

DRAFT 4a - subject to revisions

I-405 Express Toll Lanes

2013 Pre-Campaign Survey Report

Prepared for the Washington State
Department of Transportation
November 11, 2013

PRR



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Background & Purpose

- The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is currently in the process of adding up to two express toll lanes in each direction in I-405 between Bellevue and Lynnwood. These new lanes will be in addition to existing general purpose traffic lanes.
- This survey provides attitudes and opinions about the I-405 express toll lanes among Washington users who travel along I-405.
- Topic areas covered in the survey included:
 - Awareness and knowledge of I-405 express toll lanes
 - Support toward the I-405 express toll lanes
 - Appeal of messages regarding the I-405 express toll lanes
 - Likelihood to use the express toll lanes
 - Attitudes toward potential carpool definition changes
 - Current travel behaviors on I-405
 - Preferred communication mediums for information about I-405 express toll lanes
 - Respondent demographics

Methodology

- Conducted with a statistically valid telephone survey using both random digit dialing and cell phone sample.
 - Survey fielded from September 11 through September 29, 2013
- Also included an online survey of vanpoolers from King County Metro and Community Transit.
 - Survey fielded from September 25 through October 1, 2013
- In order to qualify to participate in the study, users needed to:
 - Travel on I-405 at least one day in the past 7 days
 - Not work for a transportation agency or have anyone in their household work for a transportation agency
- The survey was completed by 975 respondents. The data was weighted by travel mode (single occupancy vehicle (SOV), carpool, or vanpool) to approximate the overall mode split on I-405.
- The margin of error is +/- 3.1%.
- All reported relationships are statistically significant.
- The numbers in the charts are all percentages.

For the telephone survey, the following zip codes were used:

98004, 98005, 98006,
98007, 98008, 98011,
98012, 98021, 98026,
98027, 98028, 98029,
98031, 98032, 98033,
98034, 98036, 98037,
98039, 98040, 98043,
98052, 98053, 98055,
98056, 98057, 98058,
98059, 98072, 98074,
98075, 98077, 98087,
98118, 98122, 98144,
98148, 98155, 98158,
98168, 98178, 98188,
98204, 98208, 98275,
98290, 98296

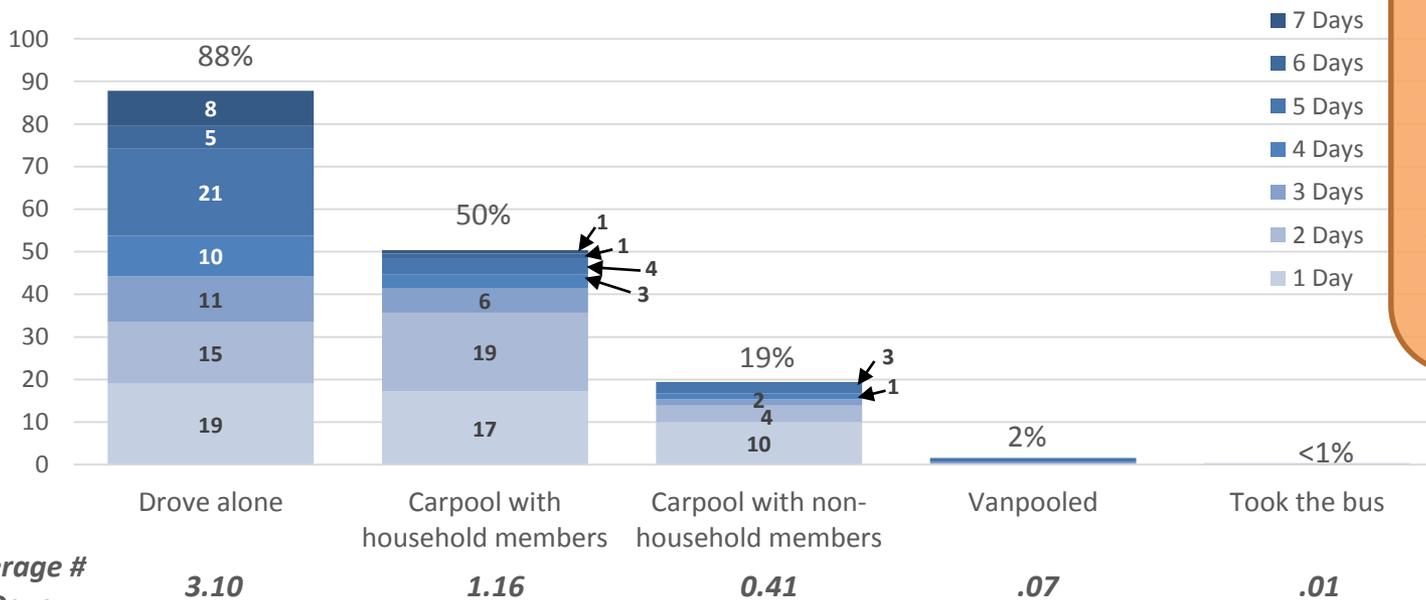
Key Findings

- Overall support for the express toll lanes on I-405 is low among users (27% strongly support the lanes).
 - Awareness and knowledge of these lanes was low prior to the survey, as only 38% were aware the express toll lanes were being added to I-405.
- According to users, the most appealing aspect of the express toll lanes was that general purpose lanes would still be free. The fact that there would be no toll booths and that transit and registered vanpools would travel on the lanes for free was also very appealing for users.
 - The key driver for express toll lane support was the benefit of reducing congestion on I-405.
- The majority of users were not planning on using the express toll lanes, though one-third (34%) were at least somewhat likely to use the new lanes to make it to an important appointment.
 - Roughly one-third (34%) of users thought the general purpose lanes would travel faster after the express toll lanes are complete.
 - Nearly half (46%) of users thought the express toll lanes would operate faster, more reliable trips on I-405.
- There was little support for changing the definition of a carpool.
 - Only one-quarter (25%) of current carpools would qualify for the new definition of 3 or more people.
 - Changing the definition so the express toll lanes would work more effectively or so carpools would pay less than 1-person vehicles were more popular than having the carpool definition change by time of day.
- Users were not interested in changing their mode of travel on I-405 in order to get a “free ride” on the new I-405 express toll lanes.
 - Single occupancy vehicles were least likely to be open to using a vanpool, carpooling, or using transit.
- The preferred way to communicate with users about the express toll lanes is to provide information online.

How Are Users Currently Traveling on I-405?

- The majority of respondents (88%) had driven alone on I-405 in the past week and 50% had carpooled at least once.
 - Vanpool members were more likely than SOV or carpool members to only use I-405 during weekdays.
 - Hispanics were more likely to ride the bus or vanpool than non-Hispanics.
 - Males were more likely to drive by themselves or vanpool than women who were more likely to carpool.
 - Younger users were more likely to carpool (18-34) or vanpool (25-34) than older users. Those age 35 or older were more likely to drive alone.

Modes Used to Travel on I-405 in Past Week by Number of Days Used
Base = all respondents (n=975)



An average of 2.3 household members or 2.5 non-household members typically make up each carpool (including driver).

Only 25% of same household carpools and 26% of non-household carpools would qualify for the new definition of 3 or more people.

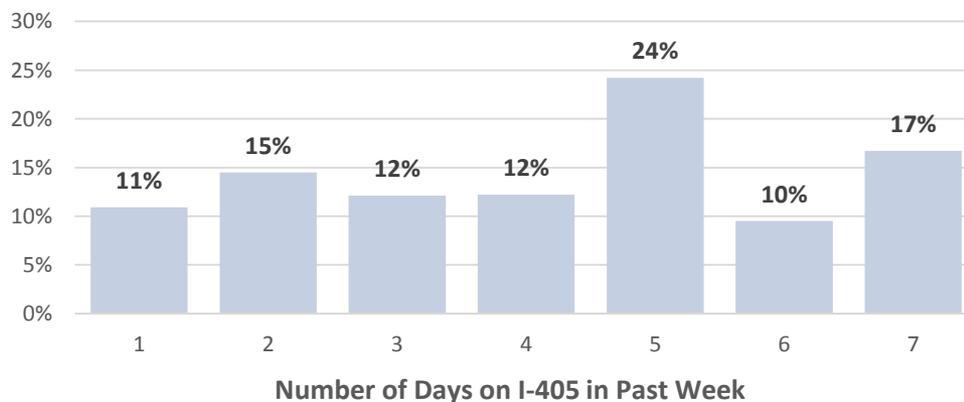
Average # of Days

How Often are Users Traveling on I-405?

- On average, respondents traveled on I-405 4.2 days per week, with more than half (51%) traveling on I-405 at least 5 days per week.
 - Males traveled on I-405 more days per week than females (4.5 days per week vs. 4.0).
 - Vanpool members had the highest average number of days traveling on I-405 with 4.6 days per week, followed by single occupancy vehicles (4.3 days), and carpool members traveled the fewest days per week (4.1 days on average).
 - Those in the 35-45 age category traveled more often on I-405 in the last week than those in older and younger age categories.
- Nearly four out of five respondents traveled on I-405 between Bellevue and Lynnwood in the past week (78%).
 - Single occupancy vehicle (SOVs) were more likely to be traveling between Bellevue and Lynnwood than carpools or vanpools.

