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Subject: BetterBridge.org SR 520 public comment.doc
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Attachments: [BetterBridge.org SR 520 public comment.doc](#)

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October 31, 2006

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C-032-001

BetterBridge.org is a 501c(4) organization formed to play a constructive advocacy role on the SR 520 Bridge Replacement & HOV Project. We are proud to have suggested concepts that eventually led to WSDOT's official Pacific Street Interchange for SR 520. We at BetterBridge.org strongly support the 6-lane Pacific Street Interchange option for SR 520, and oppose all other DEIS options.

Origin of BetterBridge.org

BetterBridge.org was co-founded by Rob Wilkinson and Jonathan Dubman, who suggested a daring new approach for SR 520 via an Opinion piece in the Seattle Times in February of 2005. These concepts were quickly met with interest and enthusiasm in the Montlake community, among elected officials and countless other interested parties with whom we have met. Some 162 individuals and groups have donated money to fund BetterBridge.org, and many have volunteered in various capacities.

C-032-002

Appreciation for the SR 520 project team

Throughout this process, we have been absolutely delighted that WSDOT has been willing to listen, and has given all the citizen-generated ideas, ours included, serious and fair consideration. We have come to understand that the SR 520 project team is led by and comprised of exemplary public servants who deserve enormous credit for their hard work, dedication, flexibility and objectivity. The project has clearly gone to enormous efforts to do public outreach, to provide concerned citizens, jurisdictions, agencies, etc. with clear, accurate, relevant and timely

C-032-001

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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

C-032-002

Comment Summary:

Coordination with Other Transportation Projects

Response:

See Section 1.0 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-002

information in an objective manner, and to listen to and respond to everyone's concerns. This track record bodes very well for the hard work ahead as we move towards an FEIS, a Record of Decision, years of construction and many decades of operation of a new SR 520 facility.

We want to take this opportunity to make a special remark on the record concerning the outstanding legacy of the late Maureen Sullivan, at one time the head of both the SR 520 and the Alaskan Way Viaduct projects, whose skillful leadership helped guide the SR 520 project through challenging times. She combined professionalism with warmth, openness and a willingness to listen, and has left a legacy in our hearts as well as on this project.

Pacific Street Interchange is the only solution to averting stalemate on SR 520

Prior to the addition of the Pacific Street Interchange option, it appeared to us that we were headed for a stalemate on SR 520 that would serve nobody's interests. There were adamant supporters of a 4 lane floating bridge, an 8 lane floating bridge. It was our perception that neither of these would be politically viable regionally, and neither would meet our transportation needs. The latter is borne out by the facts of the analysis in this DEIS. On March 1, 2005, a meeting (organized by a large coalition of neighborhood organizations, BetterBridge.org not included) was held at the Museum of History and Industry to send a clear message that none of the alternatives on the table at that time was acceptable. The meeting had about 350 attendees including SDOT, the office of the Mayor of Seattle, and every member of the Seattle City Council, or a representative thereof. Essentially, the project was perceived as having unacceptable impacts and insufficient transportation benefit.

C-032-003

Major advantages of Pacific Street Interchange

Pacific Street Interchange is the only option that creates a direct, fast and reliable connection between SR 520 bus service and light rail.

Pacific Street Interchange is the only option that restores a continuous greenbelt linking Portage Bay with Union Bay and the Arboretum.

Pacific Street Interchange is the only option that fixes the Montlake Bridge bottleneck, saving over 20 minutes for trips from 45th St. to SR 520 in the PM peak period.

Pacific Street Interchange adds HOV lanes for the length of the corridor without necessitating an 8 or 9 lane Portage Bay Viaduct.

When no alternative is specified in the comments below, the comments should be interpreted as referring to the Pacific Street Interchange option.

C-032-004

On our original suggestion of a high-level suspension or cable-stayed bridge

We originally suggested a pair of high level suspension or cable-stayed bridges, with a Pacific Street Interchange. Suspension and cable-stayed bridges were screened out due to issues including noise, constructibility, cost, environmental impacts. Although a high level bridge was thought to be possible, from discussions with WSDOT, we arrived at the belief that a new facility closer to the current profile would be preferable in terms of visual impacts. The WSDOT team was very helpful in providing sufficient information, including renderings, to reach this conclusion.

