



Received

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SR520 Document Control

April 5, 2010

Jenifer Young
SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project
Environmental Manager
SR 520 Project Office
600 Stewart Street, Suite 520
Seattle, WA 98101

RE: SR 520 I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

Dear Ms. Young:

The Puget Sound Regional Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the SR 520 I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project (Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f)/6(f) Evaluation. The project represents a significant and crucial next step toward implementing the region's long-range growth management, economic and transportation strategy, VISION 2040, as well as new direction set forth in the Draft Transportation 2040 Plan.

VISION 2040

VISION 2040 establishes the long-range regional direction and provides a basis for the more detailed planning and investment strategies in the region's Transportation 2040 Plan. Together VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040 are designed to address the region's transportation challenges. The continued development and support of regional growth centers is a core component of the region's growth strategy, multicounty planning policies, and Transportation 2040.

Draft Transportation 2040 Plan

The proposed project is consistent with the Transportation 2040. Specifically, Transportation 2040 includes the following:

The SR 520 bridge will be replaced with a 6 lane facility resulting between I-5 and I-405 which will include a two-lane HOT system tolled from I-5 to Montlake, a fully tolled bridge and a one-lane HOT system from the bridge to SR 202 by 2020. Early tolling will occur on SR 520 in the near-term, prior to bridge replacement. This SR 520 tolling will be combined with advanced technology, transit and telecommute/TDM investments as part of the Urban Partnership Agreement. The HOV lanes will be moved to the inside lane from 84th Ave to SR 202 and widening in the Redmond area is also included by 2020. The full cross section from I-5 to SR 202 could be tolled by 2040.

R-001-001

R-001-001

Constrained Plan Elements:

*\$4.7B - SR 520 (I-5-Portage Bay Bridge, Montlake Blvd – 84th Ave
NE SR 202)*

\$20M – SR 520 HOV to HOT (I-405 – SR 202)

Unprogrammed Plan Element:

\$250M – Bel-Red Regional Connectivity – SR 520/12th I/C

\$2M - SR 520 Trail over SR 520 Bridge (E Seattle CL – Medina W CL)

The Transportation 2040 Plan recognizes that new revenue sources must be identified in order to implement Transportation 2040. The tolling assumptions included in the SR 520 bridge project are a fundamental part of the Transportation 2040 Financial Framework which recognizes an increased reliance in tolls over time.

R-001-002

Monitoring of the Transportation 2040 Plan will be done in part through monitoring of 12 subareas within the region, called “SMART Corridors.” See information on the draft SMART Corridor/CMP Report here: <http://www.psrc.org/transportation/cmp/> and for specific information regarding the Cross-Lake SMART Corridor see: <http://www.psrc.org/assets/3547/CrossLake.pdf>. The information contained in this existing conditions report will be updated at least every two years and can provide a means for monitoring the transportation system performance within the corridor as well as a means for identifying future transportation needs.

In conclusion, the Regional Council would like to again thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact me at (206) 464-7134 or Robin Mayhew, Program Manager, at (206) 464-7537.

Sincerely,



Norman A. Abbott
SEPA Responsible Official

CC:

Charlie Howard
Robin Mayhew
Mark Gulbranson
Rick Olson



April 15, 2010

Jenifer Young
Environmental Manager
SR 520 Project Office
Washington State Department of Transportation
600 Stewart Street, Suite 520
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Jenifer:

R-002-001

Sound Transit staff has reviewed the Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS) for the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV project and have identified several concerns. The agency's objective is to ensure that transit impacts are avoided, minimized or adequately addressed and mitigation measures are included in the project to address those impacts. Our review of the SDEIS focused mainly on project and construction effects to transit service, riders and facilities.

Transit Service, Operations and Access

R-002-002

Removal of Montlake Freeway Station: This was not fully discussed in the SDEIS document in terms of the impacts to transit service provision and riders. It was discussed mainly in the context of the removal of the facility. The reason why the Montlake Freeway Station is being removed—to narrow the project footprint in the Montlake area—should be included in the document. This removal of the Montlake Freeway Station has the consequence of removing a critical transfer point and access to SR 520 transit service. The Montlake freeway station provides all-day, two-way frequent connections between downtown Seattle, the University District and the Eastside.

