# Columbia River Crossing Project Traffic and Tolling Analysis Summary

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## **Vollmer Associates LLP**

- Gerry Nielsten, Principal, New York City
- Vollmer one of few firms recognized by bonding companies for performing investment grade tolling analysis in the United States
- Phase II analysis for CRC is "less than investment grade"

# **CRC Tolling Study Scope of Work**

- Review Traffic Analysis
- Identify and prepare tolling model
- Identify toll rate structure and collection options, including Electronic Toll Collection (ETC)
- Evaluate toll alternatives and provide traffic and revenue

# **Basic Elements of a Tolling Study**

- Regional model basis for traffic without tolls
- Toll model predicts new traffic with tolls
  - Assumptions made on percentages of HOV and trucks.
  - Assumptions include toll rates for different users and percentage using ETC
- Toll model predicts toll revenues

# **CRC Tolling Assumptions**

- Feasibility analysis assumes:
  - If <u>only I-5</u> is tolled, tolls would be collected in both directions for all vehicles crossing on I-5
  - If <u>both I-5 and I-205</u> are tolled, tolls would be collected in one direction on all vehicles crossing the Columbia River

# What Tolling Options Were Studied?

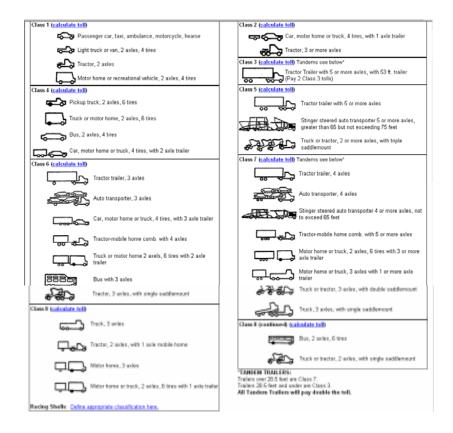
- Analyzed the possibility of several toll options:
  - Uniform toll rates for SOV, HOV, trucks with and without time of day differentials
  - Vehicle class tolling differentials with and without time of day differentials
  - Loyalty, HOV and ETC discounts
  - Toll escalation rates

### **Possible Toll Rate Policies**

- Passenger Cars
  - Vehicle occupancy
  - Frequent user discount
  - ETC discount
  - Time of day variations
  - Toll escalation
- Commercial Vehicles
  - Vehicle classification
  - Frequent user discount
  - ETC discount
  - Time of day variations
  - Toll escalation

## **Vehicle Class Rate Differentials**

- Commercial vehicles
  - Larger vehicles pay higher tolls
- Differentials based on
  - Visual
  - Weight
  - Axle



NYSTA Visual Classifications

#### **Truck Tolls**

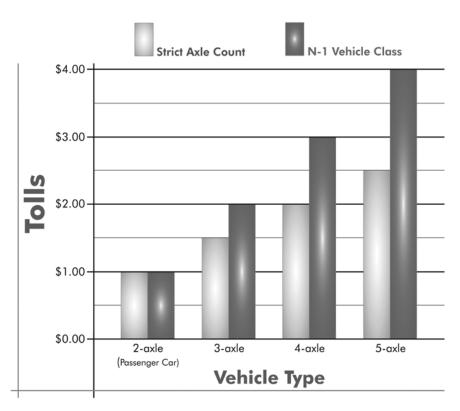
 How it might work - if the car toll is \$1.00 then the "per axle" toll is 50¢

#### **Strict Axle Count**

- Multiply number of axles times "per axle" toll.
- Example: 5 axle truck pays
   5 x 50¢ = \$2.50

#### "Axles minus 1" (or "N-1")

- Multiply one less than the number of axles times full car toll.
- Example: 5 axle truck pays4 x \$1.00 = \$4.00



Possible truck tolling scenarios

# **Electronic Toll Collection (ETC)**

- Several ETC Options Available
  - High speed collection
  - Toll plaza collection
  - License plate look-up with no transponder
- CRC Project Assumptions
  - ETC would be available with a mix of high speed and toll plaza collection
  - Transponders required for ETC
  - Manual toll collection would also be available for cash-paying customers

#### **Discounts for ETC Customers**

- Discounts encourage early ETC use
- Higher ETC market share increases the toll plaza throughput
  - High speed ETC = 2,000 vehicle per lane/hour
  - Toll plaza ETC = 1,200 vehicle per lane/hour
  - Manual collection = 200-400 vehicle per lane/hour depending on toll (full dollar amounts faster than odd coin amounts)
- CRC Project Assumptions
  - 15% car ETC discount
  - 15% truck ETC discount
  - 100% transit bus ETC discount
  - 50% HOV-3+ discount for ETC customers
- Alternative: No ETC Discounts

## **Toll Escalation Rates**

CRC evaluation assumed a 3% annual inflation rate with \$0.25 increments.