C-032-003

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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

C-032-004

Comment Summary:

Alternatives Development

Response:

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

C-032-005

Bus-rail transfer at the UW transit hub

Because the University of Washington is a critical transit destination, Sound Transit plans a light rail station in the vicinity of Montlake Blvd. / Pacific St. intersection. From this station, Sound Transit anticipates running trains as frequently as every 2.5 minutes. It will be a 6 minute train ride from UW to Westlake, 3 minutes from UW to Capitol Hill, and 7 minutes to Northgate. Via bus rapid transit, it will be about a 12 minute ride to Overlake / Microsoft from UW.

Because of the siting of a light rail station in this vicinity, the UW becomes the natural location for a transit hub that connects light rail, local and regional buses. This area, the vicinity of what is today, Triangle Parking Garage, has a lot of geometric and functional constraints, and cries out for an integrated plan. We strongly advocate that this plan be optimized for transfer between buses and light rail, to minimize the number of steps and maximize the comfort and convenience for transit patrons. This entire interchange requires a comprehensive plan that will consider the joint use of WSDOT right of way and UW property to create a pedestrian-friendly transit hub that serves both transient and local pedestrian movement in an attractive, quiet and safe manner. Grade separation, inclement weather protection, moving walkways and the needs of bicyclists should all be considered.

C-032-006

Montlake lid

The lid in Montlake should extend from Montlake Blvd. all the way east to the 24th Ave. overcrossing, with an opening for ventilation if absolutely necessary. If possible, a sidewalk and room for landscaping should be cantilevered to the north of Lake Washington Blvd., east of 24th Ave. E, linking this park to the part of the Arboretum south of SR 520 and helping to respect and restore the Olmsted legacy of Lake Washington Blvd.

C-032-007

Montlake Blvd. treatment

The outer lanes of Montlake Blvd. that currently serve on- and off-ramps for SR 520, should be striped as bicycle lanes, possibly shared with local transit if that is seen to be helpful. The "boulevard treatment" of Montlake Blvd. as envisioned by the Olmsted Brothers should extend further south across the SR 520 right of way all the way to Roanoke St.

The sidewalks along Montlake Blvd. south of the Montlake Bridge are in unsafe condition and should be repaved and brought up to current accessibility standards.

West Montlake Place E realignment

For the FEIS, please evaluate restoring the alignment of West Montlake Place E to roughly match what it was prior to SR 520 construction, while reconfiguring E Roanoke St. to be a quiet neighborhood street with planting strips, like E Louisa St., E Miller St., etc. It is important to maintain a signalized pedestrian crossing south of Lake Washington Blvd. E and north of E McGraw St. on the arterial that is variously referred to as 24th Ave E and East Montlake Place E.

C-032-005

Comment Summary:

North of Montlake Cut

Response:

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

C-032-006

Comment Summary:

Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

Response:

See Section 2.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-007

Comment Summary:

Local Street Network

Response:

See Section 5.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-008

Mitigation for 24th Ave. E

Traffic speeds and volumes are of great concern on 24th Ave. E in the Montlake community. This community is trying to nurture a small business district, a block away from an elementary school, that is also home to a new branch of the Seattle Public Library system. Law enforcement officers have clocked numerous drivers traveling at over 60 mph through this area. Automated speed enforcement should be provided as a form of mitigation for the increased traffic volumes that are anticipated on this arterial as a result of this project.

C-032-009

Arboretum mitigation

We believe this project should transfer ownership of the "WSDOT peninsula" to the Arboretum, and fund the Arboretum Master Plan as partial mitigation for the disruption and loss of property that the construction will cause.

We support a toll surcharge at the Lake Washington Blvd. ramps to help generate funds and to prevent an increase, and potentially decrease, the traffic volume in the Arboretum.

C-032-010

Foster Island Loop Trail

The Foster Island Loop Trail should be brought up to current environmental standards, if possible, and should be designed such that it is above the water level of Lake Washington year round as an interpretive trail system for educational and recreational use. This trail should tie into the treatment ponds at the current MOHAI site. The exemplary water treatment facility in Renton and associated public art should be seen by all who participate in the design for water treatment facilities on SR 520.

