Washington State Department of Transportation

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program

I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

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	Douglas S. Ramsay	**CommentDate:**	4/12/2010 6:37
2. E-mail	ramsay.doug@gmail.com	**Comment Source:**	Online Comment Form
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5. State:	WA		
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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-244-001

1) The increased volume of traffic coming from an expanded 520 onto local streets will make traffic that is already bad much worse. Since a large percentage of the 520 traffic exiting in Montlake will want to go to the University side of the Montlake bridge, a multiple exit ramp strategy from 520 must be devised that will distribute the traffic to where people want to go rather than to force them into bottlenecks on local streets. At high-volume periods, it can take 20-30 min to travel from 15th and Pacific to the entrance to 520 and even longer from University Village to 520. This ridiculous gridlock that will only get worse with the expanded 520 bridge!

I-244-002

2) A new 520 must include rapid mass transit (e.g., light rail, express buses) and it MUST connect them to the light rail station at Husky stadium. It is simply defies common sense to build two major transportation links so close to each other and then NOT connect them but instead expect passengers to walk between the two stations. This plan will create a major obstacle to the use of mass transit at a time when our society must re-engineer its environment in ways that encourage people to use mass transit.

I-244-003

If our state cannot come up with a modern, forward-thinking transportation solution for whatever reason (e.g., economy, special interest lobbying) then we should limit our spending and choose to refurbish / renovate the 520 bridge that we currently have by accepting its existing design and postpone any re-deign decisions until we have either the economic will and/ or shared vision to build the correct solution. This option must be presented and considered.

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-244-001

Today, the Montlake interchange area can be congested for several hours during the commute periods. In the future, without the project, this congestion is expected to worsen due to increases in population and employment and associated traffic. Increased congestion on SR 520 and I-5 will also lead to increased congestion on local streets within the SR 520 study area. With the Preferred Alternative, SR 520 mainline and ramp improvements will lead to improvements in traffic operations for both highway and local traffic during the peak hours. Improving traffic flow during the peak hours will also improve traffic flow in the hours leading up and following the most congested times. Please see the Final Transportation Discipline Report, Chapters 5 and 6 for a discussion of the effects of the No Build and Preferred Alternatives on freeway and local traffic volumes and operations.

I-244-002

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 (see Section 5.1 of the SDEIS and Final EIS). 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. 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 HCT 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.

Although WSDOT believed that the design had already achieved this goal, it continued to work 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. As discussed in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS, the Preferred Alternative is compatible with two future rail options:

- Option 1: Convert the HOV/transit lanes to light rail. This approach would accommodate light rail by converting the HOV lanes to exclusive rail use. Trains would use the direct-access ramps at Montlake Boulevard to exit, or they could use a 40-foot gap between the northbound and southbound lanes of the west approach to make a more direct connection to the University Link station at Husky Stadium.
- Option 2: Add light-rail-only lanes. This approach could provide several connections—via a high bridge, a drawbridge, or a tunnel, as suggested in the Nelson/Nygaard report—to the University Link station.

Section 2.4 of the Final EIS provides further discussion of how the project can accommodate high capacity transit.There has been extensive coordination between the State, Sound Transit, and King County Metro Transit in identification of the Preferred Alternative for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project regarding high capacity transit in the new SR 520 corridor. The coordination process began in 2007 with evaluation of transit needs on the SR 520 corridor and in the Montlake area and consideration of how high capacity transit on SR 520 would intersection with the University Link light rail line. Results from that coordination process can be found in the 2008 SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan. The second coordination effort undertaken to discuss transit needs in the Montlake area was conducted in accordance with the requirements of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392. In accordance with the requirements of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392, WSDOT has worked collaboratively with Sound Transit, King County Metro

Transit, the City of Seattle, The University of Washington, and other stakeholders to develop design refinements for transit connections in the Montlake area.

The Montlake Multimodal Center, which was collaboratively planned as part of the 2008 High Capacity Transit Plan under ESSB 6099, will serve as a major transfer point between the University Link rail station, the proposed SR 520 bus rapid transit lines, and local bus service. The Preferred Alternative also responds to the concern expressed in the comment regarding transit connections in the Montlake area. The ESSB 6392 transit connections and design refinements workgroup considered bus stop locations and pedestrian access among other things. Its recommendations are described in the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report (Attachment 16 to the Final EIS). The SR 520, I-5 to Medina project will provide HOV lanes continuous on Montlake Boulevard between SR 520 and the Montlake Triangle. The workgroup recommended that SR 520 buses utilize a bus stop on Pacific Street but in a location closer to the Husky Stadium station than the existing stop. The group also concluded that stops located within the Stadium station could be constructed in the future if there is sufficient need. Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) provides updated information regarding the Montlake Multimodal Center and the effects of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project on transit connections in the Montlake area. The workgroup's white paper on Transit Connections: Bus Stop Locations can be found at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/6392workgroup.htm.

I-244-003

Comment noted.