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Comment Category: General Comments

Comment Location: Chapter-7, Page-1

Address: , , 98102

Comment:

I-0742-001

It is certain that the SR520 bridge must be replaced. It will become increasingly unsafe, and it does not in its current configuration permit reasonable traffic flow. Problems include lack of breakdown lanes, which results in too many backups, and the inability to permit the speedy flow of public transportation.

However, the 6-lane alternative is seriously flawed. A road structure of that size over the sensitive Arboretum and Union Bay and their wetlands and fish and wildlife habitats will create a negative impact on the habitat and on the recreational uses and quality of life in the adjacent neighborhoods. The loss of habitat, recreation, and quality of life, and the increase in noise, will not be offset by the gains in traffic speed. It is also too expensive. In addition, adding more traffic lanes will only encourage more single-occupancy vehicles travelling from the Eastside into Seattle, and will overload and cause further traffic problems on I-5, I-405, and local streets. Only mass transit alternatives should be encouraged in our road planning, especially in the face of the predictions of population growth in the Puget Sound area. We cannot lay down enough asphalt to accommodate our present driving habits, much less future growth! The 4-lane alternative is the only fiscally and environmentally responsible alternative, and must include designated HOV lanes at least during rush hours, limited to buses and 3+ carpools.

I-0742-002

The so-called Pacific Street Interchange, which more accurately should be called the Union Bay and Marsh Island Interchange is not a community-generated alternative. It was proposed by WSDOT in the 1960s and emphatically rejected by Seattle voters and the City Council in the 1970s, but resurrected by a neighborhood that, in order to push SR520 traffic into other neighborhoods and natural areas, is willing to expand that traffic further. The six-lane alternatives, especially the Pacific Interchange (estimated cost \$4.38 billion!) are not affordable. The preferred alternative must be one which can be responsibly financed.

I-0742-003

The Governor's expert review panel finds that even the four-lane alternative is too big to be affordable. The four-lane must be scaled back by reducing width of lanes, shoulders, and ramps, cutting the proposed Portage Bay Viaduct from seven (!) lanes to the current four, and making the shoulders intermittent (pull-out) rather than continuous (and thus avoiding future pressure to convert them to traffic lanes).

The draft EIS failed to study, and the final EIS should study, the strong possibility that the current four-lane bridge's excellent transit share of total persons who cross would decline with the six lane alternatives. Transit share can best be maintained and improved not by more lanes, but by bus priority not only on SR520 but also on the way to and from SR520 (such as on ramps and local streets, and on nearby parts of I-5 and I-405). The draft EIS fails to study converting any of the existing four lanes to HOV or transit-only. The draft EIS fails to consider the impacts of noise under 66 decibels and above the first floor, both of which are worst with the six lane alternatives.

I-0742-001

Comment Summary:

6-Lane Alternative

Response:

See Section 1.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0742-002

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

See Section 1.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0742-003

Comment Summary:

4-Lane Alternative

Response:

See Section 2.0 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

