



Corridor Program

Minutes

I-405/SR 167 Executive Advisory Group

Thursday, June 18, 2015

Bellevue City Hall

10 a.m. – Noon

Executive Advisory Group members in attendance:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Beal, Sound Transit | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peter Heffernan, King County Metro |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Josh Brown, PSRC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rep. Linda Kochmar, Washington State Legislature |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor Fred Butler, Sound Transit Board of Directors and Mayor of Issaquah | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rep. Chad Magendanz, Washington State Legislature |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rep. Judy Clibborn, Washington State Legislature | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dan Mathis, FHWA |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councilmember Randy Corman, City of Renton | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rep. Joan McBride, Washington State Legislature |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councilmember Rich Crispo, City of Newcastle | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rep. Luis Moscoso, Washington State Legislature |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rep. Mia Gregerson, Washington State Legislature | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Snyder, City of Auburn |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reema Griffith, Washington State Transportation Commission | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor Amy Walen, Kirkland |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councilmember Kevin Wallace, City of Bellevue |

I-405/SR 167 Project Team and Staff in attendance:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation Secretary Lynn Peterson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Michaud, Toll Division, WSDOT |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Craig Stone, Assistant Secretary, Toll Division, WSDOT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theresa Greco, Toll Division, WSDOT |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amy Scarton, Assistant Secretary, Community and Economic Development, WSDOT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wendy Taylor, I-405/SR 167 Project Team |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lorena Eng, Northwest Region Administrator, WSDOT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Colleen Gants, I-405 Communications |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kim Henry, I-405/SR 167 Project Director | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Peer, I-405 Communications |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patty Rubstello, Director, Toll Operations, WSDOT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maggie Humphreys, I-405 Communications |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kate Elliott, Toll Division Communications |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caitlin Morris, I-405 Communications |

Note: These meeting notes are intended to capture the discussion at the meeting including questions and comments from the group. This is not intended to be a formal testimony or complete transcript of the meeting. Meeting materials including the PowerPoint presentation are available on the Web at:

<http://wsdot.wa.gov/tolling/eastsidecorridor>



I. Welcome and Introductions

Craig Stone, Assistant Secretary, WSDOT Toll Division, welcomed the group and invited everyone to introduce themselves. He reviewed with the group the 2013 EAG recommendations for the express toll lanes 2+3+ carpool policy. He then introduced Transportation Secretary Lynn Peterson, who made welcoming remarks to the group.

Secretary Peterson spoke about the EAG's regional leadership and important role in building community partnerships along the I-405/SR 167 corridor. Peterson emphasized the importance of multimodal transportation ensuring that local, transit, bike and pedestrian systems work together with the freeways. She explained that WSDOT's goal is to build a truly integrated transportation system, where the various modes can work together. Peterson closed, noting that the I-405/SR 167 EAG is truly a unique example of community-driven regional planning.

II. I-405 Master Plan Update

Kim Henry, I-405/SR 167 Project Director, provided a summary and progress report on the I-405 Master Plan. Henry explained that the current HOV and general purpose lanes on I-405 are failing more than 200 days a year. At the same time, the Puget Sound area is also experiencing rapid population growth. WSDOT recognized these challenges several years ago when it convened the first Executive Advisory Group in 1999 to develop a multimodal I-405 Master Plan.

Henry explained that the EAG met again between 2009 and 2013 to study express toll lanes at the direction of the Washington State Legislature. This EAG included representatives from south King County and north Pierce County. This group facilitated a robust public involvement process, including 11 public meetings, 8 open houses, and over 200 community briefings. The committee developed a 10-year implementation plan for express toll lanes, starting with the funded Bellevue to Lynnwood I-405 widening project.

Henry then discussed next steps for the corridor. WSDOT is awaiting funding from the legislature to complete the Renton to Bellevue project, which will complete a 40-mile system of express toll lanes between Lynnwood and Puyallup. He stated that this system of managed lanes will provide the backbone for reliable, bus rapid transit (BRT) and then invited Sound Transit to provide an update on BRT in the I-405/SR 167 corridor.

III. Developing Sound Transit's New System Plan

David Beal and Andrea Tull presented an update on ST3, a new funding package for Sound Transit, as well as an overview of BRT planning in the I-405/SR 167 corridor.

Beal provided an overview of ST3's timeline, the draft priority project list, and how Sound Transit is involving the public. These draft priorities include deferred projects, enhancements supporting the existing system, corridors from ST2 high-capacity transit studies, system-wide programs and studies from the 2014 Long Range Plan, and supporting system expansion.

