

**Online Comment by User: Gregory Hill**

Submitted on: 10/31/2006 4:12:00 PM

Comment Category: Comment on all alternatives

Comment Location: Chapter-1, Page-1

Address: , , 98103

**Comment:**

**I-0219-001**

The SR 520 project represents both an opportunity to encourage transit use and the potential to substantially increase the numbers of vehicles traveling the streets of Seattle's neighborhoods. Light rail on the bridge offers a good opportunity for increasing mobility while not encouraging additional driving. Unfortunately the 6 lane alternative and the Pacific Interchange focus on sov use at the expense of the livability of our city and the environment.

The Pacific Interchange proposal would increase driving capacity into the city by including a high level viaduct across the Montlake Cut. This is a very grave concern for our neighborhood. The proposed viaduct would deliver a significant increase in additional traffic to Pacific Avenue, according to the little information provided by WSDOT. This additional projection for traffic is problematic for several reasons.

**I-0219-002**

First, traffic modeling has been shown to be inaccurate in forecasting real results related to increasing road capacity. Modeling for new projects for the past twenty years has always indicated no additional congestion, when it is clear that there is additional congestion caused by these projects. Similarly, the traffic projections for new and widened roadways always seems to project smooth open-road driving, when the reality is that any new capacity is quickly consumed and new congestion results on all adjoining roadways. The initial studies on SR 520 showed that existing congestion on the eastern end of the westbound facility was merely moved further west by the massive investment with little additional capacity. Then, WSDOT 'adjusted' their model. Now the projections are much rosier. The problem is that there appears to be no real model, only an aid that is adjusted to tell the story WSDOT wishes to tell. We believe there will be far more traffic attracted to a new facility that promises additional capacity.

1. Please provide revised estimates of likely new traffic volumes and levels of congestion for the new facility and roads leading to the new facility.
2. Provide a clearer, simplified design diagram and cost estimate for BRT service into Montlake. Show buses in the center of the bridge rising to the Montlake Boulevard level for a flyer stop/exit from the east and west. (only 6 lanes plus setbacks from retaining walls)

**I-0219-003**

Second, the WSDOT projections always stop short of describing the impacts to the local streets leading to the enlarged facility. In this case, WSDOT is adamant that they are not responsible for local streets, and by reference, the impacts they cause to local streets. In this case, the WSDOT traffic model stops at 15th Avenue NE. There is no explanation for where the additional traffic from the west originates. The WCC has too notions of where this is coming from. There is already a steady stream of traffic from I-5 to 5th NE and down past Latona School to NE 40th. This traffic feeds both west and east on Pacific. The installation of a major freeway ramp at the end of Pacific Avenue will have a profound affect on this

**I-0219-001**

**Comment Summary:**

Regional Land Use and Transportation Planning

**Response:**

See Section 6.4 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

**I-0219-002**

**Comment Summary:**

Methodology (Freeway)

**Response:**

See Section 5.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

**I-0219-003**

**Comment Summary:**

Local Street Network

**Response:**

See Section 5.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

**I-0219-003** | section of the neighborhood as traffic will be able to shortcut the I-5/SR 520 interchange by driving through east Wallingford.

**I-0219-004** | Similarly, traffic from N 50th and N 45th, which is eastbound, will realize that they can re-route to South Wallingford to the new Pacific on-ramp. Currently, Pacific has become the focus of neighborhood efforts to find ways to cross what is becoming a more hostile street environment with more and faster traffic. Pacific and NE 40 are currently unsafe facilities from a pedestrian safety standpoint during peak hours. Adding additional traffic will only worsen the situation and extend the hours of hostility. The WSDOT representatives who visited our neighborhood appeared bemused and unable to offer any information to us regarding these issues, because 'local streets are not part of the study.' They are however, intimately linked to where we live, and we believe they should be made to address the issue of collateral impacts for all areas east of Aurora. We believe that our neighborhood is at a critical tipping point with regard to auto volumes and speeds, and the ability for pedestrians to move about safely and conveniently.

3. Please provide an analysis of traffic to and from the Pacific Interchange related to Wallingford as far west as Aurora Avenue (Highway 99).

4. Please provide proposed mitigation and cost estimates for that mitigation to eliminate any impacts to pedestrians on Latona, NE 40th, Pacific Avenue NE, Northlake Avenue NE from 5th Avenue NE to Wallingford Avenue North.

**I-0219-005** | Third, while not in our neighborhood, the area at the east end of the Montlake Cut and along near the MOHAI is a very beautiful natural shoreline area near which to walk and canoe. Building an elevated viaduct on top of this area will destroy it. We are against any further destruction of parts of our city by highways.

5. Please indicate the specific proposed mitigation based on the present City of Seattle requirements for habitat replacement. Provide detailed plans and cost estimates.

6. Please provide a clear study of the impacts to rowing, recreational power boating and maritime shipping and the combination of the above, that would result from the placement of many large concrete columns in the area east of the Cut that is essentially open water without obstruction today.

**I-0219-006** | 7. Please provide an alternative that eliminates the ramps to the Arboretum, instead, combining those vehicles with the Montlake exiting vehicles.

**I-0219-007** | 8. Please provide an alternative that uses adjustable tolls to manage traffic.

We think the answer is a No Net Increase in Vehicle policy. We encourage you to help stop the destruction of our city by the notion that bigger highways will lead to a better city.

Gregory Hill  
Transportation Chair  
Wallingford Community Council

#### **I-0219-004**

##### **Comment Summary:**

Local Street Network

##### **Response:**

See Section 5.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

#### **I-0219-005**

##### **Comment Summary:**

Pacific Street Interchange Option

##### **Response:**

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

#### **I-0219-006**

##### **Comment Summary:**

6-Lane Alternative

##### **Response:**

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

#### **I-0219-007**

##### **Comment Summary:**

Tolling Scenarios, Pricing, and Revenue

##### **Response:**

See Section 3.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

- I-0219-008** | **Comment Category:** Noise  
**Comment Location:** Chapter-1, Page-1  
**Comment:**  
The WSDOT has, over the past 25 years, repaved the bridge and 520 east of the bridge on two separate occasions. In the meantime, the concrete surface on the west side of the bridge has continued to deteriorate. This deterioration has led to very high noise levels.
1. Please provide a comparison of a newly paved 4 lane facility compared to the proposed a six lane facility in order to eliminate any built-in prejudice that may have taken place from allowing the road surface to deteriorate or over the past 24 years.
  2. Provide a full set of images from the driver's perspective of driving on various points along the proposed bridge and roadways with full height noise walls on both sides.
- I-0219-009** |

**I-0219-008**  
**Comment Summary:**  
Noise (Methodology)

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

**I-0219-009**  
**Comment Summary:**  
Visual Quality Effects

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