

I-0781-001

Online Comment by User: paulgar

Submitted on: 10/30/2006 11:05:00 PM

Comment Category: Pacific Street Interchange

Comment Location: Chapter-1, Page-1

Address: , , 98105

Comment:

Thank you for allowing comments on the draft EIS.

Having read the draft EIS, I have four main comments. They are all related to my belief that as it stands the EIS contains insufficient analysis to enable our elected officials to make truly informed decisions about which of the options to proceed with, and that it would be a grave mistake to proceed without this being addressed.

In particular, the analysis of the Pacific Interchange Option to the six lane alternative is insufficient. I believe the EIS analysis fails to adequately consider a number of key factors, and others seem to have been entirely overlooked, which for me calls into question the credibility of its favorable treatment of the Pacific Interchange Option, and makes me question whether it would have a sufficiently positive impact on the city to make it worthwhile.

I believe that, for the following reasons, the Pacific Interchange Option is unlikely to achieve many of the cited benefits, and at the same time would be highly detrimental to the local environment of Union Bay and Laurelhurst, as well as to North East Capitol Hill, Eastern Montlake, the Arboretum, the sections of the University facing Union Bay, the Montlake cut and Portage Bay, with additional negative impacts on neighborhoods further to the North and East.

These are the main issues with the current EIS that lead me to question its conclusions:

1. Continued traffic impacts from the existing Montlake Bridge make the Pacific Interchange Option ineffective for improving traffic flows.

The biggest issue with the EIS is the lack of sufficient analysis of traffic flows for the Pacific Interchange Option. In particular it completely overlooks the impact of opening the Montlake Bridge. Traffic from both Eastbound and Westbound 520 that is heading to Montlake and North and East Capitol Hill will come down from the new bridge next to the Husky Stadium and turn left towards Southbound 23rd/24th Avenue to cross the existing Montlake Bridge, in addition to traffic heading that way from the North, 25th Ave, University Village, and Sandpoint Way. The opening of the Montlake bridge, which is only a hundred yards or so from the proposed Pacific St intersection, will cause traffic to back up into the intersection very quickly, blocking all traffic from the 520, Pacific Street and North Montlake every time. The resulting regular gridlocks may largely negate the traffic flow benefits of building the Pacific Interchange Option and so waste the additional money spent and the additional environmental impacts suffered.

2. Underestimated traffic impacts to neighborhoods around the Pacific Interchange.

The traffic analysis in the EIS for the Pacific Interchange Option focuses on improvements to the movement of vehicles along Montlake and Pacific Street and at the same time concludes

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Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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

I-0781-001 | that there will be limited increase in the traffic approaching the area through the intersections on 25th Ave, 35th Ave, Sandpoint way and into the neighborhoods. These conclusions stretch credibility as common sense would indicate that if the new interchange does manage to improve traffic flows then the decreased travel time will draw significantly more drivers to use that route and therefore the approach roads from NE Seattle.

I-0781-002 | 3. Weak noise impact analysis.
The EIS restricts its detailed analysis of changes to noise levels to those approaching or above federal noise mitigation levels. Significant quality-of-life issues for local residents appear well below these levels and yet no quantitative account is being taken of the population affected by changes below those levels that may occur. How can baseline noise studies that the analysis is based be sufficient to be credible, when for instance, measurements were taken at the end of Webster point for a total of 48 hours, with no consideration of variations in wind strength and direction? The EIS needs to consider changes to noise at lower levels and make more accurate and credible baseline measurements in order to be sufficiently informative.

I-0781-003 | 4. No night-time lighting impact analysis.
The EIS contains no consideration of night-time lighting of the various options. The impact of night-time light pollution would likely be greatest with the Pacific Interchange Option as the high level intersection over SR520 would need to be brightly lit by freeway intersection quality street lighting high above an intersection that is itself high in the air. No account is taken of the effect of the resulting significant increases in night-time light pollution on the neighborhoods both to the north and south that face the bridge, nor on the wildlife in the university/arboretum wetlands.

Thank you for listening

Comment Category: Transportation and Traffic
Comment Location: Chapter-6, Page-1
Comment:

I-0781-004 | Continued traffic impacts from the existing Montlake Bridge make the Pacific Interchange Option ineffective for improving traffic flows.
The biggest issue with the EIS is the lack of sufficient analysis of traffic flows for the Pacific Interchange Option. In particular it completely overlooks the impact of opening the Montlake Bridge. Traffic from both Eastbound and Westbound 520 that is heading to Montlake and North and East Capitol Hill will come down from the new bridge next to the Husky Stadium and turn left towards Southbound 23rd/24th Avenue to cross the existing Montlake Bridge, in addition to traffic heading that way from the North, 25th Ave, University Village, and Sandpoint Way. The opening of the Montlake bridge, which is only a hundred yards or so from the proposed Pacific St intersection, will cause traffic to back up into the intersection very quickly, blocking all traffic from the 520, Pacific Street and North Montlake every time. The resulting regular gridlocks may largely negate the traffic flow benefits of building the Pacific Interchange Option and so waste the additional money spent and the additional environmental impacts suffered.

Comment Category: General Comments

I-0781-002

Comment Summary:

Noise (Methodology)

Response:

See Section 12.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0781-003

Comment Summary:

Visual Quality Effects

Response:

See Section 10.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0781-004

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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

I-0781-004

Comment Location: Chapter-7, Page-1

Comment:

The EIS contains no consideration of night time lighting of the various options. The impact of night time light pollution would likely be greatest with the Pacific Interchange Option as the high level intersection over SR520 would need to be brightly lit by freeway intersection quality street lighting high above an intersection that is itself high in the air. No account is taken of the effect of the resulting significant increases in night time light pollution on the neighborhoods both to the north and south that face the bridge, nor on the wildlife in the university / arboretum wetlands.

Comment Category: Pacific Street Interchange

Comment Location: Chapter-7, Page-14

Comment:

I think this underestimates / avoids traffic impacts to neighborhoods around the Pacific Interchange. The traffic analysis in for the Pacific Interchange Option focuses on improvements to the movement of vehicles along Montlake and Pacific Street and at the same time concludes that there will be limited increase in the traffic approaching the area through the intersections on 25th Ave, 35th Ave, Sandpoint way and into the neighborhoods. To me these conclusions stretch credulity, as common sense would indicate that if the new interchange does manage to improve traffic flows then the decreased travel time will draw significantly more drivers to use that route and therefore the approach roads from NE Seattle.

Comment Category: Noise

Comment Location: Chapter-7, Page-19

Comment:

The EIS restricts its detailed analysis of changes to noise levels to those approaching or above federal noise mitigation levels. Significant quality-of-life issues for local residents appear well below these levels and yet no quantitative account is being taken of the population affected by changes below those levels that may occur. How can baseline noise studies that the analysis is based be sufficient to be credible, when for instance, measurements were taken at the end of Webster point for a total of 48 hours, with no consideration of variations in wind strength and direction? The EIS needs to consider changes to noise at lower levels and make more accurate and credible baseline measurements in order to be sufficiently informative.

Comment Category: Pacific Street Interchange

Comment Location: Chapter-7, Page-9

Comment:

How is it that in these artists impression of the Pacific Interchange Option is significantly lighter and airier with much reduced shadows even though the roadway is 20 feet wider than the 6 lane option. It's even lighter and less shadowed than the artists impression of the four lane option. It's unfortunate, but this kind of thing, really throws doubt on the credibility of the conclusions surrounding the Pacific Interchange Option.

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Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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