Tull explained that the I-405 Master Plan identified BRT as the preferred high capacity transit mode in the corridor and that delivery of BRT depends on express toll lanes. Sound Transit has implemented several



projects in the I-405 corridor, including: Ash Way park and ride; Ash Way transit access; Lynnwood HOV direct access ramp; Lynnwood Transit Center/Park and Ride; Canyon Park freeway station; Totem Lake Transit Station/direct access ramps; Totem Lake Transit Center; Bellevue NE 6th HOV direct access ramp; Bellevue Transit Center; and Tukwila Sounder Station.

As a part of the I-405 Master Plan, transit-supportive elements could include either a single route BRT or trunk and branch BRT. Sound Transit [conducted an HCT Corridor Study](#) to weigh the outcomes of each option. Sound Transit will continue to study these design options and involve the public as they move forward.

IV. Executive Advisory Group Discussion

Craig Stone facilitated a group discussion with EAG members focused on I-405/SR 167 corridor priorities as well as recommendations on how the EAG should work together moving forward.

Bellevue Deputy Mayor Kevin Wallace asked if there is possibility to look at a combination of the I-405 Master Plan and a new plan for the corridor.

Renton Councilmember Randy Corman stated that in 2002, the focus of the EAG was on managed lanes and multimodal lanes. He noted that in Renton there is a lot of interest in seeing a focus on general purpose lanes. He's heard some trepidation about express toll lanes. Corman expressed that Renton is concerned about underservice in Renton from Sound Transit, and that BRT will be the first major service from Sound Transit for Renton residents.

Newcastle Councilmember Rich Crispo stated his concern about following a Master Plan or Sound Transit plan that may be outdated by the time it is implemented. He asked the group how they can they ensure that designs made today will be appropriate for tomorrow.

Craig Stone responded to Councilmember Crispo's question. He agreed, saying his concern is something the EAG should be open to and that the question is how? He agrees that Sound Transit a long-term program.

Peter Heffernan, King County Metro, Office of Regional Transportation Planning, emphasized that King County is working in sync with Sound Transit to integrate service and long range planning.

Representative Mia Gregerson of Seatac shared her support for widening the study area for future planning in the I-405/SR 167 corridor. She emphasized that destination cities, like SeaTac, are impacted by transportation investments made elsewhere. She also stated that the EAG needs to recognize that populations in south King County are predominately low income. She suggested using the leadership of the Sound Transit's Mayors Forum for future input. Gregerson also noted that the Port of Seattle wasn't present and that she would like to see them at future meetings.

Representative Judy Clibborn of Mercer Island stated her appreciation for the EAG's collaboration and coordination on I-405/SR 167 transportation planning. Clibborn noted that I-405 and SR 167 have a strong foothold in transportation funding because of the EAG's ability to find regional consensus and present unified recommendations for the corridor. She noted that the EAG is the only group she knows of its kind.



Sound Transit Boardmember and Issaquah Mayor Fred Butler echoed Representative Clibborn's remarks. He noted that projects of this magnitude take a long time, and the EAG allows focus to be maintained on the long range vision. Butler stated that the EAG is a model that works, and that although a lot has been accomplished, there's a lot to be done.

Representative Joan McBride of Kirkland stated that she has a long history with the project. She began her involvement in 1999 as a representative for the City of Kirkland. She emphasized the importance of the corridor to the state's regional transportation system. I-405 and SR 167 deserve maintenance and resources. McBride also noted that while EAG members change, a certain trust develops between the stakeholders and jurisdictions represented at the table.

Councilmember Crispo noted that he supported the EAG's work, and that he thinks it would be valuable for the EAG to collect data from the cities to incorporate into their planning efforts.

V. Go Live! Expectations

Patty Rubstello, Director of Toll Operations, WSDOT Toll Division, provided an overview of how the express toll lanes will operate as well as how WSDOT will monitor traffic after Go Live! She began with a short animated [video that demonstrated how the new lane system will work](#).

Rubstello noted that express toll lanes are growing across the nation. The country has roughly 30 other express toll lane systems, and several jurisdictions are choosing to expand their facilities. Rubstello shared that on Miami's I-95 express toll lanes tripled the speeds in HOV lanes and doubled the speeds in general purpose lanes. She also noted that opinion data from around the country shows that once express toll lanes are implemented public approval grows.

She also noted that WSDOT expects driver confusion when the new lanes first roll out. Points of potential confusion include the 2+/3+ carpool requirement, dynamic- and destination-based pricing, access points and lane striping, and the repurposed auxiliary lanes.

Rubstello explained that WSDOT anticipates drivers may be slow to start using the new lanes. This could mean that the general purpose lanes are more congested for the first few weeks after launch. WSDOT has implemented a traffic monitoring plan in partnership with the local jurisdictions. Rubstello stated that WSDOT will staff an Emergency Operations Center during the launch and give daily status updates to neighboring jurisdictions and media.

VI. Communications/Public Education

Patricia Michaud, Toll Division Communications, presented on the communications strategies WSDOT will use to ensure the public is informed and ready for Go Live!

