



**CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

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PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL

October 10, 2008

Bob Drewel, Chair  
520 Tolling Implementation Committee  
c/o Puget Sound Regional Council  
1011 Western Avenue, #500  
Seattle, WA 98104-1035

Dick Ford  
520 Tolling Implementation Committee  
c/o WA State Transportation Commission  
PO Box 47308  
Olympia, WA 98504-7308

Paula Hammond  
520 Tolling Implementation Committee  
c/o WSDOT  
PO Box 47300  
Olympia WA 98504-7300

**Re: City of Mercer Island Resolution No. 1402: Tolling on the Lake Washington Bridges**

Dear Committee Chair Drewel, Members Hammond and Ford:

On October 6, 2008 the Mercer Island City Council unanimously adopted Resolution No. 1402 regarding tolling on the Lake Washington bridges. The Resolution is enclosed with this letter. It establishes that any proposal to toll I-90 across Lake Washington requires consultation with the partners to the 1976 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on I-90; that both the R8A configuration and the consultation required by the MOA must be completed before I-90 is tolled; and that tolls must not be imposed on travel to and from Mercer Island.

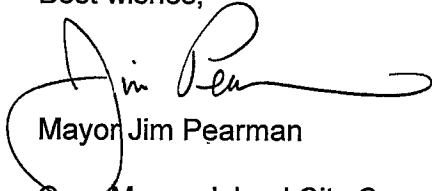
As you know, Mercer Island is closely following the work of the 520 Tolling Implementation Committee. We have taken special care to understand the potential effects on Mercer Island of all the scenarios you are studying. And we have concluded that tolls on travel to and from the Island would inequitably burden those who work, live and visit here.

On September 11, I sent a letter to the Committee requesting that you assess the effects in all of your scenarios of not tolling trips to and from Mercer Island. We have not officially heard back from the Committee on that request, but our staff's understanding is that it can be done fairly easily. In that same letter, we also proposed that the Committee determine if and how all the revenue needed for the SR 520 project can be generated by tolling 520 alone. We understand this new scenario is now included in the second round of your modeling analysis.

Mercer Island looks forward to hearing the findings from your second phase study. We welcome you back to our City for another Open House community event where our citizens can hear directly the results of your second round of traffic modeling. I understand our staffs are right now setting a date for this public input event.

Please let me know if you have questions about our policy positions.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Pearman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "P".

Mayor Jim Pearman

Cc: Mercer Island City Councilmembers  
Rick Olson, Government Relations & Communications Director, PRSC  
Linda Mullen, Senior Associate, EnviroIssues

**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND  
RESOLUTION NO. 1402**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MERCER ISLAND, WASHINGTON  
REGARDING TOLLING ON LAKE WASHINGTON BRIDGES.**

**WHEREAS**, the geographic position of Mercer Island, separated from the mainland on all sides, means those who live and work on the Island cannot leave their community without using I-90; and

**WHEREAS**, if tolls are imposed on the I-90 bridges, Mercer Island residents, unique among all others in the Puget Sound region, would have to pay a fee penalty each time they traveled to or from their city; and

**WHEREAS**, Mercer Island is a small and primarily residential community of 22,000, with limited medical care, other professional services, retail and entertainment opportunities on the Island, thereby requiring access to the mainland to fulfill the needs and obligations of daily living; and

**WHEREAS**, if a proposal to toll I-90 across Lake Washington is advanced, the Department of Transportation and Washington State Transportation Commission are obliged under the terms of paragraph 14 of the 1976 Memorandum of Agreement to "take no action which would result in a major change in either the operation or the capacity of the I-90 facility without prior consultation with and the involvement of the other parties [to the Memorandum of Agreement], with the intent that concurrence of the parties be a prerequisite to Commission action to the greatest extent possible under law."