C-032-011

Trail link to Madison Park

BetterBridge.org strongly endorses a bicycle/pedestrian trail link to Madison Park. This connection probably makes more sense at 43rd Ave. E than at 37th Ave. E due to wetland impacts at 37th. There are navigation issues and concerns over trailhead parking. Leaders and members of the bicycle community with whom we have met have been enthusiastic about this connection, which would provide a much shorter route from the east part of Seattle to the Eastside and also to UW. The Arboretum Master Plan includes a recreational trail but does not include a commuter trail through the Arboretum, and Lake Washington Blvd. a narrow, winding roadway with high traffic volumes and poor nighttime lighting, is not bicycle-friendly, so this connection from Madison Park would provide a vital link in our region's bicycle network.

We are a bit puzzled at opposition to this idea from some residents of Broadmoor who live nowhere near 43rd Ave., as there would be no access to this trail to the Broadmoor community, nor would the trail be visible from that community.

C-032-012

Other bicycle/pedestrian trail opportunities and issues

The SR 520 project is to be commended for its inclusion of a full 14-foot trail across Lake Washington. Every effort should be made to provide connectivity to other routes and trails on both sides of the lake. BetterBridge.org advocates extending the SR 520 bicycle trail west to Montlake Blvd. to connect with the proposed freeway lid park in Montlake, and from there down to the popular Montlake Playfield and connecting routes to Interlaken Park, Eastlake and other Seattle destinations. This should be constructed in addition to, but not in place of, a bicycle trail on the Union Bay Bridge to UW. We expect the SR 520 bicycle trail to be much more popular than the I-

C-032-008

Comment Summary:

Local Street Network

Response:

See Section 5.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-009

Comment Summary:

Arboretum (Concerns)

Response:

See Section 9.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-010

Comment Summary:

Arboretum (Concerns)

Response:

See Section 9.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-011

Comment Summary:

Madison Park Bicycle/Pedestrian Connection

Response:

See Section 24.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-012

Comment Summary:

Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

C-032-012

90 bicycle trail, given the proximity of the Burke-Gilman trail and UW to residential districts and employment centers on the Eastside. If a connection is made on only one side of the ship canal, many bicyclists will be forced onto the narrow shoulders of the Montlake drawbridge, which will be shared with high pedestrian volumes. Additionally, extending the SR 520 bicycle trail west to Montlake would activate the park on the lid, and save about half a mile for bicycle commuters coming from or going to south of the ship canal.

With its location at the UW and its proximity to the Burke-Gilman trail, a local bicycle route across the Montlake Bridge and SR 520 bicycle trail access, the UW transportation hub at Montlake/Pacific will be a major bicycle hub as well as a transit hub. It is a natural spot for a bicycle station incorporating secure bicycle storage, rental and other services, kiosks with maps and other bicycle-related information. There are some excellent examples of this such as the facility at Millennium Park in Chicago.

A trail on the Portage Bay Bridge would have an extended, steep grade and would add significant cost and environmental impacts and need not be pursued.

C-032-013

Mitigation opportunity: South Portage Bay Park / Montlake Playfield

With a matching neighborhood grant and participation from Seattle Parks Dept., FABNIA (Fuhrman and Boyer Neighborhood Improvement Association) has been evaluating opportunities to improve South Portage Bay Park and the Montlake Playfield with shoreline mitigation, a waterfront trail, a put-in for hand-carried boats, etc. This plan ought to be funded as mitigation for the major construction and view impacts that the rebuild of the Portage Bay Bridge will imply.

C-032-014

Waterfront trail on NOAA property

It was once possible to walk along the shoreline of Portage Bay from the Seattle Yacht Club to the Bill Dawson trail which passes under SR 520 and connects to the Montlake Playfield. Since a near-waterfront trail is envisioned all the way west to Everett St., and there is an existing waterfront trail all the way from the Seattle Yacht Club to Foster Island, the NOAA property represents a "missing link" in what could be an approximately 1.5 mile waterfront to waterfront trail from Portage Bay to Union Bay and the Arboretum. This trail opportunity should be pursued as part of this project.

C-032-015

Alignment of Montlake Blvd. widening north of Pacific Place.

The green wooded buffer alongside the Burke-Gilman trail is an important asset for the University of Washington campus, for trail users, and even for all those who travel along Montlake Blvd. between 45th St. and Pacific Place. Please choose an alignment for the widening of Montlake Blvd. that preserves to the greatest possible extent this wooded buffer. This would require the displacement of additional surface parking spaces on the UW campus. These parking spaces can readily be replaced through structured parking.

