

## **Appendix D**

### **Environmental Justice Report**



# URBAN PARTNERSHIP SR 520 VARIABLE TOLLING PROJECT

Environmental Justice Discipline Report

March 2009

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# ACRONYMS

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DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
EBT	Electronic Benefit Transfer
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GIS	Geographic Information System
HOT	High-Occupant Toll
LEP	limited-English proficiency
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act
UPA	Urban Partnership Agreement
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation



# 1 Chapter 1 Introduction

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## 2 1 What are the features of the Urban Partnership SR 3 520 Variable Tolling Project?

4 The Lake Washington Urban Partnership Agreement (UPA) is a  
5 cooperative effort to use innovative traffic management tools  
6 for improving safety and traffic flow along SR 520 and I-90  
7 between Seattle and the Eastside. The agreement calls for a  
8 new variable tolling system that will improve traffic flow on  
9 the SR 520 corridor and provide up to \$500 million for  
10 investments in the SR 520 corridor. UPA partners are the  
11 Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT),  
12 King County, and the Puget Sound Regional Council.

13 The SR 520 Variable Tolling Project includes several  
14 components:

- 15 ▪ A single tolling facility on the Evergreen Point Bridge,
- 16 ▪ Vehicle-mounted transponders,
- 17 ▪ Signs on routes approaching the tolling location, and
- 18 ▪ A customer service center.

## 19 What is the No Build Alternative?

20 Under the No Build Alternative, tolling would not be  
21 implemented on the existing Evergreen Point Bridge and no  
22 construction activities would occur.

## 23 2 What is the purpose of this report?

24 In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as  
25 amended, Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address*

1 *Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-*  
2 *Income Populations*; U.S. Department of Transportation  
3 (USDOT) Order 5610.2, *Order to Address Environmental*  
4 *Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*;  
5 and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Order 6640.23,  
6 *FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority*  
7 *Populations and Low-Income Populations*; the purpose of this  
8 report is to determine if the Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable  
9 Tolling Project would result in disproportionately high and  
10 adverse human health or environmental effects on low-income  
11 or minority populations. A second purpose is to identify  
12 measures to avoid or minimize any adverse effects on low-  
13 income or minority populations.

14 We also examined the potential effects of the project on  
15 limited-English proficient (LEP) populations, in order to avoid  
16 discrimination on the basis of national origin. Title VI of the  
17 Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis  
18 of national origin.

### 19 **3 Why is it important to consider Environmental** 20 **Justice as we plan this project?**

21 Environmental justice acknowledges that the quality of our  
22 environment affects our lives and negative environmental  
23 effects should not disproportionately burden low-income or  
24 minority communities.

25 Negative environmental effects associated with transportation  
26 projects may include, among others: limited access to a  
27 publicly-funded facility, disruptions in community cohesion,  
28 presence of hazardous materials, raised noise levels, or  
29 increased air and/or water pollution.

### 30 **4 What studies did we complete for this analysis?**

31 We used four approaches to collect data on low-income,  
32 minority, and LEP populations:

- 33 ▪ Demographic analysis
- 34 ▪ Surveys of Evergreen Point Bridge users

- 1   ▪ Focus groups and Spanish-language telephone interviews
- 2       with Evergreen Point Bridge users
- 3   ▪ Public involvement activities

## 4   **5 Why is public involvement important?**

5 Public involvement is important so that all members of the  
6 public, especially low-income, minority, and LEP populations  
7 potentially affected by a project have meaningful opportunities  
8 for involvement during project planning and development.

9 Public involvement is one important way to identify project  
10 impacts as early as possible so that they can be avoided and/or  
11 mitigated.

12 Public involvement activities typically include neighborhood  
13 meetings, open houses at which project staff collect public  
14 input and answer their questions, and hosting booths at  
15 community festivals.

## 16   **6 What are the key messages from this report?**

### 17   **What are the potential effects of the project?**

18 The Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project will not  
19 result in adverse effects as a result of project construction, as  
20 construction will only involve installation of the electronic  
21 equipment needed to read transponders in vehicles and collect  
22 the toll. We do not anticipate effects to water, visual aesthetics,  
23 or cultural resources and there will be little to no traffic  
24 disruption, noise, dust, hazardous waste, or residential or  
25 business acquisitions associated with construction of this  
26 project.

27 There are two ways in which project operation will benefit all  
28 users, including low-income, minority, or LEP populations:

- 29   1. People who drive across the Evergreen Point Bridge will  
30       benefit from improved speeds for all vehicles and trip  
31       reliability as a result of fewer cars on the bridge.
- 32   2. With fewer cars on the Evergreen Point Bridge, transit  
33       riders will benefit from improved transit speeds and  
34       reliability.

1 However, there are three principal ways in which project  
2 operation will adversely affect low-income or limited-English  
3 proficient populations if not mitigated (we did not find adverse  
4 effects to minority populations):

- 5 1. The cost of the tolls will present a burden to low-income  
6 bridge users.
- 7 2. The cost of the tolls will present a burden to social service  
8 agencies that serve environmental justice populations.
- 9 3. Bridge users may choose to purchase a transponder and set  
10 up an account with WSDOT to pay the toll, or have their  
11 license plate automatically photographed and receive by  
12 mail a bill for the toll with a surcharge added. Both options  
13 will present a burden to low-income and limited-English  
14 proficient Evergreen Point Bridge users.

15 Furthermore, there is potential for cumulative effects to  
16 adversely impact low-income populations. Cumulative effects  
17 are effects on the environment that result from the incremental  
18 effect of an action when added to other past, present, and  
19 reasonably foreseeable future actions. Construction is planned  
20 for both un-tolled routes around or across Lake Washington,  
21 which could make it much more difficult for low-income  
22 Evergreen Point Bridge users to take an alternate route to avoid  
23 paying the toll. Furthermore, the possibility of tolling the I-90  
24 Bridge across Lake Washington is under consideration. If that  
25 route were to be tolled, it would limit the un-tolled alternate  
26 routes. Note that potential tolls on the I-90 Bridge would be  
27 evaluated under a separate environmental process.

28 **What can be done to avoid or minimize adverse effects to**  
29 **low-income or LEP populations?**

30 If the Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project is  
31 undertaken, WSDOT and its partners have already decided to  
32 employ these five strategies to help minimize adverse effects  
33 on low-income or LEP populations:

- 34 1. **Permanent Customer Service Centers:** WSDOT will  
35 establish a permanent customer service center at either end  
36 of the Evergreen Point Bridge. Both locations will be

- 1 transit accessible. Drivers will be able to purchase Good to  
2 Go!<sup>TM</sup> transponders and establish prepaid accounts with  
3 cash at these centers.
- 4 2. **EBT Cards can be used to establish and replenish Good**  
5 **To Go!<sup>TM</sup> accounts:** Low-income Evergreen Point Bridge  
6 users will be able to establish and replenish their prepaid  
7 accounts using their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)  
8 card. EBT functions like a debit card and allows recipients  
9 who receive federal benefits to pay for products and  
10 services, such as groceries and health care.
- 11 3. **Transponder retail outlets:** WSDOT will explore the  
12 possibility of establishing permanent Good to Go!<sup>TM</sup> retail  
13 outlets at convenient locations, such as grocery stores,  
14 convenience stores, or pharmacies throughout the region.  
15 Low-income focus group participants and Spanish-  
16 speaking interview participants indicated that this would  
17 make it much easier for them to purchase transponders and  
18 set up prepaid accounts with WSDOT.
- 19 4. **Multi-language outreach:** WSDOT will conduct outreach  
20 in multiple languages to provide information about how to  
21 purchase a transponder, establish an account, and use the  
22 system. Target languages will be the same languages that  
23 the Washington Department of Licensing uses for its  
24 translation: Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Russian, Spanish,  
25 and Vietnamese. WSDOT will also use pictograms  
26 whenever possible to explain the system. WSDOT will  
27 distribute information about the new tolling system and  
28 transponders throughout the region via community-based  
29 organizations, social service offices, churches, and schools;  
30 purchase advertising in ethnic newspapers and radio  
31 stations; and establish hotlines with multi-lingual customer  
32 service agents well in advance of tolling.
- 33 5. **Training of social service workers:** WSDOT will provide  
34 social service agencies with information about tolling and  
35 options to avoid the tolls. This will assist social service  
36 workers in sharing accurate information with clients.

1 In addition, the following strategies will be considered for  
2 minimizing the effects of tolling on low-income or LEP  
3 populations. Some options may require legislative action,  
4 coordination with other agencies, or commitment of additional  
5 funding resources other than tolling revenue.

6 1. **Targeted transit improvements:** The Washington State  
7 Legislature could consider allocating additional funding to  
8 King County Metro Transit and Sound Transit to increase  
9 service along SR 520 routes that are used by low-income  
10 populations, especially in the University District and  
11 Crossroads in Bellevue. These routes could be identified by  
12 overlaying the Evergreen Point Bridge travelshed map with  
13 King County Metro and Sound Transit route maps. Service  
14 could also be increased between low-income residential  
15 neighborhoods and job/education centers.

16 2. **Refunds to social service agencies:** The Washington State  
17 Legislature could allocate funding to provide refunds to  
18 social service agencies that broker transportation for low-  
19 income and disabled populations that meet certain  
20 thresholds.

21 **What will happen if we adopt the No Build Alternative?**

22 Under the No Build Alternative, variable tolling would not be  
23 implemented on the existing Evergreen Point Bridge and no  
24 construction activities would occur. Traffic volumes across  
25 Lake Washington on the Evergreen Point Bridge would be  
26 expected to increase, and speeds would decrease, including  
27 speeds for transit. Drivers and transit riders alike would not  
28 benefit from a faster, more reliable trip.

29 Low-income drivers would not be adversely affected by tolls.  
30 Low-income and limited-English proficient drivers would not  
31 be adversely affected by the need to purchase a transponder  
32 and set up an account with WSDOT.

# 1 Chapter 2 Project Description

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## 2 1 What is the purpose of the Urban Partnership SR 3 520 Variable Tolling Project?

4 The primary purpose of the project is to ease congestion on SR  
5 520. The SR 520 corridor, which includes the Evergreen Point  
6 Bridge over Lake Washington and connects I-5 in Seattle to I-  
7 405 and the region's high-tech industry center on the Eastside,  
8 is highly congested. Completed in 1963, the Evergreen Point  
9 Bridge carries about 110,000 vehicles each day – almost  
10 double the capacity for which it was designed.

11 USDOT through the Lake Washington Urban Partnership will  
12 provide funding for new technology – such as electronic tolling  
13 – to reduce congestion and make commutes across Lake  
14 Washington safer, faster, and smoother. The toll will be higher  
15 during peak travel periods and there will be no toll booths to  
16 slow down traffic.

17 In addition to reducing congestion, another important purpose  
18 of the project is to generate funding for improvements along  
19 the SR 520 corridor. It is likely that the state legislature will  
20 vote to use toll revenue to help pay to replace the Evergreen  
21 Point Bridge across Lake Washington. The existing bridge is  
22 vulnerable to windstorms and earthquakes and is at risk of  
23 collapse if not replaced.

## 24 2 What are the details of the Urban Partnership SR 25 520 Variable Tolling Project?

26 The Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project  
27 includes several components:

- 1   ▪ A single tolling facility on SR 520,
- 2   ▪ Vehicle-mounted transponders,
- 3   ▪ Signs on routes approaching the tolling location, and
- 4   ▪ A customer service center.

5   **Tolling facility**

6   WSDOT is proposing to place tolling equipment on the eastern  
7   end of the bridge. Tolling equipment will include:

- 8   ▪ Overhead signs on the bridges for each direction of travel,
- 9   ▪ An overhead automobile detection device,
- 10  ▪ Antennae and other equipment that will read in-vehicle  
11  transponders,
- 12  ▪ Video cameras over each lane to capture license plate  
13  images, and
- 14  ▪ Either visible or infrared lighting.

15  **Vehicle-mounted transponders**

16  WSDOT will encourage drivers to obtain transponders for their  
17  vehicles. These will be linked to a prepaid Good To Go!<sup>TM</sup>  
18  account. As a vehicle passes under the tolling equipment, the  
19  overhead automobile detection device will read the vehicle's  
20  transponder and deduct the toll from the associated prepaid  
21  account. The driver will receive a monthly statement that  
22  shows the toll transactions for that month. This system is being  
23  used on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the SR 167 High-  
24  Occupant Toll (HOT) Lanes Pilot Project.<sup>1</sup>

25  A vehicle that passes under tolling equipment on the Evergreen  
26  Point Bridge without a Good To Go!<sup>TM</sup> account will be

**Exhibit 2-1**  
**Example of electronic toll**  
**technology that could be**  
**used on SR 520.**



**Exhibit 2-2**  
**Good to Go!<sup>TM</sup> vehicle-**  
**mounted transponder**



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<sup>1</sup> Although the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the SR 167 HOT Lanes project also use Good To Go!<sup>TM</sup> transponders, there are some key differences from the Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project. On the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, customers without a transponder can pay with cash at a toll booth. On SR 167, only single-occupant vehicles using the High-Occupant Toll (HOT) lanes pay the toll. Carpools and transit do not pay a toll to use the HOT lanes and no toll is charged to vehicles in the general purpose lanes.

1 photographed. . The vehicle owner will receive a bill for the  
2 toll with a surcharge added.

### 3 **Signs**

4 WSDOT will install signs along the corridor to inform drivers  
5 that they are approaching a tolled facility and indicate the  
6 location of the last un-tolled exit.

### 7 **Customer Service Center**

8 The customer service center maintains customer account and  
9 transaction information for those customers with a Good To  
10 Go!™ account. Customers will be able to access their accounts  
11 or make payments during business hours at walk-in storefronts  
12 or 24 hours a day via telephone and the Internet. WSDOT is  
13 planning to build two permanent customer service centers at  
14 either end of the Evergreen Point Bridge, in a transit-  
15 accessible, easy to access location. WSDOT is also evaluating  
16 whether the use of mobile units or retail locations would  
17 provide greater access to opening and maintaining accounts.

### 18 **3 What is the schedule for implementation?**

19 The Washington State Legislature will make a final decision  
20 about whether or not to go forward with this project in spring  
21 2009.



# 1 Chapter 3 Study Approach

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## 2 1 What is the study area and how was it 3 determined?

4 For this Environmental Justice Discipline Report, we used a  
5 study area that captures:

- 6 1. The area surrounding the Evergreen Point Bridge,
- 7 2. The Evergreen Point Bridge travelshed, and
- 8 3. Communities that do not surround the project but may still  
9 be affected by the tolling.

10 Exhibit 3-1 shows the study area that we used for this analysis.

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### Environmental Justice

Environmental justice acknowledges that the quality of our environment affects our lives and negative environmental effects should not disproportionately burden low-income or minority communities.

Negative environmental effects associated with transportation projects may include, among others: limited access to a publicly funded facility, disruptions in community cohesion, presence of hazardous materials, raised noise levels, or increased water and/or air pollution.

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**Exhibit 3-1  
Study Area**



1 **Area surrounding the Evergreen Point Bridge**

2 To conduct an environmental justice analysis on most highway  
3 projects, we examine the effects of the project on the human  
4 environment within a specified distance from the project limits.  
5 The effects of constructing and operating the project – such as  
6 increased noise or traffic – typically do not extend farther than  
7 this.

8 Because project operation is most likely to affect  
9 transportation, we include the study area used for the  
10 Transportation Discipline Report. The limits of this study area  
11 are I-5 on the west, SR 522 on the north, I-405 on the east, and  
12 I-90 on the south.

1 **Evergreen Point Bridge Travel shed**

2 The tolling of the existing Evergreen Point Bridge will affect  
3 *users* of the facility as much as it will affect people living and  
4 working near the facility. To identify Evergreen Point Bridge  
5 users, we examined the communities from which trips on the  
6 Evergreen Point Bridge originated (the Evergreen Point Bridge  
7 travelshed).

8 To determine the Evergreen Point Bridge travelshed, WSDOT  
9 placed video cameras on the bridge in May 2008. Cameras  
10 were placed at on- and off-ramps during the morning and  
11 evening peak periods, as well as midday and weekends. The  
12 Department of Licensing provided WSDOT with the addresses  
13 associated with the registered owners of each vehicle that was  
14 videotaped. (No other identifying information – such as the  
15 vehicle owner’s name – was released to WSDOT.) Using those  
16 addresses, we developed a map of the Evergreen Point Bridge  
17 travelshed. Exhibit 3-2 shows the Evergreen Point Bridge  
18 travelshed.

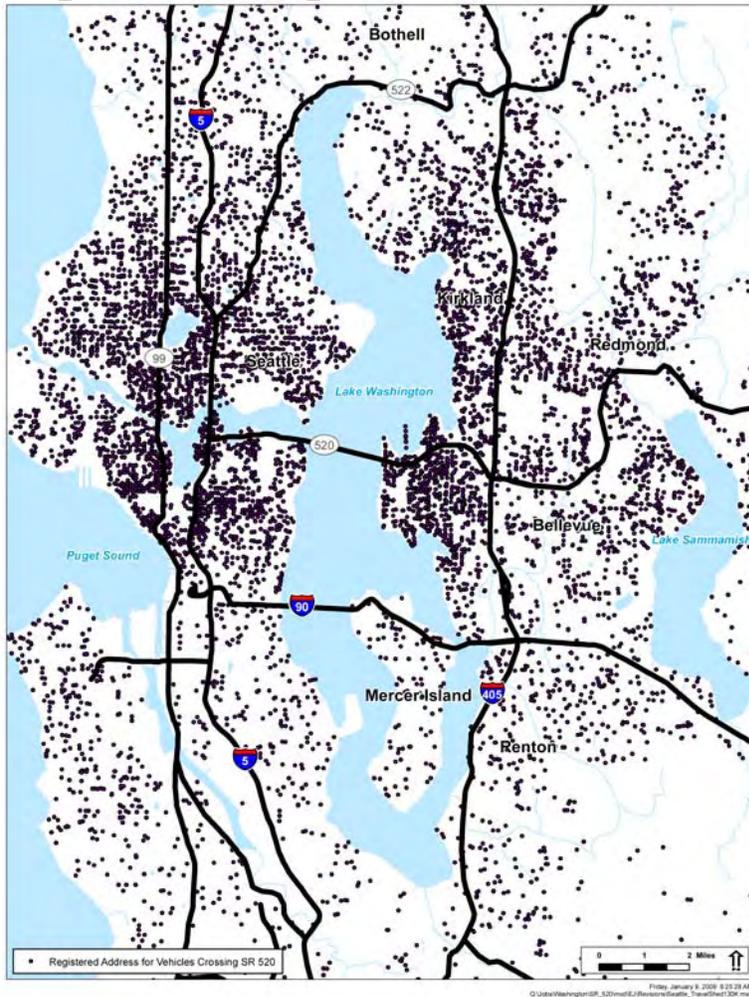
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**What is a travelshed?**

A travelshed refers to the geographic area from which traffic on a given facility originates.

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**Exhibit 3-2  
Evergreen Point Bridge Travel Shed**



- 1 The dots represent registered addresses of vehicles that crossed
- 2 the Evergreen Point Bridge on at least one of the days that
- 3 WSDOT videotaped license plates.
- 4 **Communities that do not surround the project but may**
- 5 **still be affected by the tolling**
- 6 Because one potential effect of tolling the Evergreen Point
- 7 Bridge is that traffic may increase on non-tolled routes (such as
- 8 the I-90 Bridge or SR 522 through Bothell), it is important to
- 9 examine the communities surrounding non-tolled alternate
- 10 routes.

1 **2 What laws, regulations, or guidance are related to**  
 2 **environmental justice?**

3 In response to a concern that minority or low-income  
 4 populations bear a disproportionate amount of adverse health  
 5 and environmental effects of public projects and to reinforce  
 6 the fundamental rights and legal requirements contained in  
 7 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, President  
 8 Clinton issued Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to*  
 9 *Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and*  
 10 *Low-Income Populations* in 1994. It directs each federal  
 11 agency to make environmental justice part of its mission.

12 Following Executive Order 12898, USDOT issued Order  
 13 5610.2, *Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority*  
 14 *Populations and Low-Income Populations*. It provided  
 15 guidelines for how environmental justice analyses should be  
 16 performed and how environmental justice should be  
 17 incorporated into the transportation decision-making process.  
 18 The USDOT Order requires federal agencies to do the  
 19 following:

- 20 1. Explicitly consider human health and environmental effects  
 21 related to transportation projects that may have a  
 22 disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority or  
 23 low-income populations; and
- 24 2. Implement procedures to provide “meaningful  
 25 opportunities for public involvement” by members of those  
 26 populations during project planning and development  
 27 (USDOT Order 5610.2, §5(b)(1)).

28 FHWA issued a similarly-worded order, *FHWA Actions to*  
 29 *Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and*  
 30 *Low-Income Populations* (FHWA Order 6640.23).

31 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that “no  
 32 person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color,  
 33 or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied  
 34 the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any  
 35 program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

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**How do we define minority?**

A minority is an individual who identifies himself as Black (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa); Hispanic (a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race); Asian American (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); American Indian/Alaskan Native (a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition); or some other race.

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**How do we define low-income?**

A low-income person is an individual whose household income falls below the federal poverty guidelines, as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For 2008, the federal poverty guideline for a household of four in one of the 48 contiguous states and Washington DC was \$21,200.

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1 Title VI compels us to also look at the effects of projects on  
2 people with limited-English proficiency (LEP), in order to  
3 avoid discrimination on the basis of national origin.

4 Other federal laws, such as the National Environmental Policy  
5 Act (NEPA), Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property  
6 Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended, the Civil Rights  
7 Restoration Act of 1987, and the Transportation Equity Act  
8 (TEA-21) also include the nondiscrimination requirements  
9 outlined in Title VI.

### 10 **3 How did we collect information on low-income** 11 **and minority populations for this report?**

12 When we use the term “low-income and minority populations”  
13 in this report, we are referring to groups that were identified in  
14 President Clinton’s 1994 executive order on environmental  
15 justice: minorities and people with household incomes below  
16 federal poverty guidelines. We also collected data on LEP  
17 populations.

18 We used four approaches to collect data on low-income,  
19 minority, and LEP populations:

- 20 ▪ Demographic analysis
- 21 ▪ Surveys of Evergreen Point Bridge users
- 22 ▪ Focus groups with Evergreen Point Bridge users
- 23 ▪ Public involvement activities

#### 24 **Demographic analysis**

25 We used data from the 2000 U.S. Decennial Census to collect  
26 information on demographic characteristics of populations in  
27 the study area. The U.S. Census Bureau provides statistics on  
28 minority and poverty status for block groups in the study area.

29 We also collect data on LEP populations, to ensure that our  
30 outreach efforts take into account the potential need for  
31 translation. To collect information on LEP populations, we  
32 look at two sets of U.S. Census data. The first dataset  
33 identifies the number of residents in each census block group  
34 who are linguistically isolated, or those who indicated in the

1 census survey that they speak English “not well” or “not at all.”  
2 We look at a different census dataset to identify the specific  
3 languages that populations in the study area speak. Information  
4 on the specific languages that residents speak is available at the  
5 census tract level.

6 Because the most recent decennial census data is nine years  
7 old, we verified our findings with National Center for  
8 Education Statistics (NCES) demographic data on students  
9 enrolled in schools in the study area for the 2006-2007 school  
10 year.

### 11 **Surveys of Evergreen Point Bridge users**

12 To understand how tolling of the existing Evergreen Point  
13 Bridge might affect low-income, minority, or LEP populations,  
14 we conducted a telephone survey of 600 individuals who use  
15 the Evergreen Point Bridge two or more days a week. Three  
16 hundred respondents qualified as a member of a population  
17 protected under environmental justice laws and regulations. In  
18 other words, 300 respondents either identified themselves as  
19 Black, Hispanic, Asian American or Pacific Islander, American  
20 Indian or Alaskan Native, or indicated that their household  
21 income fell below the federal poverty level.

22 To capture LEP Evergreen Point Bridge users, we translated  
23 surveys into Spanish. We were also prepared to translate the  
24 surveys into other languages, but there were no substantial  
25 concentrations of survey respondents in other languages.

