



Eastside Corridor Tolling Study: Public Open Houses

Open House Summary

November 30, 2009

Background

In 2009, the Washington State Legislature directed WSDOT to prepare a traffic and revenue study for Eastside Corridor tolling and to seek input from the public by January 2010. As part of the outreach process, we presented information at 13 community festivals and hosted three open houses in the month of August and two in November. At the November meetings we presented the preliminary results from our traffic modeling and key findings from our public outreach so far. Additionally, members of the public were encouraged to provide feedback by e-mail, comment form, or talking with project staff at the open houses.

Overview

The goal and purpose of the second series of open houses was to reintroduce the study, share results of public outreach tactics (focus groups and phone and online surveys), identify public concerns, distribute comprehensive background information, and provide information on the traffic and revenue results for each study option. The meetings were held on Nov. 3 at Kent-Meridian High School and Nov. 5 at Kirkland City Hall. A total of 52 community members attended the open houses.

During the meetings, attendees reviewed background information and public outreach results, considered the five study options, learned about the preliminary results on traffic performance, average toll rates, and possible funding for each option, and viewed a 10 minute informational video. Key project team members were available to discuss the new study results, clear up confusion over issues and answer any questions with attendees. All meeting materials, including copies of the display boards, are posted on the project Web site: www.wsdot.wa.gov/tolling/eastsidecorridor.

To advertise the open houses to a large audience, WSDOT conducted an extensive outreach campaign that included committee briefings, online comment forms, print and online advertising, listserv and e-mail invitations, and postings at various community locations.

Attending committee briefings allowed WSDOT to reach an audience of representatives that report back to a large group of diverse backgrounds (such as a city or business). For example, at a *Commute Trip Reduction* meeting in Renton, WSDOT met with representatives of, among others, King County Metro, Sound Transit and several hospitals, who then reported back to their employees about the study and how they can comment. Posting open house flyers at community locations, which includes libraries, community centers and city halls, proved to be a valuable tool. Each flyer included a phone number and a mailing and e-mail address for people, if they have comments or questions regarding the study. Posting flyers at community locations and in print publications allowed WSDOT to reach a more diverse audience; one that may not have access to a computer or the internet.



For those that have internet access, WSDOT used a variety of online methods including the Eastside Corridor Tolling Web site, listserv items (sent to members of the I-405/Eastside, South King County and I-5 connections listserv groups), press releases, advertisements on several online publications, and postings on several community calendars (city Web

sites) along the Eastside Corridor. The postings on the community calendars gave WSDOT the opportunity to reach out to those who are already or would like to be involved in their community. By using listserv items, WSDOT stayed connected with those community members who are familiar with the process and wish to stay connected throughout the tolling study.

The following summary highlights the advertising efforts and summarizes the public's comments.



Citizens gather at Kirkland City Hall to learn about express toll lanes



Comment Station – Kirkland City Hall

Advertisements and Notifications

WSDOT sent e-mail notices to approximately 10,000 interested parties on the project mailing list and several listservs (I-405/Eastside, S. King County and I-5 Connections) and ran display ads in eight print publications and four online publications, reaching over 265,000 readers and securing over three and a half million established impressions.

Other advertising and meeting notification included:

- Flyers and posters at community locations (i.e. city halls, community centers, etc)
- Press release to local media
- Announcement on project Web site and city community calendars
- E-mail distribution to various neighborhood groups on the Eastside Corridor
- E-mail to various Chamber of Commerce offices throughout the Eastside Corridor

Open house flyer

Express Toll Lanes on I-405 and SR 167?
Plans underway to operate our highways smarter.

Ever driven on the express lanes? Or the SR 167 high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes? If so, you may be interested in a possible new transportation option.

WSDOT is considering creating a two-lane express toll lane system, alongside existing toll-free general purpose lanes on I-405. The express toll lanes would connect with SR 167 HOT lanes, creating a 50+ mile "expressway within a highway" from Puyallup to Lynnwood.

Through the use of technology, an Eastside Corridor express toll lane system could give commuters a choice for a reliable, fast trip every day.

We'd like your input.

Join us to share your feedback and discuss the tolling study with project staff. You can come by any time between 4:00 and 7:00 pm. Your input is important and will be included in a report to the Governor and Legislature in January 2010.

Tuesday, November 3
Kendall
Kant Mendon High School
Cabrera
10205 SE 256th St
Kant, WA 98035

Thursday, November 5
Kirkland
Kirkland City Hall
Piper 204 Room
123 20th Ave
Kirkland, WA 98033

4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Washington State Department of Transportation

For more information email ectollingstudy@wsdot.wa.gov or visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/tolling/eastsidecorridor - Contact: Janet Matkin at 206-716-1150.