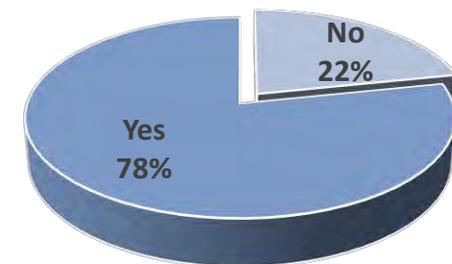
Number of Days Traveling on I-405 in Past Week

Base = all respondents (n=975)



Traveled Between Bellevue and Lynnwood on I-405

Base = all respondents (n=975)

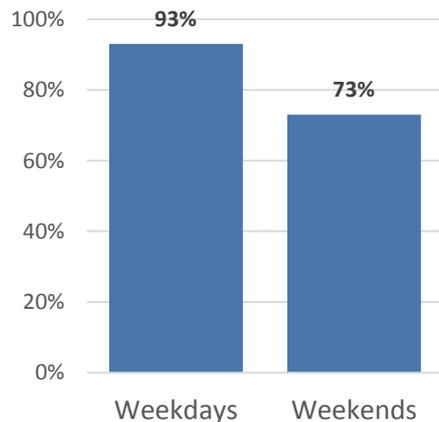


When are Users Traveling on I-405?

- Most respondents traveled on I-405 on weekdays (93%) and many also used I-405 on weekends (73%).
 - Vanpool members were more likely than SOVs or carpool members to only use I-405 during weekdays.
- Peak hours (AM and PM) were the most popular times to travel on I-405.
 - Males were more likely to travel on I-405 during peak hours and overnight, while females were more likely to travel on I-405 during mid-day.
 - Vanpool members were most likely to travel on I-405 during peak hours and carpools were most likely to travel on I-405 during the PM peak.

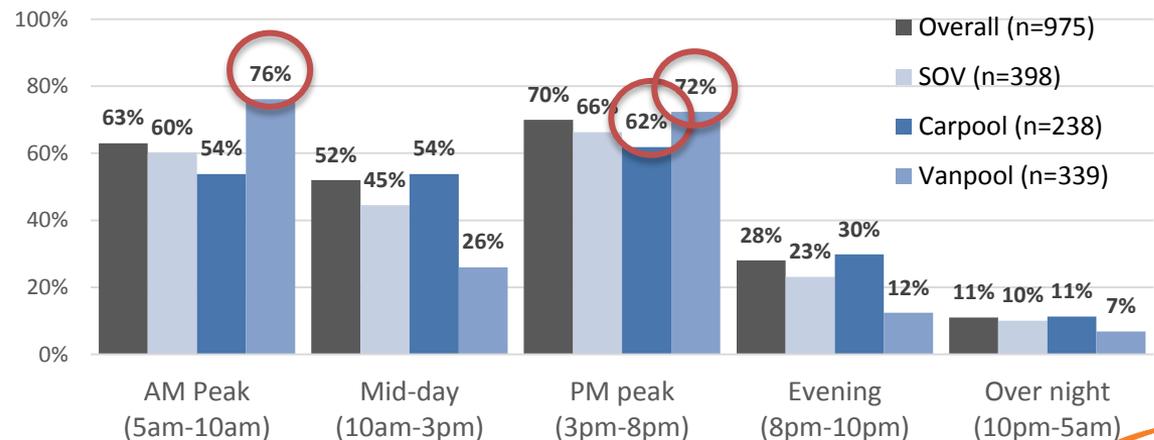
Traveling on Weekdays or Weekends?

Base = all respondents (n=973)



Time of Day Traveling on I-405

Base = varies, see legend

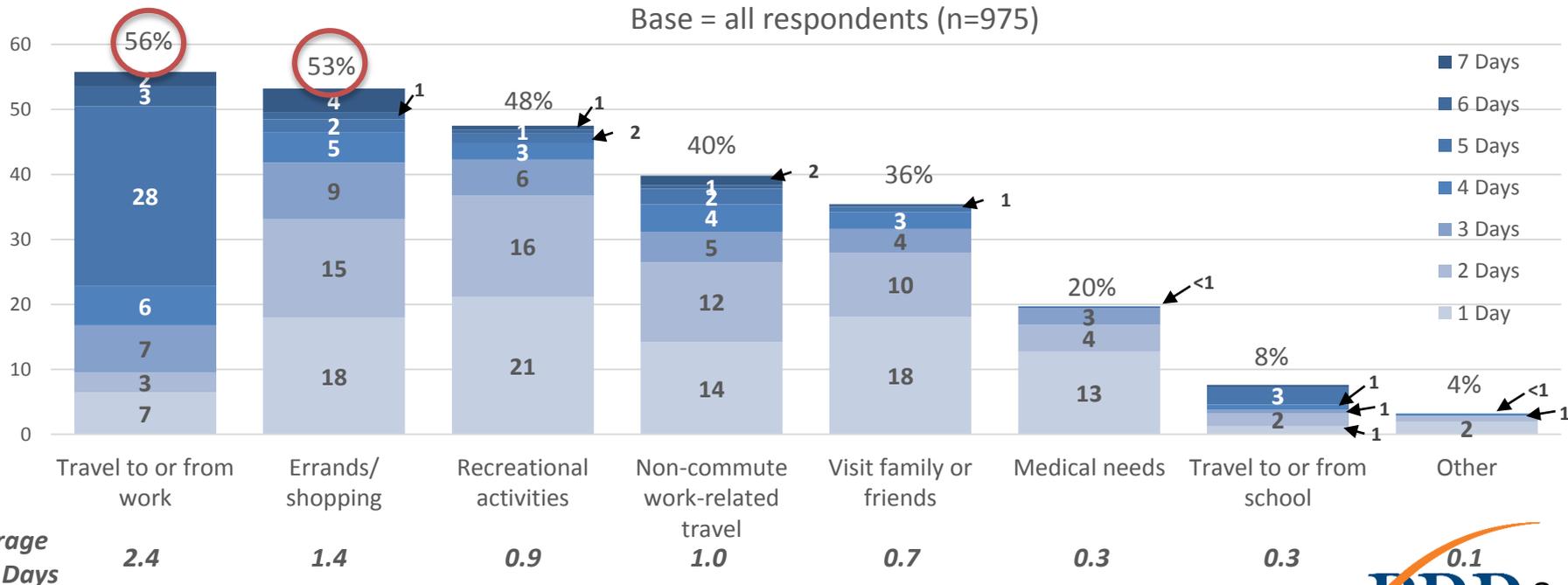


What Are The Purposes for Using I-405 and How Frequently is I-405 Used for Each Purpose?

- More than half of users have driven on I-405 in the past week to travel to or from work (56%) or for shopping or running errands (53%).
 - Vanpool members and SOVs were more likely than carpool members to use I-405 for work.
 - Carpools and SOVs were more likely than vanpool members to use I-405 for errands/ shopping, recreational activities, non-commute work-related travel, to visit family or friends, or medical needs.
 - Carpool members were more likely to travel on I-405 to or from school than SOVs or vanpools.
 - Males were more likely than females to travel on I-405 to or from work.

Reasons for Traveling on I-405 by Number of Days

Base = all respondents (n=975)

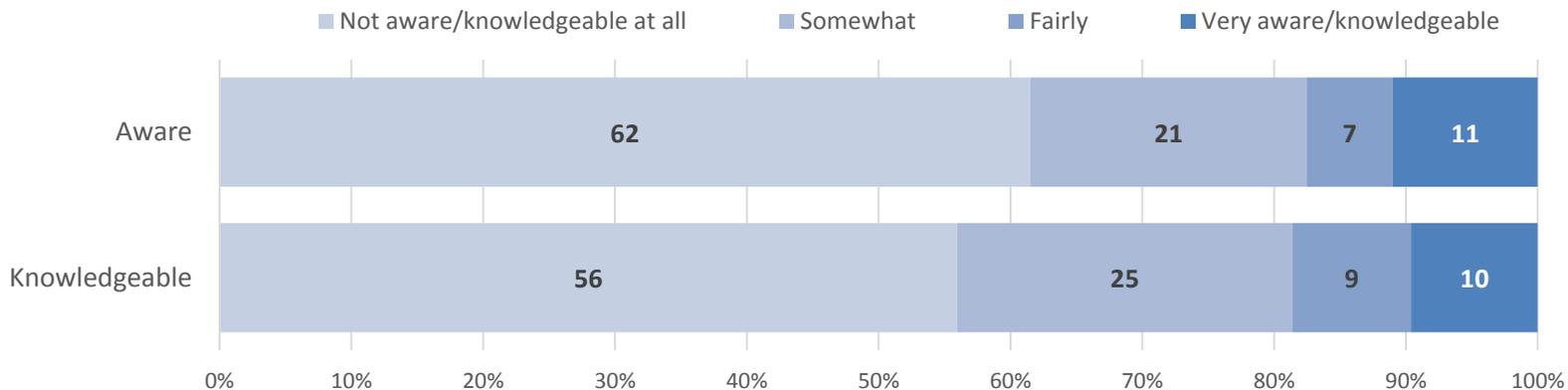


Are Users Aware that Express Toll Lanes are Being Added to I-405?