26 In addition to demographic questions, we asked survey  
27 respondents how their travel behavior will be affected by a toll  
28 on the Evergreen Point Bridge. We asked if they will:

- 29 ▪ Pay the toll and continue to use the bridge;
- 30 ▪ Choose an alternate route;
- 31 ▪ Change their time of travel to a time when the toll will be  
32 lower;
- 33 ▪ Use transit or rideshare; or
- 34 ▪ Forgo the trip altogether?

1 We also described how the technology will work for collecting  
2 the toll and asked respondents to indicate if they are likely to  
3 have difficulty obtaining a transponder. Refer to Appendix A  
4 for the SR 520 Environmental Justice Survey Report, including  
5 the telephone survey questions.

6 To find our survey sample, WSDOT videotaped the license  
7 plates of Evergreen Point Bridge users and the Department of  
8 Licensing provided us with the addresses of the vehicle owners  
9 associated with those license plates. (As mentioned earlier, no  
10 other identifying information was provided to WSDOT). We  
11 used a reverse directory to find phone numbers associated with  
12 those addresses. To supplement this sample, we purchased a  
13 targeted list of low-income and minority residents living in the  
14 Evergreen Point Bridge travelshed.

15 Because the license-plate videotaping missed regular transit  
16 users, we conducted a transit intercept survey in June 2008.  
17 We conducted the survey before the University of Washington  
18 finished its regular session, to ensure that we captured students,  
19 faculty, and staff who use the Evergreen Point Bridge. Staff  
20 handed out survey forms (and pencils) to transit riders at park-  
21 and-ride lots and freeway stations that serve Evergreen Point  
22 Bridge users during the morning and evening peak travel times.  
23 A total of 1,051 surveys were distributed. 447 completed  
24 surveys were returned for a response rate of 47%. Refer to  
25 Appendix A for the SR 520 Environmental Justice Survey  
26 Report, including transit intercept survey questions.

### 27 **Focus groups and interviews with Evergreen Point Bridge** 28 **users**

29 To collect more detailed information about how tolling might  
30 affect low-income or minority populations, we conducted two  
31 focus groups. One focus group was with English-speaking,  
32 low-income bridge users. The second focus group was with  
33 English-speaking individuals who are not low-income or  
34 minority. This was conducted for comparison purposes.

35 We recruited focus group participants by contacting survey  
36 respondents who indicated they would be willing to participate.

1 We also recruited through contacts at social service agencies  
2 that serve environmental justice populations in the study area.

3 To collect information on how tolling might affect LEP  
4 populations, we conducted six telephone interviews in Spanish  
5 with Evergreen Point Bridge users. Two of the six  
6 interviewees had household incomes below the federal poverty  
7 level. The remaining four interviewees had household incomes  
8 below 130% of the federal poverty level.

9 Appendix B contains the SR 520 Focus Group and Spanish  
10 Language Interview Report, including the moderator guide for  
11 the focus groups and the interview guide that was used for the  
12 Spanish-language telephone interviews.

### 13 **Public involvement activities**

14 The Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling team  
15 conducted public scoping meetings on June 24, 2008 at the  
16 Naval Reserve Building in Seattle's Lake Union Park and June  
17 25, 2008 at Bellevue City Hall. The meetings used an informal,  
18 open house format to share exhibits, maps, and other pertinent  
19 information about the project.

20 The SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project public  
21 involvement team hosted information booths at several local  
22 festivals and fairs in summer 2008. The purpose was to share  
23 information about the Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable  
24 Tolling Project and collect comments from the public.

25 The Tolling Implementation Committee, which was created by  
26 the State Legislature in 2008, hosted public meetings around  
27 the Puget Sound on whether and how the Evergreen Point  
28 Bridge should be tolled. The Tolling Implementation  
29 Committee is charged with engaging the public and local  
30 elected officials in a discussion about tolling the 520 Bridge  
31 and reporting the results of those discussions back to the  
32 Governor and Legislature in January 2009.

33 The Tolling Implementation Committee public involvement  
34 team also conducted interviews with social service agencies.  
35 Questions were designed to understand how many  
36 customers/clients drive on the bridge, how the proposed tolling

1 might affect agencies and their clients, and suggestions for  
2 mitigation.

3 The SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Draft  
4 Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which was  
5 completed in 2006, also examined tolling on the Evergreen  
6 Point Bridge. We reviewed public and social service agency  
7 comments from the DEIS that pertained to tolling.

8 **4 How did we evaluate information on low-income,**  
9 **minority, or LEP populations?**

10 To determine how the project will affect low-income, minority,  
11 or LEP users of the Evergreen Point Bridge facility, we  
12 analyzed data collected in the telephone survey, transit  
13 intercept survey, and focus groups. To determine other ways in  
14 which the project will specifically benefit or adversely affect  
15 these populations in the study areas, we examined the  
16 following analyses for the Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable  
17 Tolling Project Environmental Assessment:

- 18 ▪ Traffic and Transportation
- 19 ▪ Air Quality
- 20 ▪ Cultural Resources
- 21 ▪ Economics
- 22 ▪ Noise
- 23 ▪ Social Effects
- 24 ▪ Visual Effects

25 After identifying adverse effects or benefits, we isolated the  
26 project effects that will affect people differently, such as  
27 increases in neighborhood traffic. Then we used a Geographic  
28 Information System (GIS) to map the adverse effects over  
29 census block groups. This allowed us to compare the minority,  
30 poverty, and LEP status of those affected by the project to those  
31 not affected by the project.

1 Next, we determined whether effects are disproportionately  
2 high and adverse. FHWA directs WSDOT to apply two criteria  
3 to determine whether low-income or minority populations will  
4 experience a disproportionately high and adverse effect:

- 5 1. Low-income and/or minority populations will  
6 predominately bear the effects; or
- 7 2. Low-income and/or minority populations will suffer the  
8 effects and they will be considerably more severe or greater  
9 in magnitude than the adverse effects suffered by the  
10 general population.

11 We also looked at whether LEP populations would be  
12 disproportionately affected.

13 To understand whether using alternate routes or travel modes  
14 will increase travel time, distance, or cost, we tried using these  
15 routes and travel modes during peak periods. For example, we  
16 drove from North Seattle to Bellevue using SR 522 during the  
17 peak morning commute and compared travel time and distance  
18 with using the Evergreen Point Bridge. This gave us an idea of  
19 whether it will cost more time and money for people who  
20 indicated on the telephone survey that they will use alternate  
21 routes or travel modes to avoid paying the toll.

## 22 **5 What public involvement activities did we conduct** 23 **for this project?**

24 As mentioned earlier, the Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable  
25 Tolling team conducted public scoping meetings in Bellevue  
26 and Seattle. In addition, the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and  
27 HOV Project public involvement team hosted booths at several  
28 local festivals and fairs, including:

- 29 ▪ Farmers markets, including Crossroads (Bellevue), Lake  
30 City, Columbia City, Kirkland, Phinney Ridge, University  
31 District, Wallingford, Broadway, West Seattle, Redmond,  
32 Madison Valley, and Lake Forest Park
- 33 ▪ Chinatown International District Festival
- 34 ▪ Fremont Fair

- 1   ▪ Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival
- 2   ▪ SeaFair Marathon
- 3   ▪ Renton River Days
- 4   ▪ Bellevue Arts and Crafts Fair
- 5   The Tolling Implementation Committee hosted two rounds of
- 6   open houses: five open houses were held in July and August of
- 7   2008 and three open houses were held in November of 2008.
- 8   The Tolling Implementation Committee ran advertisements in
- 9   the following newspapers to engage low-income and minority
- 10   populations:
- 11   ▪ *Northwest Asian Weekly* (English language publication that
- 12    serves an Asian-American audience)
- 13   ▪ *Siete Dias* (Spanish language publication, translated
- 14    advertisement)
- 15   ▪ *The Seattle Medium* (targeting African-American
- 16    audiences)
- 17   ▪ *Northwest Observer* (targeting African-American
- 18    audiences)
- 19   Placards advertising the open houses were placed on 1,300
- 20   King County Metro and Sound Transit buses.
- 21   In November and December of 2008, the Tolling
- 22   Implementation Committee public involvement team held
- 23   interviews with agencies that serve low-income or minority
- 24   populations. They initially sought to interview 10–12 agencies
- 25   that serve low- and moderate-income people, but many of the
- 26   agencies contacted declined the opportunity. The Tolling
- 27   Implementation Committee public involvement team
- 28   interviewed these agencies:
- 29   ▪ Catholic Community Services
- 30   ▪ King County Housing Authority
- 31   ▪ YWCA of East King County

1 We also reviewed summaries from meetings that SR 520  
2 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project outreach team  
3 conducted with social service agencies in 2004 and 2006.  
4 These organizations included:

- 5 ▪ Circle of Friends
- 6 ▪ Foundation for International Understanding through  
7 Students
- 8 ▪ Fremont Public Association
- 9 ▪ University of Washington Ethnic Cultural Center and  
10 Theater Complex

11 We reviewed public comments submitted by Hopelink.  
12 Appendix C includes summaries from the meetings with social  
13 service agencies and the public comments from Hopelink.

## 14 **6 How have we involved tribal governments?**

15 Native Americans are considered to be a minority population,  
16 so coordination with tribes that could be affected by the project  
17 is part of WSDOT's environmental justice outreach.

18 A WSDOT Executive Order signed in 2003 directs WSDOT  
19 employees to enter consultation with tribes who have ancestral  
20 homelands in affected areas.

21 For the Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project,  
22 WSDOT sent letters providing information on the project to the  
23 Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation,  
24 Duwamish Tribe, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, Snoqualmie Tribe,  
25 Suquamish Tribe, and Tulalip Tribe. WSDOT will continue to  
26 coordinate with the tribes throughout the planning of the  
27 project. These tribes may have crucial information on natural,  
28 cultural, and archaeological resources in the study area that  
29 WSDOT can incorporate into the environmental and design  
30 processes.



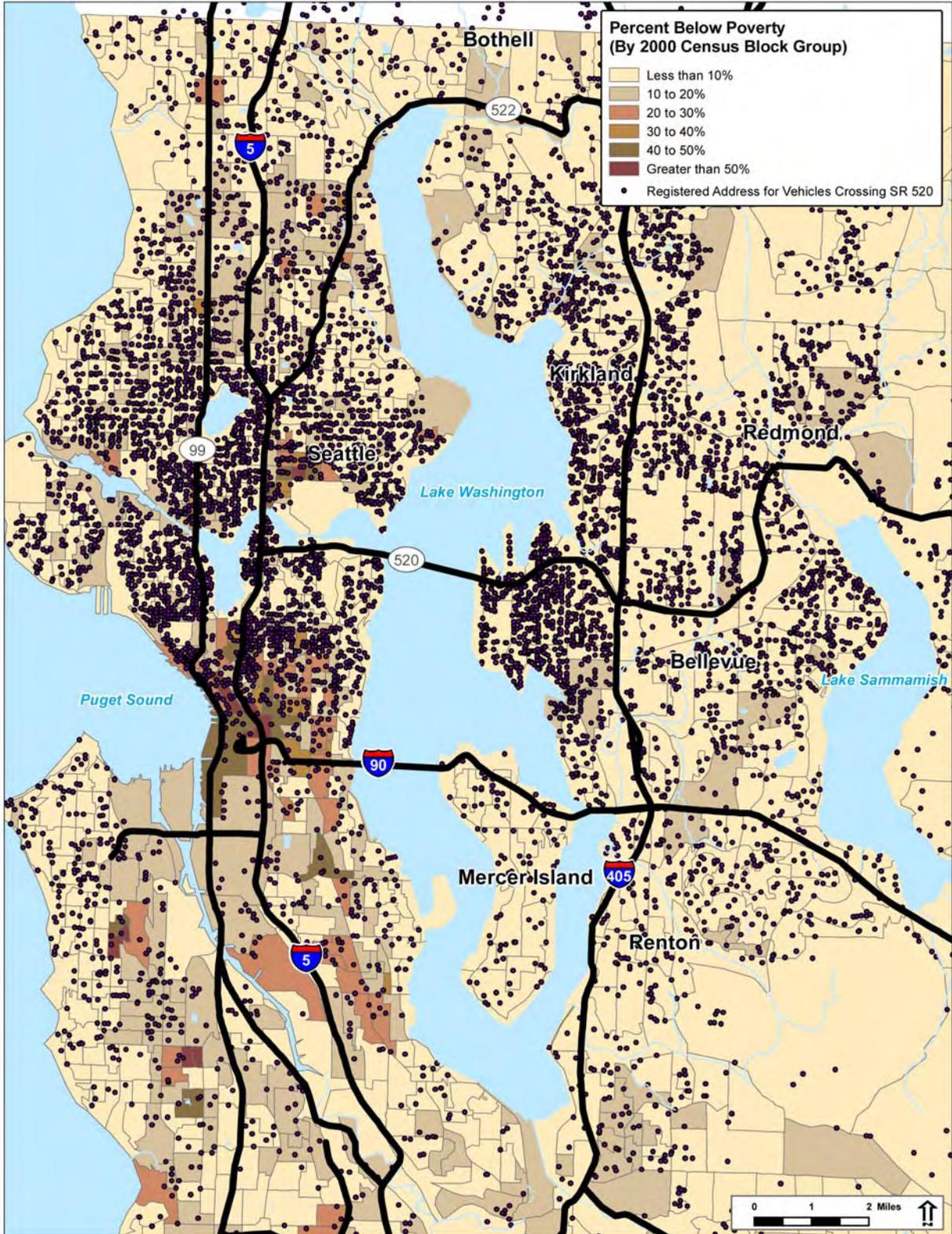
# 1 **Chapter 4 Existing Conditions**

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## 2 **1 What are the demographics of the study area?**

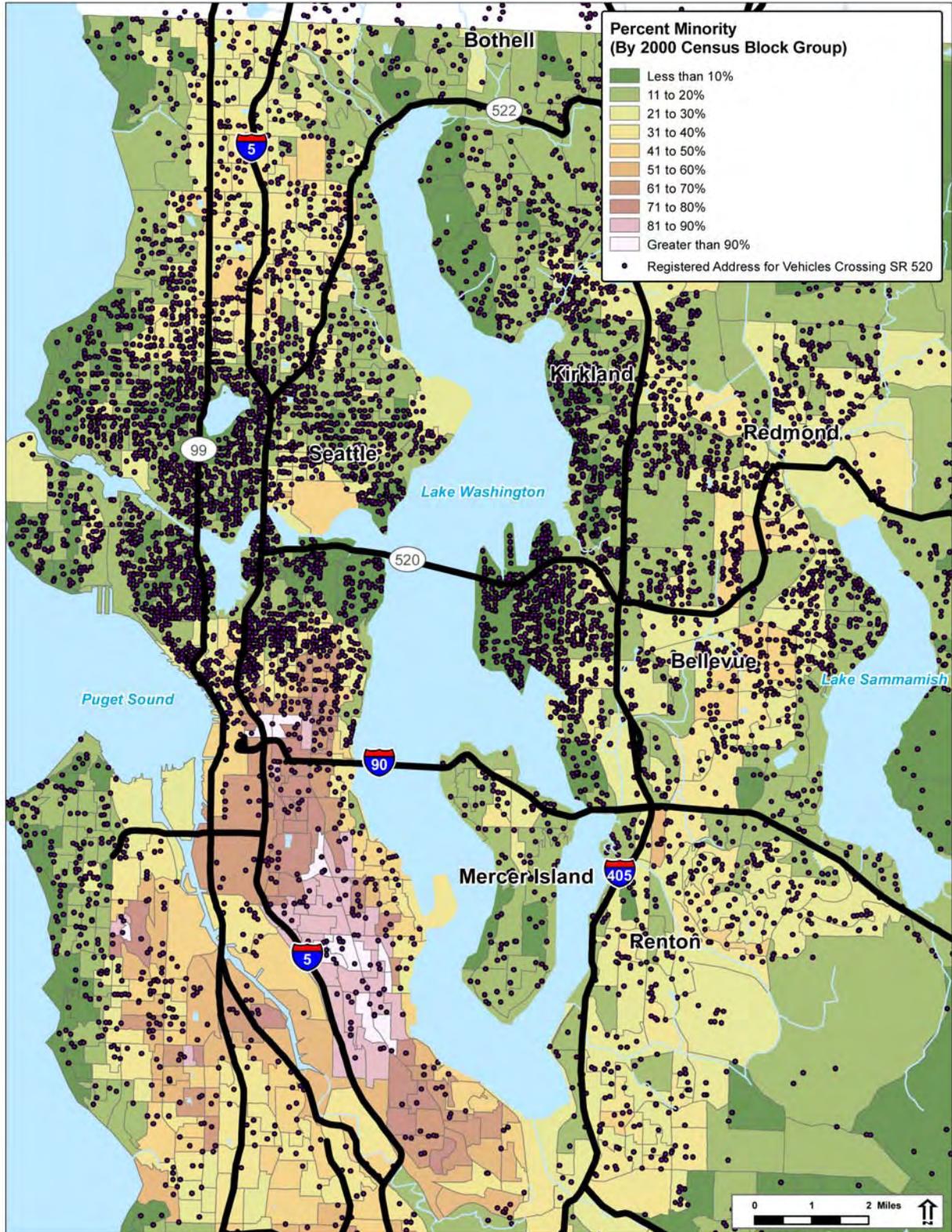
3 The study area is comprised of cities in King County,  
4 Washington. Approximately 10% of the 1,826,732 King  
5 County residents live below the federal poverty level,  
6 according to 2006 US Census estimates. Exhibit 4-1 shows the  
7 percentage of households with incomes below the federal  
8 poverty level for each census block group in the study area.

Exhibit 4-1  
Poverty in the Travelshed



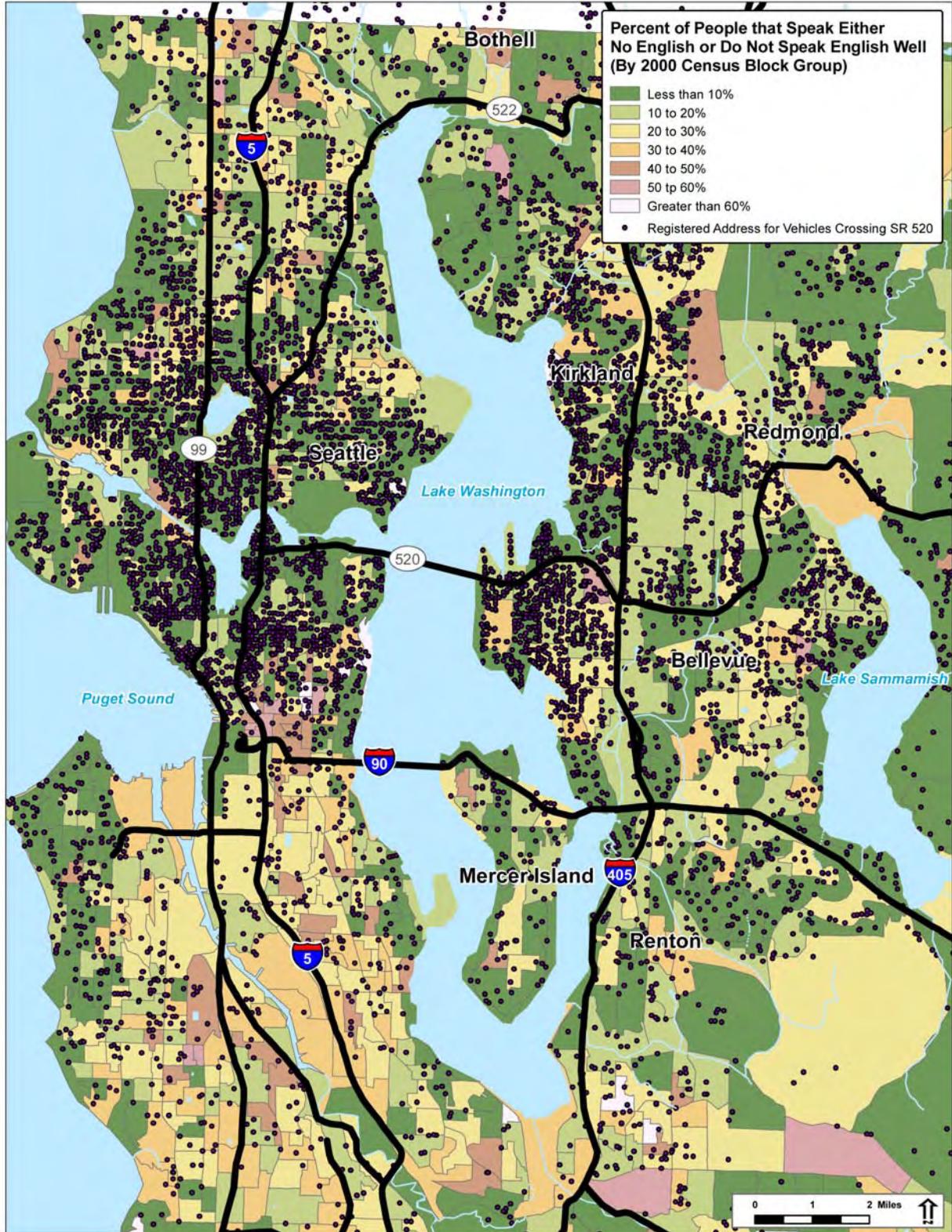
1 Approximately 70% of the population in King County is white  
2 non-Hispanic, 13% is Asian, and 6% is African American,  
3 according to the US Census 2006 estimates for King County.  
4 About 7% of the area's population is Hispanic. Exhibit 4-2  
5 shows the percentage of residents who are minority.

Exhibit 4-2  
Minorities in Travelshed



1 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 compels public  
2 agencies to avoid discrimination on the basis of national origin.  
3 For this reason, we identify populations who may be limited-  
4 English proficient (LEP). Approximately 5% of King County  
5 residents are linguistically isolated. In other words, they  
6 indicated in the census survey that they speak English “not  
7 well” or “not at all.” Exhibit 4-3 shows the percentage of  
8 residents who are linguistically isolated for each census block  
9 group in the study area.

Exhibit 4-3  
LEP in Travelshed



1 WSDOT refers to the U.S. Department of Justice guidelines in  
2 deciding when to translate documents into other languages.  
3 The Department of Justice recommends that if demographics  
4 indicate that 5% or 1,000 persons or more in a project area  
5 speak a language other than English, project materials should  
6 be translated into that language. Information on the specific  
7 languages that residents speak is available at the census tract  
8 level. Exhibit 4-4 shows the census tracts in which 5% or more  
9 of the population speaks a language other than English. It also  
10 shows the languages represented in those census tracts, also  
11 listed here:

- 12 ▪ African language
- 13 ▪ Cambodian
- 14 ▪ Chinese
- 15 ▪ Korean
- 16 ▪ Other Asian language
- 17 ▪ Other Pacific Island language
- 18 ▪ Persian
- 19 ▪ Serbian/Croatian
- 20 ▪ Spanish
- 21 ▪ Tagalog
- 22 ▪ Vietnamese

23 WSDOT and its partner agencies can use this information to  
24 improve their outreach to LEP populations before and after the  
25 tolls are implemented.

### Exhibit 4-4 Languages Spoken in Travelshed



## 2 Do low-income, minority, or LEP populations use the Evergreen Point Bridge?

Although we do not have a way of determining exactly what percentage of Evergreen Point Bridge users are low-income, minority, or LEP, based on our demographic analysis of the Evergreen Point Bridge travelshed and surveys of Evergreen Point Bridge users, we conclude that these populations use the Evergreen Point Bridge. Nearly 9% of households in the Evergreen Point Bridge travelshed have incomes below the federal poverty level and 28% are non-white, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. More than 18% speak a language other than English at home. Based on this information, it is probable that at least some of these households have Evergreen Point Bridge users. Appendix D lists the percentages for each block group in the travelshed.

In our telephone survey of Evergreen Point Bridge users, we spoke with 318 low-income and/or minority respondents. Seventy-one of the 318 respondents had household incomes below the federal poverty level. Sixty-four spoke a language other than English at home. In our intercept survey of transit users on the Evergreen Point Bridge, 107 of the 442 respondents were low-income and/or minority. Twelve of those 107 had household incomes below the federal poverty level. Twenty-six spoke a language other than English at home.

