I-081-001

MR. BADER: I'm Jorgen Bader. I was on the mediation panel, representing the University District. I have just delivered to you comments that I have prepared on the supplemental draft Environmental Impact Statement. We are for A-Plus without the Arboretum ramps. We support the findings of the legislative work group except for the Arboretum ramps, the simple A proposal.

And under A, there will be less traffic going through the Arboretum than we have now. It is the only option that does that. All of the other options considered in mediation increase traffic volumes through the Arboretum; this one cuts them.

I-081-002

We also need a corridor-management agreement so that we have land-use planning to favor transit. We have recommended for further

I-081-003

study that we prepare and really study whether you can, in fact, find replacement land for park land taken. I don't think it can be done, except for Option A without the Arboretum ramps.

I-081-004

I've also recommended that you study the effect on the biota, which is at the very bottom of the food chain. That hasn't been done.

I-081-005

I think the EIS should set forth what you have done on the research, explain why rail cannot be put into the transit at the moment and why it's not feasible to plan to put rail stops on there or to have the lanes the bus stop in be the travel lanes. Those are things that were recommended by the Mayor, and they deserve some discussion to move the debate along.

I-081-006

Finally, the SDEIS should be more effective. It tends to soften the horrendous flaws caused by A, and it tones down the many advantages

I-081-001

The Preferred Alternative would not include construction of any new ramps in the Arboretum. The Preferred Alternative would reduce effects on the Arboretum, compared to No Build Alternative, by physically removing the existing Lake Washington Boulevard eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp and the R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps. Access to Lake Washington Boulevard by westbound SR 520 traffic would be moved to a new intersection located on the Montlake Boulevard lid at 24th Avenue East. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for additional information. The result of this and other features of the Preferred Alternative is a reduction in trip volumes on Lake Washington Boulevard in the Arboretum compared the No Build Alternative. Under the Preferred Alternative in 2030, a.m. peak hour volumes on Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum would be 1,330 vehicles per hour with the Preferred Alternative, compared to 1,950 vehicles per hour with the No Build Alternative. P.m. peak hour volumes would be 1,410 vehicles per hour compared to 1,730 with the No Build Alternative. See the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) for further discussion of trip volumes.

I-081-002

In early 2010, the Washington State Legislature passed and Governor Gregoire signed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392. ESSB 6392 directed WSDOT to work with regional agencies to refine components of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina preferred alternative, including design refinements and transit connections, and transit planning and financing. WSDOT led a workgroup process in collaboration with the City of Seattle, King County, the University of Washington and Sound Transit. WSDOT's approach to managing freeway corridors are based on existing strategies for reducing collisions and congestion on urban freeways. These strategies were presented to the ESSB 6392 Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Technical Coordination Team (TCT) for discussion. The TCT considered

I-081-006

(sic) of A and the effects that A presents to the neighborhoods. I think that you've got to have a full discussion so that the decision-makers can make an honest and objective finding and decision.

Thank you.

(End of comment.)

WSDOT's strategies and developed final recommendations for managing traffic in the new SR 520 corridor. These strategies included continuous HOV lanes from I-5 to SR 202, variable tolling, continued use of traffic management applications such as ramp meters, variable speed limits, and lane control, as well as companion incident response services and enforcement. The final recommendations will result in a corridor that is well positioned to meet the established HOV lane performance standards and corridor performance expectations expressed by the legislature and Seattle City Council. The Corridor Management Plan Technical White Paper is available at: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/0346C8DC-2063-4E6F-8B6D-902EB05C37EE/0/CorridorManagementPlan.pdf.

I-081-003

The Preferred Alternative would remove the Lake Washington Boulevard eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp and the R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps. Through commitments outlined in the Arboretum Mitigation Plan (Attachment 9 of the Final EIS), WSDOT would also construct improvements and restoration of the peninsula as part of ramp removal.

The Preferred Alternative is similar to Option A, but with a number of design refinements that reduce the amount of recreational property affected by the project, compared to all options evaluated in the SDEIS. Through the project's Section 4(f) process, WSDOT has identified appropriate mitigation for its use of recreational facilities in the project area. The mitigation measures, agreed upon by WSDOT and the agencies with jurisdiction over the resources, are outlined in the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation (Chapter 9 of the Final EIS).

Additionally, the purchase and/or development of the Section 6(f) replacement site would result in a net gain of 1.3 acres of Section 6(f) recreational space in the Seattle Area.

I-081-004

WSDOT followed accepted methodology to assess the effects of the project on the ecology of the project area.

I-081-005

Section 2.4 in the Final EIS explains why initial implementation of light rail transit on SR 520 is not planned. The decision to locate Sound Transit's initial east-west light rail transit corridor on I-90 rather than SR 520 has been made through extensive regional deliberation (see Table 2-2 of the Final EIS). However, while WSDOT believed that the design of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project already accommodated potential future light rail, the agency worked with the City of Seattle and Sound Transit to identify changes that would enhance the corridor's rail compatibility. The Preferred Alternative reflects these design changes and allows for two potential future rail options. These options allow for connection to the University Link station at Husky Stadium. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for further discussion. Please also see the responses to comments from the City of Seattle Mayor's Office, in Item L-007, regarding high capacity transit.

It is not clear what the comment is referring to regarding having the "lanes the bus stop in be the travel lanes." However, the State and transit agencies coordinate on a regular basis to determine the best design for the freeway transit station stops to ensure safety for transit patrons and people driving on the highway. The basis for the design comes from the State design guidelines, and there are no "in lane" stop designs for highways in the State guidelines. Bus stops cannot be located in the SR 520 travel lanes for safety and operational reasons. Through the ESSB 6392 design refinements and transit connections workgroup, WSDOT worked with the City of Seattle and other stakeholders to refine the design of the project in the Montlake area, including a larger lid, relocated bus stops, and refined pedestrian connections. The Montlake Freeway Transit Station would be removed to minimize the width of the freeway through the Montlake area, which could be reduced by up to 40

feet with removal of the station. Please see Attachment 8 to the SDEIS, Range of Alternatives and Options Evaluated, for a discussion of how and why removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit stops was considered. Although the Preferred Alternative removes the Montlake Freeway Transit Station, transit connectivity would be improved on the Montlake lid with additional bus stops and enhanced access between neighborhoods and to the Eastside. Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) provides updated information regarding the effects of removing the Montlake Freeway Transit Station, and the subsequent transit facilities, rider connections, and bus stops on the Montlake lid.

I-081-006

Analyses presented in the SDEIS used accepted methodology based on WSDOT and FHWA guidance, as well as other guidance where applicable. The discipline reports describe the methodologies as well as policies and regulations applicable to the specific resource. Specific topics regarding the characterization of the SDEIS documentation and analysis are addressed in the responses to subsequent comments.