From: Nancy Brainard [mailto:nbrainard@qwest.net]
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2010 3:18 PM
To: SR 520 Bridge SDEIS
Subject: SDEIS Comments

C-028-001

The SR 520 SDEIS is deficient on several critical fronts

Most serious are its failures to study key measures that could avoid damage to the surrounding urban and natural environment. Specifically:

- Failure to adequately study the noise reduction that can be achieved by designing and properly installing the best kind of quieter pavement into the road. (I live less than 100 feet from 520 on a hill above the roadbed. Sound walls here will not help. Noise here today is already above federal health standards.)

C-028-002

- Failure to adequately study the feasibility (for mobility) and the benefits (to the urban and natural environment) of reducing 520's six lanes (plus shoulders) to four lanes (plus shoulders) from Montlake to I-5.

C-028-003

- Failure to adequately study the feasibility and benefits of an immersed tube tunnel (rather than a second bridge) to carry 520 traffic that is headed across the Montlake cut.

C-028-004

- Failure to adequately study the impacts that surrounding neighborhoods will suffer if the lids referred to in the SDEIS as "optional" are not built.

C-028-005

In addition, I add my support to the further comments submitted by the Coalition for a Sustainable SR 520, The Madison Park Community Council, The Montlake Community Council, the Shelby-Hamlin Group, the Roanoke Park/Portage Bay Community Council, the Seattle Yacht Club, the Queen City Yacht Club and the Laurelhurst Community Club.

I submit the above comments as an experienced representative of the North Capitol Hill Neighborhood Association on SR 520 issues, who has served on the state-funded Local Impact Committee, the City of Seattle's Stakeholders Advisory Committee and the state's Mediation Team. Thank you for your attention.

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C-028-001

The Final EIS presents information on mitigation measures for expected construction and operation effects of the Preferred Alternative. The analysis is consistent with the level of detail required by NEPA and with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Since the SDEIS was published, FHWA and WSDOT have identified a Preferred Alternative that is similar to Option A, but incorporates design refinements that respond to community and stakeholder comments on the SDEIS. The Preferred Alternative includes noise reduction strategies such as 4-foot concrete traffic barriers with noise absorptive coating, which would reduce traffic noise in the corridor in comparison to the No Build Alternative.

Quieter concrete pavement is included as a design feature for Option A, Option K, and the Preferred Alternative; however, because it is not an FHWA-approved mitigation measure and because future pavement surface conditions cannot be determined with certainty, it is not included in the noise model for the project.

Please see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative, and Section 5.7 for a list of measures that avoid or minimize noise effects of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project. For more information on anticipated noise levels, please also see the Potential Effects section of the Noise Discipline Report Addendum (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS).

C-028-002

The transportation analysis performed for the Draft EIS showed that while a 4-lane alternative would improve safety by replacing vulnerable structures and widening lanes and shoulders, it would not meet the project purpose of improving mobility in the SR 520 corridor. In 2010, WSDOT used an updated traffic model to evaluate a transit-optimized 4-

lane alternative and a 4-lane alternative with tolling for congestion management, based on a public comment. The results showed that these 4-lane alternatives would provide substantially lower mobility benefits than the 6-lane alternative for both general-purpose traffic and transit. Therefore, the 4-lane concepts were eliminated from further study. Please see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a discussion of project alternatives, including why some alternatives were not studied further.

C-028-003

Although a tunnel concept was considered early in the SR 520 planning process, the concept was not found to be sufficiently feasible to justify further evaluation. As discussed in the introductory chapters of the Draft and SDEIS documents, the Trans-Lake Washington Study, initiated in 1997, examined over 100 transit, roadway, and demand management/land use concepts, including transportation modes not limited to replacing or expanding existing bridges. These included tunnel, car and passenger ferry, and many HOV and transit options, including rail technologies such as light rail, monorail, and maglev high-speed rail. The concepts found to be technically, environmentally, and economically feasible were those involving improvements to existing transportation systems, plans, or policies, and these were recommended for further study. In 2000, WSDOT, Sound Transit, FHWA, and the Federal Transit Administration carried forward the Trans-Lake Washington Study recommendations by initiating the SR 520 EIS process to evaluate the environmental effects of proposed improvements to the SR 520 corridor. This process led to the Draft EIS in 2006 and the SDEIS in 2010, culminating in 2011 with the Final EIS. Therefore, although a tunnel concept was considered early in the continuum leading to the Final EIS, it was not found suitable for detailed environmental evaluation.

C-028-004

The Preferred Alternative includes the lid at 10th Avenue and Delmar Street, as well as an expanded Montlake interchange lid, while the lid at

I-5 would be replaced by an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle crossing. The lids and crossing in the Preferred Alternative are designed to improve neighborhood connectivity and non-motorized transportation, while also providing a better location and environment for the regional bus stops incorporated in the transit/HOV direct access ramps.

C-028-005

Comment noted.