

# CENTRAL PUGET SOUND SUMMARY

## 2019 MULTIMODAL MOBILITY HIGHLIGHTS

- Approximately 4.84 billion person miles were traveled on the I-5, I-405, I-90, SR 520 and SR 167 corridors in the Central Puget Sound region in 2019, down 0.5% from 4.86 billion person miles in 2018
- Vehicle delay on the I-5, I-405, I-90, SR 520 and SR 167 corridors in the Central Puget Sound region decreased 6% from 8.6 million hours in 2018 to 8.1 million hours in 2019
- In 2019 during the southbound morning commute, buses (1.1% of all vehicles) moved 27.7% of travelers on I-5 at N 145th Street
- The SR 99 tunnel in downtown Seattle opened in February 2019, replacing the SR 99 Alaskan Way Viaduct
- The I-405/SR 167 direct connector in Renton opened in 2019, providing a seamless connection between SR 167 HOT lanes and I-405 HOV lanes
- WSDOT temporarily closed the SR 520 HOV lane approaching Montlake in October 2019 in order to make space for construction. Work on this project is scheduled to be complete in 2023



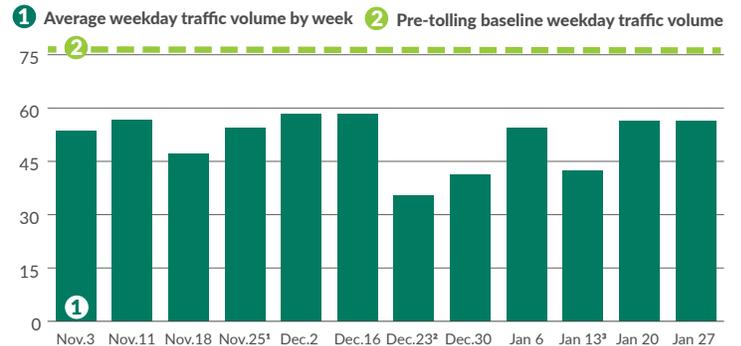
### State Route 99 and Downtown Seattle

Seattle saw the permanent closure of the SR 99 Alaskan Way Viaduct in January 2019 and the opening of the tunnel in February 2019. The new tunnel changed access into and out of downtown Seattle, accompanied by several other transportation changes including the demolition of the viaduct, ongoing surface-street network enhancements, transit tunnel dedication to Link Light Rail in March and moving buses to surface streets, and subsequent commencement of tolling in November 2019.

In close coordination with the City of

### Traffic volumes on State Route 99 fall after tunnel tolling begins

Average weekday traffic volumes on SR 99 in thousands; Weeks beginning Monday, Nov. 3, 2019 through Monday, Jan. 27, 2020; Pre-tolling baseline



Data source: WSDOT Toll Division

Notes: 1 The week of Monday, November 25, 2019 included the Thanksgiving holiday. 2 The week of Monday, December 23, 2019 included the Christmas holiday. 3 There was substantial snow the week of Monday, January 13, 2020.

Seattle, Port of Seattle, King County Metro and others, WSDOT monitored the multimodal network effects during the toll-free tunnel and toll commencement periods. During the toll-free period, traffic volumes and travel times, and transit and water taxi ridership continued to adjust over the summer and began settling into a new equilibrium. When tolling began, drivers adjusted again, experimenting with alternative routes, modes, and schedules. Overall the switch from the free viaduct to the tolled tunnel resulted in traffic shifting away from SR 99 and to Alaska Way, other city streets, and I-5. The chart above illustrates baseline volumes during the toll-free period versus volumes after the commencement of tolling. Monitoring of these changes and the subsequent impacts continued closely through the first year of the tolled tunnel.

## Transit shoulder use on I-5 in Mountlake Terrace

At the end of 2018, buses began to travel on the 1.5-mile stretch of the southbound I-5 inside shoulder between the Lynnwood Transit Center and the Mountlake Terrace Freeway Station. Travel time savings of over four minutes were observed for transit using the shoulder versus traffic in the HOV lane during the congested morning commute.

## Interstate 405/State Route 167 Direct Connector

The direct connector opened to traffic in February 2019, providing a seamless connection between the HOT lanes on SR 167 and the high occupancy vehicle lanes on I-405 in Renton. The direct connector is providing a faster, more reliable trip with the future completion of the Renton to Bellevue Express Toll Lanes project slated for 2024

## I-405/SR 167 use trends

The I-405/SR 167 corridor is one of the most congested highways in the state, serving an area that has exceeded regional population growth estimates. I-405 in Bothell and south Snohomish County continues to experience congestion, particularly southbound in the morning commute, because there is not enough roadway capacity to keep up with demand. In 2019, the Legislature authorized up to \$600 million for capacity improvements, which enabled WSDOT to move forward with the design of an additional express toll lane between SR 522 and I-5. The series of projects will also include new direct access ramps that will help support a more reliable trip for public transit.

With vehicles transitioning more easily between I-405 and SR 167, performance on southbound SR 167 became more challenging in both the general purpose lanes and the HOT lane. In response to the higher volumes and decline in speeds, WSDOT implemented operational adjustments to manage demand more proactively, that made toll rates more responsive to changes in corridor speeds. WSDOT also continued work on the design of an additional northbound high occupancy vehicle lane from Puyallup to Auburn that will become an express toll lane at a future date.



## SR 520 HOV lane closure in Seattle

In October 2019, the HOV lane approaching Montlake was closed, leaving buses and carpool vehicles to merge with two general purpose lanes. Travel times increased in the westbound lanes as SR 520 reverted to the configuration that existed in 2017 before the new westbound lanes west of the floating bridge opened. The closure allows crews to continue construction of the Montlake phase, which is slated to be complete in 2023.

