

SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Supplemental Draft EIS Comment Form

Please use this form to share your comments on the content provided in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement 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 using one of the following methods:

- Complete this form.
- Mail your comments to Jenifer Young, SDEIS 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.
- Speak to a court reporter at an environmental hearing scheduled for 5 – 7 p.m., Feb. 23, at Lake Union Park Naval Reserve Building, 860 Terry Ave. N., Seattle.

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7. Do you have any comments on the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

To the planners of the 520 replacement

I would like to voice my opinion regarding the scenarios presented thus far for the replacement of the 520 bridge. None of the solutions give any space for mass transit and thus encourage more car use rather than give us transit opportunities. They make no connection to the new light rail line and stop provided at the UW. They do not alleviate any congestion issues on montlake boulevard. They negatively impact the arboretum and the montlake community. They directly contradict many sound urban planning principals in practice today. Our state has a mandate to reduce its impact on the environment, none of the solutions presented seem to take this into account. It is time that our regional transportation and urban planners get serious rather than present us with yet more two bit, short term solutions.

Mass transit is soon to be a vital part of our region, you must include this in any 520 replacement option.

Sincerely
Daniel Stettler

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, comments may be made available to anyone requesting them for non-commercial purposes.

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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.

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:

- Option 1: Convert the HOV/transit lanes to light rail. This approach would accommodate light rail by converting the HOV lanes to

exclusive rail use. Trains would use the direct-access ramps at Montlake Boulevard to exit, or could utilize a 40-foot gap between the eastbound and westbound lanes of the west approach to make a more direct connection to the University Link station at Husky Stadium.

- Option 2: Add light-rail only lanes. This approach would allow several connections—via a high bridge, a drawbridge, or a tunnel—to the University Link station.

Both approaches would require the addition of supplemental floating bridge pontoons to support the additional weight of light rail, should the regional decision to add rail be made and funded. Such a decision would need to be planned and programmed by regional land use and transit agencies, funded by a public vote, and evaluated in its own environmental analysis. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for further information.

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 Preferred Alternative also responds to the concern expressed in the comment regarding transit connections in the Montlake area. In accordance with the requirements of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6392, WSDOT has worked collaboratively with Sound Transit, King County Metro Transit, the City of Seattle, The University of Washington, and other stakeholders to develop design refinements for transit connections in the Montlake area. The workgroup considered bus stop locations and pedestrian access among other things. Its recommendations are described in the ESSB 6392: Design Refinements and Transit Connections Workgroup Recommendations Report (Attachment 16 to the Final EIS). Chapter 8 of the Final Transportation Discipline Report (Attachment 7 to the Final EIS) provides updated

information regarding the effects of the SR 520, I-5 to Medina project on transit connections in the Montlake area.

The Preferred Alternative also responds to concerns about effects on the Arboretum and the Montlake community. See Chapter 2 of the Final EIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative and Table 2-3 for a summary of design elements that respond to public and agency comments.