I-090-001

MR. KOSZYK: Hello. My name is Eric Koszyk, Capitol Hill, and I'm just speaking out against the A-Plus option tonight.

I-090-002

Basically, this bridge is going to last the next 50 to 75 years. We need to build a bridge that meets the goals in 50 years, not in just a decade or so. And we need to realize that the future is not going to be as car-centered as it is today, due to the price of gas increasing.

Plus, we need to meet our state's and our nation's global-warming goals, and this bridge would not do that. We are just basically building a bridge for the 1950s as opposed to the 2050s, which is what we need to focus on today.

You can't just say that, later on, we'll add light-rail lanes because, at that point, the lanes are already devoted to cars, and then people will fight those as well. So, you know, we need to do it now, not in 10, 20, or 30 years.

I-090-003

So we need to keep the bridge with only six lanes with the maximum, and two lanes should be devoted to barrier-separated bus rapid transit now and being light-rail ready in the future. So bus rapid transit now, light-rail ready in the future.

I-090-004

And also, we need to keep the Montlake transit stop, and we also need to get rid of the Arboretum ramps, because the Arboretum is a state treasure and a national treasure, and it must be kept in its present form.

And thank you very much. Thank you.

(End of comment.)

I-090-001

Comment noted.

I-090-002

The SR 520 project would complete the HOV lane system in the corridor and add a bicycle/pedestrian lane to the corridor. The project would not add general-purpose lanes. The 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 (see Section 5.1 of both the SDEIS and Final EIS). Because the project would improve reliability and efficiency for transit and carpools, it would create incentives for people to choose an alternative to driving alone.

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). The HOV lanes that are part of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would allow for the near-term implementation of bus rapid transit, as called for in the SR 520 High-Capacity Transit Plan. The SR 520 High-Capacity Transit Plan, which was endorsed in 2008 by the state, King County Metro Transit, and Sound Transit, found that until at least 2030, demand for transit in the 520 corridor could be satisfied by bus rapid transit that runs in HOV/transit lanes—complementing Sound Transit's East Link on I-90.

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 (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS). Under the SR 520

High Capacity Transit Plan, Sound Transit would study the demand and necessity of light rail later in this decade. For more information, please see the SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/Library/technical.htm.

The addition of a dedicated lane for transit and HOV, along with the reduction in general-purpose demand achieved by tolling, would provide benefits regarding greenhouse gas emissions. As discussed in Section 5.9 of the Final EIS, the Preferred Alternative would result in a 4 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the project area compared to the No Build Alternative, with a corresponding 4 percent reduction in annual fuel consumption. The project area includes the following freeway segments and associated ramps and interchanges: SR 520 between I-5 in Seattle and SR 202 in Redmond; I-5 in Seattle between NE 45th Street and south of the I-90 collector-distributor north connection to the mainline; and I-405 between NE 70th Street in Kirkland and NE 4th Street in Bellevue. The reduction in VMT results in a reduction of approximately 10 percent in GHG emissions compared to the No Build Alternative, which is consistent with state legislation calling for such reductions and would contribute to other regional and national reduction efforts. It should be noted that this estimate does not take into account the estimated 60 percent increase in transit ridership that would be achieved if bus rapid transit is implemented in the corridor as part of the SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan.

I-090-003

See the response to Comment I-090-003 regarding how the project can accommodate potential future light rail.

Sound Transit and King County Metro have incorporated bus rapid transit (BRT) level bus service on the SR 520 corridor today, but need to have the reliability factor of the completed HOV lane to truly call the system BRT. The transit agencies have not identified a need for barrier

separation and the additional width that comes with the barrier and shoulders to run an effective BRT system.

I-090-004

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. The Preferred Alternative would not include construction of any new ramps in the Arboretum. Since the SDEIS was published, WSDOT and FHWA have developed a Preferred Alternative, which includes modifications to the Montlake Boulevard interchange and lid that would better accommodate transit. With implementation of the Preferred Alternative, bus stops on the lid would accommodate both eastbound and westbound buses, replacing the current Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops for buses traveling between the University District and the Eastside. The Montlake lid stop would also function as a flyer stop during the off-peak periods so that passengers could access the SR 520 buses traveling between the eastside and downtown Seattle.