- Few users were aware that express toll lanes are being added to I-405, as just over one-third knew about the toll lanes before taking the survey (38%). One out of ten reported being very aware of the express toll lanes (11%).
 - Those who traveled on I-405 between Bellevue and Lynnwood were more likely to be aware of the toll lanes than those who did not travel on this stretch of I-405.
 - Those age 55 and over were more likely to be aware of the toll lanes than those under age 55.
 - Awareness was positively correlated with age; as age increases, so does awareness.
- Knowledge of the proposed express toll lanes on I-405 was also low (43% reported having at least some knowledge).
 - Users age 25-34 reported being most knowledgeable about the express toll lanes.

Awareness and Knowledge of I-405 Express Toll Lanes Prior to Survey

Base = all respondents (n=975)



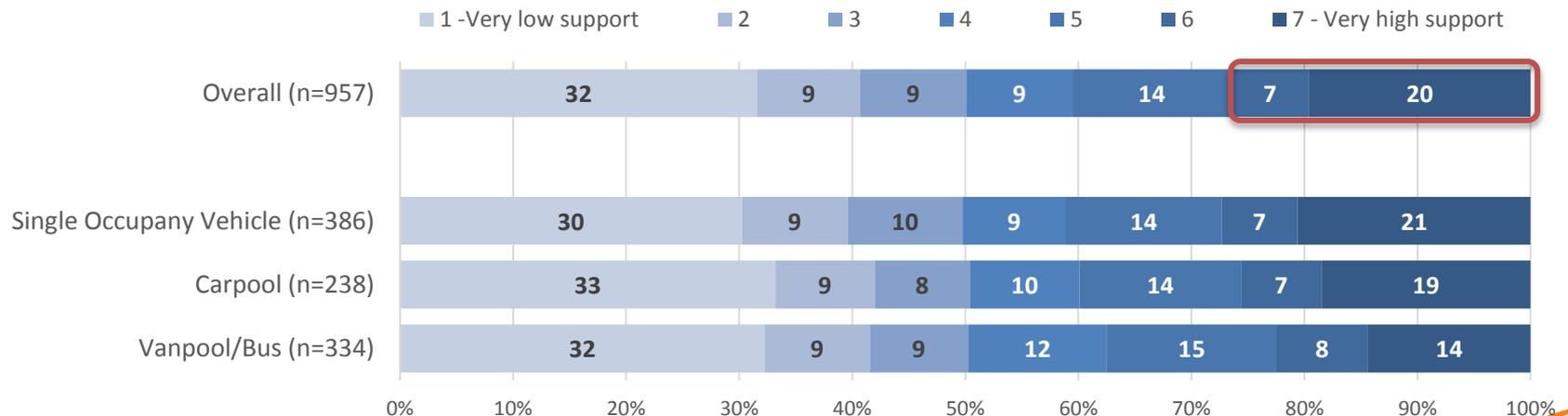
There were no significant differences by travel mode in either awareness or knowledge of the express toll lanes on I-405.

Do Users Support the Express Toll Lanes on I-405?

- Support for the express toll lanes is not overwhelmingly strong by users, but more than a quarter of users strongly supported the additional lanes (27% supported the lanes with a 6 or 7).
 - There were no significant differences in support by travel mode.
 - The more knowledgeable users were about the express toll lanes, the more they supported the lanes.
 - Support varied by age and was most heavily supported by younger users age 18-24.
 - Users with high incomes (\$150,000 per year or more) were more likely to support the express toll lanes.
 - Support for the lanes was higher among males than females.

Overall Support for Express Toll Lanes on I-405

Base = all respondents (n-sizes vary, see below)



What are the Key Drivers of Support for the Express Toll Lanes on I-405?

- When trying to understand what factors or benefits influence support of the express toll lanes on I-405 the most, the benefit and idea that the additional lanes “*allows the corridor to operate more efficiently to reduce congestion*” was most influential.
- The level at which users believe that congestion will be reduced was the biggest influence on how much they support the express toll lanes.

7 Largest Influencers on Overall Support for I-405 Express Toll Lanes.

These 7 explain approximately 57% of the variance in support for express toll lanes ($R^2=.565$)

Adding express toll lanes instead of general purpose lanes allows the corridor to operate more efficiently to reduce congestion.

How convinced are you that express toll lanes on I-405 will provide faster, more reliable trips for those in the express toll lanes.

Tolling funds could go directly into a dedicated account to maintain and improve the I-405 corridor and to extend express toll lanes to Renton and connect with the SR 167 HOT lanes.

How likely would you be to choose to use the express toll lanes for a faster trip?

Toll rates will change by the amount of traffic congestion – higher rates during times of more congestion, lower rates during times of less congestion.

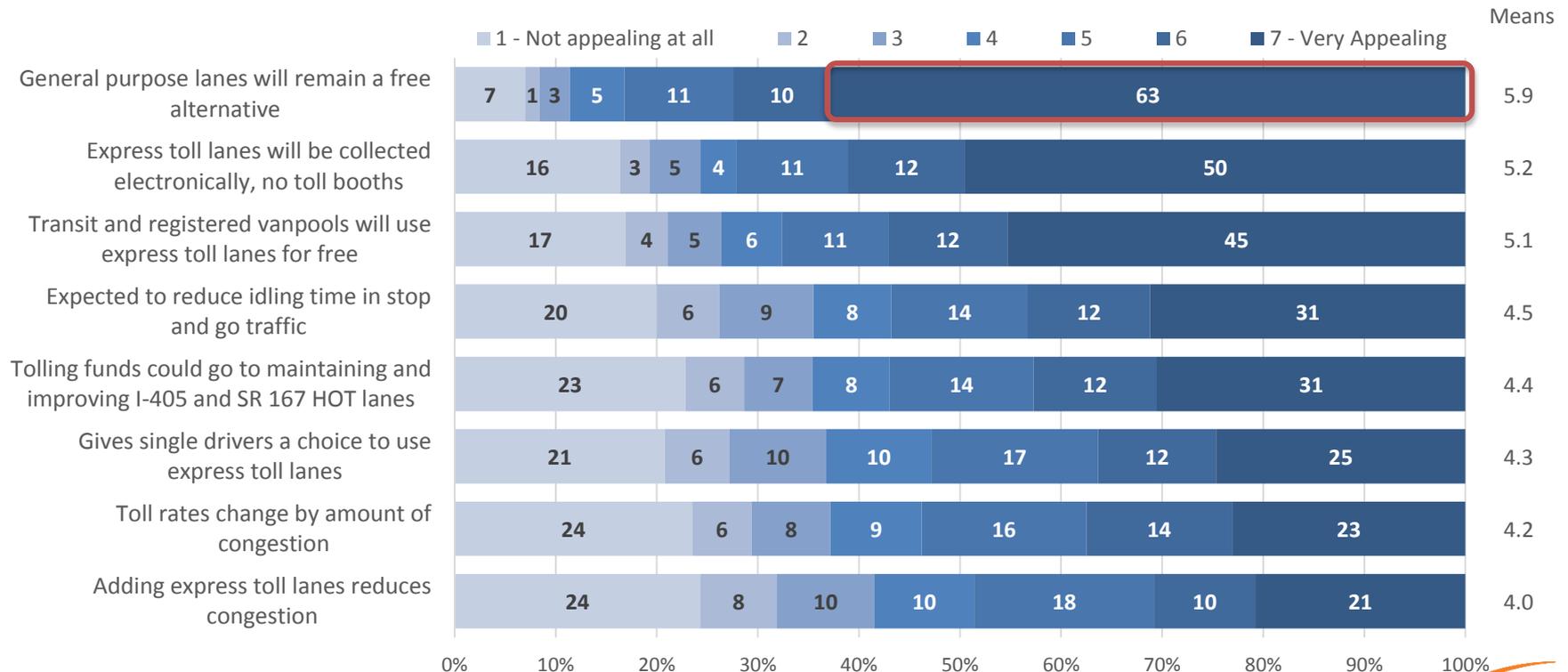
How convinced are you that express toll lanes on I-405 will provide faster, more reliable trips for those in the general purpose lanes.

Express toll lanes will collect tolls electronically as vehicles travel at regular highway speeds. There would be no toll booths.

How Appealing are the Different Benefit Statements of Having Express Toll Lanes on I-405?

- The fact that general purpose lanes will continue to be a free alternative resonated as the most appealing benefit for users (63% very appealing). Having no toll booths and the opportunity for transit and registered vanpools to use the express toll lanes for free were also quite appealing.

Appeal of Benefits of I-405 Express Toll Lanes
Base = all respondents (n=971)



Does the Appeal of the Benefit Statements Differ by Travel Mode?

- When looking at benefits by travel mode, it is apparent that vanpool members found the idea of *vanpools using express toll lanes for free and reduced idling time in stop and go traffic, which will be good for air quality* more appealing benefits than carpool members or SOV drivers.
- SOV drivers and carpool members found the *free general purpose lanes and no toll booths* more appealing than vanpool members.