Service provision is impacted significantly by the removal of the Montlake freeway station. Riders traveling to and from the Eastside and the University District will lose access to 355 bus trips per day provided now. Currently, the Montlake freeway station functions both as an origin/destination and a transfer point. Eastside riders bound for the University of Washington and the University District can ride transit service operating on SR 520 between the Eastside and downtown Seattle and get off buses at the Montlake freeway station. They can then transfer to local buses, walk or bike to their destinations.

With the removal of the freeway station, downtown Seattle buses operating on SR 520 can no longer serve this function. Existing SR 520 transit service operating between the Eastside and downtown Seattle serves both Westside destinations (the University District and downtown Seattle) through utilization of the Montlake

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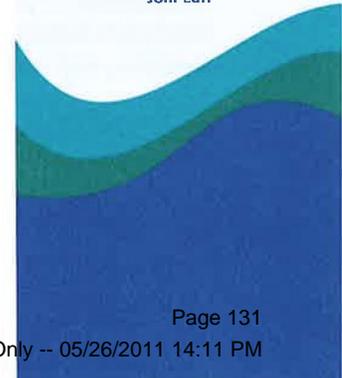
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R-002-002

freeway station. This efficiency will be eliminated with the removal of the Montlake freeway station. To respond to the removal of this access, additional direct service between the Eastside and the University District is needed. This is an impact that needs to be addressed in the document, and mitigation proposed to address the removal of the Montlake Freeway Station. Transit riders will want to know the details about how they will be impacted by the removal of this facility and how they will reach their destinations in a timely manner during the peak periods, midday, evenings and weekends, without it.

The SDEIS states on page 5-23 that service will be provided between the University District and the Eastside at frequent intervals during peak periods. It does not state the level of service that would be provided in the mid-day, evenings or weekends. Off-peak service between the University District and the Eastside will be significantly reduced or eliminated with the removal of the Montlake transit freeway station. Connections between the University District and the SR 520 Corridor will only be provided on Sound Transit Route 540 which operates weekdays only with basically 30-minute headway during the mid-day with some additional trips and 60-minute headways in the evenings. King County Metro Route 271 currently provides service every 30 minutes in the mid-day, 60 minutes in the evening and 30 to 60 minutes on weekends. However, with its current routing, it will not serve either of the Eastside transit freeway stations, so no access would be provided to SR 520 corridor riders.

The description of service between the Eastside and the University District on page 5-24 states that:

“With relocation of the HOV lanes and transit freeway stations to the inside median of SR 520, King County Metro routes 261 and 271 will no longer be accessible from the Evergreen Point freeway station. These routes use the SR 520/84th Avenue NE interchange which, with the project would prevent them from being able to access and serve riders using the new median transit station at Evergreen Point. On weekends, no University District bus service would be accessible from the new transit station with the current transit service and routes.”

What is proposed to address this impact? No access to weekend service between the Eastside and the University District is a significant impact to transit riders. Please describe the mitigation that is proposed. Sound Transit could develop a proposal for Eastside-University District service to address this impact but funding would be needed for the service.

The SR 520 High Capacity Plan (2008) developed by WSDOT, Sound Transit, King County Metro and the University of Washington, as directed by the state legislature, mitigates the removal of the Montlake Freeway Station. The HCT Plan is only partially funded. Funding is unresolved for the full HCT Plan.

Page 2-6. Brief details should be added for the reader that support the general statement that all options would "place an emphasis on multimodal transportation by decreasing reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel and facilitating transit connections." In the description of alternatives, it would be useful to the reader to identify how each of the alternatives facilitates transit connections and where they differ (use of Transit-only of Transit/HOV-only ramps, HOV/Transit-only lanes; location of proposed transit stops).

Pages 5-23 to 5-24: This section describes the effects of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station on eastbound and westbound riders. To place the information in context for the reader, please provide in the Final SEIS comparisons of project transit service frequencies to current conditions (information provided in Transportation Discipline Report). The point should also be made that potential transfer requirements, changes in station locations, and reduced frequencies could increase transit travel times for some riders.

