

**Appendix B**  
**Public Involvement**



# The Lake Washington Urban Partnership



- Designed to reduce congestion through the “Four T’s”:
    - Transit
    - Telecommuting
    - Technology
    - Tolling
- 
- Awarded \$154.5 million to assist WSDOT, PSRC and King County in applying these innovative approaches to reducing congestion in the SR 520 corridor.
  - Other regions that have been selected for Urban Partnership Agreements include:
    - **Miami**
    - **Minneapolis**
    - **Chicago**
    - **San Francisco**
    - **Los Angeles**

## Funded by:



# The Lake Washington Urban Partnership

## How will the four T's improve SR 520 congestion?

### Transit

Adding more transit services along SR 520 would move more people and provide options to commuters who don't want to drive across the bridge. Other improvements that make the most of transit services, such as additional park-and-rides, the use of the King County Metro RapidRide bus rapid transit (BRT) program and better rider information services would make ride sharing more convenient.



A King County Metro bus approaches the Portage Bay Viaduct.

### Technology

Existing tools such as ramp meters, traffic loops and variable message signs would improve traveler information and traffic control. New innovations, such as variable speed limits, improved on- and off-ramp access and real-time traveler information signs would provide commuters with the tools and information they need for a more reliable trip.



Artistic renderings of future technology on SR 520, including variable speed limits and variable message signs.

### Telecommuting

Widespread broadband Internet access and support from major employers will enable our region to expand telecommuting programs to provide more people the option to telecommute or use flextime. This would help reduce work trips during weekday peak commute times in the mornings and evenings.



Many employers recognize the value of allowing employees to telecommute.

### Tolling

Electronic tolls would mean no booths, no lines and no delays because drivers would not have to stop to pay. Toll prices that vary by time of day would provide a discount to travelers who opt to use the bridge during less crowded times or pay a higher price to use the bridge during peak travel times. This system would encourage some drivers to choose alternate transportation methods to help ease congestion during peak travel times.



Artistic rendering of what an electronic tolling system may look like on the SR 520 bridge.

# The Lake Washington Urban Partnership

## Adding transit to the SR 520 corridor



### The SR 520 corridor today:

- 24 bus routes.
- 400 bus trips per day.
- 13,400 riders daily.

### The Urban Partnership Agreement allocates \$41 million to be used to:

- Purchase 45 additional buses for the 520 corridor.
- Make improvements to the South Kirkland and downtown Redmond park-and-ride lots.
- Enhance passenger facilities (new shelters and improved lighting).
- Install real-time traveler information signs.



# The Lake Washington Urban Partnership

## Technology to build smarter roadways *High-tech tools to improve your commute*

### Expand Washington's intelligent transportation system, that now includes:

135 ramp meters, real-time traveler information, 475 traffic cameras, 179 electronic message boards, 7 traffic management centers, 55 incident response trucks, 884 timed traffic traffic signals, 200 miles of HOV lanes and 20 miles of HOT lanes.

- **Overhead signs**

Variable speed limit and lane-control signs over each lane with variable message signs to alert drivers of backups down the road.

- **Variable lane control**

Signals alert drivers to steer away from trouble spots and clear the way for emergency vehicle access.

- **Travel time signs**

Allow drivers to make trip decisions.



M42 Birmingham, England.



Overhead gantry envisioned by WSDOT.

# The Lake Washington Urban Partnership

## Electronic tolling in Washington



Electronic tolling at the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.



Simulation of electronic tolling on SR 167 HOT lanes.

- All tolls on the SR 520 corridor would be collected electronically – there will be no toll booths.
- Drivers would be encouraged to set up prepaid *Good to Go!* accounts, using the same system in place on both the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the SR 167 HOT Lanes Pilot Project.
- Drivers without *Good to Go!* accounts would be billed based on their license plate, with a surcharge added to the toll rate.
- Washington drivers have embraced electronic tolling and signed up in record numbers—more than 90,000 accounts and 200,00 transponders in the first six months—the most successful launch in the country.



Current and future tolling options in the Puget Sound region.

# Good To Go!™

# The Lake Washington Urban Partnership

## SR 520 variable tolling environmental assessment

The purpose of implementing tolling on SR 520 is to reduce congestion between I-5 and I-405.



### What is being proposed?

- Existing highway would be tolled – no new highway lanes
- All electronic tolling – no toll booths.
- Variable toll – lower price in non-peak periods.
- Single tolling location or multiple tolling locations?
- Revenue to be invested in SR 520 corridor (i.e. bridge replacement).

### Why is tolling needed now?

- SR 520 is a key regional corridor and a major traffic bottleneck.
- Tolling could help manage congestion.
- Tolls can help close the funding gap.



# The Lake Washington Urban Partnership

## SR 520 variable tolling environmental assessment

### What issues are being studied?

- Effects of tolling on traffic.
- Effects of tolling on low-income highway users.
- Other topics?



Your comments about this project will help to ensure that the environmental assessment addresses all of the project's environmental issues.

