

Online Comment by User: gregli

Submitted on: 10/29/2006 4:36:00 PM
Comment Category: 4-Lane Alternative
Comment Location: Chapter-5, Page-15
Address: , , 98112
Comment:

I-0216-001

I strongly oppose the 4-lane alternative

Given the traffic now on this vital Seattle/Eastside link, and projected for the future, it would be a mistake to replace this bridge without increasing the capacity. As someone who commutes from Seattle to Microsoft, I live the congestion and headaches every day. With more HOV capacity, I would be more inclined to use the bus.

Comment Category: Transportation and Traffic
Comment Location: Chapter-5, Page-24
Comment:

I-0216-002

I strongly support the bike connection to Madison Park

I currently live in Madison Park, on McGilvra Blvd. I enjoy biking, around town such as around Mercer Island, Lake Washington, or along the Burke-Gillman. Each year I do at least one of supported summer tour rides such as the Seattle to Portland, Seattle to Vancouver BC, and charity fund-raising rides. I also work at Microsoft. During the summer, at least once a week, I try to ride to work, which for me means traveling south to I-90, coming across the lake, and coming back up through Bellevue. Needless to say, I am a huge fan of the bike lane planned for the new 520 bridge.

Right now, it takes me roughly 1:45 to bike to Microsoft, and approximately 1:30 to bike home (Microsoft sits atop the "overlake" hill, making it harder to get to than to come from). Because so much time is required, and I'm riding more than 3 hours on these days, I can only manage to find the time and energy once a week. With the 520 bike lane, my best estimates cut these times by at least half. Since the time and physical demands are lower, and the biking time is approaching that of driving in traffic, I expect I will be able to ride to work at least three times a week. My point: reducing the time and physical demands of biking will increase the use of the bike trail and reduce the number of cars on 520, not linearly, but exponentially. This is a strong argument for having the 520 bike lane, which I believe is fairly secure in all of the bridge replacement designs. But it also argues for the Madison Park connection - trimming miles off the journey and a major hill on Madison - which directly translates into more days that bicyclists can leave their cars at home.

But I believe the strongest argument for the Madison Park connection is safety. Without it, cyclists will use Lake Washington Blvd to reach 520. It is a windy, two-lane road, with no shoulder. Cyclists today use this road to reach UW or the Burke-Gillman. And often cars try to pass these bikes - without much visibility or space left for the cyclist, hoping there isn't an oncoming car around the bend. It is not a safe situation today, and for this reason I personally avoid biking on Lake Washington Blvd. There is a "Lake Washington Loop" route marked which avoids this road and is safer, but because it is convoluted and slower, bicyclists often use Lake Washington Blvd anyway. Today, since I'm typically on a

I-0216-001

Comment Summary:

4-Lane Alternative

Response:

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

I-0216-002

Comment Summary:

Madison Park Bicycle/Pedestrian Connection

Response:

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

I-0216-002

recreational ride in this part of town, I don't mind using the safer marked route and it taking a little longer. Now consider bike commuting: I want to get to and from work as quickly as possible. In the mornings and evenings, Lake Washington Blvd is a busy road with plenty of commuters in cars coming to and from 520. Having the allure of a bike lane on 520 will only make the safety problem worse, with more bikes, and more bike commuters who are trying to get to work in a timely manner. Given the lack of a Madison Park connection, I would probably use Lake Washington Blvd myself.

McGilvra, the street I live on, has far less traffic and wide shoulders. Cyclists are often seen on this road. On McGilvra, I have never seen a potential bike accident, nor have I felt unsafe myself when on a bike, and I ride this road a couple of times a week. A safe path can be created between Lake Washington Blvd, south of Madison Park where it pulls away from Lake Washington, up McGilvra, and on to 520 with great connections east and west. This would be very attractive to cyclists and will reduce the number of bikes on Lake Washington Blvd from today's levels.

Comment Category: Pacific Street Interchange

Comment Location: Chapter-5, Page-24

Comment:

I strongly support the Pacific Interchange Option

I-0216-003

There are so many aspects and arguments around this choice, I won't waste the reader's time recounting them all. The argument that resonates for me: if we have the opportunity to fix the traffic issues associated with "the cut," we absolutely should.

The problem is well understood. The Montlake Bridge, being two narrow lanes each way, is a choke point for access to 520 and central Seattle from the north. Making matters worse, the Montlake Bridge is a drawbridge, and it comes up from time to time, completely stopping traffic flow.

The impact of this choke point is huge. I live in Madison Park. University Village, a major shopping area, is less than 3 miles from my home, but across the cut. And most days I would prefer to travel downtown, face the traffic there, and pay for parking, then go across the cut. Recently I was looking for a new house, and working at Microsoft, realtors wouldn't even take me over to Laurelhurst. Great schools, better access to I-5, access to shopping, parks, and Lake Washington – all of it was trumped by the traffic through the cut. If you have ever tried to make your way across the cut at rush hour, you would immediately understand why.

The only other option I have seen that addresses this problem is a second drawbridge across the cut. This would obviously increase the capacity across the cut, and relieve the traffic burden. But, it is still a drawbridge, subject to somewhat unpredictable traffic interruptions, adding uncertainty to everyone's schedule who uses this corridor and especially busses who need to be on a reliable schedule.

A nice side benefit of the Pacific Interchange, over what the second bridge offers, is the reduction in lanes and on/off ramps in the Montlake area. Combined with a green belt lid

I-0216-003

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Pacific Street Interchange Option

Response:

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I-0216-003

over 520 at Montlake Blvd, it is possible to create a continuous green belt from the Montlake playing fields all the way through to the UW Arboretum. People have their homes here – they live, play, and raise their kids here – and it is in everyone’s best interest to create strong living spaces in Seattle. We don’t often have the chance to relocate traffic and noise away from where people live to where people will never live, south of Husky Stadium and off shore of the UW campus.