

ERP Final Report Appendix E: Summary of Regional, State, and Federal Policies

APPROACH

Federal Policy - FHWA Tolling and Pricing Program

Value Pricing Pilot Program - The Value Pricing Pilot (VPP) program, initially authorized in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) as the Congestion Pricing Pilot Program, and most recently renewed with the passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), encourages implementation and evaluation of value pricing pilot projects to manage congestion on highways through tolling and other pricing mechanisms. This is the only program that provides funding to support studies and implementation aspects of a tolling or pricing project. The program is limited to 15 slots, which FHWA has reserved for States, and each State can have multiple projects.

Federal Policy – HOV Facilities

Section 1121 of SAFETEA-LU replaces Section 102(a) of Title 23 of the United States Code (23 U.S.C.) with a new Section 166 that clarifies some aspect of the operation of HOV facilities and provides more exceptions to the vehicle occupancy requirements for HOV facilities. It also authorizes States to create High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes. Specifically, this section allows States to charge tolls to vehicles that do not meet the established occupancy requirements to use an HOV lane if the State establishes a program and procedures that addresses the selection of certified vehicles and procedures to manage the demand of the facility by varying the toll amount and enforcing violations. A toll agreement must be executed between the FHWA, the State Department of Transportation, and operating agencies. Tolls under this section may be charged on both Interstate and non-Interstate facilities. There is no limit on the number of projects or the number of states that can participate.

Federal Policy – USDOT/HUD/EPA Livability Initiative, Six Principles

1. Providing more transportation choices;
2. Expanding access to affordable housing, particularly housing located close to transit;
3. Enhancing economic competitiveness—giving people access to jobs, education and services as well as giving businesses access to markets;
4. Targeting federal funds toward existing communities to spur revitalization and protect rural landscapes;
5. Increasing collaboration among federal, state, and local governments to better target investments and improve accountability;
6. Valuing the unique qualities of all communities – whether urban, suburban, or rural.

Regional Policy – Transportation 2040

Three key strategies:

1. Congestion and Mobility – improve mobility through a combination of effective land use planning, demand management, efficiency enhancements, and strategic capacity investments. Improve system efficiency through “smart corridors” with advanced technology, better information for travelers, and advanced tolling approaches that adjust for actual traffic conditions. Capacity improvements strategically expand roadway, transit, and non-motorized facilities, with new roadways limited to key missing links and enhancing existing transportation facilities.
2. Environment – a key focus of the plan is to protect and improve the region’s environmental health, ensuring that the region has healthy air that meets all standards, ensuring that transportation projects improve the handling of storm water runoff to protect Puget Sound and other surface waters, and addressing emerging issues such as transportation’s role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change.
3. Funding – the Transportation 2040 financial strategy relies on traditional funding sources in the early years of the plan. Over time the region will transition to a new funding structure based on user fees, which could include high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, facility and bridge tolls, highway

system tolls, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) charges, and other pricing approaches that replace the gas tax and further fund and manage the transportation system. Funding strategies need to include a nexus between the tax, fee, or toll and the use of the revenues. The strategy starts with developing HOT lanes, and tolling individual highway and bridge projects in the entirety as they are implemented. The plan calls for full highway system tolls by approximately 2030. Guidance for the funding strategy includes being flexible and accelerating the implementation of tolls earlier than 2020 wherever feasible.

State Policy – Legislative direction ESHB 1773, *Moving Washington*, HOV policy

Consistency with Legislative Directive ESHB 1773: Policy Guidelines for Establishing Toll Facilities

1. Encourage effective use of the transportation system and provide a source of transportation funding
2. Tolling should be used when it can be demonstrated to contribute a significant portion of the cost of a project that cannot be funded solely with existing sources or optimize the performance of the transportation system
3. Tolling should be fairly and equitably applied and not have significant adverse diversion impacts that cannot be mitigated.
4. Tolling should consider relevant social equity, environmental and economic issues, and should be directed at making progress toward the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals.
5. Revenue from toll facilities must only be used to improve, preserve, manage or operate the eligible toll facility on or in which the revenue is collected.
6. Toll rates must be set to meet anticipated funding obligations. To the extent possible, the toll rates should be set to optimize system performance, recognizing necessary trade-offs to generate revenue.
7. Tolls on future toll facilities may remain in place to fund additional capacity, capital rehabilitation, maintenance, management, and operations and to optimize performance of the system.

State HOV Policy (<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/HOV/Policy.htm>): concept is consistent with WSDOT HOV policy in that it proposes to maximize the people-carrying capacity of the freeway system by providing incentives to use buses, vanpools, and carpools and to provide capacity for future travel growth, [and to help reduce transportation-related pollution and dependency on fossil fuels].

State Policy – Highway System Plan (<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B24AC1DA-8B9A-4719-B344-B083BB3F10FB/0/HSPweb.pdf>)

Level of Service (LOS) is one of the measures utilized by WSDOT for developers to identify highways that may be in need of improvements. For WSDOT, as stated in the Highway System Plan on page 66 “There is not enough state or local money or land to build sufficient highway capacity to reach free-flow conditions statewide. Therefore, WSDOT has set a goal in the Washington Transportation Plan to manage the State Highway system to achieve maximum throughput.” Maximum throughput is defined as the greatest number of vehicles traveling at the optimal freeway speed occurring between 70 to 85 percent of the posted speed limit. For more information please refer to the link to the Highway System Plan.

The I-405 program, during the Programmatic Environmental Impact Study (EIS) phase, followed the WSDOT process for determining need and balancing improvements with program and regional goals. The adoption of the preferred alternative or master plan, which equalized interstate roadway capacity with transit, transportation demand management (TDM), local street improvements and pedestrian and bicycle improvements set policy on a “balanced” set of improvements for the corridor. When analyzed for 2020 traffic conditions, the master plan, which called for up to two additional lanes, still showed 2 to 12 hrs of congestion in some sections of the corridor. To address this, the Executive Committee advised WSDOT to continue to study a managed lanes system to provide the most efficient traffic operations on the corridor. Through this further analysis, WSDOT has found that operating up to two lanes as priced managed lanes, provides a reliable sustainable mobility solution.