### What is the schedule?

**January 2009** – Issue the environmental assessment.

**January/February 2009** – Public comment period.

### We want to hear from you

WSDOT, with the Federal Highway Administration, is undertaking an environmental assessment of variable tolling on SR 520. What issues should be evaluated in the environmental assessment? You can provide comments in the following ways:

**Comment form:** Complete one of the comment forms provided at this meeting.

**E-mail:** [KruegeP@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:KruegeP@wsdot.wa.gov)

**Write:** Urban Partnership SR 520 Variable Tolling Project  
c/o Paul Krueger, Environmental Manager  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
401 2nd Avenue South  
Seattle, WA 98104

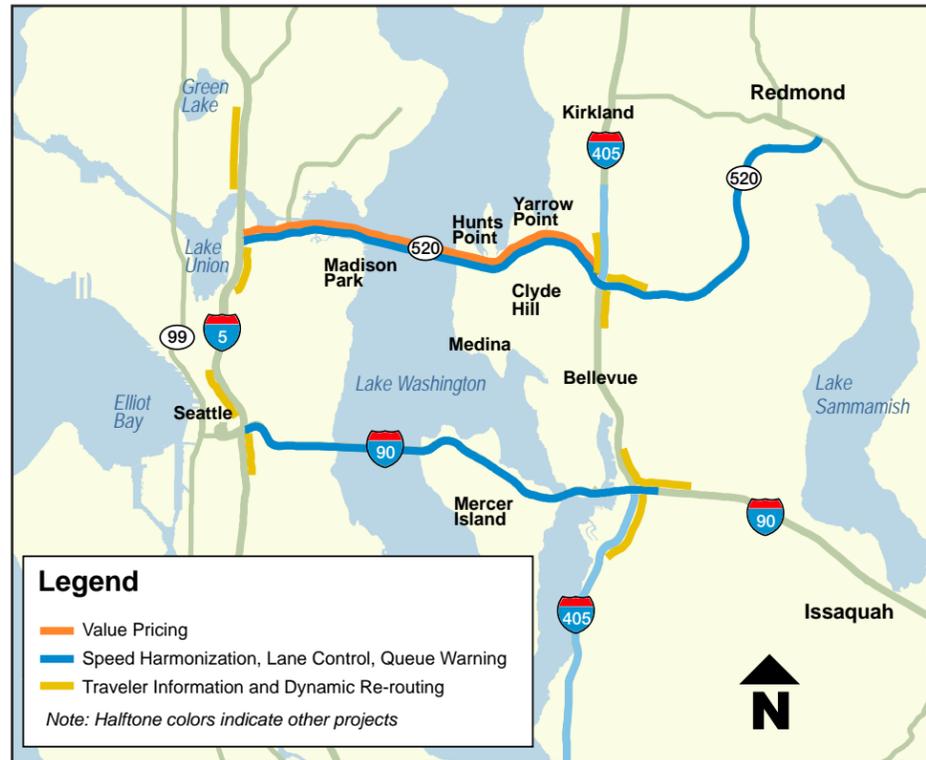
For scoping comments to be considered, please send them by July 17, 2008. All other comments and inquiries can be sent at any time to the above project addresses.



## The UPA grants for SR 520 could include:

- \$41 million for transit improvements, including enhanced bus services with the purchase of 45 additional buses for the corridor.
- \$63 million to develop an advanced tolling system that could contribute up to \$500 million toward replacing the aging SR 520 bridges and help manage congestion .
- \$23.1 million for advanced traffic management and traveler information systems to provide real-time traffic information and more reliable trips for drivers.
- We will use existing revenue to build on existing commute trip reduction programs and encourage employer-based programs that reduce rush-hour-traffic demands such as telecommuting, flexible work schedules, and ride sharing.

## Improvements through the plan



**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information:** Persons with disabilities may request this information be prepared and supplied in alternate formats by calling the Washington State Department of Transportation ADA Accommodation Hotline collect 206-389-2839. Persons with hearing impairments may access Washington State Telecommunications Relay Service at TTY 1-800-833-6388, Tele-Braille 1-800-833-6385, Voice 1-800-833-6384, and ask to be connected to 360-705-7097.

**Title VI Statement to Public:** WSDOT ensures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin or sex in the provision of benefits and services resulting from its federally assisted programs and activities. For questions regarding WSDOT's Title VI Program, you may contact the Department's Title VI Coordinator at 360-705-7098.

## Timeline

- Spring 2007**
- Submitted UPA grant application
- Summer 2007**
- Selected as grant finalist
- Fall 2007**
- King County received funding for five of six transit projects included in the UPA and new enhanced bus service on SR 520
- Winter/Spring 2008**
- Tolling and traffic technology concept development
- Summer 2008**
- Launch an environmental process for a proposal to toll the existing SR 520 floating bridge
- Fall/Winter 2008**
- Develop design and contracts
  - Meet with local agencies and the public to get comments
- Spring 2009**
- UPA plan goes to legislature for consideration
- As early as fall 2009**
- Launch the tolling project on SR 520

This partnership also includes you. Your participation is important to us and we welcome your involvement. Look for updates about the status of the Lake Washington Partnership program and the UPA grant online at

[www.wsdot.wa.gov/Congestion/UPA](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Congestion/UPA).

