

Supplemental Draft EIS Environmental Hearing Comment Form – Feb. 23, 2010

Welcome to the environmental hearing for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Please use this form to share your comments on the content provided in the Supplemental Draft EIS document. WSDOT will consider all comments received between Jan. 22 and April 15, 2010 in making its final decision in the environmental review process. Thank you for your comments.

You can provide comments through one of the following methods:

- **Complete this form** and place it in one of the comment boxes during the meeting. Please write clearly.
- **Mail** your comments to Jenifer Young, SR 520, I-5 to Medina Environmental Manager, Washington State Department of Transportation, 600 Stewart Street, Suite 520, Seattle, WA 98101.
- **E-mail** your comments to SR520Bridge_SDEIS@wsdot.wa.gov.
- **Visit the Web page** at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge.

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These comments will become part of the public record for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Personal information is voluntary and will become part of the public record if provided. The Washington State Department of Transportation is a public agency and is subject to the State of Washington's Public Records Act (RCW 42.56). Therefore, meeting comments may be made available to anyone requesting them for non-commercial purposes.

Do you have any comments on the Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

I-044-001 1. REMOVAL OF ALL EXISTING ARBORETUM RAMPS IS ESSENTIAL

I-044-002 2. CURRENT (OR FUNCTIONALLY SIMILAR) BUS STOPS SHOULD BE RETAINED AT MONTLAKE

I-044-001

The Preferred Alternative would not include construction of any new ramps in the Arboretum, and would remove both the existing Lake Washington Boulevard ramps and the R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps. Access to Lake Washington Boulevard by westbound SR 520 traffic would be moved to a new intersection located on the Montlake Boulevard lid at 24th Avenue East. With the Preferred Alternative, bus stops would be located on the new Montlake lid, which would continue bus access similar to the existing bus access. Pedestrian access to the transit stops would be improved compared to the existing stairs, the walk to the NWFSC would be shorter, and the user experience would be improved compared to the current bus stop, which is adjacent to the freeway. HOV lanes would be continuous between SR 202 and I-5, allowing buses to bypass congestion and operate more cost effectively (less time lost due to congestion) and more fuel efficiently (steady speeds versus stop and go) than with the No Build Alternative, particularly for trips to and from the Eastside.

I-044-002

The Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops were removed in all of the design options considered in the SDEIS, based on a decision making process that was part of Westside mediation. The mediation process was mandated by Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6099 and is described on pages 1-17 through 1-19 of the SDEIS. The mediation workgroup consisted of members from adjacent neighborhoods, transit agencies, jurisdictions, and State agencies. Removing the Montlake Freeway Transit Station would minimize the width of the freeway through the Montlake area, reducing the width by up to 40 feet compared to keeping the station. The mediation workgroup did not recommend any design options that included the Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops. See Attachment 8 to the SDEIS, Range of Alternatives and Options Evaluated, for further discussion of how and why removal of the stops was considered.

Do you have any comments on the Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement? (continued from page 1)

I-044-002 | INTERCHANGE - VERY CRITICAL FOR
MONTLAKE COMMUTERS TO DOWNTOWN
& EASTSIDE

I-044-003 | (3) THERE SHOULD BE DISINCENTIVES TO THROUGH
TRAFFIC IN ARBORETUM (I.E., USE OF
ARBORETUM ROAD AS EXTENSION OF ON/OFF RAMP(S))

I-044-004 | AT THIS POINT, OPTION A+ IS
THE BEST OPTION WITH
COMMENTS (2) AND (3) ABOVE



The Preferred Alternative includes removal of the Montlake Freeway Transit Station stops; however, it also includes a modified Montlake Boulevard interchange and lid. Modifications include a full lid from Montlake Boulevard to the Lake Washington shoreline, and bus stops on the lid for both eastbound and westbound buses (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative). The intent is to provide greater pedestrian amenity in the central part of the Montlake neighborhood while simultaneously providing a better location and environment for the regional bus stops incorporated in the transit/HOV direct access ramps (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS). At the option of the transit agencies, SR 520 buses will be able to exit at the Montlake interchange during the off-peak periods to service passengers to/from the Montlake lid transit stop. University Link light-rail service, expected to be operational in 2016, will accommodate some of the trips that now use the bus stops. Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) provides further discussion of expected transit operations with the Preferred Alternative, including expected transit travel times, rider connections, and how future transit would incorporate service currently provided at the stops.

I-044-003

Through a number of design refinements, the Preferred Alternative would have fewer and less severe effects on Lake Washington Boulevard and the Arboretum than the No Build Alternative. The Preferred Alternative would remove the existing Lake Washington Boulevard eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp and the R.H. Thomson Expressway ramps. As a result of these ramp removals and other design features, in 2030, trip volumes on Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum would be reduced compared the No Build Alternative. Under the Preferred Alternative in 2030, a.m. peak hour volumes on Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum would be 1,330 vehicles per hour with the Preferred Alternative, compared to 1,950 vehicles per hour with the No Build Alternative. P.m.

peak hour volumes would be 1,410 vehicles per hour compared to 1,730 with the No Build Alternative.

As part of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan, WSDOT has committed to working with the Seattle Department of Transportation to fund traffic-calming measures along Lake Washington Boulevard and to identify additional traffic management measures in the Arboretum.

I-044-004

Comment noted. WSDOT received a number of comments in support of and in opposition to Options A, K, and L and the associated suboptions. These opinions are summarized in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement Summary of Comments (WSDOT, April 2010), available at

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/SDEIS.htm>.

Since publication of the SDEIS, WSDOT has identified a Preferred Alternative, which is similar to Option A but with a number of design refinements that would improve mobility and safety while reducing negative effects. Chapter 2 of the Final EIS describes the Preferred Alternative and Chapters 5 and 6 describe its environmental effects.