

---

**From:** earjbell@netscape.net [mailto:earjbell@netscape.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 04, 2006 12:17 PM  
**To:** SR 520 DEIS Comments  
**Cc:** richard.conlin@seattle.gov; Jan.Drago@seattle.gov; Jean.Godden@seattle.gov;  
Nick.Licata@seattle.gov; Richard.McIver@seattle.gov; Tom.Rasmussen@seattle.gov;  
Peter.Steinbrueck@seattle.gov; David.Della@seattle.gov; sally.clark@seattle.gov  
**Subject:** SR 520 Comments of DEIS

Please find attached the comments of the University Park Community Club on the August 18, 2006 DEIS. Remarks, questions and clarifications should be addressed to me as the authorized person for this matter.

Earl J. Bell  
Board Member

---

[Check Out the new free AIM\(R\) Mail](#) -- 2 GB of storage and industry-leading spam and email virus protection.

## UNIVERSITY PARK COMMUNITY CLUB

OCTOBER 10, 2006

Paul Krueger  
Environmental Manager  
SR 520 Bridge Replacement Project

[Comments sent to sr520deiscomments@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:Comments sent to sr520deiscomments@wsdot.wa.gov)

**C-007-001** These are Comments submitted by the University Park Community Club (UPCC) pursuant to the call for public comment on this project contained in the DEIS dated August 18, 2006. We join those individuals and organizations who have stated their concerns or their opposition to the Pacific Street Interchange Option (PSIO). As the manner in which all of the alternatives and options are presented serves to make it appear that this option under the six-lane alternative is the WSDOT "putative preferred alternative" (PPA) most of our comments will be addressed to it specifically.

First, we lay out our objections to the PPA and then we follow with what we believe is an alternative that will accomplish much of what is sought from this investment without the necessity of a total transformation of the neighborhoods north of the Ship Canal.

Put most succinctly, the UPCC does not see anything in the DEIS that is persuasive that the PPA would be anything but harmful to the environment north of the Ship Canal. It *might*, however, succeed in doing something for the Montlake neighborhood in terms of re-routing traffic that would pass through towards another adjacent area, but at what cost in terms of peace and tranquility for these other areas is nowhere examined in the DEIS.

To us, the Pacific Street Interchange, while it appears to offer some possibility of improving throughput of vehicles through this busiest of intersections, does so only by an "improvement" that is completely out of scale. The impact on one of our major recreational areas (e.g., the UW waterfront) would be devastating, not only in terms of diminished opportunity for recreation but also in terms of environmental impact. However, even if there were magically no impacts in the area surrounding the Interchange, the consequences at short distances from it are not spelled out or even cursorily mentioned in the DEIS. For example, there is no mention of projected congestion estimates for any intersection north of NE 45<sup>th</sup> or west of 15<sup>th</sup> AV NE. Those projections that are shown are in the vicinity of Montlake Blvd north of Pacific Street. Communities like ours are left wondering what it might look like in 2030 if the alternatives were built. The DEIS is not helpful to this process. No information is given regarding projections for general increase in traffic volumes in surrounding areas such as Ravenna, Wallingford, Bryant or Laurelhurst.

Members of our community know that any project of this scale will have unintended consequences that will likely be anywhere from significant to devastating. What troubles us is the lack of any attention in the DEIS to the consequences that **are** intended. The PSIO has been put forth as a sort of panacea for solving a problem that may not be amenable to solution: the movement of people and goods using automotive vehicles other than rapid transit without severe impacts on the areas through which the vehicles pass. This is a long term project. While no light rail is foreseen across the 520 bridge in the next expansion of the light rail system, it is certainly reasonable to expect such an expansion during the 50+ year lifetime of the new bridge. The DEIS contains mentions in passing that the bridge pontoons would be designed to be able to carry rail rapid transit, but there is no design for how this would be achieved.

If we really want to reduce the Montlake mess we have to turn to public transport and move the

### C-007-001

#### Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

#### Response:

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

## C-007-002

### Comment Summary:

Regional Land Use and Transportation Planning

### Response:

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

**C-007-001** bulk of the projected demand to this transport modality. This has not seriously been considered in the DEIS. There is not even a clear plan of how passengers transfer between different bus lines. There must be a valid concept of how a new light rail line would continue on either side of the bridge and connect to other lines and buses. For instance, the intersection near Marsh Island should be designed to accommodate the wider curves needed for light rail to make the turn towards Husky Stadium. Once light rail gets to the Pacific Street intersection is it going to go over all the planned new construction or below? Can the mezzanine floor of the presently planned station be modified for an underground east-west station for a line to Ballard, or is the 520 line going to make a turn and connect to the downtown line? We should not box ourselves in and prevent solutions needed in the future.

This Putative Preferred Alternative is the most expensive alternative, mostly because it involves the ambitious Union Bay Bridge but it will also be due to numerous lids and other benefits for the Montlake neighborhood. It is instructive to note the comments from the report of the Governor's Expert Review Panel dated September 1, 2006:

"The SR 520 project premised its finance plan on \$573 million of secured funding and over \$3.6 billion of anticipated funding. We think that premise is overly optimistic. Overall, we find it unreasonable to assume the project will realize sufficient funding from secured and anticipated funding sources. We doubt that an anticipated \$153 million in sales tax revenue will be transferred to the project. We have assumed that only the six-lane alternative, if selected, will receive Regional Transportation Improvement District (RTID) ballot measure funding of \$800 million. Moreover, we find no basis to believe that any of the second increment of the RTID funding target of \$1.4 billion will be available to the project.

Consequently, we find that the funding sources identified in the SR 520 finance plan fall far short in secured and anticipated funding categories. This shortfall is of particular concern, given the impacts to regional circulation if the structure should fail. The lack of alternative routes makes it essential to fully fund the solution chosen for SR 520 bridge alternative."

Thus, with the recent adjustments due to inflationary pressure and the Seattle City Council's apparent preference for the most expensive option, the process is dangerously close to assurance that the PPA will not be fully funded. This being the case, the UPCC urges the adoption of the 6-lane alternative with a second Montlake bridge as the most prudent way to proceed given the current fiscal situation of the State. The six-lane alternative is acceptable as an alternative only if the "HOV lanes" are dedicated not for HOV use but for transit use exclusively. To do otherwise would be to court a lack of full funding and thus to delay the immediate undertaking of bridge replacement.

**C-007-002**

The UPCC recognizes that the six-lane alternative is the likely selection by WSDOT and other decision-making bodies involved in the final selection. With the two additional lanes dedicated to transit, we could support the six lane alternative. Nonetheless, the UPCC wishes to emphasize its opposition to the Pacific Street Interchange Option no matter what level of funding turns out to be available. Our opposition, as outlined above, is not based entirely upon cost, but lack of benefits for our and other communities north of the Ship Canal as well as the lack of a viable public transit solution.

Please direct any questions or requests for clarification to the email address shown on page one.

I have been authorized and directed to submit these comments on behalf of the Executive Board of the University Park Community Club.

Earl J. Bell  
Board Member