

Tacoma Narrows Bridge Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

March 28, 2018 - 6 – 8 p.m.

Harbor History Museum
4121 Harborview Dr. | Gig Harbor, WA

TNB Citizen Advisory Committee:

Bruce Beckett, Gig Harbor (Chair)	Ron Jones, Gig Harbor
Alan Weaver, Gig Harbor (Vice Chair)	Michael Murphy, Gig Harbor
Randy Boss, Gig Harbor	Jay Stricherz, University Place
Kathleen Harkins, Fircrest	

AGENDA:

Call to orderBruce Beckett

Legislative update.....Bruce Beckett, Carl See

Tolling exemptions overview.....Rob Fellows, Carl See

Public comment

Adjourn

March 29, 2018

Tacoma Narrows Bridge Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2018

Harbor History Museum, Gig Harbor

Attendees:

Bruce Beckett Randy Boss
Michael Murphy Jay Stricherz
Kathleen Harkins

Carl See- Transportation Commission

Rob Fellows – WSDOT Tolling

Alexandra Mather – Pierce Transit

1. Review of HB 2990 and its impact on TNB tolling

Carl and Rob presented an overview of SHB 2990 and the impact on tolling over the remainder of the debt repayment period. Carl also presented a forecast of the amount of the loans necessary with, and without, a \$0.25 toll increase in 2022.

CAC discussion – the CAC discussed the role of the CAC under SHB 2990, and agreed it was appropriate to schedule November meetings to review TNB financials, and to provide input into the annual report to the Legislature that will specify the loan requirements for that year. November meetings also allow for input into any rate setting adjustments that the Commission may be considering. Additionally, Randy Boss questions whether toll payers will be responsible for the (estimated) \$12 million in toll facility replacement expenditures planned for the 2019-2021 biennium.

2. Review and Action – Exemption from Tolling

The Transportation Commission has initiated information gathering and analysis on toll exemption policies across the different tolling facilities in western Washington. The Commission's tolling subcommittee is considering whether to recommend changes in exemption policies to align policies across the system. The full Commission had initial analysis and data presented at their January meeting. The CAC was provided an update.

Rob Fellows and Carl See showed the CAC how exemptions differ between toll facilities and the estimated impact of those policies. The tolling subcommittee is considering recommending adding new exemptions from tolling for transit, rideshare, private buses and school buses on the TNB. The data presented by Carl See indicated a reduction in toll collections of about \$225,000 per year, or \$450,000 per biennium. The shortfall would be added to the loan amount authorized under SHB 2990, to be repaid by toll payers during 2031 – 2033. The total amount of exempted tolls at the end of the repayment cycle would be about \$2.025 million.

Alexandra Mather from Pierce Transit discussed their support for adding the new exemptions. The agency cites:

- Bring Pierce County into parity with King County. Toll facilities in King County exempt buses, rideshare, vanpools and private buses from tolls.
- Rewards good behavior by the users. Currently 84 vanpools cross the TNB daily, with the largest number going to the Bremerton Shipyards. Pierce Transit questions the wisdom of government to government payments for tolls.
- Administrative burden and expense to equip the buses and vanpools with transponders, monitor and insure payment to their accounts.

CAC Discussion and Motion:

Following CAC discussion, the CAC unanimously adopted the following motion offered by Michael Murphy, and seconded by Jay Stricherz:

“The CAC recommends no additional exemptions on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge”

The CAC’s reasoning:

- Unlike other toll facilities in Washington, the TNB remains a wholly toll payer funded facility. In the end, it’s the toll payers who will bear the burden of the cost of the exemptions.
 - Members of the CAC commented that if the TNB were 30% funded with state dollars, like other facilities, they might feel differently.
- Riders on Pierce County buses and vanpools benefit from the bridge and, since the TNB is entirely a user funded facility, they should participate in paying for the bridge.
 - Note – using the estimates provided by Carl, it will take more than 385,000 “Good to Go” trips across the TNB to pay the cost of the exemptions in 2031-2033
- The CAC expressed concern that adding new exemptions will only create ongoing pressure to add additional exemptions over time.
- The TNB has three (3) exemptions that have been in place since the facility opened in 2007. Changing those exemptions would only serve to needlessly confuse the TNB users.
 - The three exemptions on the TNB are (1) Department maintenance vehicles (2) WSP vehicles (3) Authorized emergency vehicles. Those three (3) exemptions are standard on every one of the other toll facilities in Washington State.
- Additional exemptions unique to other toll facilities can be standardized because those other toll facilities are in proximity to each other, and ripe for confusion

Toll Exemptions:

Should They be Consistent Across Facilities?