Because 2000 census data is several years old, we further confirmed the presence of low-income, minority, and LEP populations in the study area by obtaining school data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for the 2005-2006 school year. For the six school districts represented in the travelshed, more than 18% were eligible to participate in the Free Lunch Program (which means they came from families with household incomes below 130% of the federal poverty level); more than 39% of students were non-white; and nearly 8% of students were limited-English proficient. We show our detailed findings in Appendix E.

1 Although the data suggests that there may be an even larger  
2 presence of low-income, minority, and LEP populations in the  
3 study area, note that the school data cannot be compared  
4 directly with 2000 U.S Census data for the following reasons:

- 5 ▪ School district boundaries encompass an area larger than  
6 the travelshed, so the data includes some students who  
7 came from households outside the travelshed.
- 8 ▪ NCES does not collect data on the percentage of students  
9 who come from families below the federal poverty level.  
10 The closest measure is the percentage of students eligible  
11 for the Free Lunch Program. Income eligibility for the Free  
12 Lunch Program (130% of the federal poverty level) is  
13 higher than the low-income threshold for environmental  
14 justice.
- 15 ▪ NCES data reports the demographics of students, rather  
16 than households.

17 **3 Do low-income, minority, or LEP populations live**  
18 **in neighborhoods that may be affected by the**  
19 **project?**

20 Neighborhoods that have the potential to be affected by the  
21 project include:

- 22 ▪ Neighborhoods surrounding the Evergreen Point Bridge,  
23 and
- 24 ▪ Neighborhoods surrounding un-tolled alternate routes that  
25 may be used by drivers who want to avoid paying the toll  
26 on the Evergreen Point Bridge. These include  
27 neighborhoods surrounding SR 522 north of Lake  
28 Washington and the I-90 Bridge.

29 **Neighborhoods surrounding the Evergreen Point Bridge**

30 There are low-income, minority, and LEP populations living in  
31 the neighborhoods surrounding the Evergreen Point Bridge.  
32 We made this determination after reviewing the demographic  
33 analysis completed for the Environmental Justice Analysis for  
34 the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Draft  
35 Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). For this analysis, the

1 study area was defined as the polygon created on an area map  
2 by applying a 1-mile buffer around these two sections of  
3 highway:

- 4 ▪ SR 520 from the I-5 interchange in Seattle east to the 124th  
5 Avenue Northeast interchange in Bellevue
- 6 ▪ I-5 from the SR 520 interchange south to the Boylston  
7 Avenue East on-ramp to I-5

8 While most of the census block groups in the study area have  
9 low concentrations of low-income, minority, and LEP  
10 populations, there are relatively high concentrations of low-  
11 income populations in a few census block groups in the  
12 University District and in the South Lake Union neighborhoods  
13 in Seattle. There are also relatively high concentrations of  
14 minority and LEP populations in the Crossroads neighborhood  
15 in Bellevue.

#### 16 **Neighborhoods surrounding un-tolled alternate routes**

17 SR 522 north of Lake Washington and the I-90 Bridge are un-  
18 tolled alternatives to the Evergreen Point Bridge. There are  
19 low-income, minority, and LEP populations living in the  
20 neighborhoods surrounding these alternate routes.

21 According to our demographic analysis of census block groups  
22 surrounding the SR 522 corridor, nearly 10% of residents had  
23 household incomes at or below the federal poverty level in  
24 2000. The percentage of residents in each block group with  
25 household incomes below the federal poverty level ranged  
26 from 2% to 31%. Twenty-three percent of residents were non-  
27 white and 5% were Hispanic<sup>1</sup>. The percentage of residents in  
28 each block group who were non-white range from 10% to 57%  
29 and the percentage of residents who were Hispanic ranged  
30 from 1% to nearly 15%. More than 17% spoke a language  
31 other than English at home.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Hispanic is used by the U.S. Census Bureau for anyone who is of Hispanic origin, regardless of race.

1 The neighborhoods surrounding SR 522, such as those in  
2 Kenmore and Lake Forest Park are well-established and have a  
3 relatively high level of community cohesion. Community  
4 cohesion is defined as the linkages that people in a community  
5 have with their neighbors and social resources like schools,  
6 community centers, recreational facilities, and churches. It is  
7 important to examine the level of community cohesion in an  
8 affected neighborhood and determine the extent to which the  
9 project might adversely affect or improve that cohesion.

10 There are also low-income, minority, and LEP residents living  
11 in the neighborhoods surrounding I-90 between I-5 and I-405.  
12 The majority of these residents are concentrated in the  
13 neighborhoods at the western end of the I-90 Bridge.  
14 According to our demographic analysis of census block groups  
15 surrounding the I-90 Bridge, nearly 15% of residents had  
16 household incomes below the federal poverty level in 1999.  
17 The percentage of residents in each block group with  
18 household incomes below the federal poverty level ranged  
19 from 0% to 49%. Nearly 42% of residents were non-white and  
20 nearly 6% were Hispanic. The percentage of residents in each  
21 block group who were non-white range from 4% to 78% and  
22 the percentage of residents who were Hispanic ranged from 1%  
23 to nearly 25%. Nearly 26% spoke a language other than  
24 English at home.

25 The neighborhoods surrounding the I-90 Bridge are also well-  
26 established and have a relatively high level of community  
27 cohesion. For example, in neighborhoods along Rainier Avenue  
28 near the on-ramp to the I-90 Bridge, several different ethnic  
29 groups – including Hispanic, East African, Chinese,  
30 Vietnamese, and Cambodian people – live in tightly-knit  
31 communities. There are also businesses that cater to those  
32 communities.

1 **4 Are there places of particular importance to low-**  
 2 **income people, minorities, and LEP populations**  
 3 **that depend on the Evergreen Point Bridge?**

4 Because the study area is so large, we focused our search on  
 5 social and public services, community centers, recreational  
 6 facilities, religious organizations, and businesses that either  
 7 depend on the Evergreen Point Bridge to reach clients or whose  
 8 constituents or customers use the Evergreen Point Bridge to  
 9 reach them.

10 To identify these services and resources, we reviewed the  
 11 Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project Social and  
 12 Public Service analyses. In addition, we consulted with the  
 13 Tolling Implementation Committee and SR 520 Bridge  
 14 Replacement and HOV Project outreach teams, who  
 15 interviewed social service agencies that depend on the  
 16 Evergreen Point Bridge.

<b>Exhibit 4-5 Social Service Organizations in the Study Area that are of Particular Importance to Low-Income or Minority Populations and Depend on the Evergreen Point Bridge</b>		
<b>Agency</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Constituents</b>
Catholic Community Services (Redmond)	Services to help families transition from homelessness and help families with basic needs.	Low-income families.
Circle of Friends – Adult Day Health Center (Bellevue and Seattle)	Services to Russian seniors on both sides of the Evergreen Point Bridge.	Russian senior citizens, some of which are low-income.
Foundation for International Understanding through Students (University of Washington Campus)	Programs to support international students and help them interact with the community.	International students, especially those of Chinese, Korean, and Indian origin.
Fremont Public Association (Seattle)	Provider for King County Access transportation program.	Low-income, elderly, and disabled populations.
Hopelink Transportation Program (Bellevue)	In partnership with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Hopelink’s transportation program serves people on Medicaid in King County. They also provide rides for elderly or disabled clients. Hopelink transports clients to and from doctor’s appointments.	Low-income, elderly, and disabled populations.
YWCA (East King County)	A variety of services for low-income and homeless populations.	Low-income populations.

1 We also searched in telephone books and on the Internet to  
2 locate ethnic religious organizations and businesses. We  
3 contacted several to inquire whether their constituents or  
4 customers and employees depend on the Evergreen Point  
5 Bridge to reach them.

#### 6 **Social Services**

7 We identified six social service agencies in the study area that  
8 serve low-income, minority, or LEP populations and depend on  
9 the Evergreen Point Bridge for access to clients.

10 We did not include the University of Washington Ethnic  
11 Cultural Center and Theater Complex on this list. When the SR  
12 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project outreach teams  
13 interviewed a representative from this organization in 2004, he  
14 indicated that most of their constituents do not cross the lake to  
15 attend.

#### 16 **Public Services**

17 King County Metro ACCESS provides van transportation to  
18 people with disabilities throughout King County.

19 Sound Transit routes 540, 545, 555, and 556; King County  
20 Metro Transit routes 167, 242, 243, 250, 252, 255, 256, 257,  
21 260, 261, 265, 266, 268, 271, 272, and 277; and Community  
22 Transit route 424 use the Evergreen Point Bridge.

23 From the demographic information collected by the transit  
24 intercept survey, which was distributed to riders on these  
25 routes, we can make general inferences as to the extent to  
26 which low-income or minority populations use these transit  
27 routes. Approximately 2.7% of survey respondents qualified as  
28 low-income. Approximately 22.5% of survey respondents  
29 qualified as minority and 24% spoke a language other than  
30 English at home.

31 Transit riders in King County are more likely than non-riders to  
32 be low-income or minority. According to the 2006 King  
33 County Metro Rider Non-Rider Survey, which collects data on  
34 transit use in King County, regular transit riders are more likely  
35 than infrequent and non-riders to be minorities. Twenty-five  
36 percent of regular riders who participated in the survey have

1 household incomes below \$35,000, compared to only 12% of  
2 non-riders. The survey does not collect information about  
3 whether respondents have household incomes at or below the  
4 federal poverty level.

### 5 **Community Centers**

6 Seattle Center, which is about two miles from the west side of  
7 the Evergreen Point Bridge, is host to dozens of ethnic and  
8 cultural events that draw people from all over the region.

### 9 **Recreational Facilities**

10 Our research shows that there are no Evergreen Point Bridge-  
11 dependant recreational facilities of particular importance to  
12 low-income, minority, or LEP populations in the project area.

### 13 **Religious Organizations**

14 We found two churches in the travelshed that are of particular  
15 importance to low-income, minority, or LEP populations and  
16 whose constituents depend on the Evergreen Point Bridge.

- 17 ▪ St. Demtrios Greek Orthodox Church serves 680 families,  
18 50 of which use the Evergreen Point Bridge to reach the  
19 church for Sunday services and weekday programming.
- 20 ▪ University Unitarian Church serves a congregation  
21 comprised of people from diverse ethnic and socio-  
22 economic backgrounds from all parts of King County.

23 We contacted several other religious organizations that serve  
24 people from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds,  
25 including mosques, Hindu temples, and Buddhist temples. We  
26 found no additional religious organizations whose constituents  
27 depend on the Evergreen Point Bridge. Most organizations  
28 indicated that they draw constituents from nearby  
29 neighborhoods.

### 30 **Businesses**

31 Our research did not turn up any businesses in the Evergreen  
32 Point Bridge travelshed that are of particular importance to  
33 low-income, minority, or LEP populations and whose  
34 customers or employees depend on the Evergreen Point Bridge.



# 1 Chapter 5 Potential Effects

---

## 2 **1 How will project construction affect low-income,** 3 **minority, or limited-English proficient (LEP)** 4 **populations?**

5 Construction of the Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling  
6 Project will primarily involve installing the electronic  
7 equipment to read transponders in vehicles and collect the toll.  
8 There will be little to no traffic disruption, noise, dust,  
9 hazardous waste, or residential or business acquisitions  
10 associated with construction of this project. We do not  
11 anticipate effects to water, visual aesthetics, or cultural  
12 resources.

13 Therefore, we do not anticipate any effects of construction on  
14 low-income, minority, or LEP populations.

## 15 **2 How will project operation benefit low-income,** 16 **minority, or LEP populations?**

17 There are two ways in which project operation will benefit all  
18 users, including low-income, minority, and LEP populations:

- 19 1. All Evergreen Point Bridge drivers, including low-income,  
20 minority, and LEP drivers, will benefit from increased  
21 speeds and trip reliability as a result of fewer cars on the  
22 bridge.
- 23 2. All transit users who cross the Evergreen Point Bridge,  
24 including low-income, minority, and LEP riders will benefit  
25 from improved transit speeds and reliability.

1 **All Evergreen Point Bridge drivers, including low-income,**  
2 **minority, and LEP drivers will benefit from increased**  
3 **speeds and trip reliability**

4 One purpose of the Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling  
5 Project is to manage congestion using tolls. Traffic analysts  
6 expect substantial reductions in vehicle volumes across the  
7 Evergreen Point Bridge because some drivers will choose not  
8 to pay the toll to drive alone across the bridge. This should  
9 translate to faster speeds and better trip reliability for drivers.

10 Traffic analysts projected traffic volumes on the Evergreen  
11 Point Bridge in 2010 and 2016 assuming two toll rates: \$2.95  
12 and \$3.80. They compared these volumes to projected  
13 volumes in 2010 if no toll is implemented. Below, we report  
14 the percentage reduction in traffic volumes in 2010 and 2016  
15 over traffic volumes in 2010 if no toll is implemented:

16 In 2010 during the morning peak, analysts expect a reduction  
17 of more than 11% in traffic volumes for the lower toll scenario,  
18 and more than 18% for the higher tolling scenario. During the  
19 afternoon peak, analysts expect a nearly 14% reduction for the  
20 lower toll scenario, and a more than 17% reduction for the  
21 higher toll scenario.

22 In 2016 during the morning peak, analysts expect a reduction  
23 of nearly 12% for the lower toll scenario, and nearly 14% for  
24 the higher tolling scenario. During the afternoon peak, analysts  
25 expect a nearly 12% reduction for the lower toll scenario, and a  
26 nearly 13% reduction for the higher toll scenario.

27 For more information about the traffic analysis, please refer to  
28 the Transportation Discipline Report.

29 Interestingly, many low-income participants in our focus  
30 groups and Spanish-language interviews indicated that a \$3.50  
31 toll would be worth it for a faster, more reliable trip. This is  
32 consistent with other studies on the equity of high-occupant toll  
33 (HOT) lanes, which also found that many lower income people  
34 supported congestion pricing if it ensured a faster, more

1 reliable trip.<sup>1</sup> Researchers hypothesized in these studies that  
2 lower income people who worked for hourly wages or  
3 depended on child care would choose to pay a toll to avoid  
4 losing wages or paying high late fees at their child care  
5 facilities. For many lower income people who are juggling  
6 multiple jobs and child care, traffic delays may pose an even  
7 bigger burden than a toll.

8 **All transit users who cross the bridge, including low-**  
9 **income, minority, and LEP riders will benefit from**  
10 **increased speeds and reliability for transit**

11 All transit riders who use routes that cross the Evergreen Point  
12 Bridge should benefit from the tolling. According to the Urban  
13 Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project Traffic Discipline  
14 Report, transit on the Evergreen Point Bridge should  
15 experience improvements in speeds and reliability as a result of  
16 the tolls.

17 **3 How will project operation adversely affect low-**  
18 **income, minority, or LEP populations?**

19 Project operation will not affect minority populations  
20 differently than the general population. There are three  
21 principal ways in which project operation will adversely affect  
22 low-income or LEP populations if not mitigated. Chapter 6 –  
23 Measures to Avoid or Minimize Effects describes  
24 recommended mitigation strategies.

- 25 1. The cost of the tolls could present a burden to low-income  
26 bridge users.
- 27 2. The cost of the tolls could present a burden to social service  
28 agencies that depend on the Evergreen Point Bridge to  
29 serve their low-income clients.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that in most HOT lanes studies, low-income was defined as populations with household incomes under \$35,000, which may 200% or more of federal poverty thresholds. Because NEPA defines low-income as populations with households at or below federal poverty thresholds, we refer to populations in the HOT lanes studies as “lower income”.

1 3. Bridge users may choose to purchase a transponder and set  
2 up an account with WSDOT to pay the toll, or have their  
3 license plate automatically photographed and receive by  
4 mail a bill for the toll with a surcharge added. Both options  
5 will present a burden to low-income and limited-English  
6 proficient Evergreen Point Bridge users.

7 **Tolls could present a burden to low-income bridge users**

8 Whenever tolling is discussed, people worry about the effects  
9 of tolling on low-income populations. The toll will be the  
10 same amount for all users, regardless of income, which means  
11 that low-income users will have to spend a higher proportion of  
12 their income on the toll.

13 To illustrate this, consider two fictional commuters who drive  
14 alone across the Evergreen Point Bridge five days a week, 50  
15 weeks a year. The first commuter works as a software  
16 developer and makes \$65,000 a year. The second commuter  
17 works at a retail store and makes \$17,600, which is at the  
18 poverty level for a family of three. If the toll is \$3.50, both  
19 commuters will spend roughly \$875 a year on tolls. This  
20 represents only slightly more than 1% of the higher-income  
21 driver's income, but nearly 5% of the low-income driver's  
22 income.

23 As mentioned in the Study Approach chapter, we conducted  
24 surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews with  
25 Evergreen Point Bridge users to find out how a toll on the  
26 Evergreen Point Bridge would affect them, especially low-  
27 income users.

28 In our low-income focus groups and Spanish-language  
29 interviews, many respondents indicated that the tolls would be  
30 a burden to their families. Several social service agencies that  
31 were interviewed by the SR 520 and Tolling Implementation  
32 Committee outreach teams echoed these concerns. Refer to  
33 Appendix C for summaries from meetings with these social  
34 service agencies.

35 According to our analysis, while some low-income focus group  
36 and interview participants will forgo the trip or take an un-

1 tolled route rather than pay the toll, others will give up other  
2 expenditures to pay the toll because they do not feel that they  
3 have a better choice. They indicated transit was not a viable  
4 alternative for them, as service is infrequent, unreliable,  
5 requires several transfers, or takes too much time. They also  
6 indicated that using an un-tolled route is not a good option, as  
7 it would add substantial time and expense.

8 According to the telephone survey, nearly 51% of low-income  
9 respondents said they would *not* use transit to avoid paying the  
10 toll. More than 53% of those who said they would not use  
11 transit indicated that transit service is not frequent enough on  
12 their routes. Nearly 56% said they live or work too far from  
13 transit. Of those low-income respondents who said they would  
14 use transit to avoid paying the toll, 63% said that it would  
15 greatly increase their travel time.

16 Un-tolled routes were a more desirable alternative to paying  
17 the toll for survey respondents. More than 64% of low-income  
18 respondents said they *would* use an un-tolled route if they  
19 wanted to avoid paying the toll. However, of those low-income  
20 respondents who said they would use an un-tolled route, 67%  
21 said it would greatly increase their travel time. Nearly 97%  
22 said it would greatly increase their travel distance, which  
23 would add to the cost of their trip in the form of wasted fuel  
24 and wear and tear on the vehicle.

25 To verify that un-tolled routes would increase travel time and  
26 distance, we drove from the University District in Seattle to  
27 downtown Bellevue using I-90 and SR 522 during the morning  
28 commute. The I-90 route added 5.2 miles and 10 minutes to  
29 the trip, and the SR 522 route more than doubled the time and  
30 distance to make the trip. The trip was 9.7 miles and  
31 approximately 35 minutes on SR 520, but 20.6 miles and 55  
32 minutes to use SR 522.

33 Although no decisions have been made at this time, there have  
34 been discussions about whether or not to toll the I-90 Bridge as  
35 well. If I-90 were to be tolled, it would limit alternatives to  
36 paying the toll. Further analysis on the effects of tolling on

1 low-income populations will need to be conducted if I-90 is  
2 tolled.

3 **The cost of the tolls could present a burden to social**  
4 **service agencies that depend on the Evergreen Point**  
5 **Bridge to serve their low-income clients**

6 Social service agencies had concerns about the tolls as well.  
7 Hopelink, which coordinates transportation to and from  
8 medical appointments for low-income residents on Medicaid  
9 assistance, is concerned that the toll will make it prohibitively  
10 expensive to provide transportation services to clients.  
11 Hopelink uses taxis to transport clients, which may or may not  
12 be able to use the toll-free HOV lane if there are not three or  
13 more passengers.<sup>2</sup> The budget for this service is already very  
14 tight, and adding in the cost of the toll could make it very  
15 difficult for Hopelink to maintain the current level of service.

16 If special-needs transportation services such as King County  
17 Metro ACCESS, which provides van transportation to people  
18 with disabilities, are not classified as transit, they will not be  
19 able to use the toll-free HOV lane unless there are three or  
20 more people in the vehicle. At the time of publication of this  
21 document, there was still no confirmation as to whether  
22 ACCESS will be classified as transit for tolling purposes.

23 **Bridge users may choose to purchase a transponder and**  
24 **set up an account with WSDOT to pay the toll, or have**  
25 **their license plate automatically photographed and**  
26 **receive by mail a bill for the toll with a surcharge added.**  
27 **Both options will present a burden to low-income and**  
28 **limited-English proficient Evergreen Point Bridge users.**

29 There will be no toll booths on the Evergreen Point Bridge.  
30 Instead, tolls will be collected using a transponder unit that  
31 drivers will install in their vehicle windows. Drivers will be  
32 able to purchase a transponder for about \$12.

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<sup>2</sup> WSDOT is in the process of deciding whether vehicles with three or more passengers will be able to travel the bridge toll-free.

1 To use the transponder, drivers will need to set up a prepaid  
2 account from which their tolls can be deducted. To set up an  
3 account, drivers will need to put \$30 into the account.  
4 Accounts can be prepaid online with a credit or debit card.  
5 Alternatively, customers can prepay with cash at a WSDOT  
6 customer service center. WSDOT is planning to establish two  
7 permanent, transit-accessible customer service centers at either  
8 end of the Evergreen Point Bridge.

9 Evergreen Point Bridge users who do not set up a prepaid  
10 account will be billed by mail. A surcharge will be added to  
11 the bill, the amount of which is not yet determined.

12 This system could limit access to the Evergreen Point Bridge  
13 for people who do not have a credit or debit card. These people  
14 will either have to travel to a customer service center to set up  
15 an account with cash or pay a surcharge on their toll when they  
16 are billed by mail. The Seattle Times recently reported that  
17 52,000 households in King County do not have traditional  
18 banking services, according to an estimate by the City of  
19 Seattle. According to the telephone survey results, more than  
20 25% of low-income respondents indicated that they would not  
21 be able to use a credit, debit, or checking account to prepay  
22 their account.

23 Furthermore, coming up with \$30 to put toward the pre-paid  
24 account may be difficult for low-income drivers.

25 The system could also limit access to the Evergreen Point  
26 Bridge for limited-English proficient populations, who may  
27 also have difficulty understanding how to purchase a  
28 transponder and set up an account.

29 **Other potential effects on low-income, minority, or LEP**  
30 **populations**

31 According to the Traffic Discipline Report, we do not  
32 anticipate substantial increases in traffic on un-tolled routes, so  
33 there should be no adverse effects on people who use these  
34 routes or live nearby, including low-income, minority, or LEP  
35 populations.

1 Conventional wisdom and results from the telephone survey  
2 suggest that people who do not choose to pay the toll on the  
3 Evergreen Point Bridge will try un-tolled routes as an  
4 alternative. This would result in increased congestion on SR  
5 522 and I-90, cut-through traffic on local streets in those  
6 corridors, a degradation in air quality and pedestrian safety on  
7 local streets, an increase in noise for homes along SR 522 and  
8 I-90, and potential disruption of community cohesion in  
9 neighborhoods surrounding SR 522 and I-90.

10 According to the Traffic Discipline Report, however, only a  
11 small amount of traffic is likely to divert from the Evergreen  
12 Point Bridge to un-tolled routes SR 522 and the I-90 Bridge. In  
13 fact, traffic volumes on the I-90 Bridge are expected to  
14 *decrease* by 2% under the lower toll scenario and increase by  
15 only 1% under the higher toll scenario. Traffic volumes on SR  
16 522 are expected to increase only 1% under the lower toll  
17 scenario and 2% under the higher toll scenario.

18 The traffic model that analysts used, which was developed by  
19 the Puget Sound Regional Council assumes that people may try  
20 the alternate routes rather than pay the toll at first, but most  
21 will find that the increased time and distance will make it more  
22 costly in fuel and lost time to use the alternate routes.  
23 Eventually, they will return to using the Evergreen Point  
24 Bridge or find another way to get across Lake Washington,  
25 such as by carpool or transit.

