

520 Tolling Implementation Committee - Public Comments Received

Comment	
From:	Scott Anderson
Source:	info@build520.org
Date:	10/01/2008
Zip Code:	98155
Comment:	There should be a way to identify carpools and provide them with a discount or no toll at all. This applies for any of the scenarios
From:	Sunni Parker
Source:	Mail
Date:	10/02/2008
Zip Code:	98072
Comment:	I support early "variable pricing" tolling of the 520 and I-90 bridges to bring quick and effective solutions to our region's transportation problems. We should set the tolls so they will pay to rebuild the 520 bridge and fund transportation choices. This will help relieve congestion and reduce climate change pollution.
From:	Mark Lamb
Organization:	City of Bothell
Source:	Mail
Date:	10/03/2008
Zip Code:	98011
Comment:	<p>Dear SR 520 Tolling Committee Members:</p> <p>We appreciate your leadership on the issue of evaluating appropriate financing options and mitigation measures for SR 520. Your charge includes "Evaluate the potential diversion of traffic from SR 520 to other parts of the transportation system, including SR 522 and local roadways, when tolls are implemented on SR 520 or other corridors, and recommend mitigation measures to address the diversion."</p> <p>The Bothell City Council has reviewed the analysis data released to date and takes this opportunity to express our concerns with the reliability of the data for the SR 522 corridor. Based upon our review of the data, we offer the following recommendations for mitigation of the expected impacts in Bothell.</p> <p>Reliability of the Data Many commuters already use SR 522 as an alternative cross-lake connection when SR 520 is either unavailable or is experiencing significant delays. With the possibility of tolling SR 520 and I-90, common sense would tell us that there should be a significant impact on SR 522: We are, therefore, surprised that the initial data shows "relatively little change to speeds or vehicle volumes on SR 522" in any of the initial "scenarios." We recommend further analysis, such as the following:</p> <p>Peak periods: We were glad to see that the committee recognizes that additional work needs to examine changes in peak periods. Many of the intersections on SR 522 are already functioning at a low level of service 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 volumes during peak periods will be critical to fully understand the impact.</p> <p>Need for current data: We need to have a better understanding of data used for</p>

years. This significant impact has to be taken into account for this analysis.

Transit Analysis: There needs to be a better understanding of the role transit has in these corridors. Currently in this study, it appears all trips are counted the same and transit is outside the discussion. We believe more residents will choose transit on the SR 522 corridor if it is more readily available. The high gas prices have resulted in increased transit use in the region.

Diversion Assumptions: The analysis states that up to 23 percent of the trips will be diverted to "other routes" if both bridges are tolled and, therefore, are not counted as having impact on routes such as SR 522. We believe this assumption underestimates the true impact on SR 522, the connecting arterials, and residential streets.

Other Possible concerns: Our Public Works Department has requested a meeting with your staff to better understand the underlying assumptions of this analysis and may express additional concerns once they are able to review the details of this study.

Mitigation Measures

As was stated in the original legislation creating the SR 520 Tolling Committee, a key charge was to "recommend mitigation measures to address the diversion." We offer the following recommendation to mitigate the impact of tolling on SR 520.

Improve Transit Service: We would recommend a Bus Rapid Transit service on the SR 522 corridor which would 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 & 312 and Sound Transit route SR 522) are already at capacity with most at standing room only during peak periods.

Improve Park & Ride Facilities: All of these facilities are also at or near capacity. This is a compelling need for structured park-and-ride facilities, especially in Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, and Bothell.

Improve Transit Capacity: Complete the Business Access Transit Lanes (BAT) in the SR 522 Corridor west of Wayne Curve to help move transit with more reliability.

Improve Capacity on the SR 522 Corridor: Complete the scheduled improvements on this corridor, especially those in Kenmore and Bothell. These include realigning the SR 522/SR 527 intersection in Bothell and completing the Kenmore improvements.

Improve Mitigation Measures: Allow tolling revenues to be spent on mitigation measures.

Sincerely,

Mark Lamb
Mayor

From: Sarah Frohlich
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 10/15/2008
Zip Code: 98177

Comment: I'm a native of Seattle, but lived back east for over 8 years in Washington D.C. area. I feel that tolls back east even with easy pass options lead to unnecessary congestion on the highways and bridges particularly at normally heavy traffic time periods that already are challenging to commuters. There are also overheads on maintenance of these tolling programs, equipments such as cameras and then following up on unpaid dues. I believe taxes on gas taken at the pump, can raise these same taxes but not cause the road congestion and other headaches for drivers. I don't believe individuals who drive the bridges should have to carry the larger tax burden for the community on these bridges. Everyone in the community benefits from these important public works and infrastructure projects and the tax burden of maintenance and building should be shared by all in the surrounding counties/state.