Page 5-24: This section describes University District-Eastside bus routes. Please note in the text that the elimination of the Montlake Freeway Station would result in need for additional bus service in order to

R-002-002 | accommodate demand. In addition, please state that service needs will be developed in coordination with transit providers during the preparation of the Final SEIS.

Page 5-167, Table 5.16-1: The section summary identifies the removal of the Montlake Freeway Station and the need to replace its function at other transit stops as well as potential effects on passenger travel routes. The reduced service frequencies that would result along the corridor should be referenced. The effect of these potential changes, reduced transit options and longer transit travel times for some, should be included in the Final EIS.

R-002-003 | **Montlake Multimodal Center:** The document did not include information about the Montlake Multimodal Center which was identified and developed jointly by WSDOT, Sound Transit, King County Metro and the University of Washington to provide a location for multimodal connections in the area. It is a key component of transit service provision between the University District and the Eastside. Key bus stops provide connections between cross-lake service and local service in addition to nearby connections to light rail at the University of Washington light rail station. Information needs to be provided in the environmental documentation about how the Montlake Multimodal Center will function and the plans that were identified for it, as included in the SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan (2008) developed by the partners identified above as directed by the state legislature in ESSB 6099.

R-002-004 | **SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan:** The HCT Plan is mentioned on page 5-25 as part of the discussion of the University Link Light Rail Station. It should be described in its own section as a component of the requirements of ESSB 6099. The purpose of the plan was to “plan for high capacity transit in the SR 520 corridor. The parties shall jointly develop a multi-modal transportation plan that ensures effective and efficient coordination of bus services and light rail services throughout the SR 520 corridor”. Update this in the Final EIS. The purpose of the HCT Plan was not, as noted in the SDEIS, “to determine the effects of different transit service structures” in the SR 520 corridor.

R-002-005 | **Traffic on Montlake Boulevard and NE Pacific Street to/from SR 520:** Do traffic volumes on these streets increase with the SR 520 project? Exhibits 5.1-11 and 12 show traffic at screen lines on these streets but they don't show traffic volumes by direction. Are additional general purpose or HOV lanes needed to accommodate traffic demand to and from SR 520, for example southbound on Montlake Boulevard south of NE 45 Street and on NE Pacific Street east of 15th Avenue NE? Sound Transit's interest is to ensure that buses are able to operate efficiently between SR 520 and the University District once they leave the SR 520 corridor.

Following construction of the University of Washington Link Light Rail Station, the reconfigured driveway into the parking lot located just north of the Montlake Bridge will operate as a signalized, east leg of the Pacific Street / Montlake Boulevard intersection. Seattle DOT will require a protected left turn from southbound Montlake Boulevard eastbound into the parking lot. Traffic analysis prepared for the University of Washington, Seattle DOT, and Sound Transit related to the Rainier Vista Plan indicates that the traffic model prepared for the SDEIS does not accurately account for future traffic operations at this intersection. Please revise the traffic analysis and explain any impacts to traffic movement in this vicinity in the Final EIS.

Construction Impacts

R-002-006 | **Sound Transit's University Link Light Rail project:** Please include information about how University Link construction will be accommodated by WSDOT during the SR 520 Westside construction period. The University Link project construction was initiated in 2009 and will continue until 2015 in this area. University Link will be in operation in 2016. Please include Sound Transit and King County Metro in the development and review of proposed detour routes in this area, along with the City of Seattle.

R-002-007 | Please describe how Sound Transit's University Link project construction schedule will be maintained. In addition, please discuss how the University Link tunnel spoils and materials haul route on Pacific Street/Pacific Place and Montlake Boulevard will be maintained during SR 520 project construction. Construction material and haul routes were identified and discussed with WSDOT staff. Please describe how the University Link materials and haul routes will be maintained during SR 520 construction.

R-002-008 | The discussion of project effects on transit on pages 6-9 to 6-11 does not address potential project construction effects on the UW Station that may occur *after* University Link is opened for service, now scheduled for 2016. Such effects could include changes or limitations on pedestrian access, and air quality, noise, and visual impacts experienced by light rail users. Chapter 1 indicates that the non-floating bridge portions of the project would be completed in 2018, subject to the availability of full funding. Please confirm that project construction in the UW Station area would not occur after the Station's 2016 opening. It appears that construction in the UW/Montlake area would occur later under the Phased Implementation Scenarios. Please consider whether effects on the operational UW Link Station should be evaluated in the Final EIS with respect to the Phased Implementation Scenario. This discussion could be incorporated into the transit operations discussion on pages 6-9 to 6-11, which currently focuses on bus transit facilities.