26 Because the traffic analysis does not reveal any substantial  
27 diversion of traffic to I-90 or SR 522, we do not anticipate  
28 adverse effects to these neighborhoods.

29 **4 Will low-income, minority, or LEP populations**  
30 **experience disproportionately high and adverse**  
31 **effects as a result of the project?**

32 As mentioned earlier, FHWA directs WSDOT to apply two  
33 criteria to determine whether an effect is disproportionately  
34 high and adverse:

- 1 1. Low-income and/or minority populations will  
2 predominately bear the effects; or
- 3 2. Low-income and/or minority populations will suffer the  
4 effects and the effects will be considerably more severe or  
5 greater in magnitude than the adverse effects suffered by  
6 the general population.

7 Low-income or minority (and LEP) populations will not  
8 predominately bear the effects. The toll will be charged to all  
9 bridge users and all bridge users will either need to purchase  
10 transponders or be billed for the toll plus a surcharge. Although  
11 we cannot determine exactly what proportion of bridge users  
12 are low-income, minority, or LEP, by looking at the travelshed  
13 map overlaid with U.S. Census data in the previous chapter, it  
14 does not appear that there are more bridge users coming from  
15 census block groups with higher proportions of low-income,  
16 minority, or LEP residents.

17 The tolls on the Evergreen Point Bridge will be appreciably  
18 more severe for low-income users, however, because low-  
19 income users will have to spend a higher proportion of their  
20 income on the toll.

21 Previous analyses of the equity of tolling have concluded that  
22 the effect would not be disproportionately high and adverse for  
23 the following reasons:

- 24 1. The benefits of improvements to trip reliability and speeds  
25 will offset the burden of the tolls, and
- 26 2. There are viable options to avoiding the toll. Furthermore,  
27 because low-income populations tend to use transit at a  
28 higher rate than the general population, improvements in  
29 transit speeds and reliability will offset the burden of the  
30 tolls.

31 Regarding the first point, while it is important to note that  
32 many low-income people will benefit greatly from a faster,  
33 more reliable trip, environmental justice principles hold that to  
34 offset a disproportionate adverse effect to low-income  
35 populations, the benefit also needs to disproportionately affect

1 low-income populations. In this case, the benefits of a faster,  
2 more reliable trip apply to all people and not just low-income  
3 populations.

4 Regarding the second point, based on the results of our  
5 surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews, we conclude  
6 that transit is not a viable alternative to paying the toll for most  
7 low-income populations because service is infrequent,  
8 unreliable, requires several transfers, or takes too much time.  
9 Furthermore, although some national and regional studies  
10 suggest that low-income populations use transit at a higher rate  
11 than the general population, results from the transit intercept  
12 survey suggest that transit routes on the Evergreen Point  
13 Bridge do not serve low-income users at a higher rate than the  
14 general population.

15 In addition, although many survey respondents indicated that  
16 they would use un-tolled routes as an alternative to paying the  
17 toll, these routes will add substantial time, distance, and cost to  
18 the trip. Furthermore, if I-90 is also tolled, it will eliminate this  
19 route as an un-tolled alternative.

20 The burden of purchasing a transponder and setting up a  
21 prepaid account will also be appreciably more severe for low-  
22 income bridge users, because they are more likely to be  
23 without a credit or debit card and will need to prepay their  
24 accounts with cash. Low-income people are also less likely to  
25 be able to come up with the \$30 needed to prepay their  
26 accounts.

27 As mentioned earlier, the burden of purchasing a transponder  
28 and setting up a prepaid account or paying a surcharge will also  
29 be appreciably more severe for limited-English proficient  
30 bridge users, who may have difficulty understanding how to  
31 use the system.

## 32 **5 What effects will occur under the No Build** 33 **Alternative?**

34 Under the No Build Alternative, variable tolling would not be  
35 implemented the existing Evergreen Point Bridge and no

1 construction activities would occur. Traffic volumes across  
2 Lake Washington on the Evergreen Point Bridge would be  
3 expected to increase and speeds would decrease, including  
4 speeds for transit. Drivers and transit riders alike would not  
5 benefit from a faster, more reliable trip.

6 Low-income drivers would not be adversely affected by tolls.  
7 Low-income and limited-English proficient drivers would not  
8 be adversely affected by the need to purchase a transponder  
9 and set up an account with WSDOT.

10 **6 What are the potential cumulative benefits and**  
11 **adverse effects on low-income, minority, or LEP**  
12 **populations?**

13 If the Washington State Legislature implements the Urban  
14 Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project, King County will  
15 receive a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)  
16 to buy 45 new buses and increase service on SR 520. This  
17 could make transit a more viable un-tolled option for low-  
18 income populations.

19 In addition, there are a few projects separate from the Urban  
20 Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project that may make  
21 transit a more viable alternative to paying the toll for Evergreen  
22 Point Bridge users, including low-income, minority, or LEP  
23 users:

- 24 ▪ **King County Metro Transit Now:** In 2007, voters  
25 approved a sales tax that will create a bus rapid transit line  
26 on the Eastside. This will connect the SR 520 corridor with  
27 high-frequency transit service between Bellevue and  
28 Redmond. This service will operate seven days a week for  
29 approximately 18 hours a day starting in 2011.
- 30 ▪ **Sound Transit 2:** In 2008, voters approved a new sales tax  
31 that will pay for 100,000 hours of additional Sound Transit  
32 Express Bus service starting in 2009, including some  
33 additional service hours on SR 520. This should benefit  
34 transit riders who cross the Evergreen Point Bridge,  
35 including low-income, minority, or LEP transit riders.

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**What are cumulative effects?**

The effect on the environment that results from the incremental effect of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of which agency or person undertakes these actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively noticeable actions taking place over a period of time.

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1 There are two ways in which cumulative effects could further  
2 adversely affect low-income or LEP populations:

- 3 1. Construction on SR 522 and I-90 could make these un-  
4 tolled routes even less viable as alternatives to paying the  
5 toll.
- 6 2. Potential tolling of the I-90 Bridge would eliminate it as a  
7 viable alternative to paying the toll.

8 **Construction on SR 522 and I-90 could make these un-**  
9 **tolled routes less viable as alternatives to paying the toll**

10 There are two scheduled construction project on SR 522 and  
11 two scheduled construction projects on the I-90 corridor  
12 between Seattle and Bellevue. Any daytime traffic disruptions  
13 as a result of project construction could cause delays and make  
14 these routs less viable alternatives to paying the toll.

15 ▪ **City of Kenmore SR 522 Improvement Project:**

16 Construction on SR 522 through Kenmore is under way  
17 and will continue into 2010. However, daytime traffic  
18 impacts are expected to be minimal.

19 ▪ **Sound Transit SR-522 HOV Enhancements:** Sound  
20 Transit is working with the City of Bothell on SR 522 HOV  
21 improvement project near 96th Avenue (Wayne Curve).  
22 Construction is expected to be completed in 2010. It is  
23 unclear what the expected traffic impacts will be.

24 ▪ **I-90 Two-Way Transit and HOV Operations Project:**

25 This project will affect the I-90 corridor from Seattle to  
26 Bellevue. It is scheduled for construction from 2010 to  
27 2014.

28 ▪ **I-90 – I-5 to 12th Avenue S. Seismic Retrofit:** In 2009  
29 and 2010, WSDOT will strengthen the columns, girders,  
30 and crossbeams of the double-decked overpass that carries  
31 I-90 over I-5 in Seattle.

32 **Potential tolling of the I-90 Bridge would eliminate it as a**  
33 **viable alternative to paying the toll**

34 As mentioned earlier, tolling the I-90 Bridge is under  
35 discussion, although no decision has been made at this time. If

1 the I-90 Bridge were to be tolled, it would no longer be a viable  
2 alternative to paying the toll and would substantially limit  
3 options for low-income populations who can not afford to pay  
4 a toll to cross Lake Washington. Further analysis of the effects  
5 of tolling on low-income populations would need to be  
6 conducted.



# Chapter 6 Measures to Avoid or Minimize Effects

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## 1 What measures will be taken to mitigate effects on low-income, minority, or LEP populations during construction?

Because we do not anticipate adverse effects on low-income, minority, or LEP populations as a result of project construction, we do not identify measures to avoid or minimize construction effects.

## 2 What measures will be taken to mitigate the effects of operation on low-income, minority, or LEP populations?

Because we do not anticipate adverse effects on minority populations, we do not identify measures to mitigate the effects of operation on them.

The following measures will be taken to minimize or avoid the adverse effects of project operation on low-income or LEP populations:

- 1. Permanent Customer Service Centers:** WSDOT will establish a permanent customer service center at either end of the SR 520 Bridge. Both locations will be transit accessible. Drivers will be able to purchase Good to Go!<sup>TM</sup> transponders and establish prepaid accounts with cash at these centers.
- 2. EBT Cards can be used to establish and replenish Good To Go!<sup>TM</sup> accounts:** Low-income SR 520 Bridge users will

1 be able to establish and replenish their prepaid accounts  
2 using their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. EBT  
3 functions like a debit card and allows recipients who  
4 receive federal benefits to pay for products and services,  
5 such as groceries and health care.

6 **3. Transponder retail outlets:** WSDOT is exploring the  
7 possibility of establishing permanent Good to Go!<sup>TM</sup> retail  
8 outlets at convenient locations, such as grocery stores,  
9 convenience stores, or pharmacies throughout the travel  
10 shed. Low-income focus group participants and Spanish-  
11 speaking interview participants indicated that this would be  
12 make it much easier for them to purchase transponders and  
13 set up prepaid accounts with WSDOT.

14 **4. Multi-language outreach:** WSDOT will conduct outreach  
15 in multiple languages to provide information about how to  
16 purchase a transponder, establish an account, and use the  
17 system. Target languages will be the same languages that  
18 the Washington Department of Licensing uses for its  
19 translation: Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Russian, Spanish,  
20 and Vietnamese. WSDOT will also use pictograms  
21 whenever possible to explain the system. WSDOT will  
22 distribute information about the new tolling system and  
23 transponders throughout the travel shed via community-  
24 based organizations, social service offices, churches, and  
25 schools; purchase advertising in ethnic newspapers and  
26 radio stations; and establish hotlines with multi-lingual  
27 customer service agents well in advance of tolling.

28 **5. Training of social service workers:** WSDOT will provide  
29 social service agencies with information about tolling and  
30 options to avoid the tolls. This will assist social service  
31 workers in sharing accurate information with clients.

32 **3 What additional measures should be considered**  
33 **to mitigate the effects of operation on low-income**  
34 **and LEP populations?**

35 In this section, we offer recommendations for additional  
36 strategies to avoid or minimize the effects of the tolls on low-

Exhibit 6-1  
Example of a VMS sign  
programmed in Spanish



1 income and limited-English proficient populations. Some  
2 options may require legislative action, coordination with other  
3 agencies, or commitment of additional funding resources other  
4 than tolling revenue.

5 Because implementation of mitigation has implications for  
6 future tolling projects in the region, the state, and across the  
7 country, we recommend that the Washington Transportation  
8 Commission evaluate the performance of any mitigation  
9 strategies implemented for this project. We further recommend  
10 that the Washington Transportation Commission develop  
11 statewide policies to guide the development of mitigation  
12 strategies for offsetting the effects of any future tolling projects  
13 on low-income and minority populations.

14 1. **Targeted transit improvements:** The Washington State  
15 Legislature could consider allocating additional funding to  
16 King County Metro Transit and Sound Transit to increase  
17 service along SR 520 routes that are used by low-income  
18 populations, especially in the University District and  
19 Crossroads in Bellevue. These routes could be identified by  
20 overlaying the travel shed map with King County Metro  
21 and Sound Transit route maps. Service could also be  
22 increased between low-income residential neighborhoods  
23 and job/education centers.

24 2. **Refunds to social service agencies:** The Washington State  
25 Legislature could allocate funding to provide refunds to  
26 social service agencies that broker transportation for low-  
27 income and disabled populations.

#### 28 **4 What public involvement activities are ongoing?**

29 WSDOT will continue outreach throughout project planning,  
30 construction, and operation. Ongoing public involvement  
31 activities will include the following:

- 32 ▪ Hosting a speakers bureau to make presentations on tolling  
33 and the Good To Go!<sup>TM</sup> program;

6-4 Measures to Avoid or Minimize Effects

- 1   ▪ Distributing materials – including materials in other  
2    languages – through businesses, social service agencies,  
3    libraries, community groups, and schools;
- 4   ▪ Maintaining a Web site with information about tolling and  
5    Good To Go!™ in multiple languages;
- 6   ▪ Providing information booths at community events;
- 7   ▪ Sharing information in newspaper and newsletter  
8    advertisements and radio spots; and
- 9   ▪ Placing articles in newsletters, magazines, and newspapers.

# 1 **Chapter 7 Unavoidable Adverse Effects**

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## 2 **1 Environmental Justice Determination: Does the** 3 **project cause any disproportionately high and** 4 **adverse effects on low-income or minority** 5 **populations that cannot be avoided or mitigated?**

6 We do not anticipate disproportionately high and adverse  
7 effects on minority populations. If reasonable mitigation  
8 strategies, such as those proposed in Chapter 6 are adopted,  
9 they will minimize disproportionately high and adverse effects  
10 on low-income populations.

11 Furthermore, these mitigation strategies will also minimize  
12 disproportionately high and adverse effects on LEP  
13 populations, who are protected under Title VI of the Civil  
14 Rights Act of 1964.



# List of Appendices

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Appendix A: SR 520 Environmental Justice Survey Report

Appendix B: SR 520 Focus Group and Spanish Language Interview Report

Appendix C: Summaries of interviews with social service agencies

Appendix D: U.S. Census demographic data for the study area

Appendix E: National Center for Education Statistics demographic data for the study area



# **Appendix A: SR 520 Environmental Justice Survey Report**

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**SR 520  
Environmental  
Justice Survey**

**Final Report**



# Executive Summary

Environmental justice acknowledges that the quality of our environment affects our lives and negative environmental effects should not disproportionately burden low-income or minority communities.

Negative environmental effects associated with transportation projects may include, among others: limited access to a publicly funded facility, disruptions in community cohesion, presence of hazardous materials, raised noise levels, or increased water and/or air pollution.

As part of the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) efforts to evaluate the potential effects of tolling the SR 520 Bridge on low-income or minority populations, WSDOT engaged PRR, a multi-disciplinary public affairs firm to conduct a transit intercept survey and telephone survey of SR 520 Bridge users. The objectives of the surveys were to understand the potential effects of tolling the SR 520 Bridge on low-income and minority people, as well as how tolling is likely to affect the travel behavior of SR 520 Bridge users.

Key findings from the survey results are:

- Most SR 520 Bridge users who currently drive across the bridge report that they are likely to change their travel behavior when tolling begins.
- Most SR 520 Bridge users who currently drive across the bridge do not believe that transit will be a viable un-tolled alternative for them. Most who say they will not use transit report that it is not frequent enough or close enough to where they live or work.

- More SR 520 Bridge users who currently drive across the bridge would use an un-tolled route to avoid paying the toll. However, many respondents said that using an un-tolled route would greatly increase their travel time and distance.
- Most respondents, regardless of ethnicity or income, agree that it is important to provide toll discounts, make public transit available, and maintain un-tolled routes for tolling to be fair.
- Most non-Environmental Justice respondents supported variable tolling. However, just under half of low-income respondents supported variable tolling.
- Most respondents indicated that they could afford to purchase the \$12 transponder.

# Introduction

## Survey Purpose

The purpose of these surveys was to better understand the potential effects of tolling on environmental justice populations. When we say “environmental justice populations” in this report, we are referring to low-income and minority people.

In order to assess the potential effects of tolling the SR 520 Bridge on environmental justice groups, as well as attitudes toward tolling, PRR conducted two surveys. The first was an intercept survey of those who use transit over the SR 520 Bridge. The second was a telephone survey of those who drive their personal vehicles across the SR 520 Bridge. PRR used data from both surveys in an environmental justice analysis to identify the potential effects of tolling the SR 520 Bridge on minority or low-income populations.

Other goals of these surveys included learning:

- How much respondents are willing to pay to cross the SR 520 Bridge one-way
- If respondents support different toll rates for different times of day (variable tolling)
- If respondents support tolling accommodations for low-income travelers
- If respondents will change their travel behavior because of tolling
- Whether non-tolled options – such as transit or alternate routes – are viable alternatives to paying the toll
- Understanding respondents’ current travel and commuting behaviors

## Methodology

PRR used data from both surveys to conduct an analysis of the potential effects of tolling the SR 520 Bridge on environmental justice (EJ) populations. Table 1 describes the characteristics of those in the EJ by low-income group and those in the EJ by race group. All other respondents in this study are considered non-EJ.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents in the EJ Group<sup>1</sup>**

<b>EJ by INCOME (N=83)</b>	<b>EJ by Race Group (N=400)</b>
<b>Income and Household Size</b>	<b>Ethnicity/Minority Status</b>
1 HH member and HH Income less than \$10,400	White/Caucasian (Hispanic/Latino Background)
2 HH members and HH income less than \$14,000	Black/African American
3 HH members and HH income less than \$17,600	Hispanic/Latino
4 HH members and HH income less than \$21,200	Asian/Pacific Islander
5 HH members and HH income less than \$24,800	Native American
6 HH members and HH income less than \$28,400	Other
7 HH members and HH income less than \$32,000	
8 HH members and HH income less than \$35,600	
9 HH members and HH income less than \$39,2001	

For the telephone survey, the respondents were identified as:

- Environmental justice income group (n=71)
- Environmental justice race group (n = 292)
- Non-environmental justice group (n = 367)

For the transit survey the respondents were identified as:

- Environmental justice income group (n=12)
- Environmental justice race group (n =108)
- Non-environmental justice group (n =341)

<sup>1</sup> The total number of household members (HH) includes the respondent, a spouse, children (including full-time students under age 23 even if they do not live at home), and any legal dependents. Total household income was before taxes for 2007.

In several cases, respondents qualify as environmental justice by both income and race.

### *Transit-Intercept Survey*

In consultation with WSDOT and the SR 520 Tolling Implementation Committee, PRR conducted a transit-intercept survey that included the following activities:

- The process for developing survey questions involved review and editing of several drafts of questions. The final survey was formatted into a paper survey capable of electronic scanning for efficient and cost-effective data entry. The survey had a postage-paid mail-back panel so bus riders could complete the survey while in transit and then mail it without needing to pay for postage or affix a stamp.
- A sufficient number of surveys were printed for distribution at the following six Park-and-Ride lots and transit centers. These locations were chosen because of their greater likelihood to service environmental justice populations:
  - Overlake Transit Center
  - Bellevue Transit Center
  - Northgate Transit Center
  - Eastgate Park and Ride
  - Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel
  - Evergreen Point
  - Montlake Freeway Station
- Staff provided survey forms and pencils to riders on the following routes, all of which crossed the SR 520 Bridge during the morning and evening peak travel times on one weekday in June 2008: King County Metro Transit Routes 167, 242, 243, 250, 252, 255, 256, 257, 260, 261, 265, 266, 268, 271, 272, 277; Community Transit Route 424; and Sound Transit Routes 540, 545, 555, and 556.
- A total of 1,051 surveys were distributed and 447 completed surveys were returned, for a response rate of 47%.

### Telephone Survey

In consultation with the WSDOT and the SR 520 Tolling Implementation Committee, PRR conducted a telephone survey that included the following activities:

- Development of a statistically-valid telephone survey. This process involved review and editing of several drafts of survey questions. The final survey was programmed into Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) software.
- The following sampling frames were used as a basis for the random selection of potential respondents:
  - A list of SR 520 Bridge users obtained through videotaping of vehicle license plates in May 2008.
  - Random digit dial list of telephone numbers from within zip codes in the SR 520 travel shed that were likely to have a higher concentration of low-income or minority households.
- Pre-testing the survey. The survey questions were pre-tested and monitored on the first night of the survey fielding. The pre-testing indicated that the survey questions were working well and no changes were made to the questions.
- Administration of the survey to a disproportionate stratified random sample of 659 respondents. The sample was stratified relative to qualifying as an environmental justice population respondent. Respondents could qualify as an environmental justice group member by virtue of belonging to a race other than white (not Hispanic background). This sampling approach provided adequate numbers of cases within each group for statistical analysis purposes.
- To reduce sample bias, a minimum of four attempts per potential respondent were made to establish telephone contact at different times of the day and days of the week.
- Using the very strict CMOR formula for computing the response rate, which includes in its formula the inclusion of “no answers, busy signals, and answering machines”, this survey had a response rate of 18%<sup>3</sup>. However, the “cooperation rate” (defined as the percent of qualified respondents who were contacted and who completed the survey) was 76%.

3 Using the approved CMOR approach, response rate is defined as the number of completed surveys plus partial or suspended divided by the number of completed surveys, plus partial or suspended surveys, plus qualified refusals, plus break-offs, plus no answer, plus busy signal, plus answering machine, plus soft refusals, plus hard refusals, plus scheduled callbacks, plus unspecified callbacks.

## Data Processing and Analysis

Data processing consisted of coding and entering quantitative and qualitative responses with the use of a CATI system. Qualitative variables were coded to convert them to quantitative measures. Response range and logic checks were performed to ensure the data was clean before data analysis was conducted. Data analysis was conducted with SPSS (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences).

Data analysis involved the use of appropriate descriptive statistical techniques (frequencies, percentages and means) and explanatory statistical techniques (in this case t-test, Pearson's r, Phi, and logistical regression) to test for the statistical significance of relationships between and among variables, particularly to test differences between those who qualified as an environmental justice race group member and those not who did not.<sup>4</sup> Since the number of EJ by income respondents was relatively low (n=83), creating a high margin of error (+/-11%), and was disproportionate to the number of non-EJ respondents (n=1025), we did not conduct bivariate analysis between EJ by income and non-EJ respondents. A separate descriptive analysis is conducted on those who qualify for EJ by income.

Throughout this report, relationships between variables that are statistically significant at the .05 level or better, and that are meaningful to an understanding of the data are reported. Multivariate logistical regression was performed to assess the full relationship of all the demographic variables (including income) with each other.

## How to Read this Report

This report is divided into three main sections. In the first section, we report on our analysis of environmental justice by income respondents.

In the second section, we report on our analysis of EJ by race respondents compared to non-EJ respondents.

In the third section, we report on our multivariate analysis. Variables include whether or not the respondent qualified as low-income, as well as other demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, education, and current SR 520 Bridge commuting patterns.

4 Phi is a measure of the relationship between two variables and is appropriate to use with 2 X 2 categorical variables. Phi ranges from -1 to +1 and indicates the strength and direction of a relationship. Pearson r is another test of the relationship (correlation) between two variables that is appropriate with continuous and dichotomous variables. The accompanying "p" scores presented in this report indicate the level of statistical significance. Logistical regression was used to identify predictor variables that are closely related to support for tolling and for the likelihood to pay the toll.



# Section 1: Results from Environmental Justice by Income group

This section provides results on demographics, commuting patterns, toll acceptance, and toll avoidance for those participants that qualified as environmental justice by income. The following data provides percentages on the total data from both surveys, unless otherwise stated.

## Participant Demographics

**Table 2: Demographics of Low-Income Respondents**

	Low Income
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>n = 83</b>
Telephone Survey	n = 71
Transit Survey	n = 12
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White/Caucasian	53%
Caucasian (Hispanic Background)	2%
Black African American	6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	20%
Hispanic/Latino	5%
Native American	2%
Other	2%
Refused	9%

<b>Low Income</b>	
<b>Employment Status</b>	
Employed full-time	39%
Employed part-time	19%
Student full-time	11%
Student part-time	9%
Homemaker	4%
Retired	11%
Unemployed	2%
Refused	3%
<b>Education Level</b>	
Less than HS	1%
HS	16%
Some/technical/ AA	20%
BA	23%
Post Grad	17%
Graduate Degree	19%
Refused	3%
<b>Age</b>	
18-24	17%
25-34	13%
35-44	8%
45-44	28%
55-64	18%
65 and older	13%
Refused	2%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	42%
Female	58%
<b>Household Size</b>	
Average household size	3.02

## Participant Commuting Patterns

Low-income respondents had traveled across the bridge in a personal vehicle an average of 2.9 times in the previous week, and they usually conduct this travel during peak times and mid-day. They most often use the bridge to travel to and from work or school and they are driving alone.

