

Tolls in Connecticut

Frequently Asked Questions

The following information details the proposals that have been made by Governor Lamont and supported by legislative Democrats to implement tolls in CT. While there are many unknowns about how tolls will impact CT residents, the following is what we do know.

Who will pay for tolls?

DOT studies have estimated anywhere from 60%-75% of toll revenue coming from CT residents. Governor Lamont has stated that 60% of the revenue will come from in-state residents. These estimates are based on rough numbers and do not include many factors such as being able to collect from out of state drivers, road avoidance, and the impact of out of state drivers obtaining CT discounts by purchasing a CT transponder. While the governor initially pledged to only toll trucks, his budget includes tolling all cars, with minor exemptions for emergency vehicles.

Can tolls just be placed on the borders?

Connecticut cannot implement border tolls without losing federal money and having to pay back the federal government for decades of funding we received because we didn't have tolls (this is unique to CT because of an agreement with the federal government in 1984 when tolls were removed. If we did border tolls, we would have to pay back all federal funding received since that agreement began.)

Is there a set plan for how tolls will be implemented?

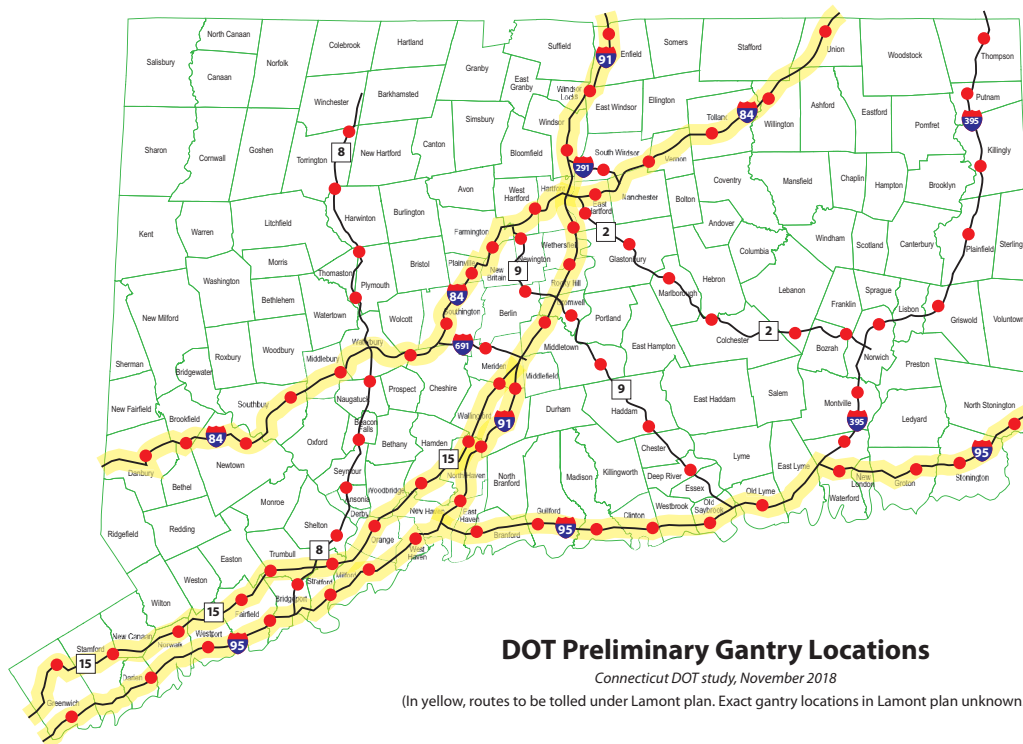
The governor is asking for the legislative “green light” without offering specific plans or details about costs, rates, gantry locations or impact on residents. The legislature is also considering two Democrat proposals that would give the DOT carte blanche to develop and implement a toll plan. No proposal has been presented to the federal government for approval yet.

How much will residents pay for tolls?

Difficult to estimate at this point with no fully detailed plan available. Governor Lamont does not have specific estimates on rates for residents. Democrat legislative proposals also do not speak to toll rates. A previous DOT proposal estimated rates from 3.5 cents to 7.9 cents for drivers depending on time of day, commuter status, and in what state your E-ZPass is registered. If an out of state resident purchases a CT EZ pass they can receive the in-state discount too. This occurs in NY where 18% of EZ passes are held by out of state residents and in MA where 14% of EZ passes are held by out of state residents. We anticipate similar ratios for CT. A Democrat State Senator has estimated their toll bill could cost the average resident \$600 per year. None of these are fully detailed plans.

Where will tolls be located?

