

July 29, 2008

520 Tolling Implementation Committee
Bob Drewel, Executive Director, Puget Sound Regional Council
Paula Hammond, Washington State Secretary of Transportation
Dick Ford, Washington State Transportation Commission
c/o Puget Sound Regional Council
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, Washington 98104-1035

Dear 520 Tolling Implementation Committee Members:

On behalf of several Northend King County Cities, we appreciate your leadership on the issue of evaluating appropriate financing options and mitigation measures for SR 520. We applaud your efforts to evaluate and recommend mitigation measures regarding potential traffic diversion from 520 to other parts of the transportation system, including SR 522 and local roadways, when tolls are implemented on 520 or other corridors. We especially appreciate the outreach you have done with all of us and our communities on this important task.

With the release of the first analysis of the tolling committee, we would like to express our serious concerns with the reliability of the data for 522 and I-405 corridors, and would like to offer our recommendations on necessary mitigation for our communities.

Reliability of the Data

Our residents and businesses use 522 on a daily basis and recognize that many commuters already use this route as an alternative cross-lake connection when 520 is unavailable or experiencing significant delays. With the possibility of tolling 520 and I-90, common sense tells us there will be a significant impact on this alternative cross-lake connection. We are therefore surprised that this initial data shows “relatively little change to speeds or vehicle volumes on 522 in any of the initial scenarios.” We recommend further analysis such as the following:

- Peak Periods. We are glad to note that the committee recognizes that additional work needs to examine changes in peak periods. Many of the intersections on 522 are already functioning at the lowest level of service, especially during peak periods. Even minor changes to this volume, without a mitigation plan, will have a serious impact on the functioning of this corridor. Better data on demand during peak periods will be critical to fully understand the impact.

- Need for Actual Trip County, Not Only Modeling. According to the briefing we received, the real data used for this report was from a 1999 Origin/Destination survey and then was updated with a model from 2006. There needs to be an update to this data set due to the rapidly changing demographics of North and East King County.
- Housing and Jobs Growth. There has been explosive growth in housing and jobs in the northeast part of King County and South Snohomish County, which has significantly impacted 522 and the I-405 corridor. We do not believe the current and future growth has been taken into account in this analysis.
- Transit Analysis. There needs to be a better understanding of the role transit has in these corridors. Currently in this study, all trips are counted the same and transit is outside the discussion. We believe more residents will choose transit on the 522 corridor if more transit options are provided. Understanding the current frequency and volume is important to understanding actual trip counts across the lake.
- Diversion Assumptions. The analysis states that up to 23% of the trips will be diverted to “other routes” if both bridges are tolled, and therefore are not counted as impacting routes such as 522. We have two concerns. One is that this modeling assumption most likely underestimates the true impact to these alternative routes, such as 522. The other is that arterial routes, such as SR 202 and the Woodinville-Duvall road, will experience significant impacts and should be mitigated with improvements.
- Other Possible Concerns. Our technical staff will meet with your staff to understand the underlying assumptions of this analysis and may express additional concerns at that time.

Mitigation Measures

As was stated in the original legislation creating the Tolling Committee, a key charge was to “recommend mitigation measures to address the diversion.” We offer the following recommendations to mitigate the impact from tolling on 520.

- Improve Transit Service. We recommend a Bus Rapid Transit service on the 522 corridor that will provide service at least every 5 minutes during the peak periods and every 15 minutes during off-peak periods. The current transit service routes (Metro routes 306 and 312 and Sound Transit route 522) are already at capacity with most at standing room only during peak periods.
- Improve Park-and-Ride Facilities. All of these facilities along 522 are also at or near capacity. This is a compelling need for structured park and ride facilities, especially in Lake Forest Park and Kenmore, which would complement downtown redevelopment plans.
- Improve Transit Capacity. Prior to tolling, complete the Business Access/Transit Lanes (BAT) in the 522 Corridor to help move transit faster. More transit capacity down I-405, especially during peak times, needs to be added to the Woodinville and Brickyard park and rides. Especially necessary are increased express bus service to and from downtown Seattle.
- Improve Capacity on the 522 Corridor. Prior to any tolling, complete the scheduled improvements on this corridor, especially those in Kenmore and Bothell. These

include straightening out 522 in the Bothell corridor and completing improvements that are planned but not fully funded in Kenmore.

- Improve Capacity on Other Routes. As already noted in this initial analysis there will certainly be diversions to other routes, such as the Woodinville-Duvall Road and 202. These corridors will also need substantial improvements to mitigate these tolling impacts.

We are pleased that the committee has shown a true desire to be transparent in its outreach to residents and community leaders, and in its analysis of the true impact of tolling. We look forward to working with you and the surrounding communities to evaluate the actual diversion and necessary mitigation measures to alleviate these concerns.

Additionally, we have consulted with Mayor Mark Lamb of Bothell. He has indicated that he would like to confer with his city council prior to providing feedback to the Tolling Committee.

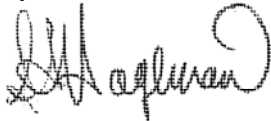
Sincerely,



Mayor Dave Hutchinson, Lake Forest Park



Mayor David Baker, Kenmore



Mayor Scott Hageman, Woodinville



Councilmember Bob Ferguson, King County Council