



June 20, 2008

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

Re: Preliminary Expression of Interests regarding Tolling in the Cross-Lake Washington Corridor

Dear Chairman Drewel:

As you and I discussed on May 28, I want to provide you with an early view of the Mercer Island City Council's interests in the work you are doing to assess the potential impacts of, and possible mitigations for, tolling in the Lake Washington corridor. We will closely follow your modeling and data analysis process, and look to be continuously involved in your deliberations. Mercer Island's special place in those discussions is described in the December 1976 Memorandum Agreement on I-90, the Amendment that followed in 2004, and the 2006 letter from the Secretary of Transportation and Governor Gregoire's Chief of Staff. I'm attaching those documents for your convenience.

As a first step to educate and inform ourselves, the City Council asked State experts on transportation to serve on a discussion panel at our Council meeting on May 5. That panel consisted of our two State Representatives Judy Clibborn and Fred Jarrett, former Senator Jim Horn, former Transportation Commissioner Aubrey Davis, and Transportation Department Deputy Secretary David Dye. This is the panel I mentioned when you and I met a couple of weeks ago. In the discussion following, our Council talked about several principles that express Mercer Island's interests in the tolling question. Below is a preliminary summary of points the City wants to put forward at this early stage in your process.

We all acknowledge that the regional deliberations that follow must rest on the best data we -- specifically your Committee -- can produce. We readily accept your invitation to comment on your modeling results when they are available in July, and to propose additional avenues of research, so Mercer Island's contributions will be data-based and thoughtful.

As these conversations begin, we submit these preliminary statements of Mercer Island's interests:

Rights under the I-90 Memorandum Agreement:

As a party to the 1976 Memorandum Agreement for I-90 and the 2004 Amendment, Mercer Island asserts its rights to consultation and involvement regarding changes to I-90 "with the intent that concurrence of the parties be a prerequisite to [Highway Commission] action to the greatest extent possible."

Commitment to Engage in the Analysis and Decision-Making Process:

Mercer Island understands the importance of financial and mobility modeling, and of thorough consideration of the effects and consequences of tolling, as well as the urgency in making those decisions. The Council commits to engage with the 520 Tolling Implementation Committee's data gathering and analysis, to thoughtfully contribute to its deliberations, and to express its own interests and positions clearly throughout the process.

Geographically restricted use of toll revenue:

If tolls are placed on SR-520 and on I-90, as a congestion management device or as mitigation for anticipated traffic diversion from SR 520, the revenues derived from tolling these roadways must be retained for transportation construction, maintenance, improvement and mitigation within the cross-Lake Washington corridor.

Sequence of corridor modifications:

Consistent with previous agreements, Mercer Island expects to see cross-Lake Washington corridor changes follow this sequence:

- Early SR 520 tolling to generate a revenue stream for bridge replacement (with the smallest possible toll, so as to avoid massive diversion onto I-90);
- Completion of the R-8A configuration on I-90;
- Only after MI mobility is secured consistent with the letter and intent of the I-90 agreements (see attached documents), the center lanes may be given over to Sound Transit for light rail operations. (The City understands that the R-8A lanes may ultimately be tolled as HOT lanes. If that occurs, Mercer Island expects to be consulted and involved in design and implementation.)

Mitigation for decreased access:

In the event that changes to I-90 crossing Mercer Island result in (or anticipate) diminished access to the I-90 HOV lanes, MI must be compensated for such loss with capital and/or service mitigations as secured in the I-90 Agreements.

Thank you for your consideration of these interests at this early stage. We look forward to working closely with you and the other regional players.

Best regards,

Jim Pearman, Mayor

cc: Mercer Island Council Members
Representative Judy Clibborn
Representative Fred Jarrett
PSRC Government Relations Director Rick Olson
City Manager Rich Conrad
Interim Deputy City Manager Linda Herzog

Attachment: Memorandum Agreement on I-90 (dated Dec. 1976)
Amendment to the Memorandum Agreement (dated Aug. 2004)
Letter from Tom Fitzsimmons and Doug MacDonald (dated Dec. 22, 2006)