Appeal of Benefits of I-405 Express Toll Lanes

Base = by mode SOV (n=390), Carpool (n=233), Vanpool (n=323)

1 - Not appealing at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 - Very Appealing



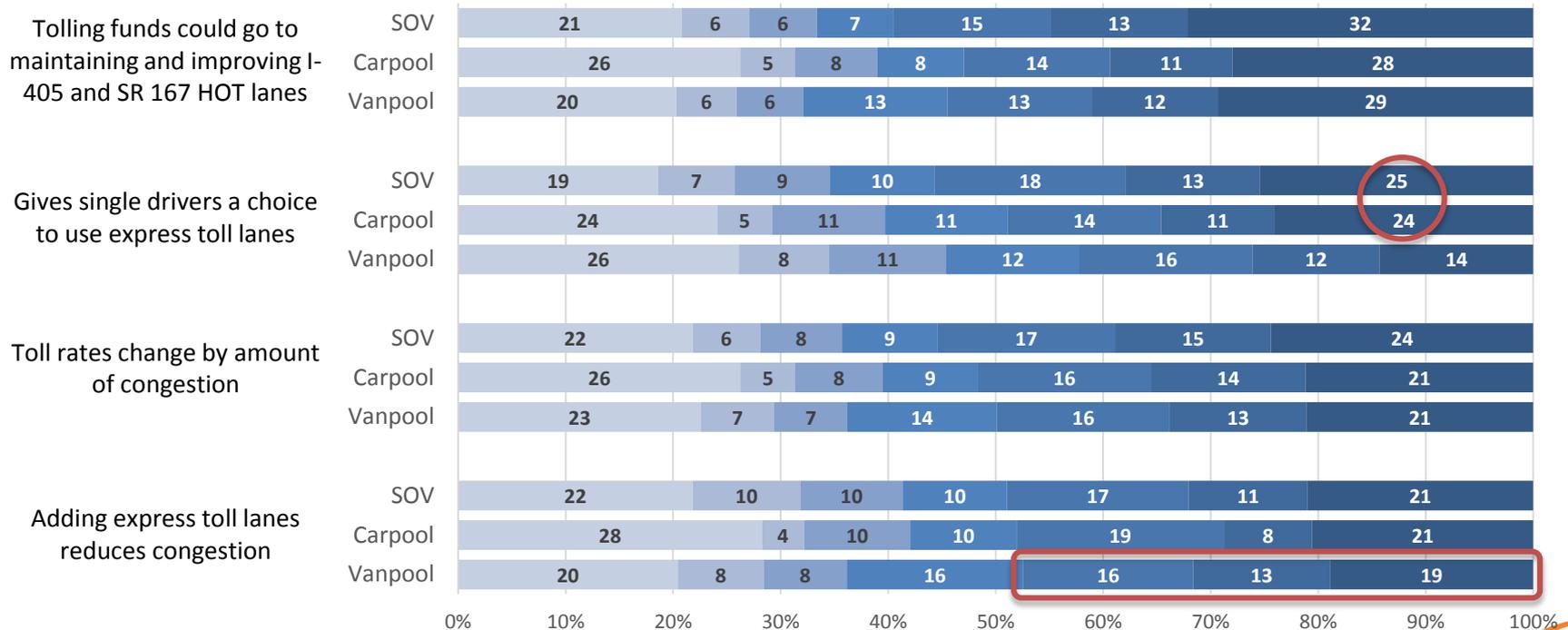
Appeal of Benefit Statements by Travel Mode (continued)

- The idea of giving single occupancy drivers a choice to use express toll lanes was more appealing to SOV and carpool members than vanpool members.
- Vanpool members found the reduced congestion more appealing than SOV or carpool members.

Appeal of Benefits of I-405 Express Toll Lanes

Base = by mode SOV (n=390), Carpool (n=233), Vanpool (n=323)

1 - Not appealing at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 - Very Appealing



Appeal of Benefit Statements by Additional Factors

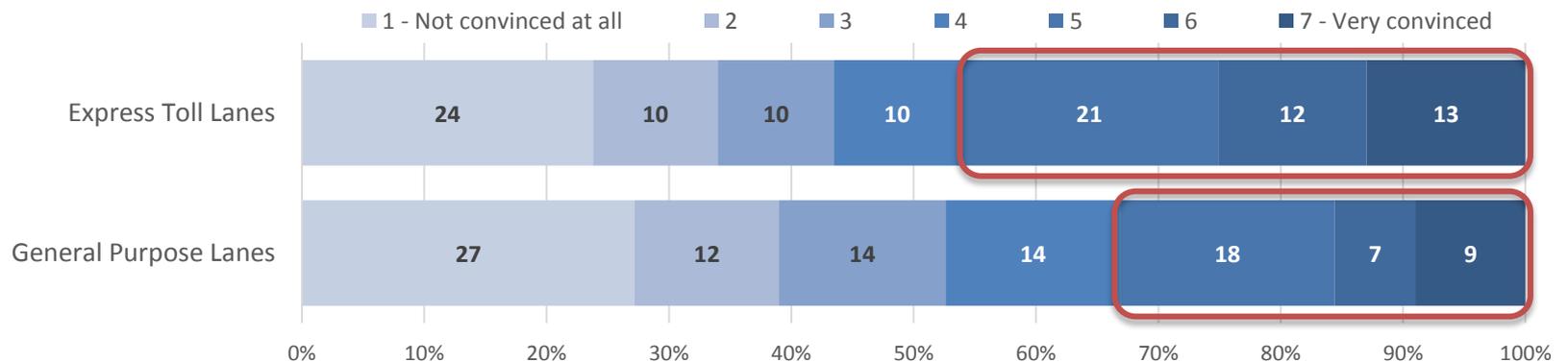
- The following benefits appealed more to certain subsets:
 - General purpose lanes will remain a free alternative
 - Ages 45 and older more than under 45
 - Those with household incomes above \$35,000 per year
 - Express toll lanes will be collected electronically, no toll booths
 - Ages 18 to 44 more than 45 or older
 - Hispanics
 - Appeal increases with income – as income rises, appeal of electronic toll booths rises
 - Transit and registered vanpools will use express toll lanes for free
 - Age 25-64, not as much to younger or older users
 - Those with household incomes above \$150,000 per year
 - Expected to reduce idling time in stop and go traffic
 - Caucasians
 - Tolling funds could go to maintaining and improving I-405 and SR HOT lanes
 - Blacks/African Americans and Asians
 - Toll rates change by amount of congestion
 - Those with household incomes above \$150,000 per year

How Convinced are Users that Express Toll Lanes Will Provide a Better Experience on I-405?

- Users were not overly convinced that the express toll lanes will allow for a faster, more reliable trip on I-405 in either the express toll lanes or the general purpose lanes. Support was higher for the improved express toll lanes experience (46% rated 5 or higher) than the general purpose lanes (34% rated 5 or higher).
 - There were no significant differences by travel mode.
 - Those traveling on I-405 from Bellevue to Lynnwood were more likely to be convinced the general purpose lanes will move faster than those who did not drive on this stretch of I-405.

How convinced are you that express toll lanes on I-405 will provide faster, more reliable trips for those in the...

Base = all respondents (n=972)

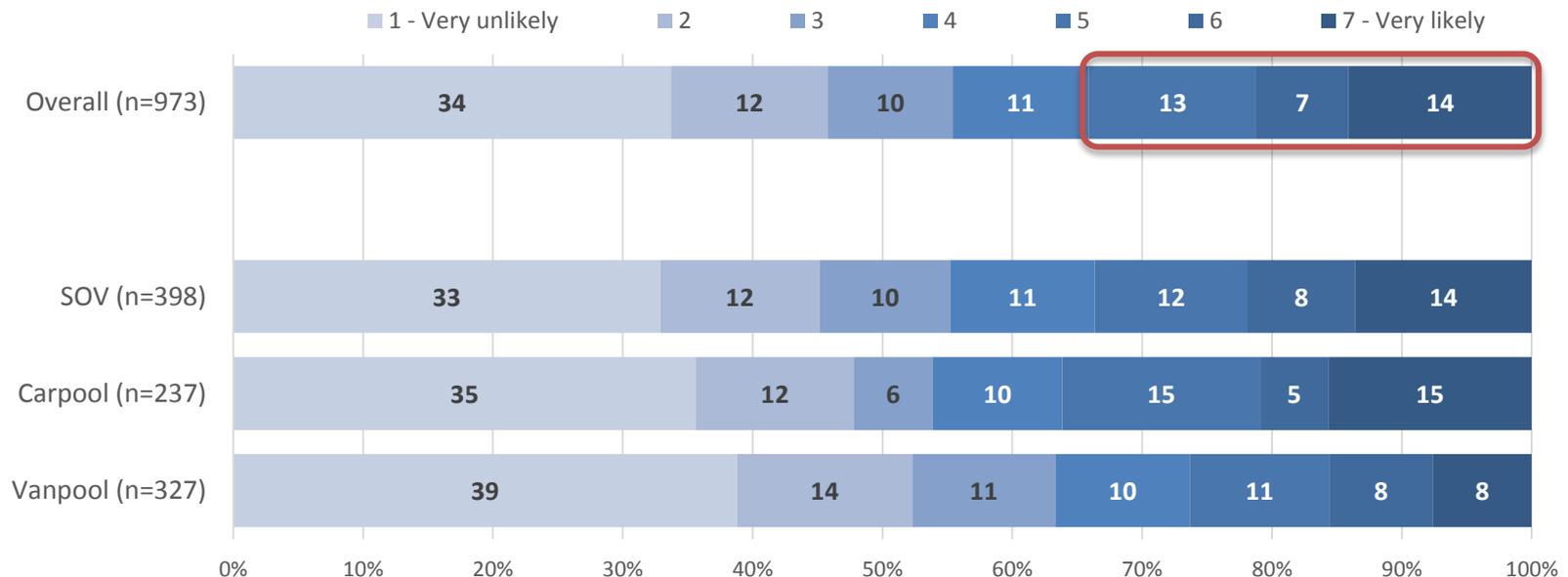


Will Current Users Use the Express Toll Lanes?

