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MR. STORK: Good evening. I'm an Eastside resident and a user of transit across the 520 Bridge who also lived in Montlake, in the 1980s, for quite a few years. I generally support the A-Plus option without the Arboretum ramps, with one significant caveat.

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I think, in order to make the design function well for transit, it is essential to retain the real function of the Montlake Flyer transit station. It has served us very well for 30 years, and it does a lot more than just provide access to the University of Washington. It provides for transfers north and southbound, transfers to areas like the Central District, Capitol Hill, north to Laurelhurst, U Village, Wedgewood, onward to Wallingford and the like.

And the plan is for the 520 Bridge to be a bus rapid transit corridor or a bus corridor. That's what transit studies show. For transit to work, it needs to have connections and places to get on and off, and Montlake Flyer station serves an important function; again, not just access to the University District. It even serves an important function on Saturdays, for Husky football games, when Montlake is congested.

The role is probably far more important in off-peak periods and on weekends and so on, when it's just not going to be economically efficient to run dedicated buses that go to the University of Washington. The answer that the Department of Transportation provides is: "Oh, we'll have additional service that goes to the University of Washington." But if that's hourly service, it might as well almost not exist.

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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.

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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.

The Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS 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

In fact, if you read the environmental impact statement, it tells you that all options would substantially -- this is the summary. "All options would substantially lessen the demand for transit service."

It also later says, "All options would remove the Montlake transit station and replace its function at other nearby transit stops. Also, the transit station would require passengers to change their routing, travel routes. These changes could include using light rail, additional bus transfer, and finding alternate bus routes to get to the same destination."

I'm going to say: This means it goes away, and we don't really know what's going to happen and people can fend for themselves. You know, why should transit users, as the only population group, give up their portion that the right of way serves today? The actual footprint of the bridge in the Montlake area is increased, under this design, over what's there today. It's increased -- essentially, all of those -- and some of those are safety improvements; the rest of it goes to roadway, and it's taken away from transit users, and that does not seem to me to be the right tradeoff.

And I think, if you applied your engineering resources to it, you could fit transit stations into the footprint. You may need to elevate some things or do some other creative things, but I think the transit function should be retained, and I urge you to try to do that.

Thank you.

(End of comment.)

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. The comment's characterization of changes in demand for transit is inaccurate. The SDEIS notes that "All options would substantially increase the demand for transit service..." compared to the No Build Alternative (see the text box on page 5-20 of the SDEIS and also SDEIS Table 5.16-1). This increase is based on improved transit speed and reliability with the completed HOV lane system.