C-032-016

Pedestrian crossings of Montlake Blvd. on the UW campus

There are several pedestrian crossings of Montlake Blvd. connecting the central UW campus to the east campus, athletic facilities and parking lots. These pedestrian crossings would have to be reconstructed as part of this project if Montlake Blvd. is widened. None currently meets ADA standards. These bridges would be viewed by at least 60,000 people per day passing over or underneath and should be held to a high standard of design. They should be wider, and of course, accessible, with adequate clearance. We have heard concerns that the widening of

Response:

See Section 2.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-013

Comment Summary:

Park Effects

Response:

See Section 9.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-014

Comment Summary:

Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

Response:

See Section 2.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-015

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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

C-032-016

Comment Summary:

Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

Response:

See Section 2.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-016 | Montlake Blvd. would further divide these parts of campus. We believe that exemplary pedestrian bridges in this area would actually serve to unite the campus.

C-032-017 | Potential early action: Early widening of Montlake Blvd. with HOV lanes

With Pacific Interchange, Montlake Blvd. is widened from Pacific St. to the vicinity of 45th St. One idea that was suggested before Pacific Interchange was conceived (e.g., the City of Seattle's University Area Transportation Study) is a southbound HOV lane on Montlake Blvd., to reduce person-hours of delay on the approach to the Montlake Bridge. While this is not a solution for the whole problem, it could help achieve tangible benefits quickly, years before the completion of the SR 520 project. We would like to see the early action of adding HOV lanes north and southbound on Montlake Blvd. (to be converted eventually to GP lanes) evaluated as a form of construction mitigation. For the FEIS, provided Pacific Street Interchange is chosen as a preferred alternative, please forecast and document the reduction in daily person-hours of delay that could be achieved by the addition of HOV lanes on Montlake Blvd. (on the inside or outside lanes, as appropriate) prior to completion of the Union Bay Bridge, please assess potential transit service that could serve as construction mitigation, and please assess what would be required to accelerate construction of this arterial widening.

C-032-018 | Potential early action: Accelerate initiation of tolls on SR 520

The SR 520 project will include tolls. The Project's traffic analysis shows that these tolls have significant traffic benefits in the corridor. With legislative action and support from WSDOT and the region, these could be instituted earlier rather than later, making better use of today's SR 520 bridge, while accelerating funding for project mitigation. BetterBridge.org has suggested this in numerous public forums and found great enthusiasm for this concept. We believe the privacy issues are important, but solvable. It is vital for Washington State to have a single, reliable, low-maintenance and highly secure transponder system that is flexible enough for us to migrate to regional tolling, which is probably where we are headed. For the FEIS, please evaluate the financial and traffic implications of initiating tolls as early as possible, either regionally or on SR 520 alone if procedural issues preclude looking at the region as a whole as part of this study. This could be done in the context of any corridor development authority, public/private partnership, or other innovative approach that is eventually decided upon for designing, building, operating and maintaining the corridor.

C-032-019 | Congestion or value-pricing in the GP lanes

With the 6 lane alternatives, considerable congestion is forecast in this DEIS for the GP lanes on SR 520, particularly westbound in the morning, albeit far less than with the 4 lane alternative or No Build. While this congestion may provide an incentive for time shift, mode shift or other behavioral adaptations, it represents an economic and environmental cost that every effort should be made to avoid. For the FEIS, please attempt to determine a regional tolling policy that would implement "congestion pricing" or "value pricing" on SR 520. Please give careful consideration to what it might take to eliminate, if possible, or reduce to the maximum possible extent, congestion on the GP lanes of SR 520. Since the noise analysis already assumes posted speeds at maximum traffic volume, that should not need to be reevaluated.

C-032-020 | Width of shoulders and GP lanes in Seattle

Some are advocating for narrower shoulders and GP lanes in environmentally sensitive areas in Seattle. While we agree with the intent of this narrowing, a balanced view would consider the implications for safety and reliability. Balancing these factors will present a challenge, but it

C-032-017

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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

C-032-018

Comment Summary:

Early Tolling

Response:

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

C-032-019

Comment Summary:

Tolling Scenarios, Pricing, and Revenue

Response:

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

C-032-020

Comment Summary:

6-Lane Alternative

Response:

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

C-032-020

should not be assumed that narrower is necessarily better. For the FEIS, please quantify the anticipated impact to safety and reliability for narrowed shoulders and travel lanes at various widths, so the environmental impacts can be balanced against transportation impacts and public safety.

