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RE: SDEIS COMMENT LETTER, **NOISE WALLS; PORTAGE BAY VIADUCT**
SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program FHWA-WA-EIS-06-02-DS

O-001-001

The following comments are being provided regarding the above referenced SDEIS. Our comments are primarily focused on our immediate neighborhood of South Portage Bay defined on the north and west by Highway 520, on the south by Delmar Drive and on the east by 15th Avenue and the newly developed south Portage Bay reclamation portion of the Montlake Park. This area forms a topographic "bowl focused on the 2,500 foot long Viaduct. There are over 60 single family residences and approximately 100 multi family units in this area that would achieve a 7-dba reduction from noise wall mitigation. Approximately 100 of these units are "first row" properties, most of which were developed prior to Highway 520. In addition, the Queen City Yacht Club and Seattle Yacht club which border the viaduct on the northwest near the bridge ends predated viaduct construction.

This letter is a request for noise walls on the Portage Bay Viaduct and to express concern about the vagueness in the SDEIS about the provision of noise walls on the Portage Bay Viaduct.

This letter is a formal request that noise walls be included in the 520 project on the Portage Bay viaduct. Noise walls should be provided for the following reasons:

- Exhibits in the SDEIS show a dramatic positive benefit from noise walls.
- This is a Type 1 project for which noise walls appear to meet the "reasonable and feasible" criteria consistent with WSDOT policy, implemented in accordance with 23 CFR part 772.
- Noise modeling in the SDEIS shows that noise walls meet all FHWA and WSDOT requirements for avoidance and minimization of negative effects of the 520 viaduct.
- **Noise will exceed threshold criteria without walls and will be reduced by walls to a level that meets WSDOT criteria for a decision to provide walls.** Modeling done by WSDOT shows a greater than 10 decibel reduction from walls on all three of the properties my wife and I own and a greater than 7-dba reduction in the noise levels for the 160 residences in the South Portage Bay area

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The comments in this letter were also submitted by Carl Stixrood as part of Item I-037. Please see the responses to comments I-037-001 through I-037-005.

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described above. **Under these conditions the WSDOT is required by its policies to make every reasonable effort to achieve these reductions.**

- Review of the noise discipline report page 115-117 and modeling results (SDEIS page 5-106) indicates that **the following criteria for noise walls are met in the South Portage Bay area:**
  - Many receivers achieve a 10 DBA reduction
  - A 7-dba reduction appears to be achieved for over 160 single and multifamily residences north and west of Delmar Drive
  - Most of first row properties were developed prior to 520 construction
- As indicated on page 1-26 of the SDEIS "regardless of the preferences of mediation participants, they do not affect FHWA's and WSDOT's responsibility to identify and consider effective noise abatement measures under existing laws." **My wife and I agree with this statement that the mediation process does not affect WSDOT obligation to provide noise walls along the Portage Bay viaduct.**
- The recently designed and constructed South Portage Bay reclamation/interpretive area fronting the Viaduct and adjacent to Montlake Park is not discussed in the SDEIS. This passive park area was recently designed and constructed under the supervision of a noted Seattle/Bellevue area Landscape Architect in partnership with Seattle Parks and Seattle Green Partnership to provide public access and interpretation and reclaim shoreline wildlife habitat. The park development was funded by a grant from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, with contributions from Microsoft, Starbucks, King County Council, Seattle Department of Planning and Development (mitigation funds), Washington Native Plant Society, Montlake Community Council, Montlake Advisory Council, and private cash donations totaling over $15,000. Matching labor hours exceed 3,250 to date. Interpretive signing is being designed, installed and constructed under a grant from the Bullitt Foundation. The South Portage Bay wildlife reclamation project would benefit from a greater than 7 decibel reduction from noise walls. This area should be included in the cost analysis for noise walls on a residential equivalency basis.

Conclusion.

This project is needed to increase mobility and access and will bring increased growth, and thus a better economy, to our region. However, consider that roads have impacts and can destroy the goals we are trying to achieve as a region and a nation. By mitigating noise impacts of the Portage Bay viaduct portion of this project, WSDOT can contribute

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to strengthening a high density neighborhood that provides exceptional owned and rental housing, walk to work, education, recreation and shopping opportunities.

In summary, the viaduct portion of the 520 project, with proper noise mitigation can support a showcase neighborhood that achieves regional and national land use planning "smart growth" goals. Without noise walls on the Viaduct the 520 project will destroy an opportunity in the South Portage Bay neighborhood to achieve national security and health objectives.

Please include noise walls on the Portage Bay Viaduct.

Sincerely,

Leon T Preston

Anne V. Preston

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Date February 21 2010

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