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STATE OF WASHINGTON
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

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April 14, 2010

Ms. Jenifer Young, Environmental Manager
SR 520 Project Office
600 Steward Street, Suite 520
Seattle, WA 98101

Re: Comments on the SR520 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Ms. Young:

S-003-001

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) has reviewed the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the SR 520 I-5 to Medina project and offers the following comments for your consideration. As the delegated authority for implementation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in Washington State, RCO has reviewed the document for compliance with LWCF program requirements for conversion of 6(f) protected park land. Portions of the Arboretum Park are protected park under Section 6(f) of the LWCF Act through a grant awarded to the City of Seattle and University of Washington.

RCO concurs with comments submitted by the National Park Service (NPS) on the SDEIS. Since specific information regarding the Arboretum Park conversion and replacement are not yet available, a parallel environmental review process is needed in order to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review requirements for the LWCF program. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) can complete the FEIS for the SR 520 project independently of the LWCF environmental review and utilize the FEIS as reference documentation. The NPS will make its own NEPA determination for the LWCF action independent from the determination made by the Federal Highways Administration for the SR 520 project.

The LWCF environmental review must include the following:

- A description of the proposed replacement property with specific attention to the public outdoor recreation resources and opportunities it will provide.
- A detailed proposed 6(f) park boundary map for the proposed replacement property.
- A description of other approvals, permits, and other factors needed to implement acquisition and development of the proposed replacement park with a timetable for completion.
- A description of the 6(f) protected park area to be converted at the Arboretum Park including outdoor recreational facilities and opportunities.
- A description of the remaining 6(f) protected park area at the Arboretum Park and the remaining outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities.

Additional guidance on the content of the NEPA documentation required for the LWCF program can be found in the *Land and Water Conservation Fund and State Assistance Program Manual*.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board • Salmon Recovery Funding Board • Washington Biodiversity Council
Washington Invasive Species Council • Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health
Governor's Salmon Recovery Office



S-003-001

In coordination with the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), and the National Park Service (NPS), WSDOT developed a Section 6(f) Environmental Evaluation to analyze the conversion of Section 6(f) resources by the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project. WSDOT has determined that the affected Section 6(f) property is a recreational trail complex that includes two named trails, as well as the two parks along Montlake Cut and Union Bay where the trails are located. These are Ship Canal Waterside Trail and the Arboretum Waterfront Trail, located in East Montlake Park and Washington Park Arboretum. The Final Section 6(f) Environmental Evaluation provides information on the effects of using this Section 6(f) resource, and the effects to the replacement site, at a level that is consistent with the RCO and NPS requirements for environmental evaluation, while simultaneously satisfying NEPA requirements. The environmental evaluation addresses the points outlined in your April 14, 2010 comment letter. The findings from the Final Section 6(f) Environmental Evaluation are presented in Chapter 10 of the Final EIS.

The final Section 6(f) Environmental Evaluation will be included as part of the grantee agencies' (University of Washington and City of Seattle) application to the RCO and NPS, in which they request approval of the conversion of Section 6(f) property and replacement with the Bryant Building site, which is further described in the document. The grantees are expected to submit this application to RCO after FHWA issues its Record of Decision for the project.

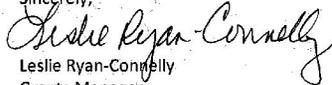
As a guide, WSDOT has entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Seattle and the University of Washington to identify Section 6(f) property conversion and replacement process commitments through RCO and NPS approval. The Memorandum of Understanding will stand through development of individual Memorandum of Agreements with the University of Washington and the City of Seattle to formalize property

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S-003-001 The City of Seattle and the University of Washington are the project sponsors of the LWCF grant at the Arboretum Park. WSDOT's collaboration with the project sponsors is critical to the 6(f) environmental review process. We appreciate the work you have done facilitating the Parks Technical Working Group as substantial progress has been made since early 2009. WSDOT should work with Seattle and the University to determine a timeline that meets the project sponsor's needs regarding the Arboretum Park conversion and mitigation. Once a replacement property that meets both of the project sponsors' recreational needs has been identified, the LWCF environmental review process can be completed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (360) 902-3080 or leslie.ryan-connelly@rcow.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Leslie Ryan-Connelly
Grants Manager

transaction after FHWA issues a Record of Decision in summer 2011 and as part of the Conversion Package submitted to RCO for Board approval.