**WHEREAS**, The Washington State Highway Commission originally approved 10 lanes for I-90, 4 general purpose lanes west bound, 2 transit lanes, and 4 general purpose lanes east bound (4-2T-4); and

**WHEREAS**, both the original and amended I-90 Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) were based on this configuration; and

**WHEREAS**, Mercer Island was projected to generate almost one full lane of traffic into Seattle; and

**WHEREAS**, Mercer Island has already made significant sacrifices in agreeing to give up the 4th general purpose lane for the right of Mercer Island traffic to use the transit lanes on a third priority basis

**WHEREAS**, the I-405 final environmental impact statement (FEIS) approved on June 10, 2002 and issued on June 28, 2002 is a comprehensive analysis studying the major transportation corridors east of I-5 and including the operation of I-90; and

**WHEREAS**, the I-405 Corridor Program Record of Decision documents the FEIS as approved by 24 agencies; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mercer Island City Council has consistently asserted the City's right and responsibility to protect Island residents, businesses and visitors from degradation of their mobility to and from the Island; and

**WHEREAS**, plans are now underway to replace the failing SR 520 bridge across Lake Washington, and \$1.5 to \$2 billion more is needed to fund the bridge replacement project; and

**WHEREAS**, roadway tolling has been identified as one of the possible revenue sources for the needed project funding; and

**WHEREAS**, tolling SR 520 in order to generate revenue to fund replacement of the 520 bridge places the responsibility for payment on those who actually use 520, but tolling I-90 to help fund 520 places a burden on those who do not and will not directly benefit; and

**WHEREAS**, the 520 Tolling Implementation Committee appointed by the State Legislature is charged with evaluating the feasibility of raising the needed funds through tolling on 520 and possibly also tolling on I-90; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tolling Committee's initial evaluation results indicate that more than enough revenue would be collected if I-90 were tolled in addition to 520 given the initial toll rate assumptions; and

**WHEREAS**, these initial evaluation results also show only a small diversion of traffic from SR 520 to I-90 if tolls are collected on SR 520 alone; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tolling Committee is also evaluating the "reasonableness" of tolls that might be imposed on one or both of the cross-Lake Washington bridges, and reasonableness includes the concept of equity; and

**WHEREAS**, the citizens and businesses of Mercer Island will be uniquely and unfairly impacted if tolls are exacted on their travel to and from their community; and

**WHEREAS**, tolling I-90 to pay for a new SR-520 bridge would place a disproportionate share of the costs on Mercer Island residents

**WHEREAS**, under State and Regional Growth Management principles all jurisdictions must achieve a balance between housing and employment, and for Mercer Island this requires daily in-migration of employees, and tolls on I-90 would be a material barrier to achieving this important goal; and

**WHEREAS**, the 520 Tolling Implementation Committee has requested input on their initial evaluation results from all affected communities and their elected representatives,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Mercer Island as follows:

**SECTION 1.**

Any proposal to toll I-90 across Lake Washington would constitute an action resulting in a major change in the operation and capacity of the I-90 facility and therefore would trigger the consultation and concurrence provisions contained in paragraph 14 of the Memorandum of Agreement.

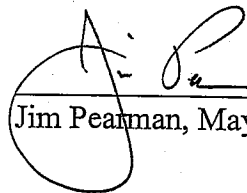
**SECTION 2.**

Both the continuous HOV lanes planned for construction between Seattle and Bellevue and across Mercer Island on I-90 (R8A) and the consultation and concurrence prerequisites' of the Memorandum of Agreement must be completed prior to implementation of tolling on I-90.

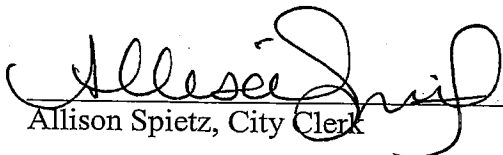
**SECTION 3.**

Tolls must not be imposed on travel to and from Mercer Island on I-90, the only means of public access to and from the Island.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERCER ISLAND, WASHINGTON AT ITS REGULAR MEETING ON THE 6<sup>th</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER, 2008.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Pearman, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Allison Spietz, City Clerk