

RCW 47.56.880 Interstate 405 and state route number 167 corridors—Tolls authorized—Eligible toll facility—Toll rate schedule—Capacity improvements—Performance measures—Violation.

(1) The imposition of tolls for express toll lanes on Interstate 405 between Interstate 5 on the north end in the city of Lynnwood and Interstate 5 on the south end in the city of Tukwila, and for state route number 167 between Interstate 405 on the north end and state route number 512 on the south end is authorized. Interstate 405 and state route number 167 are designated an eligible toll facility, and toll revenue generated in the corridor must only be expended on the Interstate 405 and state route number 167 projects as identified in each corridor's master plan and as allowed under RCW 47.56.820.

(2) Tolls for the express toll lanes must be set as follows:

(a) The schedule of toll rates must be set by the tolling authority pursuant to RCW 47.56.850. Toll rates may vary in amount by time of day, level of traffic congestion within the highway facility, or other criteria, as the tolling authority deems appropriate.

(b) In those locations with two express toll lanes in each direction, the toll rate must be the same in both lanes.

(c) Toll charges may not be assessed on transit buses and vanpools.

(d) The department shall establish performance standards for travel time, speed, and reliability for the express toll lanes project. The department must automatically adjust the toll rate within the schedule established by the tolling authority, using dynamic tolling, to maintain the goal that average vehicle speeds in the lanes remain above forty-five miles per hour at least ninety percent of the time during peak hours.

(e) The tolling authority shall periodically review the toll rates against traffic performance of all lanes to determine if the toll rates are effectively maintaining travel time, speed, and reliability on the highway facilities.

(f) (i) Toll charges may not be assessed on carpools with two or more people in the vehicle on the portion of Interstate 405 between Bellevue and state route number 167 for at least the first year following the initial imposition of tolls on that portion of the express toll lanes, contingent upon the analysis described in (f) (ii) of this subsection.

(ii) The department must analyze the effect of (f) (i) of this subsection utilizing forecasting and modeling data and present the results of the analysis to the tolling authority. If the analysis indicates that the express toll lanes on the portion of Interstate 405 between Bellevue and state route number 167 will not cover the financial obligations outlined in RCW 47.56.884(4), then the restriction on toll charges in (f) (i) of this subsection will not be implemented and the department must provide the transportation committees of the legislature with a report, within thirty days, that provides options for not assessing toll charges on carpools with two or more people in the vehicle, which also meet the financial obligations outlined in RCW 47.56.884(4).

(g) After the bonds issued pursuant to RCW 47.10.896(1) (a) are retired, the tolling authority must reduce the toll rates commensurate with this reduction in the amount of toll revenues required from the express toll lanes.

(3) The department shall work with local jurisdictions to minimize and monitor impacts to local streets and, after consultation

with local jurisdictions, recommend mitigation measures to the legislature in those locations where it is appropriate.

(4) The department shall monitor the express toll lanes and shall annually report to the transportation commission and the legislature on the impacts from the project on the following performance measures:

(a) Whether the express toll lanes maintain speeds of forty-five miles per hour at least ninety percent of the time during peak periods, and any alternate metric determined by the department in conjunction with the federal highway administration;

(b) Whether the average traffic speed changed in the general purpose lanes;

(c) Whether transit ridership changed;

(d) Whether the actual use of the express toll lanes is consistent with the projected use;

(e) Whether the express toll lanes generated sufficient revenue to pay for all express toll lane-related operating costs; and

(f) Whether travel times and volumes have increased or decreased on adjacent local streets and state highways.

(5) The department, in consultation with the transportation commission, shall consider making operational changes necessary to fix any unintended consequences of implementing the express toll lanes.

(6) A violation of the lane restrictions applicable to the express toll lanes established under this section is a traffic infraction. [2019 c 421 s 11; 2011 c 369 s 3.]

Intent—Effective date—2019 c 421: See notes following RCW 47.10.896.

Intent—2011 c 369: "The legislature recognizes that the Puget Sound region is faced with growing traffic congestion and has limited ability to expand freeway capacity due to financial, environmental, and physical constraints. Freeway high occupancy vehicle lanes have been an effective means of providing transit, vanpools, and carpools with a fast trip on congested freeway corridors, but in many cases, these lanes operate beyond their capacity during peak commute times.

It is the intent of the legislature to improve mobility for people and goods by maximizing the effectiveness of the freeway system. An express toll lanes network is one approach for managing the use of freeway high occupancy vehicle lanes and, at the same time, generating funds to improve the Interstate 405 and state route number 167 corridor. The legislature acknowledges that as one of the most congested freeway sections in the state, the combined Interstate 405 and state route number 167 corridor serves as an ideal candidate for the use of an express toll lanes network. An express toll lanes network could provide benefits for movement of vehicles and people, as well as having the potential to generate revenue for other improvements in the Interstate 405 and state route number 167 corridor, also known as the eastside corridor.

The legislature also recognizes the need for geographic balance and regional equity in decisions regarding tolling and pricing, and intends to consider the implementation of express toll lanes on other facilities in the region in the future. It is further the intent of the legislature to use its evaluation of initial express toll lanes on Interstate 405 to guide additions to the express toll lanes network, particularly in the most congested areas of the Interstate 405 and state route number 167 corridor, such as the Renton-to-Bellevue

segment and the Interstate 405/state route number 167 interchange, with the ultimate goal of continuous express toll lanes from Puyallup to Lynnwood.

Therefore, it is the intent of this act to direct the department of transportation to develop and operate express toll lanes on Interstate 405 between the city of Bellevue on the south end and Interstate 5 on the north end and to conduct an evaluation of that project to determine the impacts on the movement of vehicles and people through the Interstate 405 and state route number 167 corridor, effectiveness for transit, carpools and single occupancy vehicles, and feasibility of financing capacity improvements through tolls." [2011 c 369 s 1.]