*(Reprising information shared at the January 17, 2018
Transportation Commission meeting)*

Rob Fellows

Planning and Policy Manager, Toll Division

Tacoma Narrows Bridge Citizen Advisory Committee

March 28, 2018

Presentation Overview

Objectives

- **Begin Commission discussion on system-wide toll exemptions**
- **Report out on Tolling Subcommittee discussion on this topic**

Agenda

- **WSDOT presentation**
 - Overview of existing exemptions by facility
 - Vehicle types exempted by category
 - Differences between rules that would need resolution for consistency
- **Subcommittee/Commission staff presentation**
 - Comments and initial recommendations
 - Proposed decision process and schedule

Presentation Overview

What is the discussion about?

- **Considering exemptions that could apply to all facilities**
 - Not including exempt vehicles specific to HOT and express toll lanes (carpools and motorcycles)
- **All current exemptions have one of these in common:**
 - The exempted vehicles are working on the toll facility to improve the person-carrying capacity, efficiency and safety of the roadway
 - The exempted vehicles are used to respond to emergencies

Why discuss this now?

- **SR 99 rate-setting decisions needed this year**
 - Early consideration of exemptions may streamline rate-setting process
- **Commission has striven for eventual consistency between facilities**
 - Consistent system-wide approach to exemptions could simplify future rate-setting and reduce customer confusion
 - Opportunity to clean up and simplify rules

Current Exemptions, by facility

	Carpools	Motorcycles	Transit/ Vanpools	Private Buses	Emergency Vehicles	Incident Response/ Tow Trucks	Maintenanc e Vehicles
BRIDGES AND TUNNELS							
SR 16 Tacoma Narrows Bridge	No	No	No	No	Bona fide emergency	No	In-Service
SR 520 Bridge	No	No	At all times	At all times, Fixed route only	Bona fide emergency	In-Service	In-Service
SR 99 Tunnel	To Be Determined	To Be Determined	To Be Determined	To Be Determined	To Be Determined	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
EXPRESS TOLL LANES							
SR 167 HOT Lanes	2+	At all times	At all times	At all times	On-Duty	In-Service	At all times
I-405 Express Toll Lanes	3+ peak/ 2+ off peak	At all times	At all times	At all times	In-Service	In-Service	In-Service

On-Duty = vehicle operating in an official capacity

In-Service = on-duty and responding to an incident. Includes private tow trucks directed by WSP to clear vehicles from SR 520 bridge

Current Exemptions in Commission Rules (WSTC 468-270 WAC)

WAC	WAC Title	
468-270-090	What vehicles are exempt from paying tolls on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department maintenance vehicles • WSP vehicles • Authorized emergency vehicles
468-270-091	What vehicles are exempt from paying tolls on the SR 520 Bridge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department maintenance vehicles, IRT vehicles, WSDOT tow trucks • WSP vehicles • Publicly owned or operated transit buses • Passenger motor vehicles used as ride-sharing • Privately owned and operated passenger buses with 16+ capacity, fixed schedule/route • Vehicles owned by foreign governments and international organizations • Authorized emergency vehicles • Tow trucks authorized by WSP
468-270-100	What vehicles are exempt from paying tolls on the SR 167 HOT lanes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit buses and vanpool vehicles • Vehicles allowed in HOV lanes (defined in WSDOT HOV access rules)
468-270-110	What vehicles are exempt from paying tolls on the I-405 express toll lanes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit buses and vanpools • WSP vehicles • Department maintenance vehicles, IRT vehicles, WSDOT tow trucks • Authorized emergency vehicles • Tow trucks authorized by WSP

