

From: [jack whisner](#)
To: [SR 520 DEIS Comments:](#)
CC:
Subject: SR-520 environmental scoping
Date: Tuesday, October 31, 2006 12:31:32 AM
Attachments:

Dear Paul Krueger,

Please consider the following comments on the SR-520 DEIS.

- I-1106-001** We seek an optimized hybrid of the alternatives studied to date. WSDOT should select an option with features of both the four and six lane options and mitigation to match.
1. The SR-520 replacement should be both designed with system wide dynamic tolling in mind. The affect of pricing on peak period demand did not seem adequately studied in the DEIS. System wide dynamic tolling would reduce traffic diversion to other corridors. Tolling should begin soon. Early projects, aside from SR-167 already underway, should be both Lake Washington floating bridges and the I-5 reversible lanes. Tolling should be used during construction as demand management, not just after implementation as a revenue source. Toll revenue could be used to fund long term maintenance and additional transit service.
- I-1106-002** 2. The DEIS considered a peak direction connection between SR-520 and the I-5 reversible lanes. WSDOT should conduct a study of the optimal use of this capacity. Use by SR-520 HOVs may not be the best way to maximize its person through put. Transit service by ST, King County Metro, and CT is more intense in the north corridor. An early demand management tool could be conversion of the I-5 reversible lanes to HOT lanes. Their points of peak period congestion are at access and egress points due to too many vehicles using the facility (e.g., the through lane and Stewart Street and Mercer Street in the a.m.; and, NE 42nd Street and 7th Avenue NE, SR-522, and Northgate in the p.m.). Would the connection between SR-520 and the I-5 reversible lanes cause the loss of one lane? This cost would clearly be unacceptable. (The first step for the I-5 reversible lanes may be outside the SR-520 scope: the ramps at Mercer and Stewart streets should be made HOV

I-1106-001

Comment Summary:

Tolling Scenarios, Pricing, and Revenue

Response:

See Section 3.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1106-002

Comment Summary:

Freeway Operations (I-5 Area)

Response:

See Section 5.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1106-002 | only as the other downtown Seattle ramps are; this would reduce the traffic congestion on Mercer Street, Fairview Avenue North, Stewart Street, Olive Way, and Howell Street. It would make transit flow better. It would induce a shift to transit and HOV modes from SOV, as the general purpose lanes are already stop and go).

I-1106-003 | 3. The hybrid alternative for SR-520 should include a northbound transit lane between Olive Way and SR-520 on the I-5 mainline. It would be fairly inexpensive and would provide a long queue jump to transit. It may even be useful for ST I-5 services going northbound at time periods when the I-5 reversible lanes are southbound.

4. As an alternative to connect west to southbound SR-520 transit with downtown Seattle, please study an elevated transit lane between the merge with I-5 on the left side of the southbound mainline to the elevated overpass carrying Belmont and Lakeview over I-5 to Eastlake Avenue East. It would be a long t-ramp and use a relatively empty arterial to connect with the Seattle surface streets. Some of the support piers could be in the gap between the structures of the general purpose and reversible lanes.

I-1106-004 | 5. The study of HOV lanes on SR-520 should be expanded. Today, they are on the outside and incomplete. They are cited as the major advantage of the six lane option over the four lane option. Consider the primary purpose of HOV lanes: to move transit and HOVs past congested general purpose lanes. HOV lanes in the center are better for long distance trips. If this project shifts its HOV lanes to the center, will the HOV lanes east of I-405 remain on the outside? How would transit transition in between? If the eastern HOV lanes are also shifted to the inside, would the project include center access ramps at NE 40th and 51st streets? What is the role of HOV lanes on a limited access highway that is dynamically tolled? Could the tolls be set to optimize flow? If so, why have HOV lanes and center access ramps at all? This would be a huge savings to the project in scale, width, and scope. Could transit service flow freely in either a four or six lane SR-520 that was dynamically tolled?

I-1106-005 | 6. Could the hybrid alternative selected include six lanes east of the Union Bay bridge intersection and four lanes west of there to I-5? Significant traffic is oriented to the University District. I-5 has no additional capacity. Building six lanes over Portage Bay on a viaduct seems like very costly car storage approaching a jammed I-5. A narrower four lane facility would have less impact on Portage Bay. Hill climbing lanes were cited as an advantage of a wider Portage Bay viaduct. But why provide a 70

I-1106-003

Comment Summary:

Freeway Operations (I-5 Area)

Response:

See Section 5.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1106-004

Comment Summary:

Regional Land Use and Transportation Planning

Response:

See Section 2.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-1106-005

Comment Summary:

Alternatives Development

Response:

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

I-1106-005 | mph facility approaching I-5? Traffic has to slow anyway to merge and I-5 is often moving slowly. Providing a limited access highway is good enough; it need not be built to Montana speeds.

I-1106-006 | 7. The west to north off ramp of the Pacific Interchange could include HOV lanes and a touch down for transit on the east side of Montlake Boulevard NE to allow for short walk distances for bus-rail transfers. The Link LRT platforms will be east of Montlake Boulevard NE. If transit must go through the NE Pacific Street interchange, passengers will not be able to alight until a stop is reached several hundred feet in distance and on the other side of Montlake Boulevard NE.

8. Could the project mitigate the loss of UW stadium land and surface parking by providing structured parking? Could the UW place housing or offices atop the garages?

I-1106-007 | 9. The hybrid four and six lane option mentioned in number 6 above would allow retention of the Montlake flyer stop. The suggested mitigation for the loss of the flyer stop is frequent service oriented to the University District. But note that a significant share of Montlake flyer stop users are oriented to and from the south and would have to travel out of direction to transfer. The major service on SR-520 is ST Route 545. It is a rising star, gaining ridership and productivity. ST may not success in extending Link LRT to Overlake, and even if they do, it will not be for many years. The timing of the various mega projects is not clear. It is insufficient to plan for a snap shot of time in the distance future. We must also plan for the messy periods in between. Until Link LRT reaches Overlake, Route 545 will be very important and Seattle riders should be able to transfer to and from it at Montlake. It is even possible that the SR-520 project may preceed the Link LRT UW stadium station.

Thank you for considering these comments.

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I-1106-006

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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

I-1106-007

Comment Summary:

Montlake Freeway Transit Station

Response:

See Section 2.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.