



September 16, 2008

Bob Drewel, Executive Director  
Puget Sound Regional Council  
Tolling Implementation Committee  
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98104-1035

**Re: Preliminary Comments Concerning Early Cross-Lake Tolling Analysis**

*Bob*  
Dear Mr. Drewel:

Thank you for your presentation to the Bellevue Council on July 28 concerning preliminary findings associated with the four cross-lake tolling scenarios. The implications of tolling the floating bridges across Lake Washington are likely to be significant, and we appreciate your efforts to develop information that should allow better understanding of the regional and local benefits and impacts associated with tolling concepts on SR 520 and I-90. On behalf of the Bellevue Council, I am writing to convey our initial policy interests with regard to key tolling policy areas.

On August 4, the Bellevue Council continued its discussion about the cross-lake tolling analysis and agreed to the following preliminary policy principles with regard to the key areas shown below.

**The purpose of tolling SR 520**

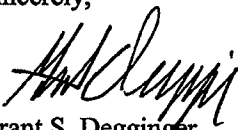
We believe the State needs to be clear about the purpose of tolling the SR 520 bridge, as the purpose ultimately drives the tolling outcomes. Bellevue's position is that principle purpose for tolling SR 520 should be to generate revenue to help fund construction of a new SR 520 bridge. While we support evaluation of the benefits and impacts of congestion pricing on the regional system, we do not think implementing tolls for congestion management purposes on a single segment of the system (SR 520 and I-90) should be one of the goals for the SR 520 tolling effort. The preliminary policy principles outlined below assume the purpose of the tolling is to generate revenue to build the new SR 520 bridge.

1. **Timing of tolls SR 520** - We find tolling on the existing SR 520 bridge is only acceptable in 2010 if: (1) deployment of early tolls will result in significantly earlier completion of project; and (2) beginning earlier in 2010 allows for lower toll rates that are deemed more acceptable to the public.
2. **Tolling approach: SR 520 only or both bridges:** Assuming the primary purpose of tolling SR 520 is to fulfill the legislature's identified funding gap for replacing the bridge, the toll should be applied only to SR 520. If the scenarios tolling only SR 520 result in unreasonable toll rates, we would urge the Legislature first to consider whether additional State or Federal resources should be sought to allow the toll rate to be reduced. If it is determined that tolling I-90 is needed to help reduce the toll rate on SR 520 or to ease traffic diversion, then:
  - a. The State should ensure that a toll is accompanied with improvements on the I-90 corridor, such as completion of the R8-A or other projects and;
  - b. The toll rate for I-90 should be set to minimize the diversion and to fill the funding gap, rather than tolling it at the same level as SR 520.

3. **Segment tolling** - At this time, the City of Bellevue does not support the use of segment tolls. PSRC staff indicated that the cost of collecting tolls on these short, non-bridge segments may be greater than the value of having these tolls in place. Segment tolling potentially adds an unnecessary layer of complexity and confusion to the tolling discussion. Segment tolling should therefore be dropped in any forthcoming evaluation and policy consideration.
4. **Use of tolling revenues** - Tolling revenue should be used for capital construction on the bridges. Should the focus of tolling in the future shift to a system-wide approach to congestion pricing beyond SR 520 and I-90, the use of tolling revenues for other purposes should be explored at that time.
5. **Toll rates if both bridges are tolled** - Should the state determine that there is a need to toll both SR 520 and I-90, the rate of the tolls on each should be established to best address traffic diversion issues even if that requires differential rates over time. It will be critical that the relationship and purpose of the tolls be clearly linked to capital improvements on each bridge with distinct funding assignments between the two bridges.
6. **Minimize and mitigate traffic diversion on corridors that are not tolled** - SR 520 tolling should be implemented in a manner that minimizes traffic diversion on alternate local and state routes to the greatest extent possible. We believe additional analysis of the data is needed to understand the impact of the projected diversion to local streets. In order to better assess the regional and local impacts, we ask that you include peak period diversion information by key intersections and volumes along I-405 in any forthcoming evaluation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide early comments on your first round of cross-lake tolling analysis. We look forward to continued collaboration with you.

Sincerely,



Grant S. Degginger  
Mayor

cc: Bellevue City Council  
Steve Sarkozy, Bellevue City Manager  
41<sup>st</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> District Legislators  
Dick Ford, Transportation Commissioner and Tolling Implementation Committee  
Paula Hammond, WSDOT Secretary and Tolling Implementation Committee  
Joni Earl, CEO, Sound Transit