## For more information, contact

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# The Lake Washington Urban Partnership

Summer 2008

To reduce traffic congestion in major urban areas, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) requested innovative ideas to improve big-city freeway traffic flow through the combined use of transit, technology, telecommuting and tolling – the four T's.

In response to USDOT's request, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and King County submitted an innovative plan to help fund the replacement of the vulnerable SR 520 bridges and reduce congestion along the SR 520 corridor across Lake Washington.

The USDOT selected the Lake Washington Urban Partnership plan to receive significant grant funding to implement innovative congestion management strategies on SR 520, Interstate 90 and across Lake Washington in the next few years.

Funded by:   
U. S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

# How will we apply the four T's to improve SR 520 congestion?

As long as our region continues to grow, there is no single solution to fix traffic congestion along SR 520. The four T strategies in our plan will work together to ensure the free movement of people and goods on SR 520 well into the future.

## Transit

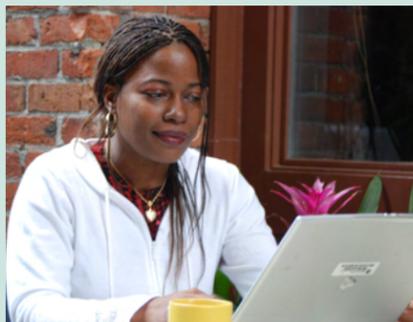
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## Technology

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Image of future technology on SR 520, including variable speed limits and electronic message boards.

## Tolling

Electronic tolls would mean no booths, no lines, and no delays because drivers would not have to stop to pay. Toll prices that vary by time of day would provide a discount to travelers who opt to use the bridge during less crowded times or pay a higher price to use the bridge during peak travel times. This system would encourage some drivers to choose alternate transportation methods to help ease congestion during peak travel times.



Image of a fully electronic tolling system on the SR 520 bridge.

# Why is this partnership important?

SR 520 is one of two east-west Lake Washington crossings. The corridor is critical to the region's economy and quality of life because it links densely populated cities and some of the largest employers in the state. A rapidly growing population depends on the SR 520 link across Lake Washington to commute between home, school and work; to access shopping and recreation; and to reach medical institutions throughout the region. Because of the region's dependence on SR 520 and because of its vulnerabilities, the Lake Washington Urban Partnership is an important plan to help replace the aging bridge and to improve SR 520 traffic flow.

## Mobility and reliability

Though the region has grown, the capacity of the SR 520 bridges remain the same as when they were designed nearly 50 years ago. Today, SR 520 is one of the most congested corridors in the Puget Sound region, with approximately 115,000 vehicles crossing the bridges each day, more than double the traffic the bridges were designed to carry.

The partnership plan manages the demand placed on SR 520 by providing commuters with more choices, real-time information and tolls that vary by time of day to help shift demand away from overburdened SR 520. The plan also makes travel across the bridge more efficient and adaptable to fluctuating traffic demands which smooth traffic flows and helps drivers avoid delays, such as collisions on the roadway.

## Safety

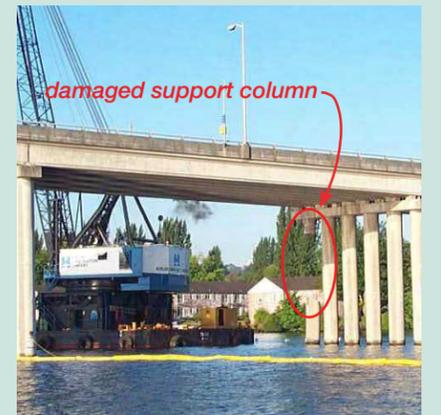
Built in the 1960s, without the benefit of today's design standards, the Evergreen Point Bridge and the Portage Bay Bridge are vulnerable to windstorms and earthquakes and are at risk of collapse if not replaced. If either of these bridges or their approach structures were to collapse, it could cause serious injury or loss of life and overwhelm all major regional highways with re-routed traffic.

Governor Gregoire determined the region needs a safer and more reliable SR 520 before 2018, and asked WSDOT to find ways to open the new bridge earlier. However, with many other competing needs in the region, the state has insufficient funding to replace the bridges or make other vital corridor improvements, and the longer it takes to start construction, the more costs will be affected by inflation and price increases.

We are examining tolling as a way to fill the funding gap in the \$3.9 billion project. The Urban Partnership could provide the means to begin generating funds and start construction of the bridge early which would save in construction costs and raise up to \$1.2 billion to build the new bridge. We could begin tolling in the SR 520 corridor as early as 2009.



SR 520 is a vital link across Lake Washington, carrying more than 115,000 vehicles and 155,000 people east and west each day.



The hollow bridge columns are as vulnerable to earthquakes as the Alaskan Way Viaduct.



The floating bridge is vulnerable to wind and waves. The drawspan, anchor cables and pontoons could break or crack during windstorms, and the bridge could sink.