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From: jcooper@fhcrc.org [mailto:jcooper@fhcrc.org]

Sent: Sunday, February 28, 2010 10:01 AM

To: SR 520 Bridge SDEIS

Subject:

I-073-001

I have two major concerns:

1. The bridge is much wider than the current bridge, and has considerable footprint in the form of interchanges etc at both ends. This removes current habitat for migratory birds. The mitigation plans are feeble and based on wishful thinking. The impacts on Foster Island area cannot be mitigated (white-washed) by tiny changes in Seward Park and other parks or by flooding the playfields at Montlake. Changes made in the Montlake Fill area need careful planning so they will not modify or destroy outstanding habitat. Meadow/grassland species also use the Union Bay Natural Area and just dredging to make more wetland is not a suitable answer. The footprints of the ends of the bridge need to be reduced.

I-073-002

2. There is no allowance for light rail. This is short-sighted and will have negative impacts on longterm traffic problems in Seattle and Eastside for decades to come.

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### I-073-001

WSDOT has designed the Preferred Alternative to have the least effects to natural resources as feasible and practicable. Effects of the Preferred Alternative are similar to those disclosed in the SDEIS. The lanes are wider apart than discussed in the SDEIS to accommodate light rail and thus effects to wetlands are greater in some areas. However, over Foster Island effects have been reduced because of cultural sensitivities related to Foster Island. See the Ecosystems Discipline Report Addendum (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS).

WSDOT will mitigate for effects to natural resources from the Preferred Alternative. Mitigation has been further designed since the SDEIS. See the Conceptual Wetland Mitigation Plan (Attachment 9 to the Final EIS) for details.

### I-073-002

WSDOT policy supports the notion that people should be able to easily and efficiently move through congested intercity corridors using many transportation options. Section 2.4 in the Final EIS explains why initial implementation of light rail transit on SR 520 is not planned. The decision to locate Sound Transit's initial east-west light rail transit corridor on I-90 rather than SR 520 has been made through extensive regional deliberation (see Table 2-2 of the Final EIS). However, while WSDOT believed that the design of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project already accommodated potential future light rail, the agency worked with the City of Seattle and Sound Transit to identify changes that would enhance the corridor's rail compatibility. The Preferred Alternative reflects these design changes and allows for two potential future rail options as discussed in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS.

The SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would complete the HOV lane system in the corridor, improving reliability and efficiency for transit and carpools, but would not add general-purpose lanes. Thus the project is aligned

with improving the overall efficiency of the transportation system by creating incentives for people to choose an alternative to driving alone.