

I-90 Tolling EIS Update

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What the Legislature asked us to study

ESHB 2190 (2012) - WSDOT should, *“undertake a comprehensive environmental review of tolling Interstate 90 between Interstate 5 and Interstate 405 for the purpose of both managing traffic and providing funding for construction the unfunded state route number 520 from Interstate 5 to Medina project...”*

ESSB 5024 (2013) - Between the end of scoping comment period in February and publishing the Scoping Summary Report in June, the Legislature amended the previous direction to WSDOT by requiring an Environmental Impact Statement for the I-90 Tolling Project, along with specifying further study of specific approaches to mitigating impacts on Mercer Island travel.



I-90 Tolling Purpose and Need



Manage congestion and traffic flow on I-90 between I-5 and I-405, which is in the Cross-Lake Washington Corridor, and



Contribute revenue to the sustainable, long-term funding for timely completion of the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program and maintenance and future transportation improvements on I-90 in the Cross-Lake Washington Corridor.

Scoping Outreach

During the Oct. 7 to Nov. 6 EIS scoping period, WSDOT:

- Hosted three public meetings
- Hosted one agency scoping meeting
- Provided hearing-style verbal comment opportunities at each of the public meetings
- Accepted comments through an online comment form, standard mail and email
- Shared all scoping materials and information on the project website



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I-90 Tolling

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Public Comment and Scoping Information

WSDOT and FHWA are conducting an environmental impact statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential effects of tolling I-90 between I-5 in Seattle and I-405 in Bellevue. The additional scoping comment period starts **Monday, Oct. 7** and ends **Wednesday, Nov. 6**.

[What type of feedback is most helpful?](#)
[How can I comment?](#)
[Meeting and translated materials](#)

What type of feedback is most helpful?

As you're considering your scoping comments, remember that scoping is designed to gather input on four topics:

1. I-90 Tolling Project's [Purpose and Need](#) to:
 - Manage congestion and traffic flow on I-90 between I-5 and I-405
 - Contribute revenue toward funding the timely completion of the [SR 520 I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project](#)
2. Potential [range of alternatives](#) (pdf 87 kb) that may also help meet purpose of the project toward contribute revenue to SR 520 and manage congestion on I-90:
 - Variable tolls on all lanes of I-90 between I-5 and I-405

Potential Build Alternatives

Potential Alternative ¹	Will this option help manage congestion and traffic flow on I-90 between I-5 and I-405?	Will this option contribute revenue for timely completion of the SR 520 Bridge Replacement Project and other improvements? ²
Variable tolls on all lanes of I-90 between I-5 and I-405	Reduces Congestion – Implementation of tolls will encourage drivers to change their time of travel to avoid peak tolls, seek alternative routes and/or to change destination to avoid Cross-Lake travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary analysis shows potential to raise greater than \$1 billion for the SR 520 Program and assumes I-90 and SR 520 tolled at the same rates. Can be implemented by 2016.
Express toll lanes on I-90	Conversion of existing HOV lanes to express toll lanes would provide some reduction in congestion on I-90.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous revenue estimates prepared for the 2009 Legislative Workgroup found express toll lane revenue would only cover a small portion of the funding needed for SR 520. Express toll lane revenue could raise up to approximately \$250 million depending on the configuration.
Additional federal funds directed to the SR 520 project	No Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WSDOT has received approximately \$120 million for SR 520 improvements and the likelihood of additional federal funding is considered low. Recent transportation funding legislation has eliminated earmarks so federal funds are less likely to be directed to specific projects such as SR 520.
State gas tax funds directed to the SR 520 project	No Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statewide gas tax would have to increase about 3 cents per gallon to raise the \$1.4 billion needed to complete the SR 520 Program.
Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) tax	No Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washington State Transportation Commission is studying VMT in their Road User Charge Assessment. Work on the required infrastructure, regulations and procedures has not begun leading to a long timeframe for implementation.
Transportation Benefit District – vehicle license fee, sales or property tax	No Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on Legislature workgroup materials, the funding range generated by each of these taxes varies from approximately \$100 million to \$750 million.
King County motor vehicle excise tax	No Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2008, the SR 520 Tolling Implementation Committee estimated roughly \$150 million in funding.
Adjust tolls on SR 520	No Effect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased tolls on SR 520 would lead to higher diversion that would increase congestion on I-90. Decreased tolls on SR 520 would decrease diversion that would reduce congestion on I-90. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2008 Toll Implementation Committee found that increasing tolls to maximizing toll revenue generates roughly \$300 million more in funding than the current rate schedule. Decreased tolls could violate existing bond commitments for SR 520.
Increased transit service	Reduces Congestion – Increased transit service over and above current and planned levels, including the addition of light rail in this corridor would help to mitigate congestion, but cannot alleviate highway congestion on its own.	No Additional Revenue
Add new lanes by widening I-90	Reduces Congestion – Additional lanes on I-90 could reduce congestion.	No Additional Revenue
Implement tolls on other facilities	Additional tolls on other facilities could help manage congestion. I-405 has received authorization for express toll lanes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolls on other facilities could not be implemented in a timely manner for completion of the SR 520 Program. Tolls on other facilities could raise substantial funds.