- After being read an example of having an important early meeting and needing a reliable trip from Bothell to Bellevue, roughly one-third of users thought they would be likely to use the express toll lanes for a faster trip (34% rating 5 or higher).
 - Carpool members and SOV drivers were slightly more likely than vanpoolers to use the express toll lanes, though the difference is not significant.
 - Younger users were least likely to say they would use the express toll lanes (ages 25-34).
 - Those most likely to use the express toll lanes were users with a household income of \$150,000 or more per year.

Likelihood of Choosing to Use Express Toll Lanes for a Faster Trip

Base = all respondents (n-sizes vary, see below)

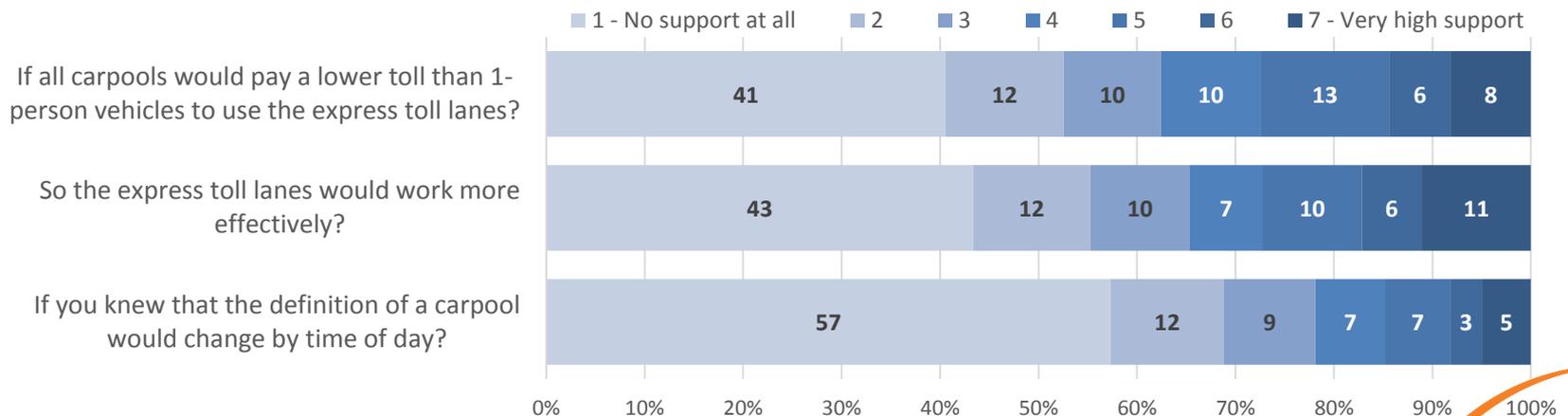


Do Users Support Changing the Definition of a Carpool to 3 or More Persons?

- There was little positive support for changing the definition of a carpool to 3 or more persons. The majority of respondents offer it no support regardless if the definition changed by time of day (78% on a 1-3 scale for little or no support), allowed the express toll lanes to work more effectively (65%), or if a lower toll were required than for 1-person vehicles (63%).
 - There were a few significant differences in support for changing the definition by travel mode, these are shown on the next slide.
 - Males were more likely than females to support changing the definition if the toll lanes would work more effectively.
 - Support was higher among those who do not travel between Bellevue and Lynnwood on I-405 for changing the definition if I-405 worked more effectively or carpools paid a lower toll than single passenger vehicles.
 - African Americans or Blacks were more likely than other races to support changing the definition if carpools pay a lower toll than single occupancy vehicles.

Support for Changing the Definition of a Carpool from “2 or more persons” to “3 or more persons” based on the following information:

Base = all respondents (n=973)



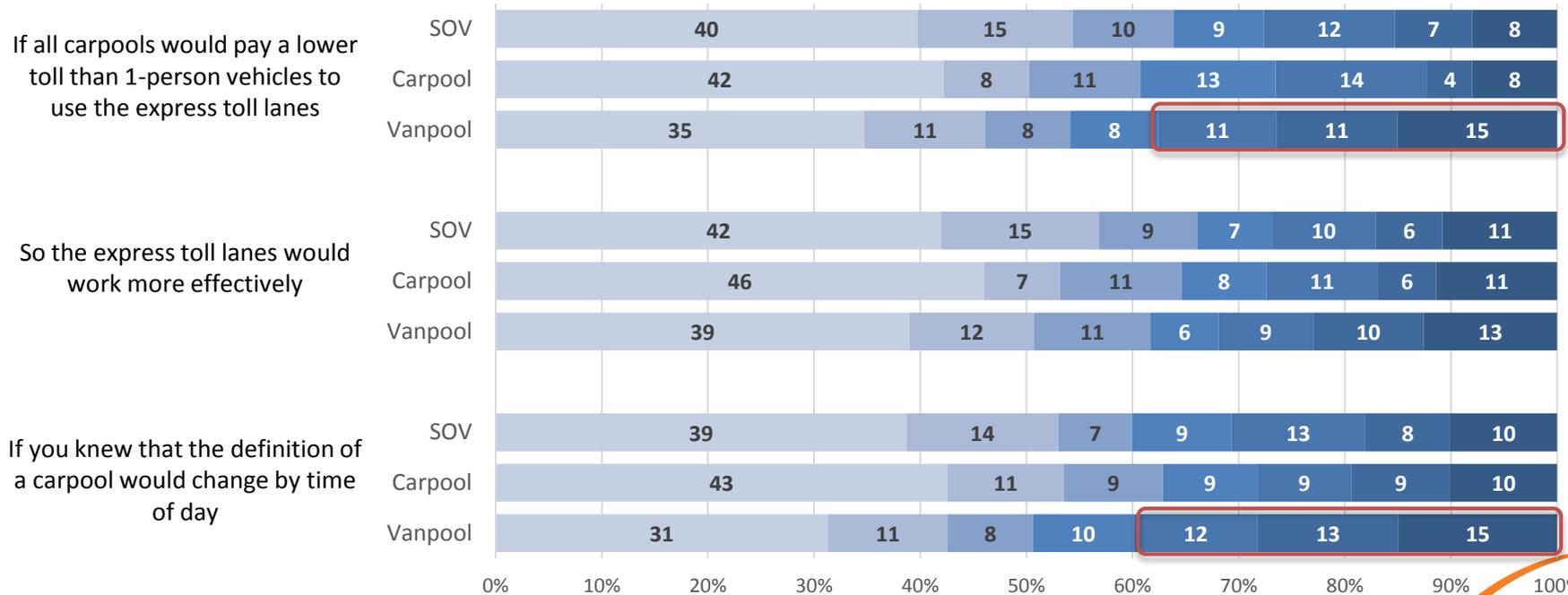
Does Support for Changing Carpool Definition Differ by Travel Mode?

- The idea of carpools paying a lower toll than SOVs to use the express toll lanes had vanpool members offering more support for changing the definition of a carpool than carpools or SOVs.
- Vanpool members were more likely to support changing the definition of a carpool to three or more persons if the definition changed by time of day.

Support for Changing the Definition of a Carpool from “2 or more persons” to “3 or more persons” based on the following information:

Base = by mode SOV (n=398), Carpool (n=237), Vanpool (n=326)

■ 1 - No support at all ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 ■ 6 ■ 7 - Very high support



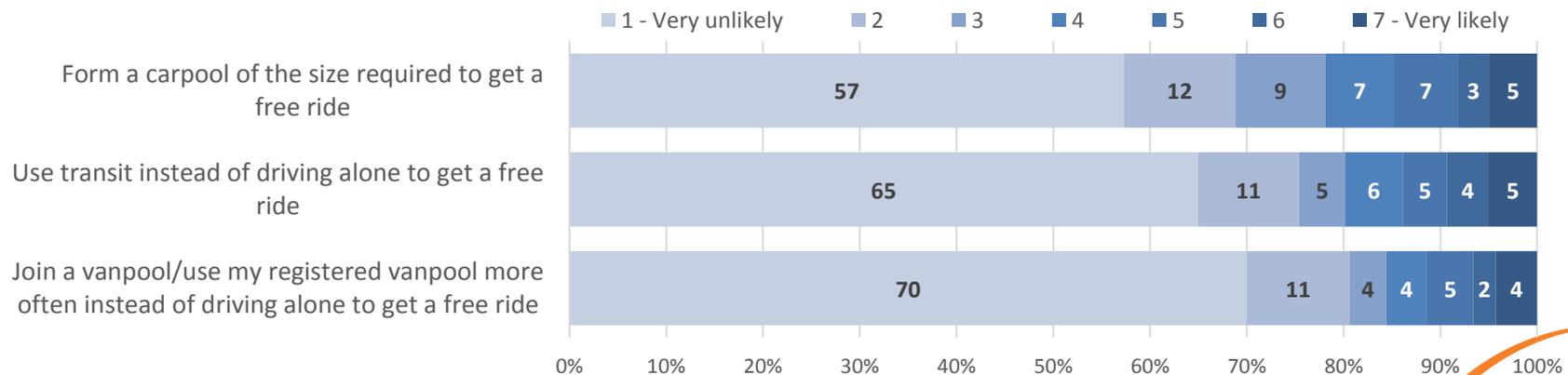
Will Users Change Their Travel Mode with the Addition of the Express Toll Lanes?

