



Washington State Auditor's Office Performance Audit Description

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January 2015

WSDOT's Toll Collection System

Program background

The Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) statewide all-electronic tolling system helps manage traffic congestion while generating revenue to fund infrastructure improvements. In fiscal year 2013, the system collected \$115 million in toll revenue and processed more than 35 million transactions. Three facilities currently use the all-electronic system to collect tolls: the SR 520 Bridge, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the SR 167 High Occupancy Toll lanes. The statewide all-electronic system will also collect tolls authorized by the Legislature for the I-405 Express Toll Lanes and the State Route 99 Tunnel.

To process all-electronic toll transactions, WSDOT's toll collection system relies on the back-office system that was developed and operated by its vendor. The vendor also provides customer services that include managing and maintaining customer accounts, billing customers, and managing the process to assess and collect fines. Although the statewide customer service center and back-office system began operations in February 2011, continuing problems with the system – in particular, the reconciliation process – and its operation raised questions about the accurate collecting and processing of tolls. Accuracy is important as the Washington State Transportation Commission relies on data from this system to set tolls at appropriate levels to cover debt payments for construction bonds.

Moreover, since the system collects and stores customers' personally identifiable data and credit card information, its security is critical. To help ensure the tolling system's security, WSDOT contractually required its vendor to comply with the IT security standards set by state's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and Payment Card Industry (PCI) security standards. However, WSDOT's vendor has not yet demonstrated its full compliance with these requirements.

Scope and objectives

This performance audit will evaluate the WSDOT's toll collection system, comprised of the statewide customer service center, the back office system, and the financial reporting of toll transactions. It will focus on system accuracy, management and oversight, security, and compliance with contract requirements through the following audit objectives:

- Does WSDOT's toll collection system accurately collect, process, and report toll transactions? If not, why not?
- Is WSDOT's toll collection system in compliance with OCIO and PCI security standards. If not, why not?

We have engaged subject matter experts to help us conduct this audit.

Timing

We estimate audit results to be released in fall of 2015.