**Table 3: Commuting Patterns**

	Low Income
<b>Average days travel across SR 520 Bridge in personal vehicle</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>Time of day travel</b>	
AM Peak	35%
Mid-day	27%
PM Peak	28%
Night time	9%
<b>Main travel purpose</b>	
Travel to and from work school	43%
Errands/shopping	14%
Non-commute work related	13%
Recreational	13%
Visit family or friends	16%
Other	3%
<b>Main mode used to cross bridge last week</b>	
Drive alone	56%
Carpooled w/HH members	23%
Carpooled w/non HH members	14%
Took the bus	6%
Vanpooled	1%

## Tolling Acceptance

Low income participants on the average are willing to pay a toll of \$1.80 to cross the SR 520 Bridge, and 42% are willing to pay \$3.50 one-way for a faster more reliable trip across the bridge.

**Table 4: Tolling Acceptance**

	<b>Low Income</b>
<b>Average toll amount willing to pay</b>	<b>\$1.80</b>
<b>Yes, would pay \$3.50 toll one-way (Telephone survey only)</b>	<b>42%</b>

## Toll Avoidance

Low income respondents (68%) would consider changing their travel behavior to avoid paying a toll to cross the bridge, particularly by taking the bus (22%) or using I-90 (24%). However, just over half (51%) indicated they would take transit to avoid the toll. The main reason these respondents would not take the bus is because transit is not frequent enough and too far away. Most low income respondents (64%) would also consider taking an un-tolled route to avoid paying a toll on the SR 520 Bridge.

**Table 5: Toll Avoidance**

	<b>Low Income</b>
<b>Yes, would change travel behavior to avoid toll (Telephone survey)</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>One thing I would do to avoid toll</b>	
Take the bus	22%
Pay the toll	2%
Change travel to lower toll time	7%
Use I-90	24%
Use SR 522	4%
Use I-5 to I-405, etc	5%
Carpool	4%
Forgo trip	2%
<b>Yes, use transit to avoid toll (Telephone survey)</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>For the <i>those who would not use transit</i>, the main reason is: (Telephone survey)</b>	
Not frequent enough	53%
Live too far from transit	56%
Too expensive	25%
Not convenient/hassle	17%
<b>Using transit would greatly increase my travel time (Telephone survey)</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>Yes, would use un-tolled route to avoid paying toll (Telephone survey)</b>	<b>64%</b>
Using another route would greatly increase travel time	67%
Using another route would greatly increase travel distance	97%

## Tolling Fairness

Environmental justice by income respondents to the telephone survey agree it is important to provide toll discounts for low-income drivers, to have public transit available, and to have un-tolled roads available in order for tolling to be fair. More than 69% of EJ by income respondents indicate that toll discounts for low-income drivers was somewhat or very important to making tolling fair. Nearly 58% indicated that available transit was somewhat or very important to making tolling fair. And, more than 65% indicated that maintaining un-tolled routes was somewhat or very important to making tolling fair.

Just over 42% of EJ by income respondents indicated *medium* to *strong* support for variable tolling, such as charging higher tolls during commute times and lesser tolls during non-commute times.

## Tolling Transponder

Most EJ by income respondents (81%) indicated that they could afford a \$12 transponder.

# Section 2: Results from Environmental Justice by Race Group and Non-Environmental Justice Group

This section provides results on demographics, commuting patterns, toll acceptance, and toll avoidance for those participants that qualified as environmental justice by race, compared to non-EJ respondents.

## Participant Demographics

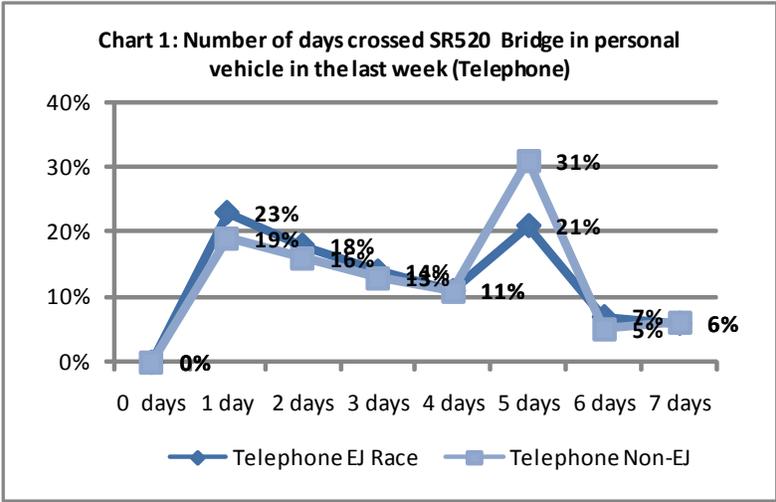
**Table 6: Participant Demographics (N=1,108)**

	Telephone		Transit	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ	EJ Race	Non-EJ
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>341</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
White/Caucasian	8%	100%	6%	100%
Caucasian (Hispanic Background)	21%		14%	
Black African American	8%		11%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	44%		67%	
Hispanic/Latino	10%		6%	
Native American	6%		4%	
Other	6%		1%	
Refused	6%		0%	
<b>Language Spoken</b>				
English	78%	98%	76%	97%
Russian	3%	0%	0%	1%
Chinese	4%	0%	10%	0%
Spanish	2%	0%	2%	0%
Vietnamese	3%	0%	2%	0%
Korean	1%	0%	3%	0%
Other	9%	2%	8%	2%
<b>Employment Status</b>				
Employed full-time	65%	68%	78%	87%
Employed part-time	12%	12%	9%	7%
Student full-time	9%	11%	1%	2%
Student part-time	3%	4%	14%	6%
Homemaker	3%	2%	2%	2%
Retired	11%	11%	0%	0%
Unemployed	2%	3%	0%	0%
Refused	1%	0%	0%	0%

	Telephone		Transit	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ	EJ Race	Non-EJ
<b>Education Level</b>				
Less than HS	2%	1%	0%	0%
HS	7%	6%	12%	2%
Some/technical/ AA	20%	18%	15%	20%
BA	27%	32%	42%	43%
Post Grad	14%	10%	7%	10%
Graduate Degree	29%	32%	24%	25%
Refused	1%	1%	0%	0%
<b>Age</b>				
18-24	5%	2%	16%	10%
25-34	13%	12%	27%	25%
35-44	30%	22%	26%	21%
45-44	27%	31%	19%	18%
55-64	16%	22%	9%	23%
65 and older	8%	11%	2%	2%
Refused	2%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	58%	49%	46%	52%
Female	42%	51%	54%	48%
<b>Household Size</b>				
Average Household size	3.07	2.8	2.8	2.3
Median Household size	3		2	
Percent at or below the median	64%		65%	

## Participant Commuting Patterns

The data in Chart 1 indicates that non-EJ group respondents in the telephone survey travel the SR 520 Bridge more days a week, particularly for those that traveled five days a week (31% non-EJ vs. 21% for EJ). However, the average days traveled per week is 3.4 days for respondents in an EJ race group and 3.6 days for those not in an EJ group. Further analysis shows no statistical difference in the number of days traveled across the bridge between those qualifying for EJ by race and those who do not.



Respondents from the transit survey obviously ride the bus frequently, with 83% from the EJ race group and 78% from the non-EJ group, riding four or more days a week. Further analysis shows this difference is statistically significant (t-test,  $p=.01$ ), but the correlation is very weak ( $r=-.05$ ). Thus it is possible respondents from the transit survey in the EJ race group ride transit slightly more often than those in the non-EJ group.

Participants using their personal vehicles to cross the bridge (telephone survey) not only do so more often, but also report driving alone more often. When asked what modes of transportation (all types) they used in the last week to cross the bridge about three-fourths (73% EJ by race and 78% non-EJ) of respondents report driving alone. However, it should be noted that regardless of EJ group status, almost 40% of these participants also report carpooling with either household or non-household members.

**Table 7: Transportation modes to cross the SR 520 Bridge in the last week (Telephone survey)**

	Telephone	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ
Drive alone	73%	78%
Carpooled with HH members	26%	24%
Carpooled w/ non HH members	12%	12%
Took the bus	7%	5%
Vanpooled	1%	2%
Motorcycled	1%	1%
Other	0%	0%

When it comes to the time of day participants travel across the SR 520 Bridge there is little difference between those in an EJ race group and those not in a EJ group. However, Table 8 shows that those who typically ride transit across the bridge do so during peak commuting hours (6am to 9am and 3pm to 7pm). Participants using their personal vehicles to cross the bridge (telephone survey) seem to travel more evenly throughout the day.

**Table 8: Typical travel times**

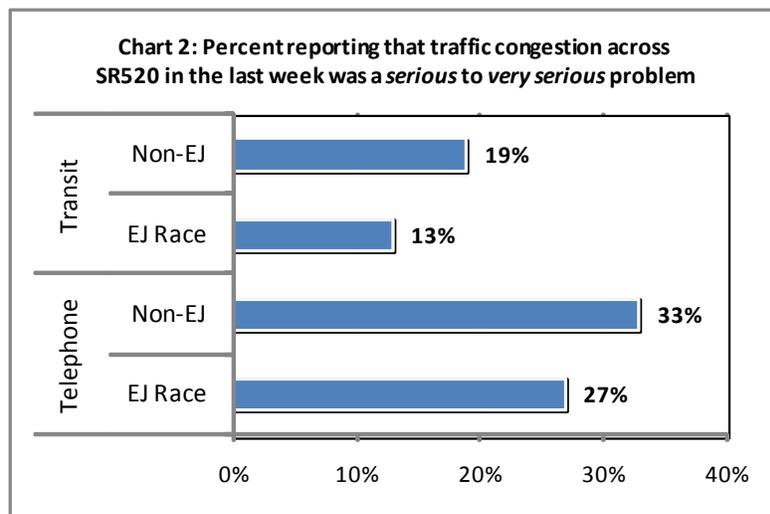
	Telephone		Transit	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ	EJ Race	Non-EJ
AM peak 6am to 9am	54%	56%	91%	91%
Mid-day after 9am- before 3pm	38%	42%	9%	9%
PM peak 3pm to 7pm	45%	47%	81%	87%
Night time (after 7pm - before 6am)	16%	17%	7%	5%

As expected, the main reason for traveling across the SR 520 Bridge is for travel to and from work or school (see Table 9). This is even more true for participants from the transit survey, where almost all the participants (96% or more) report traveling across the bridge for work or school. About one-fifth of the participants who use personal vehicles (telephone survey) report using the bridge for errands/shopping, non-commute work related activities, recreational activities, and visiting family or friends.

**Table 9: Purpose for traveling across SR 520 Bridge**

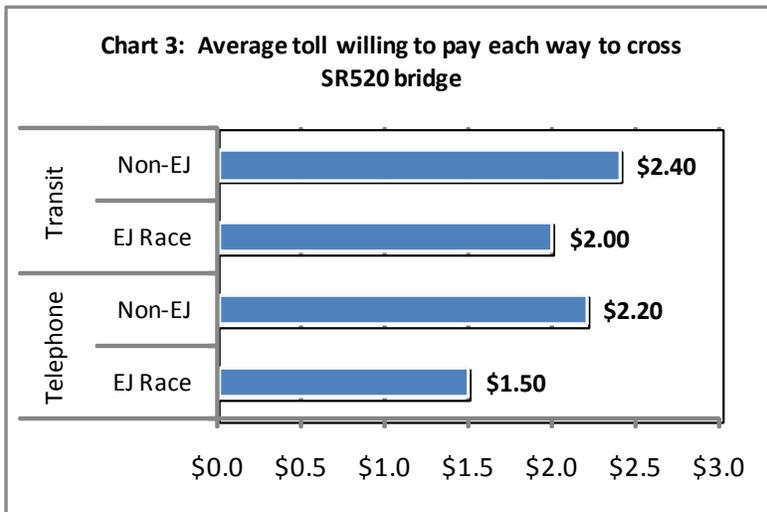
	Telephone		Transit	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ	EJ Race	Non-EJ
Travel to and from work/school	56%	55%	98%	97%
Errands/shopping	15%	21%	7%	5%
Non-commute work related	19%	22%	1%	1%
Recreational activities	19%	15%	10%	10%
Visit family or friends	19%	18%	9%	5%
Other	3%	2%	1%	1%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%

Traffic congestion is reported as more of a serious problem from participants who use their personal vehicle to cross the SR 520 Bridge (telephone survey). Overall, more than a quarter (27% EJ by race, 33% non-EJ) of these participants report that traffic congestion in the last week was serious to very serious, whereas less than one-fifth of transit survey participants report serious congestion. Further analysis of those who use their personal vehicles (telephone survey), shows a statistically significant difference (t-test,  $p=.05$ ) between those in an EJ race group and those not in an EJ group but the correlation is again weak ( $r=-.08$ ). Thus those not in EJ groups might be slightly more likely to report serious to very serious traffic congestion.



## Tolling Acceptance

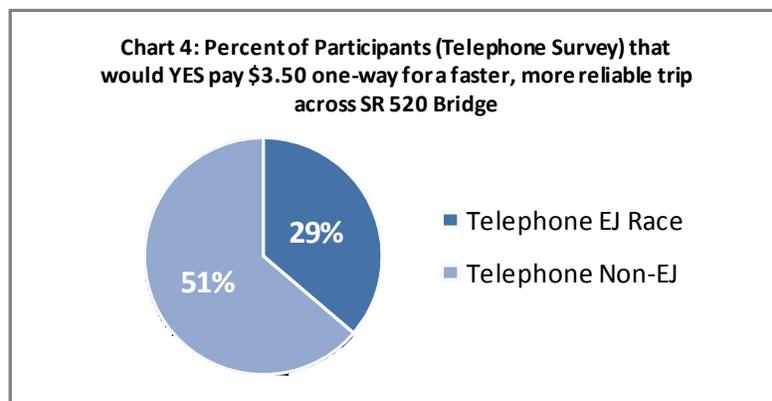
Respondents are willing to pay an average of \$2.00 to cross the SR 520 Bridge each way, with those in non-EJ groups willing to pay more (\$2.20 and \$2.40) than those in an EJ race group. Further analysis shows a statistical difference (t-test,  $p=.000$ ) in the average toll participants are willing to pay between EJ race and non-EJ groups for those that use personal vehicles (telephone survey), but not for those that use transit (transit survey). The correlation ( $r=-.21$ ) for this finding is also somewhat noteworthy, thus those that use personal vehicles in non-EJ groups are willing to pay a higher toll than those in an EJ race group to cross the SR 520 Bridge.



**Table 10: Median toll willing to pay to cross SR 520 Bridge each way**

	Telephone		Transit	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ	EJ Race	Non-EJ
Median Toll Willing to Pay	\$1	\$2	\$1.5	\$2
Percent at or below Median	55%	64%	51%	64%

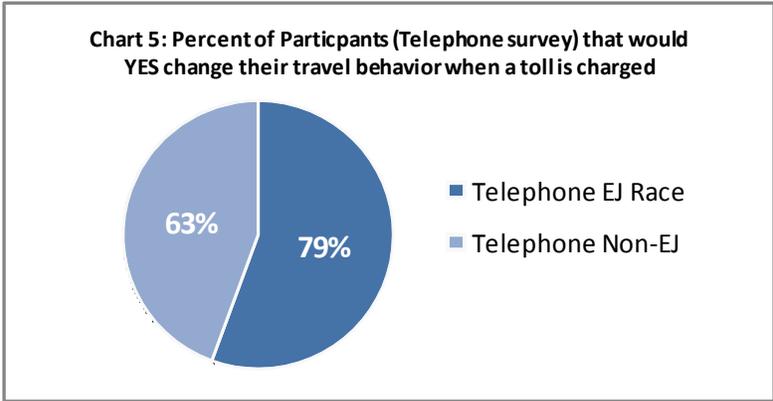
Participants who generally use their personal vehicle to cross the SR 520 Bridge (telephone survey) were specifically asked if they would be willing to pay a toll of \$3.50 one-way for a faster, more reliable trip across the bridge. Overall a little more than one-third (40%) of these participants would be willing to pay this toll. However participants not in an EJ group report more willingness (51% say “yes”) than those in an EJ race group (29% say “yes”). Further analysis shows that this difference is statistically significant (Chi-square,  $p=.000$ ) with an adequate correlation ( $\Phi=-.21$ ). Thus, those in a non-EJ group are more willing to pay a flat toll of \$3.50 each way to cross the SR 520 Bridge.



## Toll Avoidance

When asked if they would change their travel behavior when a toll is charged to cross the bridge, almost three-fourths (70%) of all telephone survey respondents indicated they would. In the EJ race group, even more (79%) reported they would change their travel behavior if a toll is charged. Further analysis shows this difference is statistically significant (Chi-square,  $p=.000$ ) with an adequate correlation ( $\Phi=.18$ ). Thus indicating those in an EJ race group are slightly more likely to change their travel behavior because of a toll.

When asked specifically what they would do to avoid paying a toll, participants in EJ race and non-EJ groups indicated they would take the bus and use I-90 most often. Those in the non-EJ group indicated using I-90 and SR 522 as more likely, and those in EJ race groups reported they would probably use the bus more.



**Table 11: One thing most likely do to avoid paying toll on SR 520 Bridge (Telephone Survey)**

	Telephone	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ
Take the bus	34%	10%
Change Travel Time to lower toll time	7%	15%
Use I-90	30%	38%
Use SR-522	7%	11%
Use I-5/I-405	8%	8%
Carpool with non-family to share toll	3%	5%
Vanpool	0%	2%
Forgo trip	5%	7%
Other	4%	3%

When asked specifically if they would use transit to avoid a toll almost half (43%) of telephone survey participants indicated they would. A slight difference, but not statistically significant, is found for those in EJ race and non-EJ groups, where those in the EJ race group report a slightly higher willingness to use transit (46% vs. 42%). The main reason respondents would not use transit to avoid a toll is because it is not frequent enough and it is too far away from where they live or work, particularly for those in an EJ race group. Those in an EJ race group also feel transit is too expensive, whereas those in a non-EJ group just don't like transit or feel it is a hassle.

**Table 12: Reason WHY will not use transit to avoid toll (Telephone Survey)**

	Telephone	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ
Not frequent enough	69%	40%
I live/work too far from transit	62%	21%
Expensive	31%	3%
Don't like	8%	11%
Hassle/not convenient	5%	14%

For those respondents from the telephone survey that would use transit to avoid a toll on SR 520 many (70% +) indicate that this would greatly increase their travel time, and slightly more so for those in an EJ race group.

**Table 13: Would use transit but it would.... (Telephone Survey)**

	Telephone	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ
Greatly increase travel time	74%	71%
Greatly increase distance	32%	24%
Neither	22%	27%

When those from the telephone survey were asked specifically if they would use an alternate route to avoid a toll, almost three-fourths (73%) of all participants indicated they would. Further analysis shows a statistically significant difference (Chi-square,  $p=.003$ ) is found for those in EJ race and non-EJ groups and the correlation is somewhat adequate ( $\Phi = -.16$ ). Thus, even though those in the EJ race group report a willingness to use an alternate route more (83% vs. 68%), it is likely a small difference.

Those who are not willing to use an alternate route indicate it would greatly increase their travel time and distance, particularly for those in a non-EJ group (see table 14). For respondents willing to use an alternate route it will also increase travel time and distance for at least half of them.

**Table 14: Using an alternate route will...  
(Telephone Survey)**

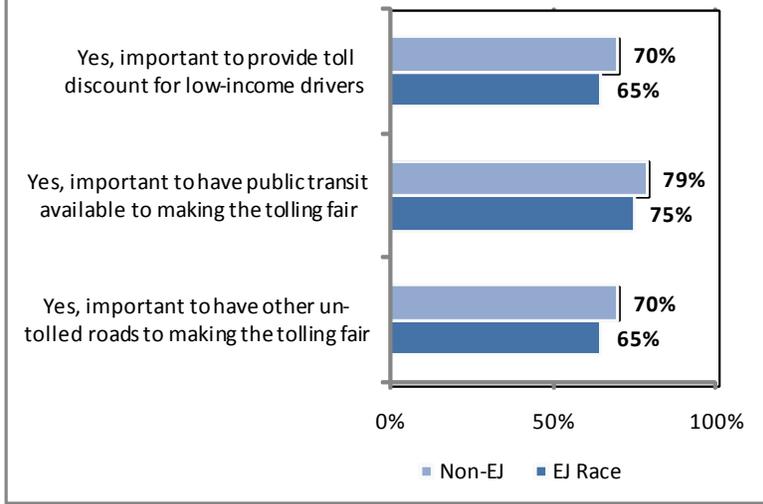
	Telephone	
	EJ Race	Non-EJ
Won't use alternate route because it will...	62%	74%
Greatly increase travel time		
Greatly increase distance	28%	49%
Neither	23%	14%
Using an alternate route will...		
Greatly increase travel time	44%	54%
Greatly increase distance	64%	47%
Neither	21%	38%

## Tolling Fairness

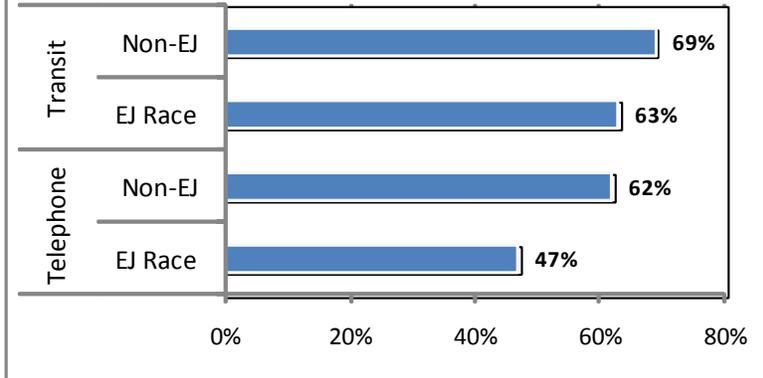
Overall participants in both EJ race and non-EJ groups from the telephone survey agree it is important to provide toll discounts for low-income drivers, to have public transit available, and to have un-tolled roads available in order for tolling to be fair.

More than half (60%) of all respondents also indicate medium to strong support for variable tolling, such as charging higher tolls during commute times and lesser tolls during non-commute times. This support remains strong between the EJ groups for respondents of the transit survey, but for those who travel alone across the bridge (telephone survey) there is a statistical significant difference (t-test,  $p=.000$ ) between the EJ race and non-EJ group. However the correlation is weak ( $r=-.14$ ), suggesting that those in the EJ race group support variable tolling slightly less than those in the non-EJ group.

**Chart 6: Percent Somewhat to Very Important (Telephone Survey)**

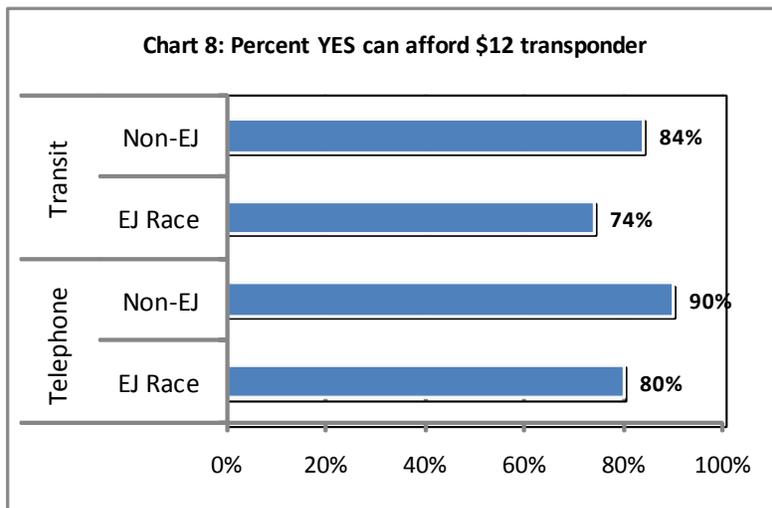


**Chart 7: Percent with Medium to Strong Support for Variable Tolling**



## Tolling Transponder

Overall most of the respondents can afford the \$12 transponder to pay the toll to cross the SR 520 Bridge. However, further analysis confirms a statistically significant difference, albeit slight, between those in the EJ race group and those not in an EJ group. Compared to the non-EJ group those in the telephone survey EJ race group (Chi square  $p=.01$ ,  $\Phi=-.14$ ) and those in the transit EJ race group (Chi square  $p=.05$ ,  $\Phi=-.11$ ) are slightly less able to afford the \$12 transponder.