C-032-021

4 lanes across the lake fails to accommodate transit and lacks political support

The 4-lane option as proposed by the Project does not provide transit speed and reliability that is necessary to provide a viable transit alternative in this corridor. Buses are stuck in congestion that is projected to increase dramatically across Lake Washington, failing to meet the purpose and need of the Project.

Local transit: The Montlake mess impacts speed and reliability for some of the most productive Metro bus routes including routes 43 and 48. Unless the Montlake bottleneck is relieved, speed and reliability for local transit will continue to decline over time.

Traffic: The 4-lane option fails spectacularly for local traffic in the Montlake area, as well as for traffic on the mainline of SR 520.

Neighborhood and park impacts: The footprint of the 4 lane configuration is not only larger through Seattle than the current SR 520, but much larger, in fact, through the heart of Montlake than the footprint of Pacific Interchange. With 4 lanes, any Montlake lid (not included in DEIS) would fail to reconnect the neighborhood due to access ramps getting in the way. 4 lanes does not provide the continuous park and trail system provided by Pacific Interchange. The Montlake interchange is expanded, and overall, things are made worse for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and local traffic. It should be noted that WSDOT's "4 lane" project has a 5 lane Portage Bay Bridge, which is almost as wide as the 6 lane Portage Bay Bridge associated with Pacific Interchange.

4 lanes may be the cheapest solution with the least Arboretum impact, but it has fatal flaws, particularly for transit.

C-032-022

8 lanes across the lake has multiple fatal flaws

Any configuration across Lake Washington that has more than 4 general purpose lanes is a recipe for both political gridlock and traffic gridlock. Any configuration that would add a significant amount of traffic to I-5 would essentially be predicated on widening I-5 at least as far as Fort Lewis. Expanding I-5 is neither affordable nor consistent with numerous City of Seattle policies. An 8 lane option would cause massive congestion on our arterial streets, degrading local transit performance.

Any 8 lane configuration would clearly have profound negative impacts to neighborhoods, parks and the environment.

In summary, 8 lanes across the lake would be unaffordable, unacceptable, and counterproductive to the purpose of this project.

C-032-023

The Base 6 alternative, with 9 lanes across Portage Bay, fails on mobility and livability

The Base 6 alternative retains the Montlake interchange and the bus stop in Montlake. As developed by WSDOT, the Portage Bay Bridge must be 9 lanes due to the need for transit acceleration/deceleration and auxiliary (weaving) lanes.

C-032-021

Comment Summary:

4-Lane Alternative

Response:

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

C-032-022

Comment Summary:

8-Lane Alternative

Response:

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

C-032-023

Comment Summary:

6-Lane Alternative

Response:

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

C-032-023

Regional transit: The Base 6 lane alternative fails to make a fast and reliable transit connection to light rail. A 4-lane historic drawbridge forms the only connection between SR 520 and all of Northeast Seattle, including the University of Washington, the city's largest employer, and the most important light rail stop north of Westlake. Pedestrian and bicycle access to the Montlake bus stop would be very poor due to enormous congestion in the Montlake area. The Montlake bus stop would continue to separate UW and downtown-bound buses on an upper and lower level, causing confusion.

Local transit: The Base 6 alternative depends on the already over-capacity Montlake Bridge. This would imply a steady reduction in speed and reliability for some of the most productive bus routes in the region.

Neighborhood and park impacts: The physical footprint of the Base 6 alternative through Montlake and across Portage Bay is profound, prompting residents to nickname the interchange the "Montlake Monster." The total acreage of parks impacts are about par with Pacific Interchange, but the Base 6 lane option covers more parkland at ground level and has far inferior mitigation opportunities. Unlike the area underneath relatively high spans in the vicinity of Foster and Marsh Island with Pacific Interchange, parkland covered at ground level would be unusable.

C-032-024

The Second Bascule Bridge option fails on mobility and livability

The Second Bascule Bridge option (parallel Montlake drawbridge) is even worse than Base 6 in almost every regard, which explains why it has vanishingly little support. It was introduced as a potential alternate approach to reduce the footprint and increase transit connectivity, but it does not deliver on these aims.

