



## SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Supplemental Draft EIS Comment Form

Please use this form to share your comments on the content provided in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement document. WSDOT will consider all comments received between Jan. 22 and April 15, 2010 in making its final decision in the environmental review process. Thank you for your comments.

You can provide comments using one of the following methods:

- Complete this form.
- Mail your comments to Jenifer Young, SDEIS Environmental Manager, Washington State Department of Transportation, 600 Stewart Street, Suite 520, Seattle, WA 98101.
- E-mail your comments to SR520Bridge\_SDEIS@wsdot.wa.gov.
- Speak to a court reporter at an environmental hearing scheduled for 5 – 7 p.m., Feb. 23, at Lake Union Park Naval Reserve Building, 860 Terry Ave. N., Seattle.

1. **Name** Nate Cole-Daum  
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7. Do you have any comments on the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

- I-143-001** | A highway through a park reflects the worst of the past thinking about public infrastructure. While today we have the sensitivity, we don't have the federal largess that left us the legacy of high-impact, low-value infrastructure like 520.
- I-143-002** | Today, we're faced with a choice, whether to double down on that way of thinking and funnel more cars into Seattle, wasting the opportunity to pave the way for a future of better mobility for all at a significantly reduced impact to the environment.
- I-143-003** | Light rail alignments conjoined with freeways are usually the lowest value form of rail transit, but 520 is different in that it is a small footprint highway through a challenging urban environment of high value and ecologically sensitive real estate. That is why I believe the footprint of a new 520 must absolutely be held at six lanes, with two dedicated to light rail or some other form of fixed-guideway transit. This type of rapid transit offers the best cost-per user ratio, results in greater economic development and reflects our best values with regard to the environment.
- I-143-003** | I also urge you to keep the transit stops along SR 520 at Montlake Blvd., ensure we do not repeat the mistake of ramps connecting SR 520 to/from Lake Washington Blvd. in the Arboretum; and take care to develop context-sensitive designs for 520 through west side landing which includes Arboretum north wetlands.

These comments will become part of the public record for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Personal information is voluntary and will become part of the public record if provided. The Washington State Department of Transportation is a public agency and is subject to the State of Washington's Public Records Act (RCW 42.56). Therefore, comments may be made available to anyone requesting them for non-commercial purposes.

## I-143-001

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 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). The project would also add a bicycle/pedestrian lane to the corridor and provide other improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS and Chapter 7 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report in Attachment 7 to the Final EIS).

The project is a replacement of an existing highway, not addition of a new highway. In response to public and agency comments, the Preferred Alternative includes a number of design refinements that address public and agency comments regarding parks. These refinements include a considerably expanded and enhanced Montlake lid, and a number of noise reduction strategies which would improvement noise levels compared to both existing and no build conditions. 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. In accordance with Engrossed Senate Substitute Bill (ESSB) 6392, WSDOT worked with the University of Washington, City of Seattle, and Arboretum Botanical Garden Committee to identify appropriate mitigation for the project effects on the Arboretum. This 8-month coordination effort resulted in the

Arboretum Mitigation Plan, which is included in Attachment 9 of the Final EIS. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative, and Chapter 5 of the Final EIS for a description of the project's permanent effects, and how it would avoid, minimize, and mitigate negative effects.

#### **I-143-002**

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. At the same time, the plan acknowledges that after 2030 significant increases in cross-lake travel may warrant dedicated high capacity transit facilities in both I-90 and SR 520. Therefore, the new SR 520 bridge and associated interchanges will be built in a way that allows the structure to accommodate a two-way light rail line or busway at a future date.

Section 2.4 in the Final EIS explains why initial implementation of light rail transit on SR 520 is not planned. However, potential future light rail could be accommodated either by converting the HOV lanes for rail use or by adding light-rail only lanes. Both approaches would require the addition of supplemental floating bridge pontoons to support the additional weight of light rail, should the regional decision to add rail be made and funded. Such a decision would need to be planned and programmed by regional land use and transit agencies, funded by a public vote, and evaluated in its own environmental analysis. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for further information.

#### **I-143-003**

With implementation of the Preferred Alternative, bus stops on the Montlake 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 has been enhanced and expanded compared to Option A. 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. University Link light-rail service, expected to be operational in 2016, will accommodate some of the trips that now use the bus stops. See Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report for an updated assessment of how removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station would affect transit service, rider travel times, and connections.

The Preferred Alternative would physically remove 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. Additionally, WSDOT is working to create a context-sensitive bridge design throughout the west approach area. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative.