

I-0496-001

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

See Section 1.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

-----Original Message-----

From: Julia Paulsen [mailto:paulsenja@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 02, 2006 2:58 PM
To: Krueger, Paul W (UCO)
Subject: comments on SR 520 & Evergreen Point Bridge plans

2 October 2006

Paul Krueger
WSDOT Environmental Manager
State of Washington

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We are writing to express our strong opposition to the "Pacific Interchange" plan proposed for the Evergreen Point Bridge/SR 520 by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Our opposition is based on the adverse impacts of both the construction time for this project and its aftermath, affecting the following areas:

1. The Arboretum. The proposal would destroy much-needed green space and water areas, especially around Foster and Marsh islands, including loss of habitat. It also ignores the Arboretum's master plan, to the detriment of plants and wildlife, wetlands and quiet spaces for walkers, birders, canoeists and kayakers. Seattle needs more park areas like the Arboretum, not less.
2. The University of Washington. As employees at the UW, we know that the years of construction alone would greatly impede traffic on NE Pacific Street, especially those needing to access to the University Hospital & Medical Center. In addition, there is no provision for the loss of parking areas (and recreational spaces) that currently belong to the UW, particularly during Husky football games, graduation and other university events.
3. Northeast Seattle neighborhoods. In the five years of living on the major arterial street of 25th Avenue Northeast (which becomes Ravenna Avenue NE), we have not only seen a significant increase in car traffic on this street, due to the growing number of condominium and apartment buildings on Lake City Way, but an escalation in the speed of that traffic, usually well above the (non-posted) 30 mile/hour limit. If this "Pacific Interchange" is built, people from Lake City and areas north will increasingly take Ravenna/25th/Montlake NE as a cut-off road to avoid using I-5 to get to SR 520 or south Seattle. A similar proliferation of large residential and commercial developments in the University Village area has further expanded the traffic volumes on the Montlake end of 25th Avenue NE, with no mitigation.

At a recent meeting of our neighborhood association with Seattle City Council and WSDOT officials, we were unimpressed with the seeming lack of knowledge of the real damage that the "Pacific Interchange" proposal would impose on the Arboretum, the University of Washington south campus and the Northeast Seattle neighborhoods. We were especially concerned that traffic impacts north of NE 65th Street and in the University District itself were not even considered in the WSDOT study, nor did the proposal's astronomical cost compared to other alternatives appear to be a factor.

The "Pacific Interchange" project seems to be driven by a small, elite and wealthy group of people, at the expense of the irreplaceable natural refuge

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of the Arboretum, users of the University of Washington and its services, and neighborhoods north of the Lake Washington Ship Canal. Better and far less costly options are being ignored in favor of this hugely expensive and environmentally detrimental proposal. While we know that the existing Evergreen Point Bridge needs to be repaired for safety and to include bike & HOV lanes, drivers need to be encouraged to reduce their car travel in the first place, through improved and expanded Metro bus and other public transportation services. We urge you to consider our concerns regarding our neighborhood, the University of Washington and the Arboretum and choose one of the more sensible and sensitive proposals for the SR 520 situation.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Julia Paulsen & Kevin O'Connor
8237 Ravenna Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98115