From: Steve Hasegawa

users of the bridge reside. e.g. Maybe those living on the East side who benefit most from the bridges should pay for a higher portion of the costs through taxes. New developers (for east side projects) should also help contribute as well.

From: Julie Nugent
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/05/2008
Zip Code: 98077
Comment: I am concerned about how tolls on I-90 would affect Mercer Island businesses who have employees and/or customers coming from off of the Island. It seems that any person who desires to work for or do business with a Mercer Island business would do so at an unfair premium considering there would be no way to access the Island without being subject to a toll. Can you tell me if this has been considered and if so, what offsets might be proposed to address this new business expense/loss?

Sincerely,

Julie Nugent

From: Warren Walton
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/06/2008
Zip Code: 98021
Comment: If the toll is set too high, I-405 through Tukwila and through Bothell to return to I-5 will see traffic congestion unimaginable. People will drive around rather than pay the toll. Then we have an unused bridge or bridges that are not getting paid for.

Set a permanent toll on all of Washington's bridges. Set an affordable toll!
A permanent toll should allow the toll to be a little lower than current plans.
It may take longer to pay for each new construction project, yet over the years, some surplus should be realized that can go toward required maintenance.

Thanks for your time.

From: Carol Freese
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/07/2008
Zip Code: 98028
Comment: Why aren't you holding meetings in the Kenmore/Bothell area? Kenmore and Bothell will be impacted if tolls are put on 520. Lots of people will choose to go around the north end of Lake Washington rather than pay a toll. Consequently Juanita Drive and Bothell Way will be greatly impacted. Neither of those two roadways can handle much more traffic.

From: Jeff Altman
Organization: Lake Forest Park Transportation Commission
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/08/2008
Zip Code: 98155

From: Ken Cowan
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/10/2008
Zip Code: 98072

Comment: Are you also looking at the loss of retail income from the people who choose to no longer drive into Seattle, or for that matter, leave Seattle, but will choose, rather, to shop via internet, rather than have to fuss with, and suffer tolls? You're talking tolls, and reducing traffic, and you still aren't even close to having a transit system on a par with Washington D.C. or San Francisco...and yet you should. Taxes are a fact of life, but tolls are a bad idea. As mentioned before, they discourage commerce. Of course the people who will pay them will get used to it. They are already inured to the idea. Also, naturally, traffic will reduce and speed up. That happens when people stop driving. Given the current economy, though, are you so sure we'll have recovered enough by 2010 that the loss of sales won't cause a great number of businesses that had survived to that point, to totally tank?
Have at it, but know that at least this constituent thinks you're a pack of short sighted idiots.

From: Jeannie Dines
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/10/2008
Zip Code: 98028

Comment: I think your evaluation that found "route diversion - people may change their routes, but net effect is distributed across the system" does not take into consideration that the "system" which equates to other ways around the lake are extremely limited particularly to the north. The only other routes in the "system" are Juanita Drive and SR 522. Those routes are so congested now that any additional traffic will have a significant impact. I am not even sure your evaluation considered Juanita Drive (via I-405, exit at 116th, 124th or 160th).

As a family of 4 who use Juanita Drive during AM and PM peak periods, we are most concerned with the impact route diversion would have on this roadway. I am not sure that there is enough money to adequately mitigate the effect tolling would have on Juanita Drive but I would expect that a significant amount of mitigation would need to be paid to the City Kenmore in an effort to mitigate the impacts.

It is unfortunate that the 520 Tolling Implementation Committee was entire composed of Washington State agency representatives and did not include either a Councilmember/Mayor/staff member from affected cities. The effect of route diversion on surrounding communities is an important consideration in determining when/if to toll 520.

Thank you,
Jeannie Dines and family

From: Craig M. Rantz
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/11/2008
Zip Code: 98133

Comment: Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe the only way to assure a plan to pay off the 520 bridge and all other related construction costs would be to toll both the 520 and I-90 bridge in both directions at a cost of at least \$75 dollars each way, per day.

This would generate \$150 dollars per day, per vehicle. The monthly cost to users of the bridges would be minimal (@ 5 days per week the cost would only be \$750 per week or \$3000 per month). The total yearly tolling dollars generated would be a minimal \$36,000 per user, per year. In a ten year period the cost would only be \$360,000.00 per user.

From: Julia Wiese
Source: Tolling web survey
Date: 11/11/2008
Zip Code: 98011
Comment: On page 5, question 1 there were several options I would have chosen depending on my reason for crossing into Seattle. It would depend on my final destination and the day and time of the week on which I needed to go to Seattle. I probably could have chosen all or most of the answers. Selecting one was not necessarily representative of my true choice. So assuming it was for a Mariner game I selected transit. If it were for business I would have selected carpool or to change the time I needed to get to the other side from Bothell. You might want to rework that question. Thanks and regards.

