updated recently, is $2.8 billion which is at least $1 billion more than Phase 1 of the Gateway project, without any toll revenue contribution. In addition to the $300 million toll revenue contribution, tolls can also help relieve congestion by encouraging drivers to use the freeway during non-peak hours, take other routes, or make other travel choices. To achieve the same level of congestion relief without tolls would be more expensive and require additional initial capacity.

How did WSDOT develop cost estimates for Phase 1 of the Gateway project?

WSDOT worked with a team of national and local experts in design and construction with current market knowledge to develop the cost estimate of $1.6 billion to $1.8 billion for Phase 1 of the Gateway project. Cost estimates include contingency, risk and inflation through year of construction. WSDOT plans to complete a cost estimate validation process (CEVP) for the Gateway project in the current biennium.

Tolling is a key component to completing the Gateway project

Tolling helps manage traffic and is critical to adopting a phased, sustainable approach to complete SR 167 and SR 509

In alignment with regional planning, SR 167 and SR 509 will be fully tolled corridors. Traffic analyses show that tolling the new SR 167 and SR 509 corridors helps relieve congestion by encouraging drivers to use the freeway during non-peak hours, take other routes, or make other travel choices. In Phase 1 of the Gateway project, WSDOT proposes to build 1 to 2 additional lanes in each direction of SR 167 and SR 509. Additional lanes will be added over time to accommodate regional growth.

I-5 express toll lanes are part of the Gateway Project

Express toll lanes on I-5, between Tacoma and Seattle, are designed to improve mobility while also creating an average revenue source of about $4.5 million to help fund I-5 maintenance and preservation or other transportation improvements. Current high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on I-5 are congested during peak times and no longer meet their established performance standard of 45 mph. As a result, trips for carpoolers, transit and freight are slower and less reliable. I-5 express toll lanes would add 10 to 20 percent more capacity, increasing mobility by better utilizing existing lanes, improving speed and reliability for transit, freight and drivers in all lanes.

How would tolling work on SR 167 and SR 509?

WSDOT's initial studies assume that the new SR 167 and SR 509 corridors be fully tolled with multiple toll points within the corridor, but there would be no tolls on existing roadways – only on new capacity. On the new 6-mile SR 167 corridor there would be three toll points, and on the new 2.5-mile SR 509 corridor there would be two tolled points.

How would toll pricing work on SR 167 and SR 509?

The final approach to toll pricing has not been determined for SR 167 and SR 509. In these corridors, the toll pricing may be based on a single charge or segmented charge. For a single charge, users would pay a single rate for using the facility no matter where a vehicle enters and exits. A segmented toll is priced by segment of the corridor traveled, and would be based on how far a vehicle travels on the tolled facility, across defined segments. For the purpose of the current study, SR 167 was priced as three segments and SR 509 as two segments to provide a potential toll price and revenue analysis.

Corridor	Potential Toll Funding Contribution
SR 509	$85M
SR 167	$95M
I-5 Express Toll Lanes*	$150M
Total Funding from Tolls	**$330M**
Tolling could contribute $330 million toward the total cost of Phase 1 which is $1.6 billion to $1.8 billion.	

**Based on single I-5 express toll lane between SR 16 in Tacoma and I-90 in Seattle in Phase 1.*

How would express toll lanes work on I-5?

The first phase would convert the existing I-5 HOV lane to a single express toll lane from SR 16 in Tacoma to I-90 in Seattle. Tolls would be dynamically priced based on congestion. The future phase would add a second express toll lane in both directions from SR 167 to SR 509, and build direct connections from the I-5 express toll lanes to both SR 167 and SR 509.

When would tolling start?

If project funding is received in 2014 and the Legislature authorizes tolling, the first I-5 express toll lane could open in 2019, and Phase 1 of the Gateway could begin tolling in 2021 when the new corridors open to traffic.

What would the toll rates be?

Preliminary traffic and revenue analyses estimate that during peak periods the maximum toll in 2020 dollars would be about $2.75 on SR 167 to travel 6 miles, and about $2.00 on SR 509 to travel 2.5 miles. For I-5 express toll lanes, the average toll would be about $4.55 (in 2020 dollars) during peak periods for a typical 10 mile trip. Additional analysis is necessary to provide a more precise range of potential toll rates. Ultimately, the Washington State Transportation Commission is responsible for setting toll rates.

For more information contact:

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