R-002-009 | **Bicycle Access:** To ensure that non-motorized access continues to occur when the existing 54 bicycle lockers are removed from the Montlake Freeway Station area, relocate those bicycle lockers to the vicinity of the Montlake Multimodal Center at the Montlake Triangle. This will provide access to cross-lake service by bicycle riders who wish to store their bicycles and continue their trips on transit.

R-002-010 | **Eastside Transit Freeway Stations:** In order to ensure that riders can access service between the University District and the Eastside, one freeway station on the Eastside needs to remain open during SR 520 Eastside construction. And this one freeway station needs to provide access to transit service operating between the Eastside and the University District. This is especially important if Eastside construction overlaps with the closure and removal of the Montlake Transit Freeway Station.

R-002-011 | **Construction Effects on Transit Service and Riders:** Please describe how transit service will be maintained during construction of the SR 520 project. In particular, the identified closure of Pacific Street for 9 to 12 months associated with options K and L will impact all cross-lake and local transit operations through the Montlake triangle area. The document needs to identify how and where transit would operate during this period and how the identified detour route on NE Pacific Place would operate with the level of bus service and traffic that is projected. For transit operations during the construction period, please discuss proposed mitigation measures to maintain or improve transit speed, reliability and access.

R-002-012 | **Bus Stops and Access to Service by Riders:** Page 5-32: Please expand the discussion of transit mitigation measures, which currently focuses on the replacement, relocation, or removal of existing bus stops. The text should clarify that ongoing coordination with transit service providers will also address issues such as providing adequate access to transit facilities, and the potential need for additional transit service. As discussed in further detail below, the summary tables included in this chapter as well as the Executive Summary should briefly identify the full range of transit effects, as well as potential mitigation measures.

R-002-013 | **Cumulative Effects:** As agreed previously by WSDOT, include the voter-approved Sound Transit 2 Plan in the 2030 No Build alternative in the analysis for the SR 520 project Final EIS. Ensure that the effects of the projects included in the ST2 Plan are included in the existing conditions for the SR 520 project. Ensure that the East Link project and associated light rail service on the I-90 corridor is included.

R-002-014 | **Travel Time:** Page 5-157. The references to afternoon HOV westbound and eastbound travel times are not consistent with the information provided on pages 5-11 (e.g., Table 5.15-4 states that the Westbound HOV No

R-002-014 | Build Average peak period travel time would be 16 minutes; Exhibit 5.1-8 on page 5-11 depicts a travel time of 20 minutes). Please revise narrative as appropriate.

R-002-015 | Page 5-167: This summary table should fully identify project effects on transit as well as appropriate mitigation. For example, the transit section should include a cross-reference to improved transit travel times, including details of the differences between sub-options. This information would highlight project benefits for transit as well as the operational differences between the sub-options.

R-002-016 | In addition, please note that the Transportation Mitigation section of Table 5.16-1 (p. 5-167) is limited to design modifications that limit effects on traffic. Please indicate whether design modifications directed specifically at transit operations will also be provided. The Summary Table should also reference WSDOT's commitment to ongoing coordination with transit providers, as well as the need for additional bus service between UW and the Eastside that would result from the elimination of the Montlake Freeway Station. The summary that is included in the Executive Summary for the final SEIS should also be revised to include these additional details.

R-002-017 | **Chapter 6: Effects during Construction:** Pages 6-9 to 6-10: Please provide additional information in the Final SEIS regarding the transit effects that would result from the transit stop relocations and transit priority lane closures. For example, inform readers how many routes would be relocated to NE Pacific Place. Provide details on the scope of the expected transit delays referenced on page 6-9. The text should note that the relocation of the transit stops described in this section could result in longer walking distances for transit users, depending on their starting locations and/or destinations, and that the transit and traffic delays would increase transit travel times. This discussion could cross-reference the traffic discussion that is provided earlier in this chapter. The effects on traffic are described in terms of LOS for affected intersections. Can information in terms of time delays also be provided? This information would be more familiar to readers seeking to understand traffic and transit effects.