Scoping Tolling Options

OPTION 1: Single Point Tolling West Side



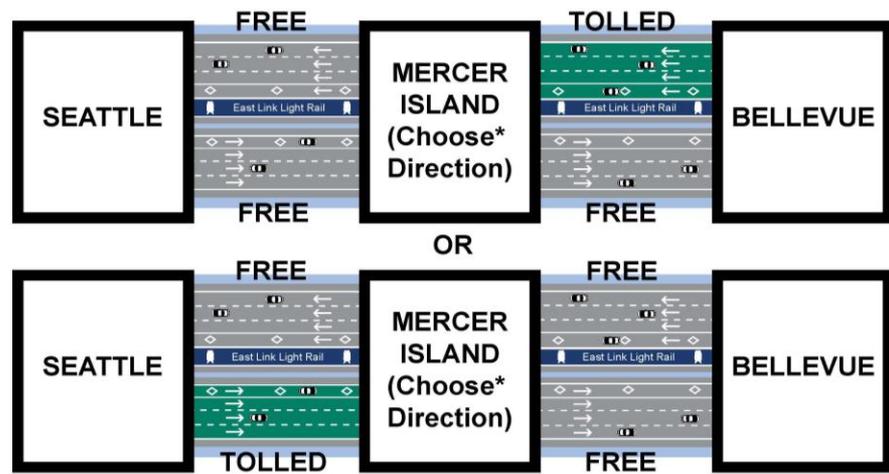
OPTION 2: Single Point Tolling East Side



OPTION 3: One Direction Tolled on Either Side of Mercer Island

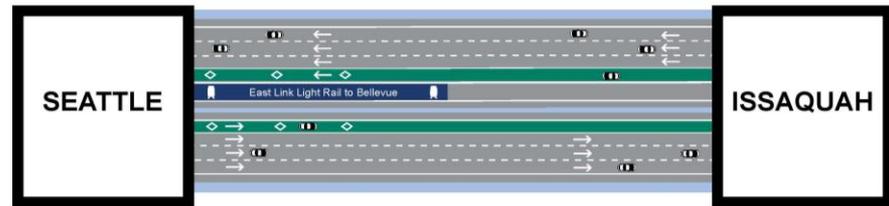


OPTION 4: Mercer Island Resident Choice* of Free Side



* Individuals choose which direction to toll.

OPTION 5: Express Toll Lanes (dynamic tolling in HOV lane)



Additional Scoping by the Numbers

In addition to the over 3,400 comments received during the initial scoping period between Jan. and Feb, 2013, WSDOT received over 1,300 comments during the EIS scoping period from Oct. 7 to Nov. 6, 2013:

- 187 letters, written comment forms, and verbal testimonies
- 987 emails and online comment forms
- One organization's letter included 4,463 signatures.