# Section 3: Results from Multivariate analysis

Findings from bivariate correlational analysis indicate that respondents (particularly those that use their personal vehicle to cross SR 520) in a non-EJ group are more willing to pay tolls, and those in an EJ race group are more likely to avoid them by changing their travel behaviors (i.e. using an un-tolled route). Since bivariate analysis only investigates the relationship between these specific attitudes and whether or not a respondent is in an EJ race group (2 variables), we conducted multivariate logistic regression analysis to fully understand the relationship of all the demographic and commuting characteristics with attitudes towards tolling.

Four overall models were analyzed and tested on respondents who use their personal vehicles (telephone survey) to specifically predict the following:

- Willingness to pay \$3.50 one-way toll for faster more reliable trip across SR 520 Bridge (Yes/no)
- Would change travel behavior when a toll is charged on the SR 520 Bridge (Yes/no)
- Would use transit to avoid paying a toll (Yes/no)
- Would use an alternate route to avoid paying a toll (Yes/no)

The demographic variables/characteristics included in these models included:

- Household size
- Ethnicity (white vs non-white) as well as ethnicity specific (Asian, Hispanic, other Ethnicity)
- Age
- Whether or not the respondent qualifies as EJ by income
- Gender
- SR 520 usage (average # of days)
- Support for variable pricing at different times of day

Being able to predict whether someone will use an alternate route to avoid a toll was the only viable model ( $p > .05$ ).<sup>5</sup> Multivariate logistic models for predicting willingness to pay \$3.50 toll, to change travel behavior in general, and to use transit to avoid a toll had significant predictors but the overall models were weak (Chi-square,  $p < .05$ ). Thus only the results for predicting the use an alternate route are discussed and are also presented in Table 15.

After controlling for all the demographic covariates listed above in the telephone survey sample (except for EJ group status, which was tested in a separate model) the most significant predictors of *using an alternate route to avoid paying a toll* are:

- Being non-white (significantly more likely to use un-tolled route---2.2 times more likely).
  - In fact, being Hispanic and in the “other race” category more likely to use un-tolled route (Hispanic 2.8 times more likely and Other 2.3 times more likely).
- Level of support for variable tolling—for each level of support increase (4 levels) they are .699 times less likely to use un-tolled route/

5 For overall and goodness of fit testing for logistic regression models a low Chi-square with a  $p > .05$  is preferred (Peng et al, 2002, An Introduction to Logistic Regression Analysis and Reporting, The Journal of Educational Research).

When a separate model is tested using EJ group status to predict the use of an alternate route, whether they are in an EJ group or not is not significant, and neither is income or ethnicity. The only variable remaining significant is support for variable tolling. So it

seems that ethnicity alone, particularly if Hispanic or Other, is a stronger predictor of un-tolled route usage than is whether or not someone is in an EJ group.

When it comes to predicting willingness to pay a \$3.50 toll, ethnicity and variable tolling support are also key predictors, but the overall models are weak ( $p < .05$ ). Age is the only significant predictor found for predicting transit use to avoid a toll (younger more likely), but again this overall model is weak ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 15: Predicting use of un-tolled route to avoid paying toll on SR 520 Bridge**

Predictors	Predicting use of un-tolled route (without EJ interaction)			Predicting use of un-tolled route (Ethnicity Specific Model)		
	B± (S.E.)	df	Odds Ratio	B± (S.E.)	df	Odds Ratio
Constant	2.515 (.690)	1	12.361	2.548 (.702)	1	12.786
# Days travel across SR520	-.085 (.057)	1	.919	-.093 (.057)	1	.911
Ethnicity (1 = non-white)	.786 (.231)***	1	2.195			
Age	-.158 (.084)	1	.854	-.182 (.085)	1	.833
Income	.320 (.328)	1	.1.377	.364 (.345)	1	.1.440
Gender	.076 (.205)	1	1.079	.115 (.207)	1	1.121
HH size	.060 (.078)	1	.942	-.062 (.078)	1	.940
Support Variable tolling	-.354 (.087)***	1	.702	-.341 (.088)***	1	.711
EJ Group						
Hispanic				1.039 (.406)*	1	2.826
Asian				.511 (.333)	1	1.667
All other ethnicity				.843 (.395)*	1	2.323
	Goodness of fit Statistics					
Hosmer and Lemeshow Chi-square			df			df
		10.060	8		7.531	8
Hosmer and Lemeshow Sig.		.261			.481	
Cox & Snell R Sqr		.067			.068	
Nagelkerke R Sqr		.097			.098	
Percentage Predicted Correctly		74%			74%	

± Significant values \* $<.05$ , \*\* $<.01$ , \*\*\*  $<.001$

## Limitations

In order to provide adequate numbers of cases within each group for statistical analysis a disproportionate stratified sample of those in environmental justice groups was taken. Without adequate geographic information on respondents, weighting the data to adjust for this sampling technique was not possible. This could possibly influence the environmental justice effect that was found from the bivariate and multivariate analysis.

The respondents in this study also represented a particularly high income bracket with 93% of all the respondents from both survey samples not meeting EJ income group requirements because their income was too high. Thus, most of the respondents in this study met EJ group requirements because of ethnicity, which supports the multivariate findings that ethnicity alone is a stronger predictor of tolling acceptance. However, because of income disparity in the data the true effect of income and its relationship to other demographic variables in predicting tolling support or travel changing behaviors may be under represented.

# Appendix A: Telephone Survey

## TOLLING SURVEY

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling for the Washington State Department of Transportation to get opinions on travel on State Route 520. This is not a sales call. It's an opportunity to express your opinion. May I please speak with the person in your household who drives across the SR 520 Bridge most often? Would that be you? (IF NO, ASK TO SPEAK WITH THE QUALIFIED PERSON AND REPEAT INTRO SECTION)

I'd like to ask you some questions on a strictly confidential basis. The questions will take about 10 minutes of your time.

### 1. Screener/Quota Questions

- Do you or does anyone in your household work for a transportation agency?
- No
- Yes (thank and terminate)
- Don't know/refused (thank and terminate)

### 2. How many days in the last week did you travel in your personal vehicle across the SR 520 Bridge, also known as the Evergreen Point floating bridge?

- 0 (thank and terminate)
- 1 (defined as less frequent user)
- 2 (defined as less frequent user)
- 3 (3 days or more defined as frequent user)
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7

**Quota for EJ population based on answers to Q3 and Q4 is 300.**

**Quota for non-EJ population is 300.**

I now have a question about the number of people in your household and your household income. Please remember that all your answers are strictly confidential.

**3. What is the number of people in your family? Number of family members includes you, your spouse, your children (including full-time students under age 23 even if they do not live at home), and any legal dependents.**

- 1 - Then ask if total income before taxes for 2007 was more than \$10,400. If no, qualifies as EJ population.
- 2 - Then ask if total income before taxes for 2007 was more than 14,000. If no, then qualifies as EJ population.
- 3 - Then ask if total income before taxes for 2007 was more than \$17,600. If no, then qualifies as EJ population.
- 4 - Then ask if total income before taxes for 2007 was more than \$21,200. If no, then qualifies as EJ population.
- 5 - Then ask if total income before taxes for 2007 was more than \$24,800. If no, then qualifies as EJ population.
- 6 - Then ask if total income before taxes for 2007 was more than \$28,400. If no, then qualifies as EJ population.
- 7 - Then ask if total income before taxes for 2007 was more than \$32,000. If no, then qualifies as EJ population.
- 8 - Then ask if total income before taxes for 2007 was more than \$35,600. If no, then qualifies as EJ population.
- 9 - Then ask if total income before taxes for 2007 was more than \$39,200. If no, then qualifies as EJ population.

(For each additional person, add \$3,600.)

**4. Which of the following best describes your ethnic/racial background? (multiple responses allowed)**

- White/Caucasian (not Hispanic/Latino background)
- White/Caucasian (Hispanic/Latino background)
- Black/African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American

- Other (specify)
- Refused

## **I. Travel Behavior**

### **5. What time of the day do you typically travel across the SR 520 Bridge? Would you say: (choose all that apply)**

- AM peak (6 am to 9 am)
- Mid-day (after 9 am to before 3 pm)
- PM peak (after 3 pm to 7 pm)
- Night time (after 7 pm to before 6 am)

### **6. For what trip purposes did you use SR 520 Bridge in the last week? Would you say: (rotate and read; multiple choices allowed)**

- Travel to and from work or school (if chosen, indicate zip code of work or school location)
- Errands/shopping
- Non-commute work-related travel
- Recreational activities
- Visit family or friends
- Other (specify)
- Don't know (do not read)

### **7. Which of the following did you use to cross the SR 520 Bridge in the last week? (read; multiple responses allowed)**

- Drove alone
- Carpooled with household members
- Carpooled with non-household members
- Took the bus
- Vanpooled
- Motorcycled
- Other (please specify)

**8. In general, how much of a problem was traffic congestion when you drove across the SR 520 Bridge during the last week? Would you say:**

- Not a problem at all
- Moderate problem
- Serious problem
- Very serious problem
- Don't know (do not read)

## **II. Tolls for SR 520**

I'd like to ask you a few questions now about tolls and the construction of a new SR 520 Bridge.

**You may know that the Dept. of Transportation is proposing to replace the SR 520 Bridge and improve SR 520 from I-5 to I-405. Tolls for the bridge will be collected electronically as vehicles travel across the bridge at regular highway speeds. There will be no toll booths.**

**9. If tolls are charged on the bridge, what is the most you would be willing to pay to cross the bridge each way? \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**10. If you knew the toll would be \$3.50 one-way for a faster, more reliable trip across the SR 520 Bridge would you pay the toll?**

- No
- Yes
- Don't know

**11. Toll amounts on the bridge may vary by time of day – higher for morning and evening commute times, lower for other times of the day? How much would you support that? Would you say:**

- No support at all
- Low support
- Medium medium support
- Strong support
- Don't know

**12. When a toll is charged to use the SR 520 Bridge, would you change your travel behavior?**

- No, I would pay the toll (skip to Intro before Q14)
- Yes

**13. If so, what is the ONE thing you would most likely do? Would you say: (ROTATE and READ; choose just one)**

- Use transit
- Change travel time to a period when the toll amount is lower
- Use I-90
- Use SR 522
- Use I-5 to I-405 or I-405 to I-5
- Carpool with non-family members to share the toll with other passengers
- Vanpool
- Forgo the trip altogether
- Other (specify)

There would not be any toll booths on SR 520. Instead, all tolls would be collected electronically. Therefore, you would need to buy a transponder and put it on your vehicle's windshield. Your toll would be collected automatically from your pre-paid transponder account as your vehicle travels through the toll area.

**14. If the cost to buy the transponder is about \$12, would you be able to afford the purchase of the transponder?**

- No
- Yes

**15. The toll is automatically deducted from your transponder account. In order to put funds into your transponder account you would need to use one of the following methods. Which ONE would you be most likely to use? Would you say: (ROTATE and READ)**

- Credit card
- Debit card
- Checking account
- Cash (in person only)
- I would not be able to use any of these methods (DO NOT READ)

**16. Which of the following do you have? (ROTATE and READ) (Multiple responses allowed)**

- Credit card
- Debit card
- Checking account
- None of these

**17. If you wanted to avoid paying the toll would you (Multiple responses allowed)**

- a. Use public transit
  - No – if no, ask if this is because:
    - a. transit service is not frequent enough on my route
    - b. I live or work too far from transit
    - c. it is too expensive
    - d. Don't like buses or trains
  - Yes – if yes, ask if this would:
    - a. greatly increase travel time
    - b. greatly increase travel distance
- b. Use another un-tolled route
  - No – if no, ask if this is because it would:
    - a. greatly increase travel time
    - b. greatly increase travel distance
  - Yes -- if yes, ask if this would:
    - a. greatly increase travel time
    - b. greatly increase travel distance

**18. When tolls are charged on SR 520, how important are each of the following to make tolling fair? (Rotate and read a-c)**

- a. Other un-tolled highways that you could use instead. How important is this to making the tolling fair? Would you say:
  - Very unimportant
  - Somewhat unimportant
  - Somewhat important
  - Very important
  - Don't know (do not read)

- b. Availability of public transit to be used instead of paying the toll. How important is this to making the tolling fair? Would you say:
- Very unimportant
  - Somewhat unimportant
  - Somewhat important
  - Very important
  - Don't know (do not read)
- c. Providing a toll discount for some low-income drivers. How important is this to making the tolling fair? Would you say:
- Very unimportant
  - Somewhat unimportant
  - Somewhat important
  - Very important
  - Don't know (do not read)

### III. Demographics

We have a few questions about you and your household. Your answers will be strictly confidential and will be combined with other's answers for statistical analysis purposes.

**19. What is your home zip code?**

**20. What is the main language you speak at home? (Accept just one)**

- English
- Spanish
- Russian
- Vietnamese
- Chinese
- Korean
- Somali
- Other (please specify)

**21. Which of the following best describes your work situation? Would you say: (multiple responses allowed)**

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Student full-time
- Student part-time
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Unemployed
- Refused

**22. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Would you say:**

- Less than high school
- High school
- Some college/technical school/Associates degree
- Bachelor degree
- Post graduate work
- Graduate degree
- Refused

**23. Which of the following broad ranges includes your age?**

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and older
- Refused

**24. Which of the following income categories applies to your household's total annual income (before taxes) for 2007?**

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,000 to less than \$35,000
- \$35,000 to less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 to less than \$75,000
- \$75,000 to less than 100,000

- \$100,000 to less than \$125,000
- \$125,000 to less than \$150,000
- \$150,000 and above
- Refused

**25. Would you be willing to be part of a discussion group or other efforts to help the Department of Transportation learn more about opinions of people like you regarding tolling?**

- NO (skip to Q27)
- YES
- DK/REF (skip to Q27)

**26. Could I have your name, phone number and email address so that you can be contacted again.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**27. Gender: (interviewer enter)**

- Male
- Female

**Those are all the questions I have for you. Thank you very much for your participation!**



# Appendix B: Transit Intercept Survey

See following pages



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

**TRANSIT RIDERS SURVEY – SR 520 CORRIDOR**

The Washington State Department of Transportation is interested in the opinions of transit riders regarding travel across the SR 520 Bridge.

This survey will take only about five minutes of your time and your answers are completely anonymous. When finished, simply fold so that the return address to PRR shows, tape closed, and drop in the mail. No postage is required. Please mail your completed survey by June 12, 2008.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and assist with transportation planning efforts in the Puget Sound region.

If you have questions, please contact:

- Phone: 1-800-520-NEWS (6397)
- E-mail: [SR520Bridge@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:SR520Bridge@wsdot.wa.gov)
- Web site: [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge)

**I. Travel Behavior**

1. How did you get to your bus stop today? (check all that apply)

- Drove alone
- Motorcycle
- Carpooled
- Rode bicycle
- Vanpooled
- Walked
- Ferry
- Train

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please check the transit agency and indicate the route number of the bus you were boarding when you received this survey?

- King County Metro
- Route # \_\_\_\_\_
- Sound Transit Express
- Route # \_\_\_\_\_
- Community Transit
- Route # \_\_\_\_\_

3. How did you pay the fare for your bus ride today?

- Cash – full fare
- Cash – Reduced Fare Employer Provided
- Puget Pass
- Employer Provided Flex pass
- Flexpass
- Transfer
- Visitor pass

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many days in the last week did you use the following methods to travel across the SR 520

19. Which of the following best describes your work situation? (Check all that apply)

- Employed full-time
- Student full-time
- Employed part-time
- Student part-time
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Unemployed

20. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school
- High school
- Some college/technical school/Associates Degree
- Bachelor degree
- Graduate degree
- Post graduate work

21. Which of the following ranges includes your age?

- Less than 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and older

22. Which of the following income categories applies to your household's total annual income (before taxes) for 2007?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,000 to less than \$35,000
- \$35,000 to less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 to less than \$75,000
- \$75,000 to less than \$100,000
- \$100,000 to less than \$125,000
- \$125,000 to less than \$150,000
- \$150,000 and above

23. Gender: Male  Female

Thank you for your participation!

Bridge (also known as the Evergreen Point floating bridge)?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Car/truck	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Vanpool	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Motorcycle	<input type="checkbox"/>							

5. What time of the day do you typically travel across the SR 520 Bridge? (Check all that apply)

AM peak (6 am to 9 am)

Mid-day (after 9 am to before 3 pm)

PM peak (3 pm to 7 pm)

Overnight (after 7 pm to before 6 am)

6. For what trip purposes did you use the SR 520 Bridge in the last week? (Check all that apply)

Travel to and from work or school

Errands/shopping

Recreational activities

Visit family or friends

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. In general, how much of a problem was traffic congestion when you rode the bus across the SR 520 Bridge during the last week?

Not a problem at all

Moderate problem

Serious problem

Very serious problem

Don't know

**II. Tolls for SR 520 Bridge**

You may be aware that the Dept. of Transportation is proposing to replace the SR 520 Evergreen Point Bridge and improve the SR 520 corridor from I-5 to 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE in Bellevue. When the SR 520 Bridge is tolled, transit buses and vanpools would not be tolled. Also, the collection of tolls from cars would NOT use toll booths – instead, the toll would automatically be collected through an electronic transponder placed on the vehicle's windshield as the vehicle traveled through the toll area at regular highway speeds.

8. If tolls were charged on the bridge, what is the most you would be willing to pay to cross the bridge each way when you were not riding the bus? \_\_\_\_\_ ▲

9. What if the toll for a one-way trip during the peak travel time was approximately \$4.00, would you be able to afford to pay this toll? \_\_\_\_\_ ▲

10. Toll amounts on the bridge may vary by time of day according to the typical amount of traffic present – higher for morning and evening

commute times, lower for other times of the day. How much would you support that?

No support at all	Low support	Medium support	Strong support
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Tolling may provide a faster trip for transit users, because buses may not be delayed in congestion as much as they are now. How much do you think these potential improvements in transit time reliability will benefit you?

Will not benefit me at all

Will benefit me somewhat

Will benefit me a lot

Don't know

12. When a toll is charged to use the SR 520 Bridge, what is the one thing you are most likely to do for your trips when you do not use the bus? (Check just one)

I always use the bus

(if you checked this box, skip to question 15)

Change travel time to a period when the toll amount is lower

Pay the toll

Use I-90

Use SR 522

Use I-5 to I-405 or I-405 to I-5

Carpool with non-family members to share the toll with other passengers

Vanpool

Forgo the trip altogether

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

If you choose to drive alone or carpool across the SR 520 Bridge after it is tolled, you would need to purchase an electronic transponder and place it on your vehicle's windshield. Your toll would be collected automatically from your transponder account as your vehicle travels through the toll area at regular highway speeds.

13. If the cost for the transponder was about \$12, would you be able to afford the cost of the transponder? \_\_\_\_\_

No

Yes

14. The toll is automatically deducted from your transponder account. In order to put funds into your transponder account you would need to use one of the following methods. Which ONE would you be most likely to use? (Check just one) \_\_\_\_\_ ▲

Credit card

Debit card

Checking account

Cash (in person only)

**III. Demographics**

We have a few questions about you and your household. Your answers will be completely anonymous and combined with those of other respondents for statistical analysis purposes.

15. What is your home zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Which of the following best describes your ethnic/racial background? (Check all that apply.)

White/Caucasian (not Hispanic/Latino background)

White Caucasian (Hispanic/Latino background)

Black/African American

Hispanic/Latino

Asian/Pacific Islander

Native American

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

17. What is the main language you speak at home? (Check just one)

English

Spanish

Somali

Russian

Vietnamese

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Chinese

Korean

18. For this question, please check the number of people in your household AND tell us if your total income before taxes for 2007 was MORE than the amount indicated for that household size. The number of family members includes you, your spouse, your children (including full-time students under age 23 even if they do not live at home), and any legal dependents.

# of household members	2007 Household Income	Yes	No
1	More than \$10,400	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	More than \$14,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	More than \$17,600	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	More than \$21,200	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	More than \$24,800	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	More than \$28,400	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	More than \$32,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	More than \$35,600	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	More than \$39,200	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10+		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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# **Appendix B: SR 520 Focus Group and Spanish Language Interview Report**

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SR 520  
Environmental Justice

**Focus Groups and  
Spanish Language Interviews  
Summary Report of Findings**



# Introduction & Methodology

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) will be replacing the SR 520 Bridge, which is vulnerable to windstorms and earthquakes and at risk of collapse if not replaced. WSDOT has already determined that it will implement tolls to pay for the bridge replacement. It is also evaluating the possibility of implementing tolls in advance of replacing the bridge, both to manage congestion on the bridge and help pay for replacement costs.

WSDOT will implement electronic tolling to collect the tolls. Drivers will need to purchase \$12 transponders and affix them to their windshields. They will also need to set up prepaid accounts with WSDOT using a debit or credit card online. Alternatively, they will be able to visit a WSDOT customer service center and prepay in cash.

WSDOT hired PRR, multi-disciplinary public affairs and market research firm to conduct research on the potential effects of the tolling on low-income and minority people. PRR developed a three pronged approach that included a transit-intercept survey of people who use transit routes that cross the SR 520 Bridge, a telephone survey of SR 520 Bridge users, and focus groups with SR 520 Bridge users.

PRR planned to conduct four focus groups to obtain in-depth information about how tolling on the SR 520 Bridge will affect low-income people. PRR planned one focus group with people who do not qualify as low-income or minority, two focus groups with low-income English speakers, and one focus group with low- to moderate-income Spanish speakers.

## Recruiting

PRR recruited focus group participants from the pool of people who responded to the SR 520 Environmental Justice telephone survey. PRR also contacted people on a purchased telephone list of low-income people who live in King County. In addition, PRR contacted several social service agencies and asked them to recommend clients who might be interested in participating. Social service agencies hung flyers at their sites inviting clients to participate.

Because turnout for focus groups amongst low-income and limited-English proficient people is typically low, PRR made every effort to recruit additional participants. PRR recruited twelve people to participate in the non-EJ focus group, eight people for the English-speaking low-income focus group, and nine people to participate in the Spanish-speaking group. PRR cancelled the second English-speaking low-income focus group because of low interest.

Only one of the nine people recruited for the Spanish-speaking focus group attended. As a contingency plan, PRR conducted six telephone interviews in Spanish with the people who did not show up for the focus group. The questions asked during the interviews were similar to the questions asked during the focus group, but PRR eliminated some questions in order to keep the interviews to 30 minutes.

## Approach

PRR and WSDOT developed a moderator guide to learn more about the following:

- The impact of tolling on people's current and future travel choices,
- Whether or not the tolling would create a burden for SR 520 Bridge users, especially those who are low-income and limited-English proficient,
- People's attitudes toward bridge replacement and traffic congestion,
- People's attitudes toward tolling the SR 520 Bridge, and
- People's ideas on what (if anything) would make tolling fair.

## Participants

In the end, PRR conducted two focus group discussions, each of which lasted two hours. The first group (referred to as the non-EJ group) consisted of eight non-minority participants with household incomes above the federal poverty level. The second group (referred to as the low-income group) consisted of four English-speaking participants with household incomes below the federal poverty level. Two of these participants were students and single parents.

The moderator guide (see Appendix A) was used to structure the discussions. PRR conducted audio and video recordings of both groups.

Six Spanish-language interviews were completed; each lasting approximately 30 minutes. Results of the focus group and Spanish-language interviews follow. Two of the interviewees had household incomes below the federal poverty level and four of the interviewees had household incomes below 130% of the federal poverty level.



# Focus Group Findings

## Attitudes toward Bridge Replacement and Traffic Congestion

Participants were asked to indicate their support for replacing the existing SR 520 Bridge and their thoughts about traffic congestion on the bridge.