- The majority of users were not interested in changing their travel behavior by forming a carpool (78% with a 1, 2, or 3 unlikely score), taking transit (81%), or using a vanpool (85%) in order to get a free ride on the express toll lanes. Though, of the different options, users were more likely to form a carpool than use transit or a vanpool.
 - Carpools were considered most by:
 - Asians and Hispanics
 - 18-35 year olds
 - AM & PM Peak travelers
 - Transit was considered most by:
 - African Americans/Blacks and Hispanics (Whites are *least* likely to consider transit)
 - 18-45 year olds
 - AM & PM Peak travelers
 - Vanpools were considered most by:
 - African Americans/Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics
 - Those traveling 5 days/week on I-405
 - 18-35 year olds
 - AM & PM Peak travelers

Bellevue to Lynnwood commuters were less likely to form a carpool than those who travel on other stretches of I-405.

Likelihood of changing commuting behavior to one of the following after express toll lanes are implemented on I-405:

Base = all respondents (n=973)

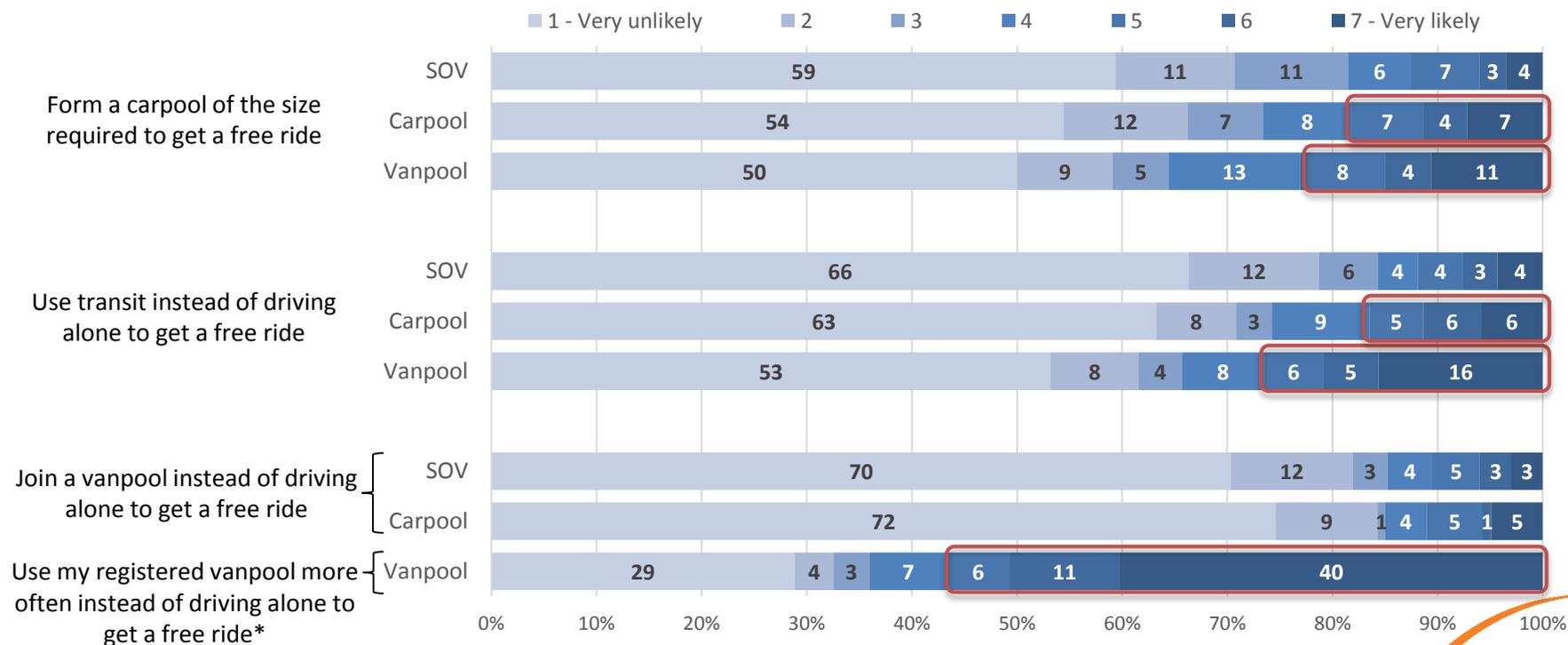


Users' Likelihood of Changing Travel Behavior by Travel Mode

- Carpool and vanpool members were more open to the idea of changing their travel behavior than SOVs. Vanpool members were also significantly more likely to use a vanpool than carpool or single drivers.

Likelihood of changing commuting behavior to one of the following after express toll lanes are implemented on I-405:

Base = by mode SOV (n=398), Carpool (n=237), Vanpool (n=326)



*Question wording was different for vanpoolers since they were already using a registered vanpool

Do Users Have a Good To Go! Account and Where Do They Currently Use Their Pass?

- Just over half of users had a Good To Go! Account (51%) and these passes were used primarily on the SR 520 Bridge (93%). Roughly a quarter were used on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge (26%) or SR 167 HOT lanes (23%).
 - SOVs and carpool members were more likely to have a pass than vanpool members.
 - Over half with a pass drove to work 5 or more days per week.
 - Those with a higher income and those between ages 35 and 44 were most likely to have passes.
 - Good To Go! Members were more likely to:
 - Support express toll lanes, be convinced the express toll lanes will improve congestion in both the express toll lanes and general purpose lanes and are likely to use those lanes.
 - Consider all but one of the 8 benefit statements appealing (all except free tolls for transit and registered vanpools).

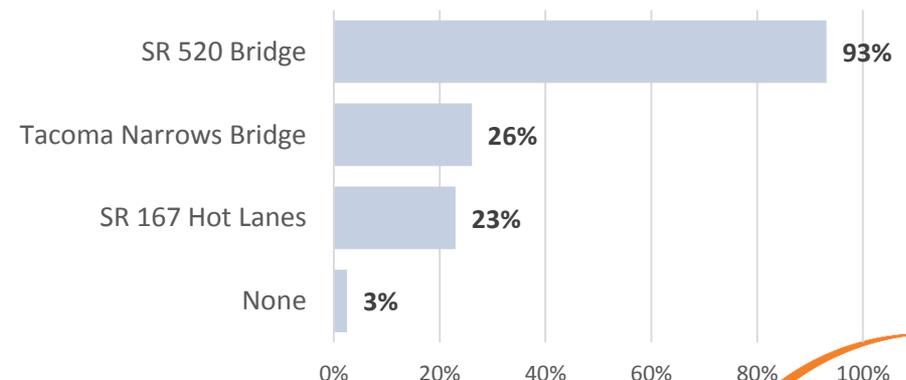
Have a Good To Go! Account

Base = all respondents (n=973)



Roadways Where Good To Go! Pass Has Been Used

Base = Those with Good To Go! Accounts (n=472)

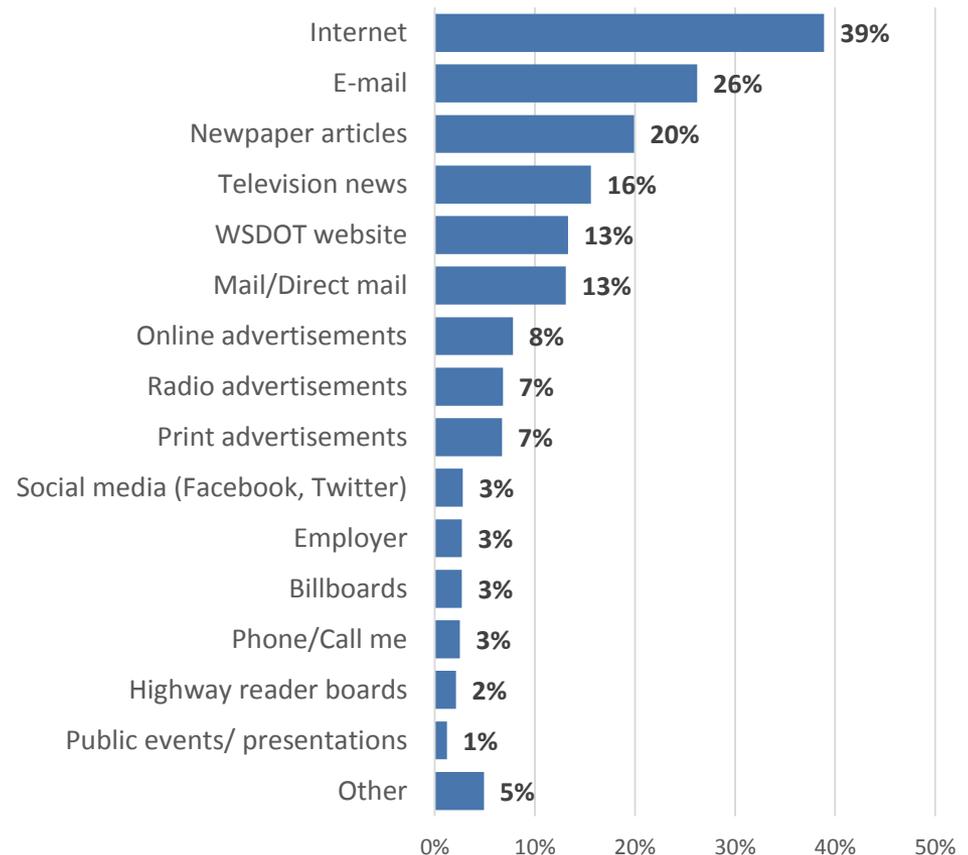


What Are the Preferred Ways to Get More Information about I-405 Express Toll Lanes?

