

C-002-001

MR. FOX: Hello. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I'm Matt Fox. I'm president of the U District Community Council and, needless to say, the Community Council favors alternative A-Plus without the Arboretum ramps.

Alternative A is a significant improvement over the version of Alternative A in the 2006 draft EIS. It would accomplish the statutory purposes of the project with the least damage to the Arboretum, the Union Bay wetlands, the environment, the UW campus, and the surrounding communities.

Options K and L are not acceptable. For all I've heard, I guess I'm shocked about how much bigger A-Plus is. K and L are over 240 feet wide in places where A is 160 feet. So those have equal, if not greater, impacts in terms of being large freeways.

Not only do these options do irreparable damage to the environment, neither of those designs serves transit, motorists, or freight mobility as well as Alternative A, and each design causes substantially more congestion on local streets and Northeast Seattle than Alternative A.

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Trucks hauling materials during the construction process should use SR 520 to I-5 or to the Eastside wherever possible. Use of Northeast Pacific Street, 15th Avenue, and Northeast 45th should be avoided to the maximum extent. These streets pass University Hospital and along these streets already heavily congested with bus and business traffic. U District streets are already used for construction of Sound Transit stations and other major projects, and we already have

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WSDOT received a number of comments in support of and in opposition to Options A, K, and L and the associated suboptions. These comments are summarized in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement Summary of Comments that was published in April 2010 and is available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/SDEIS.htm>.

Since the SDEIS was published, FHWA and WSDOT have developed a Preferred Alternative that is similar to Option A but includes design refinements that respond to community and stakeholder comment on the SDEIS. Options K and L were not identified as the Preferred Alternative, due in large part to the negative environmental effects associated with them.

Please see Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative and Chapters 5 and 6 for analyses of its environmental effects.

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Construction assumptions developed for the project identify major freeways such as I-5, SR 520, and I-405 as primary haul routes intended to carry most project truck traffic. However, there will be times when city streets will need to be used as secondary haul routes. Secondary haul routes for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project were identified based on criteria such as shortest off-highway mileage, and providing access to locations needed for construction where direct highway access is unavailable.

Since publication of the SDEIS, WSDOT has refined potential haul routes to avoid using non-arterial neighborhood streets. Local jurisdictions can limit the use of non-arterial streets for truck traffic; therefore, efforts were made to identify designated arterial streets for potential use as haul routes. Local jurisdictions will determine final haul

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a lot of traffic that we're experiencing as a result of that.

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Wherever appropriate, the many recommendations and representations contained in the discipline reports and in the SDEIS for avoiding and mitigating adverse consequences in the design and construction and operation of the project should be included in the Record of Decision and made a part of the intergovernmental agreement for the project, along with the recommendation for corridor management.

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One thing the U District Community Council -- I can give you the letter with some more comments -- but one thing we support is definitely a firm commitment on the part of WSDOT not to restripe this new facility, regardless of which alternative you chose, to more than six lanes.

We've seen that happen on the West Seattle Bridge, where we're told that we must have 12-foot-wide lanes, absolutely, for safety purposes, and then they restripe them to 9 and put a bus lane in. I was for the bus lane, but there is a precedent for that. We'd like to see further restrictions on the number of lanes on the facility.

And the U District Community Council definitely supports future light-rail transit on 520 and is glad that all the alternatives consider this, but that's likely at least 10 years away. With the current I-90 light-rail line that's still in its infancy, light-rail trains that are a possibility in the distant future should not be allowed to delay this project we've already been studying for 10 years, particularly since light rail to the U District is 10 years behind

routes for those actions and activities that require a street use or other jurisdictional permit. The permit process typically takes place during the final design phase and prior to construction.

Northeast Pacific Street, 15th Avenue Northeast, and Northeast 45th Street are not identified as potential haul routes for Option A or the Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS. A map showing potential haul routes, with locations, descriptions, construction duration, and estimated truckloads per day, is included in Chapter 6 of the Final EIS and in the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS).

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The Final EIS presents measures to mitigate potential construction and operation effects that could be caused by the Preferred Alternative. These measures are based on the level of project design development required by NEPA and are consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. As design development progresses, WSDOT will continue to define mitigation measures for the project in accordance with Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392 and through coordination with applicable federal, state, and local agencies during the permitting and approval process.

After the Final EIS has been issued, FHWA, the federal lead agency for the project, will prepare a Record of Decision (ROD), which will document the course of action it has decided to take. The ROD will explain how the lead agencies plan to implement mitigation measures and conservation actions to comply with NEPA and other laws. This will include input from the ESSB 6392 workgroups where appropriate for the level of design development.

Although the ROD is the conclusion of the NEPA process, it signals the beginning of project implementation, when WSDOT will begin to develop the engineering design for the project further, including additional details about project phasing, construction staging, and construction techniques.

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already.

So there is a plan, it is the least impactful on most neighborhoods and gives the best results and the best bang for your buck, so that's what we support.

Thank you.

(End of comment.)

At this point, WSDOT will also develop more specific plans and designs for mitigation measures, which will be documented in project permit approvals. WSDOT will comply with local jurisdictional regulations for construction and will continue to work with local communities to plan construction mitigation measures through the permit and approval process.

#### **C-002-004**

The footprint and width of the proposed SR 520 corridor has been minimized to the maximum extent feasible. Highway lanes and shoulders are designed to standards that have been established to protect the safety of drivers. When circumstances warrant a change from these standards, WSDOT must request FHWA's approval of a "design deviation." WSDOT has already obtained approvals for design deviations for both lane and shoulder widths in response to community requests for a narrower roadway footprint. In the interest of safety, FHWA will not approve further narrowing of the corridor. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative.

WSDOT intends to operate SR 520 as a 6-lane corridor and has no plans to restripe it in the future. The width of the new 6-lane SR 520 corridor and the width of the new floating bridge would not allow conversion to eight lanes without physical widening of the roadway. This would result in a new project that would need to undergo separate environmental review.

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. Light rail could be accommodated either by converting the HOV lanes for rail use or by adding light-rail only lanes. Since rail transit in the SR 520 corridor is not

programmed in current regional transit plans, any future project to add rail in the corridor would need to undergo an extensive planning and environmental review process by the responsible transit agency prior to implementation. For further information, see Section 2.4 of the Final EIS.