From: Jason Rogers
To: SR 520 DEIS Comments;
CC:
Subject: SR 520 DEIS Comments
Date: Tuesday, October 31, 2006 11:52:48 PM
Attachments: SR 520 DEIS comments.doc

October 31, 2006

Dear Sir or Madam:

The following are my comments on the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

I-1076-001

Selection of Alternatives for Study

While I am disappointed that the 8 Lane Alternative was not included in the DEIS, the reasoning put forth is understandable. Preliminary analysis indicated that bottlenecks at I-5 and I-405 would prevent an 8-lane SR 520 from being utilized at full capacity. As stated, this would not encourage transit and HOV use; however, future (yet-to-be-determined) improvements to I-5 and/or I-405 may resolve the bottleneck issues. It was short-sighted to not fully study the 8-lane alternative; more information about the impacts of this alternative would lead to a more informed decision.

I-1076-002

The tone of the DEIS seems unnecessarily dismissive of the various tunnel options. In addition, the reasoning given for not studying a floating submerged tunnel (Pg. 3-6) is weak; it is entirely possible that impacts to navigation, fish passage, and the water surface could be reasonably mitigated, but as no significant study of this option was undertaken, we do not have even a semi-informed opinion.

Despite these reservations, I believe that additional study and research is not desirable for the SR 520 project at this point, and the project needs to move forward with the information available.

I-1076-003

Alternatives Studied

The No Build option should have included an analysis of the impacts stemming from a failure of the Portage Bay and Evergreen Point bridge structures separately. While it is clear that a failure of the Evergreen Point bridge would render the roadway completely inoperable, a failure of the Portage Bay bridge would merely be a massive inconvenience, and traffic could be re-routed, with difficulty, around Portage Bay via existing surface streets, or a temporary repair of the Portage Bay structure could be attempted.

I-1076-004

The 4-lane alternative should include analysis of a Pacific Street Interchange option. While the 4-lane alternative is clearly intended to minimize costs and impacts by keeping the footprint of the facility to a minimum, the Pacific Interchange option offers enough potential advantages that study of that option in a 4-lane configuration is warranted. While I would assume that most of the impacts from a Pacific Interchange would be similar to those specified in the 6-lane alternative, they would not be precisely identical.

I-1076-001
Comment Summary:
8-Lane Alternative

Response:
See Section 1.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1076-002
Comment Summary:
Tube/Tunnel Concepts

Response:
See Section 1.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1076-003
Comment Summary:
No Build Alternative

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

I-1076-004
Comment Summary:
4-Lane Alternative

Response:
See Section 2.0 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1076-005 A reason for the roadway to be elevated over the pontoons is not specified anywhere in the DEIS; I assume this is to minimize wind effects during storm events, improve maintenance access, and minimize grade changes, especially at the east end of the bridge, but a reason should be explicitly stated.

I-1076-006 The Pacific Interchange option appears to be the most preferable option for the Seattle side of the facility. There are two major problems with the Montlake Blvd. interchange as it exists: 1) its proximity to the I-5 and Lake Washington Blvd. interchanges, and 2) the fact that most traffic utilizing the Montlake Blvd. interchange and heading north towards the University District and must pass through the Montlake Bridge bottleneck. The Pacific Interchange option solves both of these problems. Potential impacts to the Arboretum are high, but could be mitigated via improvements to Lk. Wash. Blvd. between the interchange and Montlake Blvd. The Pacific Interchange option also has generally positive effects on travel times and overall congestion in the surrounding area. While this option is generally more impactful to the natural environment, the increased impact is offset by the advantages this option provides. Specifically addressing the University of Washington's concerns, I would respond that the SR 520 project is a necessary project of regional and statewide significance, and that the unavoidable impacts to the University stemming from this project are outweighed by the advantages the project provides to the people of the Puget Sound region and the State of Washington in safety, mobility, economics, and utility.

I-1076-007 The South Kirkland Park and Ride Transit Access option, in either form, would be preferable due to increased transit connectivity reasons. This option has relatively minimal impacts.

I-1076-008 **Stormwater**

The discharge location of the Lake Union stormwater vault is not specified.

Stormwater treatment of runoff from the floating bridge is not acceptable; while I understand the constraints involved, dilution of pollutants in Lake Washington is not a solution. With the elevation of the roadway surface above the pontoons, is it possible to convey stormwater to shore for treatment and discharge?

I-1076-009 **Visual Impacts and Noise Impacts**

It should be explicitly stated that a tradeoff is being made between visual and noise impacts. The sound insulating walls will reduce noise impacts substantially, at the cost of an increased visual impact. No analysis was conducted of what the visual and noise impacts would be if some or all of the walls were omitted. While I believe that the impacts in such a situation would be more substantial, this analysis is critical to creating an informed opinion.

I-1076-010 **Wetlands**

The DEIS identifies several potential mitigation opportunities for mitigation wetland impacts on the Seattle portion of the project, but fails to note whether it has been determined if these opportunities, separately or combined, would provide sufficient mitigation. (Pg. 5-47)

The DEIS states that wetland impacts on the Eastside portion of the project cannot be adequately mitigated within either the existing right-of-way owned by WSDOT or within the immediate area due to a lack of suitable locations. While the DEIS states that additional studies are underway to determine

I-1076-005

Comment Summary:

6-Lane Alternative

Response:

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

I-1076-006

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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

I-1076-007

Comment Summary:

Eastside Concerns

Response:

See Section 24.0 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1076-008

Comment Summary:

Stormwater Treatment

Response:

See Section 15.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1076-009

Comment Summary:

Noise Walls (Aesthetics)

I-1076-010 suitable mitigation sites within WRIA 8, such sites should be identified in the Environmental Impact Statement before it is approved by WSDOT and FHWA. (Pg. 7-32)

I-1076-011 **Construction Impacts**

Please note that minor improvements may be necessary to accommodate construction truck traffic on proposed routes, and that repair work post-construction may be necessary to restore affected routes to pre-construction condition. Heavy truck traffic is extremely destructive to road surfaces.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments on this important project.

Sincerely,

Jason Rogers

20837 SE 155th Pl.
Renton, WA 98059
(425) 271-8678
jasonmr@earthlink.net

Note: Comments also attached in MS Word file

Response:

See Section 12.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1076-010

Comment Summary:

Wetland Mitigation

Response:

See Section 16.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1076-011

Comment Summary:

Schedule

Response:

See Section 4.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.