*The non-EJ group supports the replacement of the SR 520 Bridge and the low-income group does not. Spanish-speaking interviewees had not heard about the replacement.*

While all the participants in the non-EJ group expressed support for replacing the existing bridge, three out of the four participants in the low-income group did not support replacing the bridge.

Those who supported the replacement thought the bridge was old and needed expansion to handle the region's growing traffic needs. These participants expressed concern about the existing bridge's structural integrity and its ability to withstand future earthquakes or forceful winds and storms.

Those who did not support the replacement were surprised that a definite decision to replace the bridge had been already reached.

Participants posed several questions regarding the new design of the bridge. They wanted to know whether planning for the new bridge had taken into consideration factors such as increasing traffic, moving HOV lanes to the inside (they are currently on the outside), adding more lanes, and making sure that the bridge is sturdy enough to survive natural calamities.

*"It's reaching its life span."*

*"It has to be replaced... it's old."*

*"It's prone to earthquake and winds."*

*"There are safety issues considering the impending quake."*

*"Going into Seattle is crazy"*

*"It's backed up!"*

*"HOV issues: it is on the outside."*

All of the participants in both focus groups agreed that the traffic congestion had increased over the years. The reasons they stated for increased traffic congestion included population growth and more job opportunities on both sides of the bridge. Some of the participants in both groups also cited the lack of efficient mass transit options as a big contributor to traffic congestion on the bridge.

Participants from both focus groups suggested that traffic congestion on the bridge could be alleviated by expanding the bridge to include more lanes, providing more mass transit options, and promoting mass transit options and carpooling. Interestingly, only one participant in the non-EJ group recommended tolling of the bridge as a means to controlling traffic on the bridge.

When asked about replacement of the SR 520 Bridge, four Spanish-language interview participants had not heard anything about the proposed replacement. One interviewee responded “too much traffic, too few lanes,” and the other had heard that tolling could encourage greater bus use.

## Attitudes toward Tolling the SR 520 Bridge

Participants were asked to indicate what they *thought*, *felt* and *would say to others* about tolling of the SR 520 Bridge. A group discussion followed in which they were asked to share their thoughts on the following issues:

- Why they thought the SR 520 Bridge was going to be tolled,
- What were their previous experiences with paying bridge and road tolls, including whether or not they had used the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge,
- What they thought about flat rate versus variable rate tolling,
- When they thought tolling on SR 520 Bridge should start, and
- Whether or not they supported tolling on the I-90 Bridge in addition to tolling on the SR 520 Bridge.

*The non-EJ group thought that tolling was a good idea and the low-income group and Spanish-language interviewees expressed mixed thoughts and feelings about tolling of the SR 520 Bridge.*

The majority of the participants in the non-EJ group thought that tolling was a good idea. They felt excited about the faster commute that tolling might bring. They also considered tolling to be a progressive solution to the current traffic situation. However, a minority of participants in the non-EJ group reported feeling “annoyed”, “irritated”, and “rushed” into paying for using the bridge.

Some participants in the non-EJ group reported thinking about the cost of the toll and its impact on the cost of their trip, whether or not employers would reimburse their employees for the tolls, and the extent to which people could use HOV and other alternate travel options instead of driving alone.

The low-income group reported mixed feelings about tolling the SR 520 Bridge. Two of the four participants reported feeling “mad” and “dreadful” the tolling, but the other two participants reported feeling “interested” and “hopeful” that the tolling would translate to better traffic movement and less stress.

One low-income participant thought of tolling as a necessary inconvenience. Another said she might not be willing to travel on the bridge once tolling began. One participant reported worrying about the cost of the trip, the travel time, and the time and methods to pay the toll. Low-income participants also felt that students and senior citizens should be provided with a discounted toll rate.

When asked if the toll was worth the faster trip, five of the six Spanish-language interview participants responded that the toll was worth the faster trip. One did not support the toll.

*“This is necessary.”*

*“I don’t want to travel on the bridge anymore.”*

*“I am thinking of methods of payments...what’s the technology?”*

*“I wonder what the toll would be.”*

*“What is the impact on my expenditure?”*

*“Toll both bridges.”*

*“If you toll just one, the traffic would be heavy on the other.”*

*“Give people a choice.”*

*“If it is the law I will have to pay, but I will try to drive less on it because I’d rather not pay; everybody is going to suffer, companies and businesses in Seattle, because people would prefer to stay in Bellevue for their shopping and other errands; I’d rather take the bus.”*

*Both of the focus groups understood the reasons for tolling the SR 520 Bridge, but some of the Spanish-language interviewees did not understand.*

When asked what they thought were the reasons for tolling the SR 520 Bridge, the non-EJ group quickly identified safety, bridge replacement, continued maintenance, and traffic management as the main reasons. In comparison, the low-income group took more time and prodding in identifying these reasons.

When asked if they knew that tolls can be used to help traffic move better and how they think that might work, three Spanish-language interviewees responded that they knew that tolls can be used to help traffic move better and three said they did not know that tolls can be used to manage traffic. One interviewee said that if the toll is paid on only one bridge, it would not help traffic.

*Both focus groups have previous experience with paying at automated tolling receptacles.*

When asked about their previous experience with paying tolls, participants in both focus groups recalled going through and paying at manned tolling booths and tossing money into unmanned tolling receptacles. Both of these methods involved stopping at the toll booth to pay the toll. Participants unanimously expressed discomfort over “looking for” and/or “not having sufficient change” to pay for the toll.

We did not have responses to this question from the Spanish-language interview participants.

*While none of the participants have used the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge, the non-EJ group was familiar with transponders and the low-income group and Spanish-speaking interviewees were not.*

While none of the participants in the focus groups and interviews had used the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge, the participants in the non-EJ focus group said they were familiar with or had heard about using transponders for paying tolls.

None of the low-income group participants were familiar with transponders. After the moderator explained how transponders will be used to pay for tolls on the SR 520 Bridge, one participant expressed concern about having to purchase a transponder.

None of the Spanish-speaking interviewees had used Tacoma Narrows Bridge or had first-hand experience with paying tolls using a transponder. Four of the interview participants thought that the toll collection method used on the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge was a good idea. One participant was not sure if it was a good idea.

*Focus groups differ in their opinions with regard to flat versus variable toll rates.*

With regard to whether the tolls should be the same price at all times or if they should vary at different times of the day, three out of the four participants in the low-income focus group supported a flat rate. Low-income group participants believed that people who use the bridge to commute to and from work should not be penalized by having to pay a higher toll during peak commute times.

In contrast, six out of the eight participants in the non-EJ group supported a variable rate tolling scheme, as they believe that the variable rate scheme would help to control traffic on the SR 520 Bridge during rush hours.

Responses in the Spanish-language interview group were divided. Half supported a flat toll rate. One participant remarked that having a flat toll rate is easy to remember. One interviewee supported a variable rate. One participant remarked that drivers should not have to pay tolls during rush hour. One participant said that drivers should not have to pay tolls at all.

*Opinions were divided on early tolling.*

Opinions were divided in both focus groups and amongst Spanish-language interviewees on the issue of whether or not tolling should begin in 2010 (early tolling) or in 2016 (when the new bridge opens).

Those who supported early tolling felt that it was better to spread the costs out over time, and that since construction costs are expected to increase with time, paying for it earlier translates into lower toll charges.

Those who supported later tolling felt that it would give people the time to prepare themselves to change their habits, and provide employers with time to decide whether or not to reimburse employees for the cost of tolls.

*The low-income group supports the tolling of the I-90 Bridge while the non-EJ group does not. The Spanish-language interviewees' opinions were divided.*

With regard to whether or not the I-90 bridge should be tolled, initially the participants in the low-income group were not very forthcoming with their opinions. After further questioning and prodding at the end of the focus group discussion, the group unanimously supported tolling of the I-90 bridge. They decided that the toll needs to be perceived as the cost of crossing the lake, rather than a toll on a specific route. Participants also thought that tolling both bridges would balance traffic on both bridges.

One of the interview participants supported tolling of the I-90 bridge, because she was concerned that traffic would otherwise divert to I-90.

In contrast, all but one of the non-EJ group participants were opposed to tolling the I-90 bridge, based on the belief that drivers should be able to choose whether or not to pay a toll to travel from one side of the lake to the other.

Spanish language interview participants were also asked about potential new congestion on I-90 when SR 520 is tolled and how that would affect them. Interestingly, once this issue was raised, five out of six respondents agreed that both bridges should be tolled.

## Impact of Tolling on Current and Future Travel Behavior

In this part of the discussion, the participants were asked

- Whether they would pay the toll once the SR 520 Bridge is tolled,
- Alternatives they would use if they did not want to pay toll,
- What they thought was a reasonable toll to pay,
- Whether they would be able to afford purchasing the transponder, and
- Whether they would like to replenish their transponder account using a Web site, by phone, through the mail or in person at a customer service center.

They were also asked which of the following strategies would be useful and which they would be most likely to use to set up a transponder account:

- Online, using a credit card,
- Visiting a customer service center near their home or work,
- Visiting a mobile customer service center that travels around the region, or
- Establishing an account at a local retailer, such as a grocery or drug stores.

*The non-EJ group and Spanish-language interviewees are willing to pay toll while the low-income group shows hesitation.*

The majority of the participants in the non-EJ group and interviewees thought they would pay the toll once tolling started. One Spanish-language interviewee indicated a willingness to pay the toll because it will result in a faster trip, while another responded that she would pay the toll because it is important to be able to drive.

The participants in the low-income group were uncertain if they would pay the toll. They said they would modify their travel by limiting trips or by taking an alternate route. One interviewee indicated that she would try to drive less if tolls were implemented.

Participants in both focus groups reported that their willingness to pay the toll was also dependent on the urgency of the trip and the fluctuating price of gas.

*“They will be forcing us to take the bus; the Express is the best option because it is very convenient; Sunday’s schedule is pretty bad and for many of us Sunday is like any other work day”*

*“The bus is too slow; it would be better if it were Express without so many stops.”*

*“Only if there is an Express bus (currently there is no direct service to where I need to go; I need to take more than one bus); also at the time I need to take it is too crowded.”*

*Most felt that the bus was not a good alternative to paying the toll, but un-tolled routes were viable.*

When asked to identify alternate methods they would use if they did not want to pay the toll, participants in the non-EJ group stated that they would use an alternate route or mass transit to travel across the bridge.

The participants in the low-income group stated that they would reduce their trip frequency or use alternate routes to avoid the toll. When asked if they thought taking a bus was a viable option, the low-income group participants stated that the current transportation system was inefficient (took longer, required transfers, insufficient coverage) and required serious improvement in order for them to consider using it.

Three of the Spanish-language interview participants were receptive to the idea of taking the bus as an alternative to paying the toll. One participant was undecided, and one said that it would not be an option. Interview participants echoed the focus group comments that the bus system is inefficient and would add time/distance to their trip, with one participant indicating that improved bus service was necessary in order for the bus to be a viable option

When asked whether using an un-tolled road would work and whether it would add a lot of time or distance, five of the six Spanish-language interview participants responded that using an alternate route would work for them. One participant commented that while she would save money, it would take longer. Another interviewee responded that taking an alternate route would not affect time or distance much. A third interviewee indicated that the toll amount would determine if she would use an alternative route. Another participant indicated that using an un-tolled route would be better despite the fact it would add time and distance.

*Tolling is a burden for the low-income group and for some interview participants*

Low-income group participants said that paying the toll and purchasing the transponder would be a burden, and were resistant to discussing what they saw as a “reasonable” toll amount.

Non-EJ focus group participants did not feel that the toll would be a burden. When asked what a reasonable toll would be for a faster trip across SR 520 Bridge, participants in the non-EJ group suggested the maximum per trip toll rate they were willing to pay was \$2.00 during non-rush hours and \$5.00 during rush hour.

Two of the Spanish-language interview participants said that the toll would be a burden. A third interviewee responded that whether or not the toll would be a burden would depend upon the toll level, remarking that if the toll amount was too expensive, she would have to cut spending in other areas. One interviewee suggested that the toll should be paid in part by employers, while another remarked that the toll should not be a permanent toll, and charged only during construction. When asked what a reasonable toll amount would be interviewee responses ranged from \$0 to \$4 per round trip. When asked if \$12 transponder would be affordable, two of the interviewees said yes, two said no, and one would not provide an answer.

*The non-EJ group indicated a preference for online account setup while the low-income group and Spanish-language interviewees indicated a preference for setting up accounts at local retailers*

When asked which method they would use to establish a transponder account, seven out of eight participants in the non-EJ group reported that they would establish their account online. They also responded well to the idea of setting up their account at a local retailer, such a grocery or drug store.

Five out of six Spanish-language interview participants indicated they would establish their account at a local retailer. Most of the low-income group participants also liked the idea of setting up their account at local retailers and said it would be the option they would be most likely to use.

Interestingly, participants in both focus groups did not like the idea of a mobile customer service center. They thought it would lead to long lines once the mobile center arrived in their neighborhood and would be a waste of state funds.

## Making Tolling Fair or Acceptable

In this section of the discussion, the participants were asked about how tolling could be made fair or acceptable.

*Both focus groups and interviewees expressed a need for better transit system. Low-income participants said tolling discounts for low-income people would make tolling fair.*

In order to make the tolling fair, all focus group participants and some interviewees said that the transit system needed improvement so that buses would be more frequent and require fewer transfers.

A few participants in the non-EJ group supported the idea of having other un-tolled highways so that people would be able to choose whether or not to pay the toll, but others felt that tolling should be extended to any highway that was used to cross the lake. Low-income group participants they thought that both of the cross-lake highways needed to be tolled in order for the toll to be fair.

Low-income group participants indicated support for offering toll discounts for lower income drivers, as did many Spanish-language interview participants. Participants in the non-EJ group did not support the idea of extending toll discounts to lower income drivers, saying that everyone should to pay the same toll for it to be fair.

# Appendix A: Moderator Guide

## I. Introduction (10 minutes)

- [Moderator introduces herself/himself.]
- [Explain:] A focus group is a group discussion where we can learn more in-depth about peoples' ideas and opinions (compared to telephone or written surveys).
- My job is to facilitate the discussion and make sure that everyone has an opportunity to speak **and to make sure that no one dominates the conversation.**
- [Mention facility, audio recording equipment (so I do not have to take notes)]
- Housekeeping – Toilets and refreshments.
- [Mention ground rules.]
  - There are no right or wrong answers; we're interested in your honest and candid opinions and ideas.
  - Our discussion is totally confidential. We will not use your names in any report. During this discussion, we will only use first names.
  - Our discussion today is being recorded. These recordings allow us to write a more complete report, and to make sure we accurately reflect your opinions. However, please only speak one at a time, so that the recorder can pick up all your comments.
  - It is important to tell YOUR thoughts, not what you think others will think, or what you think others want to hear.
  - Please turn off cell phones
  - Your stipend will be provided as you leave.
  - Relax and enjoy

- [When Applicable] I am working with some other people on this project, and they will be observing our conversation from the other side of this mirror. Offer to show them the observation room and introduce them to the observers to put their minds at ease. Mention that I will occasionally go into the observation room to see if the observers have any additional questions.
- We're going to spend our time today talking about your ideas about tolls on the SR 520 Bridge. Any questions about the purpose of our focus group or the ground rules before we begin?
- I'd like you each to introduce yourselves. Please tell us:
  - Your FIRST name (no last names, please)
  - On average, how many days a week do you travel across the SR 520 Bridge?
  - What time of the day do you typically travel across the bridge?
  - For what purpose do you typically cross the bridge?

## II. Attitudes Toward Bridge Replacement and Traffic Congestion (10 minutes)

1. Do you support the replacement of the existing bridge? Why or why not?
2. What have you heard are the reasons why the SR 520 Bridge being replaced? (Probe on concerns with bridge withstanding earthquake, ability to handle current traffic volumes, etc.)
3. Is traffic getting better or worse on the SR 520 Bridge? [After discussion show photo of traffic congestion on SR 520 Bridge and ask if this looks like what they experience. Probe on why or why not.]
4. What causes traffic to be so bad on SR 520 Bridge?
5. What can be done to relieve traffic on SR 520 Bridge? (Listen for, BUT DO NOT MENTION AT THIS TIME, more lanes, HOV lanes, tolling, variable rate tolling.)

## III. Attitudes Toward Tolling the SR 520 Bridge (30 minutes)

6. Provide participants with Word Bubbles form and ask them to **individually** write down what they **think**, what they **feel**, and what they would **say** to someone else about tolling the SR 520 Bridge (max 3 minutes to do this). Then open up to discussion and write common themes on flip-chart.(NOTE TO MODERATOR:

IF THE WRITING EXERCISE IS NOT WORKING WELL, SWITCH TO JUST AN OPEN DISCUSSION ON THESE ISSUES.)

7. So, why do you think the SR 520 Bridge is going to be tolled? (Listen for raise funds for bridge replacement, manage congestion, safety, continued maintenance.)
8. How many of you have used a bridge or highway with a toll? Where was that and what was your experience like? (Listen for issues regarding having to stop and manually pay the toll.)
9. Have you used the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge? What was that experience like? (Listen for experience with the automated toll system.) Ask how many have a Good to Go account. Because of advances in technology, no toll booths would be necessary on the SR 520 Bridge, so you don't have to slow down to pay. What do you think about that idea? (Listen for concerns about "what do I do if I don't have a transponder".)
10. Did you know that tolls can be used to help traffic move better? Can anyone think of how that would work? How can tolling help traffic move better? (Listen for diversion to other routes, times of day, bus, carpooling, cancelled trips.)
11. Should tolls be the same at all times or should it vary? (Show of hands pre- and post- discussion). Why? (Prompt for benefits of variable rate.)
12. When should tolling start? Should it start in 2010 as a way to help traffic on the bridge move better and raise some money to build a new bridge, or should tolling start only after the new bridge is open? Why?
13. What if I-90 also had a toll? (Show of hands pre- and post-discussion on whether I-90 should be tolled). Why or why not?

Check with client to see if there are any other questions before moving on.

#### **IV. How Will Tolling Impact You And What You Will Do? (50 minutes)**

14. Once the SR 520 Bridge is tolled, do you think you will pay the toll? Why or why not?
15. If not, what is the one thing you are most likely to do instead? (Listen for take alternate routes, change time of travel, cancel trips, take bus, carpool, combine trips, change job, forgo other expenses, etc.) (For those who say they will take another route, ask which routes.)
16. [If some people are saying they will use I-90, we need to probe here.] If many people switched to the I-90 Bridge, traffic congestion on I-90 will likely increase. How will that affect you? If there is also a toll on I-90, what will you do?
17. Probe on how much of a burden the toll is going to be.

18. Would taking a bus be an option for you? Why or why not? Would it add a lot of time or distance to your trip? What would you need for the bus to work for you?

19. Would using an un-tolled road work for you? Why or why not? Would it add a lot of time or distance to your trip?

20. What would be a reasonable toll to pay for a faster trip across the SR 520 Bridge?

*(Info for facilitator if needed –Tacoma Narrows Bridge is \$4 round trip. In other places, variable rate tolls range from 50 cents to \$9, depending on the time of day.)*

What price would make you change your travel behavior?

21. The way the toll is automatically collected is through the use of what is called a transponder. [Show picture of transponder and explain that it attaches to the windshield] If the cost to buy the transponder is about \$12, would you be able to afford the purchase of the transponder?

22. The toll is automatically deducted from your transponder account. In order to put funds into your transponder account you would need to set up an account. Would you most likely do that on the website, by phone, through the mail, or in person at a customer service center? If using cash you would have to go to a customer service center. Would that present a problem for you? Why is that?

23. How helpful would each of the following strategies be?

- Having a website where you could set up an account using a credit card
- Having a customer service center near your home or work to set up your transponder account
- Having a mobile customer service center that travels around the region to sign people up
- Having agreements with local retailers, such as grocery or drug stores, where you could set up your account

Which of these would you be most likely to use? Why is that?

## **V. What Would Make Tolling Fair/Acceptable (15 minutes)**

24. What are some things that could be done to make tolling the SR 520 Bridge fair for all users? (Listen for bus and alternate route availability, lower toll rates over long periods, subsidized for lower income travelers.)

25. When tolls are charged on 520, how important are each of the following?

- Having other un-tolled highways that you could choose to use. Why is that important or not important?
- Having public bus available instead of paying the toll. Why is that important or not important?
- Toll discount for some lower income drivers. Why is that important or not important? What if I told you that such discounts would mean that other drivers would have slightly higher tolls? What do you think about such discounts now?

## **VI. Wrap Up (5 minutes)**

26. Was there anything that was NOT said that you think is important for us to know?



# Appendix B: Spanish Language Interview Script

## I. Introduction (1 minute)

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for the 520 Bridge Tolling project. Our interview will last about 30 minutes and you will be compensated for your time and opinions with \$75 which we will mail to you. We're going to spend our time today talking about your ideas about tolls on the 520 Bridge.

- [Mention ground rules.]
  - There are no right or wrong answers; we're interested in your honest and candid opinions and ideas.
  - Our discussion is totally confidential. We will not use your names in any report.

### Warm Up Questions (1 minute)

- On average, how many days a week do you travel across the 520 Bridge?
- What time of the day do you typically travel across the bridge?
- For what purpose do you typically cross the bridge?

## II. Attitudes Toward Bridge Replacement and Traffic Congestion (1 minute)

1. What have you heard are the reasons why the 520 Bridge being replaced? (Probe on concerns with bridge withstanding earthquake, ability to handle current traffic volumes, etc.)

### III. Attitudes Toward Tolling the 520 Bridge (3 minutes)

1. Have you used the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge? What was that experience like? (Listen for experience with the automated toll system.) Ask if have a Good to Go account. Because of advances in technology, no toll booths would be necessary on the 520 Bridge, so you don't have to slow down to pay. What do you think about that idea? (Listen for concerns about "what do I do if I don't have a transponder".)
2. Did you know that tolls can be used to help traffic move better? Can you think of how that would work? How can tolling help traffic move better? (Listen for diversion to other routes, times of day, bus, carpooling, cancelled trips.)
3. Should tolls be the same at all times or should it vary? Why? (Prompt for benefits of variable rate.)
4. When should tolling start? Should it start in 2010 as a way to help traffic on the bridge move better and raise some money to build a new bridge, or should tolling start only after the new bridge is open in 2016? Why?
5. Should I-90 also have a toll? Why or why not?

### IV. How Will Tolling Impact You And What You Will Do? (20 minutes)

1. Has the downturn in the economy changed your attitude toward tolls on the bridge? How does the cost of gasoline affect your attitude toward tolls on the bridge?
2. Once the 520 Bridge is tolled, do you think you will pay the toll? Why or why not?
3. If yes, is the toll worth the faster trip to get you where you need to be (such as work)?
4. If yes, is it because using the bus or taking alternate routes won't work for you?
5. If not, what is the one thing you are most likely to do instead? (Listen for take alternate routes, change time of travel, cancel trips, take bus, carpool, combine trips, change job, forgo other expenses, etc.) (For those who say they will take another route, ask which routes.)
6. If many people switched to the I-90 Bridge, traffic congestion on I-90 will likely increase. How will that affect you? If there is also a toll on I-90, what will you do?
7. Probe on how much of a burden the toll is going to be. Will they need to give up other things to be able to afford the toll (such as groceries, prescription drugs, etc.)?

8. Would taking a bus be an option for you? Why or why not? Would it add a lot of time or distance to your trip? What would you need for the bus to work for you?
9. Would using an un-tolled road work for you? Why or why not? Would it add a lot of time or distance to your trip?
10. What would be a reasonable toll to pay for a faster trip across the 520 Bridge?

*(Info for facilitator if needed –Tacoma Narrows Bridge is \$4 round trip. In other places, variable rate tolls range from 50 cents to \$9, depending on the time of day.)*

What price would make you change your travel behavior?

11. The way the toll is automatically collected is through the use of what is called a transponder. Explain that it attaches to the windshield] If the cost to buy the transponder is about \$12, would you be able to afford the purchase of the transponder?
12. The toll is automatically deducted from your transponder account. In order to put funds into your transponder account you would need to set up an account. Would you most likely do that on the website, by phone, through the mail, or in person at a customer service center? If using cash you would have to go to a customer service center. Would that present a problem for you? Why is that?
13. How helpful would each of the following strategies be?
  - Having a website where you could set up an account using a credit card
  - Having a customer service center near your home or work to set up your transponder account
  - Having a mobile customer service center that travels around the region to sign people up
  - Having agreements with local retailers, such as grocery or drug stores, where you could set up your account
14. Which of these would you be most likely to use? Why is that?