Note: This is a list does not include HOV and carpool exemptions specific to HOT and express toll lanes

Vehicles Working in the Roadway

Operating, maintaining, enforcing and managing incidents

- **SR 167 HOT lanes have no exemptions listed in this category**
- **Exemptions for all facilities except for SR 167:**
 - Department maintenance vehicles directly involved in bridge and roadway maintenance
 - Washington state patrol vehicles directly providing service
- **Exemptions unique to SR 520 and I-405 Express Toll Lanes**
 - Department maintenance vehicles directly involved in bridge and roadway maintenance, including the department's incident response vehicles responding to incidents and WSDOT tow trucks stationed on the bridge
 - Tow trucks authorized by Washington state patrol responding to clear blocking vehicles from the toll facility

Vehicles Working in the Roadway

Adding person-carrying capacity

- **There are no transit or vanpool exemptions on TNB**
 - Pierce Transit has requested this policy be revisited
 - Transit and vanpool exemptions on SR 16 would cost approximately \$0.0125 per transaction
- **Transit and vanpools exempt by statute on I-405 and SR 167**
- **SR 520 exemptions were set to be consistent with the federal Urban Partnership agreement, which is no longer in effect**
- **SR 520 exemptions also include**
 - Publicly owned or operated transit buses
 - Passenger motor vehicles used as ride-sharing
(These are primarily public vanpools and private vanpools, and social service agency vans providing paratransit service)
 - Privately buses with carrying capacity of sixteen or more persons, marked with business name and/or logo; operated on a fixed schedule and fixed route
(These are primarily Microsoft Connectors)

Emergency Vehicles

- **Exemptions for all facilities (again, except for SR 167):**
 - Authorized emergency vehicles on bona fide emergencies
- **Definitions**
 - **Emergency vehicles** are “...any vehicle of any fire department, police department, sheriff's office, coroner, prosecuting attorney, Washington state patrol, ambulance service, public or private, which need not be classified, registered or authorized by the state patrol, or any other vehicle authorized in writing by the state patrol” (RCW 46.04.040)
 - A **bona fide emergency** “...occurs when an authorized emergency vehicle, as defined herein, responds to or returns from an emergency call.”
- **Incurs overhead for WSDOT and emergency providers to verify tolled trips were on bona fide emergency**
 - Ability of Seattle fire and police to reposition vehicles in core of downtown Seattle is a concern for SR 99 tolling

Summary of Revenue Impacts

Current Exemptions (FY 17 data) and Potential (CY 17 costs)

- The revenue impact summary includes only current exemptions, with the **addition of exempting transit/vanpools on the Tacoma Narrow Bridge**
- The revenue impact summary does not include new exemptions, such as exempting emergency vehicles at all times, school buses, additional private buses, etc.

	I-405 Express Toll Lanes	Tacoma Narrows Bridge	SR 167 HOT Lanes	SR 520 Bridge	Total Tolls Dismissed
Transit	\$ 141,365	\$ 75,000	\$ 52,371	\$1,097,944	\$1,448,195
Rideshare	\$ 15,054	\$ 125,000		\$ 38,501	\$ 53,555
Private buses	\$ 29,470		\$ 1,326	\$ 268,688	\$ 299,484
Emergency vehicles	\$ 19,247	\$ 17,660	\$ 13,332	\$ 17,068	\$ 67,307
IRT/O&M	\$ 2,876		\$ 229	\$ 7,646	\$ 10,751
School buses	\$ 5,024		\$ 495	\$ 2,052	\$ 7,571
Totals	\$ 213,036	\$ 217,660	\$ 67,753	\$1,431,899	\$1,886,863
% of Annual Toll Revenue	1%	0.2%	4%	2%	

Changes to Achieve Consistency

Objective for Consistency

- Single rule for non-HOV exemptions in all facilities
- HOT/Express toll lanes would have additional HOV/motorcycle exemptions

What would need to be reconciled

- Consistent definition for vehicles working in the roadway
- Clarification of when emergency vehicles are exempt
- Transit and vanpool exemptions on Tacoma Narrows Bridge
- Private bus and rideshare vehicle exemptions clarified

CONTACT

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