City of Mercer Island and the I-90 Tolling Proposal

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How Can the City of Mercer Island Participate in this Decision?

1. Consultation and Concurrence under the 1976 Memorandum of Agreement

2. “Cooperating Agency” in the NEPA Process
   - Provide Comments during Scoping
   - Provide Comments on the Draft NEPA Document

3. Other direct efforts (see the City’s Work Plan)
What Is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Mandate?

- Agencies must analyze impacts of the proposed action and any reasonable alternatives in order to promote:
  - Informed Decision-Making; and
  - Public Participation

- No requirement to mitigate impacts

- No requirement under NEPA to make “good” decisions; taking a “hard look” is sufficient
Overview of Scoping Comments

1. WSDOT and FHWA Should Prepare an EIS.

2. WSDOT and FHWA Should Analyze and Mitigate Impacts to Mercer Island and Other Communities.

3. WSDOT and FHWA Should Consider Broader Alternatives to Tolling the I-90 Bridge.
Scoping Comment #1: Prepare an EIS.

The cumulative impacts of tolling will be significant due to diversion, as per:

- Data from SR-520 bridge
- Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project EIS
- Ohio River Bridges Project EIS

Transportation 2040 Plan, Ex. 3-17: Preferred Alternative (Tolling Scenario)
Scoping Comment #2: Analyze and Mitigate Impacts to Puget Sound Communities.

Cost to Individuals of Commuting Across the Bridge:
More than $1,700 per year*

Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts to the City, Mercer Island School District, and Mercer Island Businesses: Unknown

Impacts to Other Puget Sound Communities: Unknown

* Assuming tolls are set at $7.18/day during peak hours as for the SR-520 bridge.
Scoping Comment #3: Consider Alternatives to Tolling the I-90 Bridge.

- Alternative Funding Mechanisms
- Other Congestion Relief Strategies
- Lower Tolls over a Broader Geographic Area (e.g., all lanes on I-405, SR-522, or permanent tolling on SR-520)

If WSDOT decides to toll I-90, the agency should study, e.g.:
- Segmented tolls (i.e., lower toll for short trips)
- Optional one-way tolls (i.e., pay toll in only one direction)
- Daily cap (i.e., pay toll no more than once per day)
- Annual cap for frequent bridge users
Newly Proposed Legislation: HB 1945

WSDOT must examine mitigation options:

• Allowing all Washington residents to choose either the eastern or western portion of the tolled section of I-90 without paying a toll;

• Assessing a toll only when a driver traverses, in either direction, all of the tolled section of I-90;

• Allowing affected residents* to choose one portion of the tolled section of I-90 upon which they may travel without paying a toll;

• Any alternatives that meet the same purposes.

*“Affected residents” are “people who must use a portion of Interstate 90 west of Interstate 405 upon which tolling is considered in order to access necessary medical services, such as a hospital.”
Questions?