Federal courts have enough money to pay judiciary employees until about Oct. 15. But they fear her...
Sept. 30
At 63, Gilroy already has given up on thoughts of finally retiring, because of financial uncertainty.
"I hold the Republicans responsible," Gilroy said.
Rep. Derek Kilmer, D-Gig Harbor, whose district includes Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, pledged Monday to give up his pay for the duration of the shutdown. Kilmer said Congress shouldn't get paid if it "can't get it act together."
House and Senate members earn \$174,000 a year. Their next paychecks are due Oct. 31.
Staff reporter Andrew Gutherer can be reached at andrew.gutherer@seattlepi.com. Twitter: @AndrewGutherer

to 4.5 percent jump in hold-... 20 percent less than... Twitter: @sealtimebiz

twitter.com/SealTimeBiz

We need your input!

I-90 Tolling EIS scoping from Oct. 7 to Nov. 6.

The Federal Highway Administration and Washington State Department of Transportation are preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) to evaluate potential effects of tolling Interstate 90 between I-5 in Seattle and I-405 in Bellevue.

Participate in the scoping process to:

- Learn about the revised project purpose and need
- Offer an "input" on the issues to study in the draft EIS
- Review the range of alternatives under consideration

All comments submitted during the initial scoping period between January 22 and February 22, 2013 will be included in the initial I-90 tolling EIS report.

Three ways to comment

Whether you submit a comment verbally at a public meeting or at home from your computer, all comments are considered in the EIS document and included in the official I-90 Tolling EIS report released by November 6, 2013.

- By Email:** WSDOTComments@wsdot.wa.gov
- In Person:** Public Meetings
- By Mail:** I-90 Tolling Project, Mrs. Angela Agnew, 300 North Ave., Suite 2200, Seattle, WA 98104

Scoping meeting details

FHWA and WSDOT will conduct three public meetings during the additional scoping period. Each meeting will feature a display board, project chart as well as answer questions, and written and verbal comment cards. A Q&A report will capture all verbal comments as part of the official record. This will not be a presentation or formal question and answer session.

Bellingham	Mercer Island	Seattle
October 10, 2013	October 21, 2013	October 23, 2013
6-7 p.m.	4:30-6:30 p.m.	6-7 p.m.
Bellingham College Cafeteria	Mercer Island High School	WW African American Museum

Visit the project website to learn more about the I-90 EIS, review scoping display boards, and find out how to sign up for a verbal comment card at the public meetings.

www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i90/eis/eis.htm#scoping

What we heard from additional scoping

The key themes that emerged from agencies and the public during the public comment period, in order of the number of comments received, included:

- Opinions on Tolling
- Corridor Identification
- Purpose and Need
- Tolling Options
- Other Alternatives
- Economic Effects of Tolling
- Traffic Effects
- Transit
- Effects to Freight
- Effects on the Region
- Effects on Land Use and Development on Mercer Island
- Effects on Public Services
- Effects on Community Life
- Environmental Justice

What we heard from additional scoping

Opinions on Tolling

- Most commenters do not want tolls on I-90. Mercer Island residents are concerned they will be unfairly impacted because there is no other way off the island.
- Many daily commuters are concerned about the financial impact it would have to themselves and the region.
- There were also limited comments expressing various levels of support for tolling I-90, ranging from general support to support of certain options.

Purpose and Need

- Many commenters expressed that the purpose and need should be broader, that the EIS should look at the Puget Sound region and how tolling could affect traffic on other freeways.

Other Potential Alternatives

- Many commenters expressed that a more regional means of funding should be used instead of tolling. Some of the suggestions included: considering a gas tax, vehicle mile traveled tax, vehicle excise tax, license or car-tab fees, or a combination of fees and taxes.