- Users had the highest interest in learning more about the I-405 express toll lanes online or through email.
 - Vanpool members preferred learning more about the express toll lanes on the internet, e-mail, the WSDOT website, their employer, TV news stories, and newspaper articles.
 - SOVs wanted to hear more via the internet, e-mail, newspaper, and TV news stories.
 - Carpools were interested in receiving information through the internet, email, newspaper articles, TV news stories, and the WSDOT website.

Preferred Way to Receive More Information About the I-405 Express Toll Lanes

Base = All respondents (n=975)



Sample Profile (overall is weighted by travel mode)

- A few significant differences in traveler profiles emerged when looking at mode and demographics:
 - Males were more likely to ride in a vanpool, females were more likely to ride in a carpool.
 - Vanpool members had the highest median income and carpool members had the lowest median income.
 - SOVs tend to be older than carpool or vanpool members.
 - There were no racial differences, though SOV is highest among Caucasians.

	Overall	SOV	Carpool	Vanpool
Gender				
Male	54%	58%	48%	61%
Female	46%	42%	52%	39%
Household Income				
Less than \$10,000	<1%	1%	0%	1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1%	1%	3%	1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2%	2%	2%	<1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5%	4%	5%	3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	11%	9%	15%	9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17%	17%	16%	13%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	20%	22%	16%	22%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	24%	23%	26%	31%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	9%	10%	6%	13%
\$200,000 or more	12%	13%	11%	7%
<i>Average Income</i>	92,600	94,300	88,800	102,100

	Overall	SOV	Carpool	Vanpool
Age				
18-24	5%	4%	6%	1%
25-34	7%	6%	9%	15%
35-44	18%	18%	18%	19%
45-54	28%	26%	30%	25%
55-64	25%	29%	19%	30%
65 and older	18%	18%	18%	10%
<i>Average Age</i>	52	54	51	51
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Speaking Origin?				
Yes	96%	97%	96%	94%
No	4%	3%	4%	6%
Race				
Black/African American	3%	2%	4%	4%
White/Caucasian	83%	85%	79%	78%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	1%	2%	2%
Asian	9%	9%	10%	13%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%
Other	4%	4%	4%	3%

Are There Any Distinct Market Segments?

Cluster analysis* indicated three market segments:

1. Support the Express Toll Lanes and Would Use Them (29%)
 - Travel slightly less on I-405
 - Support of express toll lanes
 - Shows high support for all benefits of express toll lanes
 - The most appealing benefit is that adding express toll lanes instead of general purpose lanes allows the corridor to operate more efficiently to reduce congestion
 - More likely to be convinced of efficiency in both general purpose and express toll lanes
 - More likely to use express toll lanes
 - High support for changing carpool definition - support changing the definition for carpool if it would change by time of day the most of the three options
 - Most likely to join a carpool or use transit
 - More likely to have an income of \$100,000 or more (49%)
 - More likely to have a Good to Go! account (53%)
2. No Strong Feelings, Express Toll Lanes Will Be Okay (40%)
 - Travel slightly more on I-405
 - No strong feelings on benefits of toll lanes or support for toll lanes
 - The most appealing benefit is that express toll lanes will collect tolls electronically as vehicles travel at regular highway speeds – there will be no toll booths
 - Low support for changing carpool definition - support changing the definition for carpool with carpools paying lower tolls than SOVs the most of the three options
 - Low likelihood of joining a carpool, vanpool, or using transit
 - More likely to have an income of \$100,000 or more (48%)
 - More likely to have a Good to Go! account (53%)
3. Would Prefer Express Toll Lanes Were Not Added (31%)
 - Low level of support for express toll lanes
 - Shows low support for all benefits of express toll lanes
 - Less likely to be convinced of improved efficiency of express toll lanes and general purpose lanes
 - The most appealing benefit is that general purpose lanes will remain a free alternative for drivers
 - Less likely to use express toll lanes
 - Low support for changing carpool definition – support changing the definition for carpool to work more effectively the most of the three options
 - Low likelihood of joining a carpool, vanpool, or using transit
 - More likely to have an income below \$100,000 (64%)
 - Less likely to have a Good To Go! account (62% no account)

* - Cluster analysis is an exploratory data analysis technique designed to reveal natural groupings within a collection of data based on responses to survey questions. Cluster analysis results may reveal meaningful ways to group survey respondents and may help with tailoring outreach efforts.

Carpool Definition Focus Groups Moderator Guide

The focus groups will be held on:

- Group 1 – Good To Go! Account Holders -- Wednesday, March 20 at PRR in Seattle from 6:15-8:15 pm
- Group 2 – General I-405 and SR 167 Users -- Thursday, March 21 at GMA Research in Bellevue from 6:30-8:30 pm
- Group 3 – I-405 Carpoolers/Vanpoolers/Transit -- Monday, March 25 at GMA Research in Bellevue from 6:30-8:30 pm
- Group 4 – SR 167 Carpoolers/Vanpoolers/Transit -- Tuesday, March 26 at GMA Research in Bellevue from 6:30-8:30 pm

I. Introduction (7 minutes)

- [Moderator introduces herself/himself.]
- [Explain:] A focus group is a group discussion where we can learn more in-depth about peoples' ideas and opinions (compared to telephone or written surveys).
- My job is to facilitate the discussion and make sure that everyone has an opportunity to speak **and to make sure that no one dominates the conversation.**
- Housekeeping – Toilets and refreshments.
- [Mention ground rules.]
 - There are no right or wrong answers; we're interested in your honest and candid opinions and ideas.
 - Our discussion is totally anonymous. We will not use your names in any report.
 - Our discussion today is being recorded. These recordings allow us to write a more complete report, and to make sure we accurately reflect your opinions. However, please only speak one at a time, so that the recorder can pick up all your comments.
 - That is a one-way mirror behind me and a couple of my colleagues are observing our discussion
 - It is important to tell us YOUR thoughts, not what you think others will think, or what you think others want to hear.
 - Please turn off cell phones
 - Your stipend will be provided as you leave.
 - Relax and enjoy
- We're going to spend our time today talking about some potential new travel options for the Eastside. Any questions about the purpose of our focus group or the ground rules before we begin?

I'd like you each to introduce yourselves. Please tell us:

- Your first name
- Where do you live
- Do you have a Good To Go! account?

I. Travel On I-405 and/or SR 167/Good to Go! (8 minutes)

1. How many days in the last 7 days did you drive on I-405?
2. How many days in the last 7 days did you drive on SR 167?
3. Do you ever carpool when using I-405 or SR 167? If yes, how often and when? (During peak periods or with your family) Do you carpool when using your Good to Go! Pass? If yes/no, how often? Why or why not?
4. How many people are typically in your vehicle when you carpool? Are these people family members, friends or co-workers?
5. What is the traffic like in the carpool lanes on I-405? What is the traffic like in the carpool lanes on SR 167?

II. Carpool Definition Options and Initial Preferences (20 minutes)

[Moderator to hand out copies of this info and have them read. Moderator then highlights just the key points.]

Tonight we're talking about how carpools will be able to use express toll lanes on I-405 and SR 167.

What are express toll lanes and where are they in use now?

Express toll lanes are a type of carpool lane that allows non-carpool drivers the option of using the lanes if they pay a toll. They are currently being used on SR 167 and in other cities around the United States. Buses and vanpools can use the lanes for free to get a fast, reliable trip. Just like the SR 167 HOT lanes, the toll will automatically adjust based on traffic conditions. When congestion builds up in the express toll lanes, the toll price will increase to help manage the number of vehicles in the lane. Conversely, when the express toll lanes are not congested, the toll price goes down to encourage drivers from the regular lanes to move into the express toll lanes, helping improve speeds across all lanes.

Explain I-405 Express Toll Lane system.

