

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.

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CommentDate: 4/15/2010 22:24
Comment Source: Online Comment Form

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-329-001

The SDEIS presentation of Option A with Lake WA Blvd Ramps (i.e., the A+ Option) doesn't capture the full impact of removing the existing ramps and relocating them to the west. The relocation of that traffic onto the local Montlake streets will have a devastating impact on the neighborhood. Noise, pollution, and traffic congestion will increase while safety, quality of life, and property values will decrease dramatically. The Arboretum Foundation's desire to reduce traffic through the Arboretum and the neighborhood's desire to keep extra traffic off its streets seem to be at odds on this issue, but I believe there is an alternate approach would benefit both groups. Since federal law requires studying all reasonable options when historic districts are being impacted by highway projects, please add the analysis of the following proposal to the final EIS. It is likely that very little new work would be required.

The new off and on ramps can be located in the WSDOT right-of-way area that is east of the cottonwood trees lining Lake WA Blvd E, north of the Arboretum entrance, and slightly west of the existing ramps. The ramps would join Lake WA Blvd at the same place they do today. This configuration would still create a minor noise issue and an unsightly view for a few of the neighbors on Lake WA Blvd, but at least it would keep the extra traffic off the neighborhood streets. After all, this traffic runs between neighborhoods south of Montlake and the Eastside. It has no need to use Montlake's quiet, residential streets. This proposal would completely remove the existing ramps from the Arboretum as required by the project.

I-329-002

Taken on its own, this design would not decrease traffic through the Arboretum but two things could be done to improve conditions in the Arboretum. First, the Arboretum could be closed to all non-emergency through traffic on weekends. Traffic would have to use 23rd/24th Ave instead. Second, a turn restriction at the east end of Boyer Ave E could be put in place to prevent left-hand turns onto northbound Lake WA Blvd. This would discourage cut-through traffic on Boyer (which it desperately

I-329-001

The Preferred Alternative would not include construction of any new ramps in the Arboretum, and would remove both the existing Lake Washington Boulevard ramps and the R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps. Access to Lake Washington Boulevard by westbound SR 520 traffic would be moved to a new intersection located on the Montlake Boulevard lid at 24th Avenue East.

Because the Lake Washington Boulevard ramps already exist, none of the alternatives or options evaluated in the SDEIS showed "greatly increased" traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard when compared with the No Build Alternative. The Preferred Alternative would reduce average traffic volumes in 2030 on Lake Washington Boulevard in the Arboretum by compared to the No Build Alternative. Under the Preferred Alternative in 2030, a.m. peak hour volumes on Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum would be 1,330 vehicles per hour with the Preferred Alternative, compared to 1,950 vehicles per hour with the No Build Alternative. P.m. peak hour volumes would be 1,410 vehicles per hour compared to 1,730 with the No Build Alternative.

I-329-002

Through a number of design refinements, the Preferred Alternative would have fewer and less severe effects on Lake Washington Boulevard and the Arboretum than the No Build Alternative. The Preferred Alternative would remove the existing Lake Washington Boulevard eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp and the R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps. As a result of these ramp removals and other design features, in 2030, the trip volumes on Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum would be reduced compared to the No Build Alternative. See the response to Comment I-338-001.

As part of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan, WSDOT has committed to working with the Seattle Department of Transportation to fund traffic-

