

Tolling and Traffic Management

Columbia River Crossing (CRC) is a critical bridge, transit and highway project for the Vancouver-Portland region to increase safety and mobility on I-5, keeping goods and the economy moving. Tolling is expected to be an important part of the CRC finance plan, along with federal and state contributions. Tolling can also be implemented to help manage congestion and increase trip reliability for drivers. Many decisions are yet to be made – such as, when tolling begins, and the toll rate.

Tolling study and public outreach

During summer and fall 2009, the CRC Tolling Study Committee will be seeking public and jurisdictional input on a variety of tolling scenarios. Committee members include the directors of the Oregon and Washington departments of transportation and the chairs of each state's transportation commissions. The Committee will evaluate tolling and traffic management technology, review scenario findings and compile public comments for a report to the Oregon and Washington legislatures and transportation commissions in January 2010. Setting tolling policy and rates is the responsibility of the states' transportation commissions and legislatures.



Example Electronic Toll Collection System

CRC improves safety and reliability for all travelers by:

- Replacing the Interstate bridge
- Improving seven interchanges and lengthening merge ramps
- Extending light rail to Clark College in Vancouver
- Widening the pedestrian and bicycle path
- Implementing electronic, variable tolling

No toll booths necessary with electronic tolling

CRC will use electronic tolling to keep traffic moving across the bridge— no toll booths or need for motorists to slow down to pay tolls. Electronic tolls are collected with a transponder, about the size of a credit card, affixed to a car's windshield. On a tolled facility, overhead sensors link the transponder to driver's account information, and deduct the correct toll from a prepaid account. Drivers can easily manage their account by authorizing payments from a credit card or bank account when the account balance gets low.

A vehicle that does not have a transponder will have the license plate photographed and can prepay online or by phone or be invoiced for the toll, which will include an administrative processing fee for billing.

Variable tolling helps manage congestion

The CRC is proposing variable tolling—the toll rate would vary by time of day according to a set schedule with the lowest rates during non-peak hours. Variable tolling helps relieve congestion and improve travel speeds

and trip reliability by encouraging some drivers to change the time of day they travel. Other drivers might decide to take transit or change their trip destination. Most drivers will choose not to change their travel plans.

Tolling scenarios

Preliminary tolling scenarios were tested to identify opportunities, benefits, costs and tradeoffs and will be revised after receiving public input during summer 2009. All scenarios included variable toll rates; however, other elements were adjusted including the toll rate and whether the toll was charged on I-5 or both I-5 and I-205. Varying these factors highlights possible effects to the transportation system and project funding.

The preliminary scenarios studied include:

Variable Toll Rate Range in 2006 dollars (adjusted for expected inflation in 2017 dollars)	
Toll I-5	Tolls collected north and southbound
Scenario 1	\$1.00 - \$2.00 (\$1.31 - \$2.62)
Scenario 2	\$1.00 - \$3.00 (\$1.31 - \$3.94)
Scenario 3	\$2.00 - \$4.00 (\$2.62 - \$5.25)
Scenario 4	\$3.00 - \$6.00 (\$3.94 - \$7.87)
Toll I-5 and I-205	Tolls collected southbound only
Scenario 5	\$2.00 - \$4.00 (\$2.62 - \$5.25)
Scenario 6	\$4.00 - \$8.00 (\$5.25 - \$10.50)
No Toll (studied for comparison purposes)	\$0

None of the toll scenarios are recommendations for actual toll rates. Actual toll rates will depend on a final finance plan and will be set by the Oregon and Washington state

transportation commissions. When implemented, rates would be adjusted to keep pace with inflation.

How do the scenarios affect funding?

For the scenarios that included tolling I-5 after the new bridge is built in 2017, tolls could contribute between \$1 and \$2 billion to project funding. Tolling both I-5 and I-205 would more than double the funding provided by tolling.

If tolling were implemented during construction additional funds could be generated and congestion reduced.

What happens to travel patterns with tolling?

If I-5 were tolled, most people would choose not to change their travel patterns. Some people will choose to change their trip destination to avoid crossing the river, change their route to the I-205 bridge, use transit, carpool to share the toll cost, or choose another time to travel in order to pay a lower toll. These changes in travel patterns create a less congested trip for those that remain on I-5. If both I-5 and I-205 were tolled, most people would still choose to cross the river, and some would change their travel patterns.

How can I get involved?

- Contact the project office to meet or talk one-on-one with a staff member
- Visit the Tolling Study website at <http://tolling.ColumbiaRiverCrossing.org>
- Take an online survey on tolling choices at <http://survey.ColumbiaRiverCrossing.org>
- Attend an advisory group meeting
- Invite CRC staff to your group to discuss the project

How can I comment on the project?

E-mail: feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org

Mail: 700 Washington St, Suite 300
Vancouver, WA 98660

Phone: 360-737-2726 or 503-256-2726

Fax: 360-737-0294

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