From: Stephen Bohnemeyer
Source: Tolling web survey
Date: 11/11/2008
Zip Code: 98028
Comment: Please improve Juanita Drive/68th Ave NE before the tolling begins. This is an often overlooked access to 522/Lake City Way. We are somewhat trapped in our cul-de-sac that exits onto Juanita Drive during rush hours now. An increase in traffic by people avoiding the tolling would be further detrimental to our access. Please consider the unintended consequences of tolling on the existing infrastructure.

Thanks

From: David & Karen Farthing
Source: Tolling web survey
Date: 11/11/2008
Zip Code: 98011
Comment: Tolls are very nice for the rich, other people already have a hard time making ends meet. I am not poor but oppose tolls on principle.

From: James Duvall
Source: Tolling web survey
Date: 11/11/2008
Zip Code: 98011
Comment: 1. THESE QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN POORLY PRESENTED. FOR EACH QUESTION YOU SHOULD HAVE A CHOICE THAT CAN REFLECT PARTIAL AND/OR COMPLETE DISAGREEMENT WITH THE TOLLING CONCEPT!
2. TOLLS ARE NOT THE ANSWER IN ANY WAY, SHAPE OR FORM. WE NEED A SYSTEM SIMILAR TO THE JAPANESE HIGH SPEED ELECTRIC TRAIN CONCEPT. THE CONSTRUCTION ALONE WOULD PROVIDE MORE JOBS, HELP THE ECONOMY, REDUCE AIR/GROUND POLLUTION, GASOLINE USAGE, BENEFIT ROAD/HIGHWAY/ PARKING CONGESTION EVERYWHERE AND MUCH MORE!
FINANCING/PLANNING/CONSTRUCTION/USAGE FEE STRUCTURE COULD BE READILY ACHIEVED THROUGH A MUTUAL/COMMITTEE EFFORT. THE COMMITTEE TO BE COMPOSED OF APPROXIMATELY 15 OR LESS MEMBERS WHICH WOULD INCLUDED BANKERS, UNION REPS, CITY STATE/FEDERAL LEGISLATORS OR REPS, BUSINESS LEADERS, CITIZENS AND ATTORNEYS (AT LEAST ONE OF EACH CATEGORY, NECESSARY EXCEPTIONS WOULD BE TWO MAX). FINANCING COULD UNDERWRITTEN BY LOCAL/COUNTY/STATE/FEDERAL FUNCTION IN SUPPORT OF THE BANKING INDUSTRY WHO WOULD PROVIDE THE FUNDS, OVERSEE FINANCIAL AUDITS AND ASSURE ETHICAL PRACTICES HERE. PARTICIPATING PRIVATE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE GUARANTEED A REASONABLE PROFIT (POSSIBLY IN THE RANGE OF 4-8%); HANDLE THE OUTLAY OF FUNDS FROM BEGINNING TO SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION. POSSIBLY THERE COULD EVEN BE SOME INITIAL PUBLIC FUNDING GRANTS FROM

From: Becky Birch
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/12/2008
Zip Code: 98011
Comment: I am unable to make any of the meetings on this topic, but wanted to share what I know is done in other cities with tolling . . . when I lived in San Francisco, the toll was forgiven for any carpoolers . . . 2+ over the Golden Gate Bridge qualified, so I would encourage that we adopt that approach here too. I think they use a shield over the transponder when they carpool in other places . . . like for those who don't have transponders, you may need to photograph the plate if there's no payment. Please don't forget that babies/children in car seats in the back seats won't be visible but should count for carpooling. Let me know if you have any questions about this input. Thanks!

From: Larry Nakatsu
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/14/2008
Zip Code: 8011
Comment: I respectfully request that the people in charge of designing a replacement bridge seriously consider ALL options regarding replacement including but not limited to a suspended bridge (part of the way or most of it) similar to the Oakland Bay Bridge, Tacoma Narrows Bridge, Golden Gate Bridge, Astoria Bridge, etc. I am interested in knowing if it might be less expensive to build and maintain.

From: Larry Nakatsu
Source: Tolling web survey
Date: 11/14/2008
Zip Code: 8011
Comment: I suggest a special lane for HOV who would pay a lower rate because they don't have just one person in the car. I also suggest the main bridge committee look at alternative plans such as a something other than a floating bridge. Why limit the potential design to just a floating bridge? While shorter, the Tacoma Narrows bridge upgrade is way cheaper than the current 520 proposal. There are other options.

