

I-0452-001
Comment Summary:
Project Costs

Response:
See Section 3.1 of the 2006 Draft EIS Comment Response Report.

I-0452-001

-----Original Message-----
From: Neil M. Hawkins [mailto:nmhawkin@uiuc.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2006 9:33 PM
To: SR 520 Bridge Replacement & HOV Project
Subject: Re: SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Update: WSDOT Responds to Expert Review Panel Recommendations

While the numbers are really not good news they are more realistic. However, I also believe that the public needs to be better informed on the reliability of the cost estimates. The probability of encountering construction difficulties in both projects is high and especially so if the choice for the viaduct project if the choice is a tunnel. The experience with the "Big Dig" project in Boston clearly shows some of the cost-overrun problems likely with a tunnel. The other cost issue that needs to be directly addressed for the public is the cost of the "environmental mitigation" effort associated with each project. While I live close to SR 520 and would really like to see the lids and soundwalls projected for the East Side, there is still a cost for those that need to be more obvious to the public. Those "environmental mitigation" activities are certainly needed to get the east side cities to buy off on the project, but is that necessary if the alternate they have to accept is no construction if the cost is estimated to be too high for the project as a whole.

Neil Hawkins
----- Original message -----
>Date: Wed, 20 Sep 2006 16:46:26 -0700
>From: "SR 520 Bridge Replacement & HOV Project"
><SR520Bridge@WSDOT.WA.GOV>
>Subject: SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Update: WSDOT
>Responds to Expert Review Panel Recommendations
>To: "SR 520 Bridge Replacement & HOV Project"
><SR520Bridge@WSDOT.WA.GOV>
>
> Today, WSDOT sent out the following press release:
>
>
>
> WSDOT Responds to Expert Review Panel
> Recommendations
>
> SEATTLE - WSDOT today released the results of
> preliminary revisions to cost estimates for the SR
> 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project and the
> Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project.
> The release of this information follows suggestions
> recently made by the Expert Review Panel, and
> addresses the likely impact of recent worldwide
> construction cost inflation on project costs.
>
> "It is important that new estimates be in the
> public's hands," said Doug MacDonald, Secretary of
> Transportation. "Sharply higher prices for
> construction materials in recent months have been
> seen in projects across the country and even around
> the world. The entire construction industry has been
> affected by these trends. These two important

> projects will be no exception, and we have agreed
> with the Expert Review Panel that the best
> information we have now should be made available to
> everyone."
>
> Final stages of the cost estimate updates were
> conducted under the eye of several Expert Review
> Panel members in Seattle over recent weeks. Lee
> Baker, P.E., a construction cost specialist and
> member of the Expert Review Panel, said: "Today, new
> cost numbers are not welcome news on any project,
> but we support the approach WSDOT has taken and it
> follows our recommendations. We believe the cost
> ranges that WSDOT has prepared are representative of
> what the currently envisioned projects will cost.
> Use of specific costs at this preliminary stage are
> sufficient for comparing and selecting the
> alternatives to be built, and even more work will be
> required for predicting final costs."
>
> A team of in-house WSDOT experts and private sector
> consulting engineers working under the supervision
> of David L. Dye, WSDOT's Urban Corridors Office
> Administrator, prepared the new estimates. "These
> estimates introduce a new number, the 'likely cost,'
> as our best way of giving the public good project
> comparisons when tomorrow's inflation rates are hard
> to guess and 'worst case' ranges are more
> pessimistic than the future we actually expect to
> encounter. Our project design and construction
> efforts will, we hope, stay very close to the
> 'likely range' estimates," Dye said.
>
>
>
> Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project
>
> Core Tunnel:
>
> Re-evaluated Most Likely Cost, Previous Cost Range,
> Sept 2006 Oct/Nov 2005
> \$4.63 billion \$2.98 - \$3.63 billion
>
>
> Core Elevated Structure:
>
> Re-evaluated Most Likely Cost, Previous Cost Range,
> Sept 2006 Oct/Nov 2005
> \$2.82 billion \$1.99 - \$2.36 billion
>
>
> SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project
>
> 4-Lane Alternative:
>
> Re-evaluated Most Likely Previous Cost Range, April
> Cost, Sept 2006 2005 (Pre-Katrina)

> \$2.79 billion \$1.67 - \$2.02 billion

> 6-Lane Alternative with Montlake Interchange:

> Re-evaluated Most Likely Previous Cost Range, April
> Cost, Sept 2006 2005 (Pre-Katrina)
> \$3.90 billion \$2.33 - \$2.83 billion

> 6-Lane Alternative with Pacific Interchange:

> Re-evaluated Most Likely Previous Cost Range, April
> Cost, Sept 2006 2005 (Pre-Katrina)
> \$4.38 billion \$2.73 - \$3.10 billion

> For more information about the latest cost
> estimates, visit:

> www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Viaduct/CostEstimates

> The viaduct and Alaskan Way surface street together
> carry more than 120,000 vehicles each day (about one
> quarter of all north-south traffic through Seattle)
> and serve as an important route for commuters and
> freight. The seawall, which is included in these new
> project estimates, supports Alaskan Way and the soil
> underneath the viaduct. Immediately after the 2001
> Nisqually earthquake, WSDOT made \$3.5 million in
> earthquake repairs to keep the viaduct safe and
> functional and began semi-annual earthquake
> inspections to closely monitor cracks, structural
> movement and foundation integrity.

> The 42-year-old SR 520 Evergreen Point Bridge is 1.5
> miles long and carries approximately 115,000
> vehicles daily. The bridge approaches, which run
> between Portage Bay and Lake Washington, are
> vulnerable to earthquakes, and the floating bridge
> is vulnerable to windstorms. In February 2006 the
> 520 bridge had to be closed to traffic during an
> evening rush-hour winter storm, causing hours of
> massive traffic congestion on I-5, I-405, I-90 and
> other roadways around the region.

> For more information about the projects and the
> Expert Review Panel, visit the WSDOT Web sites
> listed below.

> SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project:

> www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge
>
> Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project:
> www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/Viaduct
>
> Expert Review Panel:
> www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Viaduct/ExpertReviewPanel
>
>
>
> 414 Olive Way Ste 400, Seattle, WA 98101
>
>
> Neil M. Hawkins
> Professor Emeritus, UIUC-CEE
> 2634 86th Ave NE, Clyde Hill, WA 98004
> Phone: 425-451-7338