R-002-018 | Pages 6-10 to 6-11. Please inform readers that point-to-point travel times for some transit users could increase as a result of the closure of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station. This increase could stem from the need to transfer between routes, the reduced frequency of service, and possible increased walking distances.

R-002-019 | Page 6-15. This section describes future coordination with transit service providers largely in the context of the contractor's Traffic Management Plan. Please reiterate in the introductory section WSDOT's continuing commitment to coordinating with transit service providers to identify and address project effects on transit and transit users. This commitment is stated in table 6.16-1.

R-002-020 | Page 6-113. Table 6.16-1 (Summary Comparison of Construction Effects of 6-Lane Alternative Options) should include summary information regarding the transit effects associated with the closures and relocations that are identified (for example, longer transit travel times due to project-related congestion; longer walking distances for some users accessing transit; reduced SR 520 transit service options; and potential increased transit travel times for some transit users).

R-002-021 | Page 6-129. As discussed above, the discussion of the Phased Implementation Scenario should address potential effects on an operational UW Light Rail Station, if construction would occur after the Station's opening in 2016.

Chapter 7: Indirect and Cumulative Effects

R-002-022 | Page 7-17. As discussed above, ST2 project components, approved by voters in 2008, should be included in chapter 5 transportation effects analysis.

R-002-023 | Page 7-18. Please clarify for the reader that transit demand with the project would increase an *additional* 14 percent over the No Build Alternative by 2030 and explain why. Further, rather than stating that demand for light rail will enable expansion of the Sound Transit light rail line to Lynnwood (a component of ST2), please state

R-002-023

how the project will affect demand for this service. Finally, p. 7-19 states that the East Link Light Rail project as well as other improvements would mitigate potential increases in traffic on SR 522 and I-90 resulting from the proposed tolling of SR 520. The fact that these projects could change the SR 520 project effects illustrates why they should be included in the chapter 5 effects analysis, rather than discussed in terms of mitigation in this chapter.

R-002-024

Executive Summary: Please expand the discussion of operational and construction-related transit effects and mitigation to include more detailed information described above. The Executive Summary tables should also include a qualitative discussion of the Phased Implementation Scenario and how it would change the effects analyses provided.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss Sound Transit's comments. I can be reached by phone at 206-398-5070 and by email at greg.walker@soundtransit.org.

Sincerely,



Gregory A. Walker, AICP
Director
Planning and Development

Cc Perry Weinberg, Director, Environment and Sustainability
James Irish, Deputy Director, Environment and Sustainability
Ron Endlich, Manager, Project Support/3rd Party Agreements and Permits
Andrea Tull, Senior Transportation Planner, Planning and Development
Mike Bergman, Program Manager, Transportation Services
Tracy Reed, Project Manager, University Link
Steve Kennedy, Senior Environmental Planner, Environment and Sustainability
Kent Hale, Senior Environmental Planner, Environment and Sustainability
Julie Meredith, SR 520 Program Director, WSDOT



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April 15, 2010

Sent Via E-Mail to: SR520Bridge_SDEIS@wsdot.wa.gov

Washington State Department of Transportation
Jenifer Young, Environmental Manager
SR 520 Program Office
600 Stewart St., Suite 520
Seattle WA 98101

**Subject: SR-520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project
Supplemental Draft EIS**

Dear Ms. Young:

R-003-001 Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SR-520 Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). Puget Sound Energy (PSE) believes WSDOT is legally obligated to ensure that PSE's activities related to this project are adequately addressed in the NEPA/SEPA processes. While we do not think it is prudent to suggest specific deficiencies in the SDEIS, we would like to bring the following to your attention for incorporation by reference into the SDEIS and/or future SEPA/NEPA decision(s):

