

From: Roger Kuykendall [mailto:rkuykendall@g-o.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2010 8:25 AM
To: SR 520 Bridge SDEIS
Subject: Comments on SR520 Bridge

I-026-001

I moved to the Seattle area in 1986 and for the last 24 years have experienced the constant construction on Interstate 405, with bridges and travel lanes being ripped apart and widened 5-6 feet, and then ripped apart again to add another 8-10 feet, then ripped apart again to move the lanes over, or to accommodate a new off ramp, or bus lane/pullout. I do not understand why the state cannot plan for future traffic demands, and construct the infrastructure necessary to accommodate that growth in an organized, cost-effective manner. Frankly, it's embarrassing.

Regarding the new SR 520 Bridge project, I have no objections to tolls, but please construct a bridge, roadway, and access ramps for the FUTURE needs of the traveling public. Two general purpose lanes and one bus lane, with options for a bike lane and/or light rail is not enough capacity for the year 2060. No matter how much social engineering you try to force, Americans love driving their cars, especially with bus routes being more expensive, inconvenient, and time consuming than driving my own car. Unless/until limited access highways are constructed to go around Lake Washington, or another bridge is added, the bridges across the Lake need to be constructed with the next 50 years of growth considered. The way the county has developed over the last 40 years makes having a high density of growth on the eastside near impossible, so it should be expected that growth will continue to spread east, requiring a higher capacity bridge (and connecting roads) – 2 lanes is not enough!

I-026-002

As for the people living at either bridge ends, and their complaints about the noise and pollution – they knew this was coming, so they accepted any “loss” of property value or quality of life when they purchased their property. Noise and pollution can be easily mitigated. The state has been discussing the bridge replacement at least since I arrived in the area in 1986, so certainly anyone who has purchased property since then did it knowing that one day the bridge would be expanded/replaced. The same growth and “progress” that has made them fortunate enough to purchase waterfront property is what requires the bridge to be expanded, so in a sense they have caused the bridge to be replaced, while benefiting from the wealth they obtained during the economic growth in the area. They have enjoyed living next to the lake and SR 520 corridor since the bridge was constructed. Without the bridge (enabling them to work and play in Seattle), the lake front property would not be as desirable. In fact, since all of the waterfront property has been developed, its value has been reduced by the fact that so many homes are crowded on the shores – their property values and quality of life have been negatively affected more by their neighbors than any bridge could ever cause. We all grow together – there are no special privileges just because you have money and live next to a major traffic corridor. What alternative solutions have they brought to the table?

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I-026-001

As described in Chapter 1 of the SDEIS and in the Range of Alternatives and Options Evaluated Report (Attachment 8 to the SDEIS), an extensive range of alternatives has been evaluated for this project.

Alternative corridors, technologies (e.g. tubes and tunnels), and travel modes, as well as many design variations within the existing corridor, were evaluated as part of the Trans-Lake Washington Study and again after the initiation of NEPA review in 2000. Chapter 2 of the Final EIS provides additional information on how alternatives were developed and evaluated, and why some solutions were determined not to be reasonable alternatives.

An 8-lane alternative was among the original SR 520 roadway configurations advanced by the Trans-lake Washington Study Committee in 1999 for further study, and WSDOT evaluated an 8-lane alternative several times from 2002 to 2005 during the planning and development phases of the Draft EIS. An 8-lane alternative was dropped from further evaluation because choke points at the I-5 and I-405 interchanges and traffic volumes in those corridors would limit how many people could move through the SR 520 corridor and how fast they could travel; it would carry about the same number of people as the 6-lane Alternative, but many more of them would be in single-occupant vehicles, which is contrary to regional and local policies encouraging greater use of transit and HOVs; and substantial rebuilding of portions of I-5 and I-405 would be needed to make the 8-lane Alternative work. Such rebuilding would likely affect numerous residential and commercial buildings in downtown Seattle, and would also require reconstruction of the SR 520/I-405 interchange. See Attachment 8 of the SDEIS for further discussion.

In Washington state, mandated growth management planning under the Growth Management Act ensures that growth and development are managed through comprehensive planning at local and regional levels, and transportation projects must be compatible with this planning. WSDOT transportation improvement projects are designed to be

consistent with community growth targets. The proposed 6-lane alternative is consistent with regional land use and transportation plans. See Section 5.2 in the SDEIS and Final EIS for further discussion.

I-026-002

Comment noted.