

I-1082-001

Comment Summary:

Light Rail Transit

Response:

See Section 2.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

From: [Mike Schuh](#)
To: [SR 520 DEIS Comments:](#)
CC: [Richard Conlin; Mike Lindblom \(Seattle Times\):](#)
Subject: SR530 DEIS comments
Date: Tuesday, October 31, 2006 3:54:08 PM
Attachments:

Greetings,

I wish to make the following comment on the proposed design of the SR520 replacement project.

I-1082-001 In several places the DEIS includes statements similar to this:

"The floating bridge pontoons of the Evergreen Point Bridge would be sized to accommodate future installation of facilities for high-capacity transit."

My question: why not just build a light rail link across the corridor from the get go? Do it now.

Well, "now" is a decade hence, by the time the project nears completion. By then, I daresay we will really wish that we had a functioning light rail line along the SR520 corridor - and we can.

There are two obstacles. The first is money, the second is political will. There are no insurmountable engineering issues.

The incremental cost of building light rail as part of the larger SR520 project is really small when compared to the total cost. I ain't sayin' it's gonna be free or even cheap, just that it will be less expensive to build it at the same time than at any later date, both because of inflation and the reduced cost of designing it in early instead of retrofitting it later. Further, the sooner we build it, the sooner we can realize its benefits (and we won't have to put up with a second round of construction hassles!).

Of course, nothing happens unless there is political support for it. The

I-1082-002

Comment Summary:

North of Montlake Cut

Response:

See Section 2.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1082-001 DEIS states:

"...a regional decision was made that the initial high-capacity transit crossing of Lake Washington would be on I-90, but that SR520 improvements would provide the ability to add high-capacity transit in the future."

The folks over at Sound Transit indicate that there is strong support for the maximum build out of the ST2 East Link project. I'll bet that local voters - on both sides of Lake Washington - would support extra funding to add a connection between Montlake and Medina (well, the U District and Redmond...). I encourage WSDOT and Sound Transit to ask the legislature for authorization to raise monies - apart from ST2 funding - for this corridor. Presented well, I believe it will be supported by the voters.

From the DEIS:

"Based on Sound Transit's current schedule for University Link, WSDOT anticipates that the University of Washington station will be in place at or near the time when the SR520 project is completed."

Wouldn't it be really neat if, when complete, the SR520 project included light rail such that passengers could travel directly from Redmond to the University of Washington? Or downtown Seattle or Northgate? If we design the two projects to do so - *TODAY* - then this will be possible.

From the DEIS:

"...the project team understands that additional work will be required by all four agencies to determine how to address the travel needs of transit riders affected by the removal of the Montlake Freeway Station, if that option is chosen. While the new light rail service proposed by Sound Transit will meet some of this need, this restructuring of bus service is likely to result in additional costs for transit service providers."

And a direct light rail link across the lake would meet much of the rest of the need - so let's build it.

I-1082-002 From the DEIS:

"Although no direct multimodal connections (facilities such as park-and-rides or drop-off points) are proposed as part of the SR520 project, all of the SR520 alternatives and options would improve access to the new station because they would improve trip reliability in the project

I-1082-002 | area."
Without drop-off points, how does improved motor vehicle trip reliability improve the rail passengers' experience? I'm sorry, but this statement doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

I-1082-003 | From the DEIS:
"Because the 6-Lane Alternative would substantially enhance SR520's people-moving capacity, it would provide greater benefits to rail transit users than the 4-Lane Alternative."

Neither does this one. The only way that I can see that the 6-lane alternative would improve rail transit is if two of the lanes weren't lanes but instead carried light rail. They're being designed to be able to do this in the future - I say, "do it now".

From the DEIS:

"There is strong support to ensure that the floating bridge replacement is constructed to allow expansion for incorporation of high-capacity transit in the future."

How about instead of "allow expansion for incorporation of" we test voter support for "incorporate"? The answer almost certainly will be "yes".

I-1082-004 | And a closing comment: I feel most strongly that there should *NOT* be a net decrease in public park and open space lands as a result of the SR-520 project. Once park land disappears under concrete or asphalt, it typically is gone forever. Replacing the lost land seems to never happen - there's always money to condemn housing (and parks) for highways, but never any to do so for parks. If an acre of park land is to be converted to highway right of way, then it is incumbent upon WSDOT to replace it with an equivalent acre of land nearby (this should be required by state law). We don't have enough open space as it is.

Thank you.

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Mike Schuh
POB 17005
Seattle, Washington 98127

I-1082-003

Comment Summary:

Light Rail Transit

Response:

See Section 2.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1082-004

Comment Summary:

Park Effects

Response:

See Section 9.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

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