- R-003-002 1. In Exhibit 2 of the Agency Coordination and Public Involvement Discipline Report under "Federal, State, and Local Agencies and Tribes involved in the SR-520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project" it lists several cooperating agencies that about the project and notes that the cooperating agencies do not have "Regulatory Authority". Many of PSE's relocation activities required by WSDOT's proposed improvements will require permits from these cooperating agencies.
- R-003-003 2. PSE requests inclusion in the Regulatory Agency Coordination Process and Technical Working Groups forums.
- R-003-004 3. WSDOT will need to accommodate multiple utilities crossings which may be located above or below ground as well as through conduit in the lids
- R-003-005 4. PSE will require compensation for work that is not expressly incorporated into the existing Franchise Agreements between PSE and WSDOT.
- R-003-006 5. On page 37 of Chapter 6 it states: "WSDOT will notify service providers of construction schedules, street closures, and utility interruptions in advance." PSE is highly regulated and has an obligation to provide safe reliable electric and gas service to our customers. WSDOT will need to coordinate with PSE in advance of requested interruptions. PSE will provide best efforts to accommodate the WSDOT's needs but will not be held liable for claims if we are unable to fulfill specific outage requests.

R-003-006 The proposed WSDOT improvements will necessitate relocation of PSE gas and electric facilities both within WSDOT's proposed construction footprint and outside WSDOT's proposed construction footprint. PSE maintains gas and electric systems both within and adjacent to the entire length of the SR-520 corridor. As such, any impacts to PSE facilities are considered direct impacts for any improvement to SR-520. As WSDOT continues to segment/phase/redesign SR-520 improvements, including the subject Supplemental to the 2006 DEIS, impacts to PSE facilities are required to be identified and mitigated.

R-003-007

As part of our ongoing coordination efforts with WSDOT, PSE identified probable adverse impacts to its gas and electric facilities for the SR-520, Medina to SR-202: Eastside Transit and HOV Project and provided a synopsis of anticipated relocation efforts that would be required to WSDOT on October 30, 2009. Subsequent coordination efforts were documented in a letter to WSDOT dated April 15, 2010, emphasizing PSE's need to utilize "Fish Passage A" as a permanent crossing to mitigate disruptions to our customers. The letter also included a narrative describing our anticipated construction activities as well as detailed construction plans.

The purpose of our correspondence was PSE's request to be included within the project description portion of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and an understanding that required PSE activity would therefore be evaluated in a single environmental document as required by WAC. We also requested that our narrative and plans be included in WSDOT's RFP for the Design-Build team. A description of PSE's required involvement in WSDOT'S project was not included in the EA per our request and it is not included in the subject SDEIS. PSE continues to request inclusion within the project description portion of EA's, EIS's, and other NEPA/SEPA documentation

R-003-008

Federal regulations (40 CFR 1502.16, 1508.7, 1508.8) require that indirect and cumulative effects be considered in an EIS. PSE anticipates that WSDOT will adopt the subject SDEIS and 2006 DEIS pursuant to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11-610. The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires the consideration of all direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts including both short and long term impacts (Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11-060). SEPA requires that utility relocation resulting from this project be included otherwise "(i) it would segment and avoid present consideration of proposals and their impacts that are required to be evaluated in a single environmental document." WAC 197-11-060(5)(d)(iii).

R-003-009

It is PSE's understanding that WSDOT will contract with a Design-Build team to complete the design and construction in the near future. It is also PSE's understanding that the Design-Build team could deviate from the conceptual plans upon approval by WSDOT. In order to accurately identify all gas and electric conflicts and minimize environmental impacts associated with relocation, PSE must be included in all design plan change discussions throughout the project as well as development of construction plans, schedules and sequencing. Proactively engaging PSE in these activities will improve WSDOT's ability (as it relates to PSE's utilities) to avoid construction delays, contractor claims, and eliminate disruption to the gas and electric service of surrounding communities.

Finally, we expect that WSDOT will fully support PSE, as needed, in discussions with local jurisdictions regarding necessary permits, authorizations, etc., resulting from utility relocation required by this project along with any future NEPA or SEPA processes.

We look forward to working with WSDOT as a stakeholder and impacted party throughout all the development phases of this project. Please feel free to contact me at (425) 462-3351 or angela.wingate@pse.com if you should have any questions.

Sincerely,



Angela Wingate
Municipal Liaison Manager

Cc: Karl Volkie, PSE
Chris Listfeld, PSE
Lorna Luebbe, PSE