



Expert Review Panel for WSDOT Tolling

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## TOLL COLLECTION RATES IN WASHINGTON STATE

**Issue:** What is the view of the ERP on the overall collection rates for Washington State Tolls based upon the experiences elsewhere?

**Review:** The ERP has only looked at partial data in this preliminary review but we believe the findings below are accurate and that further analysis will support the overall findings but might cause some adjustments in specific areas suggested for attention.

**Findings:** At 94% of all transactions resulting in a paid toll within the period when toll were incurred, Washington's Toll systems are among the nation's best performers. This is particularly true when considering that nearly 50% of the tolls were collected in an All Electronic Tolling (AET) environment (SR 520) and that billed tolls would still have been in process during this time. Billed revenues would normally come in late and it is reasonable to expect a 9-12 month collection period to achieve a 65-70% collection rate.

It is normal for an electronic toll system to have a 10% uncollected rate on the day of the transaction. Of the balance it is normal to expect that 10% (or 1% of overall transactions) are not able to be successfully billed. These include those whose addresses are incorrect or unknown, those from states or provinces where collection is not cost effective, those where the plate is not clearly visible or has been altered, and those with new vehicle registrations that can not be properly captured by video equipment. Of the remainder about half (or 4.5% of the total) are generally collected on a first notice. Collections on subsequent notices drop off exponentially.

In the case of Washington, it should be noted that the number of uncollected tolls may also be misleading because it does not account for the ride share participants using SR 167 and the fact that any other vehicles are not billed unless given a traffic ticket. On the TNB only 4% is uncollected, a very low rate given these people have chosen to go through without using the cash lanes or having the Good to Go transponder.

We do note that the billed transaction collection rate for SR 520 appears slightly low compared to other facilities. However, the unusually high penetration of Good to Go accounts, and the timing of bills must be taken into account. The experienced collection rate would be higher if the prepaid non-transponder accounts were considered along with those responding to their bill.

Overall we suggest that this be monitored more closely to see where the collection rates can be improved.

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