# **CRC Tolling Assumptions Summary**

- Vehicle Classification
  - Truck rates are "axle minus 1" (N-1) times the passenger car toll
- Manual toll collection, as well as high speed and toll-booth ETC will be available
- ETC Discounts to encourage use
  - 15% car ETC discount
  - 15% truck ETC discount
  - 100% transit bus ETC discount
- 50% HOV-3+ discount applied to ETC customers
- 3% Annual inflation applied in \$0.25 increments

# **Tacoma Narrows Bridge Tolling Assumptions**

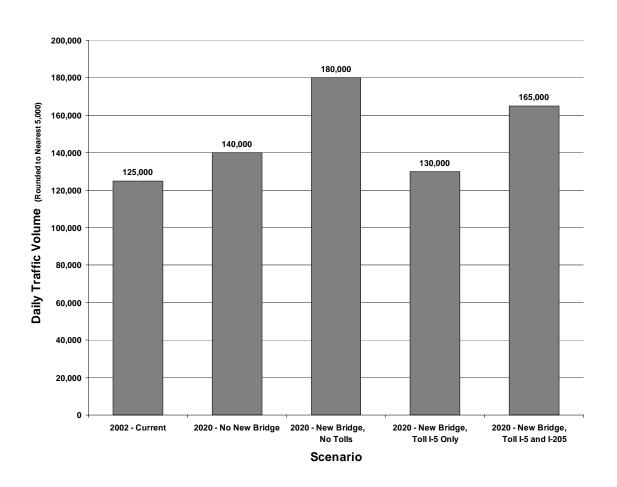
- Vehicle Classification
  - Per axle charge: At \$3.00 toll, each axle is charged \$1.50. A five-axle truck pays five times \$1.50 or \$7.50
- ETC and HOV Discounts to be studied
- Opening day \$3.00
  - Raise \$1.00 every four years to a maximum of \$6.00
  - Caveat: Law requires sufficient revenue to repay bonds tolls may be adjusted to meet requirement
- ETC forecast share 55% opening day

# **Toll Revenues Using Tacoma Narrows Bridge Assumptions**

- Revenues do not change very much
  - CRC assumptions yield lower revenues from ETC users because of discounts
  - CRC assumptions yield higher revenues from commercial vehicles because of higher rates

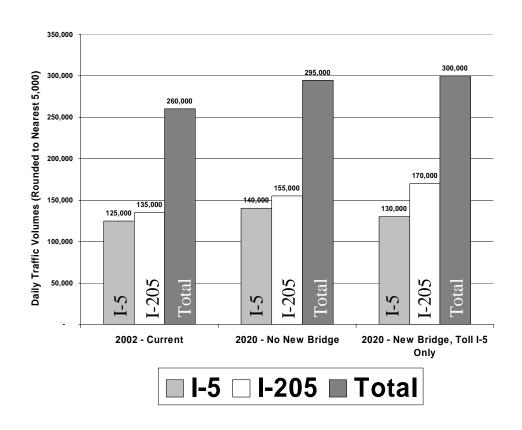
## **I-5 Traffic**

Daily Traffic Volumes for Possible Tolling Scenarios



# **Toll I-5 Only Scenario Traffic**

- Assumptions
  - Build New I-5 Bridge
  - Toll I-5 Bridge
  - I-205 Bridge stays toll free
- Results for I-5
  - Tolled traffic on I-5 is <u>less</u> than toll free traffic if the bridge had not been built
- Results for I-205
  - Toll-free traffic on I-205 is more than if the I-5 bridge were toll free and expanded



Daily Traffic Volumes for Tolling I-5 Only Scenario

# **Toll I-5 and I-205 Scenario Traffic**

#### Assumptions

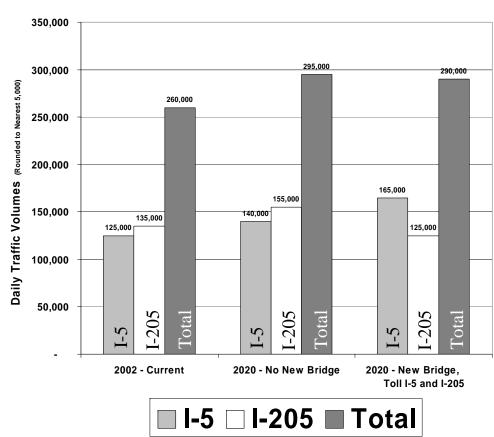
- Build New I-5 Bridge
- Toll I-5 Bridge and I-205 Bridge

#### Results for I-5

- Tolled traffic on I-5 is more than toll free traffic if bridge had not been built
- Tolled traffic on I-5 is <u>less</u> than toll free traffic

#### Results for I-205

- Toll traffic on I-205 is <u>less</u> than toll free traffic if the bridge had not been built
- In 2020, tolled traffic on I-205 is <u>less</u> than toll free traffic today



Daily Traffic Volumes for Tolling I-5 and I-205 Scenario

# **CRC Projected Revenues**

- Assumptions
  - Car toll in one direction is \$2.00 in 2004 dollars; therefore car toll is \$2.75 in 2013
  - Toll escalates in even 25¢ increments at 3% inflation rate

# Annual Projected Revenues (\$ Rounded)

	<b>Toll I-5 Only</b> (Toll one bridge - northbound <u><b>AND</b></u> southbound)	Toll I-5 & I-205 (Toll two bridges - northbound <u>OR</u> southbound)
2013	\$125 million	\$140 million
2020	\$150 million	\$170 million

### Conclusion

From a revenue projection standpoint, tolling is a feasible option for further consideration in the environmental phase of this project.