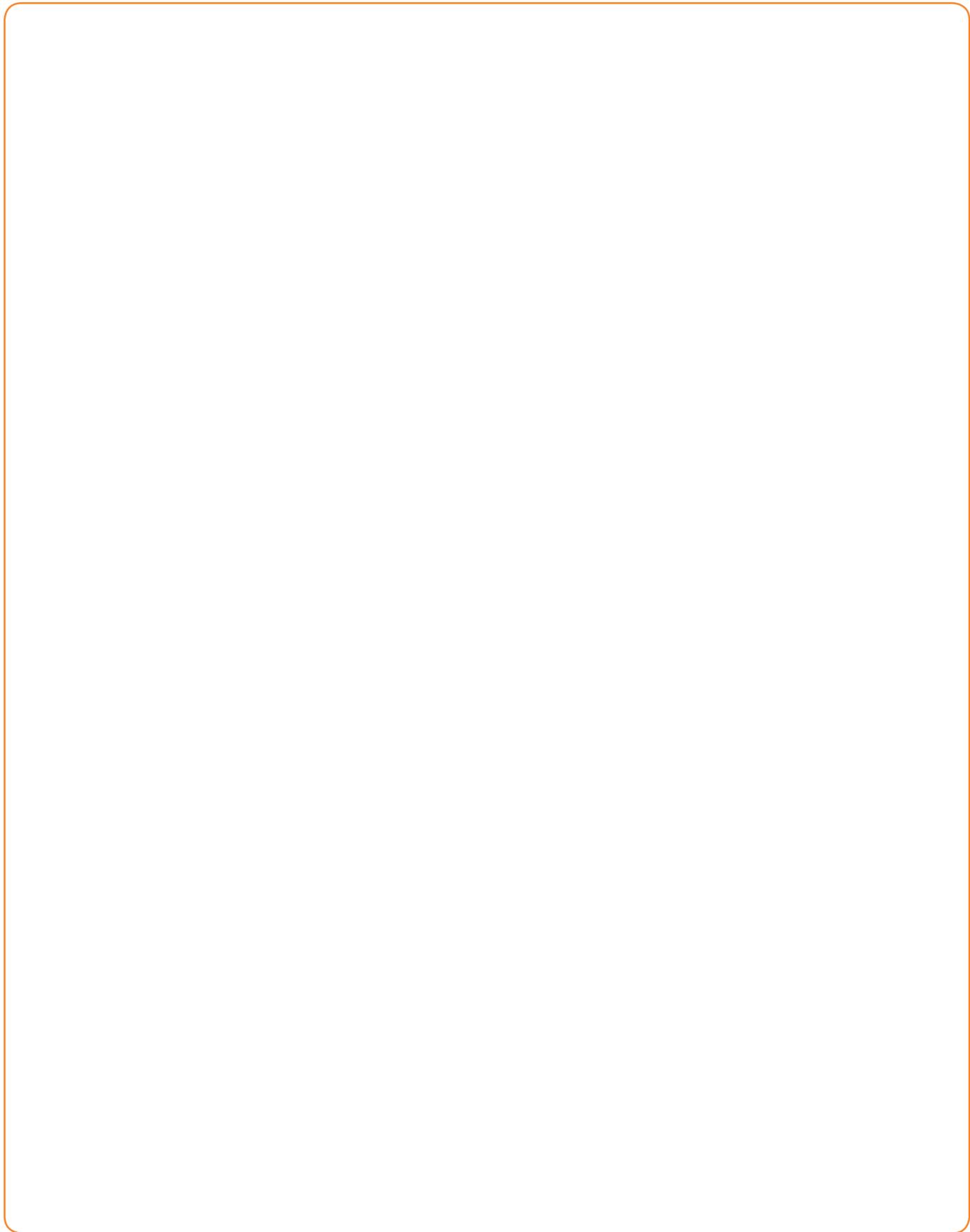
## **V. What Would Make Tolling Fair/Acceptable (3 minutes)**

1. When tolls are charged on 520, how important are each of the following?
  - Having other un-tolled highways that you could choose to use. Why is that important or not important?
  - Having public bus available instead of paying the toll. Why is that important or not important?

- Toll discount for some lower income drivers. Why is that important or not important? What if I told you that such discounts would mean that other drivers would have slightly higher tolls? What do you think about such discounts now?

## **VI. Wrap Up (1 minute)**

1. Was there anything that was NOT said that you think is important for us to know?



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# Appendix C: Summaries of interviews with social service agencies

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## Social Service Agency Interview Summaries

**Agency:** Catholic Community Services, Redmond, WA  
**Interviewees:** Jeremy Bricker  
**Interviewers:** Janet Matkin, Heather Reitmeier  
**Date:** November 21, 2008

On November 21, 2008, Janet Matkin and Heather Reitmeier met with Jeremy Bricker of Catholic Community Services to discuss the impact of SR 520 tolling on low income families.

Catholic Community Services is an organization that helps families currently coming out of homelessness to find homes. Job and budget coaching is also offered. The organization helps families with basic needs and empowers them to know where to get help if it's needed. A 2 year program is offered, but they like for families to be involved in the program for at least a year before they transition to King County Housing Authority.

"If transportation was more affordable it would make it easier for many people." Mr. Bricker said. He said stated that it's particularly difficult for families with school aged children because the bus system doesn't offer very good routes for the schools in the area; therefore will have to use the 520 bridge more often when traveling to the schools throughout the area. Also if more buses were added to certain routes, ridership might increase, "as owning a car is really not viable at all for the families at this stage."

When discussing the Good To Go! program, Mr. Bricker mentioned that it would be helpful if there was a transportation allowance on the EBT cards, a "separate allocation" specific for transportation usage. "It's hard because there's not a lot of income right now for these families because transportation is already a big expenditure for them."

"I think for the people that do use their cars and have that accessibility, more access to gas voucher type programs in relation to tolls is important," Mr. Bricker expressed, "It would help them be able to keep their cars."

Mr. Bricker stressed that when it comes to variable tolling, many lower income families do not have this option, as they are hourly employees who work when they are told to work. They do not have the option of changing their hours around to avoid traffic. He added that it would be particularly difficult to flex their schedule if they had smaller children.

**Agency:** King County Housing Authority, Tukwila, WA  
**Interviewees:** Amy Moe  
**Interviewers:** Janet Matkin, Heather Reitmeier  
**Date:** November 21, 2008

On November 21, 2008 Janet Matkin and Heather Reitmeier met with the King County Housing Authority (KCHA) to discuss the impact of tolling on low income families.

The main point focused on was to have a transportation allowance on EBT cards along with the accessibility of Customer Service stations. It was mentioned to try and retail with outlets such as Safeway/Rite Aid/Costco, as well as try and partner with a non-profit such as Hope Link. (It was mentioned that a program where a non-profit such as Hope Link could pay half of the tolls would be very beneficial.)

"For low income people making only 9.00 an hour it's already hard enough for them to pay the bills, adding a toll to that would make it worse." – Amy Moe, KCHA employee

As for the busses, adding bus routes would be the most beneficial thing to do, as many of the bus routes do not "flow" with the schedules of low income families. For instance, the bus routes/time do not work well with families with school aged children.

"A flexible schedule is really not an option for low income families." – Elizabeth, KCHA employee. "Their jobs don't allow them to be able to change hours just like that." She stressed that this was something that should not be a part of the low income side of this project because it's not very relevant to lower income families all the time.

It was stated that if someone is eligible for food stamps/EBT card/etc. that they should qualify for a lower toll rate amount, if any toll. This was an idea that KCHA really wanted to look into.

They thought it should be a priority to make some sort of linkage between DSHS and other low income programs for the toll money needs to be included in the assistance low income individuals are already receiving, along with being able to set up the Good To Go! accounts in connection with the agencies.

**Agency:** YWCA – East King County, Redmond, WA  
**Interviewee:** Cheri Kilti (comments submitted via e-mail)  
**Date:** December 2, 2008

Cheri Kilti wrote an e-mail regarding the impact tolls on SR 520 might have with lower income families. Her words are below:

"Thank you for inquiring about the impact of the possible toll of SR520 on YWCA programs. Each year the YWCA serves over 3500 individuals in our East King County programs. We have programs from Issaquah to Bellevue to Redmond. Many of our clients travel back and forth across 520 and all of them of course are extremely low income. The impact of this toll is that people will not get their needs met. There are often clients going into Seattle for medical care, employment, and education. These clients will no longer be able to access important services to their self sufficiency and stabilization.

The YWCA employs a number of staff who live and work on both side of the 520 bridge and they travel multiple times a day across 520. They will also feel the impact. For clients and staff alike this will mean a drain on resources to pay the toll that would otherwise be serving to support a family's needs. While I do not have other hard data, I can assure you that tolls on SR520 will be a financial drain and potentially cause a family back into homelessness if they have to use their funds on tolls instead of rent or food.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this issue as it has a great impact on this region."

**Agency:** Circle of Friends  
**Interviewee:** Valentina Kiselev – Executive Director  
**Date:** 8 July 2004  
**Interviewers:** Kathleen Dowd-Gailey, Bryan Jarr

**1. What service does your organization provide?**

The Circle of Friends center provides morning and afternoon sessions for Russian seniors. The morning session is from Bellevue and the afternoon session is for people from Seattle and Snohomish County.

**2. Who is your audience? How many clients do you see a day/year?**

Their audience is made up of seniors and they serve approximately 50-60 people per day in the afternoon session alone. Many of their eastside clients live in the Crossroads area, Lake Hills, around SE 8<sup>th</sup>, the Factoria area, and around 160<sup>th</sup>.

**3. How do you provide the service?**

They provide transportation to and from the center where there are general activities planned for them at the center when they arrive.

Hopelink provides the transportation services (via their brokerage service) and it can often take over an hour for them to get to the center from the Seattle side.

4. **Are there periods of time that are crucial for the service you provide (i.e., times during the day or year)?**  
Afternoon / early evening is when transportation to and from Seattle and surrounding environs is the most crucial.
5. **Do you feel you have a fairly good understanding of the proposed project? Do you have questions about the proposed construction and operation of the alternatives?**  
No questions.
6. **What are your concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your service(s) and/or people that you serve?**  
Since their clients tend to be somewhat "fragile" this can put a serious strain on them. So anything that would hinder transportation services or impede traffic flow would cause problems for them.

Most of the seniors they work with are also low-income and up to 80% of the Russians at the center have families that work at the University of Washington so they travel frequently across the SR 520 Bridge, therefore tolls would also impact them.

7. **Do you have any concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your staff and/or volunteers?**  
Tolls would definitely impact the center and their ability to provide the services for the seniors.
8. **Do you have any suggestions for ways the project can help mitigate the impacts that people you are serving may encounter?**  
Not answered.
9. **As we reach out to all groups and individuals that may be affected by the project, what is the most effective way to reach the people you serve?**  
Valentina indicated that they would be happy to host a project presentation at their center for their clients. She said that they could provide a Russian translator and also that they would be happy to assist us with translation of project materials into Russian.
10. **Does your organization sponsor any special events or fundraisers that may be impacted by the project?**  
Not answered.
11. **What languages do the people you serve speak?**  
Russian. Some speak a bit of English as well.
12. **What is the most effective way to continue to involve and inform your organization in the project as it moves forward?**  
She indicated that they would be happy to do a public service announcement on their Russian radio programs (1680 am), which are held from 7-9 in the mornings Monday – Friday. Igor is the contact person for the radio station and can be reached at 206.396.3684.  
She also suggested having an interview with project team members or engineers on their Russian radio program.
13. **Are there other organizations that you suggest we speak with or include in our project's public involvement activities?**  
Asian Pacific Islanders  
Latino Leadership Forum

**Agency:** Foundation for International Understanding through Students  
**Interviewee:** Carolyn Ho – Manager of Education Outreach  
**Date:** 27 July, 2004

**Interviewers:** Kathleen Dowd-Gailey, Bryan Jarr

**1. What service does your organization provide?**

Foundation for International Understanding through Students – (FIUTS) is a community-based non-profit organization. Although they are housed on the UW campus, they are not affiliated with the university, though they do collaborate closely with university programs and departments. They also collaborate closely with community organizations such as the World Affairs Council and the Rotary Club.

**2. Who is your audience? How many clients do you see a day/year?**

Their mission is to support international students and domestic students who study abroad.

**3. How do you provide the service?**

The community programs that FIUTS organizes includes the following: they provide short-tem host families for newly arrived international students; they sponsor the "Friendship Connection" a program that puts international students in touch with members of the Seattle community; they have a women's program, and a K-12 program which facilitates international students going into the school districts to talk about their country and culture. They also have weekly (free) lunches for international students and those interested in international issues.

**4. Are there periods of time that are crucial for the service you provide (i.e., times during the day or year)?**

During the school year.

**5. Do you feel you have a fairly good understanding of the proposed project? Do you have questions about the proposed construction and operation of the alternatives?**

Not answered.

**6. What are your concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your service(s) and/or people that you serve?**

Frequently international students have internships on the east side. As well, Indian students use the bridge frequently to visit the Indian community center on the east side.

**7. Do you have any concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your staff and/or volunteers?**

None mentioned.

**8. Do you have any suggestions for ways the project can help mitigate the impacts that people you are serving may encounter?**

None mentioned.

**9. As we reach out to all groups and individuals that may be affected by the project, what is the most effective way to reach the people you serve?**

Reach out through minority businesses in the university area such as Chinese restaurants, and also Chambers of Commerce. Also suggested going to churches or other places of worship.

**10. Does your organization sponsor any special events or fundraisers that may be impacted by the project?**

None mentioned.

**11. What languages do the people you serve speak?**

Chinese, Korean, Japanese (primary Asian languages spoken). She mentioned that several student groups (e.g. Korean Student Association) have two different official groups – one that operates primarily in English and one that operates in Korean. There are also several Spanish speaking international students.

**12. What is the most effective way to continue to involve and inform your organization in the project as it moves forward?**

Look at web site for more information on the different organizations.

**13. Are there other organizations that you suggest we speak with or include in our project's public involvement activities?**

OMSA

Ethnic Cultural Center

ASUW and GPSS (student government groups)

UW DESI (? – if they are still in operation)

Latino Student Organization

Radford Court – student family housing; has large population of international students

School of Social Work

**Agency:** Fremont Public Association

**Interviewee:** Darren Burchauser, Transportation Department

**Date:** 22 June 22, 2004

**Interviewers:** Anne Behn, Kathleen Dowd-Gailey, Paul Krueger

**1. What service does your organization provide?**

- Working wheels is a program in which they buy used cars and give them to low-income families throughout King County, although most recipients are within the City of Seattle.
- They are one of three providers in King County for the Access program.

**2. Who is your audience? How many clients do you see a day/year?**

People with disabilities, low-income, and the elderly.

**3. How do you provide the service?**

They operate 60 Access vans. Darren said that at any given time there are approximately 200 Access vans operating in the county.

**4. Are there periods of time that are crucial for the service you provide (i.e., times during the day or year)?**

Not answered in interview.

**5. Do you feel you have a fairly good understanding of the proposed project? Do you have questions about the proposed construction and operation of the alternatives?**

He wanted to know if traffic improvements were planned for surrounding areas such as Bothell and Lake City that would happen before 520 construction starts so that these areas would be better equipped to handle additional traffic that they will likely receive during construction as people take alternate routes.

**6. What are your concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your service(s) and/or people that you serve?**

With the exception of the Access program, he feels that there will be relatively few impacts to their clients.

**7. Do you have any concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your staff and/or volunteers?**

No.

**8. Do you have any suggestions for ways the project can help mitigate the impacts that people you are serving may encounter?**

Work with KC Metro to see if possible to promote alternative locations for their Access/ADA clients in order to avoid highly congested areas. (E.g. go to the Safeway closest to their house instead of the one across town, which might be what the client wants.

**9. As we reach out to all groups and individuals that may be affected by the project, what is the most effective way to reach the people you serve?**

He referred us to Paul Haas for this question. Will do follow up with Paul.

**10. Does your organization sponsor any special events or fundraisers that may be impacted by the project?**

Not answered.

**11. What languages do the people you serve speak?**

Their clients speak a wide variety of languages; no further details were given.

**12. What is the most effective way to continue to involve and inform your organization in the project as it moves forward?**

Add to mailing list

**13. Are there other organizations that you suggest we speak with or include in our project's public involvement activities?**

Access – very important to meet with them, DART

**Agency:** Hopelink, Bellevue

**Interviewee:** Jim Seeks – Project Manager, and Lynn Moody – Director of Transportation –

**Date:** 21 June 2004

**Interviewers:** Anne Behn, Kathleen Dowd-Gailey, Paul Krueger

**1. What service does your organization provide?**

In partnership with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Hopelink is the transportation brokerage for people on Medicaid in King County. They also provide rides for elderly or disabled clients and last year provided more than 958,000 rides. Another service that their transportation division provides is as a courier service for Harborview medical center for the delivery of packages such as lab samples between medical facilities. This service also includes transportation of clients to doctor's appointments and back home. In addition, Hopelink has a food bank, which serves more than 2,000 families / week. They also provide childcare services for low-income families, serving up to 110 children. They have an emergency shelter and provide transition assistance for families searching for permanent housing. They also provide literacy classes and family development programs.

**2. Who is your audience? How many clients do you see a day/year?**

Low-income, elderly, and people with disabilities. See numbers in question one.

**3. How do you provide the service?**

- Provide brokerage service for Medicaid clients. Hopelink verifies eligibility and sees that the trip is paid for either via a bus ticket, gas voucher or taxi fare.
- Provide direct transportation for elderly clients and clients with disabilities.
- Broker/facilitate transportation of people/medical packages for Harborview, and to Children's Hospital as well.
- Operate 14 DART routes serving approximately 600,000 riders / year.

**4. Are there periods of time that are crucial for the service you provide (i.e., times during the day or year)?**

October is a huge month for transportation needs, especially for the Access program and Medicaid transport. Early spring also tends to be busy. They experience typical peak times during the day, and especially at the end of the day.

**5. Do you feel you have a fairly good understanding of the proposed project? Do you have questions about the proposed construction and operation of the alternatives?**

UW / Montlake area is very congested. Both Children's Hospital and UW medical facilities are there and transportation in this area is already difficult. They are quite concerned about the impact that construction will have on their ability to provide transportation services to these facilities, especially with eventual closure of the Lake Washington ramps.

They wanted to know if emergency vehicle access was factored in when the project team did their traffic modeling. In addition, they said that some vehicles that are not classified as "emergency vehicles" such as taxis, which are often used to provide services to their clients, taking them to and from these facilities. These vehicles are not given priority.

**6. What are your concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your service(s) and/or people that you serve?**

Tolls on the bridge will affect their brokerage service. They will have to get approval from the county to increase rates in order to cover this difference.

This could also be true for cabs that provide courier services.

**7. Do you have any concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your staff and/or volunteers?**

Due to increase in the aged population, requests for their services will continue to grow and therefore these issues will continue to be in the forefront of their operations.

**8. Do you have any suggestions for ways the project can help mitigate the impacts that people you are serving may encounter?**

Suggested designating specific vehicles that could be given priority, other than ambulances.

**9. As we reach out to all groups and individuals that may be affected by the project, what is the most effective way to reach the people you serve?**

Work through social service agencies that work with these different populations. They can provide a list of groups on the east side with whom we could work.

**10. Does your organization sponsor any special events or fundraisers that may be impacted by the project?**

Not answered during interview.

**11. What languages do the people you serve speak?**

Spanish and Russian are two most dominant languages by far amongst their clientele that request interpreters. Russian comprises almost half of those requests, and Spanish another quarter.

**12. What is the most effective way to continue to involve and inform your organization in the project as it moves forward?**

Add them to mailing list.

**13. Are there other organizations that you suggest we speak with or include in our project's public involvement activities?**

They suggested speaking with the staff of medical centers located in / around the project area.

UW Medical Center

Harborview

Children's hospital

Seattle Cancer Care Alliance

Taxi Companies – esp., with regards to how they will go about getting allowance for fare increases to cover tolls.

King County Executive Alliance – a group of Executive Directors of non-profits in King County. They have a list of emails that would be a good reference of contacts for the project

Craig Lacey – City of Seattle

Diane Torledo

**Agency:** Ethnic Cultural Center and Theater Complex

**Interviewee:** Victor Flores, Assistant Director (Interim Director)

**Date:** 15 June 2004

**Interviewers:** Kathleen Dowd-Gailey, Paul Krueger

**1. What service does your organization provide?**

The center serves as a forum / meeting place 22 student groups, of which 20 are minority organizations (he referred to them as “people of color” – seems to be the lingo on campus, maybe). There are approximately 60-70 minority student organizations on the campus, so the Ethnic Cultural Center only works directly with just under a third of these groups.

**2. Who is your audience? How many clients do you see a day/year?**

Per Victor, UW has approximately 30% minority students, of which:

22% are Asian

3.5% are African American

3.5% are Latino, and

1% is Native American

**3. How do you provide the service?**

They offer meeting space, and assistance with organizing and managing a student organization. They also offer work with the groups on leadership issues, trainings on working within the UW system, budgeting guidance and membership development guidance. Student fees fund their operations.

**4. Are there periods of time that are crucial for the service you provide (i.e., times during the day or year)?**

School year is obviously their most critical time in terms of working with the student organizations, however their offices are open year round.

**5. Do you feel you have a fairly good understanding of the proposed project? Do you have questions about the proposed construction and operation of the alternatives?**

No questions at the time.

**6. What are your concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your service(s) and/or people that you serve?**

Many students are commuters and park down in the Montlake area, which could be problematic for them during construction. Victor thinks that there are relatively few students that live on the east side so cross-lake travel likely isn't too big of a problem for them in that respect. Many students do use transit and transfer areas; he was concerned what the impacts would be with respect to transit.

**7. Do you have any concerns regarding the potential impacts of the project on your staff and/or volunteers?**

Not answered during interview.

**8. Do you have any suggestions for ways the project can help mitigate the impacts that people you are serving may encounter?**

Not at this time.

**9. As we reach out to all groups and individuals that may be affected by the project, what is the most effective way to reach the people you serve?**

He suggested meeting with the Student Advisory Board, which has one representative from each of the 22 groups that meet in their facilities; they have monthly meetings.

He also said that we could forward project related information and updates to him via email and he would forward them onto the list serve he manages for the student groups. He also recommended emailing directly those organizations that have an email.

For posting locations he suggested: South Campus Center, Ethnic Cultural Center, and Mary Gates Hub. He also suggested setting up a booth at Mary Gates Hub.

**10. Does your organization sponsor any special events or fundraisers that may be impacted by the project?**

Dog Days (new student orientation week - September 26<sup>th</sup> – October 1<sup>st</sup>) has several opportunities to set up a booth at different cultural events sponsored throughout the week. Lisa Quinn in the UW transportation department is the contact for that event in order to get on their calendar.

They also have a university Internet radio station called Rainy Dog and they do public service announcements so would be a good place to advertise the project.

**11. What languages do the people you serve speak?**

Spanish – translations in Spanish would reach the broadest audience. Also have Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean.

During summer they provide English language classes for incoming students.

Victor believes that most minority students speak fairly decent English, (since they have to in order to study) however many come with their families who might not have such good language. He suggested that the communities surrounding the university would be a good place to have outreach in different languages since that is where many of the families live.

**12. What is the most effective way to continue to involve and inform your organization in the project as it moves forward?**

Please add their organization and his name to the project mailing list.

**13. Are there other organizations that you suggest we speak with or include in our project's public involvement activities?**

Association of Students of UW (ASUW)

Graduate Professional Student Senate (GPSS) (these first two organizations comprise the student government.)

GOMAP – (? – Paul, do you remember what this stands for?)

The Hub (a department) – Lincoln Johnson is the director. This is under the student affairs department.

University Heights – rents rooms and provides facilities – might be a good place to poster.