Governor Lamont stated his plan will limit tolls to I-95, I-84, I-91, and Route 15 with 53 gantries. However, a previous DOT study found that 82 toll gantry locations were needed in order to collect the revenue Gov. Lamont's plan hopes to collect. The DOT study placed tolls on I-95, I-84, I-91, Route 15, 691, 291 Route 8, Route 2, Route 395, and Route 9. The former DOT Commissioner has said that the congestion pricing model would mean "tolling every interstate and limited access [highway] and some other state roads." According to the former DOT commissioner, "We would be the only state in the nation that tolled that much."



DOT Preliminary Gantry Locations

Connecticut DOT study, November 2018

(In yellow, routes to be tolled under Lamont plan. Exact gantry locations in Lamont plan unknown.)

Who has to approve tolls? What is the process to install tolls? How quickly could they go up?

First, the governor is asking for the legislature to approve tolls as a concept, giving the governor's administration carte blanche to implement tolls as he sees fit. Following legislative approval for tolls as a concept, the governor has stated he will launch a \$10 million study, originally approved by Gov. Malloy, to develop a tolling plan, which DOT has estimated would take 2 years to complete. Any toll plan would also require federal approval, which will take time especially considering the federal government has described Lamont's mileage-based toll proposal as "new territory." DOT's previous studies estimate this process would take at least 4-5 years to implement tolls from legislative approval, and full revenue would not be possible for 7 years. Legislative Democrat proposals would similarly authorize the DOT to develop a tolls plan. One Democrat proposal would authorize a DOT tolls plan to be "deemed approved" if the legislature doesn't vote on the plan within 15 days. Federal approval would still be needed.

Didn't Connecticut already study tolls?

Yes, Connecticut has already spent over \$20 million on several studies by consultants CDM Smith and Cambridge Systematics since 2009 (not including the final \$10 million study ordered by Gov. Malloy at the end of his term.) However, Gov. Lamont is abandoning these studies and instead using rough numbers, developed in under two months, that directly conflict with the findings and estimates provided in these studies which took years to complete.

How close together will electronic tolls be located?

Governor Lamont's plan does not provide these details. However, the DOT plan released in November 2018 uses average spacing of 6.6 miles. Under all proposals, tolls essentially would become a mileage tax. Instead of paying to use a certain bridge or one roadway like in other states, CT would see tolls on many roadways and residents would be charged at the toll for every mile they drive.

How much funding is needed to build toll infrastructure?

Gov. Lamont has not provided construction cost estimates. However, he has included a chart in his proposed budget which shows debt service cost for FY22-24 of \$24.8 million and operating costs in FY23&24 of \$115.7 million. Timeline concerns raise questions about the accuracy of these projections.

Would tolls allow CT to lower other taxes?

The Governor is proposing tolls at the same time he is proposing sweeping new taxes and tax increases. While Governor Lamont has mentioned that he would like a graduated reduction in the gas tax, he has not offered a proposal to do so. Instead, the new sales taxes in the governor's budget will cost our residents \$371 million more in FY20 and \$652.6 million more in FY21, alone.

Currently, Connecticut receives more federal funding because we do not have tolls; so what happens to that funding?

For every one dollar of federal tax that we pay for gasoline, we get over \$0.70 back from the federal government mostly because we don't have tolls. Places like New York, Massachusetts and New Jersey are below \$0.40 because of tolls. We also get more money from the federal government based upon the miles of untolled roads. If tolls are installed this funding can change.

Can't we just toll trucks?

While Gov. Lamont initially suggested truck-only tolls, he has moved away from that plan due to a number of issues and is now proposing tolls on all vehicles. Trucks also do not travel through our state for free; rather they pay fees and taxes. The CT trucking industry currently pays approximately \$281 million in taxes annually. Increasing costs on the trucking industry will also result in higher prices on goods and services.

But we need to get out of state drivers to pay for our roads too, right?

Out-of-state drivers already contribute to Connecticut's transportation budget, through: per-mile costs that truck drivers pay, and through a disbursement of federal gas tax dollars that benefits Connecticut more than states that have tolls. To get out of state drivers to pay tolls we would need reciprocity with other states to bill drivers who travel through Connecticut. In fact, currently CT drivers owe millions in uncollected tolls to nearby states. If reciprocity is included in the toll proposal, we need to clarify how those unpaid tolls will be processed.

If not tolls, then what?

Connecticut needs to consider ways to fund transportation without asking for more from state taxpayers who have already been drained enough. The Republican Prioritize Progress transportation funding plan eliminates excessive use of the state's credit card for political handouts at the same time it prioritizes funding for necessities like roads, bridges and school construction. It operates under a bonding cap to curb borrowing. Today, Prioritize Progress would allow us to provide an immediate and stable funding source dedicated just for transportation totaling approximately \$2.2 billion annually in state resources alone. Over 30 years, with projected federal matching dollars, it would provide \$65 billion for critical transportation infrastructure projects within current resources. The plan is available for viewing on:

www.ctsenaterepublicans.com/prioritizeprogress .