Mercer Island Travel Surveys

- In November 2013, WSDOT mailed nearly 11,000 surveys to Mercer Island residents, businesses and organizations (schools, religious organizations, social services, etc.).
- The survey results, along with traffic counts from Mercer Island on/off ramps, help WSDOT and the City of Mercer Island learn more about I-90 travel patterns and potential effects of tolling.



Mercer Island Resident Survey

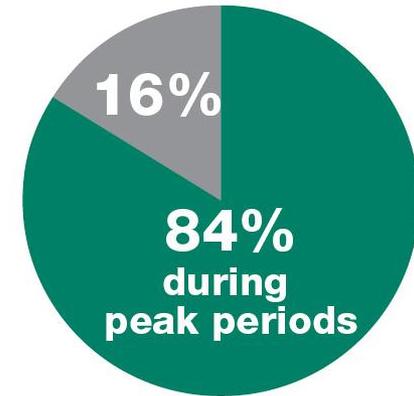
Overview

- Mailed surveys to all Mercer Island households, resulting in 3,595 responses, or a response rate of 38%.

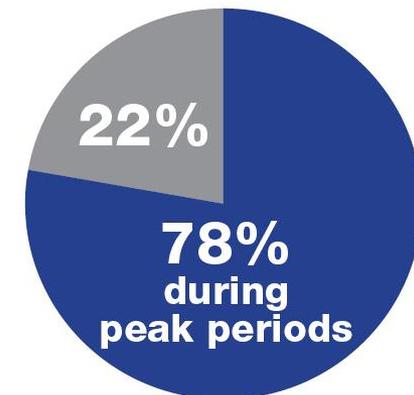
Results

- Nearly 98 percent of respondents reported trips on the I-90 during the week-long survey.
- Overall, more household trips occurred between Mercer Island and Bellevue (54%) compared to trips between Mercer Island and Seattle (46%).
- There were more work-commute round-trips that occur between Mercer Island and Seattle (55%) than between Mercer Island and Bellevue (45%).

All work commute trips
between
Mercer Island and Seattle



All work commute trips
between
Mercer Island and Bellevue



Mercer Island Business/Organization Survey

Overview

- Mailed surveys to all Mercer Island businesses, organizations and churches, a total of 269 responded for a response rate of 34%.

Results

- Overall, more business/organization-related trips are between Mercer Island and Bellevue (55%) compared to trips between Mercer Island and Seattle (45%).
- Of all business/organization trips between Mercer Island and Seattle, 63% occurred during peak period travel times.
- Of all business/organization trips between Mercer Island and Bellevue, 58% occurred during peak period travel times.

Freight Survey

Overview

- Survey to get a better idea of how tolls might affect driver behavior.
- Online survey in December coordinated between the WSDOT Freight Division, Port of Seattle and Washington Trucking Association.
- A total of 299 qualified respondents participated in the survey.

Results

- More than half (51%) of all respondents were in management positions and most others (45%) were drivers, either for a freight company or as independent operators.
- About 21% reported they would pay the toll.
- Almost 39% reported they would use I-405 to drive around the south end of Lake Washington to avoid the toll.
- More than two-thirds (69%) plan to pass on the cost (or part of the cost) of the toll to their customers.

EIS Schedule & Timing of Decisions

2013

- Initial Scoping Period (Jan. 22 to Feb. 22)
- WSDOT published Initial I-90 Tolling Scoping Summary Report
- WSDOT and FHWA proceeded with an environmental impact statement to determine potential effect of I-90 tolling
- Additional Scoping Period (Oct. 7 to Nov.6)

Early/Mid 2014

- Additional Scoping Summary Report (Jan. 27)
- FHWA/WSDOT finalize alternatives analysis report

Late 2014

- FHWA/WSDOT publish the DEIS, accompanied by a public comment period

Early/Mid 2015

- FHWA/WSDOT publish the FEIS
- Washington State Legislature considers authorizing tolls on I-90
- Record of Decision
- FHWA considers federal toll agreement

For questions or further information...

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