

SR 520 Bridge Tolling

Introducing all-electronic tolling in the
Puget Sound Region

Tolling today in Washington state

History

- 14 bridges financed with bonds and paid for with tolls from the 1930's through the 1980's

SR 520

- *Variable* toll rates change on a set time of day schedule and provides expected toll to pay for bridge construction and manage traffic

Tacoma Narrows Bridge

- *Fixed* toll rates generate revenue to pay for bridge construction

SR 167 HOT Lanes

- *Dynamic* toll rates adjust every minute to best manage traffic throughput based on current traffic conditions



Future of tolling in Washington

Current toll facilities:

- Tacoma Narrows Bridge
- SR 167 HOT Lanes
- SR 520 Bridge

Authorized toll facilities:

- I-405 Express Toll Lanes
- Columbia River Crossing
- SR 99 Alaskan Way Tunnel

Under study:

- I-90 Bridge
- SR 509 Extension
- SR 167 Extension



Lake Washington Congestion Management Program

\$154.5 million Urban Partnership grant to improve congestion in the SR 520 corridor:

- Variable tolling on the SR 520 bridge
- Electronic travel time signs on I-405, SR 520 and SR 522 direct drivers to the best route across Lake Washington
- Smarter Highways on SR 520 and I-90 provide drivers with variable speed limits and real-time driver information
- King County Metro and Sound Transit added more than 130 daily bus trips across the SR 520 bridge
- Vanpool and carpool programs encourage people to commute together



Marketing, media, public outreach

16 months of preparation

Schedule was for spring 2011 toll start date:

- **Phase 1 Research and planning**
December 2009 to April 2010
- **Phase 2 Education and outreach**
April to December 2010
- **Phase 3 Open customer center, establish account**
January to February 2011
- **Phase 4 Toll Commencement "go live"!**
March 2011 onward

Get to know *Good To Go!*



Good To Go! electronic tolling uses some of the most advanced technology available to keep traffic moving—with no toll booths, no stopping, and no slowing down. In the spring of 2011 electronic tolling will begin on the 520 Bridge to help pay for the construction of a new faster, safer bridge.

The Benefits:

- New 520 Bridge (opens 2014)
- Keeps traffic moving
- Project starts sooner and costs less
- *Good To Go!* works on all tolled bridges and roads in Washington state

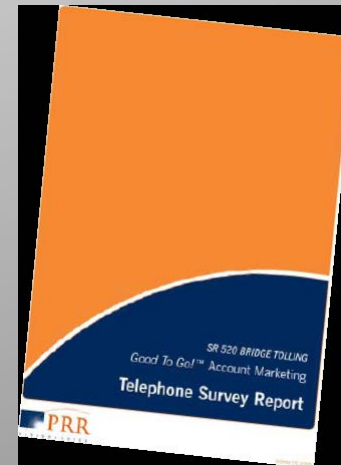
Research

What We Did:

- Expert panel - summer 2009
- Statistically-valid phone survey - October 2009
- Four focus groups - December 2009

Key Insights & Strategy:

- This is a new market
- Commuters will establish an account
- Target drivers using bridge 1- 2 times/week
- Congestion
- Many reasons for trips
- Education: what is all-electronic tolling?
- Demographics



Outreach and education

Presentations

- Local jurisdictions, large employers and community groups

Training for social service providers

- Trained 70 staff to educate clients

Partnerships with large groups

- AAA, Auto Dealers, Washington Truckers
- Local businesses and employers
- 5th Ave Theater, Seattle Symphony, Northwest Ballet, Paramount



Outreach and education

Mobile customer service centers

- Two indoor booths and two outdoor trailer/van stand-alone vehicles
- Seven days a week in four separate locations during start up phase
- Major shopping centers, employers, sporting events, universities and colleges, libraries, park & rides, hospitals, AAA stores, community centers

Incentives to get *Good To Go!* before tolling starts

- Customers signing up by April received \$10 in free tolls
- Expiration date encourages drivers to use their pass



Advertising

Local Almost Live! celebrities Bill Nye and John Keister reunited

- Bill Nye paired with other local celebrities
- Radio, television, print, billboard and on-line
- Wraps for buses in the corridor

Partnership with Seahawks and Sounders

- Online ads, radio spots, in-stadium ads
- Booth at pre-game exhibit hall
- *Good To Go!* presenting 2011 game schedules

Presence at Mariners and Huskies events

- Booth at Mariners Fan Fest and individual ticket sales day
- Mobile customer service booth at Huskies basketball games



520 Bridge tolling is coming this Spring.

And you can go for less.