From: Margaret Wiggins
Source: Tolling web survey
Date: 11/16/2008
Zip Code: 98011
Comment: Does it bother you that the promise made to the citizens of this state to take the toll off the 520 bridge after it was paid for, and then treat that bridge JUST LIKE ANY OTHER ROAD! would be broken? Why not just stop all the gas taxes and put tolls on all the roads? We can be like New Jersey, is that what you want? What if the tolls make the working person lose money over going on welfare, have you calculated how much higher the salaries will have to be just to get someone to take the minimum wage jobs? How much higher the cost will be on the consumers who count on those people for their service? Do you want all the slums in Seattle or do you want to spread them out? Spending toll money on transit, isn't that illegal since the transit bond passed? You already have that pound of flesh, double taxation could be cause for a revolt. But you might want to make sure that more buses are ready to go on day one of any toll. And most definitely by day 30 or whenever the first bill hits for your automated tolling system.

Comment:

Please do substantial improvements on SR 522 between I-5 and I-405 BEFORE starting the tolls on SR 520. Otherwise SR 522 will be in continual grid lock from all the vehicles diverting to avoid the toll.

From:

Mike Hablewitz

Source:

Tolling web survey

Date:

11/25/2008

Zip Code:

98011

Comment:

The "requirement" to use transponders is VERY unappealing to me. I don't use the road often enough to warrant purchasing a transponder - yet I'm going to be penalized "by an additional video charge" if I don't. Put in a tollbooth! I'll decide if I want to risk the hacking (California Fast Track problems) or spend the time paying. Also, there NEEDS to be mitigation money to cover the expense of handling the impact on 522. As a resident of Bothell, this diversion of traffic will impact me daily. Given the volume of Mill Creek / Woodinville / Bothell traffic that will now begin to use 522 to avoid 520; transit, P&Rs and traffic flow needs to be addressed and mitigated before tolling begins. Finally, I'm highly opposed to variable rate tolling. It seems an easy way to just steal more of my money. Set a rate and paint it on the sign over the toll booth.

From:

David Hutchinson

Organization:

City of Lake Forest Park

Source:

Mail

Date:

11/26/2008

Zip Code:

unknown

Comment:

Dear 520 Tolling Implementation Committee Members:

Thank you for your recent release of additional modeling information on the possible tolling of SR 520 and I-90. We appreciate Charlie Howard's November 20 presentation to the Lake Forest Park City Council during which time we discussed the traffic diversion to SR 522 under the modeling scenarios and possible mitigation options for the SR 522 corridor through our City.

As a result, Lake Forest Park respectfully requests that the 520 Tolling Implementation Committee strongly consider including the following mitigation measures for SR 522 in your final report to the Legislature:

1. the City requests that additional bus capacity be provided along the corridor by Metro or Sound Transit so that an additional one thousand seats per day be allocated for passengers traveling to the UniverCity District and downtown Seattle from our area;
2. the City requests increased frequency of bus service to every 5 minutes during peak periods and 20 minutes in off-peak;
3. the City requests that funding for additional Park and Ride facilities be provided along the SR 522 corridor;
4. the City requests commuter circulator vans in Lake Forest Park that pick up and deliver passengers to and from the bus stops in peak service times;
5. The City requests the implementation of a traffic monitoring and reporting program as outlined in the Committee's November 10, 2008 "Traffic Diversion Mitigation Framework" paper. This program will include at least the following:
 - a. communications outreach and signing plan for the tolling program,
 - b. system-wide construction schedule coordination,
 - c. arterial ITS System to improve traffic flow and reliability including the full list of plans as outlined in the November 10, 2008 paper.
6. Lake Forest Park understands its role in the region and encourages early

Lake Forest Park wishes to thank the committee again for their accessibility throughout this process. We are happy to work with the Committee as they craft their final recommendations to the Legislature.

From: Jeff Altman
Organization: Lake Forest Park Transportation Commission
Source: Tolling web survey
Date: 11/28/2008
Zip Code: 98155
Comment: Because LOS on SR 522 are already so poor, even the relatively minor increases to SR 522 traffic forecasted by your modeling are actually very significant. Bridge tolls should be bi-directional. Segmental tolls would be fair. Thanks!

From: Deb Blaha
Source: info@build520.org
Date: 11/28/2008
Zip Code: 98155
Comment: After reading through the web site my preference would be to toll both 520 and I-90 in 2016.

Thanks

From: Deb Blaha
Source: Tolling web survey
Date: 11/29/2008
Zip Code: 98155
Comment: I would like to either see no tolls. Or tolls on both 520 and I-90 in 2016.