

I-086-001

MR. CURREN: Hi. I'm Ryan Curren. I'm an organizer from Seattle. I'm a Seattle resident; I am a Seattleite. And you guys are reasonable. I think you'll understand this metaphor. Building more roads to increase the capacity for cars to cure congestion is like loosening your belt to cure obesity. Right? It's not going to get you where you want.

And the numbers I heard earlier, about population growth, we need to cure congestion -- to meet that population growth does not take in the fact that you're not providing that population growth alternatives, alternative transit.

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So I would just like to advocate for bus rapid transit now, no HOV lanes, and light rail in the near future. And I think -- as a taxpayer, I think that the appetite is there to fund that if it's put to a vote sooner than later, so your political time line or your funding time line can be much shorter than what you're currently anticipating.

The City Council came out Monday with a, you know, bold statement for carbon neutral, a carbon-neutral city. I'd say that six lanes is not carbon-neutral. Microsoft came out with their ad today, and, you know, two days ago, their founder came out saying that climate change is the number-one priority for their funding. So there's some great hypocrisy amongst our Council, there's some great hypocrisy amongst our business community, and, fortunately, the communities of Seattle are coming together to call them out on that. So I hope you -- hope you also acknowledge that.

Thank you.

(End of comment.)

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The project would complete the HOV lanes across the floating project. The addition of HOV lanes to the corridor, with no increase in the existing number of general-purpose lanes, is expressly intended to improve the speed and reliability of transit service, providing an incentive to use transit. As noted discussion of project need on page 1-6 of the SDEIS, the prospect of substantially increased travel times in 2030 "makes it imperative that commuters be provided with travel choices that allow them to avoid driving alone, and that the proposed project be built to support increased use of transit and HOVs." As discussed in section 5.1 of the SDEIS, and section 5.1 of the Final EIS, HOV and transit commuters would experience substantial travel time benefits in 2030 with the addition of the HOV lane.

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The SR 520, I-5 to Medina project includes 6 lanes--four general-purpose lanes and two HOV lanes--as called for in Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6099 (see page 1-17 of the SDEIS). The HOV lanes will be for vehicles with 3 or more passengers, as specified by ESHB 6392. This assumption was evaluated in the Draft EIS, SDEIS, and Final EIS, and has been shown to result in free flow operations in the HOV lane with bus service levels near 600 vehicles per day. The State's HOV lane operations policy would be used to identify when the HOV lanes' operational thresholds were met and when an adjustment to the occupancy requirement would be recommended; however, the State would need to request legislative approval to make any modifications. The SR 520, I-5 to Medina project would result in immediate benefits for transit speed and reliability in the corridor by providing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes across the floating bridge and better HOV connections at the Montlake and I-5 interchanges (see Section 5.1 of both the SDEIS and Final EIS). The HOV lanes would allow for the near-term implementation of bus rapid transit, as called for in the SR 520 High-Capacity Transit Plan. 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).

The SR 520 High-Capacity Transit Plan, which was endorsed in 2008 by the state, King County Metro Transit, and Sound Transit found that until at least 2030, demand for transit in the 520 corridor could be satisfied by bus rapid transit that runs in HOV/transit lanes—complementing Sound Transit's East Link on I-90. At the same time, the plan acknowledges that after 2030 significant increases in cross-lake travel may warrant dedicated HCT facilities in both I-90 and SR 520. Therefore, the new SR 520 bridge and associated interchanges will be built in a way that allows the structure to accommodate a two-way light rail line or busway at a future date.

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 (see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS). Under the SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan, Sound Transit would study the demand and necessity of light rail later in this decade. For more information, please see the SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/Library/technical.htm>.

The addition of a dedicated lane for transit and HOV, along with the reduction in general-purpose demand achieved by tolling, would provide benefits regarding greenhouse gas emissions. As discussed in Section 5.9 of the Final EIS, the Preferred Alternative would result in a 4 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the project area compared to the No Build Alternative, with a corresponding 4 percent reduction in

annual fuel consumption. The project area includes the following freeway segments and associated ramps and interchanges: SR 520 between I-5 in Seattle and SR 202 in Redmond; I-5 in Seattle between NE 45th Street and south of the I-90 collector-distributor north connection to the mainline; and I-405 between NE 70th Street in Kirkland and NE 4th Street in Bellevue. The reduction in VMT results in a reduction of approximately 10 percent in GHG emissions compared to the No Build Alternative, which is consistent with state legislation calling for such reductions and would contribute to other regional and national reduction efforts. It should be noted that this estimate does not take into account the estimated 60 percent increase in transit ridership that would be achieved if bus rapid transit is implemented in the corridor as part of the SR 520 High Capacity Transit Plan.