- Ride the bus—130 daily trips have been added on SR 520 (730 total daily trips)
- Carpool or vanpool (visit RideshareOnline.com)
- Ask your employer about telework or flex schedules

Learn more at GoodToGo520.org

Washington State Department of Transportation



Social media

Social media marketing campaign

- 1,700 @GoodToGoWSDOT Twitter followers
- 17,000 blog views
- 400,000 web page views at GoodToGo520.org
- 53,400 YouTube views

Created four informational videos

- SR 520 tolling overview
 - Video won seven awards
 - Online: Goodtogo520.org
- How to sign for accounts
- How electronic tolling works
- Adjudication/toll enforcement






Tolling begins Spring 2011 on the 520 bridge.

NO TOLLBOOTHES. NO STOPPING. NO HASSLES.

NO TOLLBOOTHES. THAT MAKES ME HAPPY.

CLICK THE PLAY BUTTON TO SEE HEATER DANCE

HEATER DEMONSTRATES HOW THE 'GOOD TO GO! DANCE' COMES TOGETHER.

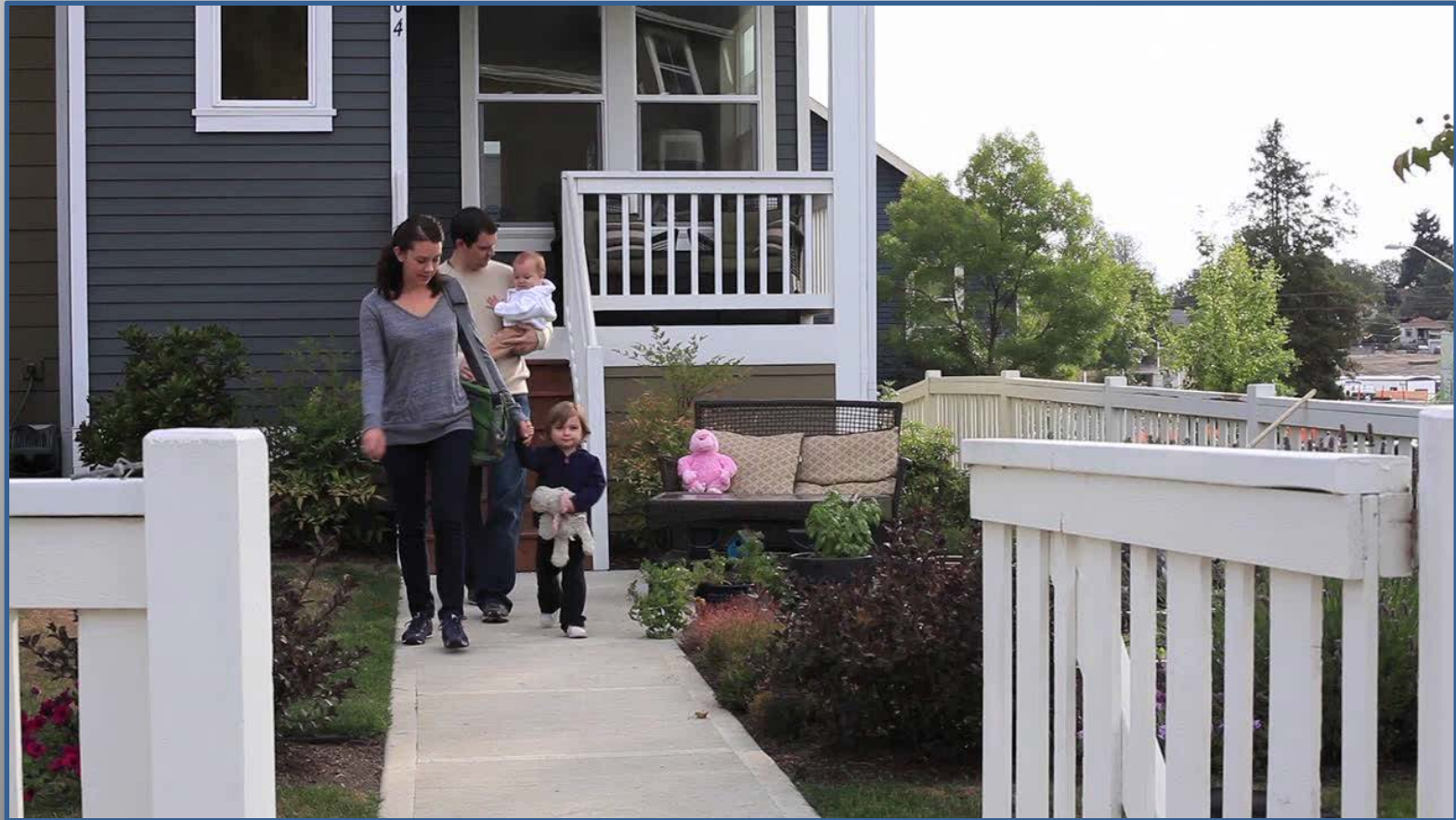
STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
		
