



January 20, 2009

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

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the City of Redmond, thank you for your extensive and very important work over the past seven months to complete the public outreach, traffic, and financial analysis of various tolling scenarios as required by ESHB 3096. Tolls represent a significant source of revenue for funding the new SR 520 Bridge and are essential to successfully managing bridge traffic across Lake Washington.

The City provided comments during your early tolling analysis in our letter of September 4, 2009. We appreciate the inclusion of several of our suggestions in your subsequent analysis. After consideration of the January 8, 2009 *Draft Tolling Report to the Washington State Legislature*, the City has the following comments:

1. Tolling both the SR 520 and I-90 bridges offers the best scenario for achieving the funding necessary to fully fund the SR 520 Bridge and related improvements;
2. Early tolling of the bridges allows the state to reduce the cost of borrowing, and allows the use of federal Urban Partnership Agreement funds to pay for tolling infrastructure and traffic management necessary for better traffic operations in the SR 520 and I-90 corridors;
3. Variable tolls help to manage traffic flow on the bridges and reduce the diversion of traffic to arterials on the north and south ends of Lake Washington; and
4. The report offers a reasonable and adaptable two-part approach to mitigation by keeping traffic on the SR 520 Bridge and directing mitigation to five locations that would potentially be impacted by traffic diversion.

In addition to our comments above, the City has the following general concerns about tolls:

1. Tolls will have a greater budget impact on low income households; therefore the state should include ways to mitigate these impacts in the final tolling plan;

2. Traffic congestion and tolls affect businesses, particularly those involved in shipping freight and goods. An in-depth analysis of toll charges and their use for better traffic congestion management, improved traffic flow, travel time, and resulting business benefits should be completed;
3. In examining the impact of various toll rates on revenue and traffic flow across both bridges, recognize that parking charges and fuel costs are not within the scope of this study, yet significantly affect travel patterns; and
4. Toll revenue should only be used to pay for capital and maintenance expenses related to the SR 520 and I-90 bridges and corridors.

Thank you for consideration of our comments. Please contact Terry Marpert at (425) 556-2428, or tmarpert@redmond.gov, should you have questions about our comments.

Sincerely,



Robert G. Odle
Director, Planning and Community Development