

I-089-001

MR. GOULD: Good evening. My name is Tim Gould. I appreciate the chance to speak here this evening. I'd just like to start off by saying that the bridge that you've designed thus far, when you consider the budget is really only enough to put in a floating bridge and nothing that approaches it, I think it's really a good -- that should be a good wake-up call to really think about how we build this structure corridor to serve a long-term need.

There's all this talk of needing to get started right away, and we don't really have the money to complete the entire project. And as far as the project is concerned, I just echo the comments that others have made this evening, that we really need to design this in a way that functions for the long term, especially for transit.

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And that's why I favor the bridge design that's supposed to be adding two lanes, two transit: bus rapid transit initially, light rail when you can get that funded to put on there.

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It's also very critical to include a Flyer stop at Montlake Boulevard instead of eliminating that, which all the various options call for. That is a big mistake if that goes away and we don't have that to add to transit connectivity.

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In addition, the Arboretum ramps ought to be taken out of any design that goes forward. That was a mistake from 45, 50 years ago. We have an opportunity now to correct that mistake. It will be a travesty if we don't do that.

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Also, I would just like to finally thank WSDOT for having extended the comment period on the EIS. This is a very important project, and

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The SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would complete the HOV lane system in the corridor, improving reliability and efficiency for transit and carpools, but would not add general-purpose lanes. Thus the project is aligned with improving the overall efficiency of the transportation system by creating incentives for people to choose an alternative to driving alone. The SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would result in immediate benefits for transit speed and reliability in the corridor by providing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes across the floating bridge and better HOV connections at the Montlake and I-5 interchanges. The HOV lanes would allow for the near-term implementation of bus rapid transit, as called for in the SR 520 High-Capacity Transit Plan. Section 2.4 of the Final EIS provides further discussion of how the project can accommodate high capacity transit.

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Comment noted.

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The Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops were removed in all of the design options considered in the SDEIS, based on a decision making process that was part of Westside mediation. The mediation process was mandated by Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6099 and is described on pages 1-17 through 1-19 of the SDEIS. The mediation workgroup consisted of members from adjacent neighborhoods, transit agencies, jurisdictions, and State agencies. Removing the Montlake Freeway Transit Station would minimize the width of the freeway through the Montlake area, reducing the width by up to 40 feet compared to keeping the station. The mediation workgroup did not recommend any design options that included the Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops. See Attachment 8 to the SDEIS, Range of Alternatives and Options Evaluated, for further discussion of how and why removal of the stops was considered.

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we should study it carefully and get it right before we go forward.

Thank you.

(End of comment.)

The Preferred Alternative includes removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops; however, it also includes a modified Montlake Boulevard interchange and lid. Modifications include a full lid from Montlake Boulevard to the Lake Washington shoreline, and bus stops on the lid for both eastbound and westbound buses (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative). The intent is to provide greater pedestrian amenity in the central part of the Montlake neighborhood while simultaneously providing a better location and environment for the regional bus stops incorporated in the transit/HOV direct access ramps (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS). At the option of the transit agencies, SR 520 buses will be able to exit at the Montlake interchange during the off-peak periods to service passengers to/from the Montlake lid transit stop. University Link light-rail service, expected to be operational in 2016, will accommodate some of the trips that now use the bus stops. Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) provides further discussion of expected transit operations with the Preferred Alternative, including expected transit travel times, rider connections, and how future transit would incorporate service currently provided at the stops.

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Since publication of the SDEIS, WSDOT has identified a Preferred Alternative with a westbound off-ramp to 24th Avenue E instead of a flyover ramp to Lake Washington Boulevard. As shown in Exhibits 2-13 and 2-14 of the Final EIS, the westbound off-ramp will travel across the northern edge of a modified lid to 24th Avenue E. At this intersection, drivers can turn left to access Lake Washington Boulevard, or continue on to Montlake Boulevard for right-turn only movements. The modifications included in the Preferred Alternative are intended to minimize impacts to the Arboretum in terms of vehicle volumes and speeds, access for visitors, and the overall environment of the park.

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Comment noted.