It's all in the wrist, just like in golf, except without the golf club...maybe I'm thinking of Football....	Now—don't be thinking about that guy who took the last muffin at the coffee shop. It's your time.	Last tip: Sell it. You're in the driver seat. Get a mirror and practice. It's harder than it looks.

I hope these tips helped. See you on the 520 bridge. —David 'The Heater' Hawthorne

GoodToGo520.org

Want the latest info, special offers and more? [Sign up here.](#)

SR 520 tolling informational video



Media

Leverage major milestones

- Customer service center grand opening
- First tolls signs uncovered
- Toll start date announcement
- Toll commencement

Managing challenges

- Back-office challenges, public scrutiny on contract management, toll start date delay

Countdown to SR 520 tolling

- Create awareness that this is hard work: set expectations
- Monitor, assess and adjust messaging as necessary
- Prepare for daily media presence at call centers, staff accordingly



Schedule delays

- Incentive offered in spring 2011 encouraged early account sign-ups.
- After opening the customer center, the SR 520 toll start date was delayed multiple times creating confusion and affecting the public perception of tolling.
- In summer 2011, WSDOT stopped all advertising, curtailed outreach and limited social media activity to focus on getting the system ready.
- Several months of complex system testing prevented WSDOT from announcing the toll start date until early December.
- After announcing the start date, WSDOT had three weeks to ensure drivers were as ready as possible for this big change.

Launch of SR 520 tolling

Go live table top

- Across WSDOT divisions and agencies
- Practiced messaging media questions
- Anticipated potential issues and walk through them as a team

Data collection/reporting

- What info will we have to share with media, how often will we get it?

Planned themes for releases, events leading up to toll start

- Customer center tour, event with Metro (travel options), on-line live chat, by the numbers, get your pass, how will WSDOT manage traffic?
- Managing the media: Setting expectations, media prep

Emergency operations center

- Scheduled spokespeople and support staff
- Media interview locations

Launch of SR 520 tolling

Work the plan: Dec. 29 Go live

- Three media availabilities: morning, mid-day and evening news
- Live interviews during commute, data crunching, prepare reports
- Pre-written news releases frame the message
- First day's traffic data, thank you drivers, get ready for Jan. 3

Keep it up: Jan. 3 First "real" commute day

- Set expectations, be ready for different traffic
- After morning commute, get ready for evening commute
- As days pass, themes adjust
- What can drivers expect? Foreshadow to first bills, next milestones

Success of SR 520 tolling

Educational marketing summary

- \$7 million spent on advertising, marketing and public outreach
- 201 million advertising impressions
- \$487,638 in bonus ads through transit, radio, TV, newspaper, online
- \$300,000 in free advertising and value from promotional partners
- \$1.5 million in free advertising through Safeway retail pilot

Goals exceeded

- 146,000 new accounts set up by start of SR 520 tolls – goal was 100,000
- Vehicles crossing the SR 520 bridge with a pass was 56 percent on first day of tolls (now it's 81 percent) – goal was 50 percent
- 222,000 *Good To Go!* passes sold by first day of tolls – goal was 164,000



What's happening next?

I-405 Express Toll Lanes

- Under construction between Bellevue and I-5 in Lynnwood. Open late 2015.
- *Dynamic* toll rates adjust automatically depending on traffic conditions.
- Discussions on how carpools may register
 - Mobile app



Toll Communications Team



Pictured (from the left): Annie Johnson, Emily Pace, Kate Elliott, Colleen Gants, Jennifer Rash, Patty Michaud. **Not Pictured:** Shirley Weisgerber, Jessie Lin, Michell Mouton and Janet Matkin.

Questions?

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