Regional transit: The Second Bascule Bridge fails to make a fast and reliable transit connection for SR 520 buses to the UW. It is particularly unreliable in off-peak times when the drawbridge goes up, but buses are generally stuck in tremendous congestion on Montlake Blvd. The SR 520 afternoon peak hours on which the restriction on bridge opening hours is based are not aligned with the UW schedule, which has peak travel demand earlier in the afternoon, so "off peak" transit reliability is a problem for access to the UW.

Local transit: Local and regional transit both share the extremely congested Montlake Blvd., and would be equally slow and unreliable with this option.

Traffic: In some ways, congestion is actually worse with this option than without a second drawbridge. By and large it is the same bad story as the Base 6 lane alternative; there are other bottlenecks in the vicinity besides the bridge itself that are not and cannot be addressed by this plan.

Neighborhood and park impacts: The Second Bascule Bridge causes irreparable harm to the Montlake neighborhood, its Olmsted legacy (which includes Montlake Blvd.) and other historic resources, and has impacts to the UW campus without attendant benefits.

C-032-025

Roanoke Park lid

BetterBridge.org supports the configuration for the Roanoke lid proposed by the SR 520 Local Impact Committee (LIC), including the concept of a bicycle trail link from 10th to Broadway Ave E. on the south side of SR 520 right of way.

C-032-024

Comment Summary:

6-Lane Alternative

Response:

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

C-032-025

Comment Summary:

Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

Response:

See Section 2.3 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-026

Microsoft/Overlake transit access

Although it is outside the geographic scope of this project, the Overlake transit station serving Microsoft and other nearby employers is very important to many users of this corridor. Today, westbound Sound Transit Regional Express buses are forced to make a 6 to 7 minute diversion to serve the transit station. Microsoft plans to add approximately 12,000 employees in Redmond and the overall employment of Redmond is projected to grow from approximately 80,000 today to over 100,000 within the planning horizon of this project. Something needs to be done to optimize bus service to Overlake, perhaps either with an in-line transit stop or direct access ramps serving the Overlake transit station.

C-032-027

Height and Design of Union Bay Bridge

The navigational clearance of the Union Bay Bridge should be lowered from 110 feet to 70 feet. This would reduce noise and visual impacts, improve traffic operations, improve the operation of buses full of passengers, and provide an easier grade for bicyclists. BetterBridge.org encourages the Project to analyze a Union Bay Bridge with 70 foot clearance in the FEIS and to work with the Coast Guard to permit this.

All parts of this corridor should be given careful design consideration, but the Union Bay Bridge will be a new Seattle landmark and deserves the highest standard of aesthetic design. Private funding should be sought to supplement public funding in order to achieve the highest possible aesthetic standard for this bridge.

C-032-028

Noise walls and quiet pavement

Given the proximity of this highway to parks and historic neighborhoods, and the limitations of noise walls given the topography in the corridor, and the visual impacts of noise walls, we strongly encourage the Project to research and pursue quiet pavement technology in this corridor, even if it is more expensive to construct and/or maintain.

C-032-029

Noise walls should be designed to strongly discourage graffiti, and to make it easy to remove graffiti should it occur. We are intrigued by the possibility of translucent and/or curved noise walls and encourage the Project to research these and examine costs and impacts thereof.

C-032-030

Construction Impacts

We are concerned over the potentially 5 year closure of the Lake Washington Blvd. access ramps. Even if a way is found to reduce the closure period, this seems likely to have a profoundly negative impact on traffic congestion at the Montlake Interchange. We encourage the Project to come up with a plan to make the best of this unavoidable situation. Early tolling could be part of this plan.

C-032-026

Comment Summary:

Eastside Concerns

Response:

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

C-032-027

Comment Summary:

Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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

C-032-028

Comment Summary:

Noise Walls

Response:

See Section 12.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

C-032-029

Comment Summary:

Noise Walls (Aesthetics)

Response:

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

C-032-030

Comment Summary:

Traffic Management (Construction)

Response:

See Section 4.2 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

Thank you for your careful attention to this important matter.

Jonathan Dubman and Rob Wilkinson, on behalf of the Directors and Board Members of BetterBridge.org:

Kate Battuello

Mabry DeBuys

Jonathan Dubman

Bob Mahon

Robert Rosencrantz

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Millennium Park Bike Storage and Locker Facility, Chicago Illinois.
(Photo courtesy Art on File, Inc.)