Advertising

To further awareness around the open houses, display ads were placed in the following publications:

| Newspaper/Media Outlet | Advertisement Insertion Date(s) | Circulation |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Seattle Times Eastside Edition | 10/26-10/30/2009 | 64,187 |
| Auburn Reporter | 10/23, 10/30 | 29,421 |
| Bellevue Reporter | 10/24, 10/28, 10/31 | 40,227 |
| Kirkland Reporter | 10/21, 10/28 | 25,956 |
| Kent Reporter | 10/21, 10/24, 10/28 | 30,223 |
| Redmond Reporter | 10/23, 10/30 | 25,089 |
| Bothell/Kenmore Reporter | 10/21, 10/28 | 21,341 |
| Renton Reporter | 10/21, 10/28 | 31,062 |
| | | |

To reach a larger audience, WSDOT also used several online publications to advertise the open houses. This is one of the newest strategies used today. In some cases WSDOT was able to reach an audience nearly 20 times bigger by using online publications over traditional print newspapers.

| Media Outlet | Advertisement Run Date(s) | No. of Impressions Received |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Seattle Times Online | 10/22-11/5/2009 | 1,286,108 |
| Seattle PI Online | 10/22-11/5/2009 | 1,266,700 |
| Colors NW | 10/22-11/5/2009 | 191,213 |
| Daily Journal of Commerce | 10/22/-11/5/2009 | 201,103 |

Seattle PI Online Display Ad

The image shows a screenshot of a web browser displaying a Seattle PI Online advertisement. The ad is a green and white graphic with the following text:

- Express Toll Lanes on I-405 & SR 167?**
- We need your input.**
- Learn more and attend an open house!
- Washington State Department of Transportation logo

The background of the screenshot shows a webpage with a search bar, a list of movie reviews (e.g., "Twilight" phenomenon both blessing, curse for Forks), and a "Recent stories" section. The browser's address bar shows "onal - [October Screenshots 11.12.09.pdf]".

Community Calendars

WSDOT coordinated with local cities along the Eastside Corridor to include information about the open houses on community calendars. The following cities posted announcements or distributed information:

| City | Advertising Mediums |
|---------------|--|
| Auburn | Community calendar |
| Bellevue | Community calendar |
| Kenmore | Community calendar |
| Kirkland | City calendar, government access channel, employee intranet, Neighborhood News list-serv |
| Mercer Island | Community calendar |
| Newcastle | Community calendar, city blog |
| Puyallup | Community calendar |
| Renton | Web calendar, spotlight news page. |
| Sumner | Community calendar |
| Tukwila | City website |

City Calendar advertisement

City of Issaquah, Washington

LIVING IN ISSAQUAH :: DOING BUSINESS :: CITY GOVERNMENT :: VISITOR / ATTRACTIONS

HOMEPAGE MAYOR & COUNCIL :: DEPARTMENTS :: BOARDS & COMMISSIONS :: NEED HELP?

Back Printer friendly version

Open House: Eastside Corridor Tolling Study

October 2009: As part of the Eastside Corridor Tolling Study, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is considering adding an additional lane on I-405 that – combined with the existing HOV lane – could operate as two express toll lanes, creating more than a 50-mile corridor from Puyallup to Lynnwood.

To involve the public and gather feedback, WSDOT is hosting two public open houses along the Eastside Corridor:

- Nov. 3, 2009
 - Kent Meridian High School Cafeteria
 - 10020 S.E. 256th St., Kent, WA 98030
 - 4-7 p.m.
- Nov. 5, 2009
 - Kirkland City Hall's Peter Kirk Room
 - 123 5th Ave., Kirkland, WA 98033
 - 4-7 p.m.

For more information, click [here](#).

Community Outreach – through other outlets

WSDOT advertised the meetings on KOMO's Neighborhood for the following communities:

- Bellevue
- Bothell
- Kent
- Kirkland
- Auburn
- Puyallup
- Redmond
- Renton
- Woodinville

Toll lanes on 405? Meeting tomorrow

Submitted by *Rose Egge* on Wednesday, November 4th, 12:26pm



Another meeting to discuss express toll lanes on I-405 will be held tomorrow at Kirkland City Hall from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

As part of the [Eastside Corridor Tolling Study](#), the toll lanes would serve as free HOV lanes for carpools, vanpools and buses but would also be open to solo drivers who choose to pay a toll.

You can find more information about the Eastside Corridor Tolling Study [online](#).

Comment Highlights

WSDOT began the Eastside Corridor Study earlier this year. Since then, over 2,000 comments have been analyzed and added to the database. We began advertising the open houses on October 15. Since that date, we received 232 comments.

The following is an overview of the written public comments received at the second round of open houses.

Direct quotes are italicized to highlight the tone of the comments. In addition to comment forms filled out at the meetings, many people elected to e-mail comments or send in comment forms by mail.

Comment themes included:

Congestion relief

A number of citizens expressed their support for express toll lanes.

- *“Provides an option to bypass slow or stopped traffic for important trips.”*
- *“Increases funding for implementing the I-405 Master Plan and supports alternative travel modes.”*

Top three benefits of express toll lanes

A number of citizens identified their top three benefits of having express toll lanes.

- *“Reduces overall congestion, expands road capacity and reduces congestion on existing general purpose lanes.”*
- *“Option to bypass stalled traffic for important trips, allows faster trip for all traffic and allows better use of road capacity.”*

Top three concerns regarding express toll lanes

A number of citizens identified their top three concerns of express toll lanes.

- *“Not enough general purpose lanes on I-405 from Renton to Bellevue, not enough general purpose lanes on highway 167 and not enough general purpose lanes from Highway 522 to I-5.”*
- *“Property impacts from widening, construction impacts and length of disruption and safety with weaving and changing lanes.”*

Other comments.

- *“Please add 2 lanes on I-405 from Renton to Bellevue before you even think of adding a HOT lane. It is unsafe and we have been neglected long enough!”*