Washington State Department of Transportation

SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program

STATE ROUTE 520

I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project

Supplemental Draft EIS Environmental Hearing Comment Form – Feb. 23, 2010

Welcome to the environmental hearing for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Please use this form to share your comments on the content provided in the Supplemental Draft EIS 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 through one of the following methods:

- **Complete this form** and place it in one of the comment boxes during the meeting. Please write clearly.
- **Mail** your comments to Jenifer Young, SR 520, I-5 to Medina 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.
- **Visit the Web page** at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge.

Name ***E-mail***

Address

City ***State*** ***Zip***

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, meeting comments may be made available to anyone requesting them for non-commercial purposes.

Do you have any comments on the Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

I-313-001

Yes; see attached Comment. I prefer not to have my personal information part of the public record. However, I am an active member of NCHNA and can be reached via my alias at b.kieburtz@ieee.org

I-313-001

Comment noted.

Do you have any comments on the Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement? (continued from page 1)

Comment
Route 520 Construction Project
A Broader View

I-313-002

There have been multiple proposals for modification of the Route 520 cross-lake bridge and approaches to deal with capacity shortfall in rush hours. As in any large project there are requirements, constraints, and assumptions. Often some of the assumptions are unstated because they seem so obvious. However, unexpected consequences can occur if all assumptions are not examined critically.

The purpose of this note is to suggest the possible advantages of taking a broader view of the project in light of some possibilities that may not have been considered.

REQUIREMENTS.
There is a requirement to foster and promote smoother traffic flow over the 520 corridor. A requirement to increase capacity is implied if not expressed.

CONSTRAINTS.
The few choices of expansion of capacity are the Evergreen Point Bridge, the I 90 floating bridge, and the north and south limbs of I 405.

ASSUMPTIONS.
A natural assumption is that traffic volume will continue at the current levels or, much more likely, will increase.

Many other assumptions could also be listed, but for the purposes of this note, only one other will be offered. Consider the following scenario. Suppose as a result of earthquake, or terrorist activity, Hiram Chittenden Locks not only became inoperable but were breached. The level of Lake Washington would drop by approximately 18 feet plus the tidal range. All floating bridges on Lake Washington would be inoperable. If any doubt were to exist concerning this possibly unstated assumption, the relative attractiveness of increasing the land capacity of the north and south limbs of I 405 might be seen in a different light.

This comment does not imply that no work is needed to insure the integrity of the current bridge, only that the work might be much altered and reduced if seen in a different perspective.

SOME QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

I-313-002

Climate change is considered in the design of the new Evergreen Point Bridge, which crosses Lake Washington. The Hiram Chittenden Locks control the lake's surface elevation, maintaining an elevation that is, on average, 21 feet above the surface elevation of Puget Sound. This elevation difference protects the lake from major surface elevation changes associated with a rise in surface elevation of Puget Sound due to climate change. Lake surface elevation changes associated with less water entering the lake would affect the floating bridge transition spans and anchor cables.

As part of its design, the I-5 to Medina project has incorporated features that would help protect the project areas from storm damage and offer resilience to the potential effects of climate change. These features include the following:

- Designing the floating bridge transition spans for lake surface elevation changes of a rise of 0.8 foot and a fall of 3.8 feet, and being able to adjust the anchor cables for the appropriate water surface elevation.
- Providing an enhanced design to protect the floating bridge and maintenance facility dock from damage due to wave action during large storm events.
- Preserving large trees and existing vegetation where possible to protect from erosion and potential landslides during large storm events.
- Using native vegetation and other natural materials to protect and stabilize the shoreline in locations exposed to low wave energy, minimizing erosion and colonization by non-native, invasive plant species.

I-313-003 | 1. How long would it take to lower the level of Lake Washington 2, 5, 10, and 18 feet if the Chittenden Locks were completely breached?

I-313-004 | 2. What Richter Scale quake magnitudes and epicenters have been used to analyze the damage and failure levels of the Chittenden Locks?

I-313-005 | 3. What magnitude in tons and kilotons of charge have be Chittenden Locks been exposed to in damage and failure analyses?

I-313-006 | 4. What studies and analyses have been performed by the Federal Emergency Management Administration with respect to hostile actions against Chittenden Locks?

rbk
4/14/10

I-313-003

The comment is outside the scope of the EIS for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project. However, see the response to comment I-313-002, which addresses the concern about the effects of global warming.

I-313-004

The comment is outside the scope of the EIS for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project. However, the Geology and Soils Discipline Report and Addendum (Attachment 7 to the SDEIS and Final EIS, respectively) provide information on the seismic design of the project. See also the response to comment I-313-002, which addresses the concern about the effects of global warming.

I-313-005

See the response to comment I-313-004.

I-313-006

See the response to comment I-313-004.