

Kim V. W. Gould

October 31, 2006

Mr. Paul Krueger
Washington State Department DOT
414 Olive Way
Suite 400
Seattle, WA 98101



Re: Comments on the SR520 Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Krueger,

I-1278-001 I want to thank you for such a comprehensive draft EIS, with its simulations of the visual impact the various options would have, from different vistas. It is from considering these that I decided to write this letter.

Early on, the EIS states that a cable-stayed bridge was briefly considered, but dismissed because, among other things, it would not fit in visually with the traditional look of our existing surroundings. I'm referring here to the structures from I-5 to beginning of the Lake Washington portion.

But upon studying the various visual simulations of the 6 lane alternatives, I was struck by their bulk and, despite having a fewer number of columns than the existing SR520, they still present a huge negative visual impact. This is most obvious from any viewing angle other than 90 degrees to the structure. This will be true for many vistas from Portage Bay and looking south from the University Area, as well as vistas in and around Foster and Marsh Islands.

I-1278-002 Given this, what a cable-stayed design could offer is a less impacted view from eye level up to tree level, owing to its fewer support towers. Further, it would place the bulky new roadway and sound wall structure up in the air where it may have less visual impact. I realize that the tradeoff is that it can be seen from further away, but the advantage of cable-stayed bridges is they can be designed to be sleek and attractive. It is worth doing the visual tradeoff.

I appreciate that this would present difficulties with the interchanges. But perhaps the Pacific Interchange option could benefit the most, by requiring fewer new support towers for the Union Bay bridge portion, with the segments over Foster Island now held by cables from above.

In addition to possibly improving the visual impact, such an approach could take up less land at ground level over the marsh areas, possibly reducing even further the impacts there.

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I-1278-001

Comment Summary:

Context Sensitive Solutions

Response:

See Section 10.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1278-002

Comment Summary:

Alternatives Development

Response:

See Section 1.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

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I-1278-002 | Could such a structure also generate less noise at ground level, thereby allowing lower and less bulky sound walls?

I realize this is an 11th hour suggestion, but we are making decisions here that impact our city for the next few generations. Please at least give it some further engineering consideration.

Regards,



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3rd generation Seattle resident, currently residing at edge of Montlake.

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