Michaud acknowledged that WSDOT understands there are a number of challenges that public outreach is trying to address, including confused drivers and carpoolers. She reported that to date WSDOT has facilitated 71 presentations, reaching nearly 2,000 people. She also shared that the Toll Division has fielded 340 phone calls and 475 emails with drivers to answer questions about the new system. Michaud stated that she anticipates these numbers to grow substantially as paid media, fairs and festivals outreach, and additional community briefings start this summer.



VII. Executive Advisory Group Discussion

Craig Stone facilitated a group discussion on expectations for express toll lanes.

Representative Clibborn stated that her office has heard a lot of input from motorcyclists. She thanked WSDOT for adjusting its policy for that constituency.

Secretary Peterson asked Stone to share additional examples of customer service improvements at the Toll Division. Stone shared that WSDOT will forgive the first toll people receive if they call to explain they did not know they would be charged. The Legislature recently passed a customer service bill that will allow the customer service center to directly address issues instead of relying on a judicial process.

Representative Luis Moscoso asked about the types of passes that will work in the new express toll lane system. Stone explained that any *Good to Go!* pass will work in the corridor, but only the *Good to Go!* Flex Pass lets qualifying carpools ride for free.

Representative Moscoso also asked if you can have multiple vehicles on one account and if a pass can be moved from one car to another. Stone replied that one account can have up to six passes linked to it, and that passes can be moved between cars.

Deputy Mayor Kevin Wallace of Bellevue asked about the maximum toll rate of \$10. Wallace asked what types of circumstances would lead to a \$10 toll. Stone explained that with dynamic tolling, the price is based on traffic. SR 167 has rarely hit its maximum of \$9. The average toll on SR 167 is \$2. Stone stated that WSDOT expects the average toll on I-405 to be between \$0.75 and \$4. Wallace continued that, with respect to mitigation and the impacts of tolling, is WSDOT looking at the spread of smartphone apps that could encourage drivers to divert to neighborhood streets? Stone answered that when SR 520 launched, developers created apps to help drivers decide between routes on I-90 and SR 520. Stone also mentioned that Toll Division is interested in working with private sector applications like Google Maps to incorporate the difference in travel time between express toll lanes and the general purpose lanes. Additionally, WSDOT will monitor the impacts of express toll lanes on local roads and will work with local jurisdictions to mitigate local impacts.

Deputy Mayor Wallace stated that WSDOT needs to consider the effect of traffic diversion to local arterials in their mitigation work. Patty Rubstello added that in other express toll lanes systems, general purpose lanes have seen improvements and drawn traffic off of local arterials. Councilmember Crispo echoed Deputy Mayor Wallace's concern.

Representative Clibborn reminded the group that when tolling began on the SR 520 bridge, WSDOT briefed cities and warned them it would take at least six months for the rate of use to normalize. Clibborn urged the local jurisdictions at the table to give drivers time to adjust to express toll lanes.

VIII. Public Comment

Colleen Gants, I-405 project team communications, facilitated a public comment period. The group heard from the following members of the public:



- Becky Birch, a Bothell resident, said she is not against tolling but is concerned about the lack of transit alternatives. She stated that she has not seen any type of public outreach regarding this project. Birch also stated that she is concerned about 3-person carpools and their economic impact on fixed-income and low-income families. She said that carpoolers are not always working, they are retirees as well.
- Matthew Mark, a Kenmore resident, expressed his frustration that the City of Kenmore was not at the table. He also asked why SR 520 is not considered an alternative route. Mark asked that the impacts of express toll lanes on I-405 on Kenmore's streets be monitored by WSDOT.
- Don Miller, who represents the Lake Lanes Neighborhood Association, shared his support for the mass transit options on I-405. Miller stated that BRT does not provide a reliable transit trip, and asked why light rail is not considered for the I-405 corridor. Miller stated that it is important to invest in alternatives that have been proven to work rather than sticking to a historical plan for the corridor.
- Vic Bishop, Eastside Transportation Association member, stated that ETA has been following this process very closely. Bishop stated that the revenue from the SR 167 HOT lanes was designed to generate future revenue, but a Cambridge study shows it is not generating enough funds to fund additional projects. Bishop noted that Representative Clibborn's transportation budget shows that future toll revenue will not be substantial enough to fund new projects. He reminded the group that there is a provision that if the system is not self-sustaining in two years, then the Legislature can terminate the program. He also asked if it is possible to turn the tolling system off during late-night and early morning hours, similar to the SR 167 HOT lanes.

IX. Wrap Up

Craig Stone thanked the members of the Executive Advisory Group for their participation and said WSDOT looks forward to continuing the EAG later this year. He also stated that WSDOT staff is more than happy to answer individual questions following the meeting.

Adjourn