Tonight's group focuses on a project that adds a new lane in each direction of I-405 between Renton and Bothell and pairs that lane with the existing carpool lane. These two lanes would create a two-lane express toll lane system between Bothell and Renton. Between Bothell and Lynnwood, WSDOT will convert the carpool lane to a single express toll lane. This first phase between Bellevue and Lynnwood is funded – shown in green on the map. The second phase is unfunded and shown in red. In addition to adding a new lane between Renton and Bellevue to create the two-lane system, plans also include connecting the new express toll lanes on I-405 to the SR 167 express toll lanes to create a 40-mile system. [Refer to 40 mile system map graphic]

Why do we need express toll lanes on I-405?

As you probably know, on I-405 today, anyone with two or more people in their car can use the carpool lanes from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. But the carpool lanes are so full in many places during rush hour

that they are often as slow as the regular lanes. The federal and state requirements say that our carpool lanes need to move people at 45 miles per hour (90% of the time) during peak travel periods, and today we are not meeting that.

[Show congestion photos on I-405 –]

Balancing two project goals

During certain times of the day, drivers in the carpool lanes on I-405 experience similar traffic congestion to drivers in the regular or *general purpose* lanes. WSDOT is trying to decide a major policy question: what type of carpools will be able to use the express toll lanes for free or at a discount. WSDOT is looking for your opinions as it considers changes to carpool policy in express toll lanes.

Tonight, we'd like you to give some thought to how WSDOT can achieve two goals on I-405:

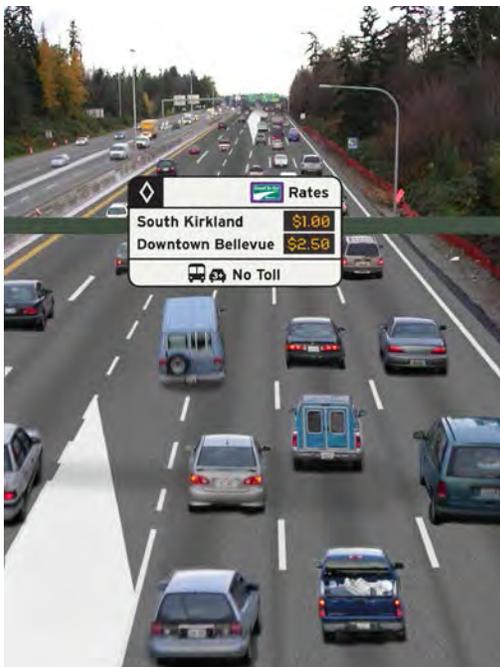
1. Move more people efficiently by providing a fast and reliable trip for traffic and transit in the express toll lanes, and
2. Raise money for future improvements to I-405; like adding a new lane between Renton and Bellevue or making improvements at the SR 167/I-405 interchange.

In the I-405 express toll lanes, carpools would be handled differently than in non-tolled carpool lanes

There are some differences between being a carpool in the current non-tolled carpool lanes, and being a carpool in the future I-405 express toll lanes. With non-tolled carpool lanes, you can only enter if you have the right number of people. With express toll lanes, anyone can enter, but carpools can use them for free or for a discounted price as long as they have a transponder or an account.

Let me stop here to see if there are any questions about the differences between carpool lanes and express toll lanes.

Use photo below to explain entrance/exit areas and how the signs at each entrance/exit indicate the cost by distance and congestion level.



III. Three Carpool Options for Express Toll Lanes (30 minutes)

Now that you know a little about where things stand today with carpooling and what WSDOT's I-405 goals are, we're going to look at three options for how carpools could be handled in the new I-405 express toll lanes. We'd like to hear your thoughts and opinions about these options.

There are a few important things to note about all of the options I will present:

- Each maintains general purpose lanes without tolls and includes express toll lanes, where non-carpool drivers could choose to pay a toll to get a faster trip.
- Each uses what is called *dynamic tolling*, where toll prices change based on traffic levels to ensure a reliable trip in the express toll lanes.
- Each allows transit and vanpools in for free.
- Each option improves traffic performance in the express toll lanes and the general purpose lanes.

[Moderator will review Option 1 first with graphic and handout and ask the question.]

Option 1: 3+ Carpool Free

- Solo drivers pay the full toll rate
- 2-person carpools also pay the full toll rate.
- 3+ carpools travel for free all the time.

[Moderator explains advantages and disadvantages of Option 1]

Option 1: 3+ Carpool Free

Advantages

- Produces the most revenue to fund I-405 improvements
- Lowest toll rates because fewer drivers travel for free
- Easy to understand

Disadvantages

- 2-person carpools must pay toll
- Express toll lanes may seem empty during uncongested times when GP lanes are free flowing

Questions to ask:

1. Do you think going to 3+ Carpool is acceptable?
2. Do you think 2-person carpools will still need some advantage? Is that your opinion or do you think that's what other people think?
3. What could WSDOT do to make 3+ carpools a more realistic possibility for you? (Listen for and probe on a faster/more reliable trip, improved enforcement, discount for 2-person carpools, etc.)

[Moderator will then review Options 2 and 3. These options will be revealed one at a time so that it is only after the third is revealed that participants can see all three options.]

Now I'm going to describe two other options being considered that continue to give some benefit to 2-person carpools, but in different ways.

Option 2: 3+ Carpool Free Peak / 2+ Carpool Free Off-peak

- Solo drivers pay the full toll rate.
- 2-person carpools pay the full toll rate during peak periods, but are free at all other times.
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Moderator hands out a form for option 2

Option 3: All Carpool Discount

- Solo drivers pay the full toll rate.
- All carpools are given a \$1 discount. This could result in a free trip when the toll rate is low (uncongested periods).
- When the general purpose lanes are uncongested and the toll is \$1 or less, carpools travel free.

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6. Knowing what you now know about these three options, write down on your pad which would be your first and second preferences. [Moderator then tallies preferences and opens up discussion as to why those preferences.

7. What would the discount for 2-person carpools need to be to move you from solo driver to 2-person carpool?

Ask observers if they have any other questions they want asked at this time.

IV. Carpool Definition Preferences with Additional Information (30 minutes)

Advantages and disadvantages for each option will be shown on handouts and on boards/flip chart. Advantages and disadvantages will be explained/discussed as needed.

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Option 2: 3+ Carpool Free Peak / 2+ Carpool Free Off-peak

Advantages

- May produce enough money to expand I-405 (generates most revenue in peak periods similar to option one while still giving 2-person carpools a benefit)
- Avoids perception of empty lanes during uncongested times
- 2-person carpools can use the lanes for free during off peak periods

Disadvantages

- Different carpool rules at different times of the day could lead to driver confusion
- 2 person carpools will pay during peak periods
- Less revenue than Option 1 (3+ Carpool Free)

Option 3: All Carpool Discount

Advantages

-
- Carpools receive a discount at all times
- Carpools may get a free trip if discount is equal to or greater than the toll rate
- Does not require a change in carpool definition

Disadvantages

- All carpools pay a toll during congested times
- May require a future change to the discount amount
- Produces least amount of money in early years – improvements would be delayed because of lower revenue.

[Moderator will hand out summary handout showing all three options.]

Then show car graphic to explain operations. Indicate that regardless of which option they choose, they all perform equally well. Ask if this information changes their preferences.

8. Knowing what you now know about these three options, which would be your first and second preferences and why. [Moderator then tallies preferences and opens up discussion as to why those preferences. Probe on what changed their preference or made them stick with their initial preference.]
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V. Wrap Up (3 minutes)

13. Now that we've completed our discussion, is there anything that particularly stands out for you? Anything that you'd like WSDOT to know or consider regarding the issue of defining carpools?

Carpool Definition Focus Groups Moderator Guide

The focus groups will be held on:

- Group 1 – Good To Go! Account Holders -- Wednesday, March 20 at PRR in Seattle from 6:15-8:15 pm
- Group 2 – General I-405 and SR 167 Users -- Thursday, March 21 at GMA Research in Bellevue from 6:30-8:30 pm
- Group 3 – I-405 Carpoolers/Vanpoolers/Transit -- Monday, March 25 at GMA Research in Bellevue from 6:30-8:30 pm
- Group 4 – SR 167 Carpoolers/Vanpoolers/Transit -- Tuesday, March 26 at GMA Research in Bellevue from 6:30-8:30 pm

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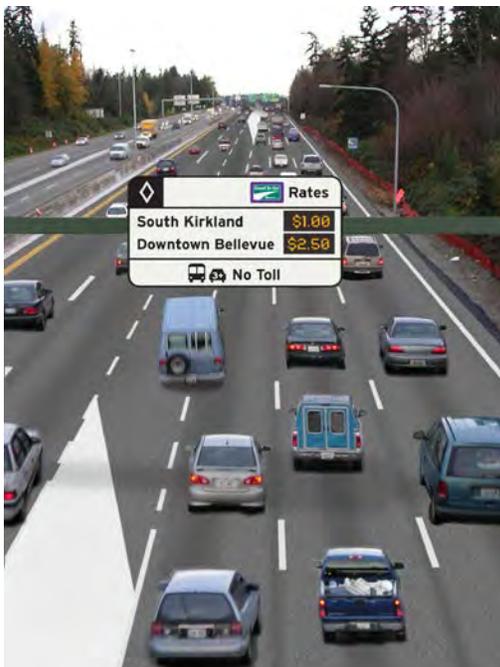
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