

A modest proposal: Solving the problem of traffic in Seattle caused by sporting events

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Whenever there is a sporting event in Seattle, traffic is reduced to gridlock for hours both before and after the event. This affects not only the people attending the sporting event in question, but also people who get caught up in the traffic as a side-effect. To resolve this issue, I present this modest proposal. In Berlin, a large museum complex can be found on Museum Island. Similarly, in Munich, Museum Island is the home of the Deutsches Museum.[†] I remember a conversation with a visitor from Germany to Seattle. She asked for suggestions on what to see, and in response to a museum, she asked, “Is it on an island?” Although we don’t have the tradition of putting museums on islands here in the United States, we can start a new tradition: Sports Arena Island. Something to think about since the owners of the Seattle Supersonics are looking for a new arena. All sporting arenas must be built on an island. The beauty of this solution is not so much in the island-ness, but in how the island is connected to the mainland. (This means that we can have “virtual Sports Arena Islands” in parts of the country where an actual island is impractical.) You see, there will be a hundred lanes of traffic leading into Sports Arena Island, but only one lane of traffic leaving it. When there is a sporting event, everybody can get onto the island quickly since there is so much incoming capacity. This means that traffic will not back up onto local streets and highways. And when the event is over, cars can leave the island only one at a time since there is only one exit lane. This prevents the sudden surge of traffic from the game from overwhelming local roads. (The inconvenience of leaving the park would also encourage people to use mass transportation to get to the game.) Once we’ve gotten everybody accustomed to the idea of Sports Arena Island, we can take it to the next level: *Floating Sports Arena Island*. Here in Seattle, we float everything. Houses, bridges, more bridges (not to be confused with its parallel bridge), and still more bridges. The floating island would travel around the perimeter of Lake Washington like a ferry and make stops according to a fixed schedule. If you wanted to get to the Mariners game, you could get on at Bellevue at 5:30pm, Mercer Island at 6:00pm, or Madrona at 6:30pm. (The island couldn’t go further north or south due to time constraints and because there are those bridges in the way, but we could have ferries pick up people from other locations and take them to the island.) This would spread out the event traffic around the entire lake instead of focusing it on one place. Similarly, when the event is over, traffic could be trickled out to the surrounding

communities. There you have it. Now you can have your football game without seriously disturbing the traffic of the surrounding area. And then we can have the same “oops” that we’ve had before and sink the structure into the lake. Next time (if there is a next time), I’ll solve the problem of identity theft. **Footnote**

†It feels weird for me to write *of the Deutsches Museum* since it violates the rules for German adjective endings. Since it’s the object of the preposition “of” (which is a dative preposition in German), perhaps I should say *the Deutschen Museum*. But this sounds weird to me because my instinct for adjective endings comes not from the analysis of strong and weak forms but rather on whether the case and gender have already been determined by the article, and since “the” is not declined in English, the answer is *no*. My instinct therefore tells me it should be *of the Deutschem Museum*, but that sounds insane the moment I say it. Besides, in German, I would have used the genitive case anyway (*des Deutschen Museums*). Of course, this is all nonsense since I’m just using a foreign phrase in English, in which case English rules apply